

can see what Speaker BOEHNER has, what Congressman RYAN has in his budget plan for 10 years. Senator TOOMEY proposed a very thoughtful 10-year budget plan that balanced our budget in 10 years. That was not easy to do, but he did it. We need to be thinking like that and get away from this confusing mishmash, which we use to claim that we are saving \$1 trillion when really nobody plans for us to be spending \$150-plus billion on the war in Iraq and Afghanistan for the next 10 years. That money has never been projected to be spent in that fashion.

So we are in a situation where it is important for the country to reach an agreement and we need to pass something that raises the debt ceiling for America. I hate to say that, but it is a fact. It would be too disruptive not to do that. But, in exchange for that, as a part of that process, we truly need to start bringing our house into financial order. We are in disarray and discord, but if we were to do that, we could leave this a better country for our children and grandchildren.

I know some just want to increase spending and then raise taxes to pay for it. The Defense Department last year got about a 2-percent increase, a 3-percent increase. Next year, there is projected to be a 2-percent increase in some of the budget numbers. It might not happen because we don't have even that much money.

But we know how much nondefense discretionary spending increased during this time of record deficits under President Obama's leadership, not counting the almost \$900 billion in stimulus money. Baseline, nondefense discretionary spending increased 24 percent between 2008 and 2010, and now we are seeing the biggest deficits ever. President Bush never had any increases in baseline spending like that—never. It is just stunning.

There was a huge Democratic majority in the Senate and in the House, and the President wanted his investments, and he got these huge increases, and now they want to raise taxes to pay for it and keep it up there and maintain it. We can't afford to maintain that level. We have to bring it back down to 2009, 2008, 2007 levels. The country is not going to go bankrupt—broke—and people are not going to be thrown into the streets if we return to those levels of spending. If we make some tough choices, the same way cities and counties and families are doing all over America, we can get this house in order. That is what we are going to have to do.

I look forward to studying plans put forward by the majority leader and to studying the plan put forward by Speaker BOEHNER. The American people need time to know what is in them and what they mean to us in terms of taxing and spending, deficits, and interest payments. And then Congress needs to have time to vote on it.

Again, I repeat my deep frustration that we have not conducted this in

open, public debate for months now, utilizing the established Senate procedure of regular order. Instead, we have attempted to solve this big problem in secret, behind closed doors, with just a few people. I believe that is contrary to the historical understanding of the role of Congress, and I am not happy about it. I oppose it, I object to it, and I expect to have an appropriate amount of time to consider whatever plan comes forward.

I thank the Chair and yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Minnesota.

Mr. FRANKEN. Mr. President, this weekend, driving around the Twin Cities, I was listening to public radio. The host of the program introduced a Republican member of the House Budget Committee. The member, whom I will not name to spare him or her a great deal of embarrassment, was asked about the consequences of not raising the debt ceiling.

The member assured the host and listeners that failing to raise the debt ceiling would not create a default for a number of reasons. Among them was, according to this member, we can pay out all the Social Security checks to seniors because—and I quote—"the money is in the trust fund."

Well, of course, there is \$2.6 trillion of assets in the trust fund, but the Social Security trust fund is composed entirely of Treasury notes. Allow me to quote from the Congressional Research Service:

By law, Social Security revenues credited to the trust fund . . . are invested in non-marketable U.S. government obligations. These obligations are physical (paper) documents issued to the trust fund and held by the Social Security Administration. When the obligations are redeemed, the Treasury must issue a check (a physical document) to the Social Security trust fund for the interest earned on the obligations.

CRS continues:

However, unlike a private trust that may hold a variety of assets and obligations of different borrowers, the Social Security trust fund can hold only non-marketable U.S. government obligations. The sale of these obligations by the U.S. government to the Social Security trust fund is federal government borrowing (from itself) and counts against the federal debt limit.

Now, I have no idea what this Republican member of the House Budget Committee believes is in the Social Security trust fund. Stacks of hundred-dollar bills? Gold bricks? Warehouses of freezers with steaks in them?

To me, it is shocking—shocking—that a Member of Congress—let alone a member of the House Budget Committee—can be so wildly ignorant of the basic workings of our government. We come to Washington to work together to solve our Nation's problems. How are we to do that if Members are unwilling or unable to come to even the most rudimentary understanding of our government?

None of us is immune to making mistakes. Yet we find ourselves in this moment of existential crisis, with the full

faith and credit of the United States being held hostage by a menagerie of ideologues who invent their own realities and are only too happy to share these fantasies with an unsuspecting public.

We are playing with disaster. Can we please just stick to the facts? The fact is, if we do not act immediately, we will see a downgrade of our credit rating and possibly even default on our debt. Both would be entirely counterproductive to our goal of shrinking our deficits and growing our economy. We cannot control the fantasies of clueless ideologues, but we must act responsibly and do our jobs. And we must do it now.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. MANCHIN). Without objection, it is so ordered.

RECESS SUBJECT TO THE CALL OF THE CHAIR

Mr. REID. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate now stand in recess subject to the call of the Chair.

There being no objection, the Senate, at 6 p.m., recessed subject to the call of the Chair and reassembled at 7:21 p.m. when called to order by the Presiding Officer (Mr. BLUMENTHAL).

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The majority leader is recognized.

Mr. REID. Mr. President, thank you very much for your patience and also for being willing to be here when most are doing other things.

SHARED SACRIFICE IN RESOLVING THE BUDGET DEFICIT—Resumed

Mr. REID. Mr. President, what is the pending business?

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report the pending business.

The legislative clerk read as follows:

A bill (S. 1323) to express the sense of the Senate on shared sacrifice in resolving the budget deficit.

Pending:

Reid amendment No. 529, to change the enactment date.

Reid amendment No. 530 (to amendment No. 529), of a perfecting nature.

Reid motion to commit the bill to the Committee on Finance, with instructions, Reid amendment No. 531, of a perfecting nature.

Reid amendment No. 532 (to the instructions (amendment No. 531) of the motion to commit), of a perfecting nature.

Reid amendment No. 533 (to amendment No. 532), of a perfecting nature.

Mr. REID. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent to vitiate the action with respect to the pending amendments and motion to commit relative to S. 1323.

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

Mr. REID. Mr. President, I now withdraw the pending motion to commit.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The motion is withdrawn.

Mr. REID. Mr. President, I now withdraw the pending first-degree amendment No. 529.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The amendment is withdrawn.

AMENDMENT NO. 581

(Purpose: To cut spending, maintain existing commitments, and for other purposes)

Mr. REID. Mr. President, I have an amendment at the desk which is a perfecting amendment.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report.

The assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

The Senator from Nevada [Mr. REID] proposes an amendment numbered 581.

(The amendment is printed in today's RECORD under "Text of Amendments.")

Mr. REID. Mr. President, I ask for the yeas and nays on that amendment.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there a sufficient second?

There appears to be a sufficient second.

The yeas and nays were ordered.

Mr. REID. The yeas and nays are ordered, Mr. President?

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The yeas and nays are ordered.

AMENDMENT NO. 582 TO AMENDMENT NO. 581

Mr. REID. Mr. President, I have a second-degree amendment at the desk.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report.

The assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

The Senator from Nevada [Mr. REID] proposes an amendment numbered 582 to amendment No. 581.

The amendment is as follows:

At the end, add the following new section:
SECTION XXX. EFFECTIVE DATE

The provisions of this Act shall become effective 1 day after enactment.

MOTION TO COMMIT WITH AMENDMENT NO. 583

Mr. REID. Mr. President, I have a motion to commit the bill with instructions, which is at the desk.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report.

The assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

The Senator from Nevada [Mr. REID] moves to commit the bill (S. 1323) to the Committee on Finance with instructions to report back forthwith with the following amendment numbered 583.

The amendment is as follows:

At the end, add the following new section:
SECTION EFFECTIVE DATE.

The provisions of this Act shall become effective 3 days after enactment.

Mr. REID. Mr. President, I ask for the yeas and nays on that motion.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there a sufficient second?

There appears to be a sufficient second.

The yeas and nays were ordered.

Mr. REID. Mr. President, I am sorry. I may not have been listening closely

enough. Did the Chair order the yeas and nays?

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The yeas and nays have been ordered.

AMENDMENT NO. 584

Mr. REID. Mr. President, I have an amendment to the instructions at the desk.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report.

The assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

The Senator from Nevada [Mr. REID] proposes an amendment numbered 584 to the instructions of the motion to commit.

The amendment is as follows:

In the amendment, strike "3 days" and insert "2 days".

Mr. REID. Mr. President, I ask for the yeas and nays on that amendment.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there a sufficient second?

There appears to be a sufficient second.

The yeas and nays were ordered.

AMENDMENT NO. 585 TO AMENDMENT NO. 584

Mr. REID. Mr. President, I have a second-degree amendment at the desk.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report.

The assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

The Senator from Nevada [Mr. REID] proposes an amendment numbered 585 to amendment No. 584.

The amendment is as follows:

In the amendment, strike "2 days" and insert "1 day".

Mr. REID. Mr. President, what we have done is put in the process our efforts, sound legislation to end the budget crisis we are in. It, in effect, does everything the Republicans have asked. It is dollar-for-dollar; that is, it increases the amount of spending cuts we make to arrive at \$2.7 trillion, which, in effect, would carry the country into sometime in 2013.

It consists of, as I indicated, what Republicans have agreed upon: discretionary spending, \$1.2 trillion; mandatory, \$100 billion; something called the Overseas Contingency Fund, which is warfighting, that is scored both by CBO and the Office of Management and Budget to the tune of about \$1 trillion. That saves about \$400 billion in interest. That is \$2.7 trillion.

There are other issues in this matter, including it allows us to finish our appropriations bills for the next 2 years. We have a joint committee that will allow us to work to do more for the long term. So it is a sound piece of legislation.

As I indicated, virtually everything we have in there has been suggested by the Republicans, and now they need to take "yes" for an answer. We have given them "yes."

For example, the Overseas Contingency Fund—this passed the House of Representatives with 5 Republicans voting no; 230, approximately, Republicans voted yes. Over here in the Senate, the same thing came up. Forty Republicans voted for it.

So we should move on. But the sad part is it appears my friends in the House of Representatives are being led by a very determined group to have us default on our debt. They are driven by probably 80 Republicans who seem to be calling the shots. It is unfortunate.

We cannot have a short-term extension. That is what their legislation is that the Speaker indicated he was going to send to us today. Every Democrat—not virtually every Democrat—every Democrat will vote against that legislation. The President, if there was some way it passed—which it will not—would veto it. They are wasting the time of the American people. Now is the time to do what legislators must do, and that is compromise. But my friends in the House, they do not even have to compromise. All they have to do is say "yes" because we have given them what they have asked for.

HONORING OUR ARMED FORCES

STAFF SERGEANT LEX LEWIS

Mr. JOHNSON of South Dakota. Mr. President, I rise today to pay tribute to SSG Lex Lewis and his heroic service to our country. As a cavalry scout in the B Troop, 1st Squadron, 10th Cavalry Regiment, 4th Infantry Division, of Fort Carson, CO, Staff Sergeant Lewis was serving in support of Operation Enduring Freedom. On July 15, 2011, he died of injuries sustained when his dismounted patrol received small arms fire in Farah Province, Afghanistan.

A graduate of Rapid City Central High School, Staff Sergeant Lewis began his military career in the Navy, where he was stationed in Japan. He joined the Army in 1999 and was on his third deployment, having previously served two tours in Iraq. From 2006–2007 Staff Sergeant Lewis served in Rapid City as a member of the South Dakota Army National Guard. During his military career, his awards and decorations included two Army Commendation Medals and five Army Achievement Medals. He was posthumously promoted to the rank of Staff Sergeant and awarded a Bronze Star Medal and a Purple Heart.

Staff Sergeant Lewis will be remembered as a dedicated soldier and a good friend. He demonstrated professionalism in his job and was known as a reliable man who you could count on. Former colleague Sgt. Dwayne Graves recalls, "He was just a real likeable guy. He'd do anything for you. You definitely want him watching your back." As a young man, Staff Sergeant Lewis knew he wanted to serve his country. His mother remembers his childhood spent playing soldier. He will be deeply missed by those who survive him: his wife Molly, step-daughter Ariel, stepbrother Frank, half-sister, Lacy, and his mother, Betty.

Staff Sergeant Lewis gave his all for his soldiers and his country. Our Nation owes him a debt of gratitude, and the best way to honor his life is to