

were to cut our defense budget over the next decade all the way down to zero—have no defense spending at all, zero—we could pay for just one-quarter of that cost of the \$22 trillion.

If we removed every penny of potentially identifiable waste in government—which we should do, by the way, and that is why we need to get back to appropriations—we could pay for less than 10 percent of this exploding cost on the mandatory side.

If we pulled out of Iraq and Afghanistan today and ended all bailouts and corporate welfare, reversed the tax cuts for all Americans making less than \$450,000 a year that we kept as part of the fiscal cliff agreement, repealed ObamaCare altogether—if we did all of those things, we would cover just 20 percent of the cost of those programs, this \$22 trillion.

In other words, even if we wanted to try to do it by cutting this spending, we could not do it because there is not enough money in that part of the budget. So it is not just a matter of choosing spending priorities and it is certainly not a matter of raising taxes.

Earlier my colleague talked about how we needed to raise more taxes for different things, and I understand a lot of people are saying that, but let's be honest about this: It is a bad idea at a time of a weak economy to raise taxes. Plus, over the next decade, you know what happens on taxes. Over the next decade we have been told by the Congressional Budget Office that taxes will be—as a percent of the economy, which is the way economists tell us we ought to look at it—at historically high levels.

So the economy is already weak, tax revenues are headed toward their highest sustained levels in history, and when it comes to taxes, there is an alternative, which is let's reform the Tax Code.

What we should be doing is restraining spending, reforming these vital but unsustainable programs, while also raising more revenues through growth, and economic growth can come through tax reform. That tax reform gives the economy a shot in the arm. It helps bring back the jobs. It increases revenue through growth. That is why we need both entitlement reform and tax reform.

The issue of entitlement reform is a tough one politically. A lot of Members of Congress are hesitant to touch it. It is called the third rail of American politics. That is akin to the electrified rail in the subway system, where if you touch it you are electrified. Let's start small. How about means testing of Medicare. This could be a first step in the right direction.

Under Medicare, the average two-earner couple retiring today pays \$119,000 in lifetime Medicare taxes, yet receives \$357,000 in lifetime Medicare benefits. So \$1 of taxes for \$3 of benefits. That is how Medicare works. That is for a typical family in Ohio or around the country. When we multiply

this by 77 million retiring baby boomers, we can see why we have an unsustainable program, because not enough money goes in to pay for the benefits going out.

Providing \$3 in benefits under Medicare for every \$1 paid in taxes for low-income seniors is one thing. We want to be sure low-income seniors are being taken care of. For the most part, in their working years, they probably didn't earn enough income to pay large Medicare taxes, and the program is designed to see that they do receive the medical coverage they wouldn't otherwise get. But should upper income seniors—seniors who are on Medicare—receive benefits that far exceed what they pay into the system? That is what happens now. Is that fair? I don't think so, when the program is going bankrupt, when our kids and grandkids are facing massive tax increases to pay for a problem that we all foresee and yet fail to correct.

By the way, I tried in this latest budget agreement to say, on the mandatory side of the ledger, why don't we deal with means testing of Medicare. That would provide enough revenue to provide relief on sequester. We wouldn't be doing things such as TSA fees or things such as reducing the benefits for our military. It was rejected. I talked to a number of Democrats about it who said we can't touch that. We can't touch even means testing of Medicare without raising taxes. So, in essence, raising taxes on the wealthy is necessary to reduce benefits for the wealthy. That is the point we are at. That is how tough it is. That is why we need a new approach. That is why we need some leadership—in the House, in the Senate but also in the White House. We need a President willing to help us on this, to talk about it.

Have we ever heard the President talk about the fact that there is \$3 of benefits coming from Medicare for every \$1 paid in? Have we ever heard the President talk about the fact that entitlements are otherwise going to bankrupt the country? We need a little straight talk and honest dialogue about this.

If we do nothing, as we have done with this budget agreement in the Senate with regard to mandatory spending, entitlement spending, and as we have done time and time again, the Social Security disability trust fund will go bankrupt in 2016, a couple years from now. Medicare will follow in 2026—again, every year, much more being paid out than being paid in. Social Security, already in a cash deficit, meaning there is more money coming out in terms of benefits than there are payroll taxes going in every year—but it will collapse, the trust fund will collapse in 2035. Medicaid has no trust fund, so it will not go bankrupt itself; it will just continue to grow at unsustainable levels, helping to bankrupt the country, but also, in that case, it may take the States down with it, and States will tell us it is generally

their largest and fastest growing expense, Medicaid.

So these are issues we must address. On the floor of this Chamber, we often talk about the next generation. We hear speeches about protecting the elderly and ensuring every American gets the benefit of the bargain made when Social Security and Medicare came into being. I agree, but to do that we need to improve and preserve these programs, and we need to stop blaming one another for what happened because, frankly, Republicans and Democrats alike are responsible for this. We have done one thing that is truly bipartisan in the last few decades; that is, we have overspent and we have overpromised, Republicans and Democrats alike. Because we helped create this mess together, we have to work together to resolve it.

With this vote on the budget this week, another budget crisis has passed, and that is good. We are on the road to avoiding another government shutdown in January and again next year. That is the most basic job of government, and I think that is good. We have a little bit of deficit reduction, we didn't raise taxes on a weak economy, but we need to aim higher. Perhaps in the context of the debt limit debate that is coming up in a matter of only a few months, we can get more serious about the underlying problem, because it is that underlying problem that is driving our future deficits. We all know that. We all agree on that. We all know it has to be fixed. So let's do it this coming year.

We have seen how divided government can achieve something important but small. That is what happened with this budget agreement this week. In 2014, next year, let's see how divided government can achieve something big and critical to economic growth and jobs and to the future of our children and grandchildren. That is our solemn responsibility in the Congress, to ensure that we are leaving a better world to future generations. We cannot do this if we do not address this fiscal crisis.

I yield back my time.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The 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. Without objection, it is so ordered.

Mr. REID. Mr. President, are we in a period of morning business?

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator is correct.

#### TRIBUTE TO KATHLEEN BIGNOTTI

Mr. REID. Mr. President, I rise today to recognize the extraordinary career of United States Capitol Police Sergeant Kathleen Bignotti, who is retiring after more than 28 years of service to the Department.

Sgt. Bignotti began her career in October 1985, when she was appointed as a U.S. Capitol Police officer and assigned to the House of Representatives Division. Less than 1 year later, she was selected to serve as a member of the First Responder Unit.

Her career with the Capitol Police included assignments to the Office of the Chief of Police, the Dignitary Protection Unit, the Senate Division, the Patrol Division, and the Library of Congress Division. Sgt. Bignotti's most highly regarded assignment came in 2003 when she was promoted to serve as Unit Commander of the USCP Mounted Unit. Her horse, Henry, will always have a special place in Sgt. Bignotti's heart.

Sgt. Bignotti represented the department with distinction in her duties that included assisting during the 1990 Goodwill Games in Seattle, WA; serving as a representative during National Police Week ceremonies; participating in the Special Olympics ceremonies and recruiting class graduations, and other special events as designated by the Chief of Police. In 1991, she received commendation as a member of the Ceremonial Unit for Honor Guard duties associated with Queen Elizabeth's visit to the Capitol.

As a former officer with the U.S. Capitol Police, I have a special appreciation for the commitment and dedication of the men and women on this force. I, along with my colleagues on both sides of the aisle, wish Sgt. Bignotti all the best in her retirement.

#### FOREIGN MEDICAL SCHOOL ACCOUNTABILITY FAIRNESS ACT

Mr. DURBIN. Mr. President, last week I introduced the Foreign Medical School Accountability Fairness Act. The bill seeks to fix a loophole exploited by for-profit schools to tap into the federal Treasury at the expense of students.

Under current law, a small number of medical schools in the Caribbean—about five, four of which are for-profit—are exempt from meeting the same requirements to qualify for title IV funding that all other medical schools outside of the U.S. and Canada must meet. This loophole allows these schools to enroll large percentages of American students—which means access to more Federal dollars.

The biggest of these schools are St. George's, Ross, and American University of the Caribbean whose enrollments of Americans are 70 percent, 91 percent, and 86 percent respectively. Other schools are prohibited from having U.S. citizens make up more than 40 percent of enrollment.

These for-profit schools have turned the idea of being a foreign school on its head—they are located outside of the United States, but have majority-American enrollments. They do not have to meet the same high standards U.S. medical schools must meet, but also do not have to meet the same re-

quirements as schools located outside of the U.S. to access hundreds of millions of dollars of Federal funding.

Pretty sweet deal, huh?

In fact in 2012, the three schools I mentioned earlier—St. George's and the two DeVry-owned schools—took in more than \$450 million from the Federal Government from American taxpayers. That amounted to more than two-thirds of all title IV funding that went to all foreign medical schools.

To sum up—three schools, two-thirds of the Federal funding, exempt from the law.

Not only are these schools exempt from the enrollment requirement, but they don't have to meet a minimum standard of success—having 75 percent of their students pass the U.S. board exams—a requirement for any of its students to actually practice medicine in the United States. The University of Sydney—with its dozen or so American students—has to meet this standard in order to receive title IV dollars. But DeVry's Ross University, with 1,000 or more American students, does not.

It doesn't seem right to the Department of Education, which says there is no rationale for continuing the exemption. And it doesn't seem right to me, either. Especially when you consider what students are getting for this Federal investment—more debt, higher rates of attrition, and lower residency match rates than U.S. medical schools.

Translation: More debt and less chance of becoming a doctor.

In September, an article in Bloomberg by Janet Lorin entitled "Devry Lures Medical School Rejects as Taxpayers Fund Debt" shined a bright light on the poor student outcomes of these schools.

It is no secret that for-profit foreign medical schools prey on students who have been rejected by traditional U.S. medical schools. They promise to fulfill the unrequited dreams for students who want to be doctors, but for one reason or another, did not make the cut in the U.S. On average, scores on the MCAT, the test required to enter medical school, of students attending these offshore for-profit schools are lower than those of students who are admitted to medical schools in the U.S. In 2012, students at U.S. medical schools scored an average of 31.2 out of 45 on the MCAT while students at the DeVry medical schools scored an average of 25.

The attrition rate at U.S. medical schools averaged 3 percent for the class beginning in 2009, while rates at for-profit foreign medical schools can be up to 26 percent or higher. More than a quarter of the students at some of these schools drop out.

On average, students at for-profit medical schools operating outside of the United States and Canada amass more student debt than those at medical schools in the United States. For example, in 2012, graduates of the American University of the Caribbean had a median of \$253,000 in student debt

versus \$170,000 for graduates of U.S. medical schools.

To add insult to injury, these foreign trained graduates are on average less competitive candidates for coveted U.S. residency positions. In 2013, residency match rates for foreign trained graduates averaged 53 percent compared to 94 percent for graduates of medical schools in the United States. They are even less likely to land a residency position the second time around.

According to the Bloomberg article I referenced earlier, one graduate of St. George's University, Michael Uva, amassed almost \$400,000 in medical school loans, but failed to land a residency spot twice. Michael now works at a blood donation clinic earning \$30 an hour. Although he sacrificed years of his life training for it, without completing a residency he will never get to practice medicine and this \$400,000 debt will likely follow him throughout his life.

Congress has failed taxpayers and students by subsidizing these Caribbean schools with billions in Federal dollars for years without adequate accountability and oversight. This bill takes a first step at addressing that failure by ensuring these Caribbean schools must meet the same standards other schools outside of the United States and Canada must meet.

At the same time, these schools are just another example of the systemic problem we have with for-profit colleges trying to make a buck off of students in this country and usually bilking Uncle Sam to do it. In fiscal year 2010, we sent \$32 billion to all for-profit schools.

There are three numbers you need to remember when thinking about for-profit schools:

The percentage of high school graduates that enroll in for-profit schools—12 percent;

The percentage of Department of Education title IV funds that go to for-profit schools—25 percent;

The percentage of student loan defaults for profit schools are responsible for—47 percent.

I have been fighting these schools for a long time. But today I have a message for those schools down in the sunny Caribbean who may have thought they could continue to exploit taxpayers and students without anybody noticing—we're watching.

#### VOTE EXPLANATION

Mr. MCCAIN. Mr. President, I regret that I was absent from the Senate yesterday and was unable to vote on the nomination of Jeh Johnson to be Secretary of the Department of Homeland Security. Had I been here, I would have voted in opposition to this nominee.

Reforming our broken immigration system is one of the Nation's top priorities. To that end, ensuring that our borders are secure and preventing illegal entry is absolutely vital. In my capacity as the senior Senator from Arizona and one of the lead advocates of