

we were told, would tackle Puerto Rico's debt crisis in an orderly way and would help to remedy the years of fiscal mismanagement. Nevertheless, I remained concerned that PROMESA and its bankruptcy-like provisions would invite years of litigation and uncertainty due to the lack of existing court precedent.

So it should be no surprise that a recent Bloomberg article titled "Puerto Rico's Bankruptcy Fight Is About to Plunge Into the Unknown" described the bankruptcy process as "a circular firing" squad with "no established rule book to shape what comes next." The article reports that one market analyst "foresees a chaotic brew of lawsuits" because "nobody has any idea what is going to happen."

According to one news report, this is just the beginning, as PROMESA's bankruptcy provisions are "more likely to face years of appeal than a typical case."

Despite assurances otherwise, what happens next in the months and years to follow may be far-reaching and likely will impact us all. In particular, prior to the enactment of PROMESA, Puerto Rico, like the States, couldn't declare bankruptcy. I told you this last year, and it is as I predicted last year—granting Puerto Rico the authority to restructure all of its debts, including its State-like constitutional obligations, would be viewed as precedent for giving States similar authority.

I am not really surprised to see this is happening right now.

Getting back to the fact that I told the Senate a year ago. This past September, William Isaac, the former head of the FDIC, called on Congress to pass a law "giving] Illinois the option of utilizing chapter 9, which is akin to what Congress just did for the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico."

The New York Times reported on May 3 that "bankruptcy lawyers and public finance experts are watching Puerto Rico's case closely, to see if it shows a path that financially distressed states like Illinois might also one day take."

The Chicago Tribune's editorial board recently wrote that investors are growing nervous about the talk of States seeking a bankruptcy system after the fashion of Puerto Rico, calling Puerto Rico "the frightening ghost of Illinois future."

The editorial wondered how much more difficult it would be for States to borrow money if lenders knew the States could shirk their obligations in bankruptcy when that debt becomes due.

For those who weren't listening to me last year, those who dismissed concerns that PROMESA would set a troubling and dangerous precedent should take notice and make sure that a one-time piece of legislation does not create a new norm. I hold out hope that PROMESA might manage to provide some help for Puerto Rico.

Success, though, will ultimately require strong leadership from the Com-

monwealth's leaders, which, for years, that leadership has been very lacking.

There is a lesson to be learned. The fiscal crisis in Puerto Rico should motivate all 50 States, our cities, and territories to find the courage now to make tough choices, which are the foundation of responsible governance, rather than look to the Federal Government and bankruptcy as a way out. If they do not, the effect could be long-lasting, harming the vulnerable both within their populations and outside of their borders.

Obviously, what a lot of smart people told us a year ago to solve Puerto Rico's debt problems simply has not worked out.

So at a time when States, citizens, and markets are all watching, we must stress fiscal responsibility and pay attention to what is happening there in Puerto Rico. Otherwise, the uncertainty and chaos we were assured would not come to pass may be just over the horizon.

I yield the floor.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. CARDIN. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

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

THE PRESIDENT'S BUDGET

Mr. CARDIN. Mr. President, on Tuesday President Trump sent his proposed fiscal year 2018 budget to Congress. A budget is supposed to reflect the President's priorities and the values our country holds dear. Unfortunately, President Trump's full budget shows how much disdain he has for supporting American families here at home, how little he values America's strong leadership around the world, and how much he misunderstands the essential role the Federal Government has in keeping our air and water clean, roads and bridges functioning, and the public safe from deadly diseases and other threats.

This President's budget shows how much he values corporate profits and polluters over children's health and demonstrates an irrational ignorance of basic principles that have worked for and against the American economy throughout the years. The budget wastes money on a border wall and deportation force that will not make America any safer and will tear apart families and communities.

President Trump fails to uphold the promise he made as a candidate to protect American workers and seniors, and he breaks new ground in the level of uncertainty he is willing to inject into our economy, our local communities, and relationships with our historical allies and economic partners. More than any other Presidential budget in recent memory, this budget must be considered dead on arrival.

President Trump's full budget for fiscal year 2018 is an exercise in extre-

mism. President Trump wants to ax \$610 billion from Medicaid—the program that lifts up America's veterans and the most vulnerable men, women, and children, capping the funding in order to finance tax cuts for big businesses and the wealthiest among us. The budget further slashes the social safety net by cutting the food stamp program and eliminating critical social services programs. It directly hurts children by cutting \$6 billion from the Children's Health Insurance Program. The President wants to choke off funding for essential scientific research at the National Institutes of Health and infectious disease detection and response at the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, while also slashing funding for key global health initiatives that ensure economic stability.

Further demonstrating his misunderstanding of the ripple effect Federal investments can have, the President inexplicably wants to end the economic development assistance programs to rural and economically distressed communities. I was particularly disappointed that he would eliminate the Appalachia Regional Commission, which is very important to the people in the western part of my State as an economic tool that can bring badly needed jobs to Appalachia country.

He wants to put the American dream out of reach for would-be homeowners and seekers of safe and affordable housing with the elimination of HUD's rental assistance and homeowner partnership programs. The President calls for shifting more than \$143 billion in additional student loan payments to hard-working students and their families. And he recommends ending a vital program that helps first responders, law enforcement, teachers, nurses, librarians, public safety, and military have a chance to reduce the burden of their student loans so that they can continue to serve their communities. The President also continues the ill-conceived Republican assault on Federal workers and retirees with his proposal for wholesale slashing the programs and staff, such as the economic and environmentally important EPA and Chesapeake Bay Program, making it nearly impossible for many departments to carry out their basic mission.

I want to talk a few minutes about the foreign assistance budget. I have the privilege of being the ranking Democrat on the Senate Foreign Relations Committee. In terms of our Nation's foreign policy, if the budget is a reflection of values, then what the Trump administration values is an American retreat from the world that would make the United States less safe and secure. The numbers speak for themselves in the narrow-minded budget release we have received.

What is most perplexing about the administration's combined 31.7 percent gutting of international affairs spending—as Secretary Defense Mattis has said: If you don't fund the State Department Diplomacy Center, you had

better give the Defense Department more bullets and soldiers. This is counterproductive to making the world a safer place for America.

America is safer when the United States helps feed millions of starving people in Africa and the Middle East, helps Europe defend its democratic institutions from Russia interference, helps support countries and international organizations caring for vulnerable refugee populations, helps train farmers and other technical workers, helps lead the world in fighting climate change and promoting global health, and helps fund programs to protect human rights and promote democracy. In each of these areas, the administration has taken a penny-wise and pound-foolish approach that will cost lives abroad and endanger Americans here at home.

Each of the programs I mentioned are either eliminated or there are significant cuts, making it impossible for our dedicated Foreign Service officers to carry out the critically important missions they undertake.

As I look at the massive spending cuts put forward by the White House for vital national security, it is impossible to conclude that this is anything but an “America alone” budget—one that, if enacted, will have disastrous effects on our standing in the world.

Luckily, the majority of Members of Congress know this budget is dead on arrival. I look forward to working with like-minded Republican colleagues to make sure nothing remotely close to this budget is enacted.

Fortunately, our Founders developed a system of checks and balances with the Constitution providing that Congress appropriates public funds. It is our responsibility to pass the appropriations bill. I intend to do everything within my power to work with Republicans, using the model of the fiscal year 2017 Omnibus appropriations, to prevent enactment of this outlandish executive branch attempt to cripple our economy and do lasting damage to our Nation’s global leadership. Congress has a responsibility to ensure that we have a more realistic budget that helps the American public, contributes to genuine economic growth, and furthers America’s true values.

I want to cite some examples in some areas as to how detrimental this budget is. First of all, there are economic assumptions made by the President’s budget that are just not realistic. He assumes there is going to be a 3-percent economic growth rate, which economists tell us is simply not realistic. What does that mean? That means there is about \$2 trillion that is being used by economic assumptions which have no justification, meaning that we are going to see significant budget deficits increase if this budget were to become law. The budget double counts some of these gains in order to offset tax reductions. He is putting our economy at risk.

In healthcare, the President’s budget continues the administration’s mis-

guided and ill-conceived efforts to jeopardize the health and well-being of our constituents under the Affordable Care Act. Make no mistake about it, President Trump is trying to make sure that the healthcare system in this country does not work. He is deliberately putting at risk the cautionary provisions that are in the Affordable Care Act, which ensure that many of our constituents have affordable health rates without outrageous deductibles or copays. The Trump administration is jeopardizing that.

The Trump administration is jeopardizing the Medicaid system—\$610 billion cut in the Medicaid system, which is critically important for some of our most vulnerable people. There are 280,000 Marylanders who gained essential health coverage through the Medicaid expansion who will be left without access to care. There are an estimated 1.25 million Maryland Medicaid enrollees who will no longer be able to depend on benefits like mental health and substance abuse, pediatric dental services, or maternity coverage.

Our President is recommending a \$6 billion cut in the Children’s Health Insurance Program, the CHIP program. That is absolutely outrageous. There is a bipartisan effort in Congress to make sure the children of America have the health they need.

Then there is a \$7 billion—22-percent—cut in the National Institutes of Health. Democrats and Republicans have come together, recognizing that America has provided the true leadership and basic research to deal with the mysteries of illness, and the President wants to reverse that trend. That will not only cost us in terms of our health advancements, but it will also hurt our economy.

The President cuts the funds to the National Institute on Minority Health and Health Disparities. I thought we had made a commitment that we are going to narrow the gap of discrimination in our healthcare system. The President’s budget moves in the opposite direction.

In Social Services and Social Security, the President, on his campaign trail, promised not to cut the Social Security system. He broke that promise with this budget. These cuts are a “Robin Hood in reverse” budget. His cuts in the Supplemental Security Income Program and Social Security Disability Insurance Program will be devastating for low- and modest-income individuals, as well as persons with disabilities and those over 65 years of age.

So we have seen cuts to programs the President claimed he would not cut when he was a candidate. The budget cuts nearly \$200 billion from the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program, SNAP, or food stamps, which helps low-income Americans with food purchases. He also cuts the TANF Program, which helps people who are in need of assistance. The budget eliminates the LIHEAP, Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program, the

Weatherization Assistance Program, and State Energy Program. I guess Donald Trump wants low-income Americans to freeze in the dark. This is shameful and reprehensible.

Yes, there is money for some advancements—the advancement of the so-called border wall with Mexico. I visited Mexico just a few months ago. I visited the U.S.-Mexico border. I couldn’t find one border security guard, security personnel, who felt that building a wall made any sense. It will not keep out the illegal flow of people or drugs, and it will compromise our ability to work with our neighbors in the south to control immigration and to control drugs. The President’s Executive order on immigration and the President’s fiscal year 2018 budget ramp up deportation forces inside the United States, which will do more to harm our national security and public safety than to help. We shouldn’t be moving in that direction.

Legal Services is one of the areas I worked on for a long time with my Republican colleagues to make sure we fund the Legal Services Corporation. The Trump budget completely eliminates that funding. The late Justice Antonin Scalia said at Legal Services Corporation’s 40th Anniversary Conference in 2014: “LSC pursues the most fundamental of American ideals, and it pursues equal justice in those areas of life most important to the lives of our citizens.”

We believe in equal justice under the law. If a person cannot get legal help, they cannot get equal justice under the law. And the President says there is no Federal role for this. I hope that we will soundly reject that.

The President’s budget eliminates the Community Development Block Grant Program. That is very troubling. Here is one of the more flexible programs we offer the local government in order to be able to make their own decisions, and the President’s budget eliminates that program.

The President’s budget eliminates many of our programs under agriculture, which will hurt our rural areas and hurt our farming community. The budget proposes to eliminate new enrollment in the Conservation Stewardship Program and funding for the Regional Conservation Partnership Program. I am very familiar with the Regional Conservation Partnership Program. It was put in the last farm reauthorization bill. It was done as an effort to help deal with conservation in critically important areas, including the Chesapeake Bay watershed. It is a very important program to preserving our bay and preserving farm land so that we can have both a healthy bay and healthy agriculture. The President eliminates those programs. I could go on and on about agriculture—the many programs that are either severely restricted or eliminated under the President’s budget.

In education, the fiscal year 2018 budget released by President Trump

may be entitled “A New Foundation for American Greatness,” but President Trump and Secretary of Education Betsy DeVos have severely undercut our students, educators, and public schools. The budget proposes to eliminate the Preschool Development Grant Program, a program that has successfully placed more than 2,700 additional 4-year-olds in high-quality preschool programs across my State. The vulnerable children in this program get a boost that helps them to lower the achievement gap among students of color, low-income children, and children with disabilities across my State. We should be expanding these programs, not reducing them. And 85 Members of this body voted in favor of the Every Student Succeeds Act and the Student Support and Academic Enrichment Grant Program. That progress is jeopardized by the President’s budget.

Yes, he finds money for a new program to help school choice programs, which will undermine the progress we have made in public education. Mr. President, 95 percent of our students get their education through the public schools, and that is jeopardized by the \$1.25 billion the President has included in his budget for school choice programs.

Maryland families understand the value of higher education. For too many, the cost of higher education means that it is difficult, if not impossible, for their children to have the higher education they need. Yet the President’s budget takes away some of the tools we have in order to afford higher education. That is just not right. We should be making higher education more affordable, not less affordable.

In the environment, the President’s proposed budget would eliminate the Chesapeake Bay Program. The Chesapeake Bay Program and related efforts are delivering encouraging results throughout the watershed and have built a tremendous movement forward. Yet President Trump has still targeted them for elimination. The local governments are doing their job in stewardship of the bay. The States are doing their job. Our stakeholders are doing their job. We depend upon the Federal Government to monitor and make sure that the programs are there—that all stakeholders are doing their fair share. The elimination of the Chesapeake Bay Program would jeopardize all of that progress. We cannot let that happen.

The President’s budget would cut the EPA budget by 31.4 percent, the most severe cut of any major Federal agency. The investment in our Nation’s water and waste water infrastructure has been flatlined through this budget proposal.

What in the world makes President Trump think that our Nation’s drinking water infrastructure shall be kept at status quo? Don’t we all remember what happened in Flint, MI? We have

discovered similar things in New Jersey and Pennsylvania. In Baltimore, our public school system cannot connect their water fountains to the water supply because of lead contamination. We need to have a greater commitment to make sure that the water supply to America is safe.

Under the budget, the Office of Compliance would be cut by one-third of its budget. That is EPA not being able to enforce the law. Aren’t we a country of the rule of law? You would not think so under President Trump’s budget.

The President’s budget also does not contain a critical infrastructure plan. We heard that during the campaign. But nowhere in this budget is he providing for that increase. Instead, it proposes cuts in some of the highway trust programs.

Every day, civil servants perform countless tasks that help support and defend and protect America. Civil servants are saving lives, empowering small businesses, keeping America safe from harm, and otherwise ensuring a safe and prosperous future for our country, including our children and families. We know that our Federal employees often perform the type of work that no one else can do. It is a highly qualified Federal workforce. On May 5, Donald Trump issued a proclamation declaring May 7 through 13, 2017, as Public Service Recognition Week. He stated:

Throughout my first 100 days, I have seen the tremendous work civil servants do to fulfill our duty to the American people. At all levels of government, our public servants put our country and our people first.

He has a bizarre way of showing his appreciation. Earlier this week, he released a budget that punishes Federal workers by making them pay much more for their pensions, an additional \$5,000 for an average Federal worker, while making these pensions much smaller.

The relentless assault on the Federal workforce must end. The civilian workforce was smaller last year than it was 40 years ago, according to data from the Office of Personnel Management. Federal workers increasingly have been asked to do more and more with less and less. They have already sacrificed financially, contributing \$190 billion to deficit reduction just since 2011.

Workers hired in 2012 already are paying more for smaller pensions. Sequestration-related furloughs cost Federal workers \$1 billion in lost pay, and there was a 3-year pay freeze from 2011 to 2013, and substandard rises since then. Salaries and wages have fallen 6.5 percent since 2010, adjusted for inflation.

Now comes the latest attack on the Federal worker’s pension, on top of continued attacks on pay, healthcare and other benefits, collective bargaining, and due process rights. President Trump would eliminate the annual cost of living adjustments for people in the Federal Employees Retirement System, including current retirees, and reduce them by half a percentage point for people in the old Civil Service Retirement System, including current retirees.

According to certified financial planner Art Stein, the annuity would lose one-third of its value over 20 years if inflation averages between 2 and 3 percent annually, and nearly half of its value if inflation averages 4 percent. According to the National Active and Retired Federal Employees Association, the average FERS annuitant would lose \$99,471 over 20 years, and the average CSRS annuitant would lose \$60,576 over 20 years under the Trump budget.

That is outrageous. That is outrageous. We are talking about people who are already retired. They can’t re-enter the workforce. They have no choice. Yet we are telling them that they are not going to get what we promised. It is important to understand that 85 percent of the Federal workforce is located beyond the Washington metropolitan area. Federal workers are in big cities and small towns across America, striving to make things better for their neighbors.

Do we really want to engage in a race to the bottom with respect to our Federal workers? These are the people who make sure our parents’ Social Security checks arrive on time. They make sure the air we breathe, the water we drink, and the food we eat are safe. They are trying to find a cure for our spouse’s cancer and our sibling’s type 1 diabetes.

They support our sons and daughters in harm’s way, and they care for the wounded warriors at home. They patrol our borders and discover and disrupt terrorist threats aimed at our community. They are working to ensure that our grandchildren inherit a habitable climate. When we punish Federal workers—30 percent of whom are veterans, by the way—we are not just harming them and their families, but we are harming each and every American.

I intend to do everything within my power to work with Republicans, using the model of the fiscal year 2017 omnibus appropriations, to prevent the enactment of this dangerous executive branch attempt to cripple our economy and do lasting damage to our Nation’s global leadership. Congress has the responsibility to ensure that we have a more realistic budget that helps the American public, contributes to genuine economic growth, and furthers America’s true values.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. DAINES). The Senator from Utah.

HEALTHCARE LEGISLATION

Mr. HATCH. Mr. President, I rise today to speak about the continuing effort to repeal and replace ObamaCare. This effort has essentially been going on since the day the bill was signed into law. I think most of us on the Republican side recognize the overwhelming consensus surrounding the