

This issue of fentanyl is very real. It is affecting our communities in new ways, and we have to be able to respond flexibly to what is happening. It remains a dangerous threat.

Also complicating the recovery process is the continued resurgence of psychostimulants, particularly crystal meth. Again, crystal meth is coming from—where?—across the border, from Mexico. You will probably remember that at one time in your communities, there was talk about meth labs. You may have seen some coverage of that, and you may have had some meth labs in your neighborhood. There are horrible environmental issues, obviously, in the producing of methamphetamines, which are so dangerous. Guess what. There are no more meth labs in your neighborhood. That is the good news. The bad news is, there are no meth labs because this stuff that comes in from Mexico is cheaper and more powerful, more devastating, and more damaging to our communities. So it is a concern.

The latest CDC data on overdose deaths—particularly with regard to opioids—is very hopeful, but the overdose deaths by psychostimulants and cocaine continue to increase. That is because, again, fentanyl is being mixed into these psychostimulants. Methamphetamine deaths increased by nearly 30 percent, and 42 percent of all overdose deaths last year were directly attributable to cocaine, psychostimulants like meth, or both mixed together. That is the new problem, and we have to address it.

As we have continued to fight opioid abuse, I recently introduced a bill, entitled “Combating Meth and Cocaine Act,” in order to address this resurgence and to be sure that here in Congress we are being flexible in responding to it and not waiting until we have another huge drug crisis here of a new way to mix drugs or a new resurgence of crystal meth. To date, grants provided by the 21st Century Cures Act, which is now called the State opioid response grants, have been used to increase access to naloxone—again, a very important drug—as well as to long-term addiction treatment and support services. Yet, for all the good these grants have done, they can’t be used to address the crisis beyond opioids, which ignores the underground reality, at least in my State and in so many other States.

Earlier this year, for example, I participated in a roundtable discussion with leaders in Knox County, and I do this around the State on a regular basis. In Knox County, the prosecutor’s office estimated that 80 to 90 percent of all drug incidents now involve crystal meth—methamphetamines. They told me they have been able to use the State opioid response grants to help with the treatment and recovery services but that they are not effective with regard to meth because there is not an effective way to treat meth with drugs, as there is with opioids. There is

not an effective way to use the Narcan with meth, as there is with opioids. So we need to be more flexible in providing these communities with the help they need to combat this new resurgence. Our legislation will allow the State opioid response grants to be used for programs that focus on methamphetamines and on cocaine usage. More flexibility is important.

We know these funds are making a difference, so the bill will also reauthorize the State opioid response grants for 5 years, which will give some certainty by providing the \$500 million annually that will be needed to ensure there will be a stable funding stream to go to these innovative programs in the States. This is a simple, commonsense change. It will allow State and local organizations the flexibility they need to fight what is quickly becoming a two-front war on addiction—opioids but also psychostimulants that are coming back with a vengeance.

The latest data from the CDC is a promising sign that we can and will recover from the drug crisis if we continue to work to give those in need the help they need to get back on their feet. We also need to ensure that we don’t rest on our laurels as cartels continue to innovate themselves and try different angles.

There is so much money in this that these deadly drugs will continue to come unless we show the same kind of flexibility when responding. If they can, they are going to continue to send drugs through the postal system. They are going to continue to send them across the southern border. Fentanyl, cocaine, and meth have shown themselves to be continuing public health threats, and we have to keep working—all of us here on a bipartisan basis—to ensure that State and local governments get the resources they need to help stem the tide.

The Federal Government has been a better partner over the past few years with our States, with our localities, and with our nonprofits that are there in the trenches, doing the hard work. We can’t give up now. The numbers from the CDC are hopeful with regard to opioids, but that just means we need to redouble our efforts to ensure that we do not now back off. We cannot take our eye off the ball. We have to continue to focus on what we are doing and then add to that more flexible responses to the new resurgence of fentanyl being mixed with meth and crystal meth coming in directly from Mexico. This new drug reality is one that must be met with the same kind of innovative response we have responded with here in the last few years.

I yield the floor.

THE PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Colorado.

ECONOMIC GROWTH

Mr. BENNET. Mr. President, I rise after 10 years of being in the Senate and after having endured speech after speech after speech on this floor that has claimed the Republican Party is

the party of fiscal discipline. It was politics that created something during the depths of the worst recession, called the tea party, which rallied all over America to stop what it said was runaway spending.

When I arrived here, I actually believed that the Republican Party was a fiscally responsible party, that there was some principle behind it. I know better today. I was naive. It is all about politics.

There have been five budget deals since 2013 between Majority Leader MITCH MCCONNELL and whoever has happened to be in the White House. These deals were meant to overcome the idiocy of the across-the-board cuts that were created by the sequestration—which nobody in America understands but which are basically across-the-board cuts on spending—that otherwise would have been investments in your family, maybe, or investments in our military. They were agreed to as part of a fiscal cliff deal in the dark of night, at 2 o’clock in the morning, by nobody—literally nobody—who had actually read the bill. Ever since then, politicians in Washington have been making deals to try to overcome it.

When President Obama was President, this is how much money he was allowed to spend. Since Donald Trump has been President, this is the money that the Republicans have spent. This red is defense, and the blue is non-defense.

Under President Obama the deals increased by an average of \$33 billion above the sequester. The two deals under Donald Trump increased spending by \$154 billion, four times as much—four times as much—at a moment when the President is saying our economy is the best it has ever been in American history.

The result of this is that under Donald Trump the deficit has increased by 15 percent each year. The deficit just between last year and this year is up by 23 percent as a result of the Republican majority in the Senate and Donald Trump.

We are on track to run \$1 trillion deficits every year as far as the eye can see. That is after 10 years of economic growth and unemployment below 4 percent.

At no time in our history have deficits been this large outside of a major war or a recession, which brings me to my second slide.

This is the annual spending growth around here. This is the annual spending growth around here of defense and nondefense. They are both in here.

Under President Obama, in his first term, the spending went up by 3 percent. We were in the worst recession since the Great Depression. He had to pass the Recovery Act. That is in this number. That is in this number. It was at the depths of the worst recession since the Great Depression. Three million Americans lost their homes, and 9 million Americans lost their jobs. We had a 10-percent unemployment rate—

not a 4-percent rate, not a 3 and change, but a 10-percent rate. In the name of fiscal responsibility, Republicans did nothing except berate the President for trying to save the economy and for what he was trying to do.

I will come to that in a moment.

This includes the Recovery Act. Overall growth—annual spending growth—grew by 3 percent during President Obama's first term. It fell by 2 percent during President Obama's second term.

It has gone up by 4 percent during Trump's first term. It has increased more under this Republican President. Admittedly, he is not a conservative. It has grown more under this Republican President than it did when President Obama was trying to save the economy during the worst recession since the Great Depression. This 3 percent number includes the Recovery Act. The Republicans are now growing government spending by more than that—by more than that.

Here is what they said when they wouldn't lift a finger during the depths of the worst recession. Congressman MIKE PENCE, before he was Vice President, said:

We the people do not consent to runaway Federal spending. We the people do not consent to the notion that we can borrow and spend and bail our way back to a growing America.

He said that to a tea party rally here in Washington, DC, that was here to stop runaway spending.

Where are they today? It is worse today than it ever was under President Obama. It is far worse, not a little bit worse, because not included on this slide are the tax cuts that have never paid for themselves and are not paying for themselves here.

Donald Trump and the Republicans have created \$2 trillion of deficit spending because of the tax cuts and \$2 trillion of deficit spending because of the spending.

By the way, they are not actually spending this money, in a sense. They are borrowing all of it from our children. They have not paid for a dollar of it—not one dollar. They are borrowing it from the pages who are here. They are borrowing it from the children of cops, teachers, and firefighters—that is who they are borrowing it from—to give tax cuts to rich people, to make our economic inequality greater.

Congressman Mick Mulvaney, now the President's Chief of Staff, talking about the Obama administration's budget at the time, said:

It's hard to explain how detached from reality that is, to think that the country can spend another \$1.6 trillion when it doesn't have the means. It means either you haven't been paying attention or you don't care.

He is the President's Chief of Staff. He is the President's Budget Director.

If that was runaway spending, how is this not runaway spending?

The junior Senator from Texas said:

The debt is out of control. And, it is jeopardizing the future for our kids. I have got two little kids who are 4 and 2.

He lectured the President.

And, the idea of handing them a \$16 trillion debt, I think is immoral.

Really? What about \$24 trillion? What about \$30 trillion? Is that more moral than \$16 trillion? Really?

Now, former Speaker Paul Ryan said: "We will end up with a Greece-like situation on our hands."

"A debt crisis is coming to the country."

That is what he said here.

Admittedly, he left in the middle of a government shutdown, never to come back to Washington, DC—a fitting end to a decade of fiscal fights and shutdowns and government closures, all done in the name of fiscal responsibility, never actually achieving it and—never, ever actually achieving it—only for the opportunity to spend like this.

I can't tell you the number of times I have heard about this on this floor:

The debt and the deficit are just getting out of control, and the administration is still pumping through billions and trillions of new spending.

Paul Ryan said:

Our debt is out of control. What was a fiscal challenge is now a fiscal crisis. We cannot deny it; instead we must, as Americans confront it responsibly. And that is exactly what the Republicans pledged to do.

That is exactly what the Republicans pledged to do. They immobilized our government. They shut it down over and over and over in the name of fiscal responsibility—no help to the economy or the next generation. That is the farthest thought from their mind.

After years of obstruction in the name of fiscal responsibility, they nominated Donald Trump, who promised during the campaign to deliver a giant, beautiful, massive tax cut and borrowed all of the money for it from working people in this country.

There was a mayor in Indiana who wrote a piece about that in the paper that I thought was so instructive.

He said: That tax plan would be tantamount to my going to my city council and saying that I want to go borrow more money than we have ever borrowed before in the history of our town, and I am not going to use it to invest in roads or bridges or the sewers or anything else, and I am just going to take the money we borrowed that our kids are going to have to give back, and I am going to give it to the richest neighborhood in my town.

He said they would have asked: What have you been smoking?

He promised to pass "one of the largest increases in national defense spending in American history" and "not touch Social Security, Medicare, and Medicaid."

He said he would eliminate not only the deficit. This is Donald Trump, the candidate whom the Republicans voted for, whom FOX News, which is in theory the conservative channel, has supported like an organ of the State, with hosts who claim they are fiscally responsible. But he promised to elimi-

nate not only the deficit but the entire national debt—that immoral debt of \$16 trillion that is now climbing to \$30 trillion.

And the way he was going to do that was by "vigorously eliminating waste, fraud, and abuse in the federal government, ending redundant government programs, and growing the economy," as well as by "renegotiating all of our [debt] deals."

He hasn't renegotiated one. He spent more time failing to get a deal with the leader of North Korea than trying to address this challenge.

Donald Trump said:

It can be done. . . . it will take place and it will go relatively quickly. If you have the right people, like in the agencies and the various people that do the balancing . . . you can cut the numbers by two pennies and three pennies and balance a budget quickly and have a stronger and better country.

This is the President of the United States of America.

That is ridiculous. That is ridiculous, but it is no more ridiculous than the history of the Republican Party, the supposedly fiscally conservative party—what a joke.

Going back to 2001, the last time we had a surplus in America, Bill Clinton was President. He was a Democrat. He had a \$5 trillion projected surplus over the decade—unimaginable today. It is unimaginable today, but politicians like us were having discussions about what to do with the surplus, what to do with abundance, how to make Social Security solvent, how to give the middle class a real tax cut, not a fake tax cut that is masquerading and covering up the tax cut for rich people.

But we did none of that, and, instead, George Bush, who followed Bill Clinton, cut taxes in 2001. Almost all of the benefit went to wealthy people. He cut taxes in 2003, and both times it was just like Donald Trump said and the Majority Leader MITCH MCCONNELL said both times. They said: Oh, don't worry about it. They will pay for themselves.

A lie, a lie, and the number is in the math. It is not about philosophy. This isn't about ideology. This is about the math, and everybody in America could see it because that is what produced the \$16 trillion that Paul Ryan said was so immoral, \$8 trillion ago and on the way to \$30 trillion in debt.

By the way, it is important to know that when this Congress voted for those tax cuts in 2003 that were not paid for, the money was all borrowed by the sons and daughters of working people in America. We had troops in Iraq and Afghanistan. So we didn't even have the decency while we had people at war to pay for those wars or to say to the American people: We need to pay for those wars. No, we are not going to pay for those wars, and we are going to borrow the money from America to give tax cuts to rich people.

Then, President Bush, on top of that, seeking reelection, passed Medicare Part D, the drug program for seniors, and paid for none of that either. All

that money is from our children—all of it—and there has never been an effort to pay for it since.

Then, because of their lax regulatory oversight of the housing market, the economy collapsed. The economy collapsed, and Barack Obama was handed not a \$5 trillion surplus but a \$1.2 trillion deficit from the Republicans, from George Bush. During the course of his Presidency, we had to weather the worst recession since the Great Depression. The worst it ever got around here was \$1.5 trillion on the deficit, and the other side called him a Bolshevik and a Socialist. Well-meaning people from all over Wall Street and other places came down here and said: Fix the debt. Fix the debt.

Where are they today? Where are they today?

By the time he left, President Obama had cut the deficit by more than half—by more than half.

Every one of these deals has been cut by MITCH MCCONNELL, every single one. So it didn't surprise me at all this week that he was reported in the Washington Post to have said to the President that no politician has ever lost an election spending more money. No politician has ever lost an election spending more money, said the Republican majority leader to the President. I can't think of a more Bolshevik statement than that, to use terms that the other side has been using for 10 years. I can't think of a more irresponsible position than that when we are not in the depths of a recession, when 10 million people haven't lost their jobs, when the economy, according to the President, is the best economy we have ever had.

This is the moment we should be securing our future. This is the moment we should be preparing for another foreign engagement. Because of these deals that have been led by MITCH MCCONNELL, the Republican leader from Kentucky, when you add it all up, not only do we have this extraordinary deficit that we have never seen in the country's history—

Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent for 1 additional minute.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection?

Without objection, it is so ordered.

Mr. BENNET. But since 2001, we have cut taxes by \$5 trillion. We borrowed all of that money from our children, and almost all of the benefit went to the wealthiest people in America. We spent \$5.6 trillion on wars in the Middle East. We didn't pay for a single dollar of it. That is \$11 trillion, \$12 trillion that we could have spent to fix every road and bridge in America, that could have fixed every single airport in America that needs it, that could have made Social Security solvent for my children's generation and for the other children of the people who came out here and said: We are here to immobilize the Democratic President in the name of fiscal responsibility. But now we know the level of their fiscal hypocrisy. It knows no end.

If there is one benefit of this—if there is one benefit of this, the American people are—

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator's time has expired.

Mr. BENNET. I yield the floor.

EXECUTIVE CALENDAR

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report the nomination.

The legislative clerk read the nomination of the following named officer for appointment as Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff and appointment in the United States Army to the grade indicated while assigned to a position of importance and responsibility under title 10, U.S.C., sections 152 and 601 to be General: GEN Mark A. Milley.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The question is, Will the Senate advise and consent to the Milley nomination?

Mr. JOHNSON. Mr. President, I ask for the yeas and nays.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there a sufficient second?

There appears to be a sufficient second.

The clerk will call the roll.

The bill clerk called the roll.

Mr. THUNE. The following Senators are necessarily absent: the Senator from Georgia (Mr. ISAKSON), the Senator from Kansas (Mr. MORAN), and the Senator from Georgia (Mr. PERDUE).

Further, if present and voting, the Senator from Kansas (Mr. MORAN) would have voted "yea."

Mr. DURBIN. I announce that the Senator from New Jersey (Mr. BOOKER), the Senator from New York (Mrs. GILLIBRAND), the Senator from California (Ms. HARRIS), the Senator from Minnesota (Ms. KLOBUCHAR), the Senator from Vermont (Mr. LEAHY), the Senator from Vermont (Mr. SANDERS), and the Senator from Massachusetts (Ms. WARREN), are necessarily absent.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Are there any other Senators in the Chamber desiring to vote?

The result was announced—yeas 89, nays 1, as follows:

[Rollcall Vote No. 230 Ex.]

YEAS—89

Alexander	Duckworth	McSally
Baldwin	Durbin	Menendez
Barrasso	Enzi	Murkowski
Bennet	Ernst	Murphy
Blackburn	Feinstein	Murray
Blumenthal	Fischer	Paul
Blunt	Gardner	Peters
Boozman	Graham	Portman
Braun	Grassley	Reed
Brown	Hassan	Risch
Burr	Hawley	Roberts
Cantwell	Heinrich	Romney
Capito	Hirono	Rosen
Cardin	Hoeven	Rounds
Carper	Hyde-Smith	Rubio
Casey	Inhofe	Sasse
Cassidy	Johnson	Schatz
Collins	Jones	Schumer
Coons	Kaine	Scott (FL)
Cornyn	Kennedy	Scott (SC)
Cortez Masto	King	Shaheen
Cotton	Lankford	Shelby
Cramer	Lee	Sinema
Crapo	Manchin	Smith
Cruz	Markey	Stabenow
Daines	McConnell	Sullivan

Tester	Udall	Wicker
Thune	Van Hollen	Wyden
Tillis	Warner	Young
Toomey	Whitehouse	

NAYS—1

Merkley

NOT VOTING—10

Booker	Klobuchar	Sanders
Gillibrand	Leahy	Warren
Harris	Moran	
Isakson	Perdue	

The nomination was confirmed.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the motion to reconsider is considered made and laid upon the table, and the President will be immediately notified of the Senate's action.

LEGISLATIVE SESSION

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senate will resume legislative session.

The majority whip.

MORNING BUSINESS

Mr. THUNE. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate be in a period of morning business, with Senators permitted to speak therein for up to 10 minutes each.

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

JUDICIAL NOMINATIONS

Mr. THUNE. Mr. President, yesterday we confirmed two more excellent judges in the Senate. Despite Democratic obstruction, we continue to move forward on confirming nominees to the Federal bench.

Some of our Democratic colleagues have criticized the amount of time the Senate spends on judges. We have spent a substantial amount of time on judges because we have had to.

Back in the day, most of the judicial nominees we are considering would have been confirmed without the time-consuming cloture vote process. By this point in President Obama's first term, Republicans had required cloture votes on just three—three—of President Obama's judicial nominees. Let's compare that to today.

As of yesterday, July 24, Democrats had required cloture votes on a staggering 94 judicial nominees—94—to 3 at this same point under President Obama.

It is not because they are fiercely opposed to all of these nominees. In fact, again and again, Democrats have turned around and voted for the very same judges they delayed.

Just a couple of weeks ago in the Senate, we confirmed three district court judges by huge bipartisan margins: 78 to 15, 80 to 14, and 85 to 10. Clearly, these were not nominees that Democrats bitterly opposed. Yet Democrats insisted on the same old delaying cloture vote tactic they have used with so many judicial nominees.

I, too, am frustrated that we have had to spend a lot of time on judges. I