

of these protections. To give just one example of how far the abortion-on-demand caucus has taken things, 2 weeks ago, the House of Representatives took up legislation to ensure that babies who survive abortions and are born alive are guaranteed medical care. Almost every single Democrat in the House of Representatives voted against the legislation. That is 210 men and women who apparently think that living babies who have already been born—already been born—can legitimately be left to die or, I suppose, be killed outright by the abortionist. That is a horrifying position.

There is much work to be done to get to a day when a country that is supposed to be dedicated to the protection of life and liberty actually guarantees the right to life of all Americans, including the most vulnerable and most innocent Americans—our unborn children.

So the March for Life today is more important than ever. The march, of course, is just one small facet of the pro-life movement, which works every day in every State around the country to help provide help and hope to moms in need, but it is nevertheless a vitally important facet because the March for Life provides a public witness to the humanity of the unborn child and to the great injustice that is happening behind closed doors. Abortion happens away from public view, so it can be all too easy to forget that every year in this country, hundreds of thousands of babies are being killed by abortion.

The Guttmacher Institute, a pro-abortion research organization, reported that there were more than 900,000 abortions in 2020—900,000. To put that number in perspective, 900,000 is roughly equivalent to the entire population of the State of South Dakota—the entire population of South Dakota. That is a lot of lives lost, a lot of love lost. Our society is a poorer place without those babies, and the March for Life reminds us of that. It reminds us that every day, thousands of babies lose their lives to abortion. It reminds us of our responsibility to confront this injustice and to work for a day when every child enjoys the right to life and the full protection of the laws.

I am profoundly grateful for all those who spent last Friday marching for life, and for all the men and women and young people in the pro-life movement who work every day around this country to help mothers and their babies and secure legal protections for unborn Americans. I know there are many days when it feels like an uphill battle, but you are all on the right side of history. And I am confident that in the end, life will prevail.

In the Gospel of Matthew, Jesus says: See that you do not despise one of these little ones. For I tell you that their angels in Heaven always see the face of my Father.

And, again:

Let the little children come to me, and do not hinder them, for the kingdom of heaven belongs to such as these.

There is no greater work than standing up for these defenseless little ones. I pray that God will bless the efforts of all those marching for life and one day soon, every child, born and unborn, will enjoy the full protection of our laws.

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. CORNYN. 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 Senator from Texas.

DEBT CEILING

Mr. CORNYN. Mr. President, we have seen this movie before. The Senate finds itself in familiar territory. The United States narrowly avoided hitting the debt ceiling over a year ago, but now we are staring down the barrel of another debt crisis.

The United States hit the debt limit last Thursday, according to the Secretary of Treasury, and now the Treasury is using what they refer to, euphemistically, as “extraordinary measures” in order to prevent the government from defaulting on its debts. Unless the Congress takes action in the coming months, the American economy will be confronted with an unprecedented crisis.

But here is what I find strange: Despite the fact that we are hurtling toward this disaster, the White House seems completely disinterested in finding a solution. President Biden has drawn a redline. He said: We are not going to negotiate on the debt ceiling. In other words, he expects Congress to raise the debt ceiling with no conditions attached and let this reckless runaway spending and outrageous debt continue to rise.

Now, I don't want to disparage drunken sailors, but it seems to me that that is the model for how the White House is responding.

It is as if you or I were spending beyond our means on our credit card, and then the issuer of the credit card said: You know, you are going to have to pay the money back at some point.

And you say: To heck with that. I want you to raise my credit limit even higher, without any demonstrated means or plan to actually pay the money back.

We know what would happen for you and me is the issuer of the credit card would cancel our credit card, as well it should, if we responded the way that the White House is responding.

So apparently what the administration plans to continue to do is continue this spending bender. It can't cover the current bills—now it is roughly \$30 trillion—and it expects somebody, anybody, maybe nobody, to pay the money back and to deal with this ever-growing national debt.

We know this is an even bigger problem in inflationary times because the more money the Federal Government continues to spend, it is like throwing gasoline on inflation, and consumers have already experienced sky-high prices—some of the highest prices in 40 years—on everything from gasoline to food, to housing, and to the essentials of life.

So why in the world does it make sense for the administration to say: We are not even going to talk; we are not even going to negotiate with the House when it comes to the debt ceiling. We are just going to keep spending as much money as we can, racking up more and more debt.

I know that President Biden has children and grandchildren. Is he concerned for their welfare?

We are writing checks that we are not going to have to pay back, Mr. President. You and I are at the age where this bird is not going to come home to roost in our lifetime, but it will in the lifetimes of our children and grandchildren, including those of President Biden.

So how responsible—or I should say how irresponsible—is it for the President to say: We are just going to keep on keeping on, and we are not even going to talk about what we need to do to deal with this mounting debt. We are not even going to entertain any reasonable ideas or suggestions about how we dig our way out of this hole.

Well, the American people witnessed our Democratic colleagues' wasteful spending over the last 2 years and chose a new direction in the midterm elections that gave Republicans the House after 2 years in which our Democratic colleagues spent \$1.9 trillion on the so-called American Rescue Plan and then another 700-or-so billion dollars on the so-called Inflation Reduction Act, which, by the way, doesn't reduce inflation, but that is what it is called.

In response, the voters gave Republicans the majority in the House. I can only imagine that part of that was a response to what they saw as a reckless spending binge that was going to continue without end if they maintained Democratic control of both Houses and the White House.

So the new reality of divided government means there is only one path we can take to avoiding a debt bomb: Republicans and Democrats have to reach a compromise.

I know the Presiding Officer believes that part of our responsibility is to negotiate and try to come up with common ground where we can and not simply to give the Heisman to one another and say we are not even going to talk.

I don't know why we are here as Members of Congress or why you would want to be President of the United States when you would see such a big problem growing bigger by the day and say: Forget it. I am not talking. I am not going to try to solve the problem. That is somebody else's issue; that is not ours.

I don't believe that is a responsible reaction, and I don't think most Members of Congress think it is a responsible reaction, but that is where we are today, but it needs to change.

As we know, the reality of Republican control of the House means that the negotiation on the debt ceiling—and there has to be a negotiation—in reality, has to be between the House and the White House. Nothing we do here that would get 60 votes would pass the House, I believe. I think that is pretty clear.

But in order to avoid a catastrophe, a bill not only has to pass the House, it needs to get 60 votes in the Senate and the President's signature. Those are the facts.

Now, drawing unreasonable lines in the sand and issuing ultimatums do nothing to solve the problem. Instead of doling out marching orders, the President needs to do his job and listen to what is being proposed and to negotiate a solution.

Nobody I know of thinks that breaching the debt ceiling is an acceptable outcome. If that is true, and I believe it is true, then there is only one alternative: try to work together to come up with some negotiated outcome that avoids breaching the debt ceiling but at the same time provides some answer to those people concerned—and I am one of them—about the ever-increasing debt and what high interest rates that are used to combat inflation are going to mean in terms of how much money we are going to have to pay to service that debt and where that will come—out of things like defense spending or other priorities.

President Biden served as a Member of the Senate for many, many years, and he ran on the promise of continuing his same approach as a dealmaker as President of the United States. In fact, he pointed to his record in the Senate and as Vice President as proof of his ability to reach across the aisle and to strike a compromise.

Now, I know in some quarters “compromise” is a dirty word these days, but there is no other way for us to function here because none of us is a dictator, none of us can say: This is the way it is and actually be able to accomplish what they seek.

Instead, the President does have some record—a good record, in one instance—of doing exactly what he refuses to do today.

As Vice President, Joe Biden helped negotiate the 2011 Budget Control Act, which was the last substantial and meaningful attempt to rein in wasteful Washington spending.

At that point, our economy was still recovering from a recession caused by the financial crisis in 2008. Federal spending soared, revenues plummeted, and it was clear that something—something—had to be done to stave off an even bigger economic crisis.

President Obama was in the White House, and Congress was divided; Democrats controlled the Senate, Re-

publicans controlled the House in 2011. And as it turns out, then-Vice President Biden was a key negotiator. He helped broker the agreement, working principally with then-Senator MccONNELL, the Republican leader, to come up with a bill that passed with strong bipartisan support.

So here we are, a dozen years later, and we find ourselves in a similar condition, without the solution.

Our economy is recovering from an unprecedented pandemic. Federal spending has soared. A large part of that was roughly \$5 trillion that Democrats and Republicans spent together because we saw no alternative but to try to respond to the COVID crisis in a way that addressed public health needs—like coming up with a vaccine—and helped sustain our economy during this crisis.

But then the wheels came off the bipartisanship over the last 2 years, as I mentioned, with the ARP and the IRA, to use a couple of acronyms.

But the American people have nowhere else to turn but here for to us address this problem.

Now, I think it is easy to engage in the blame game, and we do it here all the time. In fact, here in Washington, DC, it is a world-class sport, but at some point you have got to quit pointing the finger and you have got to try to step up and roll up your sleeves and try to solve the immediate problem.

I am not suggesting we can solve all of our problems or even do it permanently, but we can address this current crisis by doing what we are paid to do, what we are elected to do, what we took an oath to do, which is to represent our constituents to the best of our ability.

So this is the time for President Biden to step up. He is President of the United States, and he has done it before when he was Vice President in 2011.

All it would take to start this process is to invite the House, the Senate: Come. Sit around the table to discuss the problem and to try to listen to what potential solutions there might be, just as he promised to do on the campaign trail.

So it is time for him to do what he promised to do all along and lead. Presidents can't be a spectator. They can't sit on the sidelines. Nobody in America expects a President of the United States to do that. And the fact is, the President is not just a leader of the Democratic Party. He is the elected leader of the United States of America—all 330-plus million of us.

So taking a partisan position, knowing the challenges that the House is going to have dealing with a debt ceiling, and just sort of enjoying watching them struggle to deal with this is not an act of courage. It is not an act of leadership. We expect our Presidents to make tough decisions, just as we ourselves are expected to make tough decisions and to try to come up with solutions.

I can't imagine any responsible person in the country, much less in Congress, who would take the position that a clean debt ceiling increase is the way to go. I mentioned that a moment ago.

Who is going to pay the 30 trillion back we already owe? Is the idea that we can just continue to heap debt upon debt upon debt? Does anybody think that is a good idea? How, if we have another fiscal crisis like we had in 2008, would we be able to respond? How, if we had another pandemic, would we be able to respond with this debt handcuffing Congress when we need maximum flexibility to be able to respond?

And I mentioned the interest rates that are higher than they have been in a long time, which continue to eat up more and more tax revenue just to service that debt to pay their bondholders on their investment.

So this is not just a problem that can be punted. This does not call for partisan responses. This calls for statesmanship. It calls for leadership.

And as part of this, we have to look at what got us in this condition in the first place. Why it is that we need to raise the debt ceiling.

We know that America's debt crisis didn't appear overnight. It has been building for decades. And lest anybody believe that I am suggesting that this is strictly a Democratic problem, it has really been something that both political parties have contributed to over time. Somehow, we became anaesthetized or desensitized to the fact that we continue to spend borrowed money. It is true that we point to the various crises we have had, and we say, “Well, we really didn't have any other choice.” But now we do have a choice. We can respond to this responsibly and do our jobs.

Well, we need to get out-of-control spending habits in check. No household, no city council, no county government, no State government could possibly do what the Federal Government is doing. They have to live with a balanced budget. They have to live within their means. I am not suggesting it is going to be easy—because it is not—but it is not optional.

One of the most important things we can do as part of this response is to return to a regular appropriations process in funding the government each year. The idea that we can do this through an omnibus appropriations process, like we were forced to do last year in backing it up to December 23rd, right before Christmas, and threatening a shutdown, is not the right way to do business.

The House and Senate Appropriations Committees have 12 separate bills to fund each of the different components of the Federal Government. These bills are supposed to pass both Chambers and be signed into law before the end of the fiscal year, which is September 30. That didn't happen in 2022 or 2021. The Democratic-led Senate did not pass a single appropriations bill,

and I understand why. The majority leader Senator SCHUMER and Speaker PELOSI realized that delaying the appropriations process and not going through this regular order gave them immense power because they could decide what went into that omnibus bill. They could say yes to some and no to others, and they knew that the only alternative would be a government shut-down and that rank-and-file Members of the Senate and the House would be left with no other choice than to vote yes or no.

Congress cannot continue to operate like this. We have to swear off this newfound habit of continuing resolutions and last-minute omnibuses and return to a regular, on-time appropriations process. It is more transparent. It allows every Member of the Congress to participate, to offer amendments, to debate, and to vote—something denied to rank-and-file Members of Congress when you do this through an omnibus bill at the end of the year. But we shouldn't stop there. We need to look at broader reforms to the government's spending habits. The good news is that there are a number of ideas that have been proposed.

Last Congress, Senator ROMNEY, the Senator from Utah, introduced something he calls the TRUST Act, which creates a process to save Social Security and protect this critical lifeline for Americans. Social Security, you might recall, is going to become insolvent in the coming years. This is a responsible way to save Social Security and to address what is, roughly, a part of the two-thirds of the Federal spending. In other words, about a third of it is discretionary spending we appropriate, and the other two-thirds is mandatory, or automatic, spending. I am a proud cosponsor of this legislation, and would encourage the President and our Democratic colleagues to consider it as part of the debt ceiling discussion.

I am also a supporter of a balanced budget amendment to the Constitution. As I said, Republicans and Democrats are responsible for where we are today, but it would finally make clear that we have to live under the same sort of spending limits that every family in America has to live under and that every local and State government has to live with—a balanced budget. Now, that is common sense. Families and businesses across the country have no choice but to operate within a balanced budget.

My State of Texas has a balanced budget requirement, and lo and behold, it just started the current legislative session with a \$33 billion surplus. We are looking at a \$30 trillion debt. My State has a \$33 billion surplus in part, I believe, because it is required by law to balance its budget each year.

I have introduced, cosponsored, and voted for balanced budget amendments in the past, and I plan on doing so again this year. That should be part of the conversation.

There is a wide range of ideas from our colleagues that would help the Federal Government get its financial house in order, and I would hope that the President would take these ideas and his responsibility seriously. No matter how inconvenient this may be for President Biden, we are operating under a divided government. The “drunken sailor” approach may have worked when the Democrats controlled both Houses of Congress, but it won't succeed now. It is time for the administration to sober up and get serious about bipartisan solutions. It is the only path out of this mess.

I yield the floor.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. HICKENLOOPER). The clerk will call the roll.

The bill clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. DURBIN. Mr. President, I suggest the absence of a quorum.

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

Mr. DURBIN. Mr. President, I ask for permission to complete my remarks before the recess.

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

ABORTION

Mr. DURBIN. Mr. President, 50 years ago this last Sunday, the Supreme Court ruled that reproductive healthcare in America is a constitutionally protected right and that Americans have the freedom to make the most personal decision imaginable: when—and whether—to start a family. The case was called *Roe v. Wade*.

For those who were alive when it was decided, we remember what it meant for millions of Americans: the freedom to make their own reproductive health decisions. Remember, at the time *Roe* was decided in 1973, our Nation had a long, long way to go in living up to the promise of equal justice under the law. As just one example, women were often required, at that time in history, to ask their husbands for permission to apply for credit cards. In many banks, widowers and divorced women had to bring along a man who would cosign for a credit card. Can you imagine that?

Fifty years later, we still have a long way to go, of course, but *Roe* was a breakthrough. It was a vision of an America that could be looking to the future of opportunity.

Well, today, sadly, marks a very different anniversary. You see, it was 7 months ago today when six rightwing, judicial activists on the Supreme Court sent us back in time. Of course, I am referring to the Supreme Court's decision in *Dobbs v. Jackson Women's Health Organization*—the crowning achievement of the Republican-led, decades-long campaign to overturn *Roe* and abolish reproductive rights in America.

The *Dobbs* ruling is one of the most irresponsible and dangerous decisions

ever handed down by the U.S. Supreme Court. It ripped away a constitutional right from individuals, handing it over to politicians in suits.

With the *Dobbs* decision, the ultra-conservative majority not only overturned a nearly 50-year-old precedent that had been reaffirmed many, many times, they twisted the facts to reach the outcome they wanted.

What do I mean by that? Well, in his majority opinion, Justice Alito claimed that abortion cannot be constitutionally protected because it is not “deeply rooted in the Nation's history and tradition.” He is wrong because whatever you think about abortion, it has deep roots in our country. As the dissenting Justices in *Dobbs* wrote, “embarrassingly for the majority—early law in fact does provide some support for abortion rights.”

The dissent noted that common law authorities did not treat abortion as a crime before the point of fetal movement in the womb—also known as quickening. And as Justice Alito himself conceded, historians dispute whether prequickening abortions were punished before the 19th century.

So there is no credibility to Justice Alito's argument for overturning *Roe*. It wasn't originalism by any stretch. It wasn't textualism. It was an ideologically motivated outcome based on historical cherry-picking.

Someone asked the question the other day: After this decision, should the Justices be asked to wear red and blue robes instead of black robes?

Over the past 7 months, Republican lawmakers picked up right where the Thomas-Alito Court left off. In State after State, they have ripped away reproductive rights from millions of Americans.

Overturning *Roe v. Wade* has unleashed a healthcare crisis in our country. In just 7 months, 24 States have banned or severely restricted access to abortion or are preparing to do so. Many of these bans provide no exceptions, even for rape and incest victims, and many are insufficient in protecting the health and lives of mothers. And all of these bans have added layers and layers of government bureaucracy for women seeking emergency care.

If these Republican lawmakers have actually listened to all of the medical professionals who sounded the alarm on overturning *Roe*, if these lawmakers had actually listened to all of the Americans who took to the streets in protest or the millions of voters who rejected their radical agenda, then maybe you would understand the simple, indisputable truth: You cannot ban abortion out of existence.

The only thing these laws have changed, if anything, is pushing women into dangerous and deadly situations. We have already seen the barbaric consequences in these Republican abortion bans. And they haven't just endangered the lives of women living in red States; they have put every woman in danger.

Christina Zielke is one of those women. She recently shared her story