

Well, the bishops responded. The bishops called the President's attempt to appease them unacceptable. Yes, America has been awakened and now Congress must act on their objections.

There is legislation waiting to be debated that would protect the religious liberties granted in our Constitution. The legislation introduced by Senator ROY BLUNT holds President Obama to his promises. This legislation continues the 200-year tradition of this great Nation ensuring those who believe in the sanctity of life are not forced to have a hand in someone else's death. It protects conscience rights across the board. There is a bottom line and the bottom line is this: If President Obama is allowed to dictate to religious organizations what beliefs they will be allowed to hold or not to hold, then this country we all love will be a much different place and it will be a much different place for our children and grandchildren.

If the President succeeds, then our Constitution is no longer the defining document of a great Nation. Well, we do know the position of this administration, and I stand here today to categorically reject it.

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

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The Senator from Tennessee.

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 President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Without objection, it is so ordered.

THE BUDGET

Mr. CORKER. Mr. President, I came down today to talk about the highway bill we are on, and I want to say I appreciate the way we are dealing with each committee's portion of the bill as we go along. I know we are on the base bill at present, but before I get into that, I do want to make some comments about the budget.

I know we have had an inability in the Senate to pass a budget over the last 1,100 days. I know the Acting President pro tempore—a friend of mine—led a city and had to do this each year. We had to do the same in our State and city. I think those of us who come to this body are always shocked at the lack of fiscal discipline that takes place in Washington in general, but I have to say in looking at the administration's budget that was put forth today, it makes a mockery of the American people.

Our State has been blessed. We have had Governors who have been Republicans and Democrats, we have had people on both sides of the aisle, and our State has been governed well for a long time. I believe if a Governor of our State put forth a budget such as the

budget put forth today, they would be run out of our State because it is not a serious budget.

I know the Acting President pro tempore and I have been to many meetings and looked at some of the proposals that have been put out by groups like Bowles-Simpson, and it is stunning to me when we know the biggest issue our country faces is ourselves—meaning our own inability to deal with the fiscal issues that are before us and to deal with all of the reforms we know have to take place. When we know we are our own greatest enemy, to have a document that has been put out the way this one has been put out in almost a flippant way, is almost to say we don't have to deal with this serious issue that our country has to face which is pretty unbelievable.

There is no focus on the kind of tax reform that I think so many of us support that would broaden the base and lower marginal rates and have tremendous economic growth. There is no focus on dealing with programs such as Medicare and Social Security that people depend upon, that people have counted upon all of their lives and yet we know they are not going to exist in a very short amount of time unless we do something. Instead, this document totally puts its head in the sand on these issues. It doesn't deal with them.

To the Acting President pro tempore I will say that I think it is irresponsible for a President, facing the kinds of issues our country is facing and who is seeking another term, not to lay out what he believes is the approach for us to deal with these issues, just as I believe, by the way, that whoever the Republican nominee is, I think it is incumbent upon him to do exactly the same. I think all of us need to know what our Chief Executive Officer's plans are for this country as they relate to, again, the most important issue we have to deal with.

The most appalling about it is we have millions of people looking for jobs right now. Unemployment is exceptionally high. I think almost every Member of this body who talks to people out there who actually are part of small business job creation knows they will tell us they are concerned about the future of our country. That is the biggest overhang that is keeping them from investing. So these issues are tied together in a most unique way. The greatest threat to our future is our inability to deal with fiscal issues. Our Chief Executive Officer, the President, has laid out a laughable document, one that, again, makes a mockery of the American people; yet at the same time it is us acting on real fiscal discipline that actually would drive our economy to grow and create jobs.

TRANSPORTATION ACT

I am very disappointed, which brings me to the point at hand. We have a highway bill. It is the first time I think we have dealt with a highway bill since I have been in the Senate for 5 years. We keep kicking the can down the

road. It is my understanding that the EPW Committee passed this out 100 percent—Rs and Ds passed this out. Apparently they did some very good work, working together, to pass a base bill.

It is also my understanding, though, that the Finance Committee is charged with paying for this and has come up with pay-fors that work like this: We are going to spend this money over a 2-year period but we are going to pay for it over a 10-year period. Again, I look at the Acting President pro tempore, somebody I know was responsible in the job he had prior to being here, and I am sure he is in this job too. But here is what we are doing: We are going to have Republicans down here constantly railing against the President's budget. My friends on the other side of the aisle won't do that out of respect, but I am sure they are wondering what in the world has been handed to us. At the same time, we have a piece of legislation on the floor that we are going to be dealing with that candidly does a lot of the same thing. We are going to spend money over the next 2 years and yet we are going to pay for it over the next 10. I think that is absolutely irresponsible. I hope before this highway bill leaves the floor we will either reduce the amount we are spending on it—which I hate to see happen because I know we do need to spend money on infrastructure around our country—or we will figure out a way to pay for it where if we are going to spend money over a 2-year period, we will also generate revenues to pay for it over a 2-year period. This bill does not do that.

I do want to remind my Republican friends—I know we had some Republican support on the Finance Committee—that one of the things we railed about most with the health care bill that has divided our country in so many ways was that we took 6 years worth of cost and 10 years worth of revenues. All of us said it was a sleight of hand, and it was a sleight of hand; there is no question. I mean it was not honest in the way it was presented. But even since that time, with this most controversial bill, what we have done is actually moved away and now we are talking about in this highway bill spending money over a 2-year period but using pay-fors over a 10-year period. What that means is the next time we pass a highway bill under this same mode, we are continuing to run up tremendous debts. These young people who are sitting before us as pages, who come here to learn about how our country operates, want to see, hopefully, Senators acting in a responsible way.

The fact is there will be a lot of focus today on the President's budget, and I know there is a lot of disappointment on both sides of the aisle regarding what that budget says. But the thing we can do in this body over the next week or so as we are looking at this highway bill is to ensure we don't fall into that same trap here in Congress in

passing a highway bill that is not paid for, that uses future revenues which we will probably never see because we will flip them out and change them and use them in another way right after this bill is passed.

I thank my colleagues for listening.

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

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The clerk will call the roll.

The assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Without objection, it is so ordered.

Mr. JOHNSON of Wisconsin. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent to speak for not more than 15 minutes.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Without objection, it is so ordered.

THE BUDGET

Mr. JOHNSON of Wisconsin. Mr. President, I come to the floor this afternoon before the debate on President Obama's just-submitted budget descends into the arguments over the smaller little details that, quite frankly, are not going to have that great of an effect on our whole debt and deficit issue. What I would like to do is take a look and ask the American people to take a look at the larger picture. I would like to do it with a few charts and graphs.

The first chart I would like to put up really describes, from my standpoint, the root cause of the problem. It really is the size, the scope, all of the rules, all of the regulations, all of the government intrusion into our lives and the cost of government. What this graph depicts is that as of last year the Federal Government was 24 percent of the size of our economy. So 24 cents of every dollar our economy generates flows through the Federal Government. When you add on State and local governments, which are about 16 percent, the total take of government at all levels of the United States now—last year was 39.2 percent. Again, 39 cents of every dollar flows through some form of government.

I do not find government particularly effective or efficient at so many things they do. To make this relative, we are watching what is happening to Greece right now. It is in flames because that social experiment is collapsing. But if you compare the United States in terms of its size of government to European-style Socialist nations, you can see that Norway spends 47 percent of its GDP on government; Greece, which we just mentioned, 50 percent; Italy, which hit a mini debt crisis of its own, 52 percent; and France is 55 percent. Unfortunately, America has arrived at the lower limit, the lower level of European-style socialism. That is not a good metric.

The next chart I want to describe—so many people, I understand, want a balanced approach: revenue and spending reform to address the debt and deficit issue. Listen, I want more revenue too, but I think we need to raise revenue the old-fashioned way—by growing our economy. Everything we do in this country, everything we do here in Washington needs to be targeted toward economic growth.

But I think what this chart describes is the fact that we have a spending problem. It is not that we tax Americans too little; it is because we spend way too much. Ten years ago our Federal Government spent \$1.9 trillion. Last year we spent \$3.6 trillion. We doubled spending in just 10 years. And, of course, the President's budget that he just unveiled today will spend \$3.8 trillion in 2013.

In the argument moving forward, nobody is talking about cutting spending. All we are talking about is reducing the rate of growth in spending. You can tell by the chart. According to President Obama's budget, 10 years in the future, in the year 2022, he is proposing spending \$5.8 trillion. Last year's House budget would have spent \$4.7 trillion. That is what the argument is about—spending \$3.6 trillion last year and increasing it to either \$5.8 trillion or \$4.7 trillion.

Another way of looking at that is taking a look at 10-year spending numbers. In the nineties—a very successful decade—the Federal Government spent \$16 trillion over a 10-year period—\$16 trillion. Over the last 10 years, we spent \$28 trillion. And, again, the debate moving forward is President Obama, in his just-released budget, wants to spend \$47 trillion over the next 10 years. The House budget from last year would have spent \$40 trillion. By the way, when you hear about that \$6 or \$7 trillion of Draconian cuts, that is what we are talking about. All we are talking about is reducing the rate of growth in spending in the size of government.

You have seen an awful lot of charts describing the Nation's debt and how it has exploded. I like this chart because we start it on September 30, 1987, when our entire Federal debt stood at \$2.3 trillion. It took us 200 years to incur \$2.3 trillion worth of debt. Last year, in the Budget Control Act, we gave the President the authority basically—I didn't, I voted against it, but this body gave the President the authority to increase the debt ceiling by \$2.1 trillion. We will blow through that debt in around 2 years. Think of that.

So you can see what is happening. In 2001, we were at \$5.8 trillion. In 2008, right before President Obama entered office, we were at \$10 trillion. Currently we are at about \$15.4 trillion, and in the President's just-released budget, he is proposing adding about \$10 trillion to our debt over the next 10 years, to come in at a whopping \$25.9 trillion. The question is, Will we really be able to borrow that much or are we

going to face the day of reckoning, when world investors take a look at the United States and say: You know, I am not going to loan you any more money. What is more likely to happen is they will say: I will loan you some money but at dramatically higher interest rates. That is what we need to be concerned about. That is what a debt crisis is going to be. Take a look at Greece. Take a look at Italy.

One more chart I want to put up shows the extent of the problem of the unfunded liabilities together with the debt. Now, this is actually last year's chart. We have not been able to get the new one printed yet. But last year the trustees of both Medicare and Social Security published the unfunded liability of those two programs. When you add those unfunded liabilities to the Federal debt and what we owe Federal retirees, the total liability of the United States as reported last year was \$99 trillion. The new figure for this year—the accountants in the Federal Government have rejiggered the figures, and now they are claiming it is only \$72 trillion. But whichever figure you take, if you compare that to the private net assets of the United States—that is, household assets, small business assets, large business assets—that number is \$79 trillion. So the Federal Government has made promises and incurred debts that are equal to or exceed the entire net private asset base of the United States. Now, that is the definition of a problem. That is the definition of a huge problem that unfortunately this President and this town are not grappling with. We are not coming to terms with that.

Let me specifically hone in on one of those entitlement programs—Social Security. In 2010 we went net cash negative in Social Security, which means the amount of taxes collected were \$51 billion less than the benefits that were paid out. Last year we were \$46 billion in the red. If we take a look at this chart, what we see, without reforming the program, without providing the reforms that would actually save Social Security, within the next 24 years, by the year 2035, we will incur a \$6 trillion cash deficit in Social Security. Again, when you take a look at the President's budget this year, is that even being addressed?

The House budget addressed Medicare last year, and people like my Congressman from Wisconsin were demonized for doing it. Here you had an individual who had the courage to first of all acknowledge the problem and then put forward a proposal, and he is demonized. Political demagoguery is not going to solve our problem. A serious budget is what we need to solve the problem.

Because we are not serious about even putting forward a budget—and unfortunately, in this body, the majority leader is saying he will not even bring a budget to the floor for a vote; there is no need to. We are only going to incur \$10 trillion more debt in the next