

actually paid for and meets a sense of a frugal government but smart spending. It is time to show the American people that we can govern, that we can actually pass legislation in a regular order, conducting ourselves with civility as we debate our amendments.

We have to keep America rolling. This is a jobs bill. One of the best ways to put people to work is through infrastructure projects. It builds America and builds our economy. This bill will contribute to saving over 1.8 million jobs and actually creates new jobs in construction, in the supply chain, and in design and engineering, and all the vendors it supports.

In my own home State we estimate that 10,000 jobs will be created if we pass this bill. I cannot speak about this in a more firm and insistent way. When I met with the building trades guys, it was a bleak conversation with the unemployment rate in construction still sky-high. This bill will jump-start the economy. All the people who analyze this type of data say that for every dollar we spend on infrastructure construction, we get \$2 in economic output back into our economy through the multiplier effect.

Let's do an inventory of why this is a compelling need. We know we have a high unemployment rate and that we are running big debts and we are running deficits. One of the ways to reduce the debt and the deficit is to have people working where they are paying revenue in to the government. We also have an infrastructure deficit. Do you know that right now 700,000 bridges are structurally deficient? That is not a fact, that is a danger zone. Fifty percent of our roads are in need of serious repair. More than 4 million people travel over these bridges every day. This would address that kind of problem.

Then there is this whole issue of, again, roads, highways, byways, and beltways. There is also the issue of mass transit. One of the parts of the bill I am most proud of is creating Federal safety standards for the metro systems nationwide.

On June 22, 2009, there was a terrible accident in the national capital region. Nine people were killed and 50 more injured in a terrible metro transit accident when a red line train struck another train. The woman who was the conductor on that train tried valiantly to save her passengers. She died as a result. Well, we went to the funerals, we listened to the people, and we always say: We will never forget, but we do. Well, I didn't forget and the Maryland delegation didn't forget. BEN CARDIN didn't forget, CHRIS VAN HOLLEN didn't forget, and DONNA EDWARDS didn't forget. We worked very hard in creating legislation. The first thing we did was listen to the National Transportation Safety Board that gave us recommendations and said there was not only a failure of Metro being fit for duty, but all of the transit systems in America face this kind of risk where there is a failure of technology, the

failure of cars to be crash resistant, the failure to have exit doors, and the failure to have a black box.

When you look at the Congress, we are the failure. Give us an F because we have safety standards for how you open a bottle cap but not how you open a subway car in a disaster. So it wasn't Senator BARB making up safety rules on her own; we went and listened to the National Transit Safety Board. I put in legislation to give the Federal Transit Administration the authority to establish and enforce national safety standards for Metro. We had aggressive oversight hearings. Metro leadership initially was dragging its axles, but I wouldn't take no for an answer. We shook up the management, we shook up the board, and now I want to shake up the Congress.

I want to thank Senator BOB MENENDEZ. He had a parallel bill. I want to thank TIM JOHNSON, the chair of the committee. They have taken my ideas and have actually done a version of their own, and working together we have come up with a great solution that has bipartisan support. This checklist for change that I insisted on would replace the oldest cars in the fleet. It would develop real-time automatic controls so that technology would have redundancy in it. It would develop a training and certificate program so that the personnel not only know how to operate their cars but what to do in the danger zones. Runaway cars make a great movie. Denzel Washington did that one, but I don't want to see another movie where there is another transit system that went through the horrific accident here in the national capital region.

In this checklist for change legislation, working again with Senator MENENDEZ, my colleague Senator CARDIN, whom I cannot give enough credit to, our new bill gives the Transportation Secretary, Mr. LaHood, authority to establish and enforce safety standards, and allows Federal funding for these safety improvements. I am pleased that this was inculcated.

The story goes one step farther, and this is an example. Last year, through the appropriations, I was able to get funding, working with Senator MURRAY, to be able to replace the Metro cars, the ones that are old, dated, and cannot withstand all the problems I just enumerated.

I am going to tell you the rest of the story as if Paul Harvey were on the floor. A couple of weeks ago during one of our work weeks when we were visiting our constituents, I went to a place called Knorr Brakes in Carroll County, which was once very rural. Knorr Brakes actually makes the brakes for these Metro cars and makes the brakes for Amtrak and makes the brakes for many transit systems in the United States of America. Because of the improvements at Metro, they have been able to hire more people.

I wish you could have walked that factory floor with me. It is not your

grandfather's factory floor, which was often dark and dangerous. It is clean, uses the best of engineering, a few robots, engineers, with skilled blue-collar workers who are machinists who are working on this very specialized equipment. These brakes have to work, and they are the best in the world. Workers in Maryland are the best in the world. Yes, they are part of a German holding company, so we are ready to be global, and at the same time they are fixing not only Washington's Metro but they are working on transit systems.

My whole point is smart funding in the area of infrastructure and in transportation safety creates American jobs. Every time we modernize our transit fleet, we are building railroad cars in the United States of America. Many of those brakes that will go on that car will be made in Maryland by Maryland workers, competing with other American companies. And you know what. That is what it is all about. That is smart funding that creates safety and creates jobs.

I want to thank the Banking Committee for including this, and I also want to thank all three committees: Banking, Environment, and Public Works, under the leadership of Senator BOXER and Senator INHOFE, Senator BAUCUS, Senator GRASSLEY, Senator TIM JOHNSON, and my colleague from Alabama, Senator SHELBY.

This could be a great day. This could be a great day or a great week. But, yes, while we are working on the payroll tax and its temporary holiday, the real thing we could get done this week is to pass this legislation. America will be safer, our economy will grow, and it will be a win-win situation.

Madam President, I want to thank you for your kind attention. I want to thank all my colleagues who worked on a bipartisan basis. We actually listened to each other. I had a set of ideas. Others had as well. Some had flashing lights about costs, we went back and forth, and that is the subject of negotiation, and we were able to do it. I think we have come up with a great bill for surface transportation. We have come up with a great bill for transit safety, and I am going to be happy to vote for it. Let's get Congress rolling so we can get our economy rolling.

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

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

Mr. BARRASSO. Madam 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.

A SECOND OPINION

Mr. BARRASSO. Madam President, I come to the floor because of a new report that has come out by the chief economist of Gallup, the polling organization, dated today, February 15, 2012. The headline is: "Health Costs,

Gov't Regulations Curb Small Business Hiring.'

As a Member of the Senate as well as a physician who has taken care of families across the State of Wyoming for about a quarter of a century, I am concerned about jobs in this country, the economy in this country, and also the health care needs of the American people, which is why week after week I come to the Senate floor with a doctor's second opinion about a health care law that was supposed to give people what they were looking for, which was the care they need, from the doctor they want, at a cost they can afford.

Regrettably, what this President and this Senate and this House—at the time controlled by the Democrats—gave them is something very different. So the result of this report today—first line: U.S. small business owners who aren't hiring, that is 85 percent of the 600 who were surveyed, those small business owners who are not hiring are being asked: Why not?

Nearly half the small business owners point to the potential health care costs and government regulations as two big reasons. Those worried about the potential cost of health care: 48 percent. Those worried about new government regulations: 46 percent.

But yet when the President addressed the Nation about health care, what he promised was that if people liked the care they had, they could keep it, and they would see their premiums drop by \$2,500 a year a family.

When I have townhall meetings, I ask how many people believe the health care costs are going to go up as a result of the health care law. Every hand goes up in the room. So the President has misled the American people both in terms of the cost of the health care law as well as he misled the people in regard to regulations. He stood in front of us in the House of Representatives as he gave his State of the Union Address and talked about removing expensive regulations. But that is not what the small business owners, those who create the jobs in this country, that is not what they are finding.

Then the President came out with his budget on Monday. It is his fiscal year 2013 budget. As I have said before, it is "debt on arrival." The Obama budget spends \$3.8 trillion. It runs a deficit of nearly \$1 trillion. It raises taxes by nearly \$1.9 trillion. It is the largest tax increase in the history of our country, and it is the fourth year in a row to run a deficit of over \$1 trillion.

Yet the President goes on. To me, this is another clear example of President Obama's lack of leadership and his bad habit of saying one thing and doing the exact opposite. Instead of saving money, which he promises, he just spends more. Instead of leveling with the American people about our fiscal future, he misleads them.

So I would like to focus on one specific part of this budget. It is the part referring to and regarding the Presi-

dent's health care law. As we all remember, the President promised the American people repeatedly, not just once but repeatedly, that his health care reform would not add a dime to the deficit. Two years later, the American people know that is just not true. In fact, the President's new budget asks for almost \$1 billion—\$1 billion, that is 1,000 million—\$1 billion to fund his health care exchange.

As The Hill newspaper recently reported, "The health reform law did not set aside any money specifically for the creation of the Federal exchanges." Let me repeat that. The health care law did not set aside any money specifically for the creation of the Federal exchanges.

Two years ago, did the President and my friends on the other side of the aisle seriously believe Washington would be able to implement an unprecedented health care exchange for free, that it would just be free? Of course not. But the fact is, they knowingly—knowingly—ignored the costs of the President's major new entitlement program. Why?

To try to score a political victory. What do we know about that victory? We know it is going to be bad for patients, bad for the providers, the nurses and doctors who take care of those patients, and bad for the American taxpayers. The health care law, when it was crammed down the throats of the American people and forced through Congress, we knew it was unpopular then, and we know it is even more unpopular today.

The whole time the Democrats were drafting the bill behind closed doors, right outside this Senate Chamber, they knew it would cost American taxpayers billions and billions of dollars. But they did not want to admit it. They did not admit it. They refused to admit it. So they shaded the numbers. They punted this down the road. Here we are 2 years later and now they are finally trying to pay for it—listed in the President's budget.

To make matters worse, the 2013 Obama budget wants to spend \$290 million for "consumer beneficiary education and outreach" within the exchanges. What does this mean? It basically means they want to educate Americans about the exchanges in the health care law to the tune of 290 million of taxpayer dollars.

I think it is important to keep the American people informed. But my question is: Why are President Obama and the Democrats in Congress focused on educating people about the health care law now? Why? Why didn't they take the time 2 years ago to educate the American people about the exchanges and the costs of doing this?

We know the reason. The reason is because they knew the American people would never support the new law, would never give up their freedoms. Instead, the White House and Democrats in Congress covered up the costs, drafted the bill behind closed doors, and jammed it through Congress.

Now the financial bills are coming due, but the checks are not in the mail. The United States is running out of money and running out of money fast. Instead of proposing a serious budget that would get our country back on the right track, the President has put forward not a serious budget but a campaign document. No matter what he says, he is much more interested in winning votes now than in winning what he calls the future.

Earlier this week, the President spoke to students at a community college. He said his budget would make their futures brighter. I watched on television as he said that. His words could not have been further from the truth. The fact is, the President and his budget will make these students have to work even harder to pay off the Nation's increasingly growing debt. These students and all future generations of Americans will pay for the choices they never made and programs they do not want.

The new \$800 million pricetag on the exchanges is bad, and that is just the beginning. In fact, the cost of the President's health care law is going to continue to skyrocket each and every year. When we are already \$15 trillion in debt, we cannot allow this health care law to move forward. When we look at trillion-dollar deficits for each of the 4 years of the Obama Presidency, we say this cannot continue. Yet when we look at this budget, it adds \$11 trillion to the national debt over the next 10 years.

We need to repeal this health care law. We need to replace it with something that will not make it harder for future generations to get out of debt, and we need to pass a law that will allow Americans to get what they wanted in the first place; the care they need, from a doctor they want, at a price they can afford.

I yield the floor and suggest 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. MERKLEY. Madam 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.

SECURE RURAL SCHOOLS

Mr. MERKLEY. Madam President, I rise to draw my colleagues' attention to an issue of great importance to our rural communities. If Congress does not act, many of our rural counties will face an increasingly dire state of affairs in the months to come. Across the United States, timber counties are facing local budgets suddenly and deeply in the red. This fiscal crisis could mean reduced schooldays, fewer sheriffs, more offenders on the street, and cuts to other basic county services.

Congress has the power to avert this impending disaster, and Congress must