

my colleagues imagine the Congressional Budget Office saying that the U.S. Congress is double-counting? Actually, in that case, in dealing with the Affordable Care Act, \$500 billion of money extracted out of Medicare was being used to claim it would pay for the Affordable Care Act when it was Medicare's money.

So I am talking at this point and just sharing an example from Social Security and the chained CPI, but the principles are the same because both are trust funds. So it is double-counting.

In fact, any Social Security or Medicare trust fund savings so produced are legally assets of the trust fund, and debt instruments of the U.S. Treasury are issued and interest paid from the U.S. Treasury to Social Security and to the Medicare trust funds on the monies that are borrowed in that way. If the savings, as is likely, do not result in a trust fund surplus, then there is really no surplus that they can borrow. It simply tends to show more income to the U.S. Treasury—falsely showing that because, again, the money is committed off-budget to Social Security.

The critical fact is that all of those moneys are already obligated to Social Security and Medicare and will be needed by those programs, and more money, actually, is going to be needed by those programs to meet the future obligations of those trust funds, which are insolvent. They don't have enough money coming in to pay the obligations they will be required to pay in the years to come.

So the scope of this abuse of our accounting system is truly enormous and threatens our Nation's very financial future. For example, it has allowed the President to falsely assert that the Affordable Care Act would not add one dime to the debt when, absent double-counting, the act would increase our debt by over \$500 billion over the next 10 years—\$500 billion. It is going to adversely impact the financial condition of America.

The same accounting manipulations enabled many supporters of the Gang of 8 immigration bill to assert that their legislation was paid for. They were going to spend all of this money and they were going to make us safe from illegal immigration and it was all paid for—every dime of it—and wouldn't add to the debt. Do my colleagues know how they did that? Well, they were going to give Social Security cards to millions—11 million or however many would come forward—and they would pay Social Security, and they would have more Social Security money coming into the U.S. Treasury, and therefore that would pay for the extra border patrol and other expenses they said they have to spend money on.

But I ask my colleagues to think about it. The money paid by the people who have been given legal status, the Social Security they have paid for is their money. It is their money. They are going to draw out every penny of it

when they get older. We can't say it is available to pay another expense today. If we do, it is not going to be there, to pay for their Social Security when they retire. How simple is this? This was the message here on the floor. They steadfastly insisted that the bill was paid for, double-counting Social Security money.

So we have to get straight about this, I have to say. Legislation must be adopted to stop this double-counting. It is open to abuse and manipulation and has been done, really, by both parties in the past but not as much as we have seen lately. It is enabling the Nation's dangerous financial trajectory.

Finally, as we work to end the Nation's financial impasse, another warning is needed. All should understand that consent to passage of a continuing resolution or debt ceiling bill cannot be achieved until we have sufficient time to have a complete CBO score of it so we know what kind of maneuvers are being used in the bill. So I am going to object. We are not going to wake up one day and say we have to run to the floor and pass a bill with 30 minutes' notice or 3 hours' notice. That would be a mistake.

Madam President, I thank the Chair and yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Missouri.

SETTING PRIORITIES

Mr. BLUNT. Madam President, first of all, I wish to follow up on a comment my friend from Alabama just made on Social Security and Medicare. I think it is very important that we listen carefully to what he had to say, that if we do things that are so-called reforms—and I think there are many places where we could reform those programs—we should use those savings to save those programs. We shouldn't say we are going to have reforms in Medicare, more likely, perhaps, right away, then Social Security, and then not use those reforms to extend the life of these important programs.

These are programs, we have told Americans—in the case of Social Security since the mid-1930s, and in the case of Medicare since the mid 1960s—that people would be able to rely on. We see that those programs can be extended and adjusted and reformed, but I think our leader on our side of the budget effort who spends so much time trying to make the case for the right kind of budget decisions is clearly pointing out that if we make savings in these programs and then use that money to fund other discretionary spending, is that the fair thing to do with Social Security or Medicare? I don't think so, and I think the Senator from Alabama has raised a very good point.

As we try to figure out how to move forward this year, we need to be sure that savings are real savings, that they are not double-counted, that we are not saving money in one program that clearly should go toward the priority of

that program rather than the other priorities we haven't yet set.

This brings me to the topic of setting priorities. We had the opportunity to go to the White House—the Democrats yesterday, Republicans today—to talk to the President about how we move forward with the budget year, the spending year that has already started. When we were there, the President made it clear once again that we shouldn't negotiate, but on more than one occasion in the morning when we were there, the President said we shouldn't be allowed to negotiate for things we couldn't get or didn't get in the regular process.

My view of that is there is no regular process. As the President said that, I thought, this is like pouring gas on a fire of frustration for Members of the Senate and particularly in the House who are frustrated that there is no process. There is no place earlier than a crisis to say: Let's debate these issues, let's debate these priorities.

How many of the 12 spending bills for the year that began 11 days ago have we had on the floor of the Senate? One. One of the bills that should have been done starting in about last March and April and that should have been completed over the summer. That money would have been spent beginning October 1. Not one of the 12 was on the floor, and, frankly, it was a bill the majority leader had every reason to believe wouldn't pass if it was brought to the floor. Let's assume it would have passed. It still would have just been one of the 12 bills we need to run the government.

So when the President or anybody else says we shouldn't use these crisis moments to try to get our priorities discussed, they are the only moments we have. They are the only time we have.

I don't like government by crisis. I think it is very unfortunate for this Presidency that if we really look at how the government has worked in the last 5 years, it is from one crisis to another. If I could do anything to help President Obama pull away from this crisis management, I would be inclined to want to try to do that, particularly if pulling away from crisis management meant we were going to come back and have a fair debate between a divided Congress that leads to some way forward that can actually accomplish something.

The idea that we won't negotiate at this moment—or the President, feeling that somehow he won't be held hostage to the debt limit—I am certainly going to vote tomorrow not to even move forward with this discussion for a \$1 trillion debt ceiling increase with no discussion of what we are going to do to change our behavior.

President Obama, to his credit, entered into a negotiation just 2 years ago, in August of 2011, and in return for \$2.5 trillion worth of spending cuts over a decade, he got \$2.1 trillion in additional debt ceiling. Now, the President

agreed to that in August of 2011 and then in October of 2013 says nobody should ever negotiate on the debt ceiling.

Fifty-three times since 1978 we have had a change in the debt ceiling, and since 1978 more than half of those debt limits included legislation dealing with either spending or other matters.

The President says: I will not put this on future Presidents, to be the President who goes forward with increasing the debt ceiling under some—with a negotiation.

Well, every President since 1978 has had the same situation the President had in August of 2011, the same situation the Presiding Officer and I would have if we were going to get our line of credit extended and we had exceeded our line of credit. Whoever is going to extend that line of credit is going to say: What are you going to do to change the behavior that allowed you to blow through your last line of credit?

The President and others will say: This is about America paying its bills. This is about wanting the current Congress to pay the bills it has incurred.

Well, most of the bills that have been incurred weren't incurred by this Congress; they were incurred by past legislation. Sixty-two percent of the spending is now in last year—it will probably be higher in the year we are in at this moment—62 percent of the spending was mandatory spending. It was spending put in place by Congresses beginning in the 1930s, through the health care bill. That is mostly mandatory spending. The current Congress didn't get to vote on the health care bill, but more importantly, most of the current Congress wasn't alive when the Social

Security Act passed. Many of the Members of the Congress and even some of the Members of the Senate were not alive when Medicare passed.

This is the time for this Congress to look at those pieces of legislation and say: What do we need to do to adjust them to the future needs of the country? What do we need to do to adjust them to the current and future demographic realities of society? People live longer. People need these services longer. What do we do to make this work in a way that these programs can last?

These are not programs put in place by this Congress. These are not bills incurred by this Congress. These are bills, in fact, for which this Congress and this President can decide we are going to look for these programs and be sure they last and look at these programs and be sure they can be paid for.

That is exactly the kind of discussion we should be having when we ask the American people, through their Congress, to extend the line of credit.

The idea that we will not negotiate on the debt ceiling or we will not negotiate on how to spend the money—if we do not negotiate on how to spend the money by bringing the appropriations bills to the floor, how are we supposed to negotiate and set priorities and let democracy work? I do not like democracy by crisis. Whatever we do in the next few weeks or months that it takes to finish out the year we have already started, what we should all do is commit ourselves for the year that begins next October 1 to be prepared for that like the Congresses until just 6 or 7 years ago generally were prepared at or near that date.

When there was a government shutdown in 1995, six of the appropriations bills had been passed, signed into law, and all those parts of the government were working after a debate that provided funding.

So I would just say, as I conclude, we need to move away from management by crisis, but we also need to understand that if we do not do the work the regular way, there is no other place to take a stand, there is no other place to have this debate. As to the President's sense that you could get this at some other point, there is no other point if the Congress and the President are not doing their job.

I will just say, we should do our job, we should do it in a way people can see. We should do it in the small bites that the budget process is set up to allow us to look at and debate. We have not done that over the last 12 months. We have started this year in about the worst possible way. Hopefully, we will get through this and then resolve to do the work the right way for what begins 1 year from now. But at this moment, the President thinking we can just go ahead and move forward without negotiating is a wrong decision on the President's part.

I yield the floor.

ADJOURNMENT UNTIL 11 A.M.
TOMORROW

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the Senate stands adjourned until 11 a.m. tomorrow.

Thereupon, the Senate, at 6:04 p.m., adjourned until Saturday, October 12, 2013, at 11 a.m.