

have been capable of. While, as is often the case around here, some are very quick to throw out criticisms of individual offsets and were less willing to offer suggestions for suitable alternatives, Congressman NEUGEBAUER, in response to concerns about an item in the original offset package, came forward to produce a viable and scorable alternative that was able to garner bipartisan support and ultimately broaden the overall support for this long-term deal.

Back in July, when the Senate first proposed a long-term bill, many said we couldn't do it without raising taxes. When we passed our first bill, these same people claimed that it stood no chance of passage in the House. Now, just a few months later, both Chambers are a few days away from considering the conference report built upon the foundation laid by that same Senate bill.

This legislation provides a longer extension than the vaunted SAFETEA-LU extension, which many had long viewed as a model for a multiyear highway bill. In fact, you would need to go back at least to the late 1990s—actually, to the early 1990s—to find a highway reauthorization of comparable duration.

As I said, this major bicameral success was unthinkable a few months ago.

While I do acknowledge that we still face the problem of outlays from the highway trust fund outpacing the dedicated revenues, this bill will give us a much needed 5-year break from the deadlines and cliffs that all too often dictate how we deal with the highway trust fund. It is, quite simply, a great example of what we can do when we work together.

I would like to briefly note that these types of victories for good government have been piling up all year under the current Senate majority.

We do need to start thinking now about more permanent solutions on highways, but once we pass this bill, we will be in a better position than at any time in nearly two decades to do so. That, as they say, is nothing to sneeze at.

Before I conclude, I wish to pay tribute to Chairman INHOFE, Chairman SHUSTER, and BARBARA BOXER and her Democratic counterpart in the House, who led a conference committee that was able to sift through various issues and put together a very complex piece of legislation in a matter of just a few weeks. These two chairmen deserve a lot of credit for their efforts, as do all the Members who took part in the conference.

Today Congress is making headway to implementing the longest highway reauthorization bill in more than 15 years. We have heard time and again that a long-term highway bill would only be possible if we included a big tax increase. Yet we have been able to defy the odds and provide much needed funding for America's bridges, high-

ways, and roads for the next 5 years. This marks a watershed moment for our transportation community, which will now have the security and stability they need to plan, implement, and complete critical infrastructure projects.

Of course, while we have crossed a major hurdle today, our job is not yet over. There is still one more vote to go, and I am confident we will get there.

I look forward to continuing to work with my colleagues on both sides of the aisle to complete our work and ensure that a strong multiyear highway bill is signed into law this year. I look forward to working with all of my colleagues for whatever challenges lie ahead.

With that, I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. GARDNER). The Senator from Oklahoma.

GOVERNMENT SPENDING

Mr. LANKFORD. Mr. President, when you are home and the television is on, the phone starts to ring, your dog is at the back door barking, and the kids need help doing their homework, occasionally you can forget that dinner is on the stove, but if you forget about it too long, your house will catch on fire, and that is going to be a problem. You can get distracted by a lot of things and suddenly miss out on something that is very important.

Our Nation is dealing with a lot of issues right now, such as terrorism, immigration, banking issues, our economy, education, transportation, and I do have a concern that we have forgotten this year we still have \$450 billion in deficit and a total debt of \$19 trillion hanging over our heads.

If we were in any State in America and faced with that, the legislative branch would work, make hard decisions, and then balance their budget. Every single State, at the end of the legislative session, comes to a balanced budget, but we don't. We just overspend, and it has happened consecutively so many times now, our debt has built up to \$19 trillion. I don't have an easy way to articulate \$19 trillion of debt, but let me give you a picture of that. Earlier this year we passed a 10-year budget plan that would get rid of our \$450 billion of deficit and would slowly work down, within 10 years, back to a balance. Good.

Let's do a hypothetical. Let's say we finish out that path, and we have to get back to a balance within 10 years, and then in year 11 we do very well and we have a \$50 billion surplus. It is a good surplus. Here is my question: How many years in a row would we have to have that \$50 billion surplus before we paid off our debt? If you are doing the math in your head, the correct answer is 460 years in a row. If we had a \$50 billion surplus for 460 years in a row, we could pay off our debt. That is not going to happen, is it? We are in a bad spot, and my fear is that we are dis-

tracted and we are not focusing on something that will come back and bite us.

What do we do about that? I ask if we can do the first thing: Can we at least agree that this is a problem and that we should actually work to balance our budget? At least have that as the common ground that we can agree on in this body and say we need to get back to a balanced budget, and then we need to begin to pay this down and start that process—to approach this issue in a way that I think can develop real solutions. We need to find common-ground areas, but first we need to begin with that one simple principle.

Our office has come up with a list which we affectionately call the Federal Fumbles List—100 ways the Federal Government has dropped the ball. We are identifying areas of waste, duplication, and, quite frankly, regulations that are well outside the purview of the Federal Government, many of which slow down the economy and drive up the costs to consumers.

These Federal fumbles are not an exhaustive list. This is not everything; This is just our list. We took some from multiple agencies and entities. As we pulled this list together, we encouraged this. This is our to-do list. We encourage other offices to start their to-do list so at least we can have a common-ground sense of, let's get back to a balance and work together to identify something within our own office to find out ways we can deal with some simple things, such as, how are we wasting taxpayer dollars? What programs are ripe with fraud? What duplication and inefficiency is out there? Where are we overregulating, which in turn raises the costs of goods and services for consumers? And how does the government actually have processes in place that deceive taxpayers and add debt to their families?

When we walked through this, we had a common agreement on our team: We are not just going to identify problems; we are going to actually work together to find a solution. Our issues and conversations have been simple. If I am back home in Oklahoma, I can sit in the coffeehouse with other folks eating breakfast and talk about all the problems, but when I get back in this room, we can't just complain about the issues, we have to fix those issues. That is our job. We spend a tremendous amount of time just complaining about the issues as if fixing it comes from somewhere else.

So we take all 100 of these issues and say: Here is the problem, and here is the solution we have proposed. If people have different ideas and different solutions, bring them, but let's at least agree that these things should be resolved. Some of them are small, some of them are large, but we simply asked the question: How do we fix this?

I have several things to say on that issue. One is that we have to fix our budgeting process and the way we make decisions about it.

We have these cute little terms in our budgeting process, such as CHIMPS, changes in mandatory programs. It is a cute term, but the problem is that adds \$11 billion to the debt every year and everyone just pretends that it is not there, that it is not real.

There is a fund called the Crime Victims Fund. This fund is supposed to go directly to what it says—to crime victims—but it is actually not used for crime victims.

Eleven billion dollars each year—in fact, this is the same \$11 billion that is used each year as an offset for additional spending, but the money never actually moves out of that account, it just stays there. We pretend we are going to spend it and then actually spend it somewhere else and then the next year do the same thing again. It is deceptive. We have to stop that. That adds deficit and debt onto families by a deceptive tactic.

We have a thing called the corporate payment shift. This one is fun as well. The corporate payment shift assumes that money is going to come in or be spent, and we have a 10-year budgeting window and move it in the very last month to year 10 plus 1 month. We move it just slightly out of the budget window, but we say we are going to spend it and actually go ahead and spend it anyway. If we had a budget that was 10 years and 1 month, it would be out of balance, but if we put that little corporate payment shift in there, it looks fine on paper, but in reality it doesn't work. So we identify that as one of the fumbles that we have as a government. It is something that we obviously have to fix. Basic oversight will help that, but it is also this body making a decision on how we are going to budget it.

We also walked through a lot of areas where we just identified things that the Federal Government spends money on that we thought were rather unique to spend money on and we thought may need some oversight.

How about a \$43 million natural gas filling station built in Afghanistan? It cost \$43 million for one natural gas filling station. Now that that station is in place, it is not being used at all and it is a \$43 million waste.

How about the Academy Awards. It is a pretty ritzy event. The Academy Awards are choosing to build a \$250 million museum, and the Federal taxpayers are kicking in \$25,000 to that museum. Why in the world are we kicking in \$25,000? Did we believe at some point that they couldn't raise the last \$25,000, and so we had to kick in a Federal connection to it? I would disagree.

One of my favorites is the fact that we just spent almost \$50,000 to study the history of tobacco use in Russia. I am still looking for the national security implications of why we just spent \$50,000 to study cigarette use in Russia.

The National Park Service spent \$65,000 doing a study on what happens to bugs when you turn on a light in

dark areas. I can tell anyone in this Chamber what bugs do if you turn on a light in a rural area. They fly at the light. But we spent \$65,000 trying to investigate that.

The VA in Arkansas installed solar panels to show that they have green energy in this area. Many VA centers around the country are doing this project. The particular one in Arkansas put them on in the wrong spot, relocated them, and spent \$8 million in total just for the installation for their solar panels. Any guess on how long those solar panels will have to run continuously to before they pay off the cost of installation? They will have to run continuously for 40 years just to pay for the cost of installation. That is not green energy, that is just waste.

How about a challenge like this. The Social Security Administration—the definition for Social Security disability is that you cannot work in any job in the economy. You are only eligible for Social Security disability if you cannot work in any job in the economy. But there are individuals who receive both Social Security disability, which by definition means you cannot work, and unemployment insurance, which by definition means you are looking for a job. You should not be able to get unemployment insurance and Social Security disability insurance at the same time. They violate the definitions between the two. Even the President of the United States agrees with that. Yet we have not been able to get that done. That is a fumble.

As American taxpayers, we spent \$374,000 studying the dating habits of senior adults. Can someone help me understand what the national security implications are for that and why we spent \$374,000 studying the dating habits of senior adults?

We also created what is called the Ambassador Slush Fund.

The Ambassador's Cultural Fund from the State Department, \$5 million—almost \$6 million—is designed to be able to help us give away money to do construction in other areas.

We have done projects like building a welcome grotto into a Buddhist temple in China, which I find the ultimate irony. If any church in America said we wanted to be able to add on a welcome center onto our church, we would forbid the use of taxpayer dollars for that, but in China we literally borrowed money from them, gave it to our State Department so they could build a welcome grotto into a Buddhist temple back in China. I am not sure that is a great idea.

The State Department also has a Twitter account called ThinkAgainTurnAway. It is to discourage people from joining the jihadi movement. Any guess on how much Americans spend for a Twitter account? For that one Twitter account with 23,000 followers, we spent \$5 million—\$5 million to maintain a Twitter account. I am very confident there are multiple teenagers at home who could

help us run that for a lot less than the price.

Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent to extend my remarks for a couple more moments.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection?

Without objection, it is so ordered.

Mr. LANKFORD. Let me mention just a couple more.

I have a real concern that our Social Security Administration is not sharing what is called the death master file. That may seem like a macabre comment, but what happens is, if we don't share the death master file, then we literally don't know in other agencies when to be able to pull a Social Security number off the record. The Social Security Administration recognizes that someone has passed away, but the IRS doesn't, so that is still a live Social Security number to them, meaning someone could get that Social Security number, file, get a work permit, even register and vote—all sorts of things can be done—under that number.

We have 6.5 million people, according to our government, who are over 112 years old—6.5 million people. That is quite a few. Actually, in the world, there are less than 100, but according to our government we have 6.5 million and those numbers are being abused.

I can't even get into multiple issues, but let me just mention one more on this list of waste. We identified what many Americans already know. Social Security numbers are being stolen and used to file fraudulent tax forms. Many Americans in the coming months will file their taxes only to get notification from the IRS that someone has already filed under this number. It is infuriating to them, and it is billions of dollars of loss to the Federal taxpayer. The IRS knows how to fix this. We list out the solutions. We have to actually implement the fixes. We have to be able to protect the taxpayer and to protect individuals from identify theft. That is a fumble, but it is fixable and we need to do it.

I haven't even gotten into some simple things such as school lunches—ask any teenager what they think of school lunches at this point with the new regulations—or waters of the United States and how even the Corps of Engineers doesn't want to implement the new EPA rule. The fiduciary standard is causing chaos among retirees and individuals wanting to get retirement advice or rural banks in how they want to be able to give out loans for mortgages but can't in many rural areas of America.

There are solutions to these problems, and it is our responsibility to be able to work through the process to solve them. With \$450 billion in deficit spending and an economy that continues to slow down, this body needs to determine what our job is and do it. It would be my encouragement in the days ahead that we actually achieve that; that in the days ahead we speak of what we have solved for the American people rather than pretending, as

we are eating breakfast back home with some friends who are complaining about the problems. It is time for us to fix the problems.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Mississippi.

PARIS CLIMATE CHANGE
CONFERENCE

Mr. WICKER. Mr. President, policymakers from all over the world will be meeting in Paris this week and next to address the issue of climate change. With much fanfare, they will purport to reach an agreement that will prevent the Earth's "average global air temperature" from rising more than 2 degrees Celsius. This 2-degree limit will supposedly mean success for the conference in Paris and success in the battle against global warming, thus preventing catastrophic events from occurring.

So I come to the floor to call attention to several news articles pointing out problems with this approach, with this 2-degree Celsius approach. The first is a front-page story from yesterday's Wall Street Journal. I hold it in my hand. It is titled "Climate Experts Question Temperature Benchmark." This is not an opinion piece, it is a news article. The article points out that the 2-degree target is both arbitrary and based on questionable research.

The article quotes Mark Maslin, professor of climatology at the University College London, saying:

It emerged from a political agenda, not a scientific analysis. It's not a sensible, rational target.

The article goes on to say that despite assumptions by policymakers, the 2-degree target does not express "a solid scientific view." Indeed, no report by the U.N. Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change even mentions the 2-degree limit.

Economics Professor William Nordhaus appears to have been the first to use the 2-degree figure. The article notes that his work "argued that a rise of two or more degrees would put the earth's climate outside the observable range of temperature over the last several hundred thousand years." I ask my colleagues how did they measure air temperature 100,000 years ago, 200,000 years ago, as Professor Nordhaus appears to have been concerned about. I would also point out to my colleagues that being outside the observable range is far different than being catastrophic. It is not the same thing, but from that has evolved the 2-degree model.

This is not the first time the model has been criticized. In October of last year, David Victor and Charles Kennel wrote about it in the journal *Nature*. Victor is a professor of international relations at the University of California San Diego and Kennel is a professor at the Scripps Institution of Oceanography in La Jolla, CA.

Yesterday I got this article from the journal *Nature* and read it myself. In their piece, Professors Victor and Kennel wrote:

Politically and scientifically, the 2 degree Celsius goal is wrong-headed. . . . It has allowed some governments to pretend that they are taking serious action to mitigate global warming, when in reality they have achieved almost nothing.

This is one of the things I worry about. This is one of the things I fear from the Paris conference. The United States will agree to do a lot, costing job growth here, and other countries will do almost nothing, as the professors say.

Victor and Kennel say that the 2009 and 2010 U.S. conferences in Copenhagen and Cancun officially adopted this approach. They then conclude: "There was little scientific basis for the 2 degrees Celsius figure that was adopted."

Additionally, in an op-ed last month for the Wall Street Journal, environmentalist Bjorn Lomborg cites his own peer-reviewed study to show how the most high-flown promises in Paris will fail to make any substantial impact on climate change.

Even if every country fulfills every promise made in Paris over the next decade and a half, according to Dr. Lomborg, the growth of global temperatures would be reduced by less than .05 degrees Celsius, or five-hundredths of a degree Celsius—by the end of the century, the year 2100. So is it 2 degrees or is it less than five-hundredths of a degree? And is 2 degrees sensible and rational? Not according to Professors Maslin, Victor, Kennel, and certainly not according to Dr. Lomborg.

One more quote from Professors Victor and Kennel. They point out one of the major problems in the 2-degree Celsius approach: "Failure to set scientifically meaningful goals makes it hard for scientists and politicians to explain how big investments in climate production will deliver tangible results."

Yes, what are the tangible results? What can we expect in tangible results from the agreements that will certainly come out of Paris? We will be \$3 billion poorer, that is for certain, because the President has pledged \$3 billion from taxpayers for the Green Climate Fund. I would point out that \$3 billion could be used for Alzheimer's research or malaria or malnutrition or any number of the other problems the people of the world see as more important than climate change.

Tangible results coming out of Paris: Electricity bills will be higher. Lower income Americans will be colder in their own homes, our economy will have suffered, and job growth will have been slowed, perhaps by as much as \$154 billion a year. That figure comes from Stanford University analysts who say that if we adopt the Obama administration's proposal of cutting domestic carbon dioxide emissions by as much as 28 percent, GDP will be reduced by \$154 billion per year.

If we spend all of this money, trim our GDP by \$154 billion a year, and actually achieve this impractical 2 degrees Celsius, where will humankind be then? How much will the sea level not rise? No one can say. How much thicker will the icecap be in the Arctic or Antarctic? No one knows. How many coral reefs will be preserved? No one will even venture a guess. All of this to be done, all of this money to be spent, and experts cannot say how much it will help, if at all.

Dr. Lomborg writes that the Paris agreements are "likely to see countries that have flourished with capitalism willingly compromising their future prosperity in the name of climate change." Negotiators in Paris should weigh the real-world costs against the negligible environmental impact when discussing emissions reductions.

Finally, the Obama administration's international promises should come back to the Senate for advice and consent of Congress. Under the Constitution, the approval by two-thirds in the Senate is needed to enter into a legally binding treaty. I join many of my colleagues in urging the President to submit to Congress any agreement in Paris with regard to U.S. emissions targets and timetables or pledges that appropriate taxpayer dollars.

Americans should have a say in the approval process. A recent FOX News poll showed that only 3 percent of Americans believe that climate change is the most important issue facing our country.

In conclusion, the President's promises in Paris are not based on scientific analysis, according to these professors, but would certainly slow the economy, cost jobs, cost billions of dollars, divert money from real and pressing needs, and be of limited value. With so much at stake, these policies should come back to Congress for debate, consultation, and approval or disapproval.

Thank you, Mr. President.

Mr. GRASSLEY addressed the Chair. The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Iowa.

Mr. WYDEN addressed the Chair.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Oregon.

Mr. WYDEN. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that I follow Senator GRASSLEY after he has completed his remarks.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection?

Without objection, it is so ordered.

OBAMACARE

Mr. GRASSLEY. Mr. President, I come to the floor because we are discussing ObamaCare on the reconciliation bill. Webster's dictionary defines the word "success" as the correct or desired result of an attempt. So I want to discuss the definition of the word "success" as we consider repeal of ObamaCare.

On the day the bill was signed into law, President Obama said the following: