

system. This makes sure people who are hired by our companies do not have things in their background that would undermine our security. Those systems are harmed as well.

This is an example where petty politics and recklessness is being placed above people, policy, and reason. We as a nation have stood in unity after the most horrifying of attacks. We live in a world where we have seen diseases such as Ebola, where we have experienced cyber attacks, and where we have had to recover from vicious weather events such as Sandy. We live in a world where people seek to do us harm, and we should do nothing to weaken our ability to respond, to prepare, to make ourselves more resilient for any such occurrences. The urgency is upon us. We cannot be a reactive nation unified after the fact. We must be a proactive nation, working together, above politics, to do what is right for the strength and the security of our country.

I call for a clean bill in the critical, most important part, of our government to provide for the common defense. This is a time that should bring us together, not have us fall prey to every bit of Washington that people have grown tired and sick of. Let us pass a clean bill, as a bipartisan group of former Secretaries of Homeland Security has called for. This is not a time for recklessness; it is a time for reason. It is not a time for petty politics; it is time to put people first.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from South Dakota.

THE PRESIDENT'S BUDGET

Mr. THUNE. Mr. President, yesterday the President of the United States released his budget. Unfortunately, it looks like the same old failed, top-down policies of the past. It is a government-knows-best approach that clings to more taxes, more spending, and bigger government. And it is exactly what the American people don't need.

If the past 6 years have demonstrated anything, it is that big government doesn't work. Six years of big-government policies have left the American people struggling.

Even the Vice President of the United States admits it. Speaking at the House Democrats' retreat last week, Vice President BIDEN said:

To state the obvious, the past six years have been really, really hard for this country.

That is the truth. The recession officially ended more than 5 years ago, but the recovery has been weak and sluggish. Economic growth has lagged far behind the pace of other recoveries.

By this point in the Reagan recovery, the economy had created a staggering 11.8 million more private sector jobs than we have created since the recession ended.

Wage growth has remained stagnant under the Obama administration, while

prices have risen. The average family health insurance premium has increased by over \$3,000 since the President's health care law was passed. Household income has declined by more than \$2,000 over the past 6 years. And too many Americans are unemployed or trapped in part-time jobs because they can't find full-time employment.

Over the past 6 years, middle-class families have had to work harder and harder just to stay in place. Getting ahead has started to seem like an impossible dream.

Republicans are committed to changing that. Providing relief to the middle class is the priority of America's new Congress. We intend to do it by eliminating the top-down, big-government policies of the past few years and replacing them with a new path focused on growing the economy from the ground up.

If big government programs tend to assume one thing, it is that government knows best. The government decides what it thinks you need, and then it makes you pay for it.

Well, Republicans don't believe government knows best. We believe the American people know best. And our goal is to get government off the backs of American families. We want to eliminate burdensome government programs and regulations and allow Americans to keep more of their hard-earned dollars. We want to leave Americans free to make the best decisions for their families about health care, about housing, and about everything in between. We want to make sure Americans live in an economy that provides the resources and opportunities they need to support their families and achieve their dreams. That is what we mean by fighting for people, not government, and we have already gotten started.

Senate Republicans just passed legislation to approve the Keystone XL Pipeline. This project is a win-win for Americans. It would support 42,000 jobs during construction. It would invest billions in the economy. It would bring in millions in revenue to State and local governments.

In my home State of South Dakota alone, the pipeline would bring in \$20 million in tax revenue. That is a lot of funding for local priorities such as schools and teachers, law enforcement, roads, and bridges.

Finally, the Keystone Pipeline would substantially reduce our reliance on oil from unstable countries such as Russia, Venezuela, and Iran. That would be good news for American families' energy bills.

In addition to legislation to approve Keystone, Republicans have a number of other job-creating bills on the agenda.

The House of Representatives has already taken up legislation to make it easier for employers to hire veterans by exempting new veteran hires from ObamaCare's burdensome employer

mandate. House Republicans have also taken up legislation to fix ObamaCare's 30-hour workweek rule, which is currently cutting workers' hours and wages by making it more difficult for employers to create or maintain full-time positions.

Republicans will also be releasing our own budget in the next few weeks, and it will be very different from President Obama's. First of all, our budget is going to balance. The President's budget never balances—ever—and that is not a sustainable path for our country. Families have to balance their budgets. They don't have a choice. The Federal Government should be no different.

The President tends to act as if the Federal Government is different, as if the fact that his new government programs have good intentions means he can somehow ignore the fact that the country can't afford them. But the Federal Government is just like any family or business or organization. If its budget isn't balanced, bad things happen.

Right now, the Federal Government is in debt to the tune of \$18.1 trillion. That number is so large that it is practically unfathomable.

To put it in perspective, 18.1 trillion people are more than 2,540 times the total population of the Earth; 18.1 trillion miles is the distance to the Moon and back—almost 38 million times.

Needless to say, a debt that big is not a good thing—and the President's budget would keep adding to it. In fact, it would add another \$8.5 trillion to the debt. That is not good news for future generations who will have to pay down the bills our generation is racking up.

Republicans' budget will balance. It will take aim at out-of-control Federal spending and address our massive Federal debt. Our budget will also cut waste to make the government more efficient, effective, and accountable to the American people. There is no excuse for wasting Americans' money on ineffective and duplicative programs.

The President's budget is about the past. Republicans' budget will be about the future. The American people sent a clear message in November that they were tired of the status quo in Washington. They were tired of gridlock. They were tired of the same old top-down, government-knows-best approach to governing.

Well, Republicans heard them. And since we took control of Congress a month ago, we have focused on living up to the trust the American people placed in us. We have gotten Washington working again.

In just 1 month, we have held more amendment votes than Democrats held in an entire year. Committees are back up and running, and Republicans and Democrats are getting the chance to make their constituents' voices heard.

We have passed job-creating legislation, and we are going to keep passing more. We are going to put forward the kind of budget the American people are looking for: a budget that balances, a

budget that targets wasteful Washington spending, and a budget that starts to address the massive debt that has accumulated under the Obama administration.

President Obama has a choice: He can continue to put forward the failed policies his budget offers, or he can move away from these policies and work with Republicans to start cleaning up the debt and getting government off the backs of the American people. We hope he will choose to work with us.

But whatever he chooses, though, Republicans will continue this Congress as we have begun: by getting Washington working again for American families.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Wyoming.

Mr. BARRASSO. Mr. President, I wish to join in the comments from my able and learned colleague from South Dakota to talk about what happened when the President yesterday released his budget for the next fiscal year.

I agree with my colleague from South Dakota that the President's spending is absolutely astonishing. The President wants to spend \$4 trillion in 2016. That is \$1 billion 4,000 times. Nobody has ever seen a budget that big before.

The New York Times ran an article right after the budget came out yesterday with the headline "Liberal aspirations, set out as a budget." The article said:

President Obama presented a budget on Monday that is more utopian vision than pragmatic blueprint.

The American people don't want a utopian vision. They want responsible leadership—responsible leadership that understands their needs and the challenges people face every day.

So far this year, all we have seen from the President is a list of ways he wants to spend taxpayers' hard-earned dollars. These ideas are so unrealistic, there has been no sign that the President actually wants to get anything done for the rest of his term. If the President wanted to get something done, what he would do is write a budget that spends a reasonable amount of money in a responsible way. If he wanted to get something done, he would offer responsible tax simplification.

Instead, the President of the United States asked for more taxes on hard-working American families. That is what he did when he said last month that he wanted to raise taxes on college savings plans. Millions of people use those plans to give their children a better future. When even Democrats in Congress told the President it was a terrible idea, the President finally had to relent and drop his plan.

Then came the State of the Union Address, and the President had more ideas for even additional new taxes. The Tax Policy Center analyzed those ideas, and they found that millions of middle-class families would pay even

higher taxes under the President's plans. When they looked at families squarely in the middle of the middle class, they found that only about one in four of them would even get a tax break and, instead, twice as many families in the middle of the middle class—twice as many families—would see their taxes go up, and they would pay almost \$300 more on average under President Obama's plan. How is that a good deal for hard-working taxpayers all across the country, for middle-class families?

Another study looked at some of the President's other plans for tax increases. It found those ideas would lead to a smaller economy and smaller incomes. How is that a good idea for the middle class?

Now we have the President's budget. Next year, he wants to increase spending by 7 percent over what Washington will spend this year. Did most Americans get a raise of 7 percent last year? Of course not. Under President Obama's economy, wages have been stagnant. Part-time workers are having their hours cut, their paychecks cut. Why? Because of the President's health care law. People are paying higher premiums, higher deductibles, higher copays for health insurance that meets all of President Obama's mandates but doesn't necessarily meet the needs for them and their families. President Obama still has not learned that every dollar Washington takes out of the pockets of hard-working taxpayers all across the country is a dollar they can't use for themselves, to spend, to save, to invest.

In his budget the President sent over yesterday, he wants to add another \$474 billion to Washington's debt next year alone—see what the debt is, and he wants to add it to the debt on top of that. He wants another \$8.5 trillion over the next decade. Every one of those numbers is right there in his budget, and every one of them is bad news for hard-working American taxpayers.

Americans aren't asking the President to add trillions of dollars to Washington's out-of-control spending and debt. They know they are the ones who are going to have to pay for this new spending. The President may not realize it, but the American taxpayer knows it.

The White House says it can add all of this new spending because the budget deficit this year, as they say, will only be \$468 billion. That is how out of touch this administration is. The President sees a deficit of \$468 billion—and that is adding it on top of the debt—and is declaring victory. He wants to celebrate by piling on more debt to spend on his priorities, not on the priorities of hard-working American families. That is not a victory.

Over the next 10 years, under President Obama's budget, the debt in Washington is going to climb to more than \$26 trillion. That is \$75,000 that each man, woman, and child in America

would owe to pay off the debt President Obama is suggesting in his budget.

We have all of that debt, and the President's budget does nothing to preserve and protect Social Security. There is nothing to preserve and protect Social Security so it will be there for the next generation. Is that really the legacy President Obama wants to leave for America's young people?

At least the President will send his budget to Congress by the deadline this year. This is President Obama's seventh budget, and five of those he turned over after the legal deadline. Maybe the President should have taken a little more time to double check his math because the President's figures don't add up for the American people.

President Obama's economic policies have led to far less growth than we would have had following the recession. According to the latest numbers released on Friday, our economy grew by just 2.4 percent last year. That is not really what it should be, not for our country. We have tried President Obama's ideas for the last 6 years, and they have failed. They have failed the American people. This budget is more of the same ideas—more middle-class taxes, more spending, more debt. And Democrats in Congress didn't even offer a budget the past few years.

Republicans are ready to do the work of passing a responsible budget. We are going to pass a budget with common-sense spending that fits America's priorities, not Washington and President Obama's priorities. We will pass a budget that actually helps middle-class families thrive and our economy grow. We will pass a budget that takes control of Washington spending and starts to bring down President Obama's massive debt. Republicans in Congress understand that governing responsibly begins with budgeting responsibly. Instead of more new spending that middle-class, hard-working American families can't afford, we will balance the budget. We will cut waste and support programs that deliver real results.

That is what the President should have done. What he should have done is shown real leadership, not just more utopian vision. The President missed his chance to lead. Republicans will produce a budget that focuses on jobs, economic growth, and opportunity for all Americans.

I thank the Presiding Officer and yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. SULIVAN). The Senator from Louisiana.

DEPARTMENT OF HOMELAND SECURITY FUNDING

Mr. VITTER. Mr. President, I rise in strong support of moving to the Homeland Security appropriations bill. I hope we do that with a vote today. This is very important in terms of governing and in terms of passing an appropriations bill for a vital part of government.

It is also important to address and debate and vote head-on on President