

the White House may finally be coming to the debt ceiling negotiating table in a more serious way.

The President has now appointed members of his staff to negotiate directly with Speaker MCCARTHY's team—a logical and overdue step since the passage of debt ceiling legislation depends on an agreement between the President and the Republican-controlled House of Representatives.

I was also encouraged by the White House's statement after Tuesday's debt ceiling meeting, which noted that the President is "optimistic that there is a path to a responsible, bipartisan budget agreement if both sides negotiate in good faith and recognize that neither side will get everything it wants."

"[A]nd recognize that neither side will get everything it wants"—that part is very important because previously the Democrats' and the President's position was that Democrats should get everything they want and that Republicans should get nothing—an extremely unrealistic position and one that suggested Democrats did not understand the nature of divided government.

So I am grateful that the President seems to be taking a more realistic view of what is necessary for an agreement. It is unfortunate that it has taken the White House this long. Speaker MCCARTHY has been ready to negotiate for months, and the President should have engaged seriously months ago, but better late than never.

I hope that over the next few days, the two sides will be able to swiftly reach an agreement. A good place to start would be with a good, long look at the policies in the House Republicans' Limit, Save, Grow Act, which pairs a debt ceiling increase with commonsense spending reforms, things like reclaiming unspent COVID money; modestly strengthening work requirements in Federal entitlement programs for able-bodied Americans—a move, I might add, supported by more than 60 percent of the American public—in order to help individuals move from welfare to work; capping discretionary spending for next year at the fiscal year 2022 discretionary spending level—the same level we were successfully operating at mere months ago; repealing the green energy subsidies in the so-called Inflation Reduction Act, whose estimated cost has ballooned since the bill was passed; passing permitting reform—a bipartisan priority—to help get both conventional and green energy projects off the ground more quickly, which could help grow our economy; repealing the President's reckless student loan giveaway, which could otherwise end up costing American taxpayers close to \$1 trillion; and other commonsense measures.

The provisions of the Limit, Save, Grow Act have been the subject of a lot of fearmongering from Democrats, who have been set against including any spending reforms as part of a debt ceiling package, but these are responsible

ideas worthy of consideration as part of a debt ceiling agreement or, for that matter, in any other context.

Our Nation has a massive national debt—\$31 trillion and counting—and a serious spending problem, and the Limit, Save, Grow Act is a reasonable and responsible attempt to get our Nation back on a more fiscally sustainable path, saving on the order of \$4.5 trillion over the next 10 years.

While, as the President pointed out, neither side will get everything it wants in negotiations, I hope ideas from the Limit, Save, Grow Act will make it into a final debt ceiling agreement.

Despite the President's attempts to claim the mantle of fiscal responsibility, the truth is that spending under the Biden administration has reached staggering levels compared to pre-pandemic Federal budgets, and if we don't get spending under control, we are going to be facing some very serious economic consequences.

So, as I said, I am pleased that the President seems to be taking negotiations a little more seriously. I hope he will not allow himself to be distracted by extreme members of his own party, like the individuals who are suggesting that the President attempt to raise the debt ceiling on his own, using a dubious interpretation of the 14th Amendment, if Democrats don't like the debt ceiling agreement.

Debt ceiling increases have a long history of being paired with deficit reduction measures or other budgetary policy changes. In fact, 7 of the last 10 debt ceiling increases have been accompanied by budgetary reforms and policy changes.

It is time for all members of the Democratic Party to recognize what the President appears now to be recognizing, and that is that in divided government, both parties have to compromise to reach an agreement, so credit to the President for acknowledging this fact. I hope—I hope—that over the next few days, we will see a deal emerge that not only raises the debt ceiling but also puts us on a more sustainable fiscal path moving forward.

I yield the floor.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The senior assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. LUJAN). The Senator from Indiana.

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

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

MEMORIAL DAY

Mr. YOUNG. Mr. President, Boston is perhaps a surprising place to begin a tribute to Indiana's veterans on the occasion of Memorial Day, but there, on Augustus Saint-Gaudens' magnificent memorial to the 54th Massachusetts Regiment, their names are etched.

Maybe the coast of South Carolina is no less unexpected a place to continue

that tribute, but there, on the shore, they fell, the men who helped save our Union, who forever ended its greatest scourge, who fought for the Declaration of Independence, though they had been denied the unalienable rights it promised.

Seldom have American soldiers taken up arms and laid down their lives with such selflessness and yet so much at stake. Many Hoosiers were among their ranks. Their names should be known, their stories told. As Proverbs 10:7 says, "the memory of the just is blessed."

Abraham Lincoln described the Emancipation Proclamation as "an act of Justice." One of the greatest instruments of that justice was embedded at the end of the document. It read "that such persons of suitable condition will be received into the armed service of the United States." "Such persons" were Black Americans.

Lincoln's words spread far and fast and wide. In my capital city of Indianapolis, Pastor Willis Revels petitioned Governor Oliver Morton to raise a fighting force, and when the request was denied, rebels encouraged Hoosiers to join the first all-Black regiment forming near Boston.

Unable to fulfill its recruitment goals at home, the Massachusetts 54th Infantry sought and welcomed volunteers from across the Union, and Hoosiers answered the call. There were men—men like George Broady, George Charles, Alfred Lewis, George McGowan. They came from across the great State of Indiana, from places like Newport, Richmond, Louisville, and Centerville. They were farmers, blacksmiths, barbers, laborers, and, soon enough, they were soldiers for the Republic.

There was no doubt of that when the 54th appeared on the dunes of Morris Island, before the twilight on July 18, 1863. They were in South Carolina to take Battery Wagner, a seemingly insurmountable obstacle between the Union Army and the port of Charleston.

When the 54th had marched to within 300 yards of the fort, shots streaked overhead. They were ordered to the ground until the fire had passed. Then they rose. They charged forward, through sand and marshy water, as the sun sank in the western sky.

As they reached the fort, Battery Wagner exploded with fire. The 54th was razed, "like grass before the mower's scythe," one Hoosier survivor wrote afterward.

In the end, the regiment lost nearly 300 men that night—over 40 percent of its ranks. Fort Wagner remained in Confederate hands. Among the dead were Hoosiers Thomas Ampey and John Wilson.

They didn't simply fall for a good cause. Their bravery at Battery Wagner turned a tide. You see, it shattered prejudices about the supposed inferiority of Black soldiers and debunked foolish notions about their ability or willingness to fight.

Indeed, inspired by their example, additional Black regiments formed across the North. And by the end of 1863, Indiana had authorized the formation of the 28th U.S. Colored Troops.

Old Willis Revels, he was at work recruiting Hoosiers to fill its ranks. "Your country calls you," he declared—"your country."

Initially, over 500 men enrolled, forming 6 companies. The gallant 28th fought during the siege of Petersburg in Virginia. Its men fell at the Battle of the Crater.

When the Union Army marched into the fallen Confederate capital of Richmond, in the spring of 1865, the 28th was there. They helped bring the rebellion to its knees and slavery to its end.

And they were present in Galveston, TX, too, when General Order No. 3 was issued on June 19, 1865, ending legalized slavery, an event we now celebrate as Juneteenth.

Over 1,500 Black Hoosiers served in the Civil War in the Massachusetts 54th and 55th, the Indiana 28th, and across the Union Army. As President Lincoln acknowledged, the bravery of Black soldiers from Indiana and across the Union helped preserve the Union.

Offering an appropriate tribute to the fallen on Memorial Day can be a very difficult task. How can we, after all, express sufficient thanks to those who died for us?

To paraphrase President Lincoln, "the world will little note, nor long remember what we say here," but it will never forget the sacrifice of the men who fought in the 54th Massachusetts or the 28th Indiana.

It took great courage for these Black Americans to believe in the goodness of this country, its people, and the promise of its founding. The reason we build monuments and memorials to those fighting dead is so their examples live, so that we might draw inspiration from these heroes who did incredible things and fought for a more perfect Union and a world at peace.

So I close where I began, in Boston, because there, on the memorial to the 54th, the names of fallen Hoosiers Thomas Anthony and Elisha Burkett can be found. Their legacy lives on.

We remember these men and all who paid the ultimate price for our freedom on this Memorial Day.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The majority whip.

ENERGY

Mr. DURBIN. Mr. President, we are coming down to the wire here. June 1 looms over us and the threat that on that date, unless Congress takes action, the United States will default on its debt for the first time in the history of our Nation. All the people who are in the know tell us it would be a disaster of such proportion that it would harm individuals, families, and businesses across the United States and would ultimately diminish the United States reputation for the most stable currency—the U.S. dollar—in the world.

Individual families would see their 401(k)s and savings accounts diminish, the interest rates for purchases go even higher; businesses would fail, and workers would lose their jobs.

You have to ask yourself: Why would we even consider approaching that kind of calamity? Well, you take a look at the agenda that is being offered by Speaker MCCARTHY in the House of Representatives, and he spells out exactly what his goals are. First, he wants to cut spending in areas that he thinks are wasteful. For example, he would wipe out 30,000 law enforcement and Border Patrol jobs.

How many times has the Speaker's party reminded us that we have a crisis on our southern border and need to marshal our resources to protect America? Whether he is exaggerating or simply stating a fact is your own decision, your own conclusion; but can any part of his warning be answered by eliminating our personnel—our national personnel—on the border? I don't think so.

This approach by Speaker MCCARTHY would also threaten housing and food security for tens of thousands of American individuals, including many veterans. It would deprive 1 million senior citizens of access to Meals on Wheels. That is what his goal is in terms of cutting the budget.

And I might add a couple of other things for your consideration. He would cut money for medical research in the United States by 25 percent. I have tried to work over the last 6 or 7 years with the goal of increasing medical research spending by 5 percent real growth every single year. We have gone from \$30 billion to \$48 billion in annual appropriations for what is considered the most sophisticated and successful medical research program in the world.

And, now, the Speaker has told us: We want to cut back on medical research. Tell that to the families of cancer victims. Tell that to the families who are trying to cope with diseases that are life-threatening on a daily basis. The breakthroughs that come about because of this medical research should inspire us to spend even more—even more—on research.

To think that we may be close to a vaccine against pancreatic cancer. That was unthinkable a few weeks ago or months ago, but now there are reports that NIH research is leading in that direction with some promising conclusions.

To think that we have the possibility of finally dealing with those maladies of the brain which haunt us in every family in this country. The notion that the researchers, because of NIH grants, at Northwestern University in Chicago have now found a successful way to breach the blood-brain barrier and have medications go directly into the brain, what can that do? Well, it might deal directly with brain cancer—glioblastoma and similar maladies. But, in addition, they are looking at the possibility that it has applications for Alzheimer's and Parkinson's and other

brain-related diseases like Lou Gehrig's.

Do we want to stop research on that? I ask the Speaker: Do you really want to achieve that? That is your goal: to slow down and stop research by the U.S. Government which leads the world in these fields?

Mr. President, I think what really is at stake here is the Speaker is calling for these dramatic cuts in critical American programs in an effort to preserve the tax cuts that were instituted during the Trump administration. These are tax cuts that benefited corporations which were not paying their fair share of taxes and continue to receive blessings from the Trump administration to pay even less; and wealthy individuals who were doing quite well for themselves got a tax break at that time. Speaker MCCARTHY wants to preserve those tax breaks even at the expense of law enforcement, Border Patrol, helping our veterans, Meals on Wheels, and medical research. Well, that is not my priority in serving in the U.S. Senate.

There is one other item that I want to mention that is part of the Speaker's agenda that is bringing us to the brink on our national debt, and that is that the House Republican bill is really a gift-wrapped present for the fossil fuel industry. The bill that they are proposing guts critical environmental protections to fast-track new fossil fuel projects. It mandates the sale of new oil and gas leases and accelerates drilling both on- and offshore.

That is not just bad for the planet; it is bad for our people, our economy, as well as our Nation and the hopes of becoming energy independent. If this MAGA manifesto becomes law, it would eliminate 140,000 clean energy jobs across America, jobs which were promoted with the Inflation Reduction Act.

The Republican proposal would cut billions of dollars in clean energy investments, the majority of which benefit businesses and workers in their own States. Importantly, these investments are not only job creators; they are vital to our Nation's capacity to remain resilient in the face of an environmental crisis.

Just yesterday, the World Meteorological Organization warned that the next few years will be the warmest on record for planet Earth. Temperatures may even breach the targets set by the Paris Agreement—not in the next five decades but in the next 5 years. What we see coming from this are not only warmer days but more extreme weather events. You have to be sensitive to that if you are paying any attention at all. We need to make sure that every community in America is prepared for this challenge.

The House Republican proposal would make us more vulnerable in a climate crisis. It would cut funding for projects that expand access to clean air and clean water, especially in western States with chronic drought, and it