

stand up for working families and be prepared to take on Wall Street. He needs to be prepared to change our disastrous trade policies, be prepared to defend Social Security, Medicare, Medicaid, and the safety net that is so important to tens of millions of Americans. That is my objection to Mr. Lew.

I agree with my friend from Alabama that deficit reduction is a serious issue. Where we disagree is that I don't believe we balance a budget on the backs of the elderly, the children, the sick, and the poor.

I ask my friend to take a look at the Cayman Islands and Bermuda. Take a look at all the corporations making record-breaking profits and stashing their money in the Cayman Islands. For what purpose? To avoid paying taxes to the U.S. Government.

The Senator and I have met with the parents of young men and women who have died in Iraq and Afghanistan, and that is called patriotism. It is not called patriotism when corporations run to the Cayman Islands to avoid paying their fair share of taxes.

Mr. SESSIONS. Madam President, would the Senator yield?

Mr. SANDERS. I will.

Mr. SESSIONS. With regard to the Senator's views, I am concerned that working Americans are not being fairly recompensed for their work on the American debt. We have gone a long time with no real net improvement in the income, inflation has been higher than wages, and Wall Street is doing fine. It seems as though they win whether things go up or down. I don't have any brief for that crowd. I think the Senator is right to be skeptical about how things are handled on Wall Street, and I salute my friend for being aggressive in that pursuit.

Mr. SANDERS. I thank my friend from Alabama, and with that, I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Republican whip.

BUDGET MALPRACTICE

Mr. CORNYN. Madam President, I come to the floor today to mark another lamentable milestone in the long record of deadlines and misgoverning that might be called malpractice over the last 4 years. As we can see, today is the 1,400th day our colleagues across the aisle, who control the agenda on the floor of the Senate through the majority leader, have failed to produce a budget or even bring one to the floor so we could vote on one. For 1,400 days this body has been truant from one of the most fundamental obligations to the American people.

When they look to see what is happening in Washington, DC, they are incredulous. No family, no small business, no local government, no State government, no one except for the Federal Government, could actually operate without a budget. For nearly 4 years the Democratic leadership of the Senate has failed to put forward a fiscal plan to break our economy free from the lingering effects of the Great

Recession. And the consequences of that are pretty clear when we look at trillion-dollar annual deficits and when we look at \$16.5 trillion of debt which has threatened our economic recovery and job creation. That is the bitter fruit sown from the negligence of failing to produce a budget for 1,400 days.

I realize none of this is maybe as easy as it looks, and I know our Democratic colleagues have been under constant pressure from the White House. Indeed, the White House itself has long reinterpreted the role of its annual budget submissions to Congress from the governing documents they once were to now really no more than political posturing. As evidence of that, I would point to the fact that the President's last budget he submitted got zero votes out of 99 Senators voting. No Member, even of the President's own political party, would support his budget proposal last time because they believed it was not a governing document they could support instead of just a political statement.

These are some of the reasons I can't vote for Jack Lew for Treasury Secretary. After all, it was on his watch that most of this happened.

I am also deeply troubled by the fact that in my office as well as in the hearing before the Senate Finance Committee, Mr. Lew would not commit to any limit—to any limit—on Federal spending. Traditionally, over the last 40 years or so, the Federal Government has spent roughly 20 percent of our gross domestic product. It has been as high as 25 percent under the Obama administration. When I asked Mr. Lew what is the right figure we ought to be shooting for, he wouldn't even mention any figure. So he would not commit to any limit on Federal Government spending.

He also would not commit to the administration complying with Federal law requiring it to submit a blueprint for reforming Medicare, known as the Medicare trigger. It is a complex formula. But if Medicare is in trouble, Federal law requires the administration to submit a plan to fix it. Mr. Lew said: We didn't do it, and we are not going to do it.

I can't support a nominee who refuses to commit to tackling one of the biggest drivers of our debt on the eve of another manufactured fiscal showdown that was actually the President's and the White House's idea—this sequester people are hearing so much about which is now being used as a means by which to extract more money from the American taxpayer. So instead of the Federal Government doing what every family and every business has to do when there is not enough money coming in the door, the White House and the Democratic leadership are insisting on more from hard-working Americans, after a \$600 billion tax increase in December.

Unfortunately, it is hardly surprising that President Obama would nominate someone who cannot simply commit to

following the law. This administration has a record, sadly, of flouting the law of the land, and I will give some examples.

This administration, of which Mr. Lew has been an essential member, has, for example, during the government-run automobile bankruptcy process—the company's secured creditors, who were supposed to get paid first, found they were given less than unions were because of politics and flouting the rule of law.

As Solyndra was going bankrupt, we know the administration, rather than letting the private lenders pay for their bad judgment, decided to make the taxpayers subordinate to those private lenders.

We know that last year, because the circuit court of appeals in the District of Columbia has told us so, the President made unconstitutional appointments to the National Labor Relations Board and to now the Consumer Financial Protection Bureau. That case hasn't been decided, but it is impossible for me to see how the rationale would be any different from the court of appeals' decision in the NLRB case.

We also know that last year the President waived key requirements of the 1996 welfare reform law. And to help implement ObamaCare, the Internal Revenue Service has announced that it will violate the letter of the law and dispense health insurance subsidies through Federal exchanges in those States that do not create State-based exchanges.

We know that when the 2,700-page behemoth known as ObamaCare began to be implemented, when some of the supporters—and some of the President's own supporters—complained about it, they were issued waivers even though the rest of the American people had to simply take it.

Finally, the President has again missed the legal deadline for submitting his own budget for this year. That was on February 4. In fact, four of the last five budgets have been late.

Simply put, we can't keep living like this. We can't allow this to become a precedent for future Presidents and future majorities, regardless of party, to rely on. We can do better. We must do better. And my 26 million constituents in the State of Texas demand that we do better.

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.

Mr. SESSIONS. 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. SESSIONS. Madam President, just to follow up further on the situation we face, I talked earlier about the critical importance of having honest numbers. We can disagree on certain numbers. Mr. Lew predicted that under

his budget, last year's deficit in the 10th year would be about \$800 billion. The Congressional Budget Office, using the same numbers, the same analysis, says it would be 50 percent higher. They said it would be \$1.2 trillion. He was using rosy scenarios. The non-partisan Congressional Budget Office came out with greater debt numbers and more danger for America.

I am not so much complaining about that, although I think they deliberately tried to make their numbers look rosy. What I am complaining about is a fundamental mischaracterization of the budget he presented and what it would do according to his own analysis contained in the budget documents he submitted with his budget.

This is a very important matter. People say: Why don't you get together in Congress? Why don't you all reach an agreement? Well, it is kind of hard to reach an agreement when the lead negotiator for the President, Mr. Lew—some call him Dr. No—goes around saying:

We don't need to do anything; our budget we submitted will get us over the next several years to the point where we can look the American people in the eye and say, We're not adding to the debt anymore; we're spending money that we have each year, and then we can work on bringing down our debt.

He implies bringing down our total debt because we are going to have surpluses, enough money to pay down the debt. However, according to his own numbers, the lowest deficit he had was over \$600 billion, and they were going upward the last 6 years, getting worse, and the Congressional Budget Office said the last deficit would be \$1.2 billion. Unbelievable. So I wanted to continue to discuss that.

According to the budget numbers he put out, his plan would add \$13 trillion in new gross debt to the United States in 10 years, by 2021. That was in 2011. Single-year deficits will never drop below \$600 billion. In 2015 they would start climbing back up to \$774 billion. Over the 10 years total spending would increase—not be reduced at all, of course, but increase—by nearly 50 percent, with mandatory spending alone—not in any way controlled or reformed or fixed by the Lew budget—mandatory spending would increase by more than 80 percent. And mandatory spending makes up more than half of all the spending in our government. So on his track, by his own budget, by his own projections, by what he believes should happen, it increased by 80 percent. In fact, entitlements are growing at about three times the rate of GDP growth, the rate of the growth in the economy. That is unsustainable.

Do we ever hear that from the President or his chief budget guy, Mr. Lew, who is now expecting to be the Secretary of the Treasury, the primary, premier economic leader for America? If one can't be honest about what the situation is, one ought not to be promoted. That is the way I feel about it,

and I feel strongly about it. I have never seen anything like that in my entire time in the Senate, to have this kind of statement made that is so utterly unconnected to reality.

It wasn't long after Mr. Lew came to the committee—2 days or 3 days after this statement—when I asked him about that. I asked him if that was accurate, and he said:

It's an accurate statement that our current spending will not be increasing the debt . . . We've stopped spending money that we don't have.

And the lowest deficit is \$600 billion.

But Mr. Geithner came after this exchange, and I am sure Mr. Geithner was well aware of what happened in the Budget Committee. Mr. Lew dug his heels in and insisted this statement was true. What did the Secretary of the Treasury, Mr. Geithner, say at that point? I think this is the difference between Mr. Lew and Mr. Geithner. Mr. Geithner was former head of the Federal Reserve in New York, a man of some seriousness and gravitas, and he wasn't going to go in there and say something that wasn't true before the Budget Committee, although he didn't give it up easily. I had to use all the skills I had to pin him down, but when I did, this is what Mr. Geithner said. Even if the budget Mr. Lew put forward were passed and enacted, Mr. Geithner said that "we would still be left with a very large interest burden and unsustainable obligations over time." In effect, he said we would be left with an unsustainable debt path, when Mr. Lew says: Don't worry, my budget fixes it. And Geithner was talking about this very budget.

Writing in the New York Times, writing an article, an op-ed in the New York Times, Mr. Lew said:

The President's budget is a comprehensive and responsible plan that will put us on a path toward fiscal sustainability in the next few years.

He wrote that in the New York Times—totally inaccurate. Does he not respect the American people? Does he think he can just go and make CNN statements and write in the New York Times and say anything he pleases about the financial condition of our country—a financial condition that represents the greatest threat to our national security, more than any other threat we have in this world today?

That same month, Mr. Lew stated in an interview with National Public Radio:

If we're able to reduce the deficit to the point where we can pay for our spending and invest in the future, that is an enormous accomplishment. This budget has . . . proposals that would do that.

And it did not. The budget did not have anything in it that would have had us pay for our spending. We are borrowing 36 cents out of every \$1 we spend today. We are adding debt to our Nation every single hour—and to say we are going to be paying down the debt.

At no point did Mr. Lew's own estimate show that the President's 2012

budget was coming close to a point where we could pay for our spending. Excluding interest payments on the national debt—excluding the interest—the plan would have resulted in \$1.5 trillion in deficits over 10 years, and even more than that when you consider the full interest cost of \$7.2 trillion. The long-term outlook, with annual interest payments approaching \$1 trillion and mandatory spending consuming over three-quarters of the budget after 10 years, and growing—entitlement and mandatory spending absorbing three-quarters of the budgets—Mr. Lew's comments were not merely misleading, but I believe qualify to be described as the greatest financial misrepresentation in the history of the American Republic. If someone has a better analysis of it, I would like to hear it. If somebody comes down and says this is a true statement, I would like to hear them say it. I invite all my colleagues—members of the Finance Committee; lots of them voted for Mr. Lew—do you think it is OK to say this? Do you think this is accurate? And if it is not accurate, do you want to promote him anyway? Why would you want to do that? I do not understand it. I am not going to support that. Mr. Lew made these representations over and over again.

The President's next year's budget in 2012, for the 2013 fiscal year, was formulated while Mr. Lew was still the President's Budget Director and delivered while he was the President's Chief of Staff. It similarly was extreme and irresponsible, and it was part of a continued campaign to mislead the American people about how it operated, to say it was so much better than it really was.

Although the White House claimed \$4 trillion in savings, according to the Office of Management and Budget's own data, the 2013 budget would only have reduced the deficit by \$197 billion over 10 years. They claimed they saved \$4,000 billion—\$4 trillion—but, in fact, it would only have reduced the budget by \$197 billion over 10 years—virtually not changing the debt course of America. And all of those savings—virtually every one—were from tax increases. The spending was not reduced.

The White House also pushed the idea that the budget contained \$2.50 in budget cuts for every \$1 in tax hikes, while in reality there was a net spending increase above the policy baseline we were operating under. It spent more, not less. They claimed there were \$2.50 in cuts for every \$1 in tax hikes. That is not true. Overall, from current budget levels, spending would have increased by more than \$2 trillion.

The net result of the proposals contained in the 2013 budget was to bring the Federal debt up to \$26 trillion by 2022—an increase of \$11 trillion. The proposed \$4 trillion in savings simply did not exist. It was a complete fabrication. Mr. Lew understood that. He helped write that budget. He was the Chief of Staff at the White House when it actually came to the Senate.

Once again, a Lew-designed budget was presented to the American people in false terms designed to create the impression that we were putting America on a sound financial path, while we were doing the opposite—if it had passed.

And, of course, you say: Well, SESSIONS, that is your view. You are the one who is mischaracterizing the President's budget. This is all partisan. Maybe you would think that. I hope not. But let's see what some of the other observers around the country said about it when it was released. I am not talking about the budget that was described by Mr. Lew in these wonderful terms. If we had a budget that would do that, the American people would jump up and down and shout hallelujah. We are not close to it, however, as independent observers noted.

Look what these honest observers said about it.

The Washington Post, the largest paper here in Washington, said this:

The larger problem with the budget is the administration's refusal to confront the hard choices that Mr. Obama is so fond of saying must be faced.

The title of that editorial: "President Obama's budget kicks the hard choices further down the road."

What about USA Today, a nationwide paper?

President Obama likes to talk about those "Sputnik moments" when the nation rises to difficult challenges like the one posed by the Soviet space program in the 1950s. On Monday—

The day this budget was released—he had a chance to turn his . . . budget proposal into his own such moment. He whiffed.

The title of that editorial: "Obama's budget ducks tough choices."

What about the Financial Times?

President Barack Obama has unveiled a hugely disappointing budget, cutting only a few percentage points . . . in projected US federal deficits over the remainder of this century. . . . If Mr. Obama will not make this case, who will?

The title of that editorial: "Obama's budget shows failure of leadership." That is absolutely true. It was a failure of leadership.

Another from the Washington Post:

White House budget director Jacob J. Lew has told advocates of reform that the White House thinks any significant plan offered by the president would simply become a target for partisan attack.

Then it goes on to quote Alice Rivlin: "I would have preferred to see the administration get out front on addressing the entitlements and the tax reform that we need to reduce long-run deficits," said Alice Rivlin, a commission member [on the deficit commission] who served as budget director in the Clinton White House.

That was Alice Rivlin, a wise commentator, a Democrat, but a wise commentator. She went on to say:

But they clearly made a tactical decision.

She meant a political decision.

That was the Washington Post. The title of that was: "Obama spending plan criticized for avoiding deficit commission's major proposals."

Another from the Washington Post:

Ersine Bowles, the Democratic chairman of the fiscal commission, said the White House budget request goes "nowhere near where they will have to go to resolve our fiscal nightmare."

He is referring to this. This was on February 14—2 days after Mr. Lew made those ridiculous statements.

This is Mr. Ersine Bowles, a man chosen by President Obama to head the fiscal commission and spent a year studying our debt problem.

How about Investor's Business Daily, a prominent business publication?

The White House's new budget is far worse than merely bad. By not attacking the underlying cause of our debt explosion and by raising taxes, it will lead inevitably to a weaker economy and perhaps even default.

The title of that editorial: "Obama's Gutless Budget Proposal"—a proposal written by Mr. Jack Lew.

What about the Wall Street Journal? This is entitled: "The Cee Lo Green Budget."

After three years of historic deficits that have added almost \$4.5 trillion to the national debt, President Obama was finally going to get serious about fiscal discipline. Instead, what landed on Congress's doorstep on Monday was a White House budget that increases deficits above the spending baseline for the next two years. Hosni Mubarak was more in touch with reality last Thursday night.

The Wall Street Journal, the premier business publication in America.

The Orlando Sentinel:

Count us deeply disappointed by the \$3.7 trillion budget that President Obama unveiled Monday. . . . To really tackle the national debt, Mr. Obama needs to get off the sidelines, and start leading.

The title of that: "President Obama's budget plan falls short"—Jack Lew's budget plan.

The New York Daily News:

But the bottom line is that [President Obama is] figuring on reducing the deficit by \$1.1 trillion over 10 years while his blue-ribbon commission said cutting four times that amount is critically necessary.

The title of that editorial: "Deficit of courage."

This is another one:

President Barack Obama rolled out a \$3.7 trillion budget Monday that promises \$90 billion in reduced spending for fiscal 2012, but it would still produce a whopping \$1.1 trillion deficit. The best that can be said is that we've started to frame the national debate.

So said the Chicago Tribune.

The Indianapolis Star:

Obama has all but ignored the recommendations of his own deficit reduction commission.

The headline of that editorial: "We ignore 'red menace' at our peril."

How about the Los Angeles Times, a major western newspaper of liberal political views:

President Obama's budget for fiscal year 2012 landed with a thud Monday, laying out short- and long-term tax and spending plans that disappointed lawmakers on both sides of the aisle. The proposal was a remarkably tame response to Washington's fiscal problems, not the bold statement about belt-tightening that the White House had suggested was coming.

The Denver Post, another large and liberal newspaper, states:

Obama called the proposal one of the "tough choices and sacrifices," yet it does not confront entitlements and continues to act as if government spending is the way to prosperity.

That is true for sure.

The San Francisco Chronicle, an important newspaper:

In a crucial way, it lacks honesty.

The Dallas Morning News, a big newspaper:

But taken as a whole, his proposals represent the third time in 2 months he has walked up to the challenge of curbing the deficit and more troubling long-term debt and turned away on leading the Nation back from an impending fiscal nightmare.

The Philadelphia Inquirer:

The shortcoming in Obama's spending proposal is its lack of strategy for sustained, long-term deficit reduction.

That is correct. It had none of that in it. It goes on to say:

Cutting deficits by \$1.1 trillion over a decade might sound significant. But the non-partisan Congressional Budget Office has projected deficits rising \$12 trillion over that time.

The title of that editorial is "Still missing the mark."

The Minneapolis Star Tribune:

The flurry of deficit-reduction plans released late last year were supposed to kick off a national "adult conversation" about the Nation's metastasizing long-term debt problem.

When is that conversation going to begin? It certainly didn't happen on Monday when President Obama released his \$3.7 trillion budget request for 2012. The title of that editorial is "Slinking away from U.S. budget reality," written by Mr. Jack Lew, Director of the Office of Management and Budget, who declared it was a wonderful budget, totally misrepresenting what it would do.

The Washington Post, Dana Milbank:

Obama's budget proposal is a remarkably weak and timid document. . . . The President makes no serious attempt at cutting entitlement programs that threaten to drive the government into insolvency.

What about Senator Conrad, who was the chairman of the Budget Committee at that time, a distinguished Democratic Senator who retired from Congress and is no longer in the Senate. This is what Kent Conrad said, my friend, with whom I served on the committee:

But we need a much more robust package of deficit and debt reduction over the medium- and long-term.

Well, our Democratic leadership in the Senate refused to bring up a budget. Today marks the 1,400th day this Senate has violated the law of the United States and not produced a budget. It is unthinkable at a time when the debt represents the greatest threat to our country.

The House has passed a budget each year. That was part of the strategy.

That was part of the gimmick. Senator REID, the Democratic leader, says we don't need a budget; it is foolish to have a budget. That was his comment: It is foolish to have a budget even though the law explicitly requires the Senate to produce a budget.

What did he mean, "foolish"? He meant if you pass a budget, somebody could criticize you. Somebody could look at your spending and taxes, evaluate it, and say: We don't like that. He doesn't fix the debt. It raises taxes too much. It doesn't cut spending. Or it increases the spending too much. Why do that? It is foolish. Let's don't pass one, and we will criticize PAUL RYAN, the young, dynamic chairman of the House Budget Committee who wrote a budget that passed the House and would have fixed our debt problem and put us on a sustainable course.

This was a budget that was complimented by Alice Rivlin and Erskine Bowles. They may not have agreed to everything that was in it, but they complimented him on having integrity and doing what it said in laying out a plan for the future of America. The House passed it.

What did the Senate do? Nada, nothing. It was one of the greatest acts of irresponsibility, I submit, in Senate history. There are a lot of them out there. This is one in the top group, in my opinion. How could you possibly, at a time of crisis, not bring up the budget? The President submitted a budget, as he is required to do by law, and every President always has. The Senate just decided not to even move one. They say: We will have one this year. I am looking forward to that. It is behind time, as was the President's submission of a budget. He was late, according to the law, in submitting that.

As time went on and the tension rose over the budget and our future spending program, the Democratic leader in the Senate thought he would be clever and would bring up Congressman RYAN's budget and make all the Republicans vote for it—virtually all did; maybe two or three didn't—and then they would attack them because it had cuts in spending. They are going to say: You don't like old people. You don't like children. You don't like education. You don't like this in health care, and this will be great.

As I said, most Republicans, virtually all, voted for it.

Senator MCCONNELL said: All right, let's bring up the Obama budget. Let's bring up the budget Jack Lew prepared to the floor.

He forced a vote on the Lew budget. How many votes do you think it received? Zero. Every Democrat voted against it and every Republican voted against it. It was brought up in the House of Representatives. Every Democratic Member of the House voted against it and every Republican voted against it. It happened the next year in the 2013 budget.

Not a single person voted for this budget because it wasn't worthy of a

single vote. It would not do anything to change the debt course of America, and they were totally misrepresenting what it would do. It was a sad moment. That is where we are.

My question simply would be, Where was Mr. Lew in this? He was the architect. He was the architect of the budget, but he was deeply involved in the political activities that were going on at this time. It fell to his lot—I am not sure if he asked for it—to come and testify before the Budget Committee and say these kinds of things about it, these words that will live in infamy. Did he just volunteer to do it? Was he so much a part of the Obama political interest he would say whatever it takes to promote a budget that wouldn't work?

Secretary Geithner, President Obama's own Secretary of the Treasury, would not say so. He wouldn't say these kinds of things. He tried not to embarrass the administration, tried not to embarrass Mr. Lew. When I pinned him down, he said this still leaves us on an unsustainable debt course; not fixing our problem as was represented.

Now we want to replace Mr. Geithner, a man who was frank in his testimony about the dangers we faced, with a man who stood by this kind of testimony and statements.

I do believe our country is a bit confused. I believe we are to the point where in politics people think they can say almost anything and nobody cares. Just say this or say that; if it is not true, well, so what. I guess it is just politics.

If we continue in that way, this is a very dangerous trend. It places the entire democratic Republic of America at risk. The whole concept of American Government is based on finding the truth. This is why you have debate in the Senate; open, public debate. The truth, the theory is that it will somehow rise to the top, and it normally will when you have honest debate. You have negotiations on issues, you advocate for your side, and you may begin to reach consensus, sometimes at least.

How can you reach consensus when the person you are negotiating with is insisting his budget does things it absolutely does not do? He is doing that for political reasons, not for the interests of America. How are you able to deal with that?

I think this Senate—as a matter of its own integrity to defend the integrity of the Senate, and, perhaps, more importantly, to defend the integrity of the American people—has a firm and clear duty to insist that high public officials tell the truth when they come before Congress or when they go on national television. He is being paid by the American people. Was he paid to misrepresent the budget or to tell the truth about the budget?

He didn't tell the truth about the budget. Is there a consequence? We just promote him to some other high office because he helped the President win his

election by spinning the debt situation in America in a way that is not correct.

Make no mistake, I don't have proof of this. And maybe it is wrong. But it seems to me this was a campaign decision made in early 2011 that they were going to say their budget fixed our debt problems. Why do I state this? Because it was continued periodically off and on and was repeated again in a national television ad by the President of the United States in September 2012 to win reelection. "Our plan pays down the debt," I believe, was the phrase they used in that television ad.

That wasn't true. He didn't have a plan that paid down the debt or didn't add to the debt or put us in a position to pay down the debt. He never had a plan to do that. He didn't.

You say: That is not correct. I will ask my Democratic colleagues—this is a free country, a free Senate—you come down and say if I am incorrect on this. Show me if I am wrong. If I am wrong, I will apologize; but I don't think I am wrong. I have looked at it hard, and I don't think anybody is going to come down and dispute what I have said fundamentally on the details of this budget document.

I thank the Chair for indulging me.

I yield the floor and would note the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. SESSIONS. 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. SESSIONS. Madam President, the Lew nomination has not received an enthusiastic response in many quarters, that is for sure—maybe from the hard left, where he has been an advocate of some very hard left views and some inflexibility when it comes to dealing with some of our entitlement programs and welfare programs that have been surging out of control. But this is what some others have said about the nomination.

Larry Kudlow, a commentator on CNBC—who was an economist for the Federal Reserve System of the United States and a former chief economist at Bear Stearns and an employee at the Office of Management and Budget, where he was a chief economist—said this on the radio not too long ago. I guess this was written about by Jeff Poor, a reporter for the Daily Caller.

Larry Kudlow explained why President Obama's nomination of Jack Lew as Timothy Geithner's replacement to head the Treasury Department was a "nutty appointment."

If you keep up with business issues and stuff, you will see Mr. Kudlow on TV regularly, and he, like a lot of our commentators, enjoys stirring the pot sometimes, but, as I say, he was a chief economist at Bear Stearns and at the Office of Management and Budget and

an economist at the Federal Reserve. He knows a great deal about the economy. His instinct is what led him to call this a "nutty appointment."

Continuing Mr. Poor's quote:

Kudlow pointed to Lew as part of the problem.

Part of the problem as to why we don't have a budget. He said he is part of the problem.

Once again citing the Poor article:

Kudlow cited Lew's lack of qualifications as another reason that President Obama's appointment was "completely irresponsible."

Quoting Mr. Kudlow, the article went on to say this:

"You know, this whole thing is kind of centered around the Senate, which hasn't done a budget in 1,351 days—so whatever that is, four years," Mr. Kudlow said.

And I will just add that today is the 1,400th day.

Continuing the quote:

"Now the White House might not even submit a budget, and now the White House had taken the budget director and chief of staff and put him over the Treasury, where Jack Lew is completely—and I mean completely unqualified to be Treasury Secretary."

He is talking about Lew, and sending him to be Secretary of Treasury.

Mr. Poor goes on quoting Mr. Kudlow, who explains:

"He has no financial experience. He has no international experience. He has no currency experience. He ripped off Citibank for a couple million dollars. He was there for one year. I mean, there's about a million people—give me a phone book, and I'll find somebody more qualified for Treasury Secretary than former OMB director Jack Lew. This is all of a piece. It is completely irresponsible."

Well, that is pretty clear, what he expresses there, what he believes. And I think that is valuable insight.

Are we just making this up? This staffer for Tip O'Neill, the Budget Director of OMB before and now Chief of Staff at the White House, is he really qualified to lead the United States of America in addressing the challenges of our time?

What about the Secretary of the Treasury position? Is that a matter of great importance? The Treasury is one of the four great senior Cabinet positions we have—Attorney General, Defense Secretary, State, and Treasury. The credibility of the Treasury Secretary is his greatest asset, and, as I have said, this statement raises the most grievous doubts about his credibility.

We have had great Secretaries. Albert Gallatin early on, who was a Swiss immigrant, helped create the House Ways and Means Committee and instituted the development of the Treasury. Simon Chase from Ohio stood as one of Lincoln's top aides and was responsible for the civil system of federally chartered banks. William McAdoo, a distinguished businessman, helped create the Federal Reserve System. Andrew Mellon, a brilliant Pennsylvania businessman, served as Secretary of Treasury. Henry Morgenthau, Jr., served as

FDR's Secretary from 1934 through 1945. William Simon, a successful businessman, served as Secretary under Nixon and Ford. He supervised the Nation's economic policies in crisis times.

So this nominee doesn't have the kind of background one would normally look for in a Secretary of Treasury, particularly when we are doing so poorly economically. We had a big recession, and we are coming out of it at a slower rate than we perhaps have ever seen other than the Great Depression.

Mr. Malpass testified at the Budget Committee yesterday about the Lew-Obama-Paul Krugman theory of borrowing money and spending money to stimulate the economy and get us out of the recession. All you have to do is look at it and see it didn't work. How much more evidence do you need?

So that is the advice we have been getting there. And this good staffer quality is what our Democratic chairman of the Finance Committee, Senator BAUCUS, seemed to see in Jack Lew during his recent confirmation hearings. He seemed to call into question the necessary stature the position requires and whether Jack Lew met those standards. This is what Senator BAUCUS said to Mr. Lew:

I'm going to ask you—it's clear you'd be a great staffer. I'm not talking about being a great, courageous staffer and telling the President what you think and don't think. I'm talking about something else. I'm talking about the public perception, the public demeanor, representing the United States across the country and around the world, be able to influence policy in a way that makes sense—most of us would tend to agree with. We may differ along the edges, but most everybody in this room agrees that needs to be done.

So even the chairman of the Finance Committee, a Democratic chairman, Senator BAUCUS, with great experience, certainly raised some questions about the nomination.

Madam President, I appreciate the opportunity to speak, and I look forward to Senator KAINE's remarks.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Virginia.

Mr. KAINE. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent to speak as in morning business and that the time count against the nomination.

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

ABNORMAL TIMES

Mr. KAINE. Madam President, it is an honor to stand here for my first speech on the Senate floor. I am honored to be part of this body and to speak where hundreds have spoken before and thousands will speak after me.

A normal first speech for a Senator is usually a proactive, forward-looking speech. We are not in normal times. A normal first speech for a Senator usually happens much later, after a Senator has been around for a number of months. We are not in normal times. A normal first speech for a Senator is often in connection with the introduc-

tion of a piece of legislation. We are not in normal times. So I am speaking a bit earlier than I would have thought likely when I took the oath of office on January 3, but I am speaking in particular because we are not in normal times, and the abnormality of the times has a huge effect on the Commonwealth I am proud to represent.

In the summer of 2011 Congress passed a bill we are now talking about, a bill dealing with the sequestration cuts of the Federal Government.

There is no precedent I am aware of in congressional history for what is about to happen in 48 hours.

Congress designed a set of punishing, nonstrategic, ugly cuts designed to hurt the economy and hurt individuals and all—however they voted on that bill—did not want these cuts to come into place. So those who voted for the package in the summer of 2011 did not want the sequester cuts to occur and believed we would find, through compromise, an alternative; and those who voted against the package in the summer of 2011 largely voted against it because they did not want these cuts to occur.

So the abnormality of the times is this: Never, to my knowledge, in the history of this body, has Congress designed a punishment that would hurt the lives of regular individuals and that would hurt the economy. It was designed with that knowledge, fully. All hoped it would not happen. Yet we are within 48 hours of allowing it to happen.

The effects this sequester will have on the country and the effects it will have on my Commonwealth are so significant and severe that I do feel compelled to speak a little earlier than I otherwise might have. I would also add I think the effects of these cuts on this institution and the credibility of this institution are equally severe.

What I wish to do in this speech is basically a couple things. I want to talk about the effect of these sequester cuts, if they happen, on regular people. I just returned from a tour around my State and I am just going to share some stories. I want to talk, with some data, about the short-term impacts of these cuts on the broader economy. Third, I want to talk about some long-term impacts, some impacts we are not necessarily thinking of right now but should cause us significant concern. Fourth, there is a way to avoid this, and I want to talk about how we can avoid allowing this self-inflicted wound to occur. Finally, I want to talk about the fact that there is an upside in this moment for us. This is not just about avoiding harming people, hurting the economy. It is not just about avoiding negatives. I think there is an upside for us and for this institution and for this Nation if we do this right.

Let me begin with my tour around Virginia. I am now a brandnew member of the Armed Services Committee, and I sit in a wonderful seat following John Warner, who was there for 30 years, and