

care law is going to go down or it is going to get worse?" Again, all of the hands went up.

Now what these same people are learning is that the IRS is the chief Federal enforcer for key parts of President Obama's health care law. The people of my State and the people around the country do not like it at all.

What we are going to have as a result of the health care law is a much larger Internal Revenue Service. They are going to have broad new powers—powers to investigate, powers to monitor, and powers to tax the American people. At the same time, there is real doubt about whether the agency is even up to the job.

America's middle-class families don't want, don't need, and cannot afford more taxes. They don't want, they don't need, and they cannot afford a more powerful Internal Revenue Service, with more agents looking into the details of their health care choices, but that is exactly what President Obama and every Democrat in this body have given to the American people.

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

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

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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 President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

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

TRIBUTE TO DR. SANDY GREENBERG

Mr. COONS. Mr. President, I rise today to join with my colleague, Senator PAUL, to discuss the life and work of an exceptional American, Dr. Sandy Greenberg, who is here with us today, along with his wife Sue and his sister Brenda.

Sandy, in my view, is an honorary Delawarean because he spends a month every year at one of our most beautiful beaches, Rehoboth Beach. But he is much more than that. A successful businessman and philanthropist, Sandy has a wide variety of interests and life experiences. He has founded and run software and technology companies, he is a pioneer in the use of technology in medicine, and helped bring telemedicine to rural health care facilities as chairman of the Rural Health Care Corporation.

He was appointed by President Clinton to the Board of the National Science Foundation. As a young man he took a break from his studies at Columbia, where he roomed with Art Garfunkel—a well-known musician—to work as a fellow in Lyndon Johnson's office.

All of this on its own merits would make for a life well-lived and a substantive, meaningful contribution to our country. But there is one thing I have not yet mentioned. At the young

age of 19, Sandy went blind. He lost his sight, and with that all likely hope of the successful completion of his college career or a successful career in life. He was told by the social workers who met with him after glaucoma stole his sight from him that his future would likely consist of assembling screwdriver kits in a sheltered workshop in his hometown in upstate New York.

But because of the kindness and the intervention of his roommates—Art Garfunkel and Jerry Spire—and others who volunteered—Marc Mukasey—who dedicated countless hours reading to him, he was able to finish his class work, to be successful in completing his studies at Columbia, and then to go on to Harvard Law School and to Oxford, and then to go further and further.

He has lived his entire adult life and achieved a career most of us can only dream of while also plunged in darkness. His exceptional courage and his perseverance don't end there. Today he wants to serve others and catalyze a transformative shift in the health of our Nation by ending blindness by the end of this decade.

Is this outrageous? Is this audacious? Maybe. But that is what experts said when President Kennedy stood before this Congress—in the same year, 1961, that Sandy lost his sight—and challenged our Nation to put a man on the Moon by the end of that decade. The best and brightest minds, the top scientists and researchers of Kennedy's generation rose to that challenge and achieved his impossible dream. Now, for this generation, Sandy and his wife Sue have once again raised our sights and challenged the best scientific and medical researchers in the world to rise to an enormous challenge—a challenge that has been with us from the beginning of mankind.

In the Bible itself we hear of blindness, of people who could not see with their eyes but only their hearts. For millennia, humanity has struggled to understand and overcome blindness. Yet today we have the scientific tools necessary to reach for a cure—to restore the physical sight so many of us take for granted to those who otherwise live in darkness; to bring to life the 39 million people in this world who live without sight, many in the world's poorest countries, at a time when experts already believe 80 percent of blindness can be prevented or cured.

We know we can do it. Just think of what an awe-inspiring accomplishment this would be, what a triumph of the human mind, of individual initiative, of collaborative efforts of the scientific method, of modern technology, and of our investment in the belief that America can and should be a world leader in curing the diseases that have ailed humanity for generations.

Mr. President, a majority of all research scientists in human history are alive today. That remarkable fact alone carries with it great potential. That is why Sandy and his wife Sue

created the Prize to End Blindness by 2020, to take advantage of this incredible historic opportunity to bring together scientists and researchers and end blindness by the end of this decade. To inspire them, the Greenbergs have provided a prize of more than \$2 million in gold. Why gold? Well, it is a reminder of the color of the beautiful shimmering sunsets Sandy and Susan enjoyed together in the waning days of Sandy's sightedness, and it is a reminder of the beauty of the challenge of a prize to restore sight to millions who live in blindness.

Mr. President, I am no expert on the health or science of the eye, but we are blessed to have in this Senate two Members who are. We had some supportive comments that will be given by Senator BOOZMAN of Arkansas, but I am particularly glad and honored to be joined today by Senator PAUL, by Dr. PAUL, who is not only a tireless advocate for the people of Kentucky, but who, by professional training and background, is an ophthalmologist.

I yield the floor at this time.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Kentucky.

Mr. PAUL. I thank Senator COONS for inviting me, both figuratively and literally, across the aisle to join him on this side—I am glad to be here today—and for introducing me to this prize that Sandy Greenberg has brought forward to end blindness.

I am an eye surgeon. I have also done research on glaucoma and have been a longtime member of Lions Club International, whose primary research and goal is the prevention of blindness.

One of the heroes to the Lions' eye movement and to our work worldwide on blindness has been Helen Keller who, at the age of 19 months, lost not only her vision but her hearing. In 1925, she came to the Lions Club International with this mandate—and this is part of her speech from that day:

You have heard how through a little word dropped from the fingers of another, a ray of light from another soul touched the darkness of my mind and I found myself, found the world, found God. It is because my teacher learned about me and broke through the dark, silent imprisonment which held me that I am able to work for myself and for others. It is the caring we want more than the money. The gift without the sympathy and interest of the giver is empty. If you care, if we can make the people of this great country care, the blind will indeed triumph over blindness.

The opportunity I bring to you, Lions, is this: To foster and sponsor the work of the American Foundation for the Blind. Will you not help me hasten the day when there shall be no preventable blindness; no little deaf, blind child untaught; no blind man or woman unaided?

There is a long history, both in our country and in other countries around the world, of private philanthropy and these prizes. Going back to the early 18th century, there was a prize for longevity. The Harrisons, father and son, worked for nearly 40 years to develop a clock to precisely measure where they were on the Earth, to measure longitude.

We currently have something called the X Prize, which gave money last year to a company that developed a technology to speed up the cleanup of oil in the ocean after BP's disaster.

Siemens Foundation gives a \$100,000 prize. That was given last year to a 17-year-old girl from California who developed a nanoparticle that, with a chemotherapy agent, goes directly to treat tumors. A prize from Siemens was also given to 15-year-old Benjamin Clark, who won the prize for his work in how stars are born.

I love the idea, and I think it is underappreciated, of private philanthropy. Today, I am happy to be here with you to congratulate Sandy Greenberg for putting forward this prize, and I hope it will bring some results.

I think there is within our grasp the ability to treat and, hopefully, prevent blindness.

Mr. COONS. I thank Senator PAUL. I ask unanimous consent to enter into a colloquy with my colleague from Kentucky.

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

Mr. COONS. Mr. President, it certainly hasn't escaped the expert knowledge of my colleagues here today that 2020—the date of the prize of Sue and Sandy whom we have spoken about—is also the numerical indication of perfect vision. So the goal to end blindness by 2020—which is what the Sandy and Sue Greenberg prize is calling us toward—is also a year on the calendar, a year just over 7 years away. In those 7 years, Sandy Greenberg has the courage, the audacity, the strength to believe we can end blindness, working together, by 2020. It is a goal that could transform our society, our world, and the lives of millions who live in darkness today. We can do it.

At earlier times in our history, as Senator PAUL has just reflected, we have come together in response to audacious goals or inspiring prizes to conquer other debilitating diseases. One that Sandy Greenberg shared with me when we sat together and first talked about this was polio, a crippling disease that struck terror into the hearts of parents every summer.

Dr. Jonas Salk convinced medical researchers at charities such as the March of Dimes to instead turn their focus from treatment, with devices such as the iron lung, to ending the disease itself. Because of that kind of forward thinking, polio has now been largely eradicated and does not threaten children in the United States, although it remains in a few isolated outposts around the world.

We can see even more cutting-edge examples today in my home State of Delaware. Just earlier this week, I met with scientific researchers Dr. Kmiec from Delaware State University and the leaders of a company called Orthogenics, who are taking on the audacious goal of ending sickle cell anemia. That particular effort—banishing this disease from bodies around the

world through research and development—is something supported by public-private partnership.

In the end, private contributions, extraordinary generosity by Sandy and Sue Greenberg and his family, are critically important.

I happen to believe there is also a vital role for a partnership with the National Institutes of Health, Centers for Disease Control, and others that have the unique ability to bring researchers together, hopefully for efficient and effective advances in medicine.

To continue the citations of the great disability rights advocate Helen Keller: "Alone, we can do little; together, we can do so much."

Even in this era of austerity, these times of budget crunching and belt-tightening, in my view there are few areas more important for our sustained investment than the development of treatments and cures for a devastating, life-changing health condition such as blindness.

In my view, there is also a pressing economic element to this humanitarian equation. Economists have said that most of the new wealth created in this country in the last century came from biomedical research and its application to fighting and changing the human condition. They have told us that curing and treating ancient diseases and conditions is a lot of what has driven the extraordinary economic growth of this country in the last century.

We know that when we as a nation invest in making possible cutting-edge advances, interconnected networks of learning make possible the next gigantic leap. I am so grateful to Sue and Sandy for making possible this challenge, for putting out this pot of gold to literally lift the sights of teams all over the world, of individuals, of communities of effort. It is an effort that could literally bring sight to the blind.

Senator PAUL, any closing thoughts?

Mr. PAUL. I think what is great about the prize is it didn't set a short and limited goal. It goes for the whole thing: They want to prevent and cure blindness.

I think we need more big thinking. We need to talk about let's cure diabetes, let's cure AIDS. Sometimes it takes an incremental approach. But sometimes it takes a big, grand or bold vision.

The Senator mentioned Dr. Salk. In the early days, with the polio vaccine, some actually died from the vaccine. He had to move forward despite some obstacles and despite some setbacks.

Originally, the whole idea of vaccination came from Dr. Boylston in Boston, preceding the time of our Revolutionary War. There, it was a live vaccine taken from the actual pustules of someone who had smallpox, lanced it, stuck it into the pustules, and then cut into a person who did not have smallpox and gave them the disease. He tried to give them a mild variant of this. For

this, Dr. Boylston was hounded through the streets and mobs came to the house. The persons he chose to vaccinate first were his kids. That took a very bold step forward to vaccinate his kids. His kids survived, and the rest is history.

George Washington had his family inoculated. Back at the time of the Revolutionary War, more people died from communicable diseases than died from actual bullets. This was true in most wars up until this century.

I think it takes bold vision, and I think Sandy Greenberg will help to move this along with this prize. I love the idea of incentives. We are a country built on incentives. I don't think any scientist is going to jump forward and say, I am doing it only for the prize. But prizes don't hurt, and we should acknowledge that these scientists who can come forward and may come forward with a great cure should be rewarded.

I would like to thank Sandy Greenberg and his family for setting up this prize. I hope that out of this some great good will come for those who have gone blind and for prevention.

Mr. COONS. I thank, Senator PAUL. I, like the Senator, am confident that some great good will come out of this bold vision, out of this clear initiative.

As we look forward at the health care debates that have raged throughout this Chamber and this country in the last few years, I will simply say in closing, as we look to the future of the United States, there is a path forward that says the right way to deal with skyrocketing health care costs and the fiscal challenges they provide is to simply crunch down, to limit, to narrow, to cut off access, and to manage downward.

A competing and I think a more compelling and I think, frankly, a more American view is we should take bold risks. We should innovate. We should dare to speak of curing diseases that are immensely harmful and expenses that are challenges and burdens for our whole country and the world.

This prize—this challenge from Sue and Sandy Greenberg—is something I think should lift the sights of all of us in this country to the very real possibilities of working together to find exceptional cures.

I thank the Presiding Officer for letting us speak about this extraordinary American, his wife and his family and his quest to end blindness by the end of this decade.

I urge anyone interested in this topic and interested in working with us further to visit the Web site endblindnessby2020.com. I thank Sandy and Sue Greenberg for their courage, their perseverance, and their commitment to bringing light to millions of their fellow men and women around the globe.

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

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

EXTENSION OF MORNING BUSINESS

Mr. COONS. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that morning business be extended until 6 p.m., with all the provisions of the previous order remaining in effect.

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

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

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

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

We are in morning business.

THE FISCAL CLIFF

Mr. COATS. Mr. President, the clock continues to tick away while we wait for the descent from the summit, when the President and Speaker BOEHNER walk out, with tablets in hand, saying we have a deal. Many of us are beginning to wonder if that is going to be achievable. We are holding our breath. But as we near the end of the year, clearly as has been stated repeatedly on the floor, the necessity of putting something together to avoid the so-called fiscal cliff, the disastrous consequences of our not acting, is clear. Tax increases for every American taxpayer, massive cuts to defense at a time when the threats around the world are as varied and as great as we have seen in a long time, other essential programs of the Federal Government being affected by that—that is the last thing we need. In this tepid economy with a lot of people out of work we are hoping for some consensus to come together to provide a long-term solution to our fiscal problem that continues to have a negative effect on our economy and, more importantly, keeps people out of work.

As that clock ticks, some are saying partisanship is too great in Washington; the country is too divided; we are not going to be able to reach a consensus here in terms of how to address this problem.

I disagree with that. Over the last 2 years and more, we have had a number of proposals brought forward on a bipartisan basis. It started with Simpson-Bowles; Bowles, the former Chief of Staff to President Clinton, and Al Simpson, a Member of this body for a long time, recognized as two individuals who can take a look at the situation we are in and make a proposal. That has been running 2-and-some

years now. That was presented, the President's own commission, yet that was rejected by the President.

Then of course there was the Gang of Six, later the Gang of Eight, which met on a bipartisan basis for a number of months, both sides contributing to an attempt at a package put together to submit to the Congress and to the White House. That was a bipartisan effort. The supercommittee of 12, 6 Democrats, 6 Republicans—they were unfortunately unable to come to an agreement.

That has brought us to this particular point in time because failure of our effort to do this ended up in a procedure which drives us here at the end of the year toward this so-called cliff. I have been talking to a number of my colleagues, Republicans and Democrats and others, and there is a majority consensus here for putting together a credible long-term package to deal with our fiscal situation. That would send a message to the world and send a message to our citizens that the Congress and the government are serious about addressing our fiscal situation and putting us on a path to fiscal health. In doing so, it would restore the confidence of the American people. It would restore the confidence of investors around the world that America is getting its act together at a time when Europe is struggling, at a time when Japan is struggling, when China's growth is slowing down. The world is looking to the United States to take the lead as it has so many times and in so many crises before. Yet all they see is a standoff and the inability to do what I think we all know we need to do.

The choice is very clear. We have come to the point where I think most people looking at this understand that if we do not act now, the so-called kicking the can down the road no longer is a viable opportunity. It no longer is something we can afford to do. There is a group called The Can Kicks Back. I can see why the American people are frustrated over our inability to come to some agreement on this.

Obviously we hope the President and Speaker BOEHNER will bring us that grand bargain which we can evaluate and address before the end of the year. I have frequently said from this podium and back to the people I represent in Indiana, if we do not start addressing the spending problem, it doesn't matter how much we raise in taxes or revenue, it doesn't matter how much else we do to address our problem—if we do not address the out-of-control Federal spending, we cannot get from there to here. We cannot put forward a credible package.

It is no secret that over the years—without laying the blame on one party or another—our spending has exceeded our revenues now to the extent that we are plunging into serious debt and serious deficit; over \$1 trillion a year accumulated over the last 4 years, and a

significant amount of money before that. It is unsustainable. Whether you are a liberal economist or conservative economist, whether Democrat, Republican, Independent, or Libertarian, just do the math—and it is simple math; it is not calculus, it is third-grade math. You cannot keep spending \$1 trillion a year more than you collect without having severe consequences.

The consequence we have had is a very slow recovery from a very deep recession that has stifled job growth, stifled innovation, kept people out of work. The latest statistics are that over 23 million Americans are either unemployed, underemployed, or have simply given up looking for a job, frustrated trying to find any work whatsoever, and a staggering percentage of those unemployed is young people, people under 30.

Robert Samuelson wrote an article a couple of days ago asking, is this the lost generation, basically saying that those in the under-30 category may have lost—we may lose a whole generation, those who will not have the opportunity to gain meaningful employment, to realize their dreams, to participate in the American dream of getting a good job, of marrying and having a family, of buying a house, paying the mortgage—doing the things which our generation has enjoyed. We have been given that opportunity, but a generation behind us is being denied that opportunity, and will it be the lost generation.

The answer to that question falls on the shoulders of those of us here—not only at the White House with the President and his advisers but with the Congress, the Senate and the House. We now have an opportunity, maybe an historic opportunity—I do believe it is an historic opportunity—to right the wrong and to put in place something that, yes, will have an impact on us. Yes, it is medicine we will have to take for our excessive spending, but it will bring about the cure.

How many of us are thinking about the future for our children, our grandchildren, the Nation's children, the Nation's grandchildren? How many of us can stand here and simply say we are doing OK at our level, our generation, but we are not willing to make any sacrifice whatsoever to ensure that this country can provide for future generations? Most agree if we do not have a package that has \$4 to \$4.5 trillion of spending reduction over the next 10 years it will not be a credible package. There is also now almost universal agreement that we must incorporate long-term entitlement reform. Mandatory spending—over which we have no control of spending levels—and interest costs now eat up 64 percent of our budget and denies those who come to us about improving our roads, providing medical research, supporting education, whatever your interest—those interests are receiving less support than they have before. They will continue to see less support to the