

Democrats haven't passed a budget in more than 3 years despite the fact that, as Senator SESSIONS pointed out, the law literally requires it. It doesn't say, Don't pass a budget if it is hard; don't pass a budget if you have to negotiate with the House; don't pass a budget if you have to vote. It says, Pass a budget.

We haven't passed a single appropriations bill, I say to my friend, the senior Senator from Mississippi. Apparently all these people on the Appropriations Committee are completely irrelevant. Senator ALEXANDER pointed out they did their work but are never going to bring up a single bill.

By the way, it is not just the Appropriations Committee. All Senators are on committees. Does any Senator remember the last time they actually marked up a bill? Most committees are not marking up bills and not offering amendments. So I guess the new rule is: No amendments in committee and no amendments on the floor.

There are a lot of Senators around here of both parties wondering what their job is. I was elected by the people of my State. What is this job I have? I am on committees that don't do anything. Nobody votes on amendments. All the legislation we have, if we have any, is written in the majority leader's office.

Senator ISAKSON or Senator ENZI pointed out that all we do is vote on bills that have fancy titles and a poison pill and, of course, only one vote. Because you know, if you get on the bill, there won't be any amendments. So a lot of Members wonder why they are here. They fought hard for these jobs, defeated intelligent, well-funded opponents, got here ready to go to work, and nothing happens. And it is not just 1 week or a month or 6 months, but 2 years.

As Senator MCCAIN pointed out, no Defense authorization bill. We had managed to get around to doing that, no matter what our differences were, for half a century. This Democratically controlled Senate gives do-nothing Congresses a bad name. It is a complete disgrace. Never before has a Senate and a President done less to address such great challenges that we have.

I know I can speak for every single member of the Republican Conference in the Senate. Regardless of our philosophical differences with our friends on the other side, we take our jobs seriously. We think the people who sent us here expected us to function, and we intend to do so.

So if the American people decide they want to make a change, the commitment I make to them is the Republican Conference is going to pass a budget. It may be hard; we may have to twist a few arms; there may be some people who don't want to do it. We may have to do it on a partisan basis if our friends on the other side don't want to join with us. But the law doesn't say, Don't do it if it is hard. It says, Do it.

The Appropriations Committee deals with the discretionary budget of the

U.S. Government. It ought to be allowed to do its job. Not everybody is going to vote for every bill, but we are going to function.

We owe it to the American people to do, at the very least, the basic work of government. Of course, we have problems beyond the basic work of government. Certainly we were going to have differences after the 2010 election—which could best be described as a national restraining order.

The American people took a look at what this government did under this President's leadership over the first 2 years, and they said, We have had enough of that. They flipped the House of Representatives and made us a more robust minority in the Senate. They understood we weren't going to do any more of what we did the first 2 years. They were not interested in any more of that. But that is not an excuse for not doing anything. They said, We don't want to do any more of all this new stuff that was done in 2009 and 2010, the massive spending and debt and the takeover of health care and the nationalization of the student loan bills.

But they didn't send us here to do nothing. They assumed we would at least do the things we ought to be able to agree on—the basic work of government. It is embarrassing.

For the sake of this institution and for the sake of our country, we need to straighten out this place. We need an attitude change. This is not about the rules. The rules have remained largely the same over the years. This is about us. And this problem can be fixed. All we have to do is decide to operate differently. No matter who is up or who is down, there are basic things this institution owes the American people; that is, to get the basic work of government done.

So the pledge we make to the American people, if they decide they want to try new leadership in the Senate, is we will do these things even if they are hard.

Beyond the basics, let me say to our friends on the other side, we have big problems we are never going to be able to solve without some bipartisan commitment to do it. We are drowning in a sea of debt. We know we cannot save this country unless we make the entitlement programs fit the demographics of our country.

We have a lot of other problems. We have taxes, we have sequester. But the way I tend to think of that is those are the chairs on the Titanic. You can rearrange the chairs—figure out the tax problems, figure out the sequester problems—but the ship is still going down unless we make our entitlement programs meet and fit the demographics of our country. We probably won't be able to do that one party only. It is time for some statesmen to show up.

We have had an election every 2 years since 1788, right on schedule. At any point in American history, people could have said, Oh, we can't do that;

there is an election coming up. There is always an election coming up in America. That is what we do. The fact that we have an election coming up is not an excuse for not tackling the tough problems.

So no matter what the American people decide this November, no matter what they decide, the problems are there. And our commitment to the American people is, if we are in the majority, we will do the basic work of government; and our hand will be out to our colleagues on the other side and whoever the President of the United States is.

It is time to tackle the biggest problems in the country, the most predictable crisis in American history.

Mr. President, I yield the floor.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The majority leader.

Mr. REID. Mr. President, has the Republicans' time expired?

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The Republicans have 3 minutes remaining.

Mr. MCCONNELL. I will yield back the remainder of our time.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The majority leader.

SELF-CREATED RESULTS

Mr. REID. Mr. President, I haven't been able to watch all the speeches by my friends on the other side of the aisle, but I have watched enough to understand what is going on. This has been a remarkable show of hubris or arrogance from the Republican side of the aisle.

One after another, the Republicans have stood to complain about how the Senate hasn't gotten a lot done. The Presiding Officer has been one of the leaders in having a more effective Senate, because my friend, the Presiding Officer, has watched what the Republicans have done. We are going to do something about it. The Presiding Officer knows that, I know that.

What they have done is the very definition of chutzpah. The nerve. What nerve. They are complaining about a result that they themselves created. They have created the fact that we haven't gotten anything done. They are good at it. A bill that would allow veterans to get jobs, they stopped it on a technicality. They have conducted filibuster after filibuster, blocking one bill after another, and then they complain the Senate can't pass anything when they are the ones holding things up. The record is pretty detailed and deep, and I am not going to cover it all today because, really, it is significant.

I said here yesterday, I have been the leader for 6 years. I may be off 1 or 2, but I have had to file motions to overcome 382 filibusters in 6 years. I know the Senate has changed a little bit since Lyndon Johnson was the majority leader, but during the 6 years he was the majority leader, he had to file cloture once. To think that they are here complaining we are not getting

anything done when they are the ones who caused it? And we start from this point.

I have to say, I appreciate the Republican leader being so candid and honest with the American people when he stood at the beginning of this Congress and said his No. 1 goal was to stop President Obama from being reelected. That is what he said. And they have legislated accordingly, stopping us from doing the most important things for this country. Measures to create jobs, they have stopped. Measures to stop jobs from being lost, they have stopped. They have done it so many times.

How about this: We have lost approximately 1 million teachers, firefighters, and police officers because of Republicans stopping us from getting things done, really hurting State and local government. So we over here thought it would be a good idea that we stop these significant layoffs of teachers, firefighters, and police officers. We want to make sure it is paid for and we agree it should be paid for. So we said, Okay, no more layoffs of teachers, firefighters, and police officers, and we are going to pay for it. How are we going to pay for it? Anyone making more than \$1 million a year would have to pay a surtax of three-tenths of 1 percent. Every Republican voted against that.

The Veterans Jobs bill I just talked about. The cyber security bill. The Pentagon has said the most important issue facing this country is cyber security. The National Security Agency: The most issue facing this country? Cyber security. We know, they know, the Republicans know, because they were down at the same demonstration I had of our intelligence agency showing what would happen if a cyber security attack took place in the Northeast just dealing with the power grid. We know it can happen.

I have heard Senator FEINSTEIN, the chairman of our Intelligence Committee, say several times it is not a question of if, it is a question of when. The Republicans blocked a cyber security bill, stopped it.

They have conducted filibuster after filibuster, blocking one bill after another. They blocked a bill to stop outsourcing jobs—more than once.

On all these TV ads that you see, we thought it would be kind of a good idea that the American people knew who was paying for these ads. But, no, twice they said let's keep them secret—Crossroads USA or whatever name they have there, all these names that sound so good. But I think we would be better served if people knew the ads were being paid by the Koch brothers or Sheldon Adelson from Las Vegas or Simmons from Texas who is boasting about giving \$34 million to defeat President Obama. And that is what the Republican leader wants.

On the passage of several small business jobs bills, one July 12, just a month or two ago; the motion to pro-

ceed to paycheck fairness, violence against women—they stopped us from going to conference on that. On April 16 they blocked a motion to proceed to a bill to reduce the deficit by imposing a minimum tax rate on high-income taxpayers, the Buffett rule, Warren Buffett. He wants to make sure he pays a tax rate comparable to his secretary's. That is what we wanted. They defeated that.

They blocked many bills dealing with unnecessary tax subsidies for these large oil companies. They have held up hundreds of measures out of the Energy Committee—hundreds. It used to be we would pass those just matter-of-factly.

Senator STABENOW had an amendment to decrease taxes on American businesses. She wanted to do that by extending expiring energy tax credits for energy that has created hundreds of jobs in America.

They blocked the nomination for weeks and weeks of Richard Cordray to be the Director of the Bureau of Consumer Financial Protection. They blocked judge after judge. They blocked a motion to proceed to a bill to put workers back on the job while rebuilding and modernizing American infrastructure. It creates jobs.

They blocked motions to proceed to a bill to keep teachers and first responders—in addition to the one I just talked about—and other ones. They blocked a bill to reauthorize the Economic Development Administration. This has been something we have done for 25, 30 years. They blocked it.

We wanted to reduce the deficit by doing something about these outlandish subsidies we give Big Oil—blocked it. We were trying to do a bill to create jobs. We spent weeks because they wanted to dictate what women could do dealing with contraception.

Then they have this little—this little deal with the House Republicans. If we work and are able once in a while to get something done over here, such as a postal bill to save our postal system, then the Republicans block it in the House. The farm bill—reduces the debt by \$23 billion—they have this deal with the House and now they blocked that. China currency? The same thing; they blocked it over in the House.

The record is very clear. The party of trying to defeat President Obama has done everything they can to make the economy look as bad as it can because they think if the economy is really bad, it is going to help them defeat President Obama.

The middle class—we know how they feel about the middle class. That was exemplified by statements that came out in the last few days by the Presidential nominee.

This morning, as I said, I wasn't able to listen to everything, but I listened to enough. One party stands for obstruction and the rich. The big lie—listen to this: How many times did we have the Republicans come to this floor and say: They have not passed a budget?

I have served in this Congress for 30 years, and I have admired two people very much for their knowledge of certain things. One person I have admired dealing with the finances of this country more than anyone else is someone with whom I came to the Senate 26 years ago, KENT CONRAD. KENT CONRAD has come here and time and time again said: Yes, we did not pass a budget resolution because we did not need to. We passed a law. That is why the CR is going forward. We passed a law that set numbers for us.

It is a big lie for them to come here and say we have not passed a budget. It is a lie. It is untruthful.

My friend with whom we have served in Congress, we came the same day, the senior Senator from Arizona, I have said before, and I will say it again: I admire him. I admire his service to our country. But for him to come and say that the Senate is not working well because of the Democrats, that is one of the big lies.

We have tried to legislate. They are holding up virtually everything we try to do, including the Defense authorization bill. I have been waiting for months for them to come to me with an agreement. This is part of the big game they are playing to try to make us look bad when they are the cause of it. They are the reason we have not done this legislation. We can't. We have spent weeks on matters that we would have done before in a matter of an hour or 20 minutes.

Republicans are complaining about a result that they themselves caused. The Defense authorization bill—we are going to come back after the election, and we will get that done with their help.

Here is the issue with Republicans, here is why suddenly they are all upset. They have been upset for some time, but really this week has been something that would upset nearly everyone because—we thought the Olympics were over, but yesterday we saw it in full go.

We had Republicans running to break marathon records, sprint records to get away from their Presidential nominee because it makes it a little hard for them to have somebody running for President representing their party who says: I only have to worry about half the people in this country.

We are going to continue to work to the best we can to move forward with the legislation we believe is important. We are going to come back after the election, during the lameduck. Hopefully, they will decide at that time maybe they have something better to do than try to make the President of the United States look bad.

We are a very fortunate country. We have a two-party system that is the envy of the rest of the world. These parliamentary governments, they work for months and weeks and sometimes longer than that to try to form a government. We don't have to do that. We are a government of laws, and we have a system that works pretty well.

But we know, based on some academic work that has been done—it is not just me talking. We have two of the foremost experts who have watched this country for more than 40 years—Thomas Mann from the Brookings Institute and Norm Ornstein from the conservative Enterprise Institute—who have said the problem with the government today is the Republicans. They said they have been here for 40 years and have never seen anything like it. I haven't seen anything like it, and I have been here 30 years.

We used to work together. When I came to the Senate we had Republican Senators and Democratic Senators. We joined hands and we got things done. But now, because they are being led by someone who believes the most important thing to do is to defeat Obama, we are getting nothing done and they are following him like lemmings off the cliff.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The Senator from Illinois.

Mr. DURBIN. Mr. President, one of the greatest orators in the history of English-speaking people was Winston Churchill. I can't tell you how many times I have read and reread his speeches and heard his great efforts to summon the courage of the British people during World War II.

In one respect the speech earlier this morning by Senator MCCONNELL was Churchillian, in the tradition of Winston Churchill, because they once said to Winston Churchill: What do you think history will have to say about you? He said:

I'm not worried about what history has to say about me because I'm going to write the history.

This morning Senator MCCONNELL decided to write the history of the Senate session. Unfortunately, his version was a little bit different than the memory of most of us in terms of what has actually happened.

This we do remember: In the beginning of the Obama Presidency, a short time after the President had been sworn in and asked to try to take this failing economy and put it back on its feet, when we were losing 750,000 jobs a month, when businesses were failing, when American families were losing one-third of the value of their savings, when the stock market was plummeting, when we ran the risk of a global fiscal crisis, when we were sending \$800 billion to the biggest banks in America to save them from their own greed and stupidity—at that time the Republican leader, Senator MCCONNELL, said: "My highest priority is to make sure that Barack Obama is a one-term President." His highest priority.

That is a fact. That is on the record. That is on tape if you want to see it. And he lived up to that in terms of his own ambition as the Republican leader.

When the President came up with a stimulus bill to turn this economy around, we had three Republicans who would join us, three of them. What happened to those three Republicans?

One of them, Senator Specter of Pennsylvania, was then threatened with defeat in the Republican primary for joining in a bipartisan effort to save the economy. He switched parties, came over to the Democratic side, and said: It isn't the Republican Party I remember. Another, Senator SNOWE of Maine, announced her retirement a few months back and said: I can't take the partisanship and division. The third, Senator COLLINS, still survives. Those three were the only three who would stand up with the President to try to get this economy back on track.

When it came to health care reform, after months of effort by Senator BAUCUS to bring in Republicans to craft the bill, Senator GRASSLEY, who was leading the effort on the Republican side, went back to Iowa in August, had a town meeting and said: I am finished. No more bipartisan negotiation on health care reform. And they would not give us a single vote, not one vote to pass health care reform.

The same thing was true when it came to Wall Street reform to put in oversight to avoid another fiscal crisis generated by the perfidy of greed on Wall Street.

Time and time again the Republicans refused to stand with us. To my left is Senator CONRAD of North Dakota. He has been our chairman of the Budget Committee. He put in a sincere, bipartisan, good-faith effort to deal with the deficit—with Senator Judd Gregg, a Republican of New Hampshire, a man who commanded respect on his side of the aisle, as Senator CONRAD does as well. They came up with a notion. Here is what it was.

We would create a commission that would investigate the deficit crisis, and if 14 of the 18 members of the commission voted to go forward it would come immediately to the floor for a vote.

We had a lot of Senators who were cosponsoring that. Democrats and Republicans finally said that will break the logjam. Then we called it on the floor. I ask Senator CONRAD, does my memory serve me correctly that the Republican leader, Senator MCCONNELL, who was a cosponsor of this deficit commission, along with six other Republican Senators, changed their votes on the floor and defeated the very bill they had cosponsored to deal with our Nation's deficit?

The Senator didn't hear that this morning, did he? All the speeches from the other side about dealing with the deficit. Perhaps Senator MCCONNELL and those six other Senators, those remaining, would like to explain why they reversed course and said no; they didn't want to be part of the effort. But it happened. It happened for certain.

As Senator REID came to the Senate floor and explained, they have broken all records in the Senate for filibusters. Boy, I tell you what: If you have a cable TV at home and you have C-SPAN on it and you turn on the Senate, I know a lot of people across America are calling into the cable

channel providers and asking for a refund. Why in the world do we have this channel where nothing happens except an occasional mention of a Senator's name during a quorum call? Does anyone know why? There were 382 filibusters on the Republican side; 382 delays in the Senate. What sort of issues are they filibustering? I just saw one this week. It was a veterans jobs bill. A veterans jobs bill was the subject of a 2-week filibuster. It was a bill which should have passed by voice vote. If every Senator who went back home for a Fourth of July parade, grabbed the flag and walked down the middle of the street and said how much they loved the veterans would have voted for it, we would have passed it. Instead, they filibustered it. It was one of 382 filibusters.

I am glad Senator CONRAD is here to explain this whole budget resolution issue. He can do it better than anyone. I will tell the Senator I took a look this morning at the 30 Senators on the Republican side who got up to speak and about 10 of them talked about the fact that there was no budget, that we didn't have a budget this year, and we don't have a budget next year. I then looked at the votes on the Budget Control Act. Those same 10 Senators voted for the Budget Control Act, a law which controls the budget for 2 years.

I am calling for an official investigation by the attending physician to see if there is something in the coffee urn in the Republican cloakroom causing amnesia so that these Senators would come to the floor and forget they voted for the Budget Control Act and make speeches like they didn't or never heard of it.

Let me say something about entitlements. Senator MCCONNELL spoke to the issue of entitlements. He is right; it is an important part of what we need to do to right this ship to deal with our deficit. It would have been part of the conversation for the Conrad-Gregg commission, which seven Republican Senators torpedoed, including the Republican majority leader. We can go through the bills, as the majority leader has, and talk about the efforts we have made.

We have passed bills on a bipartisan basis. We passed a postal reform bill to ensure that the best postal service in the world survives. We passed it with a bipartisan vote—dead in the House.

We passed a transportation bill. Senator BOXER and INHOFE put it together. It was a strong bipartisan vote to build the infrastructure of America. It passed in the Senate. It died in the House.

We passed a farm bill with Senator STABENOW of Michigan and Senator ROBERTS of Kansas. It was a bipartisan farm bill that gave us a good architecture for the future of farm programs and reduced the deficit by \$23 billion. We passed it on a bipartisan basis in the Senate. It died in the House of Representatives. The tea party faction in the House will not allow it to go forward.

Senator REID also made the point earlier. What was the first Republican amendment on the Transportation bill? Think about this for a second. It was the first Republican amendment on the Transportation bill. They wouldn't let us move forward to that bill unless we considered an amendment which would reduce the opportunity for women across America to have access to family planning. That was on the Transportation bill. Now they are arguing that we are finding ways to slow down the Senate? The Blunt amendment was defeated, but it is an indication of the political gamesmanship that has gone on at the expense of the important bills such as the Transportation bill.

The last point I wish to make is this: We know that if we are going to thrive in this country, the middle-class working families in this country need a chance.

The Senators on this side of the aisle, as well as President Obama, want to give working and middle-income families a tax break. We passed a bill so they will have a tax reduction to help them as they struggle from paycheck to paycheck. We sent it over to the House of Representatives, where it is never going to be taken up for a vote. That is the sad reality.

So as the Republicans came to the floor this morning and gave us this grand vision of when they were in control, they tried to rewrite history. Maybe Churchill is capable of doing that, but I would say the Republican Senators failed to meet that challenge this morning.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. BROWN of Ohio). The Senator from North Dakota.

Mr. CONRAD. First, I thank my colleagues, Senator REID, our leader, and Senator DURBIN for their kind words. I very much appreciate those kind words. I also must say I am a little taken aback by what I heard earlier on the floor from some of my Republican colleagues because it truly does represent an attempt to rewrite history, the history I have lived in my 26 years in the Senate.

I announced a little more than a year and a half ago that I would not seek reelection, so I don't have a political ox to gore. But I am here to report what I have seen after 26 years of service. Let me start by saying our Republican colleagues at the leadership level decided early on that their strategy to be successful was to stop things from passing in the Senate. It is very clear that has been their strategy. That is why we have seen more than 380 filibusters in this body, which is completely unprecedented in the history of the Senate.

The Republican leader made it very clear years ago that his highest priority was to defeat for reelection President Obama. He did not say his top priority was to solve the problems of the country. He did not say his top priority was to get our economy back on track.

He did not say his top priority was to address the deficits and debt of the Nation. He did not say his top priority was to improve the security position of the United States. He said his top priority was to defeat President Obama. Shame on him. That should never be the top priority of a leader in this body, Republican or Democratic. The top priority ought to be to help solve the problems the country confronts.

I am a little cranky because many of my colleagues know my wife and I have a little dog named Dakota that is suffering from cancer. Last night we were up from 12:30 until 5:30 as he was bleeding internally. So I must say I am a little cranky after having been up most of the night, and I got a lot crankier when I heard colleagues say things they know are not true.

When they say there is no budget for the United States, they know that is not true. How do I know it is not true, and that there is a budget? Because I remember what we voted on, and it is in writing. It is a law. It is called the Budget Control Act. The Budget Control Act passed last year and contained the budget for 2012 and 2013. Some say that is not a budget. Let's look to the language of the law itself and see what it says.

Here is what it says: For the purpose of enforcing the Congressional Budget Act of 1974, including section 300 of that Act, and enforcing budgetary points of order in prior concurrent resolutions on the budget, the allocations, aggregates, and spending levels set shall apply in the Senate in the same manner as for a concurrent resolution on the budget.

What they are trying to do is mislead the American people by saying we have not passed a budget resolution. What they failed to tell people is that instead of a budget resolution, we passed a budget law. What is the difference? A resolution is purely a congressional document. It never goes to the President for his signature. So instead of a resolution, we passed a budget law called the Budget Control Act. It set out spending limits not just for 2012 and 2013, it actually set out on the discretionary side of the budget limits for 10 years.

In fact, the Budget Control Act, in many ways, is more extensive than any budget resolution could provide. It has the force of law, unlike the budget resolution that is not signed by the President. It set discretionary caps on spending for 10 years instead of the 1 year normally set in a budget resolution. It provided enforcement mechanisms, including a 2-year provision allowing budget points of order to be enforced. It created a reconciliation-like supercommittee process to address entitlement and tax reforms. It said if the special committee could not agree on reforming the entitlement programs and the tax system of the United States, there would be an additional \$1.2 trillion in spending cuts.

Let's add it up. The Budget Control Act first cut \$900 billion from the dis-

cretionary accounts over 10 years. Then it said if the supercommittee didn't reform the tax system and entitlement system of the country, there would be another \$1.2 trillion cut from the discretionary accounts over the next 10 years. That is a total of \$2.1 trillion in spending cuts over the next 10 years. That is the biggest package of spending cuts in the history of the United States. That is a fact.

The Budget Control Act set the spending limits for 2012 and 2013 and further set limits for 8 years beyond that. So when they say there is no budget resolution, what they fail to tell people is there is a budget law.

It is interesting if we compare and contrast what their side presented as their priorities in a budget because Mr. RYAN, their candidate for Vice President, came before the House of Representatives and laid out his budget blueprint. What does that do? First of all, it extends all the Bush-era tax cuts.

Think about this. Here we have a circumstance in which the revenue of our country is at or near a 60-year low. The first thing the Ryan budget does is extend all the Bush-era tax cuts, even those for the very highest income. Then it says that is not enough for the wealthiest among us. So the Ryan budget, after extending all the Bush era-tax cuts, goes and provides another \$1 trillion of tax cuts for the wealthiest among us.

I have nothing against wealthy people. I hope all Americans have the opportunity to become wealthy; that would be my fondest hope. That was why I was drawn to public service. What could I do that would strengthen the economy of the United States? It has always been my top priority. It is what I truly believe is essential to our democracy. But in a circumstance in which we are borrowing 40 cents of every \$1 we spend, and then to say the answer is more and more tax cuts for the very wealthiest among us and try to pay for it by shredding the social safety net that is critically important to those who are the least fortunate among us, frankly, I think that fails the moral test. I think that fails any moral test of government.

The Ryan budget, which our colleagues have endorsed, would give, on average, those earning over \$1 million a year an additional tax reduction of \$265,000 a year.

I know if I were listening to this I would say, How can it be that someone earning over \$1 million can get a \$265,000 tax cut, because that is about all they would pay in taxes. Remember, we are talking about the average for those earning over \$1 million a year, so we are talking about not just people who earn \$1 million a year but people who earn hundreds of millions of dollars a year. And the average tax cut provided in the Ryan budget for those folks is another \$265,000 a year.

What does Ryan do in order to offset that massive additional tax cut for the

very wealthiest among us? Well, here is an interesting quote from a former top economic adviser to Ronald Reagan, a man named Bruce Bartlett, who was a top economic adviser to Ronald Reagan. Here is what he said about the Ryan budget that our colleagues here have endorsed:

Distributionally, the Ryan plan is a monstrosity. The rich would receive huge tax cuts while the social safety net would be shredded to pay for them. Even as an opening bid to begin budget negotiations with the Democrats, the Ryan plan cannot be taken seriously. It is less of a wish list than a fairy tale utterly disconnected from the real world, backed up by make-believe numbers and unreasonable assumptions. Ryan's plan isn't even an act of courage; it's just pandering to the Tea Party. A real act of courage would have been for him to admit, as all serious budget analysts know, that revenues will have to rise well above 19 percent of GDP to stabilize the debt.

Those are not my words. Those are the words of a top economic adviser to President Ronald Reagan.

The Ryan plan is a monstrosity.

If anybody seriously studies the Ryan budget they would have to conclude that Mr. Bartlett is correct, because Mr. RYAN cuts taxes in a very dramatic way for the richest among us. Let me be clear. The first thing he does is extend all the Bush-era tax cuts. Then, on top of that, he cuts the top rate from 35 percent to 25 percent. That provides over \$1 trillion of additional tax cuts for the wealthiest among us. And they refuse to do anything to close the tax loopholes that are allowing certain wealthy people to avoid paying taxes in this country entirely.

I have shown on the floor of the Senate many times a picture of a five-story building in the Cayman Islands called the Ugland House. The Ugland House claims to be the home of 18,000 companies. A little five-story building in the Cayman Islands claims to be the home of 18,000 companies. I say that is the most efficient building in the world. Can you imagine 18,000 companies operating out of a little five-story building down in the Cayman Islands?

All those companies claim they are doing business out of that little building for a reason. They claim they are doing business out of that little building in the Cayman Islands because they don't want to pay taxes in the United States. So here is what they do, and it is very clever. Through paper manipulations, they show the profits of certain subsidiaries of their companies in the Cayman Islands rather than in the places where they actually earned the profits. Why would they do that? Because the Cayman Islands doesn't have a corporate income tax. So by showing their profits in the Cayman Islands, even though in truth they were never earned in the Cayman Islands—through accounting gimmicks they show their profits in the Cayman Islands and they aren't taxed. They avoid paying here what they legitimately owe here. What does that mean? That means all the rest of us get stuck paying for ourselves and them.

I said earlier the Ryan budget fails the moral test, and it is not just my judgment that it fails the moral test. How can one justify cutting taxes dramatically for the wealthiest among us and then turn around and shred Medicare, which is what the Ryan budget did? The Ryan budget he initially proposed changed Medicare's finances over time so that instead of Medicare paying 75 percent of health care costs for seniors who are eligible, the Ryan budget, over time, would switch that so Medicare would pay 32 percent. To be clear, under the Ryan plan, we would wind up with a situation in which the majority of one's health care costs, if one is eligible for Medicare, would be paid by that person, not by Medicare. That is to make up for the massive tax cuts he gives the wealthiest among us.

Here is what the Catholic bishops said. The Catholic bishops say the Ryan budget fails the moral test. I agree with the Catholic bishops. This is what they said in the Washington Post in 2012:

A week after House Budget Committee Chairman PAUL RYAN said that his Catholic faith inspired the Republicans' cost-cutting budget plan, the Nation's Catholic bishops reiterated their demand that the Federal budget protect the poor and said the GOP measure fails to meet these moral criteria.

In any moral test that I know of in any religion, we don't take from those who have the least to give it to those who have the most. I don't know of any religion that practices that as an article of faith—that we take from those who have the least to give to those who have the most.

Anybody who knows me knows I am pretty conservative. I come from a business family. I have a master's in business administration. Throughout my career, I have been someone who has been judged as fiscally conservative, someone who believes deeply in balancing budgets. I was the grandfather of the Bowles-Simpson Commission; served on it proudly. I was one of the 11 votes for its product—5 Democrats, 5 Republicans, 1 independent.

By the way, when our colleagues said this morning we haven't worked in a bipartisan way—well, I have spent 5 years working in a bipartisan way trying to get our debts and deficit under control. Senator Gregg, the ranking Republican on the Budget Committee, and I proposed the Bowles-Simpson Commission. We served on it. We voted for it. I subsequently served in the group of six, three Democrats, three Republicans, who were given the assignment by our colleagues to come up with a plan to reduce the deficit. We worked for a year and a half to try to find a bipartisan solution. We have had the Biden group. We have had the supercommittee, all bipartisan efforts that have gone on for years to try to produce an agreement. So my friends saying there hasn't been an effort, that is not true.

What is true is when our friends on the other side were in charge, they

brought this economy to the brink of financial collapse. That is the truth. Anybody who doubts it can simply go back to the end of the Bush administration and see where the country was. The stock market was collapsing. The housing market was collapsing. The financial system was collapsing. That is what President Obama inherited. He did not create those crises; he inherited them. At the time President Obama came into office, the economy was shrinking at a rate of almost 9 percent a year. We were losing 800,000 jobs a month. Now the economy is growing at a rate of about 2 percent a year, and we are gaining about 200,000 jobs a month. That is a dramatic turnaround.

So when they ask the question: Are we better off now than 4 years ago? Undeniably, we are better off. Undeniably, we are better off. We have gone from an economy shrinking at a rate of more than 8 percent to one growing at a rate of 2 percent. We have moved from a time when we were losing 800,000 jobs a month to a time when we are gaining about 200,000 jobs a month. We have gone from a circumstance in which the stock market was plunging to a circumstance in which the stock market has about doubled during the time of President Barack Obama. President Obama inherited two wars, a war on terror, a financial system that was collapsing, a financial system that had seen, under the previous President, the debt double; foreign holdings of U.S. debt were tripling; and this President has ended the slide and has us going back in the right direction, and with precious little help from the other side.

I ask the American people before they cast their votes to think back to the final days of the Bush administration. I will never forget as long as I live being called to an emergency meeting in this building with the Secretary of the Treasury of the Bush administration, the Chairman of the Federal Reserve, the leaders, Republicans and Democrats, in the House and the Senate, and being told by the Secretary of the Treasury and the Bush administration and the Chairman of the Federal Reserve that if they did not act, they expected a financial collapse within days—a financial collapse within days. Those were in the final months of the Bush administration. That is what President Barack Obama inherited.

The hard fact is that when our colleagues were in charge of everything—they had the House, the Senate, and they controlled the White House—they brought this country to the brink of financial collapse. That is a fact. Thank goodness this President, acting with this Congress, was able to draw us back from the brink, but we have a long way to go. We have a long way to go. It is going to take everybody working together to pull us out of the ditch completely.

I have been part of major efforts for the last 5 years—bipartisan efforts—including Bowles-Simpson, the group of six; right now the group of six has been

expanded to the group of eight. We have been working nonstop, hundreds of hours of discussions, on a bipartisan plan—four Democrats, four Republicans—to be enacted when we return, to get America back on track. That is what is required here.

What we saw this morning from our colleagues on the other side is not the answer; it is the problem. The same old tired political gamesmanship is not going to cut it. What we desperately need is Republicans and Democrats working together to solve America's problems. That is what we owe the American people. I very much hope when we return after this election that colleagues on both sides will be prepared to act in that spirit.

I thank the Chair and I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Rhode Island.

Mr. WHITEHOUSE. Mr. President, I am very proud to follow Chairman CONRAD on the floor at this time. There is no person in the U.S. Senate who has worked harder on a budget compromise than Senator CONRAD has. There is no person who has put out the hand of bipartisan friendship and cooperation more than Senator CONRAD has. There is no person who has experienced more frustration of having that hand rejected and slapped away than Senator CONRAD has, and there is no person who has contained that frustration and continued to work forward and seek resolution in a dignified way than Senator CONRAD has.

The Senate Republicans who took to the floor this morning to criticize Democrats for failing to pass a budget and deal with the impending sequester and tax cuts expiration failed to note that Senate Democrats have, in fact, passed a budget law and a bill that extends the tax cuts for 98 percent of Americans and 97 percent of small businesses. It is to protect the 2 percent and the 3 percent at the top of the income level that Republicans have refused to allow that bill protecting 98 percent of Americans and 97 percent of small businesses from tax increases from going forward.

Senate Democrats also support a balanced approach to replacing the sequester and reducing the deficit. What they didn't talk much about but which is very important in this discussion is the Republican Ryan plan for the budget.

This past May, 41 of our Senate Republican colleagues voted in favor of a radical transformation of the America we know. And the Republican-controlled House passed this budget—a budget that would devastate the middle class. The plan would end Medicare as we know it for future retirees. It would reopen the Medicare prescription drug doughnut hole that we closed for current retirees. It would slash investments that America's children depend on, from Head Start to Federal college aid; and it would give the average million-dollar earner a new additional tax

cut of, on average, \$285,000 each in that million-dollar-plus earner cohort.

The blockade here that is preventing moving beyond the sequester is by Republicans, particularly in the House, refusing to proceed in any reasonable way and, instead, demanding these damaging radical cuts for the middle class.

Let's look a little bit behind the curtain of campaign rhetoric and examine the harm—the personal real-life, real-person harm—that the Ryan budget would inflict on millions of middle-class families and retirees.

In what is one of the extraordinary examples of “say one thing, but do another” rhetoric, Mr. RYAN, in his recent nomination acceptance speech, said that “the greatest of all responsibilities, is that of the strong to protect the weak. The truest measure of any society is how it treats those who cannot defend or care for themselves.”

His budget, of course, visibly does exactly the opposite. It slashes taxes for the most well off, while decimating the programs on which struggling families and retirees rely.

Do not take my word for it. Following the House passage of this Ryan budget, the Conference of Catholic Bishops said:

Congress faces a difficult task to balance needs and resources and allocate burdens and sacrifices.

Just solutions, however—

The bishops said—

must require shared sacrifice by all, including raising adequate revenues, eliminating unnecessary military and other spending, and fairly addressing the long-term costs of health insurance and retirement programs. The House-passed budget resolution fails to meet these moral criteria.

That is what the Conference of Catholic Bishops said. I will state again: “The House-passed budget resolution fails to meet these moral criteria.”

That is not me speaking. That is the Conference of America's Catholic Bishops.

So let's start our look behind the curtain, the curtain of the budget that fails this moral test—that Governor Romney said was “marvelous,” to use his word—let's start with the budget's tax theories.

The Ryan budget would lower the top tax rates for both corporations and the highest earning individuals from 35 percent to 25 percent.

According to a Joint Economic Committee analysis, this would result in an average tax cut of \$285,000 for Americans earning \$1 million a year and more. At the same time, middle-income taxpayers making between \$50,000 and \$100,000 would see their taxes go up—go up—by \$1,300 because middle-class deductions are stripped away to pay for the high-end cuts.

RYAN would also shift, at the corporate level, to a so-called territorial tax system, which would mean that companies that ship jobs and operations overseas would no longer have

to pay any U.S. taxes on their overseas profits.

Democrats have tried repeatedly to offer tax incentives to companies that bring jobs home to the United States. And nobody in this body has worked harder on bringing jobs home to the United States than the Presiding Officer, the Senator from Ohio, Mr. BROWN.

Well, the Ryan plan would do exactly the opposite. It would tell big corporations that if they move their business operations overseas, they will never pay taxes on those again. The Ryan plan is really a jobs bill for China, for India, for Korea, not for America. It is an offshoring rewards act.

In addition to those upside down tax changes that harm the middle class and raise their taxes to cut taxes for the highest earners in this country, in addition to its inducements to offshore more jobs instead of bringing them home, the Ryan budget would slash \$2.9 trillion from our health care programs. Beginning for workers who retire in 2023, Mr. RYAN would convert Medicare to a voucher system, which, according to the nonpartisan Congressional Budget Office, would ultimately add an estimated \$6,000 in annual out-of-pocket costs that our retirees, our seniors would have to fork over.

It is hard to imagine how future seniors living on a fixed Social Security income will be able to maintain health care coverage with these substantial increases in out-of-pocket costs that Mr. RYAN's budget envisions.

If the Republicans are saying they will not make the deal that spares us the sequester unless that deal puts an end to Medicare as we know it, holding Medicare hostage, well, it then takes some “brass”—to use President Clinton's phrase—to say: We are for the sequester.

The Ryan budget does not stop there. It would repeal the Affordable Care Act and take away access to affordable health insurance for millions of Americans of all ages. And, of course, repealing the Affordable Care Act hits seniors again by reopening that dreaded Medicare prescription drug doughnut hole that we worked so hard to close and that is closed over time in the Affordable Care Act.

In 2011 alone, the Affordable Care Act helped nearly 15,000 people in my home State of Rhode Island save an average of \$554 by beginning to close the doughnut hole—millions of dollars out of the pockets of Rhode Island seniors.

That made a big difference for people such as Olive, who wrote to me from Woonsocket. Her husband fell into the doughnut hole last July. Thanks to the new law, Olive and her husband received a discount on their prescription drugs. They saved \$2,400. If the Ryan budget passed, they would be stuck paying that full cost again: \$2,400 right out of the pockets of Olive and her husband and into the pockets of the drug companies. Gee, who would be for that around here?

In fact, under the Ryan budget, the average senior would be stuck with

\$4,200 in additional out-of-pocket prescription costs—a huge transfer of wealth from America's seniors to the big drug companies.

Repealing the Affordable Care Act would not just harm seniors, it would also mean that insurance plans would no longer have to cover young adults up to age 26 on their parents' plans. This moves over 3 million young Americans—just getting out of college, still looking for that first job that has health insurance coverage—back on to the rolls of the uninsured.

The radical Ryan budget would also hurt young people by slashing Pell grants, making college less affordable. Students and graduates are already struggling to pay a record trillion dollars that Americans now owe in outstanding student loans, and the Ryan plan would force students to take on even greater debt burdens.

On top of these specific cuts, the Ryan budget takes an additional \$1 trillion in unspecified discretionary spending cuts. Domestic discretionary funding is the money that is used to keep the government operating each year—FBI agents investigating cases, Border Patrol agents working our borders, doctors and nurses treating veterans at the VA, employees mailing out Social Security checks, and many other important programs and functions.

It is already at its lowest level as a share of GDP since the 1950s. It is hard to imagine any Federal investment—whether it is education or housing or highways or law enforcement, you name it—not being jeopardized by such Draconian cuts.

That is why President Reagan's—President Reagan's—former economic adviser said about this Ryan budget plan:

The Ryan plan is a monstrosity.

Ronald Reagan's economic advisor said: "The Ryan plan is a monstrosity."

The rich would receive huge tax cuts while the social safety net would be shredded to pay for it. . . . It is less of a wish list than a fairy tale utterly disconnected from the real world, backed up by make-believe numbers and unreasonable assumptions.

If that is what Ronald Reagan's economic advisor thought about it, think what regular people might think about it.

Ryan's plan isn't even an act of courage; it's just pandering to the Tea Party.

But that is what is being held hostage on this sequester.

I hope when the election season is over, no matter who wins, that Republicans will work with us—without insisting on a monstrosity, without insisting on the end of Medicare—on a balanced and reasonable plan to reduce the deficit. With a record national debt, now is no time for more tax giveaways to billionaires, as Mr. RYAN proposes, but, rather, it is the time to ensure an America where everyone gets a fair shot, everyone pitches in their fair share, and we go forward as a country

together, as we always have in our best days.

I thank the Chair and I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The senior Senator from Washington is recognized.

Mrs. MURRAY. Mr. President, I caught some of the dog-and-pony show that Republicans put on this morning on the floor of the Senate, and I thought it was pretty indicative of their approach to this entire Congress—all politics, no participation. Someone must have reminded them this morning that they are 47 days away from an election and that for the last 624 days of this Congress, they have done nothing but say no.

But I am here to say that an hour of speeches on the Senate floor cannot erase an entire Congress of obstruction. In fact, the Republicans' show this morning reminded me of a move I have seen many times before as a former preschool teacher and as a mom who has watched a lot of kids go through school. It reminded me how on the very last day of school before summer there was always one student who had not done their homework all year long, and on that last day they showed up on their best behavior, homework in hand, hoping to leave a good impression. They thought maybe this last-ditch effort could help them avoid a bad grade.

Unfortunately, it does not work that way.

So let me assure Republicans of one thing: Their record of obstruction and their refusal to compromise will not go away at the eleventh hour. One-minute speeches on the day before they go to face voters cannot paper over 100 filibusters. It will not change the fact that almost 2 years ago the Senate minority leader revealed that his No. 1 priority was—not working to get Americans back to work, it was not bringing our economy back from the brink, it was not ensuring that America remained a leader at home and abroad, no—to defeat President Obama, it was playing politics, just as we saw this morning.

There has been, seemingly, no group of Americans—well, with the exception of millionaires and billionaires—who have been spared in the Republicans' efforts to achieve their goals—not our teachers, not our college students, not our farmers, not construction workers, not first responders, not even our Nation's veterans have been spared their efforts to destroy the work of this Congress.

There was no better example of that than yesterday here on the floor of the U.S. Senate. The Veterans Jobs Corps bill that we brought to the floor included 12 provisions to help veterans find jobs.

Eight of them. Let me repeat that. Eight of those provisions were Republican ideas. This bill was fully paid for. It was based on existing grant programs that are putting Americans to

work. It would have allowed the veterans to serve their communities. It would have given unemployed veterans the self-esteem that a job provides. It would have allowed them to support their families and help ease that transition back home.

That bill came at a time when one in four young veterans today is out of work. It came at a time when our military and veteran suicide rates are outpacing combat deaths and when more and more, as we all know, veterans are coming home today. The American Legion supported it. The Iraq and Afghanistan Veterans of America supported it. The problem was, it seemed, President Obama supported it. So we know from everything we have seen and attempted on the Senate floor, no matter how good or bad of an idea, no matter which struggling American would benefit, it seems that if the President supports it, you can pretty much guarantee Senate Republicans will not.

That is the legacy the Senate Republicans are going to take home to voters, the legacy that when middle-class American families needed their help the most, they refused to compromise to get things done; that when Americans were hurting, they put politics before people; that they set a goal of not participating, and they followed through on that at every single turn. No amount of snappy speeches is going to change that. No last-minute appeals for leniency will change that record.

In fact, it is ironic that this morning all of the Republican Senators showed up on the floor because for the last 2 years, when the American people have needed them the most, they have been absent.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Florida.

THE MIDDLE EAST

Mr. RUBIO. Mr. President, I come to the floor of the Senate to talk briefly about an amendment on which we may or may not get a vote. It is an amendment by my colleague, Senator PAUL. It really is directly related to the issues that have happened around the world in the last week and a half. We certainly watched in horror as our Ambassador, a fantastic and honorable American, along with three of his colleagues in the American consulate in Benghazi, was murdered last week. So I wanted to talk briefly about that because it really is an important moment in our foreign policy in the region.

Let me begin by expressing our deep condolences for that loss. All the members of the families of those folks who have died over there, our hearts are with them, our prayers are with them. We thank them for their brave service to our country and to the cause of freedom.

We have the right to be angry. The American people are angry and rightfully so. For years we have been investing our taxpayer dollars in aid to that region, and yet we turn on the television and we see these protests