

action, on what basis can the Senate justify returning home for a one-week vacation and recess while our spending and debt continue to spiral dangerously out of control?

We appreciate your thoughtful consideration of this request and welcome any questions you might have.

We are out of sorts. The American people are not happy with this Congress. They say our polling numbers are the lowest they can get. In last fall's election, there was a shellacking, particularly of the big spenders, the ones who want to have more government programs and create more debt. There was an accounting and I guess there will be an accounting in the next election and we all better be sure we have tried to respond faithfully to the challenges America faces.

What has happened this week is a mockery, a sham, a joke. We had four votes yesterday. Each one of them was carefully and sophisticatedly structured to fail. The one that failed the biggest was President Obama's budget. It was voted down unanimously by this body, with zero votes. It was all designed to suggest it is impossible for the Senate to pass a budget. But the Senate doesn't even require a supermajority to pass a budget. Under the Budget Act that we have, it provides that it has a preference, has to be brought up properly, and can be passed with a simple majority.

The Democratic majority, similar to Republican majorities in the past, have to choose will they seek to pass a budget that has the broad support of both parties or will they simply use their majority and pass their budget? You should do one or the other. A good, bipartisan budget is always preferable, but sometimes we have different opinions. So if you have a different view from the other party and you can't reach an agreement, you have a majority, you can pass your budget. You know, when you do that, what happens. When you pass your budget, what happens? You lay out for the American people what you believe. It is one thing to criticize someone else, it is another thing to tell the world what you believe. The House has told the world what they think would be an effective budget for the future. What does the Senate say? Nothing. We haven't even commenced a markup in the Budget Committee.

A budget sets forth your vision for the future. It tells how much you want to cut taxes or raise taxes. It tells how much you want to raise spending or reduce spending. It says how much debt you expect to accumulate over the years to come or whether you would reach a surplus or a balanced budget. That is what a budget does. It holds you accountable. You have to defend it. You have to say what it is.

One thing I have been proud about is that the Republicans over in the House met their duty and produced a budget and they are prepared to defend it. Congressman RYAN knows what he is talking about. He worked on that budget and he is prepared to defend it. It

has been terribly misrepresented, but he is prepared to defend it, explain it, and talk to anybody about it.

But if our colleagues in the Senate fail to produce a budget—don't produce one at all—it is kind of hard to hold them to account, isn't it? That is why it is pretty clear that Senator REID said: Why, it is foolish for us to have a budget. It is foolish for us to have a budget because we would then be in a position to be held accountable. Was he talking about foolish for America to have a budget? Was he expressing a view that it is better for America that we have a budget? No. When he said it is foolish for us to produce a Democratic budget, he was talking purely politically. He was saying we think it is smart politics for us not to put our necks on the line to actually expose to the American people what we believe in. We would rather be in a position to criticize those people in the House who actually had the gumption—I guess he would say the foolish sense—to pass a budget and tell the American people what they think.

I have to say that is not a good situation. We didn't have a budget last year. We are not having one this year. Is there any wonder, then, our deficits continue to spiral out of control to a degree that we have never, ever seen before?

Many criticized President Bush—and so did I—for the \$450 billion budget deficit he produced. I thought it was a stunning number. Since President Obama has been President, the budget deficits have been \$1.2 trillion, \$1.3 trillion, and by September 30, it is projected to be about \$1.5 trillion. We will take in \$2.2 trillion this year, we expect, and we will spend \$3.7 trillion. Forty cents-plus of every \$1 we spend is borrowed. We are not confronting that.

So we are taking a recess. When it came time to vote to recess, the majority leader figured out a way to not have to actually vote to go home because, I guess, his Members felt they would be embarrassed if they had to vote to go home after being in violation of the United States Code to produce a budget.

This is not going away. This issue is not going away. Every expert, including the chairman of the fiscal commission formed by President Obama, the chairman of which he appointed Mr. Erskine Bowles, told us in a written statement, delivered by Mr. Bowles and Cochairman Simpson, that this Nation has never faced a more predictable financial crisis. We are heading toward that wall at warp speed. We can have a financial crisis. In fact, Mr. Bowles was asked by our chairman, Senator CONRAD: When do you think this crisis might occur? He said: Two years, maybe less. Alan Simpson said: I think maybe 1 year.

Surely, we have to get off the debt path we are on, spending so much more than we take in, and 40 cents of every \$1 we spend is borrowed and we pay interest on it. The interest has the po-

tential to damage our economy in a very significant and substantial way. It could put us in another recession. That is what Mr. Bowles was talking about—a debt crisis, another recession. Maybe it could be perhaps worse than the one we are in. Our projection for a fragile growth is not coming back as much as we would like it to. One reason, expert economists tell us, is that we are carrying too much debt and that has the potential to pull down our economy.

I think we are in a crisis. I think the economy is so naturally strong, the American people have so many capabilities and such a good work ethic that if we get the economy under control and our fiscal house in Washington under control, I believe the economy will come back. But we need to do it now, and every day we delay increases the risk that we will have a crisis occur.

I thank the Chair. I saw my colleague, Senator KLOBUCHAR. I know she wants to speak tonight. I will repeat that this matter is not over. We are in a long-term battle for the future of America. We are in a long-term battle for the financial security of our Nation. Yes, it is about our grandchildren. But as Mr. Bowles told us and Alan Simpson told us and Alan Greenspan told us, we could have a debt crisis in just a few years. Would that not be a disaster—because of our failure to respond to the extraordinary debt we are incurring, that we have a financial crisis that could put us back into recession. I hope not. I don't think that is going to happen this year, but I don't know. We have been warned it might. It is scary.

So we are going to continue to talk about this. We are going to continue to use the rules of the Senate to try to force the Senate to comply with the rules of the United States Code that says we should have a budget. We have had 757 days without a budget. How many more will it be before we have a budget? We will continue that battle. It is going to be a battle for the financial future of our country. Hopefully, we will be successful and somehow, somehow, as the pressure builds and the American people continue to have their voices heard, the White House, which today has been oblivious to these challenges, that the Democratic Senate, which has been oblivious to these challenges, will somehow get on board and seriously work with the House to confront the challenges we face and put us on a sound path to financial security for the future.

TRIBUTE TO BRADLEY HAYES

Mr. SESSIONS. Mr. President, I rise today to say a few words on the departure of Bradley Hayes, a valued, longtime member of my Judiciary Committee staff. Although I will feel the loss of his knowledge and enthusiasm, I am pleased that he is moving on to a new phase in his career.

Bradley had a wonderful upbringing in his home town of Mobile, AL, and a

stellar academic background. He graduated cum laude with a B.S. in business from Birmingham Southern College. After managing a live music venue in Birmingham for several years, Bradley entered law school at the University of Alabama, where he served as managing editor of the *Journal of the Legal Profession* and was an active member of the moot court board. Immediately after being admitted to the Alabama bar, Bradley joined my staff on the Judiciary Committee.

In the 6 years he was with me, Bradley served at various times as my legislative counsel, senior counsel and deputy chief counsel on the Subcommittee on Administrative Oversight and the Courts. Throughout that time, he has worked to secure our borders, protect our country from the threat of international terrorism, secure the private property rights of artists and inventors in the information age, and eliminate wasteful spending and destructive litigation. Perhaps most importantly, he showed both courage and unwavering leadership during the Senate's debates on comprehensive immigration reform in 2006 and 2007. Bradley's hard work played an important role during the DREAM Act debate last year. Bradley was an effective staffer during debates on the reauthorization of the USA PATRIOT Act in 2005 and 2006. He also participated in the constitutional advice and consent process for four Supreme Court confirmations and countless important executive branch nominations.

I would just conclude by thanking Bradley for his hard work and for his loyalty. He was more than willing to invest the time and effort necessary to handle a breadth of issues, and he did so with great skill, professionalism and integrity. He was with me during some of the most critical times of my career in the Senate thus far, and his insight will be missed. He has been an excellent public servant because he loves his country and understands and defends its exceptional core values. In addition, he is fun to work with. I wish him the best in his new endeavors.

TRIBUTE TO LUIS TIGERA

Mr. DURBIN. Mr. President, I would like to take a moment to congratulate an extraordinary Illinoisan, Luis C. Tigera. After serving with distinction for 26 years with the Illinois State Police, First Deputy Director Tigera is retiring as the highest ranking career member of the organization and the first Cuban American to hold such a position in the agency.

Throughout his time with the Illinois State Police, First Deputy Director Tigera has served in a variety of positions with the organization. He started his career in law enforcement by patrolling the interstate system of the Chicago area suburbs. He worked his way up to overseeing the statewide guns, drugs, gangs and money laundering unit. Mr. Tigera also managed

and regulated the operations of the gaming industry in Illinois. And he served as senior policy adviser to the Illinois State police director.

In addition to his extensive experience in law enforcement, First Deputy Director Tigera was selected to attend the FBI National Academy in Quantico, VA, where he successfully completed executive management training. He also holds a masters degree in criminal justice administration from Lewis University.

One of the reasons the Illinois State Police has grown and flourished under First Deputy Director Tigera's leadership is his commitment to community. He led an initiative to work collaboratively with community groups and others within the public safety arena. He has always emphasized the importance of team-building and problem-solving as he served as second-in-command of a full-service police agency of 3,500 employees. In addition to his leadership in the Illinois State Police, First Deputy Director Tigera is a member of the Illinois Terrorism Task Force, the Governor's Interstate Gun Trafficking Task Force, and previously served as the Chairman of the Board of the Chicago High Intensity Drug Trafficking Area.

First Deputy Director Tigera has been married to Ana for 26 years and is the proud father of two sons, Luis, Jr., who has followed in his father's footsteps by becoming an Illinois State Police trooper, and Zachary.

I would like to congratulate First Deputy Director Tigera on his retirement and thank him for his service to the State of Illinois.

HONORING OUR ARMED FORCES

Mr. COCHRAN. Mr. President, I rise today to pay tribute to the brave men and women who have made the supreme sacrifice of their lives in defense of our Nation. This Memorial Day, I join all Americans in honoring those brave souls.

Over the past decade since the 9/11 terrorist attacks on the United States, men and women of the U.S. Armed Forces have been deployed to fight on our behalf in Operation Enduring Freedom and Operation Iraqi Freedom. Thousands of those courageous servicemen and women have lost their lives as part of these ongoing missions. More than 70 of these warriors called Mississippi home, including 7 brave fighters who have been killed in Afghanistan since we last observed this national holiday. These are the sacrifices that we should keep in mind as we commemorate Memorial Day 2011.

I am deeply grateful to the young Mississippians we have lost over the past 12 months, and my heart goes out to the families and friends they leave behind.

For the record, I now cite the names of these fallen heroes from Mississippi: 1SG Robert N. Barton of Roxie, 35, who died June 7, 2010;

PFC Joshua S. Ose of Hernando, 19, who died September 20, 2010;

PFC William B. Dawson of Tunica, 20, who died September 24, 2010;

SGT Eric C. Newman of Waynesboro, 30, who died October 14, 2010;

1LT William J. Donnelly IV of Pica-yune, 27, who died November 25, 2010;

SSG Jason A. Rogers of Brandon, 28, who died April 7, 2011; and

SSG David D. Self of Pearl, 29, who died May 16, 2011.

While their sacrifices will leave a deep void in many lives, I hope their families can find comfort in the fact that they served proudly and will be counted among the multitude of Mississippians who, over the long history of our great Nation, have bravely served and courageously given their lives for their country.

Mississippians traditionally identify themselves with a strong support of our national defense and a willingness to serve in our Armed Forces. We also hold fast to the memory of those lost in battle.

In fact, Columbus, MS, proudly claims to be the birthplace of Memorial Day, which was originally designated as Decoration Day to decorate the graves of Civil War soldiers. This tradition evolved into Memorial Day, which was recognized as a Federal holiday in 1971.

As we again gather to commemorate Memorial Day, people across Mississippi will stop to reflect on all those who have perished protecting our Nation, whether in battles long ago or in the ongoing conflicts. We will also affirm our belief that Congress should ensure that those who join our Armed Forces will be the best equipped and best trained in the world.

As a veteran of the U.S. Navy, I am thankful for the bravery and dedication of those who have fought and died for our country in our defense. They are true heroes, and we owe them our solemn gratitude for their service and sacrifice.

SERGEANT KEN HERMOGINO

Mr. BENNET. Mr. President, today I rise to remember the life and heroic service of SGT Ken Hermogino, who died on May 10, 2011, in Herat Province, Afghanistan, of injuries sustained when his military vehicle overturned. Fort Carson cannot replace a leader like Sergeant Hermogino. His passing represents a tragic loss for his hometown of Henderson, NV, and for our country.

Sergeant Hermogino's story is uniquely American. Within 2 months of the horrific terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001, that took the lives of nearly 3,000 innocent men, women, and children, Sergeant Hermogino began a military career that would span 10 years and two branches of the armed services. His exceptional character shone in the face of our shared adversity; he chose to serve when his country needed him most.

In 1998, he graduated from Basic High School in Henderson, NV, where he participated in the Marine Corps Junior