

employers. Their ability to offer quality jobs is taking its toll on our investment.

Only last week Investor's Business Daily reported that due to ObamaCare at least 258 employers cut work hours or jobs so far. Meanwhile, according to the U.S. Chamber of Commerce, 71 percent of small businesses say the law makes it harder to hire workers.

According to the July Fed Beige Book, the health care law has been cited as a job market concern. They quote from that report: "Several retailers reported that the Affordable Care Act would lead to more part-time and temporary versus full-time hiring."

The President's health care law is smothering employers in bureaucratic redtape, uncertainty, and taxes. Already more than 20,000 pages of regulations have come from the 2,700-page law. The time and cost of complying with these regulations places a serious burden on the ability to spend time and energy creating new jobs. Time and money that would be spent opening a new store, increasing hours, upgrading equipment, which would create more jobs, is instead being spent on lawyers and consultants who have to help small businesses interpret all of the regulations, all the requirements, and all the mandates created by this administration's health care law.

Poll after poll has shown that ObamaCare is extremely unpopular among a majority of Americans. According to a recent CNN poll conducted by ORC International, nearly 60 percent of Americans said they oppose the Democratic signature law. I would hope the President would begin to be honest with the American people about what this law truly means for jobs and our economy, and I would hope he would begin to listen to Americans. If he does, he will find what most of us have discovered a long time ago; that is, the American people don't want this and American employers and small businesses believe it will lead to fewer jobs and lower take-home pay for the people they employ.

I hope in the days ahead, as we focus on the economy—and if the President is sincere about his pivot back to the economy, he will take into consideration what really ails the economy; that is, excessive taxes, regulations, redtape, bureaucracy, mandates and requirements, many of which are associated with his signature achievement, which is the ObamaCare health care legislation.

What the country does not need right now is another tax increase. What the country needs right now is policies that will expand and grow the economy, that will reform our Tax Code in a way that lowers rates and makes us more competitive in the global marketplace and unleashes American energy in a way that gives us a competitive advantage over our foreign competitors. We can do all of that. All the President has to do is sign off, for ex-

ample, on the Keystone Pipeline, which would create thousands of jobs immediately and many more once it is fully built and working.

It would also mean we do away with the onerous, burdensome requirements of the ObamaCare legislation and replace it with policies that make sense, that actually focus on what will give Americans more access to affordable health care in this country.

We need to reduce spending here in Washington, DC, and quit looking at every problem as an opportunity to raise taxes. That seems to be the Democratic solution for everything. Their budget proposed a \$1 trillion tax increase. The leader of the Democrats here in the Senate has said tax reform has to include \$1 trillion in new taxes. It is not revenue that is the problem here in Washington, it is spending. If we look at revenues, they are up \$284 billion in the first 11 months of this year. We don't have a revenue problem, we have a spending problem. We don't need another tax increase, we need policies that will lower the rates, that will get rid of the redtape and the regulations that are strangling our economy and allow our small businesses to create jobs that will make lives better for middle-class Americans and improve the take-home pay for every family in the country.

The job-killing mandates in ObamaCare are harmful to our economy, they are harmful to jobs, and it is time we delay or repeal it and replace it with commonsense alternatives. We believe that discussion needs to occur, and I hope the President will allow it to occur. It is time to focus on comprehensive, revenue neutral tax reform of our broken tax system, repeal the mandates in Obamacare, and get rid of a lot of the government redtape and regulations that are making it more difficult and more expensive for employers in this country—for small businesses—to grow jobs.

Those are the types of things that will get the economy unleashed, that will expand and grow the economy and create more jobs for ordinary working-class Americans who are out of work and will raise the take-home pay for families in this country, which would allow the quality of life and the standard of living to improve for every American family.

With that, I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Georgia.

NAVY YARD TRAGEDY

Mr. ISAKSON. Mr. President, before I make my remarks, I would like to join Senator THUNE and others on the Senate floor who have expressed their compassion and their sympathy for the survivors and the victims of yesterday's terrible tragedy at the Washington Navy Yard. Yesterday was but another grim reminder of the dangerous society we live in, the danger that can confront all of us, and the need for all of

us to be aware and do everything we can to make sure our environment is secure and safe.

To those who were injured, those who sacrificed their lives, those whose loved ones were hit, may God bless their souls and may God bless them in their recovery during this period while dealing with this terrible tragedy.

TRIBUTE TO DR. JOHN D. KNOX, JR.

Mr. ISAKSON. Mr. President, tonight in Marietta, GA, my hometown, there will be a celebration I cannot attend. There will be a celebration to honor 50 years of medical service to our community by Dr. John D. Knox, Jr. I hate it that I can't be there because he has been an important part of my life, but I would like to take a minute on the floor of the Senate to pay tribute to Dr. Knox and all those physicians who deliver health care to our people, our citizens in our States, our districts, and our country.

As I pondered what I would say about John Knox on the floor this morning, I was sitting in my office looking at the plaques and certificates all of us receive for various works we have done in public life, and it occurred to me, when you go into a doctor's office you will see a diploma and you might see a Norman Rockwell painting, but really the trophies and tributes to doctors are people walking around with two feet in our communities who have survived a terrible injury or a terrible disease and who are living a normal life because a physician, with his or her training, brought them back to life or cured a terrible problem.

Dr. John Knox has done that for 50 years in my community—50 years as an orthopedic specialist and orthopedic surgeon with Resurgens Orthopaedics, which is one of the largest orthopedic practices in the Southeast. In fact, one of those great trophies to John D. Knox, Jr., is my son Kevin, who in 1989 went through the windshield of a pickup truck on a rural road in south Georgia. He had a double compound fracture of his lower right leg. He landed in a ditch full of dirty water and lay there for 2 hours before help came. Fortunately, he didn't sever an artery, but he was in bad shape.

I got the call at 4 a.m. that no parent ever wants to get—the call that paramedics had my son, that they were on the interstate and did I want them to take him to Augusta Medical College or to Atlanta, GA, for treatment because nobody in rural Georgia had the facility to treat his injuries. I immediately asked them to bring him to Marietta, GA, to Kennestone Hospital, and to immediately call John D. Knox and ask him if he would meet my son at the emergency room. The next 6 weeks my son had four surgeries, all performed by John D. Knox. He had antibiotic therapy to make sure his bone marrow did not get infected from lying in the ditch. For 8 months he got psychiatric and psychological help and

home recovery with his mom, myself, doctors, and those physicians recommended by John Knox.

The great story is that the night before my son was injured, he started as defensive end for Walton High School. One year later, after this terrible wreck and recovery, he again started as defensive end for Walton High School. The miracle of medicine put my son back together, but if it wasn't for John D. Knox, my son might not be here today.

I wanted John D. Knox, a great doctor in Marietta, GA, to know that what he did in 1989 for my son and what he has done for countless thousands of citizens in my community for years and years never will go unappreciated and will always be recognized. I am glad my family was a part of his 50 years of service as a physician. God bless John D. Knox, and congratulations on his service to our great community of Cobb County, GA.

I yield the floor.

FISCAL ISSUES

Mr. COATS. Mr. President, yesterday the President indicated that we need to pivot back to the fiscal issues facing this country and facing Congress. This comes after a year with little sense of urgency on perhaps the most pressing and challenging domestic issue before us. Of course, issues such as Syria and foreign policy have to be addressed, but we have had a year in this Congress to address our fiscal issues knowing we were moving toward a drop-dead date fiscally of September 30, and here we are now, more than halfway through September, just beginning to take up these issues that will direct the fiscal future of this country. The clock is ticking away, and we have spent little time preparing for what is coming. But here we are once again careening toward another fiscal cliff.

The American people are sick and tired of this. I think the Senate and the Congress are sick and tired of doing this. Yet we find ourselves once again careening up against a deadline to provide funding to keep our economy moving forward and to keep our government providing essential services.

Clearly, we could all argue there are a number of things that don't need to be funded or can be postponed, but there are essential functions of the Federal Government that can't be handled any other way and must be funded. National security is one of those top priorities, along with homeland security. We continue to have issues in terms of providing safety for American workers in the workplace, such as the tragedy that occurred yesterday at the Naval Yard, and these all come under the rubric of providing law enforcement and homeland security enforcement for our people.

These are essential functions of government, and unless we come to some agreement by the end of this month, we are going to shut all that down. Our

troops won't get paid, our homeland security personnel won't get paid, and a whole number of other essential functions will not be able to take place. So we have a lot of work before us and very little time to do it.

We also know that very quickly—shortly after the end of this month—if we don't pass an ongoing resolution to provide funding while we work out some of our differences, we will also reach the national debt limit. We are going to have to address whether or not to raise it and, if so, how much to raise the current borrowing limit. Today we are looking at an unimaginable national debt of \$16.7 trillion, and it is growing every day. All of us who have seen the debt clock ticking away are astounded at the rate we spend and how much we have to borrow in order to cover our spending because the revenues do not match the spending. Washington has had this spending addiction for decades, as if money just falls from trees or can just be printed down at the Fed and we won't have to pay any financial consequences.

We have had 5 years of stagnant growth in our economy, timid progress that is not putting people back to work. Our economy is not working well. Yet we are still spending way beyond our means. That also has to be addressed. In the last 20 years Federal spending has grown 63 percent faster than inflation. So it is clear that without changes, mandatory spending, including net interest, is going to consume three-fourths of the Federal budget in just one decade. Almost half of that Federal spending will go toward Social Security and health care entitlements. In 2002 that percentage was 25 percent, and now it is 45 percent.

Far too little has been done to address this runaway spending train. Instead of waiting for a crisis to hit, instead of governing from one fiscal cliff to another, isn't it time we worked together on a plan to reduce our debt and curb the rate of mandatory spending? This is a matter of extreme importance. It can't be solved with a deal at the eleventh hour.

There has been a lot of talk around here about putting us on a path to fiscal solvency but no real action, and the clock continues to tick. I would like to ask the President and the Senate majority leader at what point they think we should start acting on a plan to reduce our debt—\$17 trillion, \$20 trillion, \$25 trillion? At what point, Mr. President, do we say this is unsustainable? This is driving us toward insolvency. We need to take action. How much red ink is too much?

When will the President draw a red line on debt and borrowing? When pressed, the President says he actually has a fiscal plan: just continue to raise taxes, pass another one of his stimulus spending plans—the last one didn't work too well—and adopt his budget proposal that doesn't even have the support of his own party.

Clearly, the President is unwilling to lead on addressing our fiscal crisis. Ab-

sent his leadership, I am urging my colleagues in the Senate, Republican and Democratic, to focus on this important issue. Let's put something on the President's desk and ask him to either sign it or reject it. But let's stop waiting for the White House to come forward with a plan because their plan is going nowhere. It doesn't have the support of either side of this body, Republicans or Democrats. I am urging the majority leader to focus the Senate's attention on reducing our debt, growing our economy, and getting Americans back to work.

The best way to grow the economy and secure our country's fiscal future is by creating a long-term budget plan that focuses on restructuring mandatory spending programs, reforming our Tax Code, and cutting unnecessary Federal spending. This has been a mantra of mine ever since I came back to the Senate. I came back for this very reason, and here we are 3 years after the 2010 election, when the public was urging us to address this issue, and we still have not accomplished this task. It is because we have not had leadership from this President to address the underlying issues that are so plain, that are so evident, that are so consequential to our fiscal future. When we boil it down to what it means to American families, whether it be saving money to send their kids to college, getting a decent job after they graduate with a huge debt and being able to pay that back or getting middle-class people back to work who have been laid off for years, getting our economy moving again at more than a timid 1.8 percent or 1.5 percent, stumbling along after 5 years of recession—the policies, whether we think they are right, frankly, haven't worked. Isn't it time to deal with something everyone knows we need to deal with; that is, excessive spending, this addiction to spending, the plunging into debt that is holding us back from doing what we need to do.

I am committed to working toward a solution to address our debt, to strengthen our economy, and help provide full-time jobs for the millions of Americans who are without those jobs. It is time to stop procrastinating. It is time to start acting. It is time that the President and this Congress stop delaying the hard choices and start representing the American people who sent us.

It is so unfortunate that we cannot rely on the President—the leader of our country—to act. He has announced he would not even discuss this incredibly important issue that determines the financial viability of our country. The President says: I will not negotiate with Congress on the debt limit. I will not negotiate with Congress on the resolution coming before us to fund the government going forward.

How does this provide results to the American people? How can we work on a plan to reduce the debt if the President refuses to even negotiate it? He is