

political pawn is Glendive, MT. Glendive is growing in the energy sector. It is in the Bakken formation, with lots of oil and gas wells drilled, and it is a huge potential new energy source. Energy companies from Texas and Louisiana are rapidly sending personnel up to Glendive, and hotels in the area are running at near-full occupancy year-round. We are working hard to quickly build housing and infrastructure in order to capitalize on this great opportunity to create much needed jobs. Today, unemployment in Glendive is half the national average. But Glendive is located 230 miles from any larger airport. Glendive needs essential air service to maintain its lifeline to national commerce and continue to grow and create jobs.

We can discuss at length the merits of essential air service, the promise made to rural America, and the lifeline it provides to towns such as Glendive. In fact, this is a conversation we should have. Any changes should be made as part of thoughtful and transparent discussion, with input from the folks on the ground who are most affected. Again, that is precisely what conference negotiations are for—yet, again, negotiations we can't hold. Why? Because the House has yet to name its conferees.

The House antics have halted as much as \$2.5 billion in airport funding—funding that employs as many as 87,000 workers on construction projects around the country. At Glacier International Airport in Kalispell, MT, much needed upgrades to the taxiway are now on hold indefinitely, and so are the much needed construction jobs this project would support.

Even more troubling, 4,000 mothers and fathers and breadwinners are now out of work. These are folks such as Kristina Richardson, an administrative support specialist at Billings Logan International Airport's air traffic control tower. Over the weekend, Kristina wasn't able to go grocery shopping. She didn't know if she could count on her next paycheck to buy food and pay her bills. Kristina described the pit in her stomach when she went in to clean off her desk and shut down her computer. Kristina told my office she worried about who would help the people she had been working with. She described the pride and fulfillment that comes from working and the blow that comes when that is taken away.

Luckily, Kristina was told on Tuesday she would be able to return to work. But 4,000 other folks across the country haven't been so lucky. Like most Montanans, Kristina is one tough lady, and she understands the vital importance of essential air service to rural communities. Even when she thought she had been furloughed, she hung in there. She contacted my office to voice her support for a clean FAA extension that rejects arbitrary cuts to rural communities.

I am increasingly concerned about the nature of our political discourse.

Lately, it seems some folks are more focused on making 30-second sound bites than making laws. What happened with the FAA bill is an example of this misguided focus. Whatever the House's true reason for suspending 4,000-plus jobs and halting construction to improve airport safety, it just wasn't right.

Still, I know we can do good things around here when we work together, and I hold out the hope that we will return our focus to what is important and start getting work done, and it is not just here but on debt extension and a lot of major matters around here. But in the meantime, we need to fix this mess. This is easier to fix—much easier.

Along with Senator ROCKEFELLER, I introduced a clean FAA extension that would put 4,000 employees back to work, let us start construction projects around the country to create jobs and improve the safety of our airports, and continue to fund the trust fund. Then together we can continue working on a longer term solution. I urge my colleagues to support a clean extension.

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

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The bill clerk proceeded to call the roll.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from New Mexico.

Mr. BINGAMAN. 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 DEBT CEILING

Mr. BINGAMAN. Mr. President, we have three separate issues facing the Congress. First, the authority of the Treasury Department to borrow to meet the Nation's obligations will be reached on Tuesday. In order for borrowing to continue after Tuesday, Congress needs to raise the debt ceiling. That is the first of the three issues.

The second issue we face is the need to help our economy to become prosperous again. Unfortunately, the debate in Congress has totally lost sight of this issue, the issue of how we can grow the economy and how we can create jobs.

The third of the three issues is the need to put in place a long-term plan to reduce the deficit and the debt. The issue of raising the debt ceiling and reducing the long-term deficit and debt have, unfortunately, come to be seen by many in Congress as a single issue. So I want to urge all colleagues to take a step back and to recognize, first, that these issues are separate and, second, that failure to responsibly deal with the first of these issues; that is, failure to raise the debt limit, will greatly hamper our ability to deal with the other two issues that I mentioned.

The failure to raise the debt limit will not return our economy to pros-

perity; instead, it will postpone the day when that prosperity returns. Failure to raise the debt limit will not help reduce our debt and deficit. It will add to the debt and deficit by raising interest rates for the government and for all Americans.

So let's review how we got here.

Since the beginning of this Congress nearly 7 months ago, the Republican majority in the House has had a laser focus on one issue; that is, cutting spending. To achieve that objective, the first strategy adopted by the Republican leadership in the House was to threaten a shutdown of the government unless sufficient spending cuts were agreed to. Spending cuts were agreed to, and at the final hour Republicans agreed to pass the bill that was needed to fund the government for the balance of the fiscal year. By that I mean through September 30 of this year.

So as soon as that crisis was averted and the threat to close down the government was behind us, at least for a few months, the effort shifted to a new strategy. This strategy was to threaten a first-in-history default by the government on its financial obligations if enough additional spending cuts were not agreed to; that is, spending cuts in addition to what were agreed to, in order to avert a shutdown of the government. The device for bringing about that default was refusal to extend the debt ceiling when the government's borrowing authority was scheduled to be reached August 2, next Tuesday.

We should remind ourselves of what an artificial device is being used for leverage in this negotiation. Congress passes the laws that determine how much revenue the Federal Government collects, and Congress passes the laws that determine how much we obligate the government to spend. When the revenue we collect is less than the amount we are committed to spend, the Secretary of the Treasury has no alternative but to borrow money to meet the obligations that Congress has taken on.

So in a period like today, when the government is receiving in revenues much less than is required to meet its obligations, there are two logical actions for Congress to take. First, it can raise more revenue; second, it can reduce the obligations of the government. But in refusing to allow the Secretary of the Treasury to borrow, we are taking neither of these logical steps. Instead, we are telling the Secretary of the Treasury to default on the obligations which this and previous Congresses have already taken on on behalf of the American people.

We are told by the Secretary of the Treasury that unless Congress acts he will be forced to default or renege on our obligations beginning next week, August 2. The refusal to raise the debt ceiling and the threatening of default on our obligations has achieved much of what Republicans set out to achieve in this Congress. It has precipitated a crisis and in order to avoid that crisis,

Democrats have agreed to or acceded to the primary demands the Republican majority in the House have made.

What are those demands? There are two primary demands. The first of those demands was that all of the deficit reduction be accomplished with cuts in spending. No revenue could be raised from the wealthiest in our society to help close this gap between revenues and spending; no loopholes could be closed; no subsidies could be eliminated from the Tax Code.

Democrats have agreed that the deficit reduction would not be accomplished with a balanced package of spending cuts and revenue increases as the previous deficit reduction packages have been under President Reagan, under President George H.W. Bush, and of course under President Clinton. This deficit reduction that we are now considering would be done with spending cuts only. So that was the first demand and it was one that Democrats have acceded to.

The second demand of the Republican leadership was the totally arbitrary demand that the size of the increase in the debt ceiling not exceed the amount of spending cuts projected in the Federal budget over the next 10 years. This is a demand totally lacking in any logical justification, but, again, Democrats have agreed in order to achieve a solution to the immediate impasse.

In order to avoid the threatened default on our obligations, Senator REID has put forward a proposal that would lock in, according to the Congressional Budget Office, about \$2.2 trillion of deficit reduction over 10 years with cuts in both discretionary spending and mandatory spending. The Treasury Secretary would be given authority to borrow to meet the obligations that Congress has undertaken for approximately another 18 months. The proposal also puts in place a bipartisan and a bicameral committee with responsibility to present Congress with legislation to further reduce the deficit.

Unfortunately, it appears this proposal that Senator REID has made will be opposed by many on the Republican side. Some say the cuts are not sufficiently deep and that they would rather push the country into default rather than agree to a mere \$2.2 trillion in spending cuts.

Some others say they want to extend the debt ceiling for a shorter period so we can have another showdown with another threatened government default 6 or 7 months from now. Some say that causing the Federal Government to default will not have the adverse consequences the Secretary of the Treasury has predicted and that in fact it will have a salutary effect on both our economy and our politics.

I strongly disagree with all of these views. I believe a refusal to honor our obligations will have a major adverse consequence for our economy. I believe Congress should act now to raise the debt limit in order to avoid these ad-

verse consequences and that, although the proposal Senator REID has brought forward fails the test of balance between spending cuts and revenue increases which I would prefer, it is a plan I am willing to support in order to head off a default on our Nation's obligations. I understand additional deficit reduction will be required in the months and years ahead, but clearly the responsible course is to do what can be done today and that is adopt the Reid plan. Only by doing so can we once again focus on the steps we can take to return our economy to prosperity. That is the first priority for most Americans today. It should be our first priority as well.

Mr. President, I yield the floor.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

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

Mr. BROWN of Ohio. Mr. President, this week we have a unique opportunity to reduce the deficit to the tune of \$2.2 trillion. That is \$2.2 trillion to protect Medicare, to protect Social Security, to protect Medicaid, and to make sure the United States of America doesn't do something we have never done; that is, go into default.

We can debate how we got here. We can debate why we have this huge budget deficit. We can debate whether it is Barack Obama's fault or George Bush's fault. We can debate whether it was the Recovery Act or whether it was the two wars President Bush didn't pay for. We can debate whether it is the health care bill of President Obama or the giveaway to the drug and insurance companies that President Bush did in the name of Medicare privatization. We could talk about President Bush's tax cuts. We could do any of that, but the urgency of this situation is not a question for debate. Never before has the full faith and credit of the United States of America been held hostage to a major budget agreement.

In the past three decades before President Obama—so let's take him out of this picture for a minute—we have avoided default by raising the debt limit 38 times in the last 30 years before President Obama. Out of those 38 times, 34 of those times—almost 90 percent—were under Republican Presidents. Again, 34 of 38 times were under Republican Presidents. We didn't do a hostage-taking. We didn't try to scare people. Even if we didn't like doing it, we simply raised the debt ceiling.

As I and many Democratic colleagues have said, we can balance the budget as we did under President Clinton. I came to office in 1992 in the House. I voted for a controversial budget. No Republicans joined us. We had almost 8 years of economic growth, with 21 million net private sector jobs created, and we

got to a balanced budget. We know how to do that. We do it with a balance between spending cuts and revenues, especially closing tax loopholes, giveaways to the oil companies, tax breaks for companies that outsource jobs, and tax breaks for hedge fund operators on Wall Street. We can close those tax loopholes. We can do spending cuts, and we can do what we need to do to move toward a balanced budget.

During those 38 times, there were freestanding votes. Each time it was raised, there was a freestanding vote. Neither party played these games. Neither party held our Nation hostage to these political games.

Rather than a freestanding vote on the debt limit, we are in a last-minute scramble. Democrats have said: OK, we will reach an agreement. Never has one party insisted that the amount of the increase in the debt limit be offset by an equal amount of spending cuts. We have even agreed to that approach. Never before has one party insisted that a major budget agreement exclude provisions that address revenue. We have even said yes to that. Now having had their demands met, the people in the party who insisted on all these conditions are saying no. They are saying no again.

The debate on the debt and the deficit has been complicated, it has been contentious, it has been angry, but a default should be unimaginable. A default would risk what would amount to a permanent tax hike.

I hear many of the radicals in the House of Representatives who say they will never vote for a debt increase, as if it is something we should never, ever do in a country. They all talk about tax cuts, but a default on the part of the United States of America would amount to a permanent tax hike on all Americans. Interest rates would rise for anyone owning a home, paying a home mortgage, applying for a home mortgage, anyone with a car loan, anyone with a college loan. Credit costs for all borrowers would climb for governments at every level, businesses, nonprofits, small businesses, large businesses, credit card holders. There would be repercussions for pension funds and money market funds that guard the retirement savings of middle-class families.

Basically, everybody in the Presiding Officer's home State of Minnesota, in my home State of Ohio—everybody would be afflicted with this tax increase, if you will, from higher interest rates. Several States have already been placed on a credit watch. Every State would be hurt by a Federal default, which is why Governors of both parties are saying: Make a deal; get to this. This is not alarmist thinking.

There is a reason Ronald Reagan went to Congress 18 times to raise the debt ceiling. Here is what President Reagan said:

The full consequences of a default—or even the serious prospect of a default—

That is where we are right now, in a serious prospect of default—

by the United States are impossible to predict and awesome to contemplate. Denigration of the full faith and credit of the United States would have substantial effects on the domestic financial markets and the value of the dollar.

None of us is being alarmist because we really don't know, but we know people whom most Americans respect—President Reagan, President Clinton, others who have asked for a debt ceiling increase, economists, businesspeople—nobody knows for sure what would happen, but nobody has ever wanted to take that risk. We have always paid our bills. Default could affect Ohioans receiving Medicare and Social Security. It could affect veterans in hospitals and universities. President Obama has said he can't guarantee payments to senior citizens, to bondholders, or other obligations of the United States of America. You cannot fake cashflow. These are real consequences.

When it comes to jobs, to seniors living on fixed income, in the midst of an economic growth that is as fragile as ours is, lawmakers ought to suspend their politics. Today, the harm of inaction would be immense.

President Obama put several proposals forward to reduce the deficit in a big way, modeled after these bipartisan commissions where there has been pretty good bipartisan agreement. But efforts to forge a grand compromise bringing the deficit down by \$4 trillion have been abandoned by Republican leaders over and over.

I have not supported every detail on these grand compromise efforts. I don't want to do anything to undermine Medicare or Social Security or Medicaid, programs that have worked for generations now and programs that millions of Ohioans depend on, from Middletown to Ashtabula, from Toledo to Athens and Gallipolis. I wanted a more balanced approach. I know the Presiding Officer did too. But as days and weeks and months go by, we are now only days away from default. We are simply running out of time. That is what the Senate bill is about—protecting us from default.

In the spirit of continued compromise, again, the majority leader has come forth with a plan to reduce the deficit by \$2.2 trillion. It is truly a compromise because it meets the Republicans' main criteria. It contains spending cuts to roughly match the debt ceiling increase through 2012. The spending cuts in the Reid plan are ones to which Republicans have previously agreed. It contains no revenue increases. All three of those have been what Republicans asked for. But now it is not good enough. What do they want to do when we basically met their demands?

Beyond all that, this compromise we have offered—mostly what they have asked for—contains an important priority of mine—not one of the Repub-

licans, to be sure—and that is that we protect Social Security, Medicare, and Medicaid.

I know that major Republican budgets—the so-called Ryan budget, the Republican House budget—undercut our major important programs, Medicare and Medicaid especially. We know the so-called cut, cap, and balance proposal the Republicans have passed that is being voted on here didn't protect Medicare, Medicaid, and Social Security. So we know Republicans want to go after those programs. Under this compromise, we have been able to protect that, but we need to make sure we put country ahead of party, national interest above partisanship. That is why we have been willing to compromise.

Speaker BOEHNER's plan is being revised, but so far it provides significantly less than the savings in the Reid proposal. By design, the Boehner plan would put us back in this situation in a few months. What rational economist, what responsible elected official, what businessperson in St. Paul or Columbus, in Rochester or Mansfield—what businessperson would say: Let's put the U.S. in this situation again in 6 months?

We know what has happened in this country in the last month or so. As we approach default, as businesses particularly watch the way this is being debated and how this is being handled, people are way less certain, people are way more concerned about our ability to raise the debt ceiling and keep us out of default. Businesses are holding on to their cash reserves because they are not willing to invest now because they don't want this to happen.

So why would we want to go through this again in 6 months? Why would we possibly think this is good for the United States—for people in Chillicothe and Dayton, in Youngstown and Akron, in Canton and Kenton, Wauseon and Bowling Green? Why would we want businesses in our country to go through this again in 6 months?

We need to get this done quickly. We have to raise the debt ceiling to keep us out of default. We need to make sure we focus on deficit reduction, and we need to put our efforts into job creation. People all over my State—when I am in Dayton, Springfield, Cuyahoga County or Mahoney County, as I was this past weekend—people are mostly saying they want us to focus on job growth. We need to do budget cuts and raise the debt ceiling to keep us out of default. We mostly need to make sure we move forward on job creation.

We prevent a default and reduce the deficit with the Reid plan—a critical imperative for our children and our grandchildren. It protects Medicare and Social Security and Medicaid.

My office is being swamped with calls and e-mails from Ohioans who simply can't believe we are this close to default. Within the week, Congress must pass and the President must sign an increase in the debt ceiling. It is essen-

tial if we want to prevent an absolutely unnecessary, an absolutely uncalled for, yet catastrophic default. It is necessary to move on to address the issue of jobs. Too many recent college graduates, too many people who have been in the workforce for too many years, too many people who are unemployed are looking for jobs. That is where our focus should be.

We need to pass the Reid plan, work on deficit reduction, and work on job growth.

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

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. UDALL of New Mexico). The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Colorado.

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

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

Mr. UDALL of Colorado. Mr. President, I come to the floor today, as I think many of my colleagues have, to speak to the topic at hand, which is the debt ceiling debate we are having in the Congress of the United States.

I have to say, I think Americans across the country are looking at us with disbelief, anxiety, and—I think rightly—anger. They awoke this morning hoping to find that cooler heads had prevailed and that all of us were working together on a plan that keeps our country from default and our economy from looming collapse. Instead, the headlines read that the Speaker of the House was again refusing to negotiate and that he is, in fact, delaying action in the House because of Republican upheaval against his own plan.

I have to say, even if the House of Representatives passed a bill preventing default this evening, within hours, we would still be pushing our country right up to the edge of an economic catastrophe. In other words, what I am saying is, even though economists, market analysts, business leaders, credit rating agencies, world leaders, and the American people are begging us to find an agreement to avoid default on our debt obligations, we are no further along today than we have been in the many weeks we have been debating this issue.

As the Presiding Officer knows, as a former Member of the House, I take no pleasure in criticizing the people's House. But it does take two to tango, and when it comes to courting the House of Representatives, it feels as though they have one shoe nailed to the dance floor. I can't figure out for the life of me what it is going to take to reach an agreement on behalf of the American people. The House of Representatives just can't take yes for an answer.

The real problem, at least in my estimation, seems to be that a small group of people are set on running up the political score rather than doing the

right thing for our country. If that is the case, now is the time to finally come to the table.

Here is the truth: Many of us here are trying to prevent our economy from driving off a cliff, but others seem to be busy cutting the brake lines. On that point, I was proud of the Senate and the Democrats and Republicans who came together on the bipartisan Bowles-Simpson Commission and came up with a plan on reducing the deficit. They were willing to be a part of the solution.

The Bowles-Simpson Commission recommended taking important but difficult steps to reduce our debt by \$4 trillion over the next decade. That plan is the right one for the country, and despite the significant political risks attached to taking those positions, Senators in both parties were willing to support it. The House Members, on the other hand, when the fiscal commission offered them the bipartisan deficit reduction plan, walked away, both Democrats and Republicans, to be fair.

Unfortunately, this has become a pattern. When Vice President JOE BIDEN and House Majority Leader ERIC CANTOR were close to finally reaching an agreement on a deficit reduction plan, it was the House Republicans who walked away. When President Obama and Speaker BOEHNER sought to strike a "grand bargain," to do something great for the country, the House walked away. President Obama likened this to being left at the altar, but I cannot think of any description that is more apt than "irresponsible."

For my friends and my colleagues who know me, I am not quick to anger. But I have to say, time is not our friend here and we cannot delay action any longer. I was pleased to see Senator ALEXANDER, the third ranking Republican in the Senate, say last night:

What would be best, instead of having a Republican plan competing with a Democratic plan, would be to have the Speaker, Senator Reid, and Senator McConnell recommend to us a single plan.

I understand the Senate leaders are speaking frequently, and I have all the faith in the world that the Senate could work this problem out. But that is only half the problem. We need statesmen, we need patriots, we need problem solvers over in the House to emerge. Campaign politics and partisan talking points do not take courage. Now is the time for courage and leadership.

Instead of going back to the drawing board on the Boehner plan, we need to refocus our efforts on a plan that meets three tests. Such a plan has to, No. 1, raise the debt limit to avoid a first ever Federal Government default; No. 2, provide enough certainty to investors that America will pay its bills to stave off a downgrade in our credit rating; and, No. 3, reduce the deficit enough that we can begin the hard work to get our fiscal house in order.

The Reid plan, in my estimation, achieves each of those goals. While I

am disappointed we could not all come together on a larger \$4 to \$5 trillion deficit reduction package that would be both bipartisan and comprehensive, the Reid plan adequately addresses the most pressing issues that confront us, which are preventing a default and staving off a downgrade in our credit rating.

The Boehner plan, on the other hand, is only a short-term fix, and a host of economic forecasters and business leaders have said it would almost certainly lead to a downgrade in our, in America's, credit rating, which would raise interest rates, could sabotage seniors' retirement savings, and increase consumer costs on almost every American.

Bank of America, Standard & Poor's, JPMorgan Chase, and other major players have all warned us that future economic instability and short-term political solutions will almost certainly lead to a downgrade in our credit rating. That is some serious business.

What is sad about all of this is that the unstable political climate—which one observer called "amateur hour on Capitol Hill"—itself may lead to a downgrade.

I respect the Speaker's desire to go back to the drawing board to try to secure more Republican votes, but the fact is we do not have time. The Reid plan is ready to go, and it meets the three-part test I laid out. In fact, the Congressional Budget Office stated that the Reid plan reduces the deficit by twice as much as the House Republican plan. As reported this morning "in the battle of budget scores, the Senate Democrats deficit reduction bill is the clear winner thus far."

Our economy has been in critical condition, and I think we are feeling recently that it is beginning to come back to life, that we have been nursing it back to health. The last result we need is a self-inflicted heart attack caused by an overdose of partisanship. People wonder why we cannot get it done.

I know the Presiding Officer is a mountain climber, as am I, and we are both, I guess, old mountain climbers in more ways than one. I can tell you that there are some similarities between attempting to climb the world's highest peaks and our work here in Washington. But the difference seems to be, especially when the going gets tough here on Capitol Hill, that not only are you trying to conquer mountainous and challenging and difficult terrain, you seem to have a team of saboteurs here who are trying to push the rest of us off the mountain as we are trying to climb it. The Scots have a saying: It is not the falling off that hurts. It is the sudden stop at the bottom. I can tell you, if we do not raise the debt ceiling, that is going to involve a sudden stop at the bottom for all of us.

The people of Colorado have told me—and I suspect the rest of the Nation feels this way—they do not care

who wins politically. Frankly, I do not care who wins politically either. What I care about is passing legislation that will stave off government default and a downgrade in our Nation's credit rating. At this point, the Reid plan is the only option that meets that criteria. Let's get it done. Let's get it done.

#### TRIBUTE TO HILLARY DANIELS

Mr. President, as I close, I want to change the tone of my remarks a little bit because there are wonderful people who work here on Capitol Hill and make a difference day in and day out, and I want to recognize Hillary Daniels, who has been one of my budget and appropriations legislative assistants, who joined my team when I first came to the Senate 3 years ago.

She is a native of Colorado's western slope, the great county of Mesa and the town of Grand Junction. She is going to be leaving my office next month to go to law school at Washington University in St. Louis, MO.

She has been an invaluable team member, and I can speak for my entire staff when I say we are both excited for her to take this next step in developing her career and I am very grateful for the guidance she has given me over the last few years.

It is for the Hillary Daniels of the world, who will be leaders of our country in the next decade and the decade after that, that I think we owe an obligation to getting this job done as soon as we possibly can, assuring the markets that the full faith and credit of the United States will be preserved and protected and nurtured.

Let's turn back to job one here, which is to focus on our economy and job creation. The longer we are stalled out in a political crisis of our own making, the less we are concerned and focused on putting the American people back to work.

Mr. President, thank you for your interest, thank you for your attention.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Illinois is recognized.

#### SPECTRUM AUCTIONS

Mr. KIRK. Mr. President, I just filed an amendment to S. 1323 to BRAC the spectrum. This would give us the maximum auction revenue and access to spectrum for economic development and deficit reduction. I am proud to have the amendment endorsed by Americans for Tax Reform.

It is very important for the Congress to authorize spectrum incentive auctions. While we should protect broadcasters who choose not to participate in such actions and their customers who rely on over-the-air broadcast for entertainment and public emergency information, incentive auctions would free up much needed spectrum for the civilian side in making sure that broadband communications are fully available in the United States.

It should be, in short, the policy of the United States to offer the widest