

question the patriotism of a colleague who has been elected to serve his State and his country.

But it is even more than that. As we more carefully choose our words, we must also remember we do not have the luxury, as Senator Moynihan used to caution, to choose our own facts. If we are going to change the way we speak in the hope of changing the way we do business, we have to reintroduce truth into the public debate.

This doesn't mean just rephrasing an attack line from "job-killing" to "job-destroying," as House Republicans have done in response to the shooting. It means if there is no proof that a policy takes away jobs—if in fact the evidence shows the opposite—we shouldn't pretend any differently. The non-partisan referee we rely on for this data—the Congressional Budget Office—found that when it comes to health care reform—which is what the Republicans are talking about in this case—the claim is simply not true. Changing our rhetoric requires us to debate facts, not invent them.

In the coming weeks, much of the discussion on the Senate floor will revolve around health care, the deficit, and debt limit—those three things. Each of these issues affects the No. 1 issue in America, jobs. Each issue is complex. If we are going to make the right decisions and point our economy back in the right direction, we have to start with a shared respect for the facts.

First, let's look at health care. Independent fact checkers examined all the political rhetoric of the last year. Given the intensity of the legislative debates and the election season, there was a lot from which to choose. But one claim stood out above all—the habit of those opposed to health care to call it a "government takeover."

One of those nonpartisan experts, factcheck.org, called it plainly "false." Another, PolitiFact, a project of the St. Petersburg, FL Times, called it the "Lie of the Year." So if we are going to have an honest debate about the health reform law we passed last year, retiring this scare tactic would be a good place to start.

The deficit: Madam President, my friends on the other side are quick to associate the current President with the current deficit as if it happened overnight and under his watch. But here is a brief review of the facts.

In the 1990s, we balanced the budget under the direction of President Clinton. At the beginning of the next century, America had a bigger surplus than ever in its history. Over the next decade, while our troops went into battle, the costs of two wars went off-budget. The richest took home giant tax breaks but nobody paid the bill. A massive prescription drug program wasn't paid for either.

President Clinton left President Bush a record surplus. President Bush left President Obama a record deficit. Those unpaid-for wars, tax breaks, and

programs are the reason we are in a hole today. What we do next is fair game for debate. But facts, as President John Adams said, are stubborn things.

Finally, Madam President, the debt limit: We will soon debate the debt limit. Earlier this month, the Secretary of the Treasury, Timothy Geithner, sent us each a letter as to what would happen if we don't raise that ceiling. It would be the first time in the history of America that our country would default on our legal obligations. He didn't share his partisan opinion in that letter; he simply laid out the facts. This is what he wrote:

Default would effectively impose a significant and long-lasting tax on all Americans and all American businesses and could lead to the loss of millions of American jobs. Even a short-term or limited default would have catastrophic economic consequences that would last for decades.

What are some of those consequences? Our troops and veterans would no longer get their paychecks. Our seniors would no longer get the Social Security and Medicare checks to which they are entitled. Student loans would simply stop. On a larger scale, the Secretary of the Treasury warned it would lead to a worse financial crisis than the one we are still recovering from.

There soon will be lots of time to debate what we will do about the debt limit, but these are the facts we must first acknowledge and consider.

Finally, the American people voted in November for a divided legislative branch of government, a Democratic Senate and Republican House. They didn't elect Houses led by competing political parties because they want us to compete; they did so because they want us to cooperate. We cannot cooperate without an honest debate and we cannot have an honest debate if we insist that fiction is fact.

Mark Twain, a great Nevadan, once said:

If you tell the truth, you don't have to remember anything.

He was right. Here is one thing every Senator should remember and never forget: Although there are many different points of view in this body, we all share the same reality.

I look forward to a productive Congress and we can do that by debating the facts.

PROVIDING FOR A JOINT SESSION OF CONGRESS TO RECEIVE A MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT

Mr. REID. Madam President, before I turn this over to my friend the Republican leader, I ask unanimous consent the Senate proceed to the immediate consideration of H. Con. Res. 10, which was received from the House and is at the desk, that the concurrent resolution be agreed to, the motion to reconsider be laid on the table, that no intervening action or debate take place, and any statements be printed in the RECORD.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Is there objection?

Without objection, it is so ordered.

The concurrent resolution (H. Con. Res. 10) was agreed to.

RECOGNITION OF THE MINORITY LEADER

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The Republican leader is recognized.

DEPARTING COLLEAGUES

Mr. McCONNELL. Madam President, I wish to start this morning by acknowledging the news from last week that three of our colleagues will be leaving us when their current terms expire. Senator HUTCHISON has been a trusted adviser of mine, a leader in the Senate, and a dear friend. Senator CONRAD has been a leader on the budget. He has done a lot to alert the country to the fiscal problems we face as a Nation. Senator LIEBERMAN has been a consistent and courageous leader on defense and national security issues. We will be sorry to see them go. They have all been a great credit to this body.

STATE OF THE UNION ADDRESS

Mr. McCONNELL. Madam President, every grade school student knows that all three branches of the Federal Government in Washington are equal, but as every Member of Congress quickly learns, the President sets the agenda. Never is that more apparent than on the day of the State of the Union Address. This year the President will be speaking to a Congress that looks very different from the one he spoke to last year. The voters sent a clear message in November that when it comes to jobs and the economy, the administration's policies have done far more damage than good.

One very positive thing that the President could do tonight is to acknowledge they have a point. He has tried to do so indirectly in recent weeks by hiring new staff and by speaking in tones of moderation, but it takes more than a change in tone to improve the economy. It takes more than a change in tone to reduce the debt. It takes more than a change in tone to help create the right conditions for private-sector job growth. It takes a change in policy, and the early signals suggest the President isn't quite there yet.

The President has talked recently about working together to improve a regulatory climate that stifles business innovation and job growth. Yet he has not acknowledged the extent to which his own policies have stifled growth. Over the past 2 years, his administration has issued more than 130 economically significant new rules or 40 percent more than the annual rate under the last two Presidents. What is worse,

the new health care bill will alone create 159 new bureaucratic entities and it is exempt from the President's proposed regulatory reforms. The health care bill, which will create 159 new bureaucratic entities, is exempt from the President's proposed regulatory reforms. This is bad news for small business that was already struggling to get by in a down economy and which is now grappling with how to afford all the new mandates in the new health care bill.

The President has talked about streamlining and reducing the burden of government. Yet the health care bill he has signed is already increasing the cost of care and forcing people out of their existing coverage. The debate over this bill continues and the President and Democrats in Congress continue to defend it. But when nearly two-thirds of doctors surveyed predicted it will make health care in America worse, Americans are right to be concerned. It should tell us something that of the 19 doctors currently in Congress, 18 of them support repeal of the health care bill.

The President has talked about the need to cut spending and reduce the debt. Yet over the last 2 years his policies have added more than \$3 trillion to the national debt, much of it through a stimulus that promised to keep unemployment—now hovering just below double digits—from rising above 8 percent. And now we hear that he plans to stick with the same failed approach of economic growth through even more government spending with a call for “investments” in education, infrastructure, research, and renewable energy.

We have seen before what Democrats in Washington mean by investments. In promoting the failed stimulus, the President referred to that too as an investment in our Nation's future. Fourteen times alone during his signing statement he referred to the stimulus bill's investments. We all know how that turned out.

The first stimulus, we were told, would include critical so-called investments in education, infrastructure, scientific research, and renewable energy—the same areas we are told he will focus on tonight. Only later did we learn that some of these critical investments included things such as repairs on tennis courts, a study on the mating decisions of cactus bugs, hundreds of thousands of dollars for a plant database, and a \$535 million loan to a California solar panel maker which, instead of hiring 1,000 new workers as planned, just laid off 175 instead.

This is what happens when the government decides to pick winners and losers without considering what the marketplace wants. Competitors are left out in the cold, employees get a false sense of security, and taxpayers are left holding the bag. Unfortunately, the President does not seem to have learned this lesson quite yet. But tax-

payers now know that when Democrats talk about investments they should grab their wallets.

So I am all for the President changing his tune, but unless he has a time machine, he cannot change his record. If we are going to make any real progress in the areas of spending, debt, and reining in government, the President will have to acknowledge that the policies of the past 2 years are not only largely to blame for the situation we find ourselves in, but that unless we do something to reverse their ill effects, the road to recovery and prosperity will be a bumpy one.

The President has spoken in the tones of a moderate many times. He did so in his campaign. He has done so in countless speeches. He has a knack for it. I have no doubt he will do so again tonight. But speeches only last for as long as they are delivered. Americans are more interested in what follows the speech and, in the case of this administration, Americans have good reason to be skeptical. Time and time again the President has spoken in a way that appeals to many, then governed in a way that does not. My hope is he will leave that method aside. A better path, in my view, is the one Republicans have been proposing for 2 years, one that respects both the wishes of the public and the two-party system.

Last year, prior to the President's State of the Union, I proposed a number of areas where I thought the two parties could find common ground and work together to help the economy. The President ignored just about everything I proposed. So when the pundits ask whether there are areas where the two parties could come together, I would say yes, I have proposed several of them, but the Democrats don't seem to be interested. Some have suggested that in this new post-election environment I might find a more receptive audience. So in the spirit of bipartisanship, I wish to propose once again a few areas where I believe the two parties can work together in the weeks and months ahead.

I believe the parties can and should work together on energy initiatives that expand America's domestic energy supply and make us less reliant on foreign sources; on expanding exports and creating jobs through free trade agreements with Panama, Colombia, and South Korea; and on reforming corporate taxes so American businesses are more competitive in an increasingly global marketplace. These are just a few of the things we can do beyond the symbolic gestures and the posturing to help the economy.

Beyond that, we must work to cut spending and to rein in the size and scope and cost of government. The voters have been crystal clear on this point. By proposing more government spending tonight, the President is not only defying their will, he is refusing to learn the clear lesson of the failed stimulus—government may create debt but it doesn't create jobs.

I think we have a lot of work to do in bringing the two parties together in a program that will actually address the problems we face. But there are reasons for optimism. The President's change in tone is an acknowledgement at least that something has to change, as was his willingness to work with Republicans last month to keep taxes from going up on anyone. In the coming weeks and months Americans will be looking to him to come around on spending and debt as well, and Republicans will be working hard to persuade him to do so.

I yield the floor.

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 with Senators permitted to speak therein for up to 10 minutes each.

The Senator from Illinois.

FOCUSING ON THE FUTURE

Mr. DURBIN. Madam President, last week President Hu Jintao of China came to Chicago after he was received in Washington. He was received in a gala manner in that great city and I happened to be there for the dinner. There were leaders of the community and business all there because China has become an important part of American life. It wasn't that long ago that China was stuck in the past. We can recall the Chinese in their green quilted identical clothes on their bicycles holding their “Little Red Books” of Chairman Mao's great quotations and basically being discounted and dismissed as not a major factor.

In the world economy today, China is a major factor and that is why the remarks of the Republican minority leader need to be put in perspective. The real question the President will ask us tonight is, is America ready to compete in the 21st century? Do we have what it takes to regain the edge when it comes to manufacturing jobs and to be competitive? The challenge the President offers us is to do what is responsible when it comes to our budgeting but not to forget the investments necessary in our future. When I look at how the United States is likely to succeed, you have to start with education and training. We have to have an educated workforce, the best in the world. We have to reward innovation; provide the kind of research incentives at the Federal Government level that lead to the commercialization of products and ultimately manufacture and production that grows our economy.

If we walk away from that, if we say that the United States can no longer