

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

would roll back programs to curb pollution in low-income communities across America.

Whenever we debate energy policy in Congress, Republicans tend to revert to the same old arguments. They say: Think about the economy.

These Republicans insist that, if we want to become energy independent, we have no choice but to invest more in oil and gas. In their view, America is hopelessly addicted to fossil fuels, and forcing us to remain beholden to foreign oil giants is the Republican answer to this challenge.

But, the truth is, they are wrong. Fossil fuels are not the future. We will need a transition; that is for sure. The future is going to be seen in communities like my own hometown of Springfield, IL. Last month in Springfield, an American-owned solar company broke ground on a project called Double Black Diamond.

Now, if you are a skier, you have to wonder what that has to do with flat land in Springfield, IL. Well, it has nothing to do with skiing. What they are talking about is building one of the largest solar farms in America in the area, and the energy produced will be sent to the residents of Chicago. It is amazing. These communities that have committed themselves to green energy are making massive investments in clean, sustainable, renewable energy.

Solar is the fastest growing, most affordable source of new electricity in America. Last year, my wife and I decided to install solar panels on our home in Springfield. It was a decision which was guided more by determination to see if it worked and to do something positive in our family to help with the climate crisis that we face. Well, we installed them, and the good news is this: In the first couple of months, we started to see our electricity bill disappearing. What was \$115 a month turned into \$15 a month. And, of course, there were tax credits available for that decision for our family and for every family that moves in that direction.

We estimate that 230,000 homes in Illinois will do what we did: put solar panels on the roof. With net metering, they will find it is a benefit in their monthly utility bills and a benefit to our environment.

Right now, if we don't do this, China and other countries will. They are going to pursue solar energy and the next generation of technology, and we will be left behind if the Republicans have their way with their budget bill.

So I would conclude by saying fossil fuels had their day. There is still a transition period where they will be needed, but we have got to point to the future where we can tell our kids and grandkids: We are sensitive to this climate crisis. We are investing in the right kind of energy for the future. We are not going to have America take second place to China or any other country when it comes to competition for this technology.

The Republican approach is yesterday. We have got to think about tomorrow.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Oklahoma.

DEBT CEILING

Mr. LANKFORD. Mr. President, debt is front and center in the national conversation again. That is entirely reasonable. We have a debt ceiling conversation right now about America taking care of our debts and our responsibilities, which we are a responsible nation, and we are going to do. But we should also have a grownup conversation about our spending to say: Are we spending on our priorities? Because when you have \$31 trillion—actually, scratch that—\$31.4 trillion because \$400 billion is not a rounding error—\$31.4 trillion in total national debt, we should pay attention to this, especially when we are currently adding \$1 trillion in new debt every single year, and it continues to accelerate.

Recently, someone asked me: When does it get hard? When do we pass the point?

And I actually had to painfully say to them: 10 years ago because in the last 10 years, our debt has continued to accelerate like a rock rolling downhill, and it is going to be harder and harder to be able to manage this. At some point, we have got to be able to stop and say: Inflation is going up; challenges that are in our economy are increasing; we are spending almost as much on interest as we are on defense. At what point do we stop and say: We have got to be able to fix this?

Well, I have a perspective. The first step on actually talking about debt and deficit is actually taking it seriously and saying: What are we spending on that is a priority, and what are we spending on that is not a priority? Again, it is not unreasonable to be able to say that would be nice to do, but we don't have the money to do that. Let's set that aside.

And for whatever reason, in this town, anytime you talk about reducing spending of whatever percentage or whatever amount, everyone freaks out immediately, like, oh, you can't; there is no way we can reduce spending in government.

So we started, 7 years ago, a habit of our staff that we produce a book called "Federal Fumbles." Every year we put out the "Federal Fumbles" guide, and that is just a set of ideas to say these are areas we believe the Federal Government has dropped the ball.

The Federal Government, and our Agencies, we had a responsibility to handle American taxpayer dollars prudently and wisely, but that didn't happen. So we asked the question: Is this really what we need to spend for? In a nation that is keeping up with our infrastructure, of our national defense, of education, of so many different expenses, and things that are truly governmental, we asked a simple question: With \$31.4 trillion in total debt, is that what we need to spend our dollars on?

Now, just to set context because, again, this is difficult to be able to do, when you talk about millions and billions and trillions, it gets easy to go, those all sound alike. So they are similar. So people throw out millions of dollars or billions of dollars or trillions of dollars, and you just think, OK, I don't even understand what that is anymore.

So I break it down, as I have in the past—I break it down to seconds because that is something I can understand. A million seconds is 12 days—12 days. That is a million seconds. A billion seconds is 32 years.

So there is a big difference between a million and a billion: 12 days in 32 years; a trillion seconds is almost 32,000 years.

So let me knock that past us again. A million seconds is 12 days; a billion seconds, 32 years; a trillion seconds, almost 32,000 years.

And to put this into context of \$31.4 trillion in total debt, that is 995,000 years—almost a million years of seconds—to get to \$31.4 trillion.

The numbers here are large, and they are overwhelming. So again, why don't we talk about ways that we can actually save money. My reasonable conversation with "Federal Fumbles" every year is just to say: Let's talk about it. Is this really how we want to be able to spend Americans' taxpayers dollars?

We set up a top 10 list that we listed out some of the things that we just say, OK, of the 50 different examples—and we don't try to go into every single spending area, but we lay out in the guide for fumbles 50 different examples and just try to ask the question: Is this the best way to be able to spend America's dollars? Again, we have all got different perspectives and different ideas on it. I am just asking the question.

For instance, last year, the State Department did a grant to Ecuador to host 12 drag shows in Ecuador with American tax dollars. Now, we may have different opinions in this room on drag shows. I am just asking the simple question: Is the best use of American tax dollars to actually fund drag shows in Ecuador with U.S. tax dollars? I don't believe that it is.

Last year, we actually did a different funding through the State Department that was actually done—actually, this was the National Science Foundation. Excuse me. Strike that. It seems like a State Department thing. The National Science Foundation last year did a study of butterflies in Europe. So we funded, with American taxpayer dollars, a butterfly study in Germany where we paid a Swedish scientist to study butterflies in Germany.

I am not real sure American tax dollars was the best use of that, but that was one of the grants that was done last year.

Last year, there was also an NEA grant that was done to set up a display in Brooklyn for the Sergeant Pepper's