

real world—not in Washington or the think tanks—small- and medium-sized businesses and individuals are holding back on investing or holding back on making moves? You don't think someone who decided to leave their job, take their life's savings, and open a business because they believe so much in their dream—you don't think this uncertainty is hurting that from happening? It is.

You cannot grow your economy unless people are willing to start new businesses or grow existing businesses, and ObamaCare is keeping that from happening. That is the disaster.

Why would we fund a disaster? Why would we pay for something out of the American taxpayer's wallet we know isn't going to work? When they talk about shutting down the government and how it is going to be a disaster—ObamaCare threatens to shut down our economy. I am telling you this is a disaster. We should not fund it, and we should not have a temporary budget around here that gives money to this thing. It is a disaster, it will not work, and it is going to hurt people.

The other thing about this debt limit that I make such a big deal about—let me tell you why. We owe \$17 trillion, and that is bad, and it is bigger than our economy. Here is the worst part about it: There is no plan in place to stop that from continuing to grow. You heard right. There is no plan. This budget the Senate passed—I am glad we passed a budget—only makes it worse; it doesn't make it better.

Where is the urgency? What are we waiting for? This isn't going to take care of itself. We are not going to win the Powerball lottery and pay this thing off. When is someone going to step up and say it is time to solve it?

I have been here now 2½ years. If on the day I got elected you told me we would go 2½ years without seriously dealing with this, I wouldn't have believed you. I would have said: Look, I know it is going to be hard, but we have to do something. We are 2½ years into this, and they are saying: We are going to raise the debt limit, and we don't want any conditions. We don't want to deal with anything that fixes it.

People say: Well, the debt is something that is far off in the future. It is off in the future, but it is also happening now. Do you think when people decide to invest money to start a new business or expand an existing business—which is how you create jobs; that is how jobs are created in the private sector.

If you graduated college, went to school, got your degree, and now you can't find a job, I will tell you why you cannot find a job: The businesses that create those jobs will not create them until all of this is figured out. People do not want to risk their hard-earned and saved money in an economy that is headed for a catastrophe.

Look at what is happening in Europe now. Europe has a debt problem. You

know how they have had to deal with it? Disruptive changes in government and tax increases. If you think that stuff attracts investment in business, you are out of your mind. There isn't a chamber of commerce in the world that tells people: Come to us. Here we have high taxes and heavy debt that will make those taxes even bigger in the future.

The bottom line is that the debt limit and the fact that we don't have a solution for the debt is also the reason for the crisis. We need to begin dealing with this seriously and stop playing games. Someone has to draw a line in the sand, and I know many of my colleagues and I intend to do so every chance we get.

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

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Will the Senator withhold that suggestion.

Mr. RUBIO. Yes.

RECESS

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the Senate stands in recess until 2:15 p.m.

Thereupon, the Senate, at 12:48 p.m., recessed until 2:15 p.m. and reassembled when called to order by the Presiding Officer (Ms. HEITKAMP).

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The assistant majority leader.

MORNING BUSINESS

Mr. DURBIN. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate be in a period of morning business, with Senators permitted to speak therein for up to 10 minutes each.

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

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

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

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

SENATE PROCEDURE

Mr. NELSON. Madam President, I want to speak about a subject that is on the hearts of most of us now as we approach not what is a coming constitutional crisis, but what is already a constitutional crisis because this body is not functioning as the Constitution intended. The minority, under the rules of the Senate, is protected and has been.

In the early days of the Senate, there was no cutting off of debate. In the early 1900s, a level, a threshold of 67 was established in order to cut off debate. Then, after the abuses of that filibuster requirement to cut off debate in the abuses in the civil rights era, in-

deed, the threshold was lowered to what we have in the Senate rules today—60. But we are seeing that it is being abused.

Under the Constitution we have the checks and balances of the separate branches. But when a President is elected, the President is entitled to have the people he wants to advise him to be a part of his team to be confirmed. It has always been the practice under the Constitution to have, not a supermajority vote, as is required for treaties, but a simple majority vote in the approval of the nominations.

The issue in front of us is whether the President will be entitled to have approved by the Senate the people he has put forth to head the agencies and the Departments of his administration. That is what has brought us to the constitutional crisis where we are now finding ourselves ready to act.

Congress has failed to put aside political differences to find commonsense solutions not only on the issue of the approval of the President's appointments, but on so many of our Nation's pressing problems.

Let's start out with the charade that we call the sequester. The sequester is a meat cleaver approach to budgeting. I daresay in the minds of most of the Senators it was never intended to go into effect. It was the meat cleaver hanging over the head, a year and a half ago, of the appointed supercommittee that—after the initial \$1 trillion of spending cuts were made on the budget over a 10-year period, which was done—the supercommittee was to come along and work out deficit reduction with a target somewhere around \$4 trillion in total.

What was to encourage the supercommittee was this meat cleaver hanging over their heads, or guillotine hanging over all the heads that nobody wanted, which was cuts across the board without regard to programs—across the board in discretionary programs, defense and nondefense discretionary programs.

Such across-the-board budget cuts, is that the way to go about making proper appropriations decisions? Those kinds of meat cleaver approaches do real damage to people's everyday lives. In the long run, the sequester is certainly going to hurt our national defense, our national security, and our Nation's ability to compete economically with other countries. If we see these kinds of cuts continue in this ideological fashion without regard to programs, then we are going to be in serious trouble.

We can continue to have both sides of the aisle point fingers at each other, but isn't it about time we get rid of this approach to the budget—the sequester—and start talking about how we can get the job done?

Well, the ranking member of the Finance Committee is here. He is one of my dear personal friends. I believe he is very sincere, along with the chairman of the Finance Committee, to really