

Clinton years, our government ran a surplus, and there was no pressing need for such a requirement. When we started running deficits again, part of me hoped we could use other tools at our disposal to get our Nation back on a financially sound path.

Additionally, Members of my party raised—and continue to raise—credible arguments about why a balanced budget amendment could actually hurt our economy in some circumstances. Some of them believe it is nothing more than a rhetorical tool designed only to make a political statement and move us inevitably toward smaller government.

The recent history of the balanced budget amendment is a partisan one. Of the five proposals that were introduced last Congress, none had a Democratic cosponsor—largely because of, in my opinion, extraneous provisions that manipulated the budget in one way or another to protect favored tax breaks or certain spending.

However, if you take a longer view into the past, it was actually progressive Democratic Senator Paul Simon—along with Senator HATCH of Utah—who led the balanced budget amendment effort that came closest to passage in 1995. They knew that if we balanced our Federal budget, we would be better able to make more intelligent choices about spending, rather than spending billions on debt service, and we would actually see family incomes rise.

Today, the dilemma we face as a result of our debt is even more extreme. That is why I am cosponsoring this legislation.

Our government debt, as Senator SHELBY pointed out, is now over \$14 trillion. That is \$45,300 for every person in this country. If we don't put limits on how we spend money, the question we face isn't whether we can make intelligent choices; it is whether we will be able to afford any of the programs that we value at all—programs we need to help propel the middle class and small business over the longer term.

What is at stake isn't just family income; it is our Nation's ability to continue to lead in the global economic race. The cochairman of President Obama's bipartisan commission on reducing the debt called our debt a "cancer" that is eating away at our economic health. That is a point I wish President Obama had made in his State of the Union Address last week when he spoke about some of the investments America needs to make to spur innovation and economic growth—education, clean energy, and infrastructure, to name a few.

He is right that without targeted investments to help hard-working Americans and businesses, the United States will be relegated to second-class status. We won't be able to compete with countries around the world or to grow jobs in America. We won't be able to unleash our innovative spirit and give our children and grandchildren their shot at the American dream.

I have also come to the conclusion that unless we put constraints on spending, Congress simply lacks the political will to make the extremely difficult decisions that will lead us out of the dire fiscal situation in which we find our Nation.

I have been fighting for many years for smart budgeting tools—the Presiding Officer has as well—including pay-as-you-go budgeting, a line-item veto, and a ban on earmarks, which would help reduce waste and rein in Federal spending. I am also working with a group of bipartisan Senators trying to make sure the recommendations by the President's fiscal commission can get an up-or-down vote in Congress. A balanced budget amendment is one more important tool we need.

Let me say a few words about the legislation itself. Senator SHELBY, to his credit, first introduced this legislation—I think I can say that it was when he was a Democrat, some 25 years ago, and he continues to reintroduce it every Congress since he became a Republican. I thank him and acknowledge his leadership.

The Shelby-Udall balanced budget amendment would create a requirement that Federal spending cannot exceed revenue and that total expenditures of the government cannot exceed 20 percent of the previous year's gross domestic product.

As Senator SHELBY pointed out, this requirement wouldn't apply when the United States is at war, and it can be suspended by a supermajority, or three-fifths, vote of each House of Congress in the event certain spending is necessary to address a national emergency.

To my friends who worry that this balanced budget amendment puts our economy into an inflexible straitjacket, I say it is not true. It allows commonsense safety valves to be used for exceptional circumstances—to give the flexibility that is sometimes needed in situations that can't be predicted or planned for.

All in all, I am confident our proposed amendment provides a responsible approach to putting us on a path toward a balanced budget.

We talked a lot last week during and after the State of the Union Address about the need to work together to address our biggest challenges, not just sitting together. Today, I hope I am putting my money where my mouth is by joining my good friend from Alabama. I hope our partnership will send a signal that collaboration can help us address our most pressing national issues. The American people are demanding that of us. As usual, they are a few steps ahead of us. It is time for us to catch up.

I ask my colleagues of both parties in both Chambers to work with Senator SHELBY and me on this idea. We may not have it perfect. Nothing is ever perfect. But it is a good start. Let's at least have an honest and spirited dialogue about this legislation and ways to

dig ourselves out of our economic hole. Our children's future depends on it.

SUBMITTED RESOLUTIONS

SENATE CONCURRENT RESOLUTION 5—AUTHORIZING THE USE OF THE ROTUNDA OF THE CAPITOL TO HONOR FRANK W. BUCKLES, THE LONGEST SURVIVING UNITED STATES VETERAN OF THE FIRST WORLD WAR

Mr. ROCKEFELLER (for himself, Mr. MANCHIN, Mr. MCCAIN, Mr. BROWN of Ohio, Mr. LIEBERMAN, Mr. BINGAMAN, Mr. NELSON of Florida, Mr. KERRY, Ms. LANDRIEU, Mr. BEGICH, Mr. WYDEN, Mr. BURR, and Mr. HATCH) submitted the following concurrent resolution; which was referred to the Committee on Rules and Administration:

S. CON. RES. 5

Resolved by the Senate (the House of Representatives concurring),

SECTION 1. HONORING FRANK W. BUCKLES.

(a) IN GENERAL.—The Rotunda of the Capitol is authorized to be used at any time during the 112th Congress at a time to be determined jointly by the Majority Leader of the Senate, the Minority Leader of the Senate, and the Speaker of the House of Representatives, in consultation with the Architect of the Capitol, for a ceremony to honor the longest surviving veteran of the First World War, Mr. Frank Woodruff Buckles, as a tribute and recognition of all United States military members who served in the First World War.

(b) IMPLEMENTATION.—Physical preparations for the ceremony shall be carried out in accordance with such conditions as the Architect of the Capitol may prescribe.

Mr. ROCKEFELLER. Mr. President, today is the 110th birthday of Frank Buckles, the longest surviving American veteran of the First World War. Frank Buckles is a wonderful man who still lives on his farm in West Virginia thanks to the extraordinary care provided by his daughter Susannah Flanagan. I am sure that my colleagues will join me in wishing Frank, "Happy Birthday."

I also believe it is important that we as a nation express our deep conviction for the sacrifices that Mr. Buckles and all the World War I veterans endured for our country. Frank is a representative of the extraordinary men who fought in numerous battles of the Great War in the defense of our nation. They have made sure that we as Americans are able to enjoy the quality of life that we so cherish.

Mr. Buckles has witnessed the world change drastically throughout his lifetime and has experiences that most of us can only dream about. He has seen the metamorphosis that has defined the American social and cultural revolutions of the last century. As a young man, he served in the Army's ambulance corps in France and Germany, where he evacuated wounded soldiers from the battlefield. During the Second World War, he spent over three years confined to a Japanese prison camp in the Philippines as a civilian.

Today, I am introducing a resolution to allow for a tribute in the Capitol to Frank Buckles as the representative of all World War I veterans during the 112th Congress. As the longest surviving veteran, Frank represents nearly 4.5 million U.S. soldiers, sailors, and airmen who joined forces with over 37 million Allied soldiers to defeat the Central Powers. These men witnessed atrocities such as gas warfare that were unprecedented at the time. Each and every serviceman made his own significant contribution to the war effort that cannot be understated. This generation of dynamic young men was able to alter the course of history for the betterment of each and every one of us here today. Frank, like many young men of this time, worked hard to enlist and serve his country, and in doing so helped to change our world.

As America's last surviving veteran of the First World War, Mr. Buckles represents our final link to a generation that built a legacy as the defenders of the free world in the first large-scale global conflict. I can promise you that his legacy and the legacy of all veterans will live on forever in the ideals and values that make America the strongest nation in the world. I appreciate the bipartisan support of our cosponsors and hope more will join our effort to honor such a special veteran.

AMENDMENTS SUBMITTED AND PROPOSED

SA 5. Mr. BLUNT submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by him to the bill S. 223, to modernize the air traffic control system, improve the safety, reliability, and availability of transportation by air in the United States, provide modernization of the air traffic control system, reauthorize the Federal Aviation Administration, and for other purposes; which was ordered to lie on the table.

SA 6. Mr. INHOFE submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by him to the bill S. 223, supra; which was ordered to lie on the table.

SA 7. Mr. INHOFE submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by him to the bill S. 223, supra; which was ordered to lie on the table.

SA 8. Mr. WHITEHOUSE (for himself, Mr. KIRK, and Mrs. BOXER) submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by him to the bill S. 223, supra; which was ordered to lie on the table.

SA 9. Ms. STABENOW (for herself, Mr. BROWN of Ohio, Mr. CARDIN, Mrs. MCCASKILL, Ms. CANTWELL, Ms. KLOBUCHAR, Mr. MENENDEZ, Mr. TESTER, Mr. UDALL of Colorado, and Mr. WEBB) proposed an amendment to the bill S. 223, supra.

SA 10. Mr. LAUTENBERG submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by him to the bill S. 223, supra; which was ordered to lie on the table.

SA 11. Mr. LAUTENBERG submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by him to the bill S. 223, supra; which was ordered to lie on the table.

SA 12. Mr. LAUTENBERG submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by him to the bill S. 223, supra; which was ordered to lie on the table.

SA 13. Mr. McCONNELL proposed an amendment to the bill S. 223, supra.

SA 14. Mr. WICKER submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by him to the bill S. 223, supra; which was ordered to lie on the table.

SA 15. Mr. INOUE (for himself and Mr. LEAHY) submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by him to the bill S. 223, supra; which was ordered to lie on the table.

SA 16. Mr. WYDEN submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by him to the bill S. 223, supra; which was ordered to lie on the table.

SA 17. Mr. TOOMEY submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by him to the bill S. 223, supra; which was ordered to lie on the table.

SA 18. Mr. PAUL submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by him to the bill S. 223, supra; which was ordered to lie on the table.

SA 19. Mr. PAUL submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by him to the bill S. 223, supra; which was ordered to lie on the table.

SA 20. Mr. PAUL submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by him to the bill S. 223, supra; which was ordered to lie on the table.

SA 21. Mr. PAUL submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by him to the bill S. 223, supra; which was ordered to lie on the table.

TEXT OF AMENDMENTS

SA 5. Mr. BLUNT submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by him to the bill S. 223, to modernize the air traffic control system, improve the safety, reliability, and availability of transportation by air in the United States, provide modernization of the air traffic control system, reauthorize the Federal Aviation Administration, and for other purposes; which was ordered to lie on the table; as follows:

On page 311, between lines 11 and 12, insert the following:

SEC. 733. APPROVAL OF APPLICATIONS FOR THE SECURITY SCREENING OPT-OUT PROGRAM.

Section 44920(b) of title 49, United States Code, is amended by striking "The Under Secretary may approve any application submitted under subsection (a)." and inserting "Not later than 30 days after receiving an application submitted under subsection (a), the Under Secretary shall approve the application."

SA 6. Mr. INHOFE submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by him to the bill S. 223, to modernize the air traffic control system, improve the safety, reliability, and availability of transportation by air in the United States, provide modernization of the air traffic control system, reauthorize the Federal Aviation Administration, and for other purposes; which was ordered to lie on the table; as follows:

At the end of title VII, insert the following:

SECTION 732. LIABILITY PROTECTION FOR CERTAIN VOLUNTEER PILOTS.

(a) SHORT TITLE.—This section may be cited as the "Volunteer Pilot Organization Protection Act of 2011".

(b) FINDINGS AND PURPOSE.—

(1) FINDINGS.—Congress finds the following:

(A) Many volunteer pilot nonprofit organizations fly for public benefit and provide valuable services to communities and individuals.

(B) In calendar year 2006, volunteer pilot nonprofit organizations provided long-distance, no-cost transportation for more than 58,000 people during times of special need.

(C) Such nonprofit organizations are no longer able to purchase non-owned aircraft liability insurance to provide liability protection at a reasonable price, and therefore face a highly detrimental liability risk.

(D) Such nonprofit organizations have supported the homeland security of the United States by providing volunteer pilot services during times of national emergency.

(2) PURPOSE.—The purpose of this section is to promote the activities of volunteer pilot nonprofit organizations that fly for public benefit and to sustain the availability of the services that such nonprofit organizations provide, including the following:

(A) Transportation at no cost to financially needy medical patients for medical treatment, evaluation, and diagnosis.

(B) Flights for humanitarian and charitable purposes.

(C) Other flights of compassion.

(c) LIABILITY PROTECTION FOR VOLUNTEER PILOT NONPROFIT ORGANIZATIONS THAT FLY FOR PUBLIC BENEFIT AND TO PILOTS AND STAFF OF SUCH NONPROFIT ORGANIZATIONS.—Section 4 of the Volunteer Protection Act of 1997 (42 U.S.C. 14503) is amended—

(1) in subsection (a)(4)—

(A) by redesignating subparagraphs (A) and (B) as clauses (i) and (ii), respectively;

(B) by striking "the harm" and inserting "(A) except in the case of subparagraph (B), the harm";

(C) in subparagraph (A)(ii), as redesignated by this paragraph, by striking the period at the end and inserting "; and"; and

(D) by adding at the end the following:

"(B) the volunteer—

"(i) was operating an aircraft in furtherance of the purpose of a volunteer pilot nonprofit organization that flies for public benefit; and

"(ii) was properly licensed and insured for the operation of such aircraft."; and

(2) in subsection (c)—

(A) by striking "Nothing in this section" and inserting the following:

"(1) IN GENERAL.—Except as provided in paragraph (2), nothing in this section"; and

(B) by adding at the end the following:

"(2) EXCEPTION.—A volunteer pilot nonprofit organization that flies for public benefit, the staff, mission coordinators, officers, and directors (whether volunteer or otherwise) of such nonprofit organization, and a referring agency of such nonprofit organization shall not be liable for harm caused to any person by a volunteer of such nonprofit organization while such volunteer—

"(A) is operating an aircraft in furtherance of the purpose of such nonprofit organization;

"(B) is properly licensed for the operation of such aircraft; and

"(C) has certified to such nonprofit organization that such volunteer has insurance covering the volunteer's operation of such aircraft.".

SA 7. Mr. INHOFE submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by him to the bill S. 223, to modernize the air traffic control system, improve the safety, reliability, and availability of transportation by air in the United States, provide modernization of the air traffic control system, reauthorize the Federal Aviation Administration, and for other purposes; which was ordered to lie on the table; as follows:

On page 230, between lines 7 and 8, insert the following: