

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

over the debt limit is an absolutely appropriate time to talk about reforming Washington's future spending.

President Obama agreed to spending cuts the last time he asked for an increase in the debt limit. Now the President says he wants his credit limit increased without any effort to reduce future spending. And, of course, we all remember when he was a Senator he spoke out against raising the debt limit. He once called the need to increase the debt limit "a failure of leadership." But that was then. This is now.

The White House has floated gimmicks such as issuing a \$1 trillion coin or using the 14th amendment to raise the debt limit without congressional approval. And now the President won't negotiate responsible spending at all. His policies—his policies of the past 4 years—have buried our children and our grandchildren under a mountain of debt. America needs real budget reform, but President Obama insists on playing politics with our country's credit rating. Hard-working American taxpayers have to balance their budgets. They understand what the President does not.

The President bragged in his press conference last week that "it's been a busy and productive 4 years, and I expect the same for the next 4 years." Well, it looks like he means we can count on 4 more years of wasteful Washington spending.

This has to stop. It is time for President Obama to finally keep his promise to get America's finances in order.

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

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Ms. WARREN). The clerk will call the roll.

The assistant bill clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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 President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. MURPHY). Without objection, it is so ordered.

EXTENSION OF MORNING BUSINESS

Mr. HARKIN. I ask unanimous consent that the period for morning business be extended until 5:30 p.m. today and that all provisions of the previous order remain in effect.

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

THE FILIBUSTER

Mr. HARKIN. Mr. President, I come to the floor today to give some remarks that I give about every 2 years, I guess, when the Senate reconvenes for a new Congress. Now this is a new Congress, so once again I come here to point out that we need to make some changes in the way we operate.

I have been in this body for 28 years. I am currently eighth in seniority. As soon as Senator KERRY becomes Sec-

retary of State, I will be seventh in seniority. I am proud to represent the great State of Iowa; I am proud to be a Senator, to serve in this illustrious body. I have been in the majority and minority I think up to five times in the Senate. Before that, I served 10 years in the House. I love the Senate. It is a wonderful institution—it is, as envisioned by our Founders.

The Senate at times has been frustratingly slow to encompass the changes necessary to the smooth functioning of our country. I mention in particular the long, long struggle for civil rights and how that was held up by a small minority—which happened to be in my party, by the way, at that time.

Nonetheless, the Senate through the years has really been the Chamber that takes a long and hard look at legislation, where we have the right to amend, where we have the right to discuss and to embark upon discourse on legislation in a manner that allows even the smallest State to be represented as much as a large State. That is not true in the body that both the occupant of the chair and I used to serve in, the House. There, as you know, large States tend to dominate because we have most of the Members. But here, a Senator from Connecticut is just as important as a Senator from California or a Senator from Iowa or—let's see, what is the least populous State? I think Wyoming or Alaska—is equal to a Senator from New York or Florida or Texas or California. This has been a great equalizing body.

Having served here for this time, I think I have some perspective on this Senate. As I said, at its best, this Senate is where our great American experience in democratic self-government most fully manifests itself. It is in this body that the American people, through their elected officials, can come together collectively to debate, deliberate, and address the great issues of our time. Through our Nation's history, it has done so. In the nearly quarter of a century I have been here—well, wait, it is 28 years that I have been here, so it is over a quarter of a century—the rights of Americans have been expanded: Americans with disabilities; we have ensured health insurance for millions of Americans.

In the early 1990s we voted here on the course to eliminate the national deficit in a generation, and we are on our way to doing that.

It is because of my great reverence for this institution and my love for our country that I come to the floor today. One does not need to read the abysmal approval ratings of Congress to know that Americans are fed up and angry with this broken government. In too many critical areas, people see a Congress that is riven with dysfunction. Citizens see their legislature going from manufactured crisis to manufactured crisis. They see a legislature that is simply unable to respond effectively to the most urgent challenges of our time.

Of course, there are a myriad of reasons for this gridlock—increased partisanship; a decline in civility and comity; too much power, I believe, in the hands of special interest groups; a polarizing instant-news media; and, I might add, the increasing time demands on all of us here involved in raising large amounts of money to run for reelection. But make no mistake, a principal cause of dysfunction here in the Senate is the rampant abuse of the filibuster.

It is long past time to make the Senate a more functional body, one that is better able, as I said, to respond to our Nation's challenges. The fact is that I am not a Johnny-come-lately to filibuster reform. In January of 1995—when I was in the minority, I might add—I first introduced legislation to reform the filibuster. We got a vote on it. Obviously, we did not win, but I made my points then, and I engaged in a very good debate with Senator Byrd at that time, in 1995. You can read it in the RECORD. I think it was probably January 8, if I am not mistaken, of 1995.

At that time, I submitted a resolution because, as I said, I saw an arms race in which each side would simply escalate the use of the filibuster and abuse procedural rules to a point where we would just cease to function here in the Senate. I said that at the time. I said that what happens is when the Democrats are in the minority, they abuse the filibuster against the Republicans. Then when the Republicans become the minority, they say: You Democrats did it to us 20 times, we will do it to you 30 times. Then when it switches again and the Democrats are in the minority, they say: Republicans did it to us 30 times, we will do it 50 times. We will teach them a lesson.

On and on, the arms race is escalated. I said at the time that we might get to a point where this body simply cannot function, and sadly that is what happened.

That is why 18 years after I first submitted my proposal, I believe reform is never more urgent and necessary. The minority leader stated that reformers advocate "a fundamental change to the way the Senate operates." To the contrary, it is the abuse of the filibuster, not the reforms being advocated, that has fundamentally changed the character of this body and our entire system of government. Again, I will point out now and I will point out repeatedly in my remarks that Democrats are not guiltless in this regard by any means, but the real power grab and the real abuse has come about when the Republicans have abused this tool—one that was used sparingly for nearly 200 years.

What has happened is that effective control of the Senate and of public policy has been turned over to the minority, not to the majority that has been elected by the American people. In many cases, those who are warning of a fundamental change to the nature and culture of the Senate are the very ones