

There were emergency provisions to address the catastrophes that only the Federal Reserve could respond to. They did it faster than the Congress could do it. Had the Federal Reserve not stepped in, the consequences of the great recession would have been tremendously worse. It would have been worse than the Great Depression. This Federal Reserve could act quickly to safeguard the national economy because of its independence, and it did just that.

One of the lessons we learned from the great recession is that the Federal Reserve should not be hamstrung. It is a cornerstone of our global economy. We must maintain a Federal Reserve that is transparent, but we must also respect the independence of the Federal Reserve in order to maintain the well-being of the global economy, and that is why we included an amendment to responsibly audit the Federal Reserve while respecting its independence. The amendment passed unanimously. The bill which the Senate will vote on tomorrow, sponsored by the junior Senator from Kentucky, will critically undermine this delicate balance.

Wall Street reform ensured that the Government Accountability Office could audit the Federal Reserve, and in accordance with the law, the Government Accountability Office has carried out those audits. In the year after the passage of Dodd-Frank, the Federal Reserve was audited 29 times. Since that time, the Federal Reserve has been audited 102 times.

My colleagues don't have to take my word for it. The 102 audits of the Federal Reserve are available to everyone. All they have to do is look at the Federal Reserve Website. Proponents of this bill know that. Their calls for audits have been answered.

So let's be clear. This bill is not about auditing the Federal Reserve. It is not about transparency or keeping the books for the Fed. The oversight already exists. This bill is about giving tea party Republicans and their billionaire donors the ability to control the economy of the United States. It is an attack on policies that are designed to stabilize the U.S. economy and help the middle class bounce back.

Political parties should not and cannot run monetary policy at the Federal Reserve. That would be disastrous. I am disappointed the Senate will waste its time on another misguided partisan attack such as this one. The bill is an attack on the Federal Reserve mandate to create full employment. These attacks are partisan in nature, and it is unconscionable to think that the Republican leader will begin this year attacking policies that benefit the middle class.

Some Republicans agree. Senator BOB CORKER, chairman of the Foreign Relations Committee and a member of the Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs Committee, said this of the audit the Fed bill:

It's obvious to me that the Audit the Fed effort is to not address auditing the Fed be-

cause the Fed is audited. . . . to me it's an attempt to allow Congress to be able to put pressure on Fed members relative to monetary policy. And I would just advocate that that would not be a particularly good idea and it would cause us to put off tough decisions for the future, like we currently are doing with budgetary matters.

I agree with Senator CORKER. Injecting politics into the Federal Reserve is a bad idea.

This bill is a sham. We should dispense with it quickly, and we should do it—if there is any word quicker than quick, let's do it that way. I will vote against the bill, and I encourage my colleagues to do the same.

Will the Chair announce the business of the day?

RESERVATION OF LEADER TIME

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the leadership time is reserved.

MORNING BUSINESS

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the Senate will be in a period of morning business until 5 p.m., with Senators permitted to speak therein for up to 10 minutes each.

Mr. REID. Mr. President, I apologize to my friend, the assistant leader, for taking so much time.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The assistant Democratic leader.

75TH ANNIVERSARY OF FRANKLIN DELANO ROOSEVELT'S "FOUR FREEDOMS" SPEECH

Mr. DURBIN. Mr. President, tomorrow evening President Obama will come before Congress to deliver his annual State of the Union Address.

America has changed a great deal since President Obama delivered his first State of the Union Address 7 years ago. We remember he inherited an economy in free fall. There was a real danger that the United States would face another Great Depression. Instead, we slid into a great recession. The President—President Obama—did all he could to bring our economy back to life. Recent economic indicators show that his strategy moved us in the right direction. More Americans are working. We are seeing prosperity and opportunity return. There are still challenges ahead. We still face income inequality, and there are many things we must do to make this a fairer nation when it comes to our economy, but we avoided a Great Depression because Americans are resilient and because our government, under the leadership of President Obama, had the courage to take bold action to help put Americans back to work and to invest in America's future when the private sector would not or could not.

Our Union—and our future—is undoubtedly stronger today than when the President first took office, and I look forward to tomorrow evening

when we hear this President's hopes and plans for his final year in service to our Nation.

This afternoon I wish to take a few minutes to talk about another President and an earlier State of the Union Address. It was 75 years ago, on January 6, 1941, when President Franklin Delano Roosevelt traveled from the White House to Capitol Hill to deliver his annual message to the Nation. FDR had been reelected weeks earlier to an unprecedented third term as President. Despite historic reforms in progress, America was still battling the Great Depression he had inherited.

Pearl Harbor was 11 months in the future. Understandably, many Americans wanted to believe that the war that was consuming Europe and beginning in the Pacific could remain their problem over there, but Franklin Delano Roosevelt sensed that would not be the case. He could see America would inevitably be drawn into this conflict.

In addressing Congress, FDR proposed to make America the "arsenal of democracy." He also urged Congress to create a new "lend lease" program, enabling our historic ally, Great Britain, and their allies to withstand the assault of Nazi Germany, Fascist Italy, and Imperial Japan.

He did something else. FDR knew that in order for the Nation to face World War II, America needed to know not just what they would be fighting against but what they would be fighting for. So in some of the darkest days of World War II, with Adolf Hitler vowing to impose a new order on Europe at gunpoint, Franklin Roosevelt spoke of a moral order founded on four essential human freedoms that would be the right of every person everywhere. Those four freedoms he spoke of were the freedom of speech, the freedom of worship, the freedom from want, and the freedom from fear.

Norman Rockwell was an amazing American. He was a great illustrator. It is interesting that he did so many cover drawings for great magazines of his time, such as the Saturday Evening Post. When he heard FDR's "Four Freedoms" speech given to Congress, it inspired him to create images. Those images emerged after the original speech was given, and many people credit those images created by Norman Rockwell with allowing Americans to visualize what each of the four freedoms meant in very human terms.

I brought copies of them to the floor because they so graphically illustrate the message which FDR delivered in his "Four Freedoms" speech.

The freedom of speech. This Norman Rockwell illustration shows a working man standing and speaking his mind in a townhall meeting.

Freedom of worship. This photo shows a group of people from different backgrounds, each praying to God—the God of his or her understanding.

Freedom from want. This classic illustration shows a family gathered for a Thanksgiving feast.

The last of the four freedoms is the freedom from fear. This illustration shows a mother and father looking at their sleeping children tucked safely into bed.

In the coming struggle, President Roosevelt said, America would defend itself not just with arms but also with “the stamina and courage which comes from unshakeable belief in the manner of life that we are defending.” That is exactly what they did.

During World War II, 16 million Americans—one out of every eight—put on a uniform and fought for the promise of the four freedoms. Tens of millions more Americans back home joined the fight by planting victory gardens, recycling everything from bacon grease to tin cans, serving as “soil soldiers” in the Civilian Conservation Corps, and working in war munitions factories as Rosie the Riveters.

After the war, the “greatest generation,” as Tom Brokaw characterized them, may have given up their uniforms, but they continued their fight for FDR’s four freedoms. From the earliest days of the Roosevelt administration, Franklin and Eleanor had worked to rewrite the rules of America’s economy to give average workers and families a fighting chance against powerful corporations and entrenched wealthy special interests. They strengthened labor unions to improve workers’ pay, working conditions, safety in the workplace, health care, retirement—things we take for granted today.

After the war, the same Americans who had endured the hardships of the Depression and who had saved the world from tyranny went to work and laid the foundation for the creation of the largest middle class and the strongest economy in the history of the world. They built new schools, new homes, new towns, an interstate highway system. At the same time, more Americans began to challenge longstanding injustices based on race, creed, gender, and other distinctions.

As the historian and author Harvey Kaye writes, under the leadership of Franklin Delano Roosevelt, America greatly “expanded the ‘we’ in ‘we the people.’”

Under the leadership of Franklin and Eleanor Roosevelt, Americans saved our Nation’s economy from ruin, saved the world from tyranny, and they did all this while making America freer, more equal, and more democratic than it had ever been.

The promise of the four freedoms would inspire not only Americans, but it inspired the world. The four freedoms became part of the preamble to the United Nations “Universal Declaration of Human Rights.” That declaration, drafted by a committee chaired by the great stateswoman Eleanor Roosevelt, represents the first time in history that nations around the world agreed to a list of human rights to be universally protected.

My wife Loretta and I are honored to include among our friends Anna Elea-

nor Roosevelt, FDR and Eleanor’s granddaughter. She lives in Maine now, but she spent most of her life living in my home State of Illinois. Similar to her grandparents, Anna Eleanor Roosevelt is full of optimism, energy, and a fierce love for this Nation. She has done so much to advance her grandparents’ efforts to make America freer and fairer. I want to say to my friend Anna, America remembers and honors your grandparents’ legacy. We are a better Nation because of what their leadership and sacrifice meant to us.

As we celebrate the 75th anniversary of FDR’s “Four Freedoms” speech, it is clear that we still have a lot of work to do to make the promise of the four freedoms real. Income inequality in America is greater today than at any time since just before the Great Depression. There are many reasons for America’s growing economic inequality, including globalization and technology, but the biggest reason is nearly 40 years of deliberate political decisions to undo the progress of FDR’s New Deal and concentrate more and more income and wealth in the hands of the few. FDR was right when he said that “economic laws are not made by nature [but] by human beings.”

I hope this year we can work together to pass laws that will increase economic opportunity for all Americans, rebuild America’s middle class, and free more Americans from the fear of want.

FDR said that we Americans believe in the four freedoms not just for ourselves but for our families, for those who vote as we do or look like we do, who live in our neighborhoods and attend our same houses of worship, but we believe in the four freedoms for everyone everywhere.

An America that believes in freedom of worship doesn’t allow one religious group to deny basic rights to others. Think about our Constitution, which each of us in the Senate is sworn to uphold and defend. There are only three references in that great document to the issue of religion. The first is in the Bill of Rights to guarantee to each of us the right to believe as we wish or not to believe; second, that our government will never establish a religion; and, third, that there will never be a test for qualification for public office involving one’s religious beliefs.

Making a religious test for public office or even a religious test for immigration is inconsistent with those basic values—inconsistent with those four freedoms. Yet even in this Presidential campaign today, we hear candidates making that proposal.

Freedom of speech means allowing others to speak, too, not shouting down those who think differently than we do. Democracy works better with dialogue, not monologues.

Years ago when Loretta and I had our first baby, we faced some terrific medical challenges. Sadly, we had no health insurance. Let me state that as a new father, I was never more fright-

ened in my life. Thanks to the Affordable Care Act, ObamaCare, 17 million Americans and many millions of American parents are now free from that fear, and they know that if this act is eliminated, as has been proposed by some politicians, there is no alternative, there is no protection, and they will face the kind of fear no family should ever face.

This year, instead of voting over and over to kill the Affordable Care Act, I am calling the other party to work to strengthen the law. This law isn’t perfect, but together we can make the Affordable Care Act work better for all American families.

Freedom fear also means that Americans shouldn’t have to worry about getting shot when they are playing in a park, sitting in a movie theater, or attending a Bible study class. Even in an election year, we ought to be able to find commonsense ways to protect Americans from the fear and reality of gun violence. We ought to be able to find a way to keep guns out of the wrong hands without undermining basic Second Amendment rights. We owe it to America’s families to try.

Seventy-five years ago President Roosevelt saw that America would soon be drawn into war. While he didn’t live long enough to see America’s ultimate victory in World War II, his promise of the four freedoms helped achieve that victory.

As we know, the war ended officially with Japan’s unconditional surrender aboard the USS *Missouri* in Tokyo Bay. A member of Japan’s delegation who attended the surrender went to the ceremony fully expecting to hear how the allies intended to take their vengeance on the defeated Japanese people. Instead, he heard General MacArthur speak about the future of freedom for Japan. Years later, he wrote that it was at that ceremony that he understood that “we weren’t beaten on the battlefield by the dint of superior arms; we were defeated in the spiritual conquest by virtue of a nobler idea.” That idea—the inherent human dignity of every person—is the belief at the heart of the four freedoms. Those freedoms remain as powerful a weapon for peace and progress today as they were 75 years ago. I hope we will remember that this year.

GUN VIOLENCE

Mr. DURBIN. Mr. President, I rise to speak about the issue of gun violence and to commend the President for announcing last week a set of commonsense steps to make our country safer.

The need for action to reduce gun violence in America is urgent. About 32,000 Americans are killed by guns each year. Every day on average 297 men, women, and children are shot, 89 of them fatally. Last year, by one count, there were at least 372 mass shooting incidents where 4 or more people were shot—more than one a day in America. In the city of Chicago