

We also know that the Montanans who use and live on the land every day best understand how to best protect those resources. But, unfortunately, the Obama administration's persistent efforts to stretch the true intent of the Antiquities Act threatens Montana's ability to manage our State's resources, and it is a trend we are seeing across other States as well.

Too often these unilateral designations completely ignore the needs of the local community—the farmers and ranchers, the sportsmen and small business owners directly impacted by these new designations. My amendment will establish a deficit-neutral reserve fund for legislation to ensure States and local governments support national monument designations.

This amendment in no way precludes the President from proposing a national monument. However, any bill or designation that has a potential to impact land management must be locally driven, not spearheaded in Washington, and must have local government and State support as well. This amendment ensures the people affected most by these designations have a seat at the table and their voices are heard.

AMENDMENT NO. 389

Madam President, I ask unanimous consent to set aside the pending amendment and call up my amendment No. 389.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection?

Without objection, it is so ordered.

The clerk will report.

The senior assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

The Senator from Montana [Mr. DAINES] proposes an amendment numbered 389.

Mr. DAINES. I ask unanimous consent that the reading of the amendment be dispensed with.

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

The amendment is as follows:

(Purpose: To establish a deficit-neutral reserve fund relating to holding Members of the Senate and the House of Representatives accountable for failing to pass a balanced budget)

At the appropriate place, insert the following:

SEC. ____ . DEFICIT-NEUTRAL RESERVE FUND RELATING TO HOLDING MEMBERS OF THE SENATE AND THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES ACCOUNTABLE FOR FAILING TO PASS A BALANCED BUDGET.

The Chairman of the Committee on the Budget of the Senate may revise the allocations of a committee or committees, aggregates, and other appropriate levels in this resolution for one or more bills, joint resolutions, amendments, amendments between the Houses, motions, or conference reports relating to holding Members of the Senate and the House of Representatives accountable for failing to pass a balanced budget by the amounts provided in such legislation for those purposes, provided that such legislation would not increase the deficit over either the period of the total of fiscal years 2016 through 2020 or the period of the total of fiscal years 2016 through 2025.

Mr. DAINES. Madam President, I offer amendment No. 389 to the budget

resolution to establish a deficit-neutral reserve to hold Members of Congress accountable for failing to pass a balanced budget.

Washington has balanced its budget only five times in the last five decades. Let me say that again. Washington has only balanced its budget five times in the last 50 years. This is completely unacceptable, and it threatens the prosperity of future generations. By strengthening accountability and demanding results, my amendment will help restore fiscal responsibility—I would call it fiscal sanity—in Washington.

I have introduced related legislation—the Balanced Budget Accountability Act—which would terminate the salaries of Members of the House and Senate if their respective Chamber does not pass a balanced budget. Simply put, no balanced budget, no pay. It is time to hold Congress accountable to the taxpayer. It is time to hit the Members of Congress in their pocket-books if they can't pass a balanced budget.

Chairman ENZI's budget meets this commonsense principle, and by passing my amendment to the budget resolution we will reinforce our commitment to passing similar balanced budgets in the future.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. DAINES). The Senator from West Virginia.

MORNING BUSINESS

Mrs. CAPITO. Mr. 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.

LYNCH NOMINATION

Mrs. CAPITO. Mr. President, before turning to the budget resolution pending before the Senate this week, I would like to first discuss the nomination of Loretta Lynch to be Attorney General. Last week, I met with Loretta Lynch to discuss the legality of President Obama's Executive actions and her views concerned me.

President Obama and his administration have a record of overstepping legal authority on immigration, implementation of the Affordable Care Act, and imposing anti-energy regulations. Despite her qualifications, I am not confident that Loretta Lynch will exercise the independence needed to stand up for the proper separation of powers, and I will not support her nomination.

THE BUDGET

Mrs. CAPITO. Mr. President, turning to the budget, I rise in strong support of this resolution that delivers on the promise to balance our budget without

increasing taxes. West Virginia families and families across our country understand they cannot continually spend more money than they take in. Each month families have to balance their budgets and decide how to spend their limited resources, make tough choices, set priorities, and account for unexpected expenses.

Unfortunately, annual deficits are routine for the Federal Government, but we have recently endured 4 straight years with an annual deficit of at least \$1 trillion. Despite recent drops, our national debt now stands at \$18 trillion. That totals more than \$56,000 for every American.

American families cannot withstand spending more than they earn from month to month and neither should the Federal Government.

The debate on this budget resolution brings the Senate to an important crossroads. We can choose the President's path, which increases taxes and adds another \$6 trillion to our national debt, or we can choose to support the responsible budget on the Senate floor this week. If we fail to make the tough decisions to reduce our Federal spending, we will leave mountains of debt to our children and our grandchildren.

Our first responsibility as leaders should be to leave our country better and stronger for the next generation of Americans. That starts by taking steps to balance our budget, and this budget balances in 10 years.

This budget provides us with the flexibility to address many of the important issues confronting our Nation, including evolving threats from terrorists. When West Virginians hear about ISIS, instability in Yemen, the failing state of Iraq, the first thing we think about is the safety and security of our own families. Terrorism hits close to home, and we must ensure we have the flexibility to fund a strong national defense. Like American families, we must have flexibility to account for unexpected expenses and unexpected threats as they arise.

This budget resolution gives us the ability to pass a long-term highway bill that is paid for. We must invest in our Nation's roads and bridges and do so in a fiscally responsible way.

This budget resolution paves the way for an extension of the State Children's Health Insurance Program—a bipartisan initiative which will, hopefully, be considered by the Senate in short order. This budget facilitates changes that help our rural hospitals continue to provide critical medical services in their communities.

Our Nation's priorities are reflected in this Nation's budget. I want to draw special attention to the energy provisions in this budget. I have said many times an energy economy is a jobs economy. Energy is at the forefront of many West Virginians' minds, whether we are paying for our monthly energy bill or checking the gas prices.

The production of coal and natural gas accounts for tens of thousands of

jobs in West Virginia. In recent years, we have seen what advances in energy technology can do to broaden energy production and benefit the broader economy. The shale boom has made the United States a leading producer of both oil and natural gas. The benefits are felt by Americans every time they fill their tank and balance their budgets at the end of the month.

In my State of West Virginia, Marcellus shale natural gas production is creating jobs and providing the opportunity to expand downstream manufacturing, but Federal Government policies can hamstring our energy economy by slowing the production and the use of our resources.

West Virginia, unfortunately, has seen that firsthand in our State's coal mining industry, where thousands of jobs have been lost. Just last week, AEP issued layoff notices to employees at three West Virginia powerplants. These closures are years ahead of schedule and the early closures are solely because of the Federal Government's MATS rule.

Yesterday, Patriot Coal announced it was temporarily idling the Paint Creek Complex, which employs 400 workers in West Virginia. Coal-fired plant closures driven by EPA emission regulations were cited as part of the problem.

The upcoming EPA regulations for carbon emissions from powerplants will have an even more devastating impact. Findings from reports by well-respected economic analysis firms show costs could get up to \$479 billion over a 15-year period while causing double-digit electricity price increases in 43 States.

Over half of the country's power comes from coal. Yet EPA is predicting that by effectively eliminating one-half of our energy production we will reduce average electricity prices by 8 percent. Well, somehow that just doesn't add up. How does this impact our Federal budget?

An energy economy that works will provide the low-cost, reliable electricity to power our broader economy. By contrast, excessive regulation means fewer people working in my State's energy sector. Higher cost, less-reliable energy is a tax against manufacturing and job growth across the country. That means fewer individuals working, fewer businesses providing jobs, and, ultimately, fewer government revenues.

The budget resolution before us this week recognizes the importance of American energy production. The reserve funds in this budget will improve our energy infrastructure, reform environmental regulations and promote job growth. To supplement the strong energy provisions already in the budget, I have filed several amendments to strengthen our energy security.

Last year, the administration reached a climate agreement with China. That agreement requires short-term carbon emission reductions in the United States, but China is allowed to

continue increasing its carbon emissions until 2030. That disparity could place the United States at a significant economic disadvantage.

My amendment would block any international environmental agreement that would result in serious harm to the U.S. economy.

I have also filed an amendment that would block EPA from finalizing, proposing or issuing any regulation that would reduce the reliability of the electricity grid. Our economy relies on electricity being available. Families expect the lights will come on when they flip the switch. They expect to have heat in the winter and air-conditioning in the summer. This simple amendment says no regulation from EPA can imperil access to reliable electricity. That makes sense to me.

I urge my colleagues to support the balanced budget that is before the Senate this week, including these amendments, and to support policies that will allow our economy to benefit from America's vast energy resources. The jobs and the revenues that come from energy production can play a significant role in a responsible Federal budget.

The American people elected us to make government more efficient, effective, and accountable. American families must live within a budget, States must adhere to a budget, and it is time for the Federal Government to do the same.

Mr. President, I yield the floor.
The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Pennsylvania.

THE BUDGET AND CHILDREN'S HEALTH INSURANCE PROGRAM

Mr. CASEY. Mr. President, I rise to talk tonight about one issue: the issue of children. But I wish to speak about that one issue in two separate contexts: One is the budget we are debating now and will continue to vote on all week and the second is with regard to the Children's Health Insurance Program.

Let me start with the premise that I believe those of us who were elected to both Houses of the Congress and in both parties are charged with a basic responsibility to our children. It doesn't matter where we live or what State we represent or what district, in the case of the House, I believe we are charged with that responsibility.

A long time ago, Hubert Humphrey, who served in this Chamber for many years and was well known across the country, set forth a moral test for government. He talked about the moral test being how government treats those in the dawn of life, those in the shadow of life, and those in the twilight of life. Of course, in speaking of the dawn of life, we are talking about children. That test is still appropriate and we should try our best to adhere to it in terms of public policy, especially when it comes to the budget.

The budget, of course, is a reflection of who we are as a country and what

our values are. It is in a sense a mirror into which we look or should be looking to see who we are. And if we are not setting forth policy and being strong advocates for our children, we may as well not be here. So I think there is a test that each one of us must face when it comes to what we are doing on behalf of children.

I also believe in a very real sense that the programs, the strategies, the expenditures we make on behalf of children are in fact an investment—an investment in the long-term economy of the United States. This isn't just the right thing to do; it is also the best thing we could do for a growing economy and for our fiscal situation years from now. If kids are healthier, they will get better jobs. If they learn more when they are younger, they are going to earn more when they are older. That is not just a rhyme, it is true, and all the studies show it. So I believe this budget debate is a time to reflect upon what will happen to our children. I have real concerns about the budget as it relates to children.

Again, these are in our society the folks who are powerless and in many cases voiceless. They are not voting, they don't have a lobbyist, they don't have a high-paid strategist or voice for their needs. Because they are powerless and because they are in a sense voiceless, it is up to us to speak on their behalf—and we speak with our votes, we speak with our work.

So what is the proposal in this budget? Let me work through some of the numbers.

According to one of the leading advocacy organizations in the United States, First Focus, discretionary investments make up nearly one-third of all Federal investments that go to children. So what we do on the discretionary part of the budget—which, by definition, because it is discretionary, we have decisions to make about it year after year. Because of that, we have to be very careful when it comes to these decisions—whether it is the budget resolution, whether it is the authorization process, or whether it is in fact the appropriations process. This funding, this so-called discretionary, nonmandatory—if I can call it that—part of the budget includes programs such as Head Start, childcare assistance, housing support, special education, to name a few examples that have a direct and substantial impact upon our children.

The Republican budget we are debating this week cuts \$236 billion over 10 years in the nondefense discretionary part of the budget. Nondefense discretionary is a long way of saying the part of the budget that we vote on and we will have votes on that relate to the appropriations. So \$236 billion over 10 years is the cut. That cut, I would argue, falls disproportionately in a substantial way upon children.

What do these cuts mean for children and for families? Of course, we cannot separate one from the other. We will