

year, while taking in only \$2.2 trillion in revenue. If we compared this to a middle-class example, it would be as if someone was spending \$37,000 a year, with an income of only \$22,000.

Replace “thousand” for “trillion” and you get a good idea of how fiscally irresponsible the Federal Government has become. We have a \$14 trillion debt and, as we all know now, we are borrowing 40 cents of every \$1 we spend. Clearly, there is a growing danger in the country from tremendous debt and runaway spending. It is this resolution that will help in a very small way to put us on a better track.

I encourage us to use a multipronged approach as we move forward. We need to reverse the current spending trend of the Congress. We need to address long-term obligations and put statutory backstops into place to make sure it will be very difficult for future Congresses to do what past Congresses have done.

As a very new member of the Senate Appropriations Committee, I will be asking Federal agencies to identify further programs and ways to reduce Federal spending. The administration has been on the right track in several key areas. They have proposed to cut or terminate almost 150 discretionary programs that would save about \$21 billion and defense programs that would save about \$25 billion. But that savings should be put to reducing our total need to borrow and not bumped back into additional spending by the government.

Additionally, we need to incorporate what we just learned from the Government Accountability Office about inefficient and duplicative areas of the Federal budget. GAO’s recommendations for consolidations and eliminating programs should be fully reviewed and, in many places, implemented for next year’s budget.

Treasury Secretary Geithner will soon ask the Congress to increase the allowable Federal debt a fourth time for the last 2 years. In my judgment, Congress should say no unless such an increase is coupled with new and dramatic antispending reforms that would make any future additions to our debt nearly impossible.

While defaulting on U.S. bonds is not an option, Congress must tie future debt limit extensions to reforms that produce much smaller and smarter government. As Indiana’s Governor Daniels has said: “You will never know how much government you won’t miss.”

I yield the floor. I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Without objection, it is so ordered.

DEALING WITH THE DEFICIT

Mr. SANDERS. Madam President, we face as a nation some of the most difficult circumstances this country has faced since the Great Depression. Two of the major issues we are facing is the collapse of the middle class and, simultaneously, while poverty increases and the middle class in this country disappears, we also find ourselves with a \$14 trillion national debt and a \$1.6 trillion deficit.

At this momentous time in American history, the question arises as to how we, in fact, will deal with the deficit. Will we deal with it in a way that is fair and just or will we, at a time when the gap between the very wealthy and everybody else is growing wider, in fact, try to balance the budget on the backs of the middle class, on the backs of the poor, on the backs of the elderly, the sick, the children?

That is the question we have to address right now.

Yes, the deficit is a serious problem. Yes, we have to go forward in deficit reduction. But, no, in the midst of a major recession, it is morally wrong and economically bad policy to balance the budget on the backs of those people who are already hurting.

I find it interesting that some of the loudest voices who come before us every day talking about the serious problem of the deficit are precisely those people who have voted time after time after time to raise the deficit, raise the national debt. Yet now they come forward and say we have to cut programs for the elderly, the poor, and the children in order to balance the budget.

I suppose it turns out that now I and a few others are the real deficit hawks in the Senate. When it came to the war in Iraq—which will end up costing us some \$3 trillion—I didn’t hear a whole lot of discussion about how that war was going to be paid for. I voted against that war.

When it came to giving huge tax breaks to the wealthiest people in this country, I didn’t hear my Republican friends say: Oh, gee, we can’t do that because it is going to drive up the deficit. I voted against tax breaks for the wealthy.

When it came to passing an unfunded \$4 billion Medicare Part D prescription drug program—written by the insurance companies and the drug companies—I didn’t hear my Republican friends say our kids and grandchildren are going to have to pay for that. I voted against that.

Madam President, you will recall that after the crooks on Wall Street drove this Nation into a recession and they needed a bailout from the American people, you didn’t hear too many of our friends who voted for that bailout say: Oh, we can’t do that; it is unpaid for. It is going to drive up the deficit and the national debt. You didn’t hear that.

But now, suddenly we have people who have great concern about the na-

tional debt and the deficit, and they intend to balance that budget on the backs of working people, the elderly, the sick, the poor, and the children. Among other things, which is incomprehensible to me, at a time when approximately 16 percent of our people are truly unemployed—way above the official levels, the official numbers, because the official numbers do not include those people who have given up looking for work, those people working part-time when they want to work full-time—the Republicans come up with a deficit reduction package which will cost us some 700,000 jobs.

Now, I don’t know how or why in the middle of a severe recession, when unemployment is so high, they would come up with a proposal that costs 700,000 jobs.

Madam President, you well know that we do an abysmal job in this country in terms of taking care of our children. We have the highest rate of childhood poverty in the industrialized world. We have a totally inadequate early childhood education program in this country. Head Start, to the degree that it is funded adequately, does a good job. But in the midst of the crisis in early childhood education and childcare, the Republican proposal would cut Head Start—Head Start—one of the most important programs in America, giving low-income kids a chance to maybe get into school in the first grade, in kindergarten, on par with the other kids. They want to cut that program by 20 percent from fiscal year 2010, depriving over 200,000 little kids the opportunity not only to receive early childhood education but health care benefits and nutrition benefits from this important program.

I worked very hard to expand community health centers in America because maybe—just maybe—it is a bad idea that 45,000 Americans are going to die this year because they do not get to a doctor. Pick up the papers all over America. Tens of thousands of people are going to be thrown off Medicaid. What do you do if you don’t have health insurance and you are 40 or 50 years of age and you get sick? What do you do? Yet the Republican proposal would cut community health centers by \$1.3 billion, denying 11 million patients access to quality primary health care. In the midst of a major health care crisis, when millions of people are uninsured—50 million uninsured and people being thrown off Medicaid—you don’t shut down community health centers and deny people access to health care.

In Vermont—and I am sure in New York State—young people are finding it very difficult to afford a college education. They are coming out of college deeply in debt. In some cases, they can’t go to college. We are falling behind other countries in terms of the percentage of our young people graduating from college. Yet the Republican proposal would reduce by 17 percent the average Pell grant, and 9.4

million low-income college students would lose some or all of their Pell grant.

At this moment in American history where we are involved in an international, global economy, with so much pressure from abroad, we have to invest more in education, more in higher education, not less.

In the State of Vermont, the Community Services Block Grant Program provides vital services to low-income people who are in need of emergency food, emergency housing—emergency services. They do a great job. The Republican proposal would cut the Community Services Block Grant Program by \$405 million, which would harm 20 million low-income people, including millions of seniors.

Lastly—not lastly because there is a long list of these cuts which make no sense to me—I want to mention a cut of \$1.3 billion to the Social Security Administration. Our Republican friends say we are not cutting Social Security, but they are proposing a \$1.3 billion cut to the Social Security Administration—the people who administer the program. What does that mean?

Right now, there is a significant delay if you are looking for disability benefits—a huge delay. People are calling my office all the time saying they can't find anybody to process their claims. Yet the Republicans would propose a \$1.3 billion cut, which would delay Social Security benefits to about 500,000 Americans.

The issue is pretty clear: The top 1 percent in America earns 23 percent of all income, more than the bottom 50 percent. The wealthiest people in this country over the last 20 years have seen a reduction—a reduction—in the tax rates they pay. Today, at 16 percent, the wealthiest people in this country are paying the lowest tax rates that the rich have paid in many decades.

This is not a complicated issue. This issue is, do we move forward to balance the budget on the backs of people who are on Social Security, on the backs of little children who need Head Start, on the backs of seniors in the State of Vermont who depend upon heating assistance? Do we balance the budget on the backs of the weak, the vulnerable, the elderly or the poor or do we say: When we have an increasingly unequal distribution of income—the rich are doing very well—do we ask the wealthiest people to start paying their fair share of taxes?

The American people are pretty clear on this matter. They think it is wrong to balance the budget on the backs of those people who are already hurting in a recession. Let's ask the people on top to start paying their fair share so we can see some shared sacrifice in the midst of this recession.

Madam President, with that, I yield the floor, and I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Without objection, it is so ordered.

Mr. DURBIN. What is the pending business before the Senate?

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The Senate is in morning business.

Mr. DURBIN. I ask consent to speak in morning business for a few minutes.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Without objection, it is so ordered.

THOUGHTFUL BUDGETING

Mr. DURBIN. Madam President, in a few minutes the Senate will gather here to vote on the continuing resolution which funds our Federal Government, in this case for 2 weeks. It is hard to believe we have reached that point in Washington where we are going to fund our government 2 weeks at a time. Critics may look at us and say that certainly the men and women who serve in the House and Senate ought to be able to gather together, to sit down like adults, Democrats and Republicans, and really plot the spending and budget for our government for at least the remaining 7 months of this year. It does not seem like an unreasonable request. Instead, we appear to be lurching from 1 month to 2 weeks, and I don't know what is next.

What is at issue is how much money will be spent in the remainder of this year and whether we will follow the House lead in a bill known as H.R. 1, the House budget bill, which made \$100 billion in cuts for the remainder of this year. The Senate has already made some \$41 billion in cuts in an effort to use these spending cuts to reduce the deficit, but the House wants to move that to a higher level.

I just returned this past week from a visit to my State when we had a week of recess and went from one end of the State to the other to measure the House budget cuts and their impact on my State of Illinois. What I found is, in community after community, many of the cuts that were made by the House were not done in a thoughtful manner.

I was a member of the deficit commission. I acknowledge we have to deal with this deficit in a timely and serious way. I was 1 of the 11 who voted for the commission report, and I stand by the commission report, at least in its goal to bring all of our spending on the table and to look at it seriously so we bring this deficit down and not saddle our children and grandchildren with this obligation to pay off our debt. But we took a measured, thoughtful approach and engaged all levels of government spending to reach our goal.

The House took 14 percent of the Federal budget, the so-called domestic discretionary section, and made all the

cuts there—all of them. As a result, they went too far. Let me give an example of how they went too far.

My last visit was to the Argonne National Laboratory outside of Chicago. I had representatives there from the Fermilab, a national accelerator laboratory in the same region. The resulting cuts from the House budget will reduce the amount of money available for those two key national laboratories by 20 percent. That sounds painful but not crippling; yet it is because it is a cut that has to take place in 7 months.

In the Argonne National Laboratory, they will have to lay off one-third of their scientists and support staff and cut back their research by 40 to 50 percent for the remainder of this year. Well, so what. What difference would it make? Here is the difference. Right now, the Argonne National Laboratory is doing critical research and work in areas of innovation. Where is the fastest computer in the world today? Good old USA, right? No. The fastest computer in the world today is in China. We have been doing research to make sure we develop the next "fastest computer." It is not just bragging rights either; it is developing the technology that helps us develop our economy and develop our businesses and create jobs.

Part of this laboratory, the Advanced Photon Source, brings in pharmaceutical companies from all over the United States that test drugs that cure disease. They do it right there, Argonne National Laboratory.

I asked the person from Eli Lilly what happens if they close down for the next 6 months.

He said: I don't know where we will go. We may have to go overseas.

I said: Where?

Well, Europe, he said, or perhaps India or China.

Time and again, there is a recurring theme here. When we back off of an investment in America, our competitors have an advantage and an opportunity. That is why the House budget was so shortsighted to cut back in research and innovation.

The day before, I had gone to the Northwestern University Cancer Research Center and met with 50 or 60 medical doctors and researchers who said the cuts in the House budget would force them to lay off medical researchers for the remainder of this year. Is there anyone among us who has not had a moment in life when someone sick in their family needs help? You look for the best doctor and best hospital and ask that question we all would ask: Doctor, is there anything going on? Is there a drug we can turn to? Is there some experimental opportunity here?

The clinical trials that are part of the National Institutes of Health will be cut back by 20 percent during the remainder of this year. The oncologist at the Southern Illinois University School of Medicine said: I have 100 people suffering from cancer who are gravely ill, and unfortunately I can only put 80 of