our proposal to bring a measure of fairness to America's tax system, but far from it. One Member of the Senate leadership equated this measure to shooting ourselves in the head. The Paying a Fair Share Act—the Buffett rule—would have ensured that millionaires and billionaires paid at least as much as their secretaries, assistants, and even their nannies. Yet Republicans think asking those lucky millionaires and billionaires to contribute their fair share is just like shooting the country in the head. That is what they said.

Our legislation would have protected 99 percent of small business owners and maintained deductions for charitable giving, and it would have been a small but meaningful step to reduce our deficit at a time when every penny—in this case, every billion—counts.

It does not seem radical to me to ask Warren Buffett, who made almost $63 million in 2010, to pay a higher tax rate than his secretary. The Presiding Office can remember when he came and spoke to a group of assembled Democrats. He carried around with him his tax returns for the last several years. He is the one who told us how much he made in 2010, and he lamented the fact that he was paying the tax rate that he was.

Well, it does not seem radical to me, it did not seem radical to Ronald Reagan, and it does not seem radical to three-quarters of the American people who support our legislation. The wealthiest Americans take home a greater percentage of our Nation's income than anytime in nearly a century. Yet they enjoy the lowest tax rate in more than five decades—the lowest tax rate. So it is no surprise that Americans believe millionaires should shoulder their fair share. Even two-thirds of millionaires and a majority of Republicans around the country agree it is time to fix a system rigged to favor the richest of the rich. Republicans in Congress are the only ones not on board on this issue.

If you need evidence that millionaires and billionaires can afford to contribute a little more, consider this one simple fact: Last year there were 7,000 people who made more than $1 million who did not pay a single penny of Federal income tax—not a penny. Thanks to Republicans, these lucky millionaires and billionaires can keep gaming the system while middle-class workers keep picking up the tab.

RECOGNITION OF THE MINORITY LEADER

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The minority leader is recognized.

A NEED FOR SOLUTIONS

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, yesterday I highlighted some of the tremendous challenges we face in our country and this President's refusal to face them with the seriousness they demand.

At a moment when the Federal debt makes us look a lot like Greece, President Obama spends his time running around stumping for a tax hike that he knows will not help and that he knows will not pass. On gas prices, the President's response has been to call for a tax hike on energy manufactures, which, if anything, will drive the price of gas even higher and which he knows will not pass.

Now we hear that the President is announcing some kind of task force on oil speculation today—in other words, the same thing Washington Democrats always call for when gas prices go up. If I were to guess, I would say today's proposal by the President probably polls pretty well, but I guarantee you it will not do a thing to lower the price of gas at the pump. It never has in the past. White House officials admit as much. So why would it now?

The Democrats' favorite policy adviser, Warren Buffett, weighed in on the issue a few years ago. Here is what Warren Buffett had to say about it. Asked about the role speculation in the oil markets plays in determining price, he said, ''It's not speculation, it's supply and demand.'' That is Warren Buffett on speculation relating to the oil markets. ''It's not speculation,'' Warren Buffett said, ''it's supply and demand.'' But, of course, that is not the point for this White House. President Obama only seems to care about Warren Buffett's opinion if it polls well.

The President's goal here is not to do something about the problem, it is to make people think he is doing something about the problem until the next crisis comes along. And that is the larger problem, that we have a President who is more concerned with looking as if he is doing something than in actually doing what is needed to tackle the challenges we face. We have a President who told us that he was a different kind of politician doing the same old things and using the same old talking points politicians in Washington have been peddling for literally years—for years. I mean, weren't these kinds of gimmicks and stale talking points precisely what President Obama campaigned against 4 years ago? I thought he was offering something new, something different.

I think the Associated Press summed up the President's latest proposal pretty well this morning. The White House plan, which Obama was to unveil Tuesday, the AP said, is more likely to draw sharp election-year distinctions with Republicans than to have an immediate effect on prices at the pump. Well, AP pretty well summed it up. They said it is more about drawing a distinction. Look, we do not need new distinctions, we need solutions. Americans need lawmakers who are more concerned with facing up to the problems we face than getting reelected. They need a President who thinks about solving a problem, a President who thinks solving a problem involves more than giving a speech about it and pointing the finger at whatever does not poll well that particular day.

As I said yesterday, the President seems to have forgotten why he was elected in the first place. He seems to have forgotten his own campaign rhetoric: that he was going to be different, that he would bridge differences, that he would bring people together. The reality could not be more different or more disappointing. The sad truth is that it is all politics, all the time in this White House. They are out of ideas. They have nothing new to offer. Today's announcement is all the proof you need of that.

I yield the floor.

RESERVATION OF LEADER TIME

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Under the previous order, the leadership time is reserved.

MORNING BUSINESS

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Under the previous order, the Senate will be in a period of morning business until 11 a.m., with Senators permitted in speak therein for up to 10 minutes each, with the time equally divided and controlled between the two leaders or their designees, with the Republicans controlling the first half and the majority controlling the final half.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The Senator from Kansas.

IRAN'S NUCLEAR PROGRAM

Mr. MORAN. Mr. President, over the weekend the United States, Britain, France, China, Russia, and Germany returned to the negotiating table with Iran for the first time since January 2011. Reports indicate modest progress was made, and a second round of talks has now been scheduled for May.

While these negotiations represent an opportunity to achieve a peaceful outcome regarding Iran's nuclear program, the United States and our allies must guard against Iranian delays. Iran has a history of using negotiations as a stalling tactic. While our negotiators talk, the centrifuges keep spinning. That is the crux of the problem—Iran's nuclear program continues.

According to the most recent report in February from the International Atomic Energy Agency, Iran has produced more than 5,400 kilograms of low-enriched uranium and more than 100 kilograms of uranium enriched to a level of 20 percent. Enriching uranium to a level of 20 percent represents 85 to 90 percent of the work needed to reach weapons-grade fuel. Iran is also preparing additional cascades used to produce enriched uranium, which will accelerate the speed at which it can stockpile nuclear material. In total, Iran has enriched enough uranium