

Dr. Ride, after we had our laughs that day, suggested that we study our own planet as if it were a distant star so that we would get to know it, we would know its climate, we would know its weather, and also we would take the time to know its people, and that we would do it to save the planet and save the people who are on the planet.

I regret that our own science is not yet advanced to have saved Dr. Ride. She died of pancreatic cancer. I know the gifted and talented people at NIH and those who benefit from the funding of NIH are working all over this great country to find cures for that dread "C" word. Pancreatic cancer is deadly and it is fast and it is painful. She died steadfast and true to herself and true to her mission.

I think the entire world owes a debt of gratitude to her. The way we can honor her memory is to encourage students to search for the stars, but let's search here for the problems that hurt our own people. Let's find a cure for pancreatic cancer. And let's continue to be a great country that innovates and also educates and believes in educating its women and girls in the same way.

God bless Sally Ride. And God bless America, the kind of country that made Dr. Ride's life possible.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Kentucky.

DR. SHAKIL ALFRIDI

Mr. PAUL. Mr. President, Dr. Shakil Alfridi is a physician in Pakistan. He has been put in prison for the rest of his life for the crime, basically, of helping the United States get bin Laden. I think it is a travesty of justice that Pakistan is holding this man for the crime of helping America, and I think we should not tolerate it.

We send Pakistan \$2 billion a year, and recently, instead of withholding that, President Obama has given them an additional \$1 billion—exactly the wrong thing to do. I have a bill that will withhold all further foreign aid to Pakistan unless this doctor is released.

There are reports now that his life has been threatened. There are reports coming from the Information Minister in the province where he is being held that his life has been threatened by fellow inmates and throughout the community.

My concern is that Dr. Alfridi may well be killed before he comes to trial. He was scheduled for an appeal on July 19. They have rescheduled this, and it will be on August 30.

I have a bill, and I have the votes necessary to demand a vote in the Senate. No matter what the leadership wants, we will have a vote on ending all of Pakistan's aid if this political prisoner, Dr. Shakil Alfridi, is not released. We will have this vote. I had threatened to have the vote this week, but I am going to delay it for one month to see if the appeal works, to see if he is still safe in 1 month. But I

hate to think of what might happen to him while we are waiting here and that we have not used every bit of the leverage of this money that we give to Pakistan. It is our money, it is your money, and we should not be sending it to a country that disrespects us.

If Pakistan wants to be our ally, they should act like it. If Pakistan wants to work with us in the war on terrorism, they should act like it. And imprisoning the man who helped us get one of the world's worst mass murderers is not a way to encourage cooperation between our countries.

This episode of imprisoning this man is driving a wedge between America and Pakistan. So if Pakistan wants to help us, good. Can we cooperate with them? Yes. But we should not continue to send good money after bad while they are imprisoning this man. This doctor deserves our respect.

I have also introduced legislation that would allow him to come to the United States if there is a threat to his safety in Pakistan and if he wishes to come here as a reward for helping us get bin Laden.

This vote will happen either in early September or late August, depending on what happens with his appeal. I hope some common sense will intervene and they will let him go. But at the very least, Americans need to know that Pakistan needs to cooperate with us, Pakistan needs to help this man, and that we all should be proud of what he did to help us get bin Laden. I will do everything possible, everything I have within my limits, to get this vote to occur, and this will happen within the next month when his trial comes forward on August 30.

Mr. President, I yield back my time.

#### RECESS

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the Senate stands in recess until 2:15 p.m. today.

Thereupon, the Senate, at 12:30 p.m., recessed until 2:15 p.m. and reassembled when called to order by the Presiding Officer (Mr. WEBB).

#### MIDDLE CLASS TAX CUT ACT— MOTION TO PROCEED—Continued

Mr. DURBIN. Mr. President, 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. MORAN. 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. MORAN. Mr. President, I wish to speak about the tax issues the Senate is facing this week. There is clearly a tremendous need for comprehensive tax reform. Americans worked from January 1 to April 17 this year, 107 days, to earn enough money to pay their share of Federal, State, and local

taxes. Americans also spent nearly 8 billion hours preparing their tax returns this spring. This amounts to 1 million people working full time for an entire year. There is no reason that paying taxes should be so confusing and so complicated, so time-consuming.

The burden this process places on individuals and small businesses must be relieved. According to the nonpartisan Tax Foundation, the average American taxpayer will spend more on taxes in 2012 than they spend on food, clothing, and housing combined.

It is time for tax freedom. We need to replace our deeply flawed tax system with a commonsense system that is simpler and more growth oriented. The Tax Code matters when it comes to growing the economy. It is for these reasons that I am a sponsor of S. 13 and a long time supporter of the Fair Tax, which I see as a step in the direction of liberty and prosperity. The Fair Tax eliminates payroll, estate, and many other taxes, to be replaced with a national sales tax levied on purchased goods, placing all Americans on equal footing. The Fair Tax allows our businesses to thrive while generating tax revenues to be similar to our current 3-million-word-long Tax Code.

The process of tax reform has major consequences for every citizen of our country. But it is a process that must be started because the consequences of inaction are too costly. The truth remains that Americans want and need some sort of tax-filing relief. The need for commonsense reform becomes more obvious each and every tax season.

Over the course of the last several years, American taxpayers have become much more attentive to what is and is not happening in the Nation's Capital, and they have made their choices clearly heard. They have a message Congress should be willing to listen to, and that message is: Simplify the Tax Code.

In doing so, we will create an opportunity for economic growth and new prosperity while increasing personal freedom and liberty. By reforming this broken process, the Tax Code we have today, Americans will once again be more in charge of their lives and their money.

This coming January, as we know, our Nation faces a fiscal cliff. On top of the tax increases included in President Obama's health care law, if the Bush tax cuts are allowed to expire, a tax increase of \$494 billion will strike the economy. For Kansans, that is an average tax increase of \$3,000 per tax return, money they should be using to put food on their family's table, save for their children's education, and prepare for their own retirement. It is estimated that 70 percent of the looming tax increases will fall directly on low- and middle-income families.

This week, Congress will consider a tax proposal from the majority leader that increases taxes, unfortunately, the exact opposite of what our economy needs. S. 3412 that we are debating

this week raises the death tax on family farms, small businesses and ranches and estates to a level over a decade old, when they were brought down in a bipartisan basis.

This proposal would increase the death tax from its current rate of 35 percent to 55 percent. According to the nonpartisan Joint Committee on Taxation, the number of estates hit by this tax will rise from 3,600 to nearly 47,000.

Nothing hinders the transfer of a family farm to the next generation more than the estate tax. It is an unfair, unjust burden on our economy, and it punishes Kansans who want to continue their family business. I have long sought a permanent repeal of the estate tax and have pursued opportunities to increase the size of the estate tax exemption and lower the rates. Now we have a proposal to increase the burden of this tax. That will only create less certainty for farmers and small business owners as they plan for their future.

Under this massive tax increase, 20 times more family farming estates will be hit by the death tax and 9 times more small businesses. This tax increase comes on top of significant small business tax increases already in the legislation. According to Ernst & Young, these tax increases on the top two marginal rates would shrink the economy by 1.3 percent and reduce by over 700,000—reduce by over 700,000—jobs from the American workforce.

This tax increase legislation will only add more uncertainty to our Nation's convoluted, ever-changing tax system. Common sense tells us it does not have to be Republicans and Democrats, common sense tells us a simplified Tax Code will help boost the economy.

The revenues we need to balance our books are not increases in taxes; in fact, the United States has the highest corporate tax rate in the world. Revenues we need to balance our books will come from a strong and growing economy, where more Americans are working and therefore paying taxes.

Government must get out of the way and reduce the drag on the private sector so entrepreneurs and small business owners can put Americans back to work. Americans know that when our economy is strong, when our tax laws are fair, simple, and certain, they can provide for their families. We will have the opportunity to see once again our children and grandchildren pursuing the American dream.

I yield the floor and 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. LAUTENBERG. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

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

#### GUN VIOLENCE

Mr. LAUTENBERG. Mr. President, it is a terrible time in our country. The

entire country is in mourning for the 12 innocent people who were gunned down in Aurora, CO, last week. Our thoughts and our prayers are with dozens more still recovering from their wounds. We are mourning with people we never knew, with unfamiliar names, but we have seen pictures of grief-stricken parents, friends, neighbors, and our hearts break with them. We wish we could reach across the country and offer them some comfort while we mourn.

We know our mourning alone will not be enough to prevent a future tragedy unless we do something. We in Congress have an obligation to turn grief into action, as we have often done when faced with tragedy. So I come to the floor today to ask a question: When will we wake up? How many of our sons and daughters have to die before we go to work? It is time to sound the alarm on gun violence in our country. It is time for us to gather to talk about commonsense solutions. And I am talking about all of us—all 100. It should not matter which side of the aisle we are on. All of us who serve here have someone we love, someone we know, someone with whom we are in contact, whether it is our child, our sister, our brother, our father, or our mother. The lives of our loved ones depend on us and we should not let them down.

Right now, our Nation's lax gun laws make it far too easy for murderers to commit incomprehensible acts of violence and terror. Very early last Friday morning, we witnessed a massacre, and it has become something we have seen far too often. A tragedy with even less deaths, with less wounded, with less hurt is a tragedy of enormous proportion when something like this happens in this great country of ours. There is so much to live for, so much to enjoy, but here innocent people died.

This guy arrived at a movie theater in Aurora, CO, and he had an assault rifle with a 100-round magazine, a shotgun, and two handguns. He unleashed a barrage of bullets murdering 12 innocent people and injuring 58 more in a matter of minutes. In the theater at the time there was a total population of 200 people, and 70 of them were wounded or killed in a matter of minutes. Even though the police responded rapidly—within 90 seconds—with his high-capacity magazine, the gunman had more than enough time to carry out his reign of terror.

Among those who lost their lives were parents, mothers, fathers, servicemen, a veteran, a recent high school graduate, a college student, and a 6-year-old-girl named Veronica Moser Sullivan. She was the youngest to be murdered in Colorado that night and someone whose tragic death reminds us all too well of the time 9-year-old Christina Taylor Green was murdered in Tucson last year because she wanted to know more about her government. She was part of a group who greeted Representative Giffords.

The victims of these horrible tragedies deserve more than words of soli-

darity and mourning. They deserve our attention, our action. What we do to prevent these tragedies in the future will be the real test of character of this body. The best way to prove we are concerned is to take the action necessary to protect young lives because on that score now we lose.

I have been in the Senate a long time, and I have seen too many Americans murdered by guns, too many lives cut short because of the easy availability of guns, and too many times Congress has sat back, cowered before the gun lobby and done nothing to prevent these tragedies from happening in the future. We can't wait any longer, Mr. President, without the public at large challenging our effectiveness, wanting to know what it is we are doing to protect the next group of children and parents and loved ones.

The murderers in Colorado and Arizona both had something that enabled them to bring about the mayhem they did. They had a mega-magazine capable of shooting dozens of rounds without having to reload. They bought them legally. Here we see a picture of what this man had—a semiautomatic rifle and a 100-round drum magazine.

These magazines were originally designed for law enforcement and military people. These magazines were banned from 1994 to 2004, a period of 10 years, but under pressure from the gun lobby, Congress let that ban expire in 2004. It wasn't an accident. It didn't happen without complicity.

Just think about it. The Colorado shooter carried a 100-round magazine, and if he hadn't had that magazine, maybe the shooting toll would have been substantially lower. Maybe more lives would have been saved. Maybe more loved ones—husbands, wives, and children—would be alive today. Maybe there would be fewer people suffering from bullet wounds.

In the Arizona shooting, the shooter was only subdued when he paused to change his 30-round magazine, and if he had to stop sooner, obviously precious lives could have been saved.

These magazines are the tools of mass murderers. No matter what the gun lobby would have you believe, nobody needs a mega-magazine to go duck hunting. These high-capacity magazines put all of our families in danger, and they endanger our law enforcement officers as well. We send them into the line of fire to defend us against mass murderers such as the Colorado shooter, who legally bought 6,000 bullets and a gun magazine that holds 100 bullets over the Internet. The safety of our families is too important to let this continue. There are too many bullets, too many deaths, and too many funerals. But not enough people are saying: Stop it. Do your job. Protect my family. Protect my kids. Protect my parents.

Here are the facts. Guns have murdered more Americans here at home in recent years than have died on the battlefields of Iraq and Afghanistan. More

have been murdered on the grounds of the United States than have died in far-off battlefields. It is shocking. More than 6,500 American soldiers have died in the service of our country in support of the wars in Afghanistan and Iraq. During the same period, guns here were used to murder about 100,000 people.

Americans deserve a Congress that makes the safety of our families a priority. That is why I urge my colleagues today to help our people. Bring back the ban on high-capacity ammunition magazines such as the one used in Colorado on Friday and the one used in Arizona last year. That was the law from 1994 to 2004. This shouldn't be a partisan issue. Even former Vice President Dick Cheney has suggested that it may be appropriate to reinstate this ban. It is time to work together, all of us, to ban high-capacity magazines. Don't do it for me. Do it for your family. Do it for your constituents. Stand and say: I don't want your family hurt. I don't want your children to fall prey to a gunman.

It is time to begin a national conversation once more about taking commonsense measures to prevent gun violence in America. And to those who are fearful about the power of the NRA, understand that we bested them before and we will do it again. We beat them in 1996 when an effort that I began to ban the sale of guns to domestic abusers passed, we have stopped over 200,000 of those people from getting gun permits since that time, and a lot of lives could have been saved in there. We stood up to them again in 1999 when the Senate came together after Columbine and passed legislation to close the gun show loophole. Unfortunately, after passing in the Senate, the House refused to do anything about it. If we show resolve and if we stand with courage, I know we can do the right thing once more. There are no more excuses for inaction.

I say to my colleagues, look at your children. Look at the pictures that may be on your mantelpiece. Think about the happy days with your kids, think about the enjoyment you share together, and think about what we want to do to be able to continue those lives we enjoy so much. The stakes are just too high. We have to intervene while the memory, unfortunately, is still fresh.

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

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Texas.

Mr. CORNYN. 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. CORNYN. Mr. President, I am still trying to wrap my head around President Obama's recent remarks that small business job creators somehow

owe their success to the Federal Government. His comment wasn't just wrong, it was actually kind of embarrassing. It showed that the President does not understand the enormous challenges and financial risks entrepreneurs and job creators deal with every day. It also affirmed that the President is going to continue pushing the same misguided big-government economic policies that have helped keep our unemployment rate well above 8 percent for some 41 consecutive months.

I wish to highlight a few of the success stories from my home State of Texas that epitomize what the American dream is all about and to reassure my listeners that the American dream is still alive and well and thriving in the great State of Texas. But first I would like to make a brief point about tax policy because as mundane and boring as tax policy may seem to a lot of people, it actually has a very real impact on the people I am talking about.

There is now an emerging bipartisan consensus that tax reform should involve lowering rates and broadening the base so that our tax system becomes simpler, fairer, and more conducive to strong economic growth. Don't just take my word for it. Look at the President's own bipartisan fiscal commission, the Simpson-Bowles Commission, which reached that same conclusion.

Unfortunately, the President's own fiscal commission's report is inconsistent with the President's current demand that we have to raise taxes. That would mean a large tax increase for many people who are the people we are depending upon to create those jobs. The reason is that many small businesses pay their business income on individual tax returns. They are not major Forbes 500, multinational corporations; they are the mom-and-pop operations that are sole proprietorships, they are partnerships, and they are even sometimes subchapter S corporations. That is just a reference to the Tax Code that means you don't pay corporate taxes, you pay flowthrough business income on your individual tax return. So many people who are small businesses who may reach that threshold of \$250,000 or above are businesspeople paying on an individual tax return. If this is an effort to soak the rich, well, the middle class and small businesses are part of the collateral damage.

I would like to remind the President that Americans will spend about \$350 billion this year alone just to comply with the Tax Code. That means hiring accountants and that means hiring lawyers just to try to figure out what they owe to the Federal Government. Small business owners face a particularly heavy burden because they can't afford the army of lawyers and accountants to help them figure out what their tax obligations are. Yet these are the folks we are depending upon to get America back to work and to get our

economy growing again. But we effectively have a tax system that punishes them for their success. We can and we should do better.

When it comes to dealing with the IRS, small businesses don't enjoy the same resources that large multinational corporations do. According to the World Bank, it is now more difficult to pay business taxes in the United States than in many Western European countries. When heavily taxed, heavily bureaucratic countries such as France make it easier to comply with their tax code than America does, we know we have a problem.

If the President doesn't believe me, perhaps he should spend some time chatting with some of my constituents, people such as Steve Mayo, the owner of Mayo Furniture in Texarkana, TX. Steve's company is a family business that was established about a half century ago. It now employs 130 full-time workers and sells furniture in 25 different States. When I visited with Steve and his employees last year, they were worried about how in the world they were going to comply with the financial burdens of the new health care law, along with other taxes and regulations. They told me it would affect their business and their ability to create jobs and stay competitive. These are the same concerns I have heard about from countless constituents and small business owners all across my State.

We are one of the lucky States. About half the jobs in America have been created in my State in the last 5 years or so. We are fortunate because when it comes to small businesses we are depending upon to create jobs, we asked this very simple question: How can we make it easier for them to create jobs? How can we make it easier for them to start a business? Unfortunately, the message emanating from Washington seems to be—in so many words—how can we make it harder? How can we increase the unpredictability of their investment?

After talking to Steve Mayo, maybe President Obama would like to talk to Diane LaBleu. Diane is a breast cancer survivor in Austin, TX. Diane was creative enough to invent a clothing accessory to help women recovering from a mastectomy. The accessory is known as a Pink Pocket, and it is now being used by women around the world from Austin to Australia.

The story of Pink Pockets demonstrates the power of a great idea. Diane identified a problem facing breast cancer survivors. She came up with a brilliant solution, something nobody else had thought of before. The remarkable success of her invention is a testament to her creativity and her hard work.

The government was not responsible for the success of Pink Pockets or Mayo Furniture. Far from it. Many times all these small businesses want is for government to get out of their way, off their back, and out of their

pocket so they can do what they do best.

The government was also not responsible for the success of STS Coatings, a construction company based in the San Antonio area. The founder of STS Coatings, Cayce Kovacs, reports that she and her husband cashed in their savings to launch their business, which now has annual sales totaling more than \$3 million. As Ms. Kovacs recently said:

We were the ones sweating bullets over processing orders and paying our bills, making payroll—not the government. The government did nothing to help my business.

You know who else can say that? Another extraordinary Texan named Frank Scantlin, who founded Sunbelt Machine Works in Stafford, TX, near Houston, some 34 years ago. Frank tells a story that as a child he was so poor he sometimes couldn't even afford to buy shoes, and he had to quit school in the ninth grade in order to support his family. This is a quintessential American success story. Frank persevered and went on to create a business that now has almost 60,000 square feet of workspace and employs 90 people.

All these stories epitomize the American dream that has enticed immigrants from around the world to take a risk, leave everything they had behind, and come and make America their home. We were the one place in the world where they knew if they were willing to work hard and save, that hard work could be rewarded by success.

In the meantime, those of us who depend on those small businesses to create those jobs and prosperity could benefit as well. The owners of Sunbelt, STS Coatings, Pink Pockets, and Mayo Furniture understand their success was not inevitable, and it sure was not guaranteed by the Federal Government. They had to take the hard risks, they had to work overtime, and they had to overcome challenges that many times the government put in their way. In the end, as in so many great American success stories, their hard work and ingenuity paid off. They can, not government, declare with confidence that "I built this."

My office has received more than 250 of these stories since President Obama gave his speech in Roanoke. They are the type of stories that have made our country the beacon of prosperity and entrepreneurial energy for so many years. As one Texas business owner put it: "Rugged individualism is alive and well in the United States." I hope we remember that, and I hope the President of the United States remembers that as well.

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

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. FRANKEN). The clerk will call the roll.

The assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. KOHL. 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 remarks of Mr. KOHL pertaining to the introduction of S. 3427 are printed in today's RECORD under "Statements on Introduced Bills and Joint Resolutions.")

Mr. KOHL. Mr. President, I yield the floor, and 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. KOHL. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

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

#### MOMENT OF SILENCE IN MEMORY OF OFFICER JACOB J. CHESTNUT AND DETECTIVE JOHN M. GIBSON

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the Senate will observe a moment of silence in memory of Officer Jacob J. Chestnut and Detective John M. Gibson of the U.S. Capitol Police.

(Moment of silence.)

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

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

#### MIDDLE CLASS TAX CUT ACT—MOTION TO PROCEED—Continued

Mr. MANCHIN. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent to speak for up to 10 minutes, and that following my remarks the Senator from Rhode Island be recognized to speak.

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

Mr. MANCHIN. Mr. President, I rise today to express my indescribable frustration and genuine disbelief that we are looking at two proposals that do not do enough to fix this Nation's financial problems—and both have been predicted by both respective sides to fail. I speak of the Bush tax cuts and how those of us in the responsible middle find ourselves caught between a rock and a hard place, with a vote that offers, truly, no real solutions.

It is no secret that I prefer fixing the problems this country faces, like most of my colleagues, and we all have different approaches. We are hurling toward \$16 trillions in debt, and for the first time since the World War II era our debt exceeds the output of our economy. Even our generals say the greatest threat this Nation faces is not a foreign power or a terrorist organization but the debt we have created ourselves.

We are staring down the barrel of insurmountable obligations for decades to come, and we are passing up a key opportunity to put this country in better shape for the next generation.

As you can see, and as West Virginians know, we urgently need to put our country's financial house back in order, and the people of West Virginia are tired of temporary solutions to our long-term problems.

As I have said so many times, I will work with both sides of the aisle, Democrats and Republicans, on a comprehensive solution that lowers tax rates, broadens our revenue base, closes loopholes, cuts spending, and reduces our debt, like the framework proposed by the Bowles-Simpson plan.

Unfortunately, neither of the proposals on the Bush tax cuts will solve our long-term debt and fiscal problems. At the same time, with our debt problems getting worse every year, we must come together to take responsible action and fair steps toward reducing our debt, even if they are only temporary.

Let's look at the two proposals that have been offered, one from my Republican colleagues in the House that, unfortunately, kicks the can down the road entirely and extends these tax cuts at a cost of \$400 billion. What people do not know is that even though it would extend tax cuts for the wealthiest—and this is what they do not know—it would actually get rid of some tax reductions for middle- and low-income Americans, such as the expanded child tax credit. That is tremendously unfair.

Another proposal from the Democrats here in the Senate, our side, would cost about \$250 billion, which is at least starting to move in the right direction to reduce our deficit, and it keeps the tax cut for more than 99 percent of all West Virginians and a high percentage in every State such as the Presiding Officer's.

When considering these two proposals, I kept two priorities in mind—putting our fiscal house back in order and restoring fairness to the Tax Code. So while I would prefer a bipartisan comprehensive solution, I will support the plan to keep taxes low on families that make less than \$250,000. According to the latest available figures from the West Virginia Department of Revenue, more than 99 percent of all West Virginians will get a break on their taxes under this proposal. And the wealthiest among us will pay the rates they did during Bill Clinton's Presidency, which was the greatest era of prosperity I can remember in my lifetime.

On the other hand, the proposal that includes extending the tax cuts for the wealthiest Americans carries a heavy price for this Nation. It is about \$150 billion more than the Democrats' proposal. Given our dire budget situation, this country cannot afford that. We simply have to prioritize and close the gap. The fact is we cannot keep trying temporary solutions to our serious budget problems. And the truth is,