

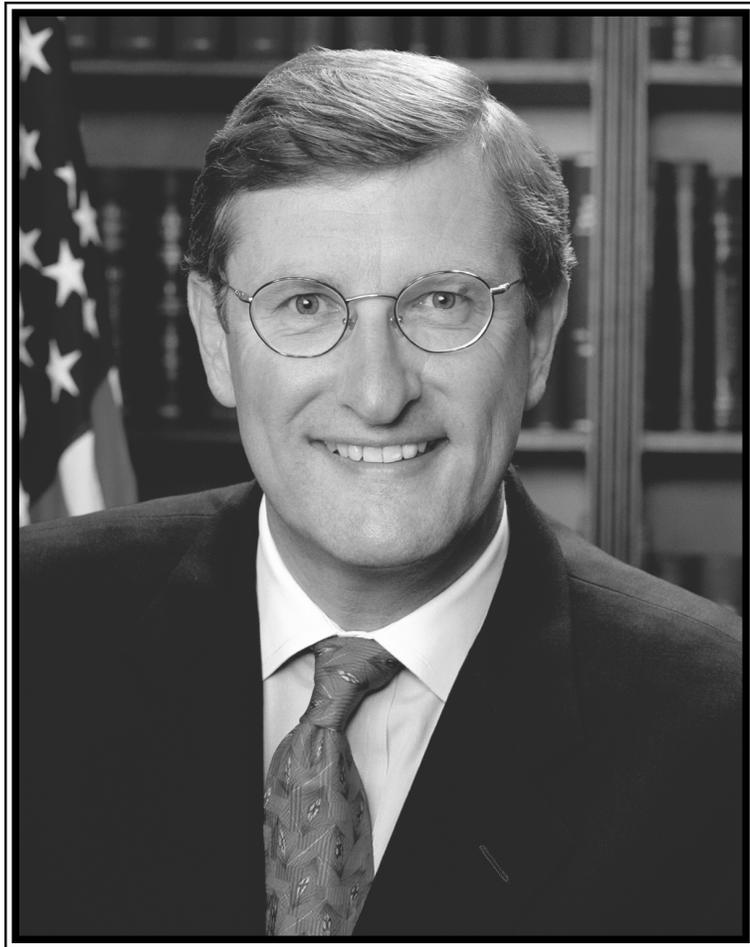
Kent Conrad

U.S. SENATOR FROM NORTH DAKOTA

TRIBUTES

**IN THE CONGRESS OF
THE UNITED STATES**





Kent Conrad

Courtesy U.S. Senate Historical Office

Tributes
Delivered in Congress

Kent Conrad
United States Senator
1987-2013



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BIOGRAPHY

A fifth-generation North Dakotan, KENT CONRAD was born March 12, 1948, in Bismarck, and attended Roosevelt Elementary and Hughes Jr. High Schools. He attended Wheelus Air Force Base High School in Tripoli, Libya, and Phillips Exeter Academy. He graduated with a degree in government from Stanford University and obtained an MBA at George Washington University. He was elected North Dakota tax commissioner in 1980 and was reelected by a large margin in 1984.

He was elected to the U.S. Senate in November 1986 on a platform of “Yes We Can!” optimism and a commonsense approach to Federal policy. During the 1986 campaign, Mr. CONRAD pledged not to run for reelection if the Federal budget was not reduced. It wasn’t, and he kept his promise and announced he wouldn’t seek reelection. But, months after he announced his retirement, the State’s other Senator, Quentin Burdick, died in office. In December 1992 he won a special election to fill the remaining 2 years of Senator Burdick’s term.

During his time in the Senate KENT CONRAD earned a reputation as a champion for the needs of rural States like North Dakota and the farm sector. His top priorities were bringing new jobs and new opportunity to North Dakota and rural America, addressing the budget deficit and warning the country about the long-term debt threat, reforming the health care system, and strengthening the farm safety net. He also championed the State’s water needs from the delivery of clean drinking water, to flood protection, and disaster relief. Senator CONRAD led the effort to bring more than \$1 billion in Federal resources to respond to the 1997 flood that hit the city of Grand Forks to help it recover and prevent future disasters.

His economic development efforts for North Dakota helped bring new businesses with hundreds of jobs to North Dakota’s cities and rural communities. Along with Agriculture Commissioner Sarah Vogel he founded the annual “Marketplace for Entrepreneurs” Exposition, which grew into one of

the Nation's largest conferences for rural development and the diversification of the rural economy.

Senator CONRAD made his mark on the Agriculture Committee with a number of significant bills, including drought and disaster relief legislation, the 5-years farm bill, and groundbreaking legislation to commercialize new industrial products made from American crops.

At the beginning of the 103d Congress he became the first North Dakotan in 70 years to be named to the powerful Senate Finance Committee. His background as North Dakota tax commissioner and his command of budget issues led to the coveted appointment. He also served as the chairman of the Subcommittee on Taxation, IRS Oversight, and Long-Term Growth, and was a member of the Subcommittee on Fiscal Responsibility and Economic Growth and the Subcommittee on Energy, Natural Resources, and Infrastructure.

The start of the 107th Congress marked the beginning of a 12-year run for Senator CONRAD serving as chairman or ranking member of the Senate Budget Committee, the longest serving Democrat to hold the position. As he took over the gavel, the country was returning to an era of deficits. He aggressively fought against the Bush-era tax cuts arguing they would plunge the country back into deficits and that they disproportionately benefited the wealthy. During the 110th Congress, he teamed with Senator Judd Gregg, the then ranking member on the Budget Committee, in introducing the Bipartisan Task Force for Responsible Fiscal Action Act to set up a special task force to address the ballooning deficits. In 2010, it became the impetus for President Barack Obama to appoint a special 18-member commission to tackle the deficit, cochaired by Erskine Bowles and former Senator Alan Simpson. Senator CONRAD served on the so-called Bowles-Simpson Commission and was 1 of 11 commissioners to vote for the \$4 trillion deficit reduction plan, though the plan did not garner the 14 votes required to send it to Congress for approval.

During his long tenure on the Budget Committee, Senator CONRAD was one of the Senate's strongest advocates for fiscal responsibility, particularly with regard to the threat posed by the buildup of long-term debt. He was a leader in asking U.S. allies in Western Europe and Japan to pay their own defense bills so that we can use the billions of dollars we spend overseas for pressing needs here at home. He was one of eight Senators who opposed the savings and loan bail-

out, arguing that the plan was badly structured and could not be improved to save taxpayer money.

During his 26 years as an advocate for North Dakota in Washington, DC, Senator CONRAD helped write the 2002 and 2008 farm bills, wrote health care policy that ensured continued access to hospitals in rural areas, and fought unfair trade practices that hurt North Dakota's economy. He also introduced comprehensive energy legislation that would make the United States more energy independent.

He is married to Lucy Calautti and has a daughter Jessamyn, a son Ivan, and a grandson Carter.

Farewell to the Senate

Wednesday, December 12, 2012

Mr. CONRAD. Mr. President, we have this long tradition in the Senate of Senators giving farewell remarks. I want to alert colleagues that mine will be especially long, so they might want to go have lunch and then come back. I don't consider this my final speech because I am still hopeful we will reach an agreement on the farm bill. The distinguished Chair is here. I hope we can reach agreement on averting the fiscal cliff because that is important to the country. I hope we will have additional chances to communicate with colleagues and the public before we are done.

These are my farewell remarks and observations of 26 years of service here, and it has been an incredible experience.

The first thing I want to do is say thank you to the people of North Dakota for having confidence in me when I was only 38 years old in sending me to represent them in the Senate. I was 38, but I looked about 25, and the people of North Dakota elected me in a stunning upset of a long-established incumbent. I treasure the confidence they have had in me.

I also want to thank my colleagues for the responsibilities they have given me. I want to thank the leadership team of Senator Reid, Senator Durbin, Senator Schumer, and Senator Murray and the confidence they have had in me. I have been so blessed to have people who have been with me on my staff in many cases for more than 20 years. My chiefs of staff include Jim Margolis, who is one of the top media gurus in the country. He has done much of the advertising for the President in this last campaign. Also, my thanks to David Herring and Mary Wakefield, as well as Kent Hall, who died an untimely death while working for me.

Thank you to Sara Garland, Bob Van Heuvelen, and Wally Rustad. Thanks also to Tom Mahr, who was my legislative director for more than 20 years.

I also wish to thank my executive assistant, who has been with me more than 20 years; Geri Gaginis, who we all fondly

call Mom in my office because she cracks the whip and makes sure the trains run on time; Mary Naylor, my long-time director on the Budget Committee and who has also been with me more than 20 years.

My Budget Committee deputies John Righter and Joel Friedman have done extraordinary work on behalf of the people of this country. Stu Nagurka is here with me today and is going to help me with charts and has been my long-time communications director.

There are so many more people I want to thank. Most of all, I want to thank my family. My wife Lucy, who has been my great partner through all of this. She was my campaign manager when I first ran for the Senate. My daughter Jessie, who has in many ways, perhaps, sacrificed the most, because when a person is in this job they miss birthdays and other important events. She has been a great daughter. She was here last night for our farewell party and we had a lovely time. Our son Ivan and his wife Kendra, who are in Oregon where they have a small farm called Tipping Tree Farm. We wish they could be here today. Our grandson Carter, who is a proud member of the University of Oregon marching band, the Ducks, and who served as an intern for me—not at government expense, by the way, it was at our expense; and our little dog Dakota who has become sort of a mascot of the U.S. Senate. Brian Williams, when he did a show on “A Day in the Life of the Senate,” concluded that program by calling Dakota the “101st Senator.” I think he will be missed perhaps more than I am as I leave the Senate.

In 1964 I came here. I sat up in the gallery—in fact, it was the gallery right up there—I was 16 years old, and I watched a debate on civil rights. Hubert Humphrey was leading that debate. It so inspired me that I thought someday I would like to be down on that floor and I would like to debate the great issues of the day and I would like to represent the people of North Dakota. So I went home and wrote out on the back of an envelope that I would run for the U.S. Senate in 1986 or 1988, and I ran in 1986 and was successful. That is the power of a plan. To the young pages who are here, if any of you seek to be in the U.S. Senate someday, have a plan, because there are so many people who sort of drift through life without one. If you have a plan, you will be light years ahead.

In that race, as I indicated, my now-wife Lucy was my campaign manager. We won what was then believed to be

the biggest political upset in the history of our State. I was proud of that victory and proud to have a chance to represent North Dakota here.

I think we all know our country needs a plan now, and we know plans have worked before. I was here in 1993 when we had just come off the largest deficit in the history of the United States. The country was in the doldrums. The economy was just plugging along, not doing very well. We had a weak recovery from a deep recession, and we passed a plan to get the country back on track. We did it the old-fashioned way. We made tough decisions, some that were unpopular, but it was the right thing to do and it worked. We balanced the budget. We had the longest period of uninterrupted economic growth in the Nation's history. Twenty-three million jobs were created, and we were actually paying down the debt of the United States at the end of the Clinton administration.

We did it again when disaster struck my State in 1997. We had one of the worst disasters ever in North Dakota, a 500-year flood that followed the worst winter storm in 50 years. Many of my colleagues may recall the images from that disaster when firemen were fighting an enormous conflagration in downtown Grand Forks in the middle of a blizzard and there was also a massive flood. Grand Forks was devastated.

Again, we had a plan, a \$500 million disaster recovery plan that became a \$1 billion plan, and it worked, and we did it the old-fashioned way. We made tough decisions, some that were unpopular, but it was the right thing to do and it worked. The community held a recognition event for me last weekend. The leadership of the community was there, and many people from the community reported on the remarkable recovery in Grand Forks. It is, I think, an example of what can be done when government responds and does so intelligently and effectively.

Now we face a new challenge. We have a fiscal cliff or a fiscal curb or whatever one terms it, but what we know is that if we fail to act, we could be pushed back into recession. Our country needs a plan—a plan to get us back on track, to revitalize economic growth, to secure our long-term economic future, and to get the country moving again, and we can do it. We have done much tougher work in the past.

Sometimes I hear people being critical of this institution when they leave here. Let me say I am not in their ranks. I leave this institution with enormous respect. The U.S. Senate is the greatest deliberative body in the world, and I sin-

cerely believe the vast majority of my colleagues are serious-minded and have the best interests of the country at heart. I believe the vast majority of my colleagues want to do what is right for the country. We have differences—enormous differences—about what is the right thing to do, but I have no doubt most of our colleagues are well intentioned.

In many circles it is fashionable now to bash government and play down its importance. I personally think we would do well to remember what it has accomplished. I can remember so clearly being called to an emergency meeting in this building in fall 2008. I was handed a note saying I was urgently requested to come here. It was about 6 o'clock in the evening. I was the last one to arrive. When I walked into the leader's office, there were the leaders of the House and the Senate, Republicans and Democrats, the Secretary of the Treasury from the Bush administration, and the Chairman of the Federal Reserve. I instantly understood something very serious was afoot. They closed the door and told us they were going to take over AIG, the large insurance company, the next day. They weren't there to ask for our approval or seek our agreement; they were there to tell us they were taking this step and they told us they were taking this step because they believed if they did not, there would be a financial collapse in this country within days, and they gave great specificity as to what would happen if there was a failure to take the action they were about to take.

The public reaction was harshly negative. The notion of the Government of the United States bailing out a large private insurance company created controversy and criticism from almost every corner. Ultimately, the rescue of that company cost \$180 billion—a staggering sum. But we have learned this week that the taxpayers will make money on the deal. Yes, it cost us \$180 billion, but the taxpayers are going to make \$22 billion on the transaction. If we hadn't done it, we would have risked going into a depression.

So when people say there is no role for government or it should be a limited, shrunken role, I say, really? Would we have wanted to stand by and risk this country going into another Great Depression? Let's recall what that was like. More than 20 percent of the people in this country were out of work. I know my own grandfather, who refused to take bankruptcy, owned stock in the local bank. In those days people had unlimited liability if they owned stock in a bank. So when there was a run on the bank, as there was, he was called to bring money to the bank, which he did. He did it

over and over, and it took him 9 years to recover. People were hungry. People were desperate. That is what a depression is about.

So when I reflect back to those decisions, I believe they were the right decisions to make. It is not just my view; that is the view of two of the most distinguished economists in this country, Mark Zandi, who was a key economic adviser to Senator John McCain in his Presidential race, and Alan Blinder, the former Deputy Chairman of the Federal Reserve. Here is what they say, "Without that Federal response, we would have had 8 million fewer jobs and a 16-percent level of unemployment in this country, and we would have been in the second Great Depression." They call it "Depression 2.0."

So let's remember where we were when President Obama came to office. The Nation was facing the worst economic catastrophe since the Great Depression. In the fourth quarter of 2008, the economy shrank at a rate of almost 9 percent. After the Federal actions, positive economic growth returned in the third quarter of 2009 and we have now had 13 consecutive quarters of economic growth. We have come a long way. This is a remarkable turnaround in a very short time, measured against previous financial crises. In fact, there has been an academic study just completed that suggests typically it takes 8 to 10 years to recover from a financial crisis. So the recovery here, while not everything we would have hoped, is a dramatic turnaround.

At the same time our constituents know, and we know, the price has been high. We know we are currently borrowing 31 cents of every dollar we spend. That is somewhat of an improvement, because we were borrowing 40 cents of every dollar we spend. So this is an improvement, but we have a long way to go. The public understands we face both a spending and a revenue problem. Spending is near a 60-year high, as this chart shows. The red line is the spending line; the green line is the revenue line. But for those who say it is just a spending problem, I don't think the facts bear that out, because the revenue is near a 60-year low. I think most logical people would say we have to work both sides of this equation.

When we look at our debt, we see that our gross debt has now surpassed 100 percent of our gross domestic product. There was a landmark work done a couple of years ago by Rogoff and Reinhart. They looked at 200 years of economic history and they concluded that once our debt exceeds 90

percent of GDP, our future economic prospects are reduced, and reduced quite significantly: future economic growth reduced by 25 to 33 percent. So this is not just numbers on a page; this is a question of future economic opportunity.

This growing debt is why many of us called for action a long time ago. In fact, it was 6 years ago this month that Senator Gregg and I came up with the idea of a commission to tackle the debt. That idea ultimately led to the President appointing the Bowles-Simpson Commission. Its bipartisan report recommended \$4 trillion in deficit reduction in a balanced way, and I think in a fair way. It protected low-income programs, it actually improved the progressivity of the tax system quite significantly, and it was balanced between revenue and spending. Other bipartisan groups have concluded the same, that we need spending restraint and we need revenue. So there is a critical role for government here. We have seen it in the past and we will find it in the future.

I think we also have to acknowledge there are problems in this Chamber. As proud as I am of this institution, and I will forever be, I have detected over the 26 years I have been here, a change. It has happened kind of gradually, but it has clearly happened. We now spend too much of our time seeking partisan advantage, and it happens on both sides, and it is all understandable. I understand it. I am not being critical of individuals. We spend too little time trying to solve problems. We spend too little time in our caucuses, in our meetings, focused on how to solve the problems facing the country. I deeply believe this observation is true.

I believe we can do better than this. The institutions of our government have a proud history. The genius of our Founding Fathers can be found in every part of our history. Whether it was conquering the last Great Depression or winning World War I and World War II or launching a man into space or conquering dread diseases, over and over our country has organized to better the plight of mankind. We need that same kind of focus and effort now to address our challenges. I am confident we can do this, but it is not enough to be confident. It is not enough to be hopeful. It requires a plan, and I would like to take the next few minutes to lay out my belief of what that plan should include.

Much of what I will talk about reflects the work of the Bowles-Simpson Commission, the Group of Six that I have been a part of, and the Group of Eight.

It starts by looking at what both sides have laid down. Republicans have laid down the spending cut plan; the Presi-

dent has laid down a revenue plan. My own belief is we should take them both. We should take what the Republicans have proposed on spending, with some modest modifications which I will discuss, and we should take the President's plan on revenue.

The President laid down a plan that said we ought to raise \$1.6 trillion over the next 10 years. Boy, that sounds like an awful lot of money, doesn't it—\$1.6 trillion. Not billion, not million—but trillion. People will be quick to say: Oh, my God, that is the biggest tax increase in the history of mankind. Terrible. We cannot do that.

Well, we need to put it in perspective. The first thing we should recognize is this will take us to a revenue level that is 19.9 percent of our GDP. The last five times we have balanced the budget in this country, going back to 1969, we have been at 19.7 percent, 19.9 percent, 19.8 percent, 20.6 percent, and 19.5 percent. Does 19.9 percent fit in? These are the only times we balanced the budget going back to 1969.

To put it in even more perspective, how much revenue are we going to raise over the next 10 years without any change? Well, here is the number: \$37.4 trillion. Nobody ever puts these things in perspective. These big numbers are in relationship to what; \$1.6 trillion is what in relationship to \$37.4 trillion? As a percentage that is an increase of 4.3 percent. My goodness, we cannot increase the revenue by 4.3 percent in this country over the next 10 years? Of course we can. Of course we can, especially if it means we get our house in order and put the country on a more firm fiscal footing.

It does not just matter how much money we raise; it also matters how we raise it. We have a Tax Code now which I cannot defend. I cannot defend it. I took a study that was done by a man named Martin Sullivan last year. He did a very interesting thing. He looked at one building on Park Avenue in New York, and he was able to do it because they happened to have the statistics that isolated that one building. Do you know what he found? The average income in that building was \$1.167 million for the year—\$1.167 million. The average tax rate of the people in that building was 14.7 percent.

The janitor in that building had an income of \$33,000. He paid a tax rate of 24.9 percent. Is this fair? Is it fair that people making \$1.1 million paid a tax rate of 14.7 percent, and the janitor who served them earning \$33,000 a year paid a tax rate of 24.9 percent? Well, I personally do not think so.

I know all of the arguments. I have served on the Finance Committee. I have heard it all. The biggest reason for this differential, by the way, is not the earned-income tax rate, which has had almost all of the attention in this national discussion. Almost all of the attention has been on the earned-income tax rate and raising it from 35 percent to 39.6 percent.

Almost no attention has been paid to the unearned-income tax rate on capital gains and dividends. The unearned rate is currently at 15 percent. That is what allows very wealthy people to pay a tax rate that is a fraction of those who work full time and are paying rates of 25 percent.

So I hope as we move to conclusion we will pay a little more attention to the unearned rates. The truth is, we would not have to have as much of an increase as is being proposed on the earned-income side and have more of an increase on the unearned-income side, and we would make the Tax Code fairer and we could raise the same amount of revenue. That is the revenue side.

But the spending side Republicans have down. They have put out a proposal that asks for savings out of entitlements and other discretionary spending. If we look at their proposal and break it down—again, let's look at health care. We are going to spend \$11 trillion over the next 10 years on health care. Republicans are proposing saving \$600 million. If we had a compromise between Republicans and Democrats let's say at \$500 million, that would be a savings of, again the magic, 4 percent.

We are going to increase revenue 4 percent. If we had savings in health care of 4½ percent, we would save \$500 billion. Now, I have had conversations with colleagues who tell me we cannot possibly save \$500 billion out of health care, just like people say, well, we cannot possibly increase revenue \$1.6 trillion.

Really, we cannot save \$500 billion out of a pot of money where we are going to spend \$11 trillion? I do not think that is true. I think we can save \$500 billion. I will tell you, there is someone sitting on this floor who has a pretty good idea of how to do it. Senator Sheldon Whitehouse has said to us over and over and over: We are spending more than any other country in the world as a share of our national income on health care. We are spending 18 percent of our GDP on health care. No other country spends more than 11½ percent.

The best minds in this country have told us we are wasting hundreds of billions of dollars in health care that do not improve health care outcomes at all. If we would save money in overall health care, 40 percent of that savings would flow through to the Federal Government. Senator Whitehouse is right about this. We ought to focus like a laser on where the waste is.

We do not need to increase the eligibility age for Medicare. We absolutely do not have to do it to save \$500 billion. What it would do, if we save \$500 billion, is it would keep the growth in health care spending about equal to the growth in the overall economy. That would stabilize the growth of health care spending. That would be a huge contribution to the economic competitive position of the United States.

Republicans have also said: Hey, let's save \$300 billion on domestic discretionary savings. Now, I will be the first to say we have already had lots of savings on the discretionary accounts. We have saved over \$1 trillion in the discretionary accounts. But they say, ok, let's save another \$300 billion. I think we should say we will do it if they go with us on the revenue. We will do it because that represents a savings of 2.6 percent of the \$11.6 trillion we are going to spend in the discretionary accounts over the next 10 years.

Now, I think we have gotten into a situation where we use numbers that are absolutely big numbers, but we do not put them in perspective. How can we save 2.6 percent out of discretionary accounts? Well, I believe we can. I absolutely believe we can. I believe we can save more out of defense.

I did not vote for going to war in Iraq. I thought that was a huge mistake. But I have supported every dollar of spending for our troops in the field. I can tell you as the Budget Committee chairman, we can save more money in defense. There are lots of Republicans who know we can do it too.

Other mandatory spending. That is another category the Republicans said to save \$300 billion there. I think they are \$100 billion too high because we are already saving over \$100 billion out of other mandatory programs to offset the cost of extending certain policies just last year. So let's save \$200 billion. That would represent, again, 4 percent of what we are projected to spend over the next 10 years in other mandatory spending; \$5.1 trillion is what we are programmed to spend. Two hundred billion dollars of savings there would represent 4 percent.

Again, I have had colleagues tell me we cannot possibly save \$200 billion. I have had staff people tell me we cannot

save \$200 billion. So I say, how much are we going to spend? That \$200 billion represents 4 percent of what we are going to spend. We cannot save 4 percent? Yes, we can.

I was elected on the slogan in 1986, of “Yes We Can.” Somebody else used that slogan a few years later. President Obama used that slogan, “Yes We Can.” He called me up.

He said, “Do I owe you royalties?”

I said, “No, I am glad you are using it.”

Yes we can. We need more of a yes-we-can attitude around here.

So when I rack it all up and I look at what we have already done, we have saved \$1 trillion in the Budget Control Act of last year. Here are other mandatory savings I just talked about: more than \$100 billion that we have already done to offset the cost of extending certain policies, \$900 billion of other discretionary savings already done. So we put that in the bank. We use that as the base.

We put it all together and here is what we have: We save another \$200 billion on defense; we have revenue of \$1.6 trillion, which is the President’s proposal; we have \$100 billion of nondefense. That gets us the \$300 billion the Republicans have asked for.

On health care we do \$500 billion. That is close to what they have asked for, \$100 billion less. Other mandatory, \$200 billion; that is close to what they asked for. The \$100 billion difference reflects what we have already done.

Interest savings. Because we are spending less and we have more revenue, we save interest, \$400 billion. That gives us a total of spending cuts of \$1.4 trillion. We add in what has already been done, \$1.05 trillion, and we have a total of \$2.45 trillion. We add that to the \$1.6 trillion of revenue, we have \$4.05 trillion of savings.

Then I personally would extend the payroll tax holiday because CBO tells us, on the tax side, that holiday is the biggest bang for the buck in giving a lift to the economy. It will cost us \$200 billion, for a net deficit reduction of \$3.85 trillion. For those wondering what happens to AMT and what happens to the doc fix, we have those in the baseline so they are covered in this proposal. We can correct the alternative minimum tax. We can eliminate the doc fix and be done with them.

This magnitude of package is precisely what was called for in the fiscal commission. In the Moment of Truth report, this is what they called for. I think they were right to call for it. I was proud to be part of that effort. I believe this is pre-

cisely what we need to do now. So that is the plan. Now we need action. We should do it the old-fashioned way. We should make tough decisions, even some that will be unpopular.

It will be the right thing to do, and it will work. It will stabilize our debt and begin to bring it down. It will provide certainty to our economy. I believe it will unleash the \$1.7 trillion that is in the balance sheets of our corporations, and it will unlock the investment potential that lies all across this country.

Let me end as I began by simply saying thank you. Thank you to the people of North Dakota, thank you to my colleagues, thank you to my staff and, most of all, thanks to my family—to my wife Lucy, to my daughter Jessie, to our son Ivan and his wife Kendra, and to our grandson Carter. To all my family members, my cousins, who have been with me in every campaign, I will never forget your support and your help. I will always consider serving here the honor of my life.

I also thank my colleague Senator Hoeven, who, in the 2 years he and I have overlapped, has been a good colleague. I have enjoyed working with him very much.

I just close by noting, because as many of you know, I am sort of a numbers guy, that I started these remarks in the 12th hour of the 12th day of the 12th month of 2012. I am sure numerologists will make much of those relationships. I began this speech in the 12th hour of the 12th day of the 12th month of 2012, and I leave here forever grateful for the opportunity to serve.



Farewell to the Senate

Wednesday, January 2, 2013

Mr. CONRAD. Mr. President, I thank my colleagues. These will be my final remarks to the Senate, and I thought I would share with my colleagues my observations on what has just occurred to put in perspective where I believe we are and where we are headed and to lay down a challenge for my colleagues as I depart. A very significant challenge remains for the Congress and the country, and I hope very much that we find the courage to take on these challenges.

It is incredibly important to the future strength of our Nation, and we can do it. We have done much tougher things in the past, and we can certainly take on these challenges.

On New Year's Eve we were called into session and were briefed by the Vice President and other staff from the White House with respect to the deal that was before us. I told our colleagues on that night that I believed we had to support the proposal before us because to fail to do so would send us back into a recession. Most economists said the economy would shrink 4 percent in the first quarter, 2 percent in the second quarter, that 1 million more people would be unemployed, and that the 2 million people now on unemployment insurance would lose that and would have no safety net. So, Mr. President, I saw no alternative but to support this agreement.

At the same time, I told my colleagues: I hate this agreement. I hate it with every fiber of my being because this is not the grand bargain I had hoped for and worked for and believe is so necessary to the future of the country. This is not, by any standard, a deficit reduction plan. As necessary as it is, no one should be misled that this deals with our deficit and debt because it only makes our debt circumstance worse.

Now, some question that assessment, but that is precisely the assessment the Congressional Budget Office has come to. I would like to take just a few moments to put in perspective where we are.

The United States is borrowing 31 cents of every dollar it spends. That is an unsustainable circumstance. It is an improvement somewhat because we were borrowing 40 cents of every dollar we spend. So there has been some modest improvement. But, this cannot go on. It has to be addressed or we will weaken the Nation.

This chart puts in perspective the spending and revenue of the United States going back to 1950. Looking back 60 years, the red line is the spending line, and the green line is the revenue line. You can see our spending is close to a 60-year high. We are not quite at a 60-year high because there has been some improvement in the last 2 years. We are close to a 60-year low on revenue. So our colleagues who say this is just a spending problem are missing the point. This is a problem of the relationship between spending and revenue. The gap—much higher spending than we have revenue—is what leads to deficits and leads to additions to the debt.

The path we are on, we are told by the Congressional Budget Office, will take us from a gross debt of 104 percent of our gross domestic product today to 115 percent by 2022 if we fail to act. So further action is absolutely essential.

Why? Why does it matter if our gross debt is more than 100 percent of our gross domestic product? Well, because the best work that has been done on this question—by Rogoff and Reinhart—concluded, after looking at 200 years of economic history, the following. I quote from their study:

We examine the experience of 44 countries spanning up to two centuries of data on central government debt, inflation and growth. Our main finding is that across both advanced countries and emerging markets, high debt/GDP levels (90 percent and above) are associated with notably lower growth outcomes.

To sum it up, Mr. President, when we have a gross debt of more than 90 percent of our GDP, we are headed down a path that dramatically reduces our future economic growth. That means we are reducing future economic opportunity for the people of our country. That is why this matters, because it will retard and restrict economic growth for our people.

Here is what the Congressional Budget Office tells us about the long-term path we are on, in terms of debt held by the public. CBO tells us we are headed for a circumstance where publicly held debt will be 200 percent of our GDP.

So, we are on a course that is utterly unsustainable.

If we look at what has been done—because those who say nothing has been done are not giving the full story either—the fact is we passed a Budget Control Act in place of a budget. We put in place a law in place of a budget resolution. That budget law dropped discretionary spending to historic lows. We were at—in the year 2012—8.3 percent of GDP going to domestic spending. The Budget Control Act, the law that was passed, will take that down to 5.3 percent of GDP going for discretionary spending. That is a historic low.

So when someone says nothing has been done, that is not accurate. We cut domestic spending, and cut it in a very significant way. We cut it to a level that will be a historic low, but that doesn't mean the problem has been solved; nowhere close to it, because at the same time the nondiscretionary accounts are rising dramatically. Medicare, Medicaid, and other Federal health spending is the 800-pound gorilla. That is where we see such a dramatic increase in spending, both in real and nominal dollars, and as a share of GDP.

Back in 1972, these health care accounts consumed 1.1 percent of our gross domestic product. By 2050, if we don't

do something, they will consume 12.4 percent. That is totally unsustainable. It is gobbling up bigger and bigger chunks of our budget, putting increasing pressure on our deficits and debt, and eating up the ability of the United States to have the flexibility to respond to crises that might occur.

The aging population is the primary driver of Medicare, Medicaid, and Social Security cost growth. We can see in this chart, the effect of cost growth is the yellow part; the effect of aging is the red part; and the spending in absence of aging and excess cost growth is the green part of this chart. In other words, our spending on Medicare, Medicaid, and Social Security would actually be very stable absent the effect of aging and the effect of excess cost growth. Now the effect of aging has become the biggest driver. There is nothing we can do about that because these people have been born. They are alive today. They are going to be eligible for Medicare and Social Security, and we are going to have to find a way to be able to afford this combined effect.

The revenue side of the equation I think is critically important to understand. Many of our colleagues say: It is true we are at a very low share of GDP going to revenue today. In 2012, less than 16 percent of our GDP came as revenue to the Federal Government. Typically, it is about 18.5 percent of GDP. But if we look back on the last five times we have actually balanced the budget around here, revenue hasn't been 18 or 18.5 percent of GDP. The last five times we have balanced the budget, revenue has been 19.7 percent, 19.9 percent, 19.8 percent, 20.6 percent, 19.5 percent of GDP.

So those who say we have to get back to the normal revenue stream, I think miss the point. The average is not going to do it. It never has, at least going back to 1969.

We are going to have to have more revenue at the same time we have more spending discipline, especially with respect to the health care accounts.

We need fundamental tax reform. This Tax Code is out of date; it is inefficient; and it is hurting U.S. global competitiveness. The complexity imposes a significant burden on individuals and businesses. The expiring provisions create uncertainty and confusion. It is hemorrhaging revenue to tax gaps, tax havens, abusive tax shelters.

I have shown many times on the floor of the Senate a picture of a little five-story building in the Cayman Islands called Ugland House. Ugland House, this little five-story building, claims to be the home of 18,000 companies that all say they are doing business out of that building. I have said

many times that is the most efficient building in the world. How can 18,000 companies be doing business out of a little five-story building down in the Cayman Islands? They are not doing business out of that building. The only business they are doing is monkey business, and the monkey business they are doing is to avoid the taxes they owe in the United States through shell games in which they show their profits in the Cayman Islands, where, happily, there are no income taxes to impose on those earnings. So they are avoiding showing their income here and putting it in the Cayman Islands where they can shield it from taxation.

We also desperately need to restore fairness. The current system contributes to growing income inequality. I don't know how anyone can conclude otherwise. I have also shown many times on the floor of the Senate the report on one building on Park Avenue in New York, where the average income is \$1.2 million of the people who live in that building and the average tax rate those people are paying is about 15 percent. The janitor in that building is paying a tax rate of 25 percent with an income of \$33,000 a year. How is that fair? How can that possibly be considered fair? These long-term fiscal imbalances simply must be addressed, and revenue is going to have to be part of the solution.

Martin Feldstein, one of the distinguished economists in our country, conservative, chairman of the Council of Economic Advisers under President Reagan, said this about the tax expenditures of the country because we are spending \$1.2 trillion a year in the tax expenditures category of the United States. We are spending more through the Tax Code than we are through all the appropriated accounts.

People say we are spending too much. Yes, we continue to have a spending problem and a revenue problem. But through the Tax Code we spend more there than we spend through all the appropriated accounts.

Here is what Martin Feldstein said about the need to reduce tax expenditures:

Cutting tax expenditures is really the best way to reduce government spending. . . . [E]liminating tax expenditures does not increase marginal tax rates or reduce the reward for saving, investment, or risk taking. It would also increase overall economic efficiency by removing incentives that distort private spending decisions. And eliminating or consolidating the large number of overlapping tax-based subsidies would also greatly simplify tax filing. In short, cutting tax expenditures is not at all like other ways of raising revenue.

I say to my colleagues, we are going to have to raise more revenue; we are going to have to cut spending; and we are

going to have to reform entitlements. It is as clear as it can be that those things are going to have to be done to get the country back on track. Here is one of the most distinguished economists in the country telling us that reforming tax expenditures is not like other ways of raising revenue in terms of its economic effect. I think Mr. Feldstein has that exactly right.

By the way, who most benefits from these tax expenditures? Here is a chart that shows the increase in after-tax income from tax expenditures and here is the top 1 percent. On average, they benefit per year by over \$250,000. The next quintile benefits by \$32,000. The lowest quintile tax expenditures benefit by \$707 a year. Wow. What an extraordinary disparity. The lowest quintile tax expenditures benefits are \$707 a year. For the top 1 percent, their benefit from tax expenditures, on average, is over \$250,000 a year.

Here we are, borrowing 31 cents of every dollar we spend. We are on course taking the debt of the United States from over 100 percent of our gross domestic product to over 200 percent if we fail to act.

That is why we had the National Commission on Fiscal Responsibility and Reform. The report we put out was called "The Moment of Truth." What we called for in that report was \$5.4 trillion in deficit reduction. We used the current baseline. That is what we would have provided, \$5.4 trillion in deficit reduction. We lowered the deficit to 1.4 percent of GDP in 2022. We stabilized the gross debt by 2015. We reduced discretionary spending to 4.8 percent of GDP by 2022. We built on the health care reform savings. We called for Social Security reform and savings to be used only to extend the solvency of Social Security itself, and we also included fundamental tax reform that raised revenue and did it in part by reducing those tax expenditures I just referred to.

Here is what would happen to the deficit as a percentage of GDP under the fiscal commission budget plan. We can see in 2012 the deficit is at 7.6 percent of GDP. By 2022 it would be taken down to 1.4 percent of GDP under the plan.

Here is what would happen to the gross debt of the country as a percentage of GDP under the fiscal commission plan. From 104 percent of GDP in 2012, down to 93 percent of GDP in 2022. Stabilize the debt. Then begin to bring it down. That ought to be our challenge.

The plan that was just passed took individual rate increases from 35 to 39.6 for couples earning over \$450,000. Capital gains and dividends were increased from 15 percent

to 20 percent. PEP and Pease were reinstated. The estate tax was increased to 40 percent for those estates above \$5 million. The alternative minimum tax was patched on a permanent basis to prevent some 30 million people from being caught up in the alternative minimum tax. It extended other expiring provisions.

On the spending side, the doc fix was put in place for 1 year to prevent doctors who provide care for Medicare-eligible beneficiaries from taking a 27-percent cut. It turned off the sequester for 2 months, the \$1.2 trillion across-the-board cut in discretionary spending in both defense and non-defense. It provided for a 1-year extension of unemployment benefits and also for a 1-year extension of the farm bill.

Again, while I believe that plan had to be supported—and I did, albeit reluctantly because I think if we had failed to support it, we would be headed back into recession, an additional 1 million people would have lost their jobs, the unemployment rate would be headed to 9.1 percent, and 2 million people would have lost their unemployment benefits. So there was good reason to support that plan. But I want to end as I began. I hated that plan. I hated it with every fiber of my being because the truth is it increased the debt of the United States. That is not just my word; that is the word of the Congressional Budget Office that tells me the revenue loss from that plan is \$3.6 trillion; the new spending, \$332 billion. The total impact on the deficit and debt, \$4 trillion. That doesn't account for the additional debt service which is another \$650 billion. The total increase in the debt as a result of that plan is over \$4.6 trillion.

So don't let anybody tell you that was a deficit reduction plan or a plan to deal with the debt because it was not and it is not. That leaves the unresolved challenge of our time. Because for this Nation's future, it is critically important that the next Congress, in its early days, try to get back to doing the grand bargain, the big deal, something that would reduce our deficits and debt by at least \$4 trillion over the next 10 years to stabilize the debt to begin to bring it down.

I leave here in many ways with a heavy heart because I came here 26 years ago believing one of the foremost responsibilities of a Senator was to guide the fiscal affairs of this country.

I ask unanimous consent to have printed in the *Record* the announcement speech I made in 1986 in running for the Senate.

There being no objection, the material was ordered to be printed in the *Record*, as follows:

KENT CONRAD SPEECH ANNOUNCING RUN FOR THE SENATE, JANUARY 27,
1986

I will be a candidate for North Dakota's seat in the U.S. Senate in 1986. I will be a candidate because I am intensely interested in North Dakota's future. I am committed to doing what I can to improve the future for our State and its people.

I have concluded that the serious economic problems facing our State can in large measure only be addressed in Washington. It is economic policies decided in our Nation's Capital that are pushing our State into a difficult financial position.

Since 1980, our national debt has doubled. Our national operating deficit has tripled. Our trade deficit has increased six-fold. And we have become a debtor nation for the first time in 71 years.

We can do better. We must do better. And we will do better if we have the courage and leadership to move this country in a new direction.

Current economic policies, which have increased the national debt in 5 years by an amount that had taken 200 years to accumulate, have forced record high real interest rates. Those record high real interest rates have bloated the value of the American dollar, which in turn has put a hidden tax on every commodity exported by our State and Nation. That hidden tax has robbed us of our export markets and dramatically reduced our commodity values.

These economic policies are not only devastating to the economy of the State of North Dakota but are rapidly exporting the economic strength of this country. This process must be stopped.

It is time for politicians to stop posturing and promising and start guaranteeing performance and results. I pledge today that, if elected, the Federal deficit, the trade deficit, and real interest rates will be brought under control or I will not seek reelection in 1992.

I have great confidence in the future of our State and of our country if our leadership and our people move swiftly in a new direction.

I offer leadership and a new vision of the role of government in solving our common problems.

We are at the dawn of a new era, one in which international competition will more and more shape the policies of states and nations.

We must meet that challenge.

That means the fundamentals of a healthy domestic economy, including a sound agricultural sector, an excellent educational system, a competitive business climate, a strong national defense, and an efficient and fair tax system must be among our highest priorities.

At the same time we must fashion a society that cares for the least fortunate among us, respects our senior citizens, nurtures our young, and preserves a strong and growing middle class. Perhaps most important, we must actively pursue peace for our generation and for the generations ahead.

We can accomplish all of this if we trust in the basic good judgment and decency of our people. I have that faith and look forward to a challenging campaign on the issues that confront us.

The trade deficit is clearly out of control. We have gone from a trade deficit of \$32 billion in 1980 to \$149 billion last year, and this year we're headed for a trade deficit of \$175 billion.

For the last 3 months, we have imported more agricultural production than we have exported. These are additional signs of an economic game plan that has gone seriously wrong. We must get the trade deficit under control or we will find our standard of living lowered for decades to come.

I believe the Senate and House Members should tell the collective leadership in Washington—both Republicans and Democrats—that it's no more business as usual. It's time to seriously address the economic problems facing our country.

The best way to get the leadership to face up to the problems facing our country is to refuse to extend the debt limit except on a temporary basis. There should be no permanent extension of the debt limit until there is an economic summit of the President and the Republican and Democratic leadership of both the House and the Senate to devise a plan to reduce our national deficit, to lower interest rates, to lower the bloated value of the American dollar, and to lower the trade deficit. These steps must be taken, and they must be taken now.

We can have a better, more secure future, but only if we take the steps now to get our country back on an economic path that makes sense.

Mr. CONRAD. This is what I said 26 years ago in my candidacy for the Senate:

I have concluded that the serious economic problems facing our State can in large measure only be addressed in Washington. It is economic policies decided in our Nation's Capital that are pushing our State into a difficult financial position.

Since 1980, our national debt has doubled. Our national operating deficit has tripled. Our trade deficit has increased six-fold. And we have become a debtor nation for the first time in 71 years.

We can do better. We must do better. And we will do better if we have the courage and leadership to move this country in a new direction.

Current economic policies, which have increased the national debt in 5 years by an amount that had taken 200 years to accumulate, have forced record high real interest rates. Those record high real interest rates have bloated the value of the American dollar, which in turn has put a hidden tax on every commodity exported by our State and Nation. That hidden tax has robbed us of our export markets and dramatically reduced our commodity values.

These economic policies are not only devastating to the economy of the State of North Dakota but are rapidly exporting the economic strength of this country. This process must be stopped.

I will end with the next paragraph:

It is time for politicians to stop posturing and promising and start guaranteeing performance and results.

Then I made a pledge.

I pledge today that, if elected, the Federal deficit, the trade deficit, and real interest rates will be brought under control or I will not seek reelection in 1992.

That is a statement I made 26 years ago. Some people are probably wondering, if you made that pledge, how are you still here? Well, 6 years after I made that pledge I announced I would not seek reelection, and I did not. I an-

nounced in April of that year I would not seek reelection. Congressman Dorgan was nominated to run for my seat and I thought I was leaving the Senate.

Then the other Senator from North Dakota died in September of that year. The Governor called me and said, "Senator, you have to run to fill out the 2 years of his term because our State is going to lose all of its seniority in one fell swoop—all of Senator Burdick's seniority, all of your seniority, and all of Congressman Dorgan's seniority." We will be the only State in the Nation with no seniority. You will have kept your pledge; you did not seek reelection; you will run in a special election which will be in December, after the regular elections in November.

I will never forget, one of the news media stations back home did a poll and two-thirds of Republicans thought I should run to fill out the 2 years of that term, which I did—which means I am the answer to a trivia question, because I am the only Senator in history who served in both Senate seats from the same State in the same day.

I believed then and I believe now that fiscal responsibility is one of the first obligations of government. My deep regret, my greatest regret, in leaving here is that we have not been able to fashion the grand bargain to put us back on track.

Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent to have a tribute to the Budget Committee staff who have served so ably and so well, served this body, served our country, led by my staff director Mary Naylor, who is truly a remarkable person; I consider her a real patriot because she has absolutely dedicated herself to getting the fiscal affairs of the country in order. If I could, I ask unanimous consent to have printed in the *Record* a tribute to all of the Budget Committee staff who have served with me so ably and so well.

There being no objection, the material was ordered to be printed in the *Record*, as follows:

TRIBUTE TO BUDGET COMMITTEE STAFF, JANUARY 2, 2013

Mr. CONRAD. Mr. President, before I depart the Senate after 26 years, I wanted to offer a special tribute to a team of professionals who have served me, this body, and this country with high distinction.

Since 2001, it has been my honor to serve as the senior Democrat on the Senate Budget Committee. Throughout my 12-year tenure as chairman or ranking member, I have had on the Budget Committee a staff of dedicated professionals who have advised me and other Senators on a wide array of complicated budget issues.

The Committee's portfolio touches every facet of the Federal Government. We write not only the budget resolution, but deal with the big picture consequences of tax and spending decisions. We enforce the many budget

points-of-order and other budget rules that govern our proceedings. Many of these rules, although well intentioned, are complex and often convoluted. We rely on the expertise of our Budget Committee staff professionals to help us comply with these rules.

When my colleagues tapped me to lead the committee, I knew part of my success would depend greatly on the composition and caliber of staff that we could attract to the committee.

SBC MAJORITY STAFF

Staff Director

Job one was making sure I picked the right staff director—a Hill veteran, who knew how to advance ideas and move legislation through this political and legislative body. Someone who knew how to write budgets, excel at managing staff, and maybe most important, care about fiscal responsibility.

Finding that right person turned out to be quite easy. Mary Naylor was already on my personal office staff, serving as my deputy chief of staff. She grew up in North Dakota. In 1989, her first task for me: writing my budget and tax mail. Twelve years later, in January 2001, she became my first and only Budget Committee staff director.

Mary has been invaluable to me. She is a loyal and trusted aide. She works hard, has a gifted mind and memory, and never takes no for an answer. In addition, Mary has this uncanny ability to know what I am thinking, how I want to implement it, and how I want to explain it. I can't thank Mary enough for her service and her loyalty to me, her contribution to the Budget Committee, the Senate's deliberations, and the country's overall well-being.

Deputy Staff Director

John Righter has served as the committee's deputy staff director for the past 7-plus years.

John was my numbers guy. He understood and mastered budget baselines and scoring issues like no one else ever has. His brilliant mind enabled him to develop and compare multiple budget plans simultaneously. He is the budget world's equivalent of a chess grand master. There were times that I had John working on six different budget plans, all at once. I'd fire detailed questions to him about each of the varied plans, and he'd be able to respond quickly and accurately. Just like a grand master who can play multiple chess games at once, John can juggle multiple budget plans simultaneously.

I was not the only Senator to rely on John's abilities. John was a key resource for the staff and members of the President's Fiscal Commission. And for the last two years, Senators from both sides of the aisle who have worked with me on the Group of Six—which later became the Group of Eight—have relied on John's mastery of budgets.

John joined the committee in May 2001 as an analyst focusing on appropriations, general government, and commerce. He was a 6-year veteran of the Congressional Budget Office, where he, among other things, excelled at budget concepts and scorekeeping issues. I can't thank John enough for his exceptional service to the committee and me these past nearly 12 years.

Communications Director

Stu Nagurka served as the committee's communications director, and came on board just days after I took over the reins of the committee. He

has been a trusted, valued, and loyal aide all these many years. As a former reporter, and with his background as a press secretary on the House side, and as a communications aide in the Clinton administration, he has been a great asset to the committee. He has always represented the committee and me before the press with great professionalism. He has been a delight to have on the committee, and I thank him for his 12 years of service.

FORMER SENIOR STAFF

I was fortunate to attract high caliber staff on the committee throughout my tenure. Some of my staff went on to serve in the administration, others moved on to think tanks, while others retired or went on to pursue other opportunities both on and off the Hill.

I would be remiss if I did not also thank them for their contributions, including Sue Nelson and Jim Horney. Both served as my co-deputy staff directors early in my tenure. As longtime veterans of helping to write and analyze budgets, they were an invaluable asset to me when I first served as chairman.

Joel Friedman served as one of the committee's two deputies during the last half of my tenure. He was the committee's lead tax and revenue expert. He brought a wealth of knowledge to the committee from his previous government service at the Treasury Department, the Office of Management and Budget, and the House Budget Committee. Joel did yeoman's work developing and evaluating tax policy during our bipartisan negotiations in the President's Fiscal Commission, and later during our Group of Six and Group of Eight deliberations. Joel was a key staff member, who I greatly admire and appreciate.

Steve Posner was a valued member of the committee staff for more than 11½ years. During that time, he wrote more than his share of my speeches, op-eds and other material. He is a brilliant writer, and knew exactly the words, phrases, and statements I wanted to make. He was of great help throughout my tenure, and I so appreciate his service.

Lisa Konwinski served as the committee's chief counsel for 11 years, 8 coming under my tenure. She was not only an excellent counsel and advisor to me and my committee members, but she was of great assistance to leadership and the Senate as a whole. I was not surprised when President Obama asked her to serve as one of his deputy directors of legislative affairs.

Joe Gaeta was the committee's next chief counsel. I and my colleagues will forever be indebted to his invaluable service during the drafting and consideration of the Affordable Care Act. It was his work, his knowledge and understanding of the budget rules and process that helped us to get the President's health law through the Senate. I am so pleased that he is still providing his services to the Senate, as Senator Whitehouse's legislative director.

Jamie Morin served as the committee's lead analyst for the defense, intelligence, and foreign affairs budgets from 2003 through 2009. He was an exceptional staff member, and I was so pleased when the Obama administration asked him to serve as the Assistant Secretary of Financial Management and Comptroller of the Air Force. He really exemplifies the high caliber staff we had serving on this committee and in the Senate.

Sarah Kuehl was another longtime staff member who joined the committee staff at the beginning of my tenure. Her portfolio included the health accounts, including Medicare, as well as Social Security. She had her hands full, particularly during the Affordable Care Act deliberations. I am so

proud and grateful for the important contributions she made during that debate. She was a highly respected staff member. She also served as the deputy staff director of the Joint Select Committee on Deficit Reduction. I appreciate her many years of trusted service on the committee.

Steve Bailey was my lead revenue staff member in my personal office, and later on the Budget Committee. He was on my staff for some 14 years. He also staffed the President's Fiscal Commission and served as senior tax counsel for the Joint Select Committee on Deficit Reduction. He received national recognition in 2004 when he alerted me to what was then an unnoticed tax provision in a pending appropriations bill. It would have allowed congressional staffers access to anyone's tax records. Thanks to Steve's catch, the offending language was removed. The country is forever grateful for Steve's heroic work, and I appreciate his service.

Jim Esquea served as the committee's lead analyst for income security and Medicaid for 11 years. In addition, at various times, he handled a wide array of issues ranging from veterans affairs and justice programs to child welfare, Temporary Assistance for Needy Families, supplemental nutrition assistance, public housing, the Children's Health Insurance Program, and other health programs. It is his expertise in these areas, as well as his great understanding of the Congress, that caused the Obama administration to appoint him as the Assistant Secretary for Legislative Affairs at the Department of Health and Human Services.

Two other staffers of the committee left us to work in the Obama administration. David Vandivier, who served as our outreach director, is now the Chief of Staff of the President's Council of Economic Advisers. Brodi Fontenot served as the committee's transportation analyst. He is now the Assistant Secretary for Administration at the Department of Transportation.

ADDITIONAL LONGTIME STAFF

Mike Jones is the committee's director of appropriations and our senior analyst for judiciary and homeland security. He has been with the committee for 11 years, and previously worked at the Department of Interior and the House Budget Committee, where he honed his budget skills.

Koby Noel is the committee's graphics production coordinator. Since joining the committee early in my tenure as the senior Democrat, Koby has been the lead staff member responsible for the countless number of charts that colleagues and C-SPAN viewers around the country have seen me use on this floor. Working with every committee staff member, she has helped design, create, produce, print, and mount hundreds of charts for me.

I have kept Koby a very busy woman. Keep in mind, for every chart the public sees on this floor, there are probably five or more charts that are created. Most of them are used in other public gatherings or private meetings. I thank Koby for her tireless efforts. And I hope she knows how much I appreciate her contribution to the committee.

BUDGET ANALYSTS

Jennifer Hanson is the committee's senior budget analyst for Medicare and Social Security. She was deeply involved in the health care debate and a key member of a team of staff who provided the committee and the Senate with critical assistance during the deliberations of that historic legislation.

Since joining the committee more than 3 years ago, Jennifer has provided extremely useful guidance on a wide array of health care matters. I particularly appreciate her sensitivity to how proposed changes in funding levels

can impact real people, as well as health care providers. She is a great asset to the committee.

Jim Miller is the committee's senior policy advisor for agriculture, and this is his second tour of duty with the committee. The Senate is very fortunate that Jim decided to return to Capitol Hill after serving as the Department of Agriculture's Under Secretary for Farm and Foreign Agricultural Services. Jim excelled in that Senate-confirmed position, and we are all so proud of his service in the Obama administration.

Jim is a walking encyclopedia of agriculture knowledge. He is well respected by Senators and staff on both sides of the aisle, and played a critical role in the drafting, enactment, and implementation of the last farm reauthorization law. I have been well served by Jim, and can't thank him enough for all he has done for the Senate, for the agricultural community and the country.

Robyn Hiestand is the committee's analyst responsible for education, discretionary health and appropriations issues. She and I share a passion for education, and I appreciate all the good work she has done to help us make education more affordable and to protect funding for important programs in the discretionary health accounts. Others have recognized her budget expertise as well. She took a brief leave of absence last year and served as a senior budget analyst for the Joint Select Committee on Deficit Reduction.

Brandon Teachout handles defense, international affairs, and veterans issues for the committee, and has been doing so for the past year-and-a-half. He is a trusted and valued aide who started his Senate career in my personal office 6 years ago. Brandon has a varied background that includes his work in TV news, a love of history and has taken courses through the Air Force's Air University.

Miles Patrie has been with the committee for several years and helps me on agriculture and trade issues, as well as nutrition. Miles is an exceptional analyst, who is detail oriented and focused, and has a calming presence on the committee. I appreciate all that he has done to make the committee and Senate a better place.

Farouk Ophaso joined the committee about a year ago and serves as our budget review professional. Farouk previously worked as a program examiner at the Office of Management and Budget, and as a cost analyst at the Department of Defense.

Gwen Litvak covers a lot of ground for us on the committee, handling housing, commerce, transportation, community and regional development, and general government issues. She is a workhorse who is immersing herself quickly in the work. She is now a 1-year veteran of the committee, and I appreciate her contribution during the past year.

Tyler Kruzich handles energy, environment, and natural resources issues for the committee. He joined our staff in June and is a Hill veteran, having served on the House Appropriations and House Natural Resources Committees. He also was a budget analyst for the Congressional Budget Office. I appreciate his good work on the committee, and know the committee will benefit from his service.

REVENUE TEAM

David Williams was the committee's senior tax policy advisor. He just concluded his second tour of duty with the committee. He brought a wealth of knowledge to the Senate, having spent his career both writing and implementing tax policy. In addition to his previous Hill experience, he has held

a number of senior positions at the Internal Revenue Service, where he received rave reviews for his work administering the earned income tax credit.

Alex Brosseau is another key member of the committee's revenue team. He serves as our budget and tax policy analyst. Alex brings an important perspective to the committee as he joined the committee about a year ago from the private sector where he was a practicing accountant. That real life work experience is a tremendous asset to the committee. I thank Alex for sharing his wisdom and experience with us.

Jeannie Biniek is an economist for the committee who excels at integrating her economic knowledge with the expertise of the budget and tax analysts. She works on joint projects with other analysts and provides helpful analysis to me and to the staff. She is also the committee's Medicaid expert.

Jeannie has been with the committee for more than 3 years, and this is her first public service position. I know it won't be her last, as she cares deeply about people and the community at large. She has been an absolute delight to have on staff, and I thank her for her service.

ECONOMIC TEAM

Brian Scholl is the committee's chief economist. I commend him for continually noting that we must navigate through this recovery carefully; otherwise we risk taking a dangerous step backward.

Zachary Moller is a member of the economic team serving as staff assistant. For more than a year, he's been researching, writing, and providing the committee with updated economic data. He is a great team player, who does whatever is needed to get the job done.

The committee has had a rich history of outstanding economists serving on staff. I have had the privilege to work with many of them including Chad Stone, Jim Klumpner, Lee Price, and Matt Salomon.

ADDITIONAL STAFF MEMBERS

Robert Etter is the committee's chief counsel whose specialties are budget process, budget rules and points of order, and other legal issues. His job is to make sure the committee, and everything we do, complies with all applicable laws and budget rules of the Senate. Robert joined the committee 1 year ago, and previously served as a House committee counsel. I appreciate all he has done for the committee, and thank him for his service.

Josh Ryan is responsible for outreach and new media for the committee. Josh is the committee's liaison to the public, including interest groups here in Washington. He also maintains our committee's Web site, handles our presence on Twitter and Facebook, and is our staff photographer. In short, Josh is a bit of a jack-of-all-trades type of staffer. I appreciate his dedicated service, and thank him for his many contributions.

Amy Edwards is the committee's performance budgeting specialist. She is the lead staff member who handles the committee's Task Force on Government Performance. Amy has been with the committee since the task force's inception in 2009. She has made important contributions in helping the committee in its monitoring and oversight capacity.

Ben Soskin is the committee's staff assistant and utility man extraordinaire. In addition to being an invaluable asset to Koby in the chart production process, Ben is one of those important staff members who will do anything asked of him for the betterment of the committee. Ben has been with the committee for 7 years, and has helped countless staff members do their jobs, enabling Senators to do ours.

Brendon Dorgan joined the committee this past summer as a staff assistant. He has helped gather and track press coverage of interest to the committee. He also has helped staff members archive the considerable material of the committee. In addition, he has shown great eagerness in wanting to learn and is always anxious to take on a new assignment. I appreciate his good work, and the energy he brings to the committee.

Anne Page is the committee's executive assistant. Very simply, she keeps the trains running, and staff happy. She is an invaluable resource and a critical aide to the committee's staff director.

Anne brings a wealth of knowledge and experience to the committee. She has a rich history, having worked for two former Speakers of the House, Jim Wright and Tom Foley. Anne is a staff and member favorite. She has so enriched our lives, and I so appreciate her service to the committee and the Congress. Thank you Anne for all you have done for us.

NONDESIGNATED STAFF

The committee is fortunate to have a strong cadre of professional nondesignated staff who provide the necessary support functions for the committee. These professionals work tirelessly day in and day out, helping the committee staff and Members on both sides of the aisle. We couldn't do our jobs without them.

These five staff members are the 24-hour-a-day fix-it staff who come to our rescue when a computer, BlackBerry, copier, phone, or some other device goes on the blink. They are an invaluable resource, and as chairman, I am grateful for their dedication to service, and I thank each of the following nondesignated staff members.

Joan Evans is the chief clerk of the committee, responsible for all of the administrative functions, and oversees all of the nondesignated staff. While relatively new to the committee, she has served in similar capacities with other Senate committees, and brings a wealth of knowledge and experience to the post. I appreciate all she has done to make the committee run so smoothly.

George Woodall is the committee's systems administrator. He's been with the committee for more than 19 years and really excels at keeping the committee wired and connected with the latest technology. George joined the committee the very year that Senate offices started using email, so he has helped lead a remarkable technological transformation over these many years. The Senate, and our committee in particular, is very fortunate to have his dedicated service.

Cathey Dugan is the committee's archivist. She has been particularly busy helping the majority staff save and store important papers and other documents from the past 12 years, so that future scholars will have the opportunity to study our work. I know my staff has been particularly appreciative of her patience, her due diligence and her continuous offer of assistance as we've navigated through the archival process.

Letitia Fletcher is a Government Printing Office detailee who has assisted the committee for the past 11 years. She is responsible for the compilation and publication of all the committee's hearings and markups. She is a thorough and dedicated public service employee who was recently recognized by the Public Printer for her 25 years of Federal service. I thank her for her contributions to the committee and the Senate.

Two staff assistants recently joined the committee. Kevin Stockert and Phillip Longbrake provide technical and administrative support to the com-

mittee staff. They are attentive, professional, and I thank them for their service.

Although she is no longer on staff, I do want to publicly thank our former clerk of the committee, Lynne Seymour, who retired last year. She first joined the committee in the early 1980s, and later became the committee's chief clerk, serving in that capacity for a record 17 years, 7 months. She was an exemplary employee who faced many administrative challenges during her long tenure, including multiple office moves whenever party control of the Senate changed hands. I will also never forget her outstanding leadership during 9/11. At the time, our floor in the Dirksen Building was being overhauled and rewired, so our offices, and all our staff, were in temporary trailers in the Russell Building courtyard. She managed the ensuing chaotic days with tremendous grace and professionalism.

REPUBLICAN STAFF

Let me also thank the Republican professional staff members of the Budget Committee. They, too, work extremely hard, and have made great contributions to the Senate. My staff and I have always had a very cordial and productive relationship with the Republican committee staff members.

In fact, over the years, I have forged long-lasting personal relationships with many of the Republican staff directors who served during my tenure. Senator Domenici's top aide, Bill Hoagland, is a Washington budget institution, who I have great respect for. Hazen Marshall served under Senator Nickles, and Scott Gudes, Denzel McGuire and Cheri Reidy all served as staff director at various times for Senator Gregg. All of them were a delight to work with. I also appreciate the contributions of Senator Sessions' Republican staff director, Marcus Peacock, and his current staff.

CONCLUSION

As my colleagues know, there are many staff members who work extremely hard to help the Senate function. That is why I wanted to come to the floor today and offer my thanks and appreciation to the professional staff members who worked tirelessly for me during my tenure of the Budget Committee. They are the ones who worked so hard behind the scenes, content doing the people's business in the background.

I hope my staff members know how much they and their work have meant to me. Each of them has enriched me, both personally and professionally; I am grateful to them.

Mr. CONRAD. I also wish to mention Sara Garland, my chief of staff, an extraordinary person, a North Dakota native, somebody who has dedicated herself to public service; Geri Gaginis, my executive assistant, who has been with me more than 20 years, also a North Dakota native—we call her “Mom” in our office because she does a good job of keeping us all on track; Tracee Sutton, legislative director, also a North Dakota native—an exceptional person, she will be on the staff of my succeeding colleague, Senator-elect Heitkamp; Susan King, also a North Dakota native, who has been with me off and on for many years, an outstanding person; Barry Piatt, my communications director, with me here at the end;

Mary Jo Prouty, my office manager, still laboring to close down our office; Molly Spaeth, also with me right here to the final days.

I also want to give special recognition to Sean Neary, who was my communications director for many years, who is now the communications director for the Finance Committee, truly an extraordinary person.

With that, Mr. President, I thank Stu Nagurka. Stu is my communications director in the Budget Committee, has stayed with me right to the end, somebody who has an extraordinary record in government service; in fact, served your own Bill Richardson, Governor of New Mexico, when he was in public service here in Washington. Stu was his communications director and did as everyone knows, an outstanding job.

His son, I want to note, is our page, Jarrod Nagurka, called back into service because in these days, you know, we are a little short of people. They are people for whom I have the highest regard, Stu Nagurka, Jarrod. I mentioned Mary Naylor, my extraordinary staff director; John Righter, the deputy; but I mention and have gone into detail on all of my Budget Committee staff in this statement that I made part of the *Record*.

Finally, let me note that my colleague on the Budget Committee, Senator Sessions, is here. Senator Sessions has been the ranking Republican. He has been a gentleman. He has been somebody with whom I have enjoyed working. He and his staff have been professional. I think we put on a series of hearings that laid out the issues for our country in a clear and undeniable way.

Again, I leave with only one true regret and that is we were not able collectively to put in place a plan to get our country back on track. But I am not without hope because next year—this year, later this year—we will have more opportunities to do what needs to be done.

TRIBUTES

TO

KENT CONRAD

Proceedings in the Senate

TUESDAY, *December 11, 2012*

Mr. ISAKSON. I wish to turn to another individual, a member of the Democratic conference and a dear friend of mine, KENT CONRAD from North Dakota.

When I came to the Senate, the first thing I noticed about KENT CONRAD was how he dressed. The second thing I noticed was his dog Dakota. You will see Dakota in the evening walking through the Halls of Congress, a smart little dog and his pet that he loves very much. His wife Lucy is a great lady and great leader in her own right in terms of Major League Baseball.

KENT CONRAD is a unique Member of the Senate. He has truly taken a bipartisan approach to the toughest problems we face in terms of spending, deficits, and debt. It was KENT CONRAD who was willing to help support the Simpson-Bowles proposal when it passed the Senate, and then it was KENT CONRAD who agreed to serve on Simpson-Bowles and came up with the recommendations they brought to us. It was KENT CONRAD who went on the Gang of Six and tried to work out a tough compromise on the tough issues before us, and it is KENT CONRAD who has served as chairman of the Budget Committee of the Senate for the last 6 years. Along with Senator Sessions, he has done a great job, and along with his predecessor, Judd Gregg, they did an even greater job to see to it that we brought forward budgets and principles of spending money to help us not go into deficit or debt. KENT is one of those rare leaders who find the sweet spot. He looks for the place where people can find common ground. He understands that the importance of our job is the future for our children and our grandchildren.

Whether North Dakota or Georgia, California or New York, Pennsylvania or Ohio, KENT CONRAD is a Senator for all America. He has done a tremendous job for the United States. I wish him and Lucy and Dakota the very best.

WEDNESDAY, *December 12, 2012*

Ms. STABENOW. I wish to take a moment to thank our distinguished colleague [Mr. CONRAD] and my dear friend for his wonderful service. We serve on three committees together. It has been my honor to serve on the committee Senator CONRAD chairs, the Budget Committee, and to have him serve as a senior member of the Agriculture Committee, which I chair. Both of us sit on the Finance Committee together.

Today he has done what he has always done for us, which is to provide vision, common sense, intelligence, and a lot of numbers. They add up, and they make sense. In listening to Senator CONRAD's farewell speech, I want to thank him again for giving us a path forward. He is someone who will forever be in Senate history as one of the great statesmen of our country, someone with intelligence, respect on both sides, and compassion. And a fighter from North Dakota like I have never seen. He is someone who serves in the best tradition of what it means to be an honorable public servant.

He has been a role model for me all the way through to this point and a dear friend. I wish him, Lucy, and Dakota—he is, in fact, the 101st Senator—wonderful opportunities going forward in the future. The Senator from North Dakota will be greatly missed, but his contributions will forever be a part of the positive tradition of this great body.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Rhode Island.

Mr. WHITEHOUSE. I yield to the distinguished chairman of the Judiciary Committee, the Senator from Vermont.

Mr. LEAHY. I thank the Senator. I will be speaking later on to the senior Senator from North Dakota.

Mr. President, I have had the privilege to serve with several hundred Senators since coming here. I have put in a very small list those who are extraordinary both for their talents and for our personal friendship, and KENT CONRAD is in that short list very easily. In fact, he defines it in many ways. Because of what we heard here, as I whispered to him a minute ago, it was nice to hear a grownup speak on the floor.

I have seen him reach across the aisle. We have been privileged to serve with fine Senators from both parties. But KENT CONRAD is unique. Marcelle and I value more than I

could possibly say here our friendship with KENT and his wife Lucy and the 101st Senator, Dakota.

As I said, I will speak later about this Senator, but what we heard today was a real giant of the Senate speaking, and I hope all Americans will listen to the lesson he gave us.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Rhode Island is recognized.

Mr. WHITEHOUSE. Before the junior Senator from North Dakota speaks—and I appreciate his courtesy in allowing us to make a few brief, personal remarks before he speaks—I wanted to say to my friend and my chairman, the senior Senator from North Dakota, that, yes, in the most obvious respect, he is leaving the Senate, and we will be a smaller Senate for his departure. But in some very important ways, KENT CONRAD is not leaving the Senate. I can assure him that for as long as I remain a U.S. Senator and have the privilege to serve in this body, KENT CONRAD will remain in this Senate as an example that I will never forget as a young Senator tutored by him in the Budget Committee. I will only speak for myself when I say that I am absolutely confident there are dozens of other Members of this body who can say exactly the same thing. In that sense, KENT CONRAD will continue to be an important part of this Senate, and the effect he will have in those years through the example he has set, echoed down the hallways of time by people who had the opportunity to serve with him, is going to be an immensely valuable one.

He displays the characteristics of diligence—an underrated attribute but an important one—of courtesy, of determination. It is an interesting combination, courtesy and determination, but Chairman CONRAD knows very well when to yield and when to fight. There was a politician hundreds of years ago in another country who said, “One ought not to be obstinate,” and then he continued, “unless one ought to be, and then one ought to be unshakable.” On the things that count, Senator CONRAD has always been unshakable. Where progress can be made, he has never been obstinate. It has been my honor to serve with him.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from North Dakota is recognized.

Mr. HOEVEN. I rise to speak on behalf of the senior Senator from North Dakota and to thank him for his dedicated service on behalf of the people of North Dakota and on behalf of the people of this great Nation.

I think this is 26 years that he has served in the Senate, and he has always served with great distinction and great commitment. He has been a leader in agriculture, in energy, and in fiscal efforts and many other areas.

I have to say on a personal note that since I came to the Senate last year, he has reached out to me and to my family in a very warm and positive way, both personally and professionally, and I would say the same about his wife Lucy. I think this is in the finest tradition of the Senate, in the tradition of bipartisanship, in the tradition of working together, and in the tradition of truly caring and being committed to getting things done. It wasn't just that he reached out on a personal level and said, "All right, how can I be helpful, how can we work together"; when I had questions or needed assistance, he was there. He was more than helpful.

In terms of working on legislation that matters, a farm bill, working together on the Agriculture Committee—Senator CONRAD has an amazing knowledge of agriculture and obviously incredible experience over the past 26 years building good farm policy for this Nation. So to work with him on the Agriculture Committee was not only rewarding but really an opportunity to craft good long-term policy for this country that will make a difference.

I start with that example because when you look at it, here we are at a time when we need good policy for our country, but at the same time we need to find savings, real savings that will help us address the deficit and the debt. So we went to work on a farm bill that is not only responsive to the farmers, the ranchers, and the producers of this country who produce the highest quality of food supply in the world at the lowest cost—every American benefits from that. They wanted more crop insurance, and we went to work. We improved the farm bill in terms of the kind of crop insurance it provides, but at the same time we saved \$23 billion to help with the deficit and the debt. That is doing it the right way.

If you think about it and you went across all aspects of what we are doing here, all of the different types of policies that we have, if we could do the same—craft good policy and find real, meaningful savings on a bipartisan basis that empowers the very people who are impacted by that policy, the farmers and the ranchers who do such a great job producing

food, fuel, and fiber, but at the same time grow our economy, create a favorable balance of trade and an incredible number of jobs—that is what we have to do, whether it is agriculture, whether it is energy, whether it is disaster assistance when we have floods and hurricanes, whether it is our military.

I am very pleased and honored to have had the opportunity to work with Senator CONRAD on those types of issues to try to make a real difference for the people of this country. As Senator CONRAD departs the Senate after 26 years—think about it: 26 years here, conducting himself in a professional manner with respect to this institution. He built relationships with Senators on both sides of the aisle but always with a commitment to the people of North Dakota and this country.

As I look at the legacy he leaves, I think one of the most important right now is his willingness to work in a bipartisan way to get things done. He brings a practical, pragmatic approach that recognizes solutions are imperfect but that we have an obligation in a bipartisan way to come together and find real solutions for the people of the greatest nation on Earth. It is that legacy, that willingness to be bipartisan and work together that I saw up close and personal here every day. I believe it is that legacy, as well as many others, that will continue here in this body when we think about Senator KENT CONRAD and his service to North Dakota and his service to this great country.

I rise to say thank you on behalf of the people of North Dakota and this country to my distinguished colleague for 26 years of dedicated service. Thank you, good luck, and God bless in your future endeavors.

Mr. President, I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from North Dakota is recognized.

Mr. CONRAD. I want to thank Senator Hoeven, my colleague, for his kind words. I have really enjoyed our relationship. I think you can tell we worked together very well, and I hope that serves as an example to our other colleagues. Even if you are on other side of the political aisle, you can work together, and you can get things done.

I also thank Senator Leahy, my dear friend. He and his wife are very close friends of mine and my wife's.

To Senator Stabenow, the distinguished chairman of the Agriculture Committee, and Senator Whitehouse, who served

with me on the Budget Committee, I want to take special note of the friendships we have enjoyed. Senator Stabenow and Senator Whitehouse will be friends of ours for as long as we are on this Earth.

I look forward to our continuing relationship with the Leahys, who, as I have indicated, have become very dear personal friends.

In closing, to Senator Hoeven, the best part of service here is getting things done. Senator Hoeven has come with that attitude to this Chamber—to get results for the people we represent—and I appreciate that attitude, and I appreciate the friendship.

Finally, I say to the distinguished occupant of the chair [Mr. Udall of New Mexico], we have had a very good relationship as well. I thank him for his service and for this opportunity to have my farewell remarks before the Senate on this the 12th day of the 12th month of 2012. That is a remarkable set of coincidences.

I thank the Chair.

Ms. MIKULSKI. Madam President, I rise to comment about some wonderful men in the Senate who are retiring on both sides of the aisle. Earlier today I spoke about my deep affection and sorry-to-see-go friends Olympia Snowe and Kay Bailey Hutchison, but I want to rise as the dean of the women in the Senate to say some very special words about very special men on both sides of the aisle. Because when I came to the Senate, it was only Nancy Kassebaum and me, and yet we worked on so many issues together. There are really wonderful men here who supported me, supported our issues, but really stood up for those States and their communities. . . .

I wish to comment about KENT CONRAD. Wow, what a numbers guy. Those charts—I loved those charts. But we have many other things in common besides a love of charts. We love baseball. We love the Baltimore Orioles and, I might add, an occasional polka at Blob's Beer Garden in Maryland. Now you know KENT. He looks like Clark Kent. And he is a Superman when it comes to the budget. But, wow, when they played "Roll Out the Barrel," he was quite a hooper.

Most of all, what I admired about him is the way he breathed life into the numbers. He not only wanted a more frugal government, but he was also passionate and compassionate about how we could use the power of the purse to improve the world and at the same time maintain sensible spending standards.

I am going to look forward to seeing him with or without his charts and maybe in a dugout. . . .

I wanted to be sure that the day would not end without my acknowledging these wonderful people who have given a big part of their lives to making this country a better place. I want to, in the most heartfelt way—I am so sorry we did not have a bipartisan dinner or party to be able to express this. I would have liked to have been in the same room, breaking bread with them, in order to be able to tell them how much we appreciate them, across party lines, across those lines that ordinarily divide us. They came from different parts of the country, they arrived in the Senate with different objectives, they will leave under different circumstances. But I want to again let them know that each and every one of them had a positive impact on me and I think a wonderful impact on the future of this country. So I wish them well. God bless and Godspeed.

THURSDAY, *December 13, 2012*

Mr. HARKIN. Mr. President, with the close of the 112th Congress, the Senate will lose its most determined champion of fiscal prudence and balance, Senator KENT CONRAD of North Dakota. Senator CONRAD is best known nationally for his leadership as chairman of the Committee on the Budget.

That committee has limited legislative power, but that did not stop Senator CONRAD from using that committee relentlessly for fiscal restraint, for honest budgeting. As we all know, he has spent countless hours on the floor educating, exhorting Senators on budget issues, driving home his points by displaying a seemingly endless array of charts and graphs.

Indeed, I would note in 2001, the Committee on Rules and Administration assigned Senator CONRAD his own printing equipment because he was producing more charts than all his colleagues combined. The other day, we had this so-called Secret Santa that Senator Franken had established, where we draw names out of a hat and we exchange these little gifts. You never know who is going to give you a gift. You know to whom you are giving, but you do not know who is giving you a gift. It turned out my gift giver was Senator CONRAD.

So I got a nice little book. But most important, I got three charts. They were charts from the 2008 farm bill we both

worked on, and of which I was chairman at that time. I thought that was a great gift, both to get some of his charts but the charts pertaining to a major piece of legislation on which both he and I had worked very closely. We have been longtime colleagues on the Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry. He joined that committee as a freshman Senator in 1987, just 2 years after I got here in 1985. We were in the midst of the worst economic crisis in the farm sector since the Great Depression.

Senator CONRAD left a major imprint on the Agricultural Credit Act of 1987, advocating strongly for measures to help farm families and rural communities persevere through circumstances beyond their control, to preserve a family farm system of agriculture as well as to preserve small towns, the fabric of rural America. Over the years Senator CONRAD has been a key advocate in enacting major drought relief bills and other disaster assistance.

He has consistently fought for effective programs to protect and enhance farm income through the farm commodity programs and crop insurance. For many years we have been allies in advancing farm bill initiatives to promote renewable energy production on farms and in rural communities.

Let no one doubt that Senator CONRAD has always been a relentless, fierce advocate for the interests of his constituents in North Dakota. I know KENT is very proud of a framed resolution presented to him by his State's Standing Rock Sioux Tribe. It bears his honorary Sioux name, *Namni Sni*, which translates as "never turns back." I think that describes KENT CONRAD. He never turns back.

KENT CONRAD and I are proud of our shared roots in the Upper Midwest. He has been an outstanding Senator, a good friend for more than two-and-a-half decades in this body.

I join with the entire Senate family in wishing KENT and Lucy all the best in the years ahead.

WEDNESDAY, *December 19, 2012*

Mr. REID. Madam President, it is often said a man is only as good as his word. In this new world we live in, the same applies to women. This is a world we live in where men and women, as much as we can, are treated equally. A good man is somebody who has his word that is good. A good woman is a person who has their word that is good. I believe that is true.

If that fact is true, then Mr. KENT CONRAD, the senior Senator from North Dakota, is a good man, indeed.

When he was running for the Senate the first time, he promised the people of North Dakota he would not run for reelection if the Nation's budget deficit was higher at the end of his term than at the beginning of it.

We came to the Senate together. I can remember 27 years ago in the LBJ Room where I first met KENT CONRAD—we were running for the Senate—this studious man, very intense. I can still remember that. We have been friends now for all those many years. But think what he did. He could have been reelected so easily and he probably could have figured out some way around it: It was my intention to reduce the debt, but we weren't able to do it.

But he didn't follow that path. He said, "I am not running for reelection," and he didn't. It is amazing what he did. He takes the national debt personally. He takes it very seriously. KENT announced he wouldn't seek reelection. I was stunned. "KENT, how could you do that?" He said, "I gave my word." But fate, as we know—and we are feeling it today with these flowers here behind me—fate is rarely anticipated. After his first term was set to expire and he had announced he wasn't running for reelection, Quentin Burdick, with whom I had the pleasure of serving, died, and so he ran for his seat and was elected. So he has held both Senate seats in North Dakota. He ran in that special election to replace Senator Burdick and won. The Senate, the people of North Dakota, and every American who cares about controlling the Federal debt have benefited from his faithful service.

Every time we have done something dealing with the debt in the last 26 years, KENT CONRAD has been at the forefront. ObamaCare, he was on top of that. He was one of the Gang of Six, it was called at the time, and took months and months. He came up, of course, with the magnificent idea, he and Judd Gregg—two people who know the finances of this country as well as any other two men in the world—they were going to do something about it, and they introduced legislation. It was patterned after the base closing commissions. They would do their work—the Commission—come back to the Senate, no filibusters, no amendments. That was KENT CONRAD and Judd Gregg's idea. As we know, the problem was the Republicans who supported the legislation, co-sponsored it, wouldn't let us get it on the floor; six or seven of them voted against that. The Bowles-Simpson Commission; the Obama-Boehner talks, two rounds of those; Biden-

Cantor, he was involved in every one of those; the Gang of Six, the Gang of Eight. Even though he wasn't personally one of the three people on the supercommittee, Chairperson Murray was leaning on him all the time for information.

He has been terrific. As chairman of the Budget Committee, no one could do more than he did. I can remember he managed the bills we had on getting budgets. He was here, my seat was there, and he wanted me to help him. Why? Because he didn't have time to deal with procedure. He was dealing with substance. I still joke with him about this. He was so intense; we could see that mind of his working. So he was happy I was here working with him to get the budgets through.

He has been a powerful voice against runaway deficits but always has been totally reasonable, with recognition that we are in a time of economic slowdown and we have to do something about the debt. He also believes that during any of these periods of time, we need stimulation of the economy; they go together.

As I have indicated, no one cares more about addressing the national debt than Senator CONRAD. But he also understands the balance between fiscal responsibility and funding our national priorities.

KENT CONRAD has been bipartisan. Sometimes some criticize him for being so bipartisan. He has never been afraid to reach across the aisle to keep our country on a responsible path. He is a person who is not an ideologue. I could be wrong, but I think he was the first person to endorse Barack Obama. President Obama was a Senator who gave indication he wanted to run for President. I think Senator CONRAD was the first to endorse him. We know Senator Obama didn't sell very well in North Dakota, but that didn't stop KENT CONRAD. He thought he was the best person to be President of the United States.

The proposal I mentioned with Senators CONRAD and Gregg was a blueprint for what the Bowles-Simpson Commission then came up with. As I have indicated, every bipartisan deficit reduction since then—and some partisan efforts—anytime there was involvement with the debt, he was there.

Although we have yet to reach a solution or a conclusion to the very serious fiscal challenges this country faces, I credit KENT CONRAD for the progress we have made to this point. He will continue to be a voice for reason and moderation even in his retirement. See, KENT has always had a bril-

liant mind for numbers. He is a step above an accountant's mind. I truly like accountants. My daughter-in-law is an accountant, but he is a step above that. He is of the mathematician's caliber; he is so very smart.

After graduating from college, he worked for the North Dakota State Tax Commission. The person who ran that tax commission was Byron Dorgan, who later joined him in the Senate. In 1980, KENT succeeded Byron as the commissioner of taxes in North Dakota. They are the best of friends. He served as tax commissioner for 6 years.

He is a fifth-generation North Dakotan, born in Bismarck. KENT CONRAD was raised by his grandparents. When he was 5 years old, his parents were killed by a drunk driver and so he was raised by his wonderful grandparents and he has told me so many times about how good they were to him.

He was always interested in politics. At his retirement party, he talked about as a youth coming to Washington, DC, and he went back to his room or wherever he went that evening and wrote on a piece of paper that he was going to be a Senator. He was just a boy, a little kid. He was a teenager, but at least in my view of a 16-year-old today he was still a little kid. He said he wanted to be a Senator to himself. "It so inspired me that I thought someday I'd like to be down on that floor and I'd like to debate the great issues of the day."

He has done it for 24 years.

Today KENT doesn't just debate the great issues of the day, he also is famous for making sure people understand what he is talking about. He has visual aids—we call them charts—that explain all his numbers and make them understandable. In 2001, the Rules Committee gave him his own printer since he was producing more charts than all the rest of the Senators combined—and that is the truth. He is famous for his charts.

He is renowned for his dog. He loves that little dog named Dakota. It is a fluffy white dog, a bijon frise. Everywhere KENT goes, Dakota is with him. They love that dog like only people can love animals. I often question how—I used to question; I don't anymore. I have a daughter. My oldest child is a daughter. She is allergic to cats. Her husband, trying to be nice to her, bought her a cat that had no hair. Frankly, it was kind of an ugly little animal, but my daughter loves that cat. They named the cat Olivia. The cat got out at night—they live in a suburb here—and a racoon attacked the

cat so the cat was never the same after that. But my daughter spent lots of money on this cat.

I finally said, "Lana, why are you spending money on the cat?"

She said, "Dad, I love that animal."

So that was the beginning; I don't question it anymore. If my daughter feels that strongly about a cat, I am going to stop criticizing people who spend money on animals.

I am reminded of my daughter every day I see him with Dakota because she loved Olivia like he loves Dakota. He and his lovely wife Lucy have spent lots of money on that little dog. They love that dog. He calls him Little Guy; that Little Guy.

I am going to miss KENT a lot. He is my friend, my pal. I wish him and his family well. He has a lovely family. His wife Lucy was the longtime chief of staff for Byron Dorgan—two Senators, both representing the same State, one Senator's wife is the chief of staff for his colleague. She went out in the private sector fairly recently and has done a great job. She has been involved in Major League Baseball. She and KENT love baseball. KENT always talks about how he talked to Pete Angelos, the owner of the Baltimore Orioles; that he is looking forward to his retirement because Angelos promised him a tryout. He is going to try to play professional baseball. He loves baseball. They go to spring training when they can. I hope they will still have a presence in Washington. I think so much of both of them. They are wonderful people.

They have two children, a daughter who wrote a book about politics, and one grandson. KENT always boasts about how smart his daughter is. I went to the book signing. I am sure she is smart because she has such a brilliant father.

I value both KENT's friendship and leadership. While he will be missed in the Senate, he should rest assured that his legacy will remain long after he leaves.

THURSDAY, *December 20, 2012*

Mr. REED. Madam President, at this time, I wish to take a few minutes to salute my colleagues who are retiring at the end of this year with the conclusion of the 112th Congress: Daniel Akaka of Hawaii, Jeff Bingaman of New Mexico, Scott Brown of Massachusetts, KENT CONRAD of North Dakota, Jim DeMint of South Carolina, Kay Bailey

Hutchison of Texas, Herb Kohl of Wisconsin, Jon Kyl of Arizona, Joseph Lieberman of Connecticut, Richard Lugar of Indiana, Ben Nelson of Nebraska, Olympia Snowe of Maine, and Jim Webb of Virginia. They have all worked ceaselessly to give their constituents the best representation and give the country the benefit of their views, their wisdom, and their experience. They are men and women who are committed to the Nation, and they have every day in different ways contributed to this Senate and to our great country.

I wish to thank them personally for their service, and, in so many cases, their personal kindness to me; for listening to my points and for, together, hopefully, serving this Senate and this Nation in a more positive and progressive way.

In particular, let me say a few words about some of the Members with whom I have had the privilege to work more closely. . . .

KENT CONRAD is an extraordinary budget chairman. No one knows more about the intricacies of the budget and no one brings to that very difficult debate more of an innate sense of fairness and decency than KENT CONRAD.

I could go on with all of my colleagues, just thanking them for their friendship, for their camaraderie, and for their commitment to the Nation and the Senate. As they depart, they have left an extraordinary legacy. Now it is our responsibility to carry on in so many different ways, and I hope we measure up to what they have done. If we do, then we can go forward confidently.

With that, I yield the floor.

Mr. LEVIN. Mr. President, there are many people in this town who say they are worried about the deficit. All too often, those claiming the mantle of “deficit hawk” are pretty dovish about making the hard decisions required to reduce the budget deficit and bring down the national debt. Some use the deficit to argue for damaging important programs that provide for the safety and well-being of Americans. Others, in a brazen bit of obfuscation now decades old, make the disproven claim that the budget-busting tax cuts they prefer would actually reduce the deficit.

In this maze of distortion and debunked arguments, KENT CONRAD is like a clean prairie breeze. He cares deeply about the fiscal health of our Nation, and for more than two decades, he has been dismantling faulty arguments and fuzzy budget math with facts and figures and with charts, yes, charts. In naming Senator CONRAD one of the 10 Best Senators in 2006, *Time* magazine reported that the support staff

here in the Senate had become so overwhelmed by Senator CONRAD's chart requests that they gave up and gave him his own printing equipment. KENT CONRAD doesn't just know the facts. He wants you to know them too—and in bright colors.

Behind the flash charts are deep substantive knowledge and a rigorous approach that eschews wishful thinking. Senator CONRAD knows that the way out of our deficit problem, the path that avoids the fiscal cliff, means looking at our entire budget picture, both the spending that goes out and the revenue that comes in. He laid out the facts recently here on the Senate floor, saying:

The public understands we face both a spending and a revenue problem. Spending is near a 60-year high, as this chart shows. The red line is the spending line; the green line is the revenue line. But for those who say it is just a spending problem, I don't think the facts bear that out, because the revenue is near a 60-year low. I think most logical people would say we have to work both sides of this equation.

This logical approach makes Senator CONRAD a strong ally. I have been proud to join with him on efforts to end some of the many distortions and loopholes that increase the deficit and make our Tax Code less fair to working families. Earlier this year, he and I introduced the CUT Loopholes Act, which would reduce the deficit by \$155 billion over 10 years through elimination of several offshore tax loopholes, and through elimination of the stock-option loophole, which forces American taxpayers to subsidize the large stock-option packages regularly awarded to corporate executives. In March, we were joined by Senator Whitehouse in advocating for inclusion of a portion of the CUT Loopholes Act in the Senate's surface transportation bill, and our amendment was adopted by the Senate. It did not become law, but the Senate's action represented real progress in the fight against tax loopholes.

Senator CONRAD and I have worked together on another important issue—the effort by many multinational corporations to secure a “repatriation” tax break for some of the billions of dollars they hold offshore. That was tried once, in 2004, and as Senator CONRAD accurately notes, that repatriation holiday was “a complete and utter failure at job generation.”

He also has been a forceful advocate for the need to address the tax rates on capital gains and dividend income. The low rates on these forms of income is a driver of our budget deficits and of rising income inequality. As Senator

CONRAD said in a recent interview about the need to address tax rates: “It’s very clear to me. You do have to have rate increases, especially on capital gains and dividends. It’s needed and fair.”

Not just needed, he said—fair. That is what I think we should keep in mind about Senator CONRAD’s work to address the deficit in an honest and forthright way. Yes, he knows the facts and figures, knows them as well as anyone. But knowing the numbers is not enough. Budget math is not an academic exercise. We are not here to represent numbers on spreadsheets. We represent people—actual human beings, with dreams and ambitions and hope. And always, KENT CONRAD has marshaled the facts and figures in support of real people. He knows the toll that out-of-control deficits can have on generations to come. He recognizes the need to address rapidly rising entitlement spending—but also the need to preserve important programs that have made so much of a difference in the lives of Americans, especially the most vulnerable.

He and his wonderful wife Lucy have been dear friends to my wife Barbara and me. The four of us have hosted dinners together to deepen our understanding of both the pressing issues of the day and of transcendent issues such as the origins of matter and the universe.

Senator CONRAD is leaving the Senate, but the need for his kind of rigorous approach and concern for the impact of our policies is not going away. I hope we can learn from and follow his example as we move forward to confront our Nation’s challenges.

Mr. COONS. . . . There are so many other Senators I want to speak about today [besides Daniel Inouye], but let me turn to a few, if I might, and give some insight for the folks who only see Members of this Chamber on cable TV shows or in the give-and-take of election season or who only know them as the cutout and caricatures that the public thinks of as Senators. If there is a common thread between them, it is that they share that loyalty, work ethic, and humility that so characterized Senator Inouye in his decades here. . . .

There are a few more retiring Senators I would like to share some more detailed stories about today, and I will start with the chairman from the Budget Committee, Senator CONRAD. Senator KENT CONRAD of North Dakota is a Senator I met many years ago. But if I am going to talk about him, I believe I have to have a chart. I really cannot

speak to KENT CONRAD's service and record in the Senate without a chart.

For decades Senator CONRAD tackled the challenge of educating the men and women of the Senate and the people of this country about the very real fiscal and budgetary challenges facing our country. As we can see, especially after the debut of Microsoft Excel, and then after he was named Budget Committee chair, the steady increase and usage of floor charts by Senator CONRAD has paved a path which few of us can hope to find.

Senator CONRAD is a budget wonk after my own heart. He is a numbers guy. He is not afraid to get into the weeds and to project in a clear and legible format the minutiae and magnifying details of the complex Federal budget. I am not sure I have met anyone in the Senate so passionately serious about the numbers and getting them right as my friend, Senator CONRAD.

The first time I met him was more than 15 years ago. He had come to Wilmington for an event that then-Senator Biden hosted at the Delaware Art Museum. There were 200 folks in a big auditorium. I will never forget Senator Biden introducing Senator CONRAD as the most thoughtful and detailed budget leader in Washington.

Senator CONRAD stood up and fired up the overhead projector, the lights dimmed, and he launched into a lengthy discourse on the minutiae of the Federal budget and deficit. After 30 minutes and more than 40 slides later, the lights came back up, and I think there were maybe 20 of us left in the auditorium. Everyone else wandered outside for the cocktails.

I was enthralled by his presentation, the clarity of his thinking, and his dedication to getting things right for the American people. Today I am on the Budget Committee, and I have enjoyed serving with Senator CONRAD as my chairman. It was, for this budget nerd, a dream come true to have the chance to show up on time and know that this Budget Committee chairman was the other member of the committee who always showed up on time. It gave us a moment to reflect on the challenges we faced and the very real solutions he has offered over these many years of service.

Senator CONRAD has earned the deserved respect of his colleagues the old-fashioned way: through hard work, attention to detail, and thoughtful leadership. He has been trying and working hard for many years to get us to make the tough choices that we need to in the Senate to deal with

our national debt. He has not given up, and I don't intend to either. I am grateful for his friendship and service. . . .

So here we are, 5 days before my family celebrates Christmas and 12 days before the new year and the beginning of the so-called fiscal cliff. Our politics have paralyzed this Chamber and this town. But what the example of all of these remarkable Senators has shown us, what it has taught me is that we can still be better than our politics.

The humanity of this place, too often shoved aside by the politics of the moment, shows us that we can do better. One by one, these Senators, in delivering their farewell addresses to this Chamber, stood at their desks and each in turn urged us to find a way to return to the days when Senators knew each other and worked together. What will it take to get us to that point again—a horrific tragedy in an elementary school, a dangerous economic cliff, some devastating attack, a cyberassault on America?

Our retiring colleagues are each telling us, each in turn, that it is not too late to restore the humanity of this Chamber and make a positive difference in the lives of all we serve. Will we heed their call? I hope and pray we will because we can do better. We must do better. And in the spirit of each of these departing colleagues, I will do my level best. I hope we all can commit to doing the same.

Thank you, and I yield the floor.

FRIDAY, *December 21, 2012*

Mr. ENZI. Mr. President, as the work of the Senate for the current session of Congress begins to wind down, it is good to take a moment to acknowledge and express our appreciation to our friends and colleagues who will be retiring when the final gavel brings to a close the 112th Session of Congress. One friend I know I will miss in the months to come is KENT CONRAD.

KENT is a hard worker, a Senator who is fully focused on the needs of his home State and the work that needs to be done to address the issues of concern to his constituents. He is a Senator who will always be known as a serious and thoughtful legislator who has a good sense of how today's problems will affect tomorrow's bottom line if we don't act now to bring our economic policies under control.

Throughout his career, KENT has never been one to look for the most popular way of doing things. He was more con-

cerned with finding the most productive way of doing things. He knows that what looks like a good idea in the short term doesn't always lead to producing the kind of long-term results we must have if we are to strengthen our economy and put the Nation back to work. He has a great sense of what needs to be done now to ensure our children and grandchildren will have the same advantages that we had. That means never putting off until tomorrow what we ought to be doing today to ensure those issues are addressed. In fact, when KENT announced his decision to retire he made mention of that fact and how his time would be better spent working instead of campaigning.

KENT has been a part of the Senate for four terms—I am on my third. Over the years I have enjoyed having a chance to come to know him and his wife. They are a very special couple and they are equally committed to each other and to the future of our Nation. Their shared determination to make this a better country for all of us has helped to make them a team that has left their mark on the Nation's Capital.

I have had a chance to travel with them, and both Diana and I have enjoyed the time we spent together. KENT has a tremendous sense of humor and he has a very interesting outlook on the world. He knows more about the legislation we take up on the Senate floor than almost anyone else, and his understanding of how our bills are written and the impact they will have on our future and our children's future make him someone you would want to be on your side when the battles begin to rage in committee or on the floor.

KENT is pretty easy to work with, and I have enjoyed the opportunities we have had to tackle some pretty difficult issues together. That sense of humor of his has helped him out on a number of occasions when the going got tough. I know, because I have seen him in action as we worked together on several bills. I also cochaired a caucus with him.

As the chairman of the Budget Committee, KENT has really revealed his leadership abilities. The Budget Committee provided him with a platform that made it possible for him to speak out on issues that were of great interest and concern to him. He has been a very effective chairman and he has left a legacy of hard work and positive results that will provide all those who follow him with a good roadmap to follow that has already proven to be effective.

The main thing I think I will always remember about KENT, however, is the way he prepares for his presentations.

I don't think there has ever been, nor will there ever be a Senator who is always so well prepared.

KENT and I both appreciate the power of a well-designed chart or graph. If you really want me to understand how the policy or program you are offering will affect my home State of Wyoming and the Nation as a whole, show me the data in pictures not words. KENT makes a regular habit of doing that, and he does it better than just about anyone else.

I know that we will be hearing more from KENT in the months to come. I don't think he views his retirement as an opportunity to stop working, I think he sees it as a chance to take on something new, some great and challenging new adventure in his life. I don't know what he has planned, but I am looking forward to seeing him take it on day by day.

KENT has been a friend to so many of us over the years, and I know he will be missed. We appreciate his service, we thank him for the way he handled the gavel in his committee, but most of all we thank him for his friendship, for his love of the Senate, and his determination to make the country a better place for us all—both current and future generations. KENT has been an effective Senator for his home State and in so many ways he has succeeded in helping to make North Dakota and our Nation a better place to live.

THURSDAY, *December 27, 2012*

Mr. LEAHY. Mr. President, for more than two decades, Senator KENT CONRAD has represented the people of North Dakota in the U.S. Senate.

I have had the privilege to serve with several hundred Senators since I came to the Senate nearly 38 years ago. The list is short for those who are extraordinary both for their talents, and for their personal friendship. KENT CONRAD is on that list. In fact, he defines it in many ways. Senator CONRAD has reached across the aisle and demonstrated what bipartisanship truly means.

Rooted in his days as a tax commissioner in North Dakota, Senator CONRAD has been a leading voice in Congress in difficult and complex budget debates. His floor charts are legendary, explaining complicated fiscal matters in terms many others can understand. As chairman of the Budget Committee, and as a senior member of the Finance Committee, he has been a key player in the fiscal debates that have

dominated the discourse in Washington as the country has recovered from the Great Recession. He has led bipartisan efforts to reduce the deficit, and helped create the 2007 task force with Republican Senator Judd Gregg to address long-term fiscal challenges. Senator CONRAD has also been dedicated to advancing American interests abroad. I have been fortunate to travel with Senator CONRAD and his wife overseas, most recently to the Eurozone, where he again brought his expertise in economic, budgetary, and fiscal policies to the table as we discussed the potential U.S. impacts of the E.U.'s financial crisis.

He has always put North Dakota first, but Senator CONRAD has never neglected the needs of other parts of the country. He is a champion of the farm bill and understands the details and nuances of agriculture commodity programs perhaps better than any other member of the Senate Agriculture Committee. Whether fighting for North Dakota's farmers, or fighting for the Nation's fiscal health, he has been a great partner. I was particularly moved by his support for Vermont in the wake of Tropical Storm Irene.

Senator CONRAD has been one of the most important voices in the U.S. Senate for the past 25 years. He is one of the giants of the Chamber today. We will miss his expertise, but we know our friendships will continue. Both Marcelle and I wish our friends KENT and his wife Lucy the best.

FRIDAY, *December 28, 2012*

Mr. CARDIN. Mr. President, I would like to pay tribute to the Senators who will not be returning when the 113th Congress commences next month. I have already spoken about Senator KYL and about Senator Inouye, one of the truly great Americans and giants of this institution. At the time of his death, Senator Inouye was just a few weeks short of celebrating 50 years of Senate service. Only Senator Byrd served in this institution longer.

Turnover is a natural occurrence, but it's important to acknowledge that the Senators who are departing have served in the Senate for a combined total of 237 years, or nearly 20 years per Senator, on average. Add Senator Inouye, and the total is close to 300 years. That service represents an enormous amount of expertise on issues ranging from national defense and foreign affairs to the Federal budget to energy policy. The departing Senators will also

take with them vast institutional knowledge and bipartisan friendships and working relationships that will leave a void we will need to fill. . . .

Mr. President, few, if any, other Senators have devoted as much time and energy as Senator KENT CONRAD has to trying to balance the Federal budget. There are few more important—or difficult—tasks. The Senate will miss his steady hand as chairman of the Budget Committee and his expertise on budgetary and fiscal matters as a former tax commissioner for the State of North Dakota.

As Senator CONRAD likes to note, he was 16 years old when he sat in the visitors gallery to this Chamber, listened to former Senator Hubert Humphrey speak on the Civil Rights Act, and decided that he wanted to be a U.S. Senator. Not only did he make that decision, he committed himself to running for a Senate seat in 1986 or 1988. After Senator CONRAD received degrees from Stanford University and George Washington University, he worked as an assistant to our former colleague, Byron Dorgan, who was the North Dakota tax commissioner from 1969 to 1980. He succeeded Senator Dorgan as tax commissioner but beat him to the Senate, defeating Republican incumbent Mark Andrews, who had represented North Dakota as a Representative or Senator since 1963. Senator CONRAD won that election in 1986. As he remarked in his farewell speech, “That is the power of a plan.”

Senator CONRAD pledged that he would not seek reelection in 1992 if the Federal budget deficit had not declined by the end of his term. He honored that pledge. But North Dakotans, to their credit, encouraged him to run in a special election that year to fill the remainder of Senator Quentin Burdick’s term. Senator Burdick, the State’s senior Senator at the time, had died in September 1992. Byron Dorgan was elected to replace Senator CONRAD, and Senator CONRAD was elected to replace Senator Burdick. He was reelected three times, with 58 percent, 61 percent, and nearly 69 percent of the vote, respectively. This is an extraordinary political accomplishment in a largely Republican State and a testament to Senator CONRAD and the discernment of North Dakota voters.

Agriculture is the single biggest component of the North Dakota economy. Senator CONRAD has successfully fought to make sure farm programs benefit North Dakota’s farmers and ranchers, from winning formula fights on drought legislation in his first term to leading the charge for disaster as-

sistance in the late 1990s and playing a leading role in writing the 2002 and 2008 farm bills. North Dakota receives far more farm program benefits, on a per capita basis, than any other State, and they have helped produce prosperity in farm country. Senator CONRAD has also brought hundreds of millions of dollars to North Dakota to develop water supply and flood protection projects. Key victories include passage of the Dakota Water Resources Act to bring Federal legislation in line with North Dakota's contemporary water needs, ensuring Federal help to protect Fargo against record spring flooding, and securing over \$1 billion to rebuild Grand Forks and build new flood controls following the 1997 flood, an additional \$1 billion to respond to the ongoing, devastating flooding in the Devils Lake Basin, and a final \$1 billion to respond to the record-breaking 2011 flooding in Minot.

While Senator CONRAD has been a leader on farm and energy policies, he has been the leader on budget policies as chairman of the Budget Committee and a senior member of the Finance Committee. Six years ago, he teamed with former Republican Senator Judd Gregg of New Hampshire to propose a bipartisan commission to tackle the debt. That idea ultimately prompted President Barack Obama to create the National Commission on Fiscal Responsibility and Reform, also known as the Bowles-Simpson (or Simpson-Bowles) Commission after its cochairs, former Republican Senator Alan Simpson of Wyoming and former White House Chief of Staff Erskine Bowles, in 2010. Senator CONRAD was appointed to the Commission and has subsequently served in the bipartisan Gang of Six and Gang of Eight groups of Senators attempting to find a budget compromise that would forestall the tax increases and automatic spending cuts scheduled to commence on January 1, 2013.

Senator CONRAD has been indefatigable in his pursuit of sound budgetary and fiscal policies. He has brought a soberness to the subject, along with his trademark patience and extraordinary ability to discuss complex budget issues and large numbers in a way that is accessible to everyone, accompanied, of course, by his myriad charts. Senator CONRAD has always promoted a balanced approach to addressing our budget deficits that includes higher revenues, spending cuts, and appropriate entitlement reform. The Bowles-Simpson Commission's report, which he helped draft, should serve as a blueprint for congressional action.

No matter how arduous the budget negotiations become, Senator CONRAD is eternally optimistic. As he noted in his farewell speech:

I think we all know our country needs a plan now, and we know plans have worked before. I was here in 1993 when we had just come off the largest deficit in the history of the United States. The country was in the doldrums. The economy was just plugging along, not doing very well. We had a weak recovery from a deep recession, and we passed a plan to get the country back on track. We did it the old-fashioned way. We made tough decisions, some that were unpopular, but it was the right thing to do and it worked. We balanced the budget. We had the longest period of uninterrupted economic growth in the Nation's history. Twenty-three million jobs were created, and we were actually paying down the debt of the United States at the end of the Clinton administration.

I share Senator CONRAD's fervent hope that his farewell speech won't be his final Senate speech; he indicated that he will take to the floor again if we reach agreements in the next few days on the 2012 farm bill and the so-called fiscal cliff negotiations. If we do find a way forward, Senator CONRAD will have played a key role in both instances. It has been my honor to serve on the Budget Committee under Senator CONRAD's leadership. . . .

Mr. President, these men and women who will be leaving the Senate soon have made extraordinary sacrifices to serve our Nation. We are fortunate that they have chosen to spend significant parts of their lives in public service. All Americans owe them a debt of gratitude. Those of us who will be in the Senate next month when the 113th Congress convenes can best honor the legacy of our departing colleagues by reaching across the aisle as they have done so many times to forge bipartisan consensus and solutions to our Nation's most vexing problems. The men and women who will be leaving the Senate at the end of this Congress understand that compromise isn't a dirty word; it is the genius at the heart of our political system. We will miss them.

SUNDAY, *December 30, 2012*

Mr. DURBIN. . . . Beyond that, there is much work that needs to be done beyond the fiscal cliff. This negotiation does not go deeply into deficit reduction, and I think we need to. I was a member of the Simpson-Bowles Commission. I salute my colleague, KENT CONRAD of North Dakota, who is retiring in just a few days, for his amazing leadership in bringing us to this moment in this national debate, but we still have

much work to do, and I am sorry KENT will not be here to be personally part of it. I have viewed him as an almost irreplaceable resource in this debate. He knows more about our Federal budget and the deficit challenge we face than any Member of Congress, period. All the rest of us have learned so much from him, and we are certainly going to miss him. . . .

MONDAY, *December 31, 2012*

Ms. KLOBUCHAR. Mr. President, today I wish to recognize my colleague KENT CONRAD for his many years of distinguished service and leadership on behalf of our country and the people of North Dakota. It has been such an honor for me to serve with KENT as my neighboring Senator these last 6 years.

I like to kid with KENT that it seems like North Dakota is always in the middle of some kind of drought or flood or other natural disaster. There's actually a joke I once told him about how you can spot a tourist from North Dakota in the middle of a beach in Florida. It's easy—they are the ones putting all the sand in sandbags.

Jokes aside, KENT has been truly tireless in his work to improve our current flood prevention measures and to ensure North Dakota has the tools it needs to prepare for and recover from natural disasters.

As anyone who has worked with him on the Agriculture Committee knows, he has also been an outstanding advocate for our Nation's farmers, ranchers, and rural communities. KENT has consistently led efforts to strengthen the sugar program, which is critical to sugar beet growers in States like North Dakota and Minnesota. He played a key role in crafting both the 2002 and 2008 farm bills, and he was a driving force in getting the 2012 farm bill drafted and passed out of the Senate on a strong bipartisan vote in June.

So there is no question that KENT's expertise on farm policy will be sorely missed. As Congressman Collin Peterson likes to say, "There are only 11 people who truly understand how the complex farm payment programs work. And ten of them are in North Dakota." Well, with KENT retiring I guess there will only be nine.

Whether it's standing up for farmers or fighting floods or saving the Minot Military Base, KENT has touched and improved the lives of people in every corner of North Dakota.

At the national level, he has been an outspoken leader on the issue of debt reduction and has consistently advocated for policies that benefit the middle class.

It would be impossible to do full justice to KENT's legacy in a single statement, so instead I will simply say this: North Dakota is better off because of KENT CONRAD's leadership, and so is our country. Senator, thank you for all of the friendship, wisdom, and support you have shown me over the years. You will be missed, but I know that even in retirement you will continue to find ways to improve our great country and work for the people of North Dakota.

WEDNESDAY, *January 2, 2013*

Mr. SESSIONS. I am so pleased to see that Senator CONRAD is here, that I could follow him. I had another subject I wanted to speak about, an important subject. But it is very important for all Americans to know how well he has served.

Senator CONRAD is one of the very small group of people in this country who understands the debt challenges we face. He has been on the debt commission. He has been the budget chairman. He staked his first election on dealing with these issues, as he has explained to us. I truly believe if he had a little more support, maybe, from his caucus and others, his vision could have been a real part of the solution we would make to this debt crisis. We are not that far apart when you consider the true challenges this Nation faces financially.

I remember a little over 2 years ago now, when the Senator called the debt commission cochairman Erskine Bowles before the budget committee. He gave a speech and written testimony, which said this Nation has never faced a more predictable financial crisis. I remember the Senator asked the cochairman when we might have this financial crisis if we don't change our ways. He replied, "It could be 2 years, as close as 2 years." That was 2 years ago, over 2 years ago now.

I think, Senator CONRAD, we have maybe gotten a little overconfident. People were telling us we were on an unsustainable course, we were facing a potential crisis, the Rogoff and Reinhart book came out and said that our debt reaches 90 percent of GDP, and all that was discussed and

we had a lot of excitement about it, and we did not act. We did not act in a significant way.

In times gone by, maybe people thought the crisis is never going to happen, but I think the Senator agrees the potential for it to happen is just as real, if not more so, than it was 2 years ago.

I want to say this. We did not always agree. The Senator didn't always agree with my views and I understand that. But the Senator allowed the minority on the committee to have its voice heard, to ask our questions, and the Senator called some great hearings. We had some of the best minds in the country provide testimony before the Budget Committee. The Senator allowed and called the administration witnesses and we were able to examine them about how they were managing the country's money. The Senator allowed that to happen in the great tradition of the Senate where we have open debate and honest questioning. The Senator was always a perfect gentleman, and always able, as I think the Presiding Officer would acknowledge, to give a little levity to a tense situation. The Senator has a great sense of humor that really endeared him to me.

So I will say to Senator CONRAD, thank you for your service. I believe every member of the Budget Committee, Republican and Democrat, appreciated the Senator's leadership. I know they did. I know the staff also respected the Senator's leadership. We had a great time working with the Senator's professional team. The Senator served his country exceedingly well dealing with the greatest issue we face today, our financial debt situation. I hope and I am confident the Senator will remain active, that he will not be silent, that he will provide continual input and advice to the Members of Congress as we wrestle with these tough issues.

Mr. CONRAD. I wish to say thanks to my colleague, Senator Sessions. He will still be on the Budget Committee. These challenges remain. I will lend my voice in whatever way I can to the responsible efforts that are needed to get us back on track. It is truly my fondest wish that we find a way to come together to do what must be done. It would be so good for the country. It would be great for the Congress. It would be good for the people. I am confident this is a challenge we can meet.

I thank the Senator.

Mr. SESSIONS. Mr. President, I will repeat my admiration and affection for the Senator from North Dakota and appreciation for his leadership.

Mrs. BOXER. Mr. President, I rise today to pay tribute to my colleague, Senator KENT CONRAD, whom I have been fortunate to call a colleague and a friend. I have served with KENT for 20 years and my husband Stewart and I have valued the friendship of his and his wonderful wife Lucy Calautti.

From helping North Dakota recover from devastating natural disasters to promoting North Dakota agriculture as a key member of the Senate Agriculture Committee, KENT CONRAD has been a leader for North Dakota for more than 30 years.

No Senator knows budget and economic issues better than Senator CONRAD and he used his knowledge to great effect as chairman of the Senate Budget Committee. His exacting and precise assessments of our Nation's fiscal health added wisdom and maturity to a debate that was often difficult and divisive. His many budget charts alone are famous in the Senate—in fact, he uses even more charts on the floor than I do, which is saying something.

He refers to his policymaking approach as “extreme moderation”—an approach that perfectly sums up Senator CONRAD's philosophy and demeanor. Senator CONRAD is one of our most respected Members, for his steady temperament, his open mind, and his willingness to reach across the aisle in search of policy solutions.

The Senate is losing a powerful voice, and a great friend to us all in KENT CONRAD.

THURSDAY, *February 7, 2013*

ORDER FOR PRINTING OF TRIBUTES

Mr. REID. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that there be printed as a Senate document a compilation of materials from the *Congressional Record* in tribute to the retiring Members of the 112th Congress.

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

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