

When they push the kids into the private loans that are not as good, not as generous, much more expensive, that covers the 10 percent they have to come up with in real money as opposed to government money. It means that 90 percent of the revenue of these extremely profitable schools comes right out of the Federal Treasury.

Even though for purposes of this rule Federal revenue includes only funds from the Department of Education's Federal student aid programs—GI bill funds, for example, are not even considered Federal funds—many for-profit schools are close to 90 percent of their revenue coming from the Federal Government. If you add in GI bill funds, sometimes it is closer to 100 percent.

Where is the accountability? If these schools are dragging kids deeply into debt, if the kids are defaulting at rates twice as fast and twice as serious as those going to public and private schools, where is our responsibility? How is a student—a high school student in Illinois or in North Dakota—supposed to know whether that Web site about that college is true?

How would they know when that school says “we are accredited,” that the accreditation is phony? Most of these for-profit schools belong to an organization that accredits all the schools that are for-profit schools. They take care of one another. They ignore the obvious when these schools are failing the students and their families.

The Federal aid is keeping the doors open for these for-profit schools. Can we afford that? Can we afford to get students across America deeply into debt for a largely worthless education? Do we have that much money sloshing around here in Washington when it comes to helping students get through school?

That is why the President's statement last night about student debt, about the rising college costs, and a scorecard for colleges and universities is right spot on. It is time we tell families across America the truth about colleges and universities, and it is time for those same colleges and universities to wake up to a reality. The reality is the sky is not the limit when it comes to the cost of higher education.

I have talked to a number of them—respected institutions—that give good degrees, good diplomas, and I have told them the same thing: You just cannot keep raising the cost of higher education. Middle-income families, working families do not have a chance. Madam President, \$20,000, \$30,000, \$40,000 a year to go to school? It is just something that ordinary families cannot even consider.

Congress needs to act now to stop this for-profit school industry from exploiting students and their families and taxpayers. Why we are spending so much money—money we can no longer afford—to subsidize these highly profitable schools is beyond me. I cannot explain it.

These schools that leave these kids high and dry break my heart. Every time I fly out to O'Hare Airport, on the Kennedy Expressway in Chicago, right before I get to the Cumberland exit, I look up at one of these office buildings, and up there in big, bold letters is “Westwood College.” Wow, the campus of Westwood College.

I know a little bit about that college. I have met students who have gone to that college, and let me tell you, I want to put a sign right under there that says, “Please Avoid This Ripoff.”

A young lady who went to Westwood College testified in Chicago. She watched a lot of shows on TV about forensic criminal investigation, and she wanted to get into criminal investigation. She signed up at Westwood College. It took her 5 years to finish.

When she finished, she had a debt of \$90,000. But she wanted a degree in law enforcement. She wanted to be on CSI in the real world. Guess what happened. She went to every law enforcement agency in the Chicagoland area, and they pushed it back and said: Westwood is not a real college. You have wasted your time—5 years—and your money.

Here she sits now living in her parents' basement at a time in life when she thought she would be starting her own career, her own life. What is she doing? She is paying back a loan for a worthless education from Westwood College.

I have been after these folks for a long time. They exploit these kids day in and day out. Sadly, we subsidize them. We send them millions of dollars in Federal funds to continue this exploitation of students.

This has to come to an end. This is not the kind of thing we need to encourage if America is going to have well-educated and trained students so they have good lives and America continues to prosper.

One of my colleagues, Senator TOM HARKIN of Iowa, has been a leader on this issue. As chairman of the HELP Committee, he has had hearings on for-profit schools, and I commend them to anyone interested in this subject. Take a look at TOM HARKIN's hearings. I could go on for a long time—TOM could too—about the schools across America that are exploiting students.

We owe it to the students to tell them the truth. We owe it to their parents. And we beg teachers and high school counselors and others, who really care about young people: Look long and hard at these for-profit schools before you recommend them to a student.

I encourage all my colleagues to take a look at legislation that TOM HARKIN and I have introduced. We are trying to drop the Federal subsidy to these for-profit schools just a small bit. It will be hard to do. These for-profit schools are pretty powerful in Washington. But if we are going to do our job to protect families and students across America—following the President's lead from his State of the Union address to make

sure we are sensitive to student loans, student indebtedness, that we hold colleges and other training institutions accountable for what they are doing to and for students—it is time for us to turn the page and join the President.

The President's speech last night is a challenge to all of us on both sides of the aisle, both sides of the Rotunda, to take this student debt crisis seriously.

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

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Ms. BALDWIN). Without objection, it is so ordered.

UNANIMOUS CONSENT AGREEMENT—EXECUTIVE CALENDAR

Mr. REID. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent that at 2 p.m. today the Senate proceed to executive session to consider Calendar No. 8, the nomination of William J. Kayatta, to be circuit judge for the First Circuit, with 30 minutes for debate, equally divided in the usual form; that upon the use or yielding back of time, the Senate proceed to vote without intervening action or debate on the nomination; the motion to reconsider be considered made and laid on the table, with no intervening action or debate; that no further motions be in order; that President Obama be immediately notified of the Senate's action, and the Senate then resume legislative session.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection?

Without objection, it is so ordered.

Mr. REID. Madam President, I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

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

STATE OF THE UNION REACTION

Mr. COATS. Madam President, last night President Obama had the opportunity to present to the American people a plan envisioned for how he plans to strengthen the state of our Union.

While I am pleased he finally turned his focus back to the ongoing jobs crisis in our country, I was left feeling disappointed and frustrated that the President continued to call for higher taxes to pay for more and more government spending.

I don't believe the President acknowledges—or at least he didn't last evening—the seriousness of our debt and fiscal crisis. We are nearly \$16.5 trillion in debt, and \$6 trillion of that

debt is from the President's spending over the last 4 years—and he now has 4 more years to go.

Yet rather than tell the American people specifically how he will reduce this unsustainable debt, he once again pulled out the same tired playbook and made it clear his basic fiscal plan is ever higher taxes. It's almost an obsession with tax hikes and telling the American people: You are just not taxed enough, when we are practically taxed to death. When you add not just the Federal but the State and the local and the sales and the excise and gasoline and the entertainment and all the other taxes that American people pay in their daily lives, it cuts into their paycheck in a very significant way each week. The real question is, Is the solution to our problems more taxes on the American people?

Mr. President, you got your taxes in the fiscal cliff debate. You had campaigned for this and you won the election. These tax levels were going to expire and hit every American with a massive tax increase. We clawed back a significant amount of that to protect the majority of Americans. But you got your taxes, Mr. President. Now is the time to address the other side of the so-called balanced approach that you have been promising: spending reductions.

Sadly, last night gave us no indication that the President is committed to leading on this critical issue and fixing our economy and, more important, getting more people back to work.

Instead of detailing a plan to reduce the record-high debt, he outlined a liberal laundry list of new government programs and initiatives. I could almost hear the sound of a cash register in the background—ka-ching, ka-ching, ka-ching—with every new program he put forward.

Some of these ideas were worthy ideas, but we cannot afford them. How are we going to pay for them? What is the result? The President said in a most disingenuous way that none of these initiatives would add a dime to the already unsustainable debt. If they do not add a dime to the debt and you are proposing all kinds of programs that are going to cost a lot of money, there is only one way you can pay for them, and that is to raise taxes—either that or to continue to borrow money and put us in an ever-deeper hole of debt, more obligated to our creditors with each day that goes by.

Hoosiers and Americans across the country are taxed enough. Washington cannot keep asking hard-working Americans to dig deeper and pony up more money so that the Federal Government can spend more. The American people no longer are falling for that. Hoosiers tell me they want to do their part to restore the fiscal health of this country. They want to do their part to help America become a better place and a more prosperous nation for their children and their grandchildren. They are willing to step up and do

what it takes to help. But Hoosiers and the American people are not willing to be enablers to Washington's spending addiction. They want to see their lawmakers and this administration reform the outrageous, out-of-control spending, not continually call for higher taxes to pay for greater spending coming out of Washington.

I have to say I was somewhat encouraged that the President mentioned he was willing to make modest reforms to programs like Medicare. Both Republicans and Democrats, including the President, agree that Medicare, Medicaid, and Social Security represent the biggest portion and ever-growing percentage of government spending. The nonpartisan Congressional Budget Office recently reported that spending on Medicare, Medicaid, and Social Security and the interest on the debt for that spending will consume 91 percent of all Federal revenues in 10 years. That, then, takes all the wind out of our sails in terms of those necessary functions of the Federal Government, such as preparing adequately for our national security and defense and a number of other things the Federal Government is involved in that are essential functions. But with mandatory spending eating up, in 10 years, 91 percent of all we take in, we still are not going to have the ability to pay for those programs.

With 10,000 baby boomers retiring every day, we know the status quo is unsustainable. We cannot afford to continue the way we are. These programs are in jeopardy. We are not trying to take away the programs, we are trying to save the programs. They are in jeopardy, though, if we do not take steps now to structure them in a way that will control costs and preserve benefits for current and future recipients.

Hard-working Hoosiers and millions of Americans have spent a lifetime paying into these programs, and they rely on the health and security benefits they receive from them. But these benefits will not last if we ignore the facts about the current fiscal status and insolvency these programs are careening toward and do nothing. I was glad the President at least acknowledged that we need to make modest reforms. I think we can do that.

The reason we are dealing with this across-the-board sequester and the reason we are talking about potential cuts that have to be made is we have not had the courage and the will to stand up and recognize and acknowledge that it is the mandatory spending reforms that will put us in a place of fiscal health so we can continue the effective and essential functions of the Federal Government.

According to the International Monetary Fund, to cover current obligations for Social Security, Medicare, and Medicaid, our younger generation—our young people—will either have to pay 35 percent more taxes and receive 35 percent lower benefits. Those are the

facts. Do the math, do the arithmetic. This is not ideological. This is not Republicans versus Democrats, liberals versus conservatives. This is pure numbers, pure math. It is an unsustainable course, and it is going to result in a massive decrease in benefits for those who pay into those programs over a lifetime or a massive increase in taxes on those who have to have that deducted from their paychecks and put into these programs in order to keep them solvent.

We have to deal with that problem and deal with it now. We should have been dealing with it years ago. We have seen this train wreck coming, and it is getting ever closer. Now it is time for the President, having recognized the need to address this issue—now is the time that he needs to show the American people he is willing to lead, not from behind but from the front, and offer a specific plan to reform and strengthen our health and retirement security programs.

The President said the sequester—the across-the-board cuts where everyone gets nicked—is a terrible idea. It is his terrible idea, and it is not the best way to address our spending plight. It is not the best way to deal with this because it basically assumes that every program is of equal value, that what is spent to provide security for the American people by having an adequate and strong military is at the same level as some program that has been proven years ago to be totally dysfunctional and efficient. But they would both get cut.

I will be laying out a number of things, as others have—like Senator COBURN to highlight some of those programs that need to be reevaluated. Not that we think all of these ought to be eliminated or trimmed or that they don't fall into an essential category in terms of the role of the Federal Government but there are several programs that nonpartisan agencies, such as the General Accounting Office, or even the President's own Office of Management and Budget have recommended, are not worthy of the support they receive because they are not an essential function or they are even dysfunctional programs altogether.

We do not have to delve into the across-the-board sequester, which we have no choice but to do now because we failed to live up to what we needed to do—and I will be talking about that later, as I said.

I urge us to focus on fixing the country's fiscal health. We do not do that by raising taxes, we do it by enacting broad spending reforms. We do it by reducing our debt. We do it by creating a budget so we can live within our means. And we do it by promoting growth, growing our economy. A growing economy can solve a lot of problems and get a lot of people back to work. This is how we strengthen America, and this is how we get Americans back to work.

It is time we get to work and accomplish this task that lies before us now,

not later—no more deferrals, no more pushing it down the road. It is time to step up now, as the President said, putting the interest of our country ahead of our own personal political interest, rising above the political to do what is right for America.

That is the challenge, and, Mr. President, we need your leadership.

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

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Louisiana.

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

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

Mr. VITTER. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent to enter into a colloquy with my Republican colleague from Alabama, as well as any other Members who may join us.

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

IMMIGRATION POLICY

Mr. VITTER. Madam President, Senator SESSIONS and I take to the floor to talk about immigration, which is obviously a very important and very hot topic. The first point I would like to make is just a simple statement and suggestion. There has been a lot of activity and a lot of discussion about immigration in the Senate and in the Congress and Washington, DC. If we merely listen to a lot of beltway, so-called mainstream reporting about this, they would give the impression that there is near universal consensus around a model we have tried before, which is a so-called comprehensive approach.

First, I don't think there is anything near universal agreement. I don't think there is consensus. I think there are real questions and concerns among many of us in the Senate and in Congress but, much more importantly, in America and the real world.

I think those fundamental concerns come down to one thing; that is, we have tried this so-called comprehensive approach before. We have tried proposals that marry an immediate amnesty with promises of enforcement. That model has not worked before. In fact, it has failed miserably.

The most notable example was major immigration legislation in 1986. It was the same model. It had comprehensive and immediate amnesty with promises of enforcement. There were promises that we will have to do this just once, never have to look back, and the problem will be solved. Of course, the problem was not solved. It didn't even just continue. The problem has quadrupled.

The amnesty did happen immediately. As soon as the bill passed, that virtually and immediately kicked in. The promises of enforcement were just

that, promises. Those promises were not kept, and as a result what happened with that model? The problem of 3 million illegal aliens didn't go away and was not solved once and for all. It quadrupled and became the present problem of 11 or 12 million—or more—illegal aliens. That is the fundamental concern I have with most of the so-called comprehensive proposals being put forward. That is the fundamental concern of Louisianans I talk to every day.

We want to solve the problem. We don't want to perpetuate it, much less quadruple it. I think it is important to discuss alternative, more effective, more workable approaches. I have several ideas about what those approaches might look like, and, in fact, I am introducing a package of immigration bills today. I will talk about that further, but I certainly want to recognize and thank my good friend and colleague, Senator SESSIONS from Alabama, for joining me on the Senate floor today.

Mr. SESSIONS. I thank the Senator for his leadership and in-depth study and knowledge about how these laws are working—and really not working—in America today.

I just left a hearing in the Judiciary Committee. The chairman of that committee, Senator LEAHY, basically said—referring perhaps to me—they want enforcement first, but it seems they don't have any interest in amnesty—or words to that effect. I would say the American people's view is exactly the opposite. What the American people have been asking for and what they are afraid of is that we will have a deal like 1986 where the amnesty provisions become law and were immediately applied, but the promises of enforcement never occurs. So I believe that is a danger again.

It feels to me so much like 2007 when I, Senator VITTER, and others engaged and asked tough questions about the legislation which really resulted in its failure because it would not have done what the authors of it said it would do. So for 30 or 40 years the American people have said: End the lawlessness. That is what they have asked of us first. They will work a way to be compassionate if the lawlessness has ended, but that has not happened.

In fact, in a number of ways we have gone in the opposite direction. Improvement has occurred at the border in real numbers because over the last several years—before President Obama took office—we agreed to increase the number of Border Patrol agents. With the help of Senator VITTER, I forced through legislation to build a fence. I am sure Senator VITTER remembers that debate.

Now everybody talks about how we have a fence, and they are bragging about it. It is only 36 miles of the real fence we asked for. I am sure the Senator from Louisiana remembers how they opposed every foot of it and how they resisted it in every way possible.

They didn't favor adding border agents. There was a vote for border agents—and I remember speaking about it—but they never produced the money. So we authorized border agents. People said they were for border agents, but they would not vote for the money to support that. We had a big discussion and debate about that, and eventually we added some border agents. That has helped, but the problem is not fixed.

Internally, this administration has systematically dismantled enforcement inside the United States. Chris Crane, who is head of the Immigration and Customs Enforcement Union, is a marine and a great guy. The ICE union has unanimously voted no confidence in John Morton, the head of the ICE Department. They have sued the ICE Department because Morton blocked them from doing their sworn duty to enforce the law.

Today I asked Crane if he had ever met with Secretary Napolitano. Chris testified about the bad morale that ICE agents have. A little over a year ago I asked Secretary Napolitano about the bad morale that ICE agents have. Crane said he had never met her and has never shaken hands with her. At this point, we don't have the kind of commitment in law enforcement that I think gives the American people confidence that we are moving forward on the right path.

Finally, I would just share with the Senator that I do think that means this is no sure thing. People are awfully confident that as long as some big names are on the bill, it is just going to pass. I am not confident that is so.

Mr. VITTER. I thank the Senator, and I certainly agree. Again, the fundamental issue is, Is the model that has been tried before really going to work—an immediate amnesty with promises of enforcement? Unfortunately, history is littered with examples of that exact model failing and those promises of enforcement never being kept.

What do I mean by that? I mentioned 1986, which is the biggest historical example: An immediate amnesty where we are going to get serious about enforcement, we will never have to look back, and we will have to do this once. We will solve the problem.

Of course, it didn't solve the problem; it quadrupled the problem. There were 3 million illegal aliens back then. There are 11 to 12 million illegal aliens now. There have been promises of a U.S.-VISIT Program with an entry-and-exit system to track everyone entering the country and making sure they exit in time. That was first promised back in 1986. Ten years later, in 1996, Congress passed another act to require a fully integrated entry-exit system with full implementation by 2005. Guess what. 2005 has come and gone. It has been 30 years since that initial promise was made. We still don't have an operational and effective U.S.-VISIT system.

My colleague from Alabama mentioned another glaring example: the