

and child in America. That is what every individual owes, every individual in this country owes of that \$16.4 trillion in debt. That is not fair to future generations.

It is up to us as leaders to look at these things and make decisions today that are in the best interests of future generations. I think it has been sort of a tradition in this country, a heritage, if you will, for one generation of Americans to sacrifice so that the future generation, the next generation of Americans may have a better life, a better standard of living, a better quality of life.

That is certainly something that is true where I come from in South Dakota and where the Chair comes from in North Dakota. We represent people who understand that you sacrifice so that the next generation and those who come after you have a better life than you had.

If we don't change the way we are doing things, this next generation will be the first generation of Americans where that is not true. Literally, they will have a lower standard of living and a lower quality of life than what we experienced because we weren't willing to live within our means. This is because we continued to spend money we didn't have, we continued to borrow money from China, and we will hand the bill to future generations.

It is unconscionable, given this picture—and, again, a picture speaks a thousand words—that we haven't done a budget in the Senate in the last 4 years. There is always a blame game played in Washington, DC, and I understand that both sides have contributed over the years. When my party was in charge of the Congress we spent too much. Obviously, since that time, since we have been out of the majority in Congress the numbers have increased dramatically.

If you look at the amount of debt we piled up just in the last 4 years under the current administration, it is about \$6 trillion that we have added to the debt in that amount of time. The spending is exploding. The tax revenues are staying fairly steady over time, as I have pointed out with this particular graphic.

One thing we know for certain is that raising taxes doesn't solve the problem. If the President got everything he wanted in terms of additional tax increases, and that would be this purple line right here, it doesn't come anywhere close to addressing the amount of spending we have already put on the books. We are going to have to borrow to pay and hand that bill to future generations. You can only do that for so long. It is high time that the Senate got on board and started doing the budget.

I served on the Budget Committee for the last 2 years. I had hoped that being on the Budget Committee would be a place where a lot of big debates would occur about how to deal with these big fiscal issues that are facing our coun-

try. I turned out to be wrong. We didn't do a budget, we didn't mark up one, we didn't put one on the floor of the Senate. We didn't vote, we didn't have amendments, and we didn't do anything to address this fiscal crisis. To be fair, the House of Representatives, every single year, on time, has passed a budget.

The President of the United States, who needs to be a party to this, is the only 1 of 307 million Americans who can sign a bill into law, can engage the American public and the Congress in a way that would address this. The budgets he submitted to the Congress, when they have been voted on in the Senate and the House, haven't received a single vote, not a single vote. Neither Republicans or Democrats in the House or the Senate have voted for the budgets the President has submitted.

Why? Because they are not serious. The President hasn't taken this issue seriously. Neither has the majority in the Senate, where we haven't had a budget now for 4 consecutive years.

It is high time that changed. I hope it will. I am encouraged, actually, by what I have been hearing from my colleagues. This year, perhaps now, finally, after 4 years, we will actually do a budget. We may put a plan in place for how we are going to address this fiscal crisis, this amount of spending that is going to bankrupt the country unless we take steps to avert it.

There are lots of ideas out there. It is not like we don't know what the issues are, like we don't know what the problems are. We do. There have been many bipartisan commissions that have studied this and have examined it thoroughly, that have all come to the same conclusion with regard to what the various problems are—and, frankly, for that matter, what the solutions are.

My colleague, Senator HATCH, was down here earlier this morning talking about some of those suggestions. Many of those suggestions, as I have said, have come from bipartisan commissions. We know if we do nothing, we are going to bankrupt the country and ensure that the programs that many Americans rely on today are not going to be available to future generations of Americans.

I would hope this is the year in which we do a budget, and this is the year in which the President engages in this discussion in a meaningful way that allows us to put in place a path that will avert what is going to be a major crisis. The problem is not that we tax too little, it is that we spend too much.

Madam President, I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Vermont.

Mr. LEAHY. Madam President, I would note that, of course, we have passed a budget, and that is why we are facing sequestration now. That wasn't just a resolution; that was an actual law, signed by the President. A lot of people who voted for it don't like it, but we voted for it.

KERRY NOMINATION

Mr. LEAHY. Madam President, I want to commend President Obama for nominating Senator KERRY to be our next Secretary of State. There are few, if any, people in America today who have had the breadth of experience that Senator KERRY has had: as a military officer, as a highly decorated veteran, as a Lieutenant Governor, as a U.S. Senator, and as chairman of the Foreign Relations Committee. He is exceptionally well qualified to be the next Secretary of State.

JOHN KERRY is a leader of extraordinary intellect, wisdom, and insight. To those of us who have watched him, worked with him, and traveled with him over the years, it is crystal clear that he is a natural diplomat. He lives and breathes the art of diplomacy. He is instinctively drawn to understanding and addressing the global security challenges of our time.

He is also multilingual. I have heard Senator KERRY in meetings in other capitals of the world, and I have watched those who were there pay special attention to what he had to say as he conversed in their language. This is someone who does not need on-the-job training. He has been learning the job over the course of four decades of public service.

I chair the Appropriations Subcommittee on the Department of State and Foreign Operations. In that role, I will look forward to working closely with Senator KERRY in his new position as Secretary of State, to provide the resources necessary to promote and protect U.S. interests around the world.

It is a formidable assignment. We face daunting threats from religious extremism, nuclear proliferation, climate change, growing competition for energy, water, and other natural resources—all amid the obligations of deficit and debt reduction. But these threats and challenges present opportunities if we approach them intelligently.

Some in Congress have an almost xenophobic attitude. They would have us retreat. They would slash our contribution to the United Nations and weaken our ability to build alliances, which would only embolden our adversaries.

They would cut the State Department's budget at a time when our diplomats and consular officers, many of whom work long hours in dangerous places, already are stretched to the limit. Then they criticize and politicize when tragedies happen.

We saw that yesterday, when members of the other body criticized Secretary of State Clinton for lapses in diplomatic security, only a week after they prevented passage of my amendment that would have allowed for the transfer of unused State Department funds to improve security at U.S. embassies around the world. Let's stop the hypocrisy.

Some here would roll back funding for international development programs, which help to create political stability in conflict-prone regions and build markets for U.S. exports, on the grounds that these funds would be better spent at home.

They miss the point. Ninety-nine percent of the Federal budget is spent on domestic programs. The notion that somehow the wealthiest, most powerful nation on Earth is an island, and that we can ignore what is happening in the world around us is foolhardy, and is dangerous.

JOHN KERRY understands this, and he knows that appropriations begin with Congress. In times of close scrutiny of all aspects of the Federal budget and fierce competition for funds among Federal agencies, he will need to make his case up here repeatedly, and I will work with him to do that. We have to convince Congress and the American people why the State Department's budget is important. As Secretary of State one can have the best policies and the best plans to implement them. But if you don't have the resources, if you don't have the people to do it, the best plans in the world don't go very far.

Secretary Clinton has done an outstanding job. I have told her that I stand in awe of what she has accomplished throughout the world and within the State Department. We all owe her a debt of gratitude for her steady hand and tireless energy as Secretary of State. I have traveled with her to other countries. I have seen how she approaches problems, always prepared and with such energy. Every American should be proud to be represented by her. She has done an extraordinary job in reintroducing America to the world after the missteps following 9/11 that caused so much damage to our image and authority abroad.

Her successor also has not only a hard act to follow, but he also understands, as we all do, that America must continuously demonstrate to the rest of the world what we stand for as a people.

I believe the Congress and the American people, and I think, in a way, the world, is fortunate to have a nominee for the position as qualified as Senator KERRY. I will enthusiastically vote for him when his name comes before the Senate.

Madam President, seeing no other person seeking recognition, as President pro tempore of this body, I am glad to see you in the role of Presiding Officer. I realize you can't respond to this, but in your first month in the Senate you are actually filling the pivotal role in this body, and I appreciate it.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The assistant bill clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

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

EXTENSION OF MORNING BUSINESS

Mr. BARRASSO. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent that the period of morning business be extended until 3:30 p.m. today, and that all provisions of the previous order remain in effect.

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

THE DEBT LIMIT

Mr. BARRASSO. Madam President, I rise today to, No. 1, welcome you and welcome all of the other new Senators who have just joined this historic body.

Along with the rest of us, you have all watched the difficult negotiations over the fiscal cliff that dominated the last few weeks of the 112th Congress. That debate was an important opportunity to talk to the American people about Washington's addiction to spending. We made clear in that debate that no amount of tax increases—no amount—would come close to wiping out Washington's debt. So as we begin the 113th Congress, we are faced with fresh opportunities to continue that conversation with the American people.

This time the debate is over whether to raise the Nation's debt limit. Last week, the President opened negotiations on this important issue by saying that he wouldn't negotiate. He did not announce this by calling the Republicans in Congress; he did it, instead, by calling a press conference.

In the last days of 2012, President Obama, in my opinion, failed to lead in the talks over avoiding the fiscal cliff. Now the President plans not to lead on the Nation's debt limit either. Whether the President leads, follows, or just gets out of the way, Washington needs real budget reform. We can't continue President Obama's pattern of untold trillions of dollars in wasteful government spending.

Over the past 4 years, President Obama has added so much to our national debt that he has already had to increase our Nation's debt limit four separate times. This includes the two largest increases in our history. No other President of the United States has needed an increase of over \$1 trillion. President Obama has asked for that much twice. While he once promised to cut the deficit in half by now, he has done just the opposite. He has added as much debt in 4 years as all the previous Presidents racked up in our country's first 225 years.

President Obama has maxed out the national credit card and now he wants a new one. In return, the President isn't willing to offer any commitments that he will try to be more responsible with that next credit card. In fact, under his latest budget, the President wants to add another \$6.4 trillion to our debt over the next 5 years. That is

the wrong direction for our Federal budget and for the Nation's future.

The President could take this opportunity to reassure hardworking American taxpayers, as well as world financial markets, that he is finally serious about reining in Washington's out-of-control spending. Instead, he has chosen to try to score political points.

This isn't the first time the President has voiced an opinion on the debt limit debate. Last December, he spoke on this subject as he, in my opinion, misrepresented decades of precedence regarding congressional consideration of the debt limit. He said that connecting debt ceiling votes and budget negotiations—connecting debt ceiling votes and budget negotiations—was something that “we had never done in our history until we did it last year.”

That statement is false. Frankly, we should be talking about responsible spending reform every time we debate any measure in Congress that involves spending money. We should certainly do it when we are debating borrowing more money.

The debt limit has been used at least 20 times in the past 60 years specifically tied to debating fiscal reform. For example, in 1954, Congress passed a temporary increase specifically as a way to control future finances. In 1967, the House actually defeated a debt limit increase so that it could force President Johnson to quit using some of the budget tricks he had been using. In 1970, the debate over the debt limit included amendments to cut defense spending, imposing a spending cap, and freezing congressional pay until Congress passed a balanced budget.

In 1983, Congress actually defeated a debt limit increase bill. Senator Russell Long, a Democrat, told his colleagues if they voted for the increase, “you are voting to continue the biggest deficits in the history of this country as far as the eye can see.”

Incidentally, the debt at that time was \$1.3 trillion. That is about how much we have added to our debt every year since President Obama was sworn in for the first time. Democrats balked at Washington having a debt over \$1.3 trillion back then. Today, the President says Republicans are doing something irresponsible for even wanting to talk about a debt of more than \$16.4 trillion.

I could go on and on with more examples, but I think you have the idea. The President says it is unprecedented for us to even ask to have this debate. Well, the President is not correct. It is not unprecedented. It is actually very common and absolutely appropriate.

There is nobody on the Republican side of the aisle here in the Senate who is saying we should not pay our bills. There is also nobody on this side of the aisle who thinks we should keep wasting taxpayer dollars without even trying to act responsibly and slow down Washington's spending. Yes, the debt limit is about paying for past obligations, but our history shows the debate