

have the opportunity to go down the road of continuing to spend money by this body and the body across the Capitol, without paying for the money we are spending.

These amendments are pretty simple and straightforward. What they say is that we as policymakers have an obligation to listen to the people who sent us here, listen to the people who said, by golly, we don't like the way you are running the financial resources that we send to Washington. And here we are, the minority leader, Senator MCCONNELL just sat down from saying and talking about an omnibus bill that goes in the wrong direction—a direction that is totally opposite of what the people of America said they wanted on November 2.

Now we are going to have a vote today on the tax package that, in my opinion, is a good package. Only in Washington is a package which says that if you continue to tax people at the rate they are being taxed today, it adds to the deficit. There is another part to that. There are additions to that tax package that do provide for additional spending—spending that can be paid for, without any feeling on the part of the offsets, or the people who are going to be affected by the offsets, as Senator COBURN has proposed.

These amendments make common sense, they make business sense, and they certainly make the kind of sense that the people in America want us to start reacting to and providing for.

Mr. President, America's finances are on an unsustainable path, and we cannot ignore this fact by continuing to pass legislation that we have not paid for.

The amendments offered by my colleague from Oklahoma, Senator COBURN, are an opportunity for this body to act responsibly so that America's future prosperity is not stifled by insurmountable debt.

All of us in this Chamber believe some portion of this bill should be paid for. Here is a chance to show we mean just that. These amendments provide billions of dollars of savings by eliminating wasteful spending, and by consolidating duplicative programs.

Moreover, these proposals are bipartisan, having been recommended by the President's Commission on Fiscal Responsibility and Reform. In addition, the amendments include ideas put forth by Presidents George W. Bush and Barack Obama to terminate certain Federal programs.

We are all aware of the tepid, seemingly unstable economic recovery from the financial crisis of the past few years. Raising taxes in the face of high unemployment and volatile economic times would injure what slow growth our economy has, in fact, achieved.

However, despite almost unanimous support for extending the emergency unemployment insurance benefits, they are still unpaid for in this legislation.

If we cannot figure out a way to pay for something that nearly everyone in this body supports, how will we ever truly address our current spending and debt levels? When will we turn and face the unavoidable hard choices?

There is no better time than now. These amendments provide \$46 billion in savings this year, and \$156 billion 5 years.

Much of the savings can be accomplished by cleaning up our own house. Specifically, this amendment proposes a congressional pay freeze and a 15-percent reduction in Congress's budget; a freeze on how much can be spent on the salaries for Federal employees and a reduction in the number of government bureaucrats; limiting the amount that the government can spend on printing, travel and new vehicles; selling unneeded and excess Federal property.

In the interests of strengthening America's financial future, we have to make the tough choices. These amendments do just that.

We must show the American people that we have the good faith, the courage, and the will to confront the challenges before us by working toward sound fiscal decisionmaking, by managing our debts and paying our bills just as millions of American families have to do month after month.

Mr. President, I yield the floor.

Mr. COBURN. Mr. President, I will close with the following comment. The Gallup organization came out today with the latest approval rating on Congress. Do you know what it is? It is 13 percent. Thirteen percent of the people in this country have confidence in what we are doing and 87 percent do not.

I side with the 87 percent. I think they have it right. If we continue with the omnibus package, and we continue to have our earmarks, and we continue to pass expenditures by not reducing expenditures elsewhere, it is going to sink even lower.

What does that really mean, that only 13 percent of the people in this country have confidence in us? What it really means is that the legitimacy of our positions and our power is in question. Everybody recognizes the problems in front of us. The question is, Will you make the hard choices and do the tough part to get us out of the problems we have? We can no longer borrow money we don't have to spend on things we don't need.

With that, I yield the floor and welcome the comments of the Senator from Indiana.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The Senator from Indiana.

FAREWELL TO THE SENATE

Mr. BAYH. Mr. President, if I could be permitted a few moments of personal privilege before I begin my formal remarks, there are so many people

I need to express my heartfelt gratitude to today, starting with, of course, my wonderful wife Susan. I know we are not supposed to recognize people in the gallery, but I am going to break the rules for one of the first times here to thank my wife. We have been married for 25 wonderful years, and frankly, Mr. President, I wouldn't have been elected dog catcher without Susan's love and support.

I often remember a story during my first campaign where I met an elderly woman who took my hand, looked up into my eyes, and said: Young man, I am going to vote for you.

I was curious and asked her why.

She said, with a twinkle in her eye: Well, I have met your wife. It seems to me you did all right with the most important decision you will ever make. I will trust you with all the other ones too.

It is not uncommon in our State, as Senator LUGAR could attest, that people say they really vote for Susan's husband.

Darling, I can't thank you enough.

She was a wonderful first lady, is a phenomenal mother, and is the partner for my life.

Next, I would like to express my gratitude to my parents. Even though they were very busy, I never doubted for a moment that I was the most important thing in their lives. There is no question that my devotion to public service stems from their commitment—something, Mr. President, I think you can relate to as well. I have always admired my father's selfless commitment to helping our State and Nation. I am proud to follow in his footsteps here in the Senate and to share his name. My mother taught me that even from the depths of adversity can come hope. She was diagnosed with cancer at age 38, passed from us at age 46—an age I now recognize to be much, much too young. I miss her, but I suspect, as so often in my life, she is watching from on high today.

Next, to my wonderful sons, Nick and Beau. They came into our lives when I was still Governor and were barely 3 when I was sworn in to the Senate. They are the joys of my life. I hope that one day they will draw inspiration, as I did, from their upbringing in public service and will choose to devote themselves in some way to making our country and State better places.

I am so proud of you, my sons.

Next, to my devoted staff and to the staff who serves us here in the Senate. My personal staff has had the thankless task for 12 years of making me look better than I deserve, and in that, they have performed heroic service. They have never let me down. To the extent I have accomplished anything on behalf of the public, it is thanks to their tireless efforts and devotion. Each could have worked fewer hours and made more money doing something else, but they chose public service.

It has been an honor to work with you. I will miss each of you and can only hope we will remain in touch throughout the years. No one has been privileged to have better support than I have.

To the men and women who work in the Senate and make it possible for us to do our jobs, I wish to express my heartfelt gratitude. You have always been unfailingly courteous and professional. The public is fortunate to have the benefits of your devotion. And on behalf of a grateful nation and a thankful Senator, let me express my appreciation.

Next, to my colleagues. More about each of us later, but let me simply say it has been my privilege, the privilege of my lifetime, to get to know each of you. There is not one of you who is not exceptional in some way or about whom I do not have a fond recollection. Each of you occupies a special place in my heart.

I am especially fortunate to have served my career in the Senate with Senator RICHARD LUGAR. I have often thought Congress would function better if all Members could have the kind of relationship we have been blessed to enjoy. He has been unfailingly thoughtful and supportive. Even though we occasionally have differed on specific issues, we have never differed on our commitment to the people of our State or to the strength of our friendship.

Dick, thanks to you and Char for so much. You are the definition of a statesman.

Finally, to the wonderful people of Indiana, for whom I have been privileged to work almost an entire adult life. Hoosiers are hard working, patriotic, devout, and full of common sense. We are Middle America and embrace middle-class values. The more of Indiana we can have in Washington, frankly, the better Washington will be.

To my fellow Hoosiers, let me say that while my time in the Senate is drawing to a close, my love for you and devotion to our State will remain everlasting.

As I begin my final formal remarks on this floor, my mind goes back to my first speech as a U.S. Senator. It was an unusual beginning. I was the 94th Senator to deliver remarks in the first impeachment trial of a President since 1868. The session was closed to the public; emotions ran high; partisan divisions were deep. It was a constitutional crisis, and the eyes of the Nation and the world looked to the Senate.

My first day as Senator, I was sworn in as a juror in that trial. There were no rules. All 100 of us gathered in the Old Senate Chamber. The debate was hot, but we listened to each other. We all knew that the fate of the Nation and the judgment of history—things far more important than party loyalty or ideological purity—were in our hands.

Consensus was elusive. Finally, we appointed Ted Kennedy—JOHN KERRY's esteemed colleague—a liberal Democrat, and Phil Gramm, a conservative Republican, to hammer out a compromise. And they did. Their proposal was adopted unanimously.

The trial of our chief magistrate, even in the midst of a political crucible, was conducted in accordance with the highest principles of due process and the rule of law. The constitutional balance of powers was preserved and the Presidency saved. The Senate rose above the passions of the moment and did its duty.

Three years later, the Senate was once more summoned to respond in a moment of crisis. The country had been attacked and thousands killed in an act of suicidal terror. This building had been targeted for destruction and death, and that would have occurred but for the uncommon heroism of ordinary citizens. I was told not to return to my home for fear assassins might be lying in wait. So I picked up my sons from their school, and we spent the night with a neighbor.

Two days later, those Senators who could make it back to Washington gathered in the Senate Dining Room. There were no Democrats or Republicans there, just Americans. Without exception, we resolved to defend the Nation and to bring to justice the perpetrators of that horrible crime. The feeling of unity and common purpose was palpable.

Fast-forward another 7 years. In October 2008, I was summoned, along with others, late at night to a meeting just off this floor. The financial panic that had been gathering force for several months had attained critical mass.

The Secretary of the Treasury, Henry Paulson, spoke first. He turned to the new head of the Federal Reserve, Ben Bernanke, and said: Ben, give the Senators a status report.

Bernanke, in his low-key, professorial manner, said: The global economy is in a free fall. Within 48 to 72 hours, we will experience an economic collapse that could rival the Great Depression. It will take millions of jobs and thousands of businesses with it. Companies with which all of you are familiar will fail. Trillions of dollars in savings will be wiped out.

There was silence. We looked at each other, Democrats and Republicans, and asked only one question: What can be done?

The actions that emanated from that evening helped to avoid an economic catastrophe. The jobs of millions and millions of people were saved, businesses endured. But the measures required were unpopular. My calls were running 15,000 to 20,000 opposed and only about 100 to 200 in favor of acting. The House initially voted down the measures. The economy teetered on the edge of the precipice, but Senators did

our duty. Some sacrificed their careers that evening. The economy was saved.

I recount these moments of my tenure to remind us of what this body is capable of at its best. When the chips are down and the stakes are high, Senators, regardless of party, regardless of ideology, regardless of personal cost, doing their duty and selflessly serving the Nation we love are capable of great things.

On my office wall hangs a famous print—the Senate in 1850. There is Henry Clay; there is Daniel Webster, Thomas Hart Benton, John C. Calhoun, William Seward, Stephen Douglas, James Mason, and Sam Houston. Giants walked the Senate in those days. My colleagues, they still do.

In "Profiles in Courage," John Kennedy tells the stories of eight U.S. Senators whose actions of selflessness and fortitude rescued the Republic in times of trial. Serving in this body today are men and women capable of equal patriotism if given a chance—new profiles in courage waiting to be written. It shouldn't take a constitutional crisis, a terrorist attack, or a financial calamity to summon from each of us and from this body collectively the greatness of which we are capable, nor can America afford to wait.

We are surrounded today by gathering challenges that, if unaddressed, will threaten our Republic—our growing debt and deficits, our unsustainable energy dependence, increasing global economic competition, asymmetric national security challenges, an aging population, and much, much more. Each of these challenges is difficult, each complex. The solutions will not be universally popular, but all can be surmounted, and I am confident they will be with the right leadership from us and the right ideas. I am confident because I know our history and I know our people. I know all of the challenges we have overcome—the wars, the economic hardships, the social turmoil. I know the character of the American people—our resiliency, our innate goodness, and our courage—and I know we can succeed. But it will not be easy, and it will not happen by itself. It is up to us.

America is an exceptional nation because each generation has been willing to make the difficult decisions and, yes, the occasional sacrifices required by their times. America is a great nation not because it is preordained but because our forebears, both here in the Senate and across the Nation, made it so. For 10 generations, the American people have been dedicated to the self-evident truth that all of us are created equal and have been endowed by our creator with inalienable rights.

From the beginning, it is freedom that has been the touchstone of our democracy—freedom not from the benevolence of a king, not by the forbearance of the majority, not by the magnanimity of the State, but from the

hand of Almighty God; the freedom to enjoy the fruits of our labors, the freedom to speak our minds and worship God as we see fit, the freedom to associate with those of our own choosing and to select those who would govern us.

From the hillsides of ancient Athens to the fields of Runnymede, to the village greens of Lexington and Concord, to the Halls of this great Senate, it has always been the same: The innate human longing for independence now finds its truest expression in the American experiment. We are the guardians of that dream.

Each generation of Americans has been called to renew our commitment to that ideal, often in blood, always with sacrifice. Now is our time. Now is the time for us to keep faith with those who have come before and to do right by those who will follow, to lift high the cause of freedom in all of its manifestations within its surest sanctuary—this U.S. Senate.

All of this was put into perspective for me one day on a visit to Walter Reed Army hospital. I was visiting wounded soldiers. There was a young sergeant from Georgia. He had been married 3 weeks before deploying to Iraq. He was missing his left arm and both legs. His wife sat by his side. A look of dignified calm was upon his face. I asked if he was receiving the care he needed. Yes, he said, he was. I asked if there was anything I could do. No. No, there was not. Anything he needed? No.

I had never felt so helpless or so insignificant.

I left his room and made my way to the hospital front door and walked outside into the bright sunshine, sat upon the curb, and cried.

All I could think of was what can I do—what can I do to be worthy of him? What can each of us do? Look at what he sacrificed for America. What are we prepared to give? Is it too much to think that while soldiers are sacrificing limbs on our behalf, that we can look across the aisle and see not enemies but friends, not adversaries but fellow citizens?

With service men and women laying down their lives, can we not lay down our partisanship and rancor but for a while? Can we not remember we are but “one nation under God,” with a common heritage and common destiny? Let us no longer be divided into red States and blue States but be united once more into 50 red, white, and blue States. As the civil rights leader once reminded us: “We may have arrived on these shores in different ships, but we are all in the same boat now.”

My friends, the time has come for the sons and daughters of Lincoln and the heirs of Jefferson and Jackson to no longer wage war upon each other but to instead renew the struggle against the ancient enemies of man: ignorance,

poverty, and disease. That is why we are here. That is why. If I have been able to contribute even a little to reconciliation among us, then I have done my duty.

My prayer is that in the finest traditions of this Senate—both in my time and my father’s time and in days before—we may once again serve to resolve our differences, meet the challenges that await us, and in so doing forge an American future that is worthy of our great past. So that when our children’s children write the history of our time, they may truly say of us: Here were Americans and Senators worthy of the name.

I thank you.

I yield the floor.

(Applause, Senators rising.)

Ms. LANDRIEU. Mr. President, I understand we are in morning business.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. That is correct.

Ms. LANDRIEU. I would like to speak for the next 5 minutes. I understand Senator VOINOVICH is on his way, but I would like to speak for the next 5 minutes.

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

Ms. LANDRIEU. Mr. President, this Senate is not going to be the same place without the Senator from Indiana. In fact, it will be a lesser place because he has been such an outstanding Senator. I wish to let him know he will be very much missed. He contributed enormously, in his very quiet and dignified but powerful way, to many important issues, both domestic and international. We look forward to hearing a lot more from Governor Bayh and Senator BAYH in the years to come.

LOW INCOME HOUSING FIX

Ms. LANDRIEU. Mr. President, I thank the leadership on both sides for giving me an opportunity, in just a few minutes, to have a portion of the time when it comes to the discussion of the bill we are going to be voting on at noon. But I thought before I got to that time I had been allotted in the unanimous consent agreement—and I am very grateful to the leadership on both sides for giving me that opportunity—I would take a minute to give a preview while there was no one on the floor asking for time now.

This massive tax bill has been negotiated by many people of good will. I see the Senator from Montana, the Finance Committee chair, who has been at the table in these negotiations, and Senator MCCONNELL and Senator KYL and Senator REID—men who have truly worked very hard. There were representatives from the White House in these negotiations. I know in their minds they did their very best. I have had some serious issues with portions of the package. I have expressed those

on the floor of the Senate on behalf of the constituents I represent. I think I have made my points. I think they have been very clear. I appreciate the opportunity, as a Senator, to be able to voice those complaints.

I am not on the floor right now to talk about the major pieces of that tax package with which I strongly disagree. I intend to vote for it. I signaled that in the vote 2 days ago. I am unhappy with many pieces of it, but that is not why I am here to speak today. I am here to ask the Members of this Senate to consider, when I ask unanimous consent later this morning, to grant unanimous consent to fix a mistake. I am going to ask, in just a few minutes, for the Senate to fix a mistake that was made in the negotiations. I am going to need all 100 Senators to say yes in order to fix this mistake.

Senator VITER, Senator SHELBY, Senator SESSIONS, Senator COCHRAN, and Senator WICKER—all the Senators from both parties in all the Gulf Coast States that are affected by this amendment—join me in this request. There is not any difference of opinion among those of us who represent these States. Only these States are affected by this amendment. It is very narrowly crafted. It has to do with a placed-in-service date for low-income housing; that is all, low-income housing.

We lost, as many people will recall, 6 years ago, over 250,000—not 5,000, not 25,000, not 50,000 but 250,000—homes in the aftermath of Katrina, Rita, and the great flood that ensued. It is only 6 years ago that happened so, of course, we are still trying to build housing, private, stand-alone, single-family housing, multifamily housing, housing for seniors. It is a huge work. In fact, it may be the largest single residential building program going on in this century, maybe not after World War II—I don’t have the figures—but it has been a huge residential rebuilding program.

This GO Zone package was crafted with the help of almost every Senator in the aftermath, and we are grateful. It had basically three main components, what I call bonds for big infrastructure project development, bonds for historic credits, because many of these neighborhoods—particularly Waveland, New Orleans, some of these historic places along the gulf coast—were destroyed. We wanted to preserve, when we rebuilt, the historic nature, so we asked the Senate and were granted historic preservation credits: the low-income housing tax credits to replace the thousands of low-income units for seniors, for the disabled and for the poor and the working poor. In this package, the negotiators got everything, but they forgot and left out—out of the total \$800 million for the GO Zones for all the Gulf Coast States, for everything I just described—they forgot to extend the placed-in-service date for the low-income housing projects.