Again, I wish to thank everyone for what they have done, and I look forward to moving the other 12 appropriations bills on a regular basis, working, again, on a bipartisan basis across the aisle and across the dome.

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

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The bill clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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 President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

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

## CONCURRENT RESOLUTION ON THE BUDGET FISCAL YEAR 2014

Mrs. MURRAY. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate now proceed to the consideration of Calendar No. 28, S. Con. Res. 8.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection?

Without objection, it is so ordered.

The clerk will report the concurrent resolution by title.

The bill clerk read as follows:

A concurrent resolution (S. Con. Res. 8) setting forth the congressional budget for the United States Government for fiscal year 2014.

Mrs. MURRAY. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that any time spent in quorum calls during consideration of S. Con. Res. 8 be equally divided.

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

Mrs. MURRAY. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that no amendments be in order for the remainder of today's consideration of S. Con. Res. 8.

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

Mrs. MURRAY. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the use of calculators be permitted on the floor during consideration of the budget resolution.

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

Mrs. MURRAY. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that staff be permitted to make technical and conforming changes to the resolution, if necessary, consistent with amendments adopted during Senate consideration, including calculating the associated change in the net interest function under section 104, and incorporating the effect of such adopted amendments on the budgetary aggregates under section 101 for Federal revenues, the amount by which Federal revenues should be changed, new budget authority, budget outlays, deficits, public debt, and debt held by the public.

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

Mrs. MURRAY. Finally, Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent the period of debate for economic goals and policy under section 305(b) of the Congressional Budget Act occur on Thursday, March 21, at a time to be determined by the two managers.

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

Mrs. MURRAY. Mr. President, we are now on the floor of the Senate with the budget, and I wish to start by thanking my counterpart, Senator SESSIONS, for all his work and his staff's work—and all our staff—to get us to this point this evening that we are debating this bill and this amendment. Senator SESSIONS has been very gracious in working with us. We have gotten to this. We obviously have differences of opinion, but I wish to commend him for the tremendous amount of work he has put into this. It is going to be great to be working with him on the floor.

When I go back home to Washington State, my constituents tell me they are sick and tired of the gridlock and dysfunction in Washington, DC. They can see that our economy is slowly getting back on its feet and businesses are beginning to hire more workers, but my constituents—and people across the country—are very frustrated that the constant political crises are holding our recovery back right when we need to be doing everything possible to support it.

After 2 years of debate about fiscal and economic policy and an election in which voters spoke loudly and clearly, the American people want their elected representatives to stop arguing and reach some solutions. I come to the floor to discuss a budget plan that meets this challenge.

The Senate budget that passed through the Budget Committee last week, with the strong support of all 10 Democrats and 2 Independents, is a responsible and balanced plan that puts the economy first and tackles our deficit and debt responsibly and credibly. I am hopeful that after it passes the Senate, the House of Representatives stands ready to compromise as well, and we can come together around a balanced and bipartisan deal that the American people expect and deserve.

The budget debate is too often discussed in terms of abstract numbers and political winners and losers. But the truth is that budgets are about far more than that. They are about our values and our priorities. They are about our visions for how government should be serving its citizens today and for generations to come, and, most of all, they are about the people across the country whose lives are impacted by the decisions we make.

The budget we will be debating on the floor this week puts those people first. It reflects the progrowth, pro-middle-class agenda that the American people went to the polls in support of last election. I believe it is a strong and responsible vision for building a foundation for growth and restoring the promise of American opportunity.

Our budget is built on three principles. No. 1, we need to protect our fragile economic recovery. We need to create jobs and invest in long-term growth. No. 2, we need to tackle our deficit and our debt fairly and responsibly. No. 3, we need to keep the promises we have made as a nation to our seniors and our families and our communities.

The highest priority of our budget is to create the conditions for job creation, economic growth, and prosperity built from the middle out, not the top down. We believe that with the unemployment rate that remains stubbornly high and a middle class that has seen their wages stagnate for far too long, we simply cannot afford any threats to our fragile recovery. So this budget fully replaces the cuts from sequestration that threatens 750,000 jobs this year alone and economic growth for years to come, as well as our national security, and the programs families and communities depend on. It replaces those automatic cuts in a fair and responsible way following the precedent that was set in the year-end deal.

Half of the new deficit reduction to replace sequestration comes from responsible spending cuts across the Federal budget and half comes from new savings found through closing loopholes and cutting wasteful spending in the Tax Code that benefits the wealthiest Americans and biggest corporations.

In addition to replacing sequestration with deficit reduction that is far more responsible, our budget follows the advice of experts and economists across the political spectrum who say it makes sense to invest in job creation in the short term while putting ourselves on a strong path to responsible and sustainable deficit and debt reduction over the medium and long term.

We believe that in order to truly tackle our economic and fiscal challenges in the real world and not just make them disappear on paper, we need a strong foundation for growth built from the middle out. So this budget invests in a $100 billion economic recovery protection plan to put workers back on the job repairing our Nation's highest priority deteriorating infrastructure and fixing our crumbling schools and installing critical educational technology such as broadband that our students need to succeed.

This plan creates an infrastructure bank to leverage public funds with private investment. It invests in our workers by making sure they have the skills and training they need to move into the 3.6 million jobs businesses across the country are trying to fill, and it is fully paid for by closing loopholes and cutting unfair spending in the Tax Code that mainly benefit the well-off and well-connected.

Our budget also makes sure we are not reducing our fiscal deficit while increasing our deficits in education and skills and infrastructure and innovation. While cutting spending responsibly overall, it protects our investments in national, middle-class, and economic priorities, such as our

schools and our roads and bridges and our clean energy and manufacturing industries.

This budget puts jobs first and our economy first and foremost, but it also builds on the work we have done over the last 2 years to tackle our deficit and debt responsibly.

In 2010, President Obama established the National Commission on Fiscal Responsibility and Reform—commonly referred to as Simpson-Bowles. That bipartisan group came back with a report recommending approximately $4 trillion in deficit reduction over 10 years from a balanced combination of spending cuts and new revenue. The report pointed out that this level of deficit reduction is more than any effort in our Nation's history. Other bipartisan groups, including Domenici-Rivlin and the Senate's Gang of 6, as well as economists across the political spectrum, agreed that $4 trillion over 10 years was a reasonable and responsible goal. Since that time, Congress and the administration have worked together to reduce the deficit by $2.4 trillion—$1.8 trillion coming from spending cuts, $600 billion from allowing tax rates to rise on the wealthiest Americans in the year-end deal.

The Senate budget takes us the rest of the way to the $4 trillion goal and beyond. It builds on that $2.4 trillion in deficit reduction already done with an additional $1.85 trillion in new deficit reduction, for a total of $4.25 trillion in deficit reduction since the Simpson-Bowles report. It reduces the deficit to below 3 percent of GDP by 2015 and keeps it well below that level for the rest of the 10-year window in a responsible way and it pushes our debt as a percentage of the economy down, moving it in the right direction.

Our budget tackles this issue the way the American people have consistently said they want it done—with an equal mix of responsible spending cuts made across the Federal budget and new revenue raised by closing loopholes and cutting wasteful breaks that primarily benefit the rich.

This budget cuts spending responsibly by $975 billion, and we make some tough choices to get there. We think every program—including the ones we know are important—need to be wringing out waste, trimming fat, and reducing costs to taxpayers. So $500 billion of our deficit reduction comes from responsible savings on the domestic spending side, including $275 billion in health care savings made in a way that doesn't harm our seniors or our families. We believe everything should be put on the table, but we do it in a responsible way that preserves, protects, and strengthens programs such as Medicare and Medicaid that the American people strongly support.

This budget saves $240 billion by carefully and responsibly reducing defense spending while giving the Pentagon enough time to plan and align those savings. We all know this involves some tough decisions, but it is a responsible path that is nothing like the across-the-board cuts from sequestration which would be devastating to defense programs and jobs if they weren't replaced.

This budget takes a balanced approach to deficit reduction, and it matches the responsible cuts with $975 billion in new revenue which is raised by closing loopholes and cutting wasteful spending in the Tax Code for those who need it the least, while locking in tax cuts for the middle class and low-income working families and protecting them from paying a penny more.

This shouldn't be controversial. There is bipartisan support for making the Tax Code more fair and more efficient. We just think that instead of that savings going toward more tax cuts for the rich, that savings ought to be used to reduce the deficit and invest in our middle class.

If this budget were to be enacted, the total deficit reduction since the Simpson-Bowles report would consist of 64 percent spending cuts, 14 percent tax rate increases on the rich, and 22 percent new revenue raised by closing loopholes and cutting wasteful spending in the Tax Code for the wealthiest Americans and biggest corporations. That is a responsible approach. It is a balanced and fair approach. It is the one that is endorsed by bipartisan groups and experts, and it is the one supported by the vast majority of the American people.

In addition to investing in jobs and economic growth and tackling our deficit and debt responsibly, this budget also keeps the promises we have made to our seniors, to our families, to our veterans, and to our communities. We think Medicare should be protected and preserved for our children and our grandchildren, and we absolutely reject calls to dismantle or privatize Medicare by voucherizing it.

The House Republican budget being considered this week could also repeal the health care law and increase the cost of care to our seniors, throw students off their parents' plans, cause tens of millions more Americans to be uninsured, and put the insurance companies back in charge of patients' care. Our budget rejects that approach, and it builds on the health care law to continue reducing costs responsibly, increasing efficiencies, and improving care.

Our budget also maintains the key principle that every other bipartisan group has maintained but that has been rejected by the House Republicans. We don't think the burden of deficit reduction should be unfairly borne by the most vulnerable children and families who have already sacrificed so much. Everyone in America needs to be a part of this solution, but the House Republican approach would shred the safety net that has offered a hand up to millions of families across America, including my own when we needed it, and we reject that approach.

The budget we are considering this week also makes the investments we need to keep our military strong, to protect our communities and environment, and uphold the sacred commitment we have made to our veterans. I believe our budget reflects the values and priorities of the vast majority of families across our country. It is a responsible and credible approach, and it offers a clear path to a balanced and bipartisan deal.

House Republicans are debating a very different approach this week. The proposal that passed through their Budget Committee would be devastating for our economic recovery and threaten millions of jobs. It would make extreme cuts to the investments in infrastructure and education and innovation that we need right now to lay down a strong foundation for broad-based economic growth. It would dismantle Medicare and would cut off programs that support the middle class and the most vulnerable families. It would do all that while refusing to ask the wealthiest Americans and biggest corporations to even contribute their fair share.

The American people are going to have an opportunity to examine these budgets side by side over the coming weeks. They are going to be able to decide which approach is best for our economy, best for jobs, and best for the middle class. They are also going to have a chance to weigh in.

After the Senate passes our budget and the House passes theirs, I am hopeful we can work together, listen to the American people, and come to the balanced and bipartisan deal this country desperately needs.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. BLUMENTHAL). The Senator from Alabama.

Mr. SESSIONS. Mr. President, I thank Chairman MURRAY for her good work. It has been 4 years since we have had a budget in the Senate. This is her first year as chair of the committee, and we have gotten a budget moved forward to the Senate floor. I congratulate her on that.

I note Senator Conrad, her predecessor, would have loved to have moved a budget forward, but the leadership somehow decided that was not the right thing to do. Indeed, they said it would be foolish to have a budget. So this is progress, and although we would have liked to have had more time in committee, Chairman MURRAY set up this system in a way that she was clear about, and gave us full time all day Thursday of last week to debate and make the points we believed were important, and so did our Democratic colleagues. They got to speak out. I thank her for having an open hearing and being respectful of those of us who had different views and were anxious to share them.

My colleague uses the phrase ''responsible and balanced.'' But what you have to know, I say to colleagues and

friends and Americans, is that this budget is anything but balanced. It never comes close to balancing. It never balances over the entire lifetime. It does not put us on a trajectory that would ever balance. It is not a budget that in any sense balances the amount of money coming in with the amount of money going out. It just does not. And we need to talk about that.

I think the American people want a balanced budget. I believe they asked for that. I think they expect that of us, and will be disappointed to find out that the leadership in the Senate, unlike the leadership in the House, does not produce a budget that is balanced.

Today we begin debate on the budget resolution. This is the first budget resolution on the Senate floor in 4 years, crafted by our Democratic majority. We are required to produce a budget, but over the last 4 years, in violation of plain statutory law in the United States Code that requires the passage of a budget by April 15—by April 1 it should be produced in committee, we have not acted. It has been disappointing. I have had many of my constituents say: How can they not produce a budget when the law says you should have one?

Senator REID said it would be foolish to have a budget. That was his excuse or reason for not bringing up one—foolish to have a budget when we have the largest deficit this Nation has ever seen, and we face the greatest systemic debt threat we have ever seen.

I do not think we can have a greater symbol of an arrogance of power than the refusal to produce a budget resolution over the last 4 years. It was a decision to place—as I have said before, and I have been clear on this—political ideas and values over the American interests.

Our friends in the majority speak of their deep concern for struggling Americans. Yet year after year there has been no plan produced that will actually help them. America has never been in a more perilous fiscal condition, never needed a sound budget plan more than today. So what has changed? Why are we moving forward? The answer is a simple one. The House of Representatives passed legislation. It said: No budget, no pay. So now we have a budget. Hopefully, we would have had one anyway, but I am glad that one is moving. Our colleagues probably like to get paid.

Today we know the Senate majority resisted offering a plan for these years. The budget before us today is a bankrupt vision that will bankrupt the country. It is a jaded tax-and-spend budget that surges the Nation's debt and achieves no reduction in our annual deficits. It is a budget that never balances—never.

I think this quote sums it up well:

> In short, this document gives the voters no reason to believe that the Democrats have a viable plan for or even a responsible public assessment of the country's long-term fiscal predicament.

That is not my analysis but I agree with it. That comes from an editorial of the Washington Post after this budget was produced.

Senate Democrats have made no attempt to make the government leaner or more productive. Their proposal goes to extraordinary lengths to shield failing government programs from reform. Just add more money. It grows the government at the expense of growing the economy. It enriches the bureaucracy at the expense of the people. It has no plan to help discouraged workers move from dependency on the government to independence. Its surging debt and taxes will crush American workers, close American factories, and depress American wages.

I ask the American people to answer this question: Do you believe the government is wasteful; that it needs to do a better job of saving your money? If your answer to that question is yes, then consider this: The Democratic budget does not achieve a single penny in net savings. After 4 years they have failed to identify any way to save money through real reform of government spending, not a solitary cent.

So any Senator who votes for this budget apparently believes the budget is perfect and needs no reform. Any Senator who votes for this budget is saying to the American people: Washington is not the problem, you are the problem. They are saying: We have managed your money well, we have done it all right, we did nothing wrong. The problem, see, is you. You have not sent us enough money. In fact, this budget says: Send us another $1.5 trillion in more taxes. Send more money.

They also say: But don't worry, you will not have to pay those taxes. We are just closing loopholes. But closing loopholes does not come close to getting this many taxpayer dollars—it just does not. When they talk about the closing of loopholes, what that really means is it is slashing popular deductions to pay for more Washington spending—charitable deductions, home mortgage, or other exemptions. That is where the money is in the deductions. You will not raise much money with loopholes.

Let's take a moment to look at the numbers in this budget and what it claims to do. First, I would like to examine the claim that this budget reduces the deficit by $1.85 trillion. That is a significant sum of money. It is not nearly enough to balance our budget, but it is a significant sum of money—over 10 years, the claim is. When many Americans hear this they might think it means the budget authors are proposing to reduce America's debt by $1.85 trillion. Not so.

According to their own budget tables our Nation's debt will climb another $7.3 trillion over 10 years, passing the $24 trillion in total Federal gross debt that our Nation has accumulated. It does not reduce the debt, not even close. The Nation's debt grows by $7.3 trillion.

Their promotional materials, however, claim $1.85 trillion in deficit reduction—they claim that. This claim refers to an alleged reduction in the size of the projected debt increase. So the debt is going to increase, but we are going to reduce the increased rate of the debt—that is what we are going to do—by almost $2 trillion. But even that $1.85 trillion claim is totally false. It just is. It is a fabrication. It is not so. Several accounting tricks are used to create this number.

The biggest of these tricks is that their budget completely eliminates the savings that have been placed in law by the sequester, but it fails to count the elimination of the reduction in spending in the sequester as a spending increase. We voted 20 months ago—Congress did, August 2011—to reduce the growth of spending $2.1 trillion in order to obtain a raising of the debt limit by $2.1 trillion over 10 years. That is what it would be. And 60 percent of that $2.1 trillion—$1.2 trillion—is the sequester. They would eliminate the sequester but not count the fact that they have increased spending of the current law that is in place, and it is not going to be changed except to be modified so it is more rational in where the cuts fall. But they would wipe it out and not count that as increasing spending.

This is how the country goes broke. This is how America confuses what it is doing—I would say deliberately—to try to convince the American people they are acting responsibly when we are acting irresponsibly.

I asked Chairman MURRAY's fine staff about this at the hearing. They didn't want to talk about it, I have to say. But when pressed, like good staff people do, and the question was put to them plainly, they gave an answer—the correct answer, I think.

> Sessions: Relative to current law, under your plan if it is enacted, how much deficit reduction will occur?

The staff answer:

> Again, if you want to go straight to CBO baseline that we started when I was talking to Mr. Johnson it would be about $1.75 trillion. If you want to make the adjustments and take out the sequester—

And of course we should—and the disaster, yes, obviously it's much less. I think the total deficit reduction is about $700 billion in the plan.

Mr. President, $1.85 trillion claimed in reduction. If you count the sequester you are at $700 billion. $1.2 from $1.9 leaves $700 billion. But there are more gimmicks than that which take us down to zero deficit reduction, really.

So I asked this question again to the staff of the majority in the committee:

> Can you honestly say that under this budget you can achieve $1.85 trillion in deficit reduction and eliminate the sequester with only $975 billion [you claim] in new taxes?

And the answer was, ''No.''

Of course you cannot, but that is basically what they were saying. That is what they said in their promotion of this budget, that it achieves $1.85 trillion in deficit reduction. Any American

who heard that would assume it means we are going to reduce the amount of deficit being added by $1.85 trillion, relative to current law.

Once again, we have this obsession, it seems, in Congress. We are trying to maneuver numbers around so we can spend more money while claiming we are not. They claim they are reducing the growth in our debt by almost $2 trillion, but it is not so. It does not happen under this budget. If anyone wishes to know more details, we will share those as time goes by.

There are other gimmicks in this budget too. The budget fails to account for the cost of continuing the stimulus tax credits and fails to offset the doc fix, as well as the physician payment fix, which we have to do just like we do every year. It should be scored. We know we are going to have to make that expenditure.

Chairman MURRAY's budget, which the committee voted on and passed, only includes $75 billion to fund the war on terror for 10 years. How much did President Obama say the War on Terror, when he submitted his last budget, would cost over 10 years? He said it would cost $494 billion. So they just waltz in and say: We will spend $75 billion in the first 2 years and zero on the War on Terror over the next 10 years.

The Ambassador was in my office this week. He negotiated an agreement for a reduction of forces in Afghanistan. We are planning to be there for years. We have drone attacks going on. We have special forces around the world fighting al-Qaida, with whom we are at war, and that is what has been funding that—this account—and they assume it is going to end. It is not going to end. But if we assume it is going to end, we save, according to the President's projection, some $400 billion. They can claim to save $400 billion by assuming we are not going to spend money that we are going to spend.

So if we add up all of these items—not scoring the sequester, the doc fix, the new stimulus money, the manipulation of the war costs—then there is zero deficit reduction. We raise $1.5 trillion in new taxes, and there is a zero-deficit reduction because spending has increased. So this budget also means there is a net spending increase above the projected growth of spending. We are on track to increase spending every year even with the Budget Control Act and the sequester—that is going up every year—but they want to spend even more than that. They want to increase the unsustainable debt course we are on now more than the current law calls for.

This budget breaks the spending limits we just signed into law with the Budget Control Act. We told the American people, who were reluctant to raise the debt ceiling—and a lot of Members of Congress were reluctant to raise the debt ceiling—because we were so irresponsible around this place. But an agreement was reached recognizing that it would be disruptive, to a significant degree, to raise the debt ceiling $2.1 trillion, that we would reduce spending over 10 years by $2.1 trillion.

We have already run up another $2.1 trillion in debt. We already hit that. In his budget last January, the President—less than 6 months after he signed the Budget Control Act and eliminated a little bit of the growth in spending—is proposing to eliminate the sequester part of it, which is $1.2 trillion, or 60 percent.

Here are some other figures the American people should know about this budget. It has a 60-percent spending increase over 10 years, which would increase spending by over 60 percent. It has over a $162 billion increase in spending next year—another stimulus bill. There will be $7.3 trillion in new Federal debt that will be added under this budget over the next 10 years; a $1.5 trillion tax increase; an 80-percent increase in Federal welfare and means-tested poverty spending. All the poverty programs—means-tested programs—would increase 80 percent. There is no reform for those programs, but a big increase.

So the question of whether to balance the budget is one of the central features of this debate that we are having now. If the American people take nothing else away from this debate, it should be that the party running the Senate—the Democratic Party—is spending taxpayers' dollars and refusing to ever balance the Federal budget.

By contrast, the Republican-led House, with Senator PAUL RYAN and his team, has a plan that they will vote on today which will balance the budget. They have passed a budget every year. Our colleagues in the Senate, while refusing to pass a budget, have delighted in complaining about the leadership and the responsible action of the House by blaming everything they can think of, and more, on unkind PAUL RYAN who wants to push the old folks off the cliff, and that is not true. He has good plans; he has growth plans. What I would say to everyone is: This Senate has done nothing by being critical of everyone else. We have had several budgets come up, and I voted for several of them. My Democratic colleagues have voted for not one. They voted against the Ryan budget, they voted against the President's budget, they voted against the Toomey budget, and they voted against the RAND PAUL budget. They voted against them all. Yet, they don't seem to be the least bit hesitant to attack everybody else.

I think we have a moral duty to balance the budget. It is not right to continue to spend and enjoy borrowed money today that someone else will have to repay tomorrow. We also have an economic duty to balance the budget, and I wish to talk about that. We need to balance the budget to prevent a future financial crisis, as Erskine Bowles and Alan Simpson told the Budget Committee a couple of years ago. We are facing the most predictable financial crisis in our Nation's history if we don't get off this debt path. We need to act now to deal with the present danger that is occurring to our economy.

Our massive public gross debt is hurting growth today. Our economy today is being damaged by it. It is destroying jobs today. Massive Federal debt is creating poverty and joblessness right now. The debt is pulling down economic growth right now—not tomorrow, now. People are not getting jobs today because of this debt. People are not getting promotions, bonuses, and wage increases as a result of this debt that is hanging over the country.

Well, some might say: How do you prove that? The famed economists Rogoff and Reinhart testified before the Budget Committee a year or two ago. They released a paper last April that concludes when gross debt—not public debt, which is somewhat less—the $16-plus trillion that we see on the debt clock in public—reaches 90 percent of GDP, then the economy slows between 1 percent and 2 percent. The economy begins to slow. Our gross debt is now 103 percent of GDP. Some may not be aware—and my colleagues need to know this—that the International Monetary Fund, the Bank for International Settlements, and the European Central Bank have all independently done studies of this kind and reached very similar conclusions.

The other studies with different approaches all find that our current debt load in the United States—which is now almost $17 trillion—is causing a drag on our economy. A 1-percent decline in growth costs 1 million jobs, according to Christina Romer, who worked in the Obama White House as a top economic adviser.

We know that for the past 3 years, growth in America has fallen well below what our experts, the Congressional Budget Office, have predicted. These studies show our debt is hurting the economy now and that increased spending and more debt must end now. It cannot be contended any longer that it is good for America to borrow more and spend more. We cannot borrow more to spend more. Somebody compared that to taking a bucket in the deep end of the swimming pool, filling it up, and going to the shallow end and pouring it in. If truth be known, when you borrow to spend, you drop some along the way. We must grow the economy, not keep growing the government, and certainly not keep growing the debt.

I believe we all know this. I think the American people know it, and we in Congress have a responsibility to honestly confront this challenge and put our country on the right path. As we learned, we actually don't have to cut spending. All we really need to do is allow the spending to increase, but allow it to increase each year at 3.4 percent and not 5.4 percent. If we increase it at 3.4 percent, as Congressman RYAN has done in his budget, the

budget balances in 10 years. We don't have to slash spending. We can even allow spending to increase, but we have to manage the growth of it. We can do this.

The recovery we are seeing from the 2007 recession is the slowest since the end of World War II and slow growth is expected to continue. The Commerce Department reported last month that the economy barely grew in the fourth quarter of 2012. We had virtually zero growth in the fourth quarter. That was a surprise. CBO expects the U.S. economy to limp along in 2013 at about 1.4 percent after inflation is taken out. That is a muddled, slow-growth, economy well below what they were predicting 2 years ago, which was a growth of about 4.6 percent, as I recall, for 2013. So no one disputes that this is the slowest recovery since 1945.

Why is it so slow? It certainly is not because the government has spent too little of the taxpayers' money. It is certainly not because we borrowed too little and spent too little. Total Federal spending has gone up 30 percent since 2007, and our annual deficit today is 7 times greater than the annual deficit was just 5 years ago. So as a consequence of huge annual deficits, our debt has grown by 73 percent since the beginning of the recession, over which time we added $6.6 trillion in new debt.

It seems quite clear that a substantial reason our recovery is slow is because of the depressing effect of high debt, big spending, a burdensome tax code, and regulations that are unnecessary. But every time Republicans have tried to reform the government, they meet the same response from our Democratic leaders—from the President to Senator REID to Chairman MURRAY—attack the reformers.

Majority Leader REID said of one Republican reform effort that it was ''a mean-spirited bill that would cut the heart out of the recovery we have in America today . . . it goes after little children, poor little boys and girls.''

I think that is an unkind thing to say. I don't think anybody proposed any legislation that would have that effect or ability or intent to do anything like that.

Chairman MURRAY said:

> I will not agree to a deal that throws middle-class families under the bus . . .

Well, we are not throwing middle-class families under the bus. We want economic growth. We want prosperity. The real truth is that the debt increases borrowing, and spending has not worked. The debt is already so high and we have irresponsibly run up so much that it is pulling down the economy because it is over 100 percent of GDP. We don't need to be attacking people who disagree over solutions in harsh personal terms, but we do need people to focus honestly on the disagreements and the challenges we face.

The real victims we are seeing here today are the millions of people trapped in poverty by failed government programs. The real victims are Americans who are being denied help by those who would defend the Washington establishment at all costs and won't reform. The real victims of the left's rhetorical assaults are the communities out there that are thirsting for growth and opportunity but denied any policies that would create more jobs and actually create better and rising wages. The real victims are the millions who lost or can't get jobs, and they are out there—we have fewer working today than we had in 2000—or those who didn't get a pay raise because the debt has pulled down economic growth.

So I think this budget shows no really effective concern for Americans living in poverty, struggling to work, trapped in a stale bureaucratic welfare state. There is no reform that will actually work to help them. That is what I am concerned about.

Look at a city such as Detroit, governed by liberal policies for decades—a city once rich with business and commerce and opportunity. More than half of all Detroit children now live in poverty. Look at our Nation's Capital, another major city locally governed for decades by very liberal policies, a city filled with finance and deep-pocketed businesses. Washington, DC, is flowing with Federal funds. No city gets more from the Federal Government than Washington. Yet, despite this cash, one in three youths in our Nation's Capital lives in poverty. Two in three live in single-parent homes—two in three.

So this budget perpetuates the misguided policies that are causing social and economic harm in every State, in every region, in every part of this country. That is my view. Others may disagree, but I am prepared to defend it, and I think that empirical data and observations show it is correct. Compassion, if we care about people who are hurting, demands that we change, does it not?

We need to grow the economy, not the government, and do it for all Americans in every State and city.

We need to create rising wages and better jobs without just borrowing money and handing it out through some government check. That is not working. It is over. We need to understand that. We need an economic policy that provides our children with more jobs, not more debt. We need jobs. We don't need to be burdening our children for the rest of their lives with an unconscionable debt so we can live high today.

We need to reform and improve ineffective government programs so they help more Americans actually achieve their financial goals. How can we do this without running up the debt? Is there something we can do? Don't we have to have government investments? Don't we have to borrow more money? We don't have any. Any new money we spend is all borrowed. We are in debt. Aren't there some things we can do? Absolutely there is, and they are things that do not cost money. How about this: create a new tax reform system that creates growth, revenue-neutral but simpler, more pro growth-oriented and fairer. Can we do that? Yes.

What about more domestic American energy production? Produce more energy here instead of sending our money abroad, creating jobs here, creating tax revenue for our States, cities, and counties.

Let's make the welfare office—which gets from the Federal Government today hundreds of billions of dollars in spending—a place that restarts lives, that helps people rejoin the workforce, not trapping them in government benefit programs year after year.

Let's defend American workers from unfair foreign trade practices—and there are a lot of them. It is time we stood up to it.

Let's make government leaner and more productive. A leaner government, a more productive government is good for America. I don't see any reform effort there.

Let's eliminate every burdensome Federal regulation that isn't needed. Those are job-killers. If a regulation promotes safety and is economically viable, that is OK, but if it is not—and many are not—let's eliminate it. It is a drag on growth and prosperity.

Let's enforce Federal immigration laws, and let's protect American workers and legal immigrants from those who care only about importing more and more cheap labor.

Let's balance the Federal budget. As I said, balancing the budget and reducing the debt of America over time will get our debt down so it won't be a drag on the economy.

The American people have heard a lot of rhetoric from their elected officials and a lot of buzzwords about financial discipline this week. Rhetoric will be matched against reality. Every Senator will have to stand and be counted. I encourage the American people to tune in to C–SPAN and see where their Senator stands on the great issues of our time: Do we balance the Federal budget? Do we reform the bureaucracy or just keep spending more money? Do we keep sending even more money to Washington through more taxes? Do we embrace our great constitutional inheritance of freedom or do we let it slip away? These are questions of our time.

The budgets reflect where we stand on these issues. I would say the Democratic budget represents more government and less commitment to efficiency—not the kind of change and progress we need. We need to have a budget that balances, that is oriented toward growth and prosperity.

I look forward to the debate today. It will be an interesting challenge throughout the next couple of days. I have been very passionate here today, very frank here today, but I know we have great colleagues on both sides of the aisle.

In our debate in the Budget Committee, we had some great Senators on

both sides of the aisle who have different views and expressed them ably. Chairman MURRAY is so articulate and wonderful to work with, but we do disagree.

It is time for change in this country. It is time to understand that our goal must be to promote prosperity and job creation and higher wages, not more government. That is what the debate is about. I urge my colleagues to be engaged in it, and let's begin to change the direction of our country and put it on the road to prosperity.

I thank the Chair and yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Mississippi.

Mr. WICKER. Mr. President, I thank Senator SESSIONS for his leadership.

I come here today as a new member of the Budget Committee, fresh from the committee process with some observations and some disappointments, but principally today I come to the floor to talk about the urgent need for budget reform and a lasting budget that will put us on a path to fiscal responsibility.

I suppose we should be delighted at least to be on the floor with a budget. After 4 years of trillion-dollar deficits and after 4 years without a budget, at least we have an opportunity as representatives of the American people to debate the financial future of this country and an opportunity to discuss putting our Nation on a trajectory away from constant debt and uncertainty and on a path toward security and prosperity, on a path that is designed to create better job opportunities for the people we represent.

Unfortunately, the budget our friends on the other side of the aisle unveiled last week ignores the spending problem that continues to drive the Federal debt skyward. Don't take the word of one Senator from Mississippi on that. Let's listen to the words of the Washington Post editorial board. Not exactly what one would call a center-right entity, they observed on March 14—and I quote the Washington Post:

> This document gives voters no reason to believe that Democrats have a viable plan for—or even a responsible public assessment of—the country's long-term fiscal predicament.

Those are the words of the Washington Post in utter disappointment about the product we will be debating on the floor for the next several days.

Being a member of the Budget Committee and being part of the budget markup process has certainly been revealing to me as a new member of the committee. We were given an opportunity before amendments were offered to ask technical questions—not really to debate but just to ask technical questions of the staff members about exactly what this budget does. We learned from these professionals—when we just asked them the questions, we learned these facts about the Democratic proposal for a budget for the next 10 years: It does not balance at any point during the next decade. Never in the next 10 years would this document bring the Federal budget into balance. Not only that, in propounding further technical questions to the staff, we learned that this budget puts our country on a spending path that never comes into balance. There is no plan for decades and decades to come, as far as the eye can see, for this budget ever to get the Federal Government into balance. Yet it was supported by friends of mine on the other side of the aisle who have certainly given lipservice to the idea not only of a balanced budget but of a balanced budget constitutional amendment.

I am going to predict that Democratic Members of this body who come in here and vote for this document will have coauthored a balanced budget constitutional amendment, who have actually voted for or cosponsored a balanced budget constitutional amendment. Yet they will be voting for a document that not only doesn't balance within 10 years but that never, ever comes into balance. Indeed, the document that we will be asked to support and that we are trying to amend grows the Federal Government at 5 percent each year for the entire decade. It raises taxes to the tune of $1.5 trillion over the decade. And this is important for us to realize: It doesn't raise taxes on that rich guy behind the tree who we think can afford it, it raises taxes on the middle class. There is no question about it. We can't get $1.5 trillion out of the American economy without raising taxes on the middle class, and that is exactly what this budget does. So it never comes into balance, but it does raise a ton of taxes right out of the middle-class economy of this country.

Now, we will have an amendment process, and there will be a number of amendments, but it will, in essence, give us an opportunity to slow the trajectory of growth of Federal spending.

Members of the Senate will be offered an amendment in this process to balance our Federal budget by the year 2023. We will be given an opportunity to debate that and to visit on a plan that would get us there. How does it get us there? By slashing and burning? By tough austerity in the budget? Absolutely not. I think it would surprise many people within the sound of my voice in this city and elsewhere to know that we can grow the size of Federal spending by 3.4 percent each year over the next 10 years and still balance the Federal budget by the year 2023. Let me repeat that. Federal spending is not going to be actually cut under the Republican proposal we will present as an alternative. Federal spending will go up each year by an average of 3.4 percent per year, and still we will be able to balance the budget by the year 2023. So we need not let anyone say that we are having to slash and burn in order to balance the budget.

There will be adequate funds to perform the functions of government and still we will be able to balance the budget.

I say what so many of my colleagues have said and what our distinguished ranking member from Alabama has said repeatedly: We are not in this business simply to say we balanced the budget. It is not some artificial goal like winning a game. We are in this process of trying to save our country from a mountain of debt in order to create jobs for the American people, in order to grow the economy, rather than growing the size of the Federal Government. We have an opportunity to avoid the fate that is occurring to our allies in Western Europe, even as we speak.

I have heard it said recently that: Well, we don't have a debt crisis yet. There are some people who would dispute that. But there are people in this Federal Government, the President included, who say: We don't have a debt crisis at this moment in the Federal Government. I ask this in response: Must we wait for an absolute crisis before we act? We see it coming. We see what has happened to our friends who have overspent in Greece, in Spain, in Portugal, what is happening to our allies, our NATO allies in France. We can avoid this fate. Must we wait until the absolute last moment when people are losing their jobs and we are unable to perform the necessary functions of government?

So I say this: We need to act now. We need to act to avoid that crisis which is not that far down the road, and we want to act to grow the economy and create jobs.

I wish to mention three issues briefly, and then I notice there are other people who want to speak on this important issue. There is hardly a more important issue that we could be talking about, and thank goodness, for the first time in 4 years, we are going to get that opportunity. Let me mention Social Security, let me mention Medicaid, and then Medicare.

Social Security is a wonderful program. My dad relies on Social Security. We are going to keep the commitment that we have made to our senior citizens in the form of Social Security. But everyone agrees the numbers simply do not add up long term. They agree with that much, as President Ronald Reagan and Speaker Tip O'Neill agreed to the very same notion back in 1982 and 1983. The numbers were not adding up long term for Social Security and something had to be done and some painful decisions had to be made in the early 1980s. To this day, we thank God for President Ronald Reagan and Speaker Tip O'Neill for having the bipartisan courage to do the tough things, to make the tough decisions, and adjust an important program so that Social Security has been saved for the past three decades.

We need that kind of statesmanship out of the White House today. Frankly, we need that kind of leadership out of the White House. We are calling for bipartisan action. I think it is worth noting—and it pains me to say this—for

the first time in 92 years, we are considering a budget without seeing a plan from the President of the United States, and he announced just last week that he was going to wait in sending us his budget plan. It will be 2 months late by the time it arrives, according to the President's own timetable. In fact, this is the fourth time in 5 years that our President, that my President, has missed this deadline. But we need the same leadership out of this White House that we had out of the Reagan White House three decades ago. We can save Social Security, but it will have to be a little different.

We can save Medicaid and make it better. We are going to have an opportunity, as legislators, as policymakers, to give the States an opportunity to design their own Medicaid Program to serve their individual States better.

Let's give one State or let's give five volunteer States the opportunity to take a Medicaid block grant and see if they cannot provide better health care to their underserved population with a Medicaid block grant. Let's give them an opportunity to do that. The program does not work very well now.

Then the statement was made—and correctly—by some of my Democratic colleagues in the Budget Committee that Medicare is a promise we have made and we ought to keep that promise. I could not agree more. There is not a soul in this Senate who does not want to keep the promise we have made to American workers and to American retired people with regard to Medicare.

But the fact remains—and every Senator in this body understands this—Medicare, as it is currently written, cannot last for many more years. The numbers simply do not add up. I am glad the point is being made, and it is being picked up by the mainstream media now. An American worker pays $1 into Medicare and gets $3 back in benefits. A system like that simply cannot be sustained long term. The numbers do not add up. The math does not. It is not that flexible.

So we need to—as Reagan and O'Neill did—as responsible custodians of our Federal Government, as responsible trustees of the future of this country, make changes to a program that has served us well.

Americans are calling for leadership and bipartisan action now. There are hopeful signs: the National Commission on Social Security Reform, the Gang of 6, the Simpson-Bowles Commission, various bipartisan groups that are trying to forge an honest long-term deal to deal not only with our debt but these three important entitlement programs.

I do not see that sort of realism in the document the Democratic majority has provided to us through the Budget Committee. I hope we can amend it. Perhaps we will not in the next few days, but we are going to have to in order to be the trustees of the future, to be the responsible leaders that our voters demand and that the people who come after us would hope we could be.

I look forward to the process. I look forward, cheerfully and realistically, to making the case for our position that we could grow the government by just a little less and balance the budget within 10 years, and in so doing we can make a better life, a better future, a better ability for our people to earn a living and support their families.

Thank you very much. I look forward to the debate. At this point I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Texas.

Mr. CORNYN. Mr. President, I will be brief because I know we have other speakers on the floor.

This is all we need to know about the budget that was voted out of the Budget Committee, along party lines, with Democrats carrying the day: It would raise spending by about 60 percent, it would raise taxes by $1.5 trillion, it would increase our national debt by $7.3 trillion, and—this is the most important part—it would never ever, ever balance.

That is the exact opposite of what America needs to get our economy moving again and get a handle on our long-term finances. We have already reached a point where the Federal spending levels are unsustainable. We all know that. We have already reached a point where our national debt is exerting a drag on our economy.

I read the other day the President said there is no risk of an immediate debt crisis. We can debate that. But what we cannot debate is that our national debt is so big that it is dragging down economic growth, crushing job creation, and resulting in a loss of hope and certainly a loss of opportunity for 23 million Americans who are out of work or who are working part time and who want to get back to work and provide for their families.

We also know, according to the Bureau of Labor Statistics, that an unprecedented—or at least in the last 30 years—number of Americans have just simply given up looking for work. They have been so discouraged that the labor participation rate is at a 32-year low.

When our colleagues across the aisle say all we need is just a little bit more revenue; in other words, more taxes, we have already seen taxes go up by more than $1.6 trillion since President Obama became President.

Simply put, we cannot act as if the laws of fiscal gravity do not apply to the Congress or the Federal Government. That is why every single Senator on this side of the aisle has cosponsored a balanced budget amendment to the Constitution, which would require the Federal Government to live within its means and require a congressional supermajority to raise taxes or raise the debt ceiling.

I have heard colleagues across the aisle say: We can't pass a balanced budget amendment. That would tie Congress's hands.

That is the point. It would tie Congress's hands in spending money we do not have, running up these dangerous debts, and being a wet blanket on economic growth and job creation.

How do we know that government can live within its means? Virtually every State has some type of balanced budget requirement. Why should the rules in Washington be any different?

Some across the aisle argue—I think they actually believe this—that embracing fiscal discipline will jeopardize the safety net. In fact, the opposite is true. If we do not embrace sensible fiscal discipline, our safety net programs will eventually collapse because we will not have the money to provide for the national security and we will not have the money to provide the safety net programs we all agree are necessary for the most vulnerable of our citizens.

As I have said before, if we reform some of these programs gradually—as the Senator from Mississippi was referring to, Medicare and Social Security—we could minimize the impact and protect our most vulnerable citizens. But if we do nothing to reform and preserve Social Security and Medicare and we experience a Greek- or Spanish-style debt crisis, these programs will be slashed abruptly. The very people our colleagues say they want to protect the most will be hurt the most because the cuts will be much harsher and they will be disproportionately impacted.

One last point. By reducing the growth of Federal spending—and that is all we are talking about doing; we are not talking about cuts in the sense that anybody else in America talks about cuts; we are talking about just reducing the rate of increase in Federal spending ever so slightly—but by reducing the growth of Federal spending, we would prevent the need for tax hikes in the future. Indeed, that is what I hear from so many people in the private sector. When we ask them: Why are you sitting on the sidelines with cash in the bank, and why aren't you investing in either new physical structure or jobs, they say: Because the debt is so high and Congress has shown a lack of willingness to deal with it, all we can do is expect that taxes are going to be a whole lot higher and greater burdens placed on job creators, and so we think the more prudent thing is to sit on it and not invest it in new job creation.

But new tax hikes would increase long-term economic uncertainty, and they would discourage job creation. Conversely, if we work hard to keep taxes within reason and certainly not raise them any more than have already been raised, this would increase long-term economic certainty and encourage job creation. After all, investors and business owners and job creators are not stupid. They understand that without real spending restraint and real entitlement reform, we are ultimately headed for another massive tax increase.

Indeed, that is what this budget, voted out by our Democratic colleagues along party lines, promises: higher taxes and more spending. That is exactly what this economy does not need for us to get back on track, to create the jobs and to create the opportunities for people to provide for their families and live the American dream.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Washington. State.

Mrs. MURRAY. The Senator from Michigan is here. I would like to ask her how much time she would like me to yield to her.

Ms. STABENOW. I believe we have other colleagues coming as well. We were hoping to have 30 minutes and possibly more.

Mrs. MURRAY. I will yield to the Senator from Michigan and her colleagues 30 minutes. I am happy to yield more.

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

The Senator from Michigan.

Ms. STABENOW. I look forward to colleagues who will be joining me to express strong support for the budget that has been reported out of the Senate Budget Committee. I first want to thank our chair, who has done a yeoman's job in putting this together. She has had so many different assignments dealing with the budget and efforts to come to responsible reform and put our country back on the right track in order to bring down the deficit and grow the economy. One more time she has stepped up to the job. So I want to thank our chair for all of her efforts.

Let me start, first of all, by saying this is very simple when we look at what we are talking about in this budget. As I said also, I want to thank the ranking member for his courtesy throughout the budget process. While we have very different views, this was done in a very professional and courteous way on all sides. I really appreciate that.

But this is a very different view, both in what we debate and how we view this budget, which is a values document for the country, and the budget that is being debated in the House of Representatives. It comes down to something very simple. Our budget strengthens the middle class. We believe it is critically important that we grow the economy from the middle out. That means making sure folks who are struggling to stay in the middle class have a fair shot, people trying to get in the middle class have a fair shot, and that we grow the economy by understanding the economic engine of America comes from having a strong middle class.

On the other side, the Republican budget just plain simply protects the special interests, special interest deals in the Tax Code and other special interests in other kinds of policies. It is just very different and does not grow or support the middle class.

I also think it is very important that we not just talk in theory but talk about what has happened in the past and what has worked and what has not. We should do more of what works and less of what does not work. We need to start by looking at what happened as we came into 2001.

I was fortunate to be a new Member of the House of Representatives in 1997 when, under President Clinton, we all worked together and balanced the budget for the first time in 30 years.

I came to the Senate in 2001. We were debating the largest budget surplus projected in the history of the country. That is where we were. The question was, What kind of economic policies, what kinds of approaches will be put in place to be able to manage that fact, that we had the largest budget surplus projected in the history of the country?

There were two proposals put forward at that time. When you look at the way the debt was going from 2001, it is amazing. If we had only taken a different track than what happened. I remember as a new Member, a new Democrat, that our leader on our side of the aisle, Senator Conrad, came forward with a proposal that I believed was eminently reasonable. He said: Why do we not take that budget surplus and divide it into thirds: one-third of it for strategic tax cuts to grow the economy; one-third of it for strategic investments in education, science, R&D, moving the economy; and one-third to prefund the liabilities for Social Security for the next 75 years.

Imagine if we had done that. Instead, what happened was the surplus was put into a huge supply side tax cut, benefiting, as we know now, the wealthiest in the country, adding to a situation where the wealthy have gotten wealthier and wealthier in the last decade, the middle class has shrunk and shrunk, and more and more people are struggling today. So it was all put into a large tax cut, and then we proceeded to go into two wars that were not paid for, a Medicare prescription drug plan not paid for, and nothing else paid for for a decade. We ended up with the largest deficit in the history of the country. That is what this President walked into. That is what we have been faced with.

Now, when we look at where the debt has come from, and why it is important that we focus on the economy, we know the biggest piece of where the debt came from was the tax cut geared to the wealthiest Americans, which has been famously called trickle down economics. The folks in Michigan are still waiting for it to trickle down.

Then we saw the wars in Afghanistan and Iraq. We are so appreciative of the President leading us out of the war in Iraq. We are closing down the war in Afghanistan. So that piece is being addressed. We have addressed the tax cuts at the end of the year, to ask those at the top to do more of their fair share. So that is being addressed. We go on down to the Recovery Act, which was so important to be able to try to focus on the middle class and get things going again. We did have some success with this. Then the other piece, the 30 percent of what is happening right now is the economic downturn.

So as we go forward today, even though we have addressed the high-end tax cuts, the wars ending, we no longer see the rescue-and-recovery measures. The economy is still 30 percent of our deficit. Frankly, we will never get out of debt with 12 million people out of work, which is why we, as Democrats, have made sure we are front and center focused on jobs and the economy in this budget.

We have to create opportunities for jobs for small businesses, for manufacturers, for the private sector, for entrepreneurs to be able to be successful so we have strong economic growth while we are putting forward a balanced budget. That is what we are attempting to do. That impacts what we do in this budget.

In fact, the efforts we put together—we know what happened when the President came in: 700,000 jobs a month being lost, the banks and financial markets in big trouble. We all know the story of what happened and what the President walked into on day one. But we have been focused on supporting an economic growth structure that would create jobs, create jobs. We are seeing that turnaround from the lost decade of jobs. We saw certainly in manufacturing huge job losses from 2001 on up to 2008. We know what happened with the automobile industry, which, by the way, because of our rescue efforts and support for them, is roaring back now and creating jobs. By the way, tremendous private sector investment is coming into the city of Detroit. The private sector is helping us turn that around. We are very proud of that. We are also seeing now jobs being created. As fast as we want? No. But we understand we have to focus on these numbers, which is creating jobs, if we are going to, in fact, get out of the deficit hole.

We have to reduce the deficit if our country is going to be more competitive, and we have to grow more jobs. We have to create opportunities for middle-class families. We know we need progrowth policies such as the ones in our budget that focus on innovation, education, rebuilding America through infrastructure, whether it is our courts, whether it is our roads or rails or water and sewer projects or what we do on technology. To compete we have to build, and we have to focus on what will create jobs.

We are now at a spot where we know if we focus, as we are in our budget, on growing the economy from the middle out rather than the top down, based on what was done in the 1990s when we did that, when we balanced the budget in the right way by investing in the future, investing in education, investing in innovation, and then also making smart cuts to balance that out, we balanced the budget. We had 22 million jobs that were created.

That is what this budget does again. It is focused on those policies that worked, not just debate back and forth in theory, but policies that actually worked in the 1990s to balance the budget, to grow the economy. We saw the policies being advocated by our friends on the other side. We did that already. We did that 2001 to 2008.

I do not know about anybody else, but I know people in Michigan do not want to relive that. That was not our idea of economic growth. It certainly did not balance the budget. It put us in the largest deficit in the history of the country.

So the budget in the House says: Boy, if you liked 2001 to 2008, you are going to love this. Two million jobs next year alone are lost in the Ryan Republican budget. And similar policies are being advocated by colleagues on the other side of the aisle.

Let me just take a moment; I see my colleague, Senator REED from Rhode Island, is here, who I know wants to be a part of this and is such an important voice. But let me just say a couple of things. We understand we need to make smart spending reductions in order to balance the budget. In fact, we have already started doing that. One of the things which is so frustrating to me is to hear colleagues talk about spending cuts without acknowledging what we have done for the last 2 years. So we already know we have put ourselves on a path for $2.4 trillion in deficit reduction. And 70 percent of that has come out of services for the middle class, the most vulnerable. It has been cuts in spending for things that would actually grow the economy, innovation and research.

I am desperately concerned as chair of the Agriculture Committee because we have seen agricultural research decimated around issues of food safety and pest and disease management and other critical things, on invasive species, that we may not feel right away but are things that will affect our future. So we have already seen major cuts.

At the end of the year a small amount of money, 30 percent of the deficit reduction, was done. We have actually been asking those at the very top, who have the most benefits from the tax cuts, the most benefits from the efforts to rescue Wall Street, the most benefits in general, just to do a little bit more—30 percent of what we have already done. So what we have said is that going forward, the final amount we need to do, between the $2.4 and $4 trillion, we are insisting that be done in a balanced way and not one more time to come back on the middle class who have already had the brunt of the sacrifice, the brunt of the cuts. It is not fair.

So we have replaced across-the-board cuts. We have had colleagues in the last few days complaining about the sequester cuts. Please vote for this budget. It stops those across-the-board cuts and puts something in that is much more common sense.

Those across-the-board cuts would cut 750,000 jobs this year alone. When you add what the Ryan Republican budget would do in the House, that is another 2 million jobs next year. It is a jobs killer.

What we are saying is replace it with a responsible, balanced approach. That is what we need to do, but it does it in a way that sets priorities.

The House says spending cuts again. This is predominantly education, innovation, construction. They also include eliminating Medicare. There is no way our majority will support this policy.

There is a whole range of things that hit the middle class, seniors, veterans, and vulnerable citizens. We say our cuts will be different. We are willing to make priorities and smart cuts on the direct spending side, but there is a whole range of things we can do in the special interest deals and Tax Code for the other half.

I totally reject the idea which has been put forward here so far today that our budget somehow raises taxes on the middle class. That is absolutely false. We have report after report after report which indicate by closing loopholes which are sending jobs overseas, cutting subsidies that aren't needed anymore, such as the top five wealthiest companies in the world, the top five oil companies—there are trillions of dollars in savings. Do this by cutting things that aren't necessary and are special deals in the Tax Code. We say half of the amount needed, yes, should come from there.

On the other side of the building, what we see is a very different picture. The Ryan Republican budget, when they look at their tax cuts, 55 percent of what we are doing in tax cuts goes to the top 1 percent. I feel this is Groundhog Day over and over. It is the same thing we have heard over and over. Give it to the top, it will trickle down. We did that. It did not trickle down. At least it didn't hit Michigan.

This budget does it over and over. Two-thirds of what they do in the House goes to the top 5 percent of taxpayers. What is left for middle-class families? We say something very different to grow the economy. We say we need in a global economy to outeducate, outinnovate, and outbuild. The President has said that over and over and our budget invests in those things that allow us to compete, grow the middle class, and create jobs while doing what we need to do to make smart, commonsense decisions on spending in the Federal Government.

Here is what I am worried about. Right now, when we look at U.S. investing in research and development, compared to what is happening around the world, the greatest country in the world, the United States of America, is down. We are losing ground on investments while everybody else races to be like America—everybody else. China wants to be like us and have a middle class. They are investing in innovation. We see proposal after proposal after proposal to cut our ability to compete for the future. This is why the Senate budget prioritizes research and development by replacing the devastating across-the-board cuts with a balanced and responsible approach which preserves $10 billion in R&D funding every year and for the future.

We continue support for medical research, one of the areas where we are the leader. We strengthen the National Institutes of Health. We have increased investments in renewable energy technology. There are so many opportunities for us. I am very proud today Michigan is No. 1 in new clean energy patents, and new ideas are coming. It is part of the economic engine which is bringing jobs back to Michigan.

Investing in our 21st century manufacturing sector is also here. Senator BALDWIN put forward a proposal on manufacturing hubs which I strongly support. Other colleagues, Senator COONS and others, have supported the manufacturing extension partnership to help small manufacturers as well.

We are also investing in exports and opening markets abroad. We know when American companies are able to increase their exports by $1 billion, they create 5,000 new jobs.

In infrastructure, we need roads and bridges. The chair of our committee is a strong advocate for ports as well in the global economy, being able to export and import. That investment in rebuilding America is in this budget. The American Society of Civil Engineers just released their report card, and they gave America a D-plus. We are not going to outcompete the world with a D-plus on infrastructure.

This budget makes historic investments in our workforce. We know from hearing from CEOs that workforce development education is absolutely key to our future.

Before asking my colleague from Rhode Island to join in this discussion as well on jobs—I speak as the chair of the Agriculture Committee—I thank the chair for including in our efforts creating a 5-year farm bill, which not only participates in deficit reduction of $23 billion but is twice what we would be required to do under sequestration.

The farm bill is a jobs bill. I don't know of any other bill that has an impact on 16 million jobs in this country. The farm bill does. It supports agriculture and rural America. The farm bill is a part of this effort.

My colleague from Rhode Island is deeply involved in efforts to create jobs, balance the budget, and reduce the deficit. I ask unanimous consent I be permitted to join in a colloquy with Senator REED at this point. He has been a champion in job creation, and I am very grateful he came tonight to join us.

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

Mr. REED. I want to thank the Senator from Michigan for allowing me to participate in this colloquy. I also

commend her for a thoughtful, insightful, and extremely compelling argument about creating jobs as a way not only to give people a chance to rise in the middle class but also to accomplish our other objective, which is ultimately to reduce the deficit.

As the Senator pointed out, when I was here with her in the late 1990s, we reached the point where we had a projected surplus of perhaps $5 trillion over 10 years. She has catalogued the way in which that surplus has been eroded. What we need to do is focus, as she suggests, on the urgent need to create jobs and ensure our Nation's budget makes investments in growing and strengthening the middle class. We are all here as beneficiaries of the programs and policies of the 1950s, 1960s, and 1970s, which consciously built the middle class and invested in us. Our parents invested in us. We need to do the same thing. She is absolutely correct, the investments we are proposing in this Democratic budget will be critical not only to individual success but to our success as an economy, and as a global competitor. I thank her for her words.

I am here to join her to address this pressing need to create jobs, to strengthen the economic recovery, and to underscore the vast differences between the proposal we are making, and the budget proposed by the House of Representatives, by our Republican colleagues.

Let me state what is a very disturbing figure. There are 12 million unemployed Americans, with 4.8 million of these individuals unemployed for more than 6 months. We are seeing unprecedented levels of long-term unemployment. Americans are struggling to stay in their homes, put their children through school and put food on their table.

In my State we are unfortunately among the top States in a category no one wants to be leading, and that is unemployment. The harsh reality of what we are facing in Rhode Island was brought home with a stunning article in last Sunday's Washington Post. It noted some 180,000 Rhode Islanders, over 15 percent of our population, receive SNAP benefits, supplemental nutrition assistance program benefits. Some are receiving SNAP because they don't have jobs, although they have looked from month to month to month. Some have jobs, but the pay is so little they qualify under the income limits of the SNAP program.

I want to particularly thank the Senator from Michigan for her valiant efforts to increase SNAP funding. Literally we are talking about putting food on people's tables. Fifteen percent of my State of Rhode Island depends on food support to have a healthy diet for them and particularly for their children.

When we talk about what we want to do with the budget, it is about getting people back to work. That is what they want. They don't want a SNAP benefit. They want good jobs. They want the same opportunities, from which we benefited, which helped build a strong middle class. What is their greatest fear? Not just falling out of the middle class, but that their children won't even have a remote chance of middle-class income or a middle-class lifestyle, those opportunities which we in our day took almost for granted. We must turn things around.

As the Senator pointed out, the Republican policy is focused on cutting taxes for the very wealthy. This policy has been demonstrated over the last decade to not produce good-paying jobs for middle-income Americans. However, it does produce very substantial benefits for the wealthiest of Americans.

That is not the way to grow a country. That is not what many people today and through our history have sacrificed their lives for. They are not out there serving in Afghanistan and other places so those who have much could have more. It is so those who have very little would have a chance, at least a chance. This is what we are talking about behind all the numbers. We are talking about investing in America. We need to make that investment.

The other side of the aisle indulges in what I believe is a fallacy: The only way of fixing the economy is cutting the deficit. But, instead of focusing exclusively on deficit reduction in the near term, we need to pass legislation which will put people back to work, give them a job, give them hope, and give them an opportunity, give them a sense they can make their lives and their children's lives much better.

The Democrats have proposed a series of initiatives over the last several years to do just that, such as tax incentives for small business to hire people, repairing schools, roads, bridges, or tax breaks for low- and middle-income Americans so they may have a little bit more in their paychecks. We have tried to pass these measures but have been frustrated consistently, even though we have the majority, because of filibusters and procedural delays. The American people understand that we need to create jobs. They want us to act. They want us to act to their benefit, not for the very few but for the majority of Americans.

The other approach Republicans espouse is hand-in-hand with this notion of tax cuts for the wealthiest Americans is that austerity through spending cuts can grow the economy. That you can cut programs, cut everything, and that will grow the economy.

That is not reality. What we see and what history suggests, when you are cutting during an economic recovery, you are basically counteracting the recovery. You are contracting economic expansion. You are not adding to the momentum of growth, you are subtracting from the growth.

If you want a current example, look across the ocean to Europe and Great Britain. They embarked upon an austerity program several years ago. Most commentators suggest they are in worse shape today than they were 3 or 4 years ago when they started this austerity program. This is the result of cutting, cutting, cutting. If we proceed down that pathway, we will be in worse shape several years from now than we are today. We can be in better shape by investing in our future and by creating jobs.

Another aspect of this too is it is not only the question of filibustering our proposals to create jobs—but that we know in August 2011 there was a real threat to undermine the full faith and credit of the United States, to refuse for the first time in modern history to increase the debt ceiling, to pay the debts which we owed. And the majority of those debts, at least the much of the recent ones, resulted from the previous administration. And so the debt ceiling crisis triggered the whole process which has led us today to sequestration. Now Americans will have to suffer through sequestration. The Congressional Budget Office has already said if we don't reverse sequestration, we will lose 750,000 jobs. Those are the jobs middle-income Americans are expecting and hoping for. We are losing about .6 percent of growth. We will be headed where our friends across the ocean are headed, not expanding but contracting; not increasing employment but decreasing employment. We are worse off because of these austere policies, not better off.

What the Democratic budget does—and my colleague from Michigan has outlined it very well and with great articulation, that the way you should deal with these issues is through a balanced approach—a balance of revenue and spending cuts which will not harm our economy. That is what we did in 1993 and 1994 when I was a Member of the House of Representatives. President Clinton came to us and said: Here it is, we are going to cut spending and we are going to raise revenue. And we passed it by one vote in the House, one vote in the Senate—not one Republican vote, but still by one vote here and one vote in the House of Representatives. That set the stage for the later efforts that finally led not only to a balanced budget but to a surplus, and that is the approach we have to adopt today. It's an approach that works.

The Republican budget calls for a total of $4.6 trillion in cuts and would leave the sequester in place. So it would compound the damage of the sequester. The Republican budget has also been estimated to provide millionaires an average tax cut of $400,000. Once again, the big winners in this proposal are the wealthiest Americans, not those who are struggling to put food on the table, to get a job, to see their children have a better future. And, again, the Republican budget refuses to responsibly address the $1 trillion sequester. They provide nearly $6 trillion in tax cuts that, again, overwhelmingly benefit the wealthiest Americans, but don't address the $1 trillion sequester. So essentially their

budget is compounding the difficulties we have in growing this economy and creating jobs.

Ms. STABENOW. I wonder if my colleague would allow me to ask a question.

Mr. REED. I will be happy to yield.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Michigan.

Ms. STABENOW. Did I hear correctly that the Republican budget would give an average of $400,000 in additional tax cuts?

Mr. REED. Those are the estimates I have received, and I believe they are reliable. Many commentators have looked at the budget and concluded that this represents a remarkable reduction in taxes for the wealthiest Americans.

And once again, it shouldn't come as a surprise because, as we recall—and I was here in 2001, when I voted against the Bush tax cuts—the mantra back then was that they are the job creators; just cut those taxes and those jobs will grow. But we saw during the Bush administration one of the poorest private job creation records of any President since World War II. And here Republicans are repeating the same line, as they say, deja vu all over again: Cut the taxes, and magically the jobs will grow. But, you grow jobs by having a balanced approach and through investment in human capital and physical capital, such as roads and bridges, and also by having the revenue to be responsible so you pay your way.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Michigan.

Ms. STABENOW. I thank my colleague, the distinguished Senator from Rhode Island. When I think of him, I think of his advocacy for our men and women who make up our troops—and I know our budget chair as well—and his strong leadership on veterans issues.

I think about $400,000 being an average tax cut for a multimillionaire under this budget versus what will happen to our veterans or folks coming home from the war and now trying to get a job, trying to do what they need to do to get back into the community and society and so on, and I wonder—the Senator has been such a leader on this and, of course, has experience with his own distinguished career in the military—if he might speak about those issues, his own experience with people coming home. Are they getting the $400,000 tax cut?

Mr. REED. Well, no. In fact, there was a front page story today, I believe, in one of the major newspapers declaring the fact that they are home from the battlefront and are now in the unemployment line. So we are seeing a remarkable number of veterans who are unemployed. And these are men and women in their twenties. They certainly want to work. They worked very hard defending this country, yet now they are coming home and have significant levels of unemployment.

That is one of the real problems, as well as our need and our obligation to support veterans health care, particularly mental health care, to support the Veterans' Administration.

The irony, of course, is that we are seeing even higher levels of unemployment, in some cases, among young veterans than we are in the population at large. That is particularly bitter and ironic for those people who have served and sacrificed and are continuing to serve and sacrifice.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Michigan should be aware that her time has expired.

Ms. STABENOW. Might I ask through the Chair if we could have a few more moments.

Mrs. MURRAY. I am happy to yield more time, and I really appreciate both Senators talking about one of the really important aspects of our budget; that is, how critical it is to invest in jobs and the economy, which the American public knows and understands are the biggest challenges facing all of us today. And you don't do that with the promise of just tax cuts for the wealthy.

We know trickle-down doesn't work. We all saw what happened from 2001 to 2008 when we gave away the tax cuts. Here we are today, now having to deal with the deficit. We all remember what happened during the Clinton administration when we had a balanced package that had both investments and responsible revenue and what happened in that decade when our economy rebounded and we got to a surplus and people felt strong again.

So that is what our budget is based upon, and I would be happy to yield additional time to both Senators to talk about this critical aspect of our budget.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senators from Michigan and Rhode Island are recognized.

Mr. REED. Senator.

Ms. STABENOW. I would simply, first of all, again thank our chair, who understands and gets this, not only about how to grow the economy and the middle class and in a commonsense way to balance the budget, but she has been such a leader on veterans issues and reminds us every day about those coming home and what they need, as does Senator REED as well, with his own service as well as his efforts with regard to our veterans.

I would be happy to defer to Senator REED, if he has additional comments. I didn't mean to interrupt him before. If he has additional comments to make, I would certainly allow for that, and then I would be happy to wrap up at some point.

Mr. REED. I would like to reemphasize the point the Senator from Michigan has made and Senator MURRAY has made, which is that we have been down this road before. We can't simply cut taxes for the wealthiest Americans to magically create jobs. What it produced in reality was a huge deficit, along with two unfunded wars. But that seems to be the message again from the other side—let's just cut taxes and then, of course, cut spending too. That is not the balanced approach we need in the Nation. That is not the balanced approach that in the 1990s, as my colleague pointed out, got us to a surplus, got us to a sense that we were really moving forward and that the middle class had a chance, that their children would have a better life. And that is what we have to do again.

When I look at my State of Rhode Island, I can cite a myriad of examples of the harm that would be caused by the Republican budget. The budget they are proposing, which leaves the sequester in place would result in about a $4.5 million cut in Federal support for our public schools. I can tell you that every city and town in Rhode Island is struggling just to keep the lights on. If they lose $4.5 million of Federal aid, that is going to make it even harder. And do you know what happens? Well, guess what happens to property taxes. They go up. And not just Rhode Island, all across the country because one of the ironies here is that every mayor understands that ultimately they have to balance their budgets, and so they will raise taxes and they will cut spending. But they will do it, hopefully, in a balanced way, similar to what we are espousing in our approach to the budget.

Now, we also have a situation where, if we look at the Republican budget, there are all sorts of abstract cuts—nondiscretionary domestic spending, et cetera—that translates into real harm, and that affects real lives. For example, there is an estimated $3.3 trillion in cuts to programs that benefit low- and middle-income Americans. Of that $3.3 trillion, $2.6 trillion are cuts to Medicaid and subsidies that help modest-income American families across the country to get health insurance. As I mentioned before, there is a projection—and the Senator is an authorizer for this program—of $135 billion being taken out of the SNAP program.

Again, let me go back to last Sunday's Washington Post story. Fifteen percent of the people in Rhode Island depend on this to help them get just adequate nutrition including children—and we are going to cut $135 billion out of this? And on the other side of the spectrum, we are giving a $400,000 tax cut or more to the wealthiest Americans? That is not fair, and it is not good economics. We can't have a generation of children who have been deprived of good nutrition, who have been deprived of good housing; if we do, we are not going to have the productive workers who will lead this Nation forward in this century and beyond. These spending cuts and tax breaks for the wealthiest Americans just do not make any sense. It doesn't balance the books, and it doesn't keep our obligation to the majority of Americans to give them a fighting chance.

Our budget, in contrast, has $100 billion in projects to put Americans to work and repair the worst of our crumbling bridges and roads. There is not

one of our colleagues who can't find some 20 or even more bridges in their State that require repair right away, and that would put hundreds of people to work productively and would increase the economic efficiency of our Nation.

Let me give an example. We had a major portion of I–95, the north-south road in Rhode Island—north-south right past Providence-Pawtucket, RI. for several years being rebuilt. The good news is that it is being rebuilt, but before we could rebuild, we had to divert truck traffic, which meant they couldn't efficiently deliver their loads. We had to station State police 24 hours a day to prevent the trucks from going there. So we had to engage all those individual law enforcement officers because the bridge couldn't support basic travel. We are now close to completing the whole project so we should no longer have to have State troopers out there 24 hours a day, and truckers no longer have to take a 20-mile detour to deliver their loads. When we talk about infrastructure, we are talking about economic efficiency as well as putting people to work. The Democratic budget does this.

I think we have also made very difficult choices—tough choices—in making sure that we are paying our way, that we are paying down the deficit and doing it in a way that doesn't cost us the recovery and creating the jobs we need right away.

I commend Chairman MURRAY because she has done a remarkable job of shepherding this bill through, of balancing so many complicated issues and making sure we have kept faith with the Americans who sent us here. They just want a chance. They just want to be able to think that their child is going to have a better life than they have had. I think this budget goes much further than our colleagues' to give them that chance, to give them that hope, and to give them that opportunity.

With that, I yield back to the Senator from Michigan.

Ms. STABENOW. I thank the Senator from Rhode Island again for his comments, his leadership, his advocacy for our military men and women and our veterans, and for the economy, for people who need help. As he said, there are a lot of people on the edge right now trying to just hold on, to stay in the middle class, or trying to get in the middle class, and our budget is for them. It is about growing the economy from the middle out.

What makes us different from other countries around the world is that we don't have just a few very rich people and a lot of poor people. We have had a robust middle class. People in Michigan feel that eroding every day, so we need to be laser-focused on making sure we keep that strong middle class that not only grows the economy but creates opportunity for young people to grow up and go to college, to dream big dreams and know that in America they can succeed and be whatever they want to be, that they have a shot. That is the American dream, and that is what we are fighting for.

Our budget, bottom line, strengthens the middle class. It creates opportunities for people to work hard no matter where they live, what their background is, so they have a shot at making it. We believe that to our core.

The Republican budget is represented by the House budget, and the proposals here on the floor on the Republican side are geared to the wealthy and the well-connected, the special interests of this country, to keep their special deals going. Let's try trickle-down economics one more time. It didn't work from 2001 to 2008. We lost 5 million manufacturing jobs. But, hey, why not try it again? Well, we say no, let's use something that has worked.

So let me in conclusion say again that the Republican tax cuts represented by the Ryan budget—55 percent of the benefit goes to the top 1 percent. As my friend the Senator from Rhode Island indicated, those at the very, very top are getting $400,000 in a tax cut, and $400,000 is more than the vast majority of Americans and certainly the vast majority of people in Michigan make in a year. Can we afford to do that? Is that the right priority?

I find it so interesting that we had a colleague speaking passionately for the past couple of days now about his concern about closing airports in rural areas. I have those concerns about closing rural airports. Well, our budget doesn't do that. Our budget invests in infrastructure and keeps those open, as opposed to the across-the-board cuts that have been objected to by the Senators trying to make changes in the budget this year and the Ryan Republican budget in the House.

We believe strongly that we should build a budget in the future on what has worked in America, and what has worked is strengthening America with investments so we can out-educate, out-innovate and out-build to win in a global economy. That is what this is about.

Our businesses tell us they are concerned about getting the right workers for the right jobs. It is a major issue right now. That is something we have a responsibility to be a part of.

The Democratic budget invests in education, invests in innovation, and invests in building for the future. I worry every day about this kind of a chart that shows that the United States of America—not a third world country—is investing less in research and development than competitors around the world. It makes no sense. The innovations are here. The smart scientists are here. The cutting-edge technology is here. And we need to keep it here. Our budget places a huge value on it.

Then, finally, it is all about jobs and making sure when we figure out and when we look at how to balance a budget, that we understand we will never balance a budget with more than 12 million people out of work. We have to focus on jobs and growing the economy. We have to.

Thirty percent of our deficit right now as we look at this going forward is in the slow economic recovery. We know it was bad prior to 2009 when President Obama was elected. It has gotten better, but it is not where it needs to be. And it won't be where it needs to be unless we invest in innovation, in education, and rebuilding America's infrastructure. That is what we do. This budget makes sense. This budget is for middle-class families all across America.

I urge my colleagues to support it.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. HEINRICH). The Senator from Alabama.

Mr. SESSIONS. Mr. President, I appreciate the opportunity to be with our colleague, Senator STABENOW, who serves on the Budget Committee.

Just briefly, and then I would yield to Senator ROBERTS, President Obama, on March 13 of this year, said:

> And so—you know, my goal is not to chase a balanced budget for the sake of balance.

Now, my colleagues—and we have been counting—so far have used the word ''balanced'' at least 14, maybe 15 times already. They use the word ''balance,'' but their budget comes nowhere close to balancing. It never balances. It has no potential to balance. It is focused on spending and more taxes, not balancing the budget.

Senator REID said: We want to pay down the debt. There is no plan whatsoever to get our deficit to zero so we can begin to pay down debt.

I believe Senator STABENOW used the phrase, ''a commonsense way to balance a budget.'' There is no plan to balance the budget. Let's be honest. Those words can be said repeatedly, over and over, but I really can't hear them. What I hear is the budget document itself, and it says: I am not balanced, I will never balance, and that is a fact.

It is great to have Senator ROBERTS of Kansas here, and I yield to Senator ROBERTS.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Kansas.

Mr. ROBERTS. Mr. President, I thank my distinguished colleague, the ranking member of the Budget Committee, the fully declared champion of fiscal responsibility, defender of hard-pressed taxpayers all across the country, doing a splendid job here as a Senator who actually asked to be on the Budget Committee to try to meet these challenges, and I credit him for his leadership and example.

I rise today to speak on my Democratic colleagues' proposed budget resolution upon which they have just been waxing poetic before the Senate. I have mixed feelings about this budget. I have mixed feelings even being here on the Senate floor in that I am bereft of charts. What on Earth am I going to do making comments about this budget

without the appropriate charts? Everybody has charts. Look at these stands around here.

My colleagues across the aisle—who have now left the Chamber since I began speaking—have displayed charts. I wonder if the Parliamentarian could inform this speaker if we could turn off the lights and I have a PowerPoint and a laser pointer?

I will not ask that.

But I don't have a chart. I just have some remarks that I would like to put together about the challenge we all face. I am pleased, everybody is pleased, finally, that the Senate has again, finally, taken up its constitutional responsibility to consider a budget in regular order—or at least some framework of regular order. However, I have the temerity to suggest that after 4 years, this budget resolution does not cut the spending muster and, from a constitutional responsibility, I fear it has indeed been very irresponsible.

At the same time, I look at this budget and I ask: Is this all we waited for these past 4 years? In the words of the famous song, ''Is That All There Is?'' Or better put, is this more than all there is? And it certainly is more.

There is an old saying that if you want to be remembered by your children, leave a lot of debt. Well, if this budget is passed and it sticks, then there are going to be a whole lot of people who vote yes who will certainly be remembered.

The solution was, indeed, to return to regular order, return to the regular process: Examine the President's budget, pass a budget resolution, and provide clear directives to the authorizing and appropriations committees to develop legislation to reflect the tough decisions made in the budget. A lot of words. None of it is very easy, but that is called regular order. That is what we should have been doing the last 4 years. We have not been doing that. We haven't been doing that at all.

Everybody knows the process around here. What happens is we have a major bill to do, we have our obligations to do, we have our constitutional responsibilities to do. We try that. We ask for amendments; we don't get amendments. We file cloture, they don't get 60 votes, and the bill fails. Or we have a continuing resolution, some giant body of legislation that is the worst way to do business—or a sequester, the same kind of thing. And people back home scratch their heads. People on that side of the aisle perhaps have an issue—not a bill, but they might have an issue. Then the blame game starts. I think the American people are tired of it.

None of it is easy. I understand that. But it works much better, much better than lurching from crisis to crisis as we have done and experienced in the last 4 years.

So I am pleased that we are slowly returning to some aspects of regular order, but I remain deeply concerned about the daunting fiscal challenges we face and the fact that we are not answering these challenges. The Federal balance sheet is now truly frightening.

Today, almost 1,500 days since we last considered a budget resolution on this Senate floor, we are fast approaching $17 trillion in debt—and beyond. It is climbing. Our per-person share of that debt is now more than $53,000. This is why I am so frustrated, and many of our colleagues are frustrated and disappointed by the budget resolution we are about to consider.

Yes, again, we have brought this resolution through regular order. I appreciate that. But the recommendations fail. They fail to begin to meaningfully address the key fiscal issues that we are all generally agreed are sustainable.

I don't have a chart, but I think people can understand this. The numbers are startling.

Since 2009 we have added nearly $6 trillion to the national debt. Under the proposed budget resolution, despite a massive new tax hike proposal, new debt will rise—since I don't have a chart, just sort of imagine it here—$7 trillion over 10 years. I hasten to add, that is on a projection by the Congressional Budget Office, and I think it is probably low.

Spending will increase another $645 billion above the projected growth over 10 years, including $162 billion in the next year alone.

The deficit will increase in the next fiscal year by $95 billion above current forecasts.

I could have a chart with a big zero on it. It is not a soft drink. This is something pretty serious. Zero. That is right, zero—zero real deficit reduction through spending reductions. It would never and doesn't pretend to try to balance the budget—precisely what the Senator from Alabama has been pointing out. In my view, this resolution would further damage our fiscal condition over the long haul, exactly what we don't want to do.

We do not want to kick the can down the road any further. We can't do it. We have reached that point of no return. And here is the kicker for me. The budget resolution includes a proposed $1.5 trillion in new taxes. That is on top of the $600 billion tax hike that was just enacted in January. This would include a $923 billion reconciliation instruction to the Finance Committee. I am a member of that very prestigious committee. I look forward to trying to achieve tax reform, but I worry about a $923 billion reconciliation despite the negative impact this would have on critically needed progrowth tax reform.

The budget also includes about $500 billion in unspecified loophole closers to increase spending on infrastructure and to replace the current sequester.

Loopholes. Loophole closures. Boy, is that in the eyes of the beholder. I am concerned about it. No doubt the Gatling gun kind of criticisms we heard in the past campaign, singling out tax reform targets—and I always want to add, you always want to worry about what lurks under the banner of reform of whatever banner someone is waving.

Time after time I heard the President talk about fat cat corporate jets. Boy, am I tired of hearing about that. That is business aviation. That is 1 million jobs. That is a great number of aircraft that is adding to our exports. The President has said: Let's double our exports, and still we hear this pejorative of fat cat corporate jets. Also, oil and gas subsidies, two major industries of Kansas, even those are critical, successful industries with all the hallmarks we should want in an industry—good, high-tech paying jobs.

Sure I am for tax reform, and sure I want to reach the specified numbers that we could all agree on—if we could all agree on a specified number. But policy counts, and you don't want to do anything terribly counterproductive. The call for a gigantic tax hike to pay for more spending is misguided and will harm our chances for tax reform. It will do little to place our budget on any sustainable path. Not only that, this budget is a job killer.

The Tax Foundation analysis I just read today indicates the legislation in its current form will result in the loss of 800,000 jobs over 10 years. It is a job killer.

Why on Earth would we be considering a budget resolution that will result in the loss of 800,000 jobs? In Kansas, that hit would be about 10,000 jobs. That is low. I have no doubt this number understates that problem.

We all know the time is long past for us to reform our overly complex, costly, anticompetitive tax system. That is a given. We know that. I might add that the Finance Committee, under the chairmanship of MAX BAUCUS and the ranking member's leadership, ORRIN HATCH—all of us on the Finance Committee have been meeting as Republicans and Democrats together. We can do this job. Give us 6 months to do it right. Give us a flashing light at the end of the room saying ''Do No Harm,'' and we can get this done.

The current system is a drain on individual and business resources. It is one of the main causes of our sluggish economic growth.

We need to put in place a Tax Code for the 21st century, one that recognizes the nature of the international trade system in which we compete—and there is competition—and one that recognizes the changes to our domestic business environment. We also need to lower corporate rates so the United States no longer has the highest rate in the developed world.

It is critical that Congress encourage economic growth and private sector job creation by putting in place a tax system that is simpler and fairer to all taxpayers, a tax system that doesn't change every year or two, one that provides certainty. We need to provide certainty by establishing a permanent

Tax Code that will allow families to plan for their future and give businesses the confidence to expand and create jobs.

Adopting a fair and simple tax system that lowers marginal rates, encourages economic growth, promotes our competitiveness, and eases compliance—read regulatory reform, read a Katrina of regulations that now affects virtually every business endeavor in the country, read all that—that is the most powerful step we can take to improve our economy.

While I support considering a budget through regular order—thank goodness we are finally achieving that—we are presented with a profoundly disappointing document, a budget that includes a massive job-killing tax increase, increases spending, raises the deficit and debt, and all but kills prospects for tax reform—just what the doctor did not order.

After 4 years of deliberate inaction, my colleagues and I had hoped for better.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Alabama.

Mr. SESSIONS. I thank the Senator from Kansas. He is an excellent member of the Finance Committee and he is experienced on these issues. I appreciate his insight. I would like to ask him a question.

He has noted this budget never ever balances. It doesn't come close to balancing. It has no intention of balancing. But we have been counting, I say to Senator ROBERTS, and our Democratic colleagues who have been promoting this budget have, I said earlier, about 14 times used the word ''balanced.'' Actually, already tonight they have used the word ''balanced'' 23 times in reference to a budget that never balances and never intends to balance.

I wonder if you thought that might reflect a guilty conscience on the part of those promoting this budget?

I am glad you will not be arrested for that device on the floor.

But I think it is pretty sad that we have such a use of that word.

Mr. ROBERTS. Let me say, if I might, and I appreciate the question and I have talked to the Parliamentarian, when people inadvertently leave their cell phones on, but the call is from their wife, that is all right.

At any rate, balance? If I heard it once, I heard it at least 10 or 15 times since I have been here and the distinguished Senator from Alabama has been here. Balance—it never balances in regard to the goal of actually balance the budget. We are talking about balance. But we are actually talking about redistribution. We are talking about balance, but what we are actually talking about is a certain kind of class warfare. When we are talking about balance, we are talking about means testing. We are talking about somebody in Washington on this floor defining who is rich or who is not or who is just a little better off—maybe $250,000, maybe $200,000. Guess what. These taxes are going to hit the middle class, and they do not think it is balanced. I don't think it is balanced, and I think it is out of whack.

If you are going to get something in balance, you ought to take a look to see can we get the budget of the United States headed toward balance and not use ''balance'' as a synonym for the proposed goals of social reform or whatever it is that you would like to accomplish under the banner of tax reform.

We should use tax reform for taxes, not for any political purpose or favoring one particular segment of the industry over another or, for that matter, Medicaid, Medicare, Social Security, food stamps, et cetera. Everything has to be considered, but everything has to be considered under the auspices of when are we going to live within our means? When are we going to achieve spending reductions, quit overtaxing people, try to spur job growth? That budget resolution they are talking about on that side of the aisle—and I know they are very sincere, apparently, in their belief—doesn't feed the bulldog. It doesn't answer the problem.

I got a little excited about that, but I think I am due that in regard to all the rhetoric we have heard from the other side. I appreciate the Senator's question.

Mr. SESSIONS. I thank the Senator. I note again the President said to George Stephanopoulos, live, on March 13, ''And, so—you know, my goal is not to chase—a balanced budget just for the sake of balance.''

I am also pleased the distinguished ranking member of the Finance Committee, senior, actually, member of the Budget Committee on the Republican side, Senator CHUCK GRASSLEY, who has been involved in these issues for many years and been a leader for many years, is with us.

I yield to Senator GRASSLEY of Iowa.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Iowa.

Mr. GRASSLEY. Mr. President, I say to Senator SESSIONS, the distinguished ranking member, I am going to try to show him and other Members of the Senate that the numbers that they think they can raise revenue from, to $1 trillion, are not going to work. We can take different taxes and add them up and up and it will come out to $1 trillion. But I am going to show him, based upon votes that have been taken on the other side of the aisle, that it is not politically possible for them to do it unless they are willing to vote differently than they have ever voted before because they have to take on some of the most popular tax credits that are in the Tax Code. That is what I am going to do in the few minutes the Senator has devoted to me.

MR. SESSIONS. I thank the Senator and ask him to take as much time as he chooses. But I note, as ranking member on the Finance Committee and having been on it and having dealt with these issues for many years, the Senator knows what the political situation is and he has the staff to help him ascertain the correct numbers. I think this will be an important bit of information to share with us, and I look forward to it.

Mr. GRASSLEY. Mr. President, over the 10 years that I was chairman or ranking member of the Finance Committee, I worked with several Budget Committee chairmen. They were Senator Domenici, Senator Nickles, Senator Gregg, Senator Conrad. We did not always agree on every issue, but by and large there was coordination between the Budget Committee and the Finance Committee. Basically, I had past chairmen, Republican or Democratic, come to me and say: Tell us what you can do or not do within the Finance Committee so we do not give you an impossible task when a budget resolution is adopted by the Senate. It worked very well because they respected the institutionalized knowledge within the staff of the Senate Finance Committee, both Republican and Democratic staffs, as well as the more important institutionalized information that comes from the Joint Committee on Taxation.

As I said, we did not always agree on every issue, but by and large there was that coordination. Unfortunately, the coordination receded somewhat, starting somewhat in the year 2007. Since 2010, we fell into this 4-year pattern of not even having a budget debate in the Senate, even though the law requires that the Senate adopt a budget every year.

Finally, getting back to abiding by the law—coordination provided the means then between the budget and Finance Committee that allowed the Finance Committee to realistically address the demands of the tax, trade, health and welfare policies that were intended by a budget resolution. This usually happened in a bipartisan way, but this year is different. This budget resolution does not realistically address the needs or the capabilities of the Finance Committee. By capabilities, I don't mean it is not there to get it done and people are willing to do it, but the possibility of doing it is very remote based upon the unrealistic assumptions in this document.

Despite claims to the contrary, this budget is not balanced unless one believes balance is more of the same fiscal behavior of the last 4 years of the Senate Democratic leadership fiscal policy. That policy has resulted in higher taxes, higher spending, and yet higher debt. Where there is fiscal pressure, it is placed on the Finance Committee by this document now before the Senate. The Finance Committee is called upon to do all the heavy lifting.

The principal lift is in the heavy tax increases. The Finance Committee has reconciled under this document with

an almost $1 trillion tax increase. Reserve funds, in addition to that $1 trillion, reserve funds anticipate another $500 billion in tax hikes to pay for even more spending.

The task put on the Finance Committee is described as curtailing or eliminating what is called ''spending through the Tax Code,'' and ''loopholes.'' But if we look at the document, and particularly if we look at recent history, we will find a different story that says what they assume is not very realistic.

We will find tax increases. I wish to explain that. But first I will account for revenue raisers the majority party has specified and supported with votes in this Congress and the last one. What those votes show, unless there is a big change of heart on the other side of the aisle, is there is not going to be that revenue ever raised. So that makes the document on the other side, if it is not possible, blue smoke and great hope and good luck.

What this is going to tell us is that the unspecified and undefined tax increases the budget resolution is seeking, once we have the undefined tax increases—I am going to then define that. I will define it by taking the universe of tax base broadeners and working through the list to explain to all the unreality. I will be able to show one of two conclusions. The first conclusion I can show, the math doesn't work and there are not sufficient revenue raisers to fill the revenue goal of my friends on the other side of the aisle or, No. 2, the budget resolution would need to go much further down the income scale and do what we just heard Senator ROBERTS say, start taxing middle-income taxpayers. But it is going to be hard to get them to admit that on the other side because all we have to do is tax the wealthy 1 percent and we can solve all our problems.

But we cannot only tax that 1 percent. We could confiscate—not tax but confiscate the income over $200,000 and we are going to run the Government for just a very few months. But people tend to believe that. It is very difficult to preach the other side, how unrealistic it is, but that is a fact.

All of us should take a careful look at the claims of the Democratic leadership and see how the claims stack up to the cold, hard numbers that I will give you and the analysis by the tax-writing committee staff. So let's turn to those numbers. Over the 10-year budget window going out to the year 2023, the budget resolution demands revenue and related outlay savings of $975 billion. There are two reserve funds, as I already said, that total up to about $580 billion in tax increases if that is taxed. And around here, with the ability—the willingness—to spend what they want to spend, they wouldn't mind tapping it, but I think that is unrealistic as well.

I am going to show my colleagues this chart. The first chart is a water well. Here is the top of the well, and we can see it is a long well to the bottom, and there is a little bit of water in the bottom. But most of the well from this point to the top is dry right now, and that is what they have to fill by their budget resolution.

At the top of the well we will see this number, $1.503 trillion, plus money to raise money for the reserve fund. That is what it takes to go from here to here to fill it.

If we want to put this another way, this budget puts the burden on the Finance Committee to come up with $1.5 trillion in offsets over the next 10 years. This budget assumes the well of revenue raisers is full to the brim, but they are starting out at this point.

My colleagues know I am a farmer. I should say my son is a farmer; I am kind of like a hired man now. I think that gives me something to know about wells and the predictability of well water. We on the farm always hope we will get rain, and particularly now, as it is dry in the middle west. So now we get a decent level of water so we can fill up the well to the top so we have plenty of reserve.

As a former chairman and ranking member of the Finance Committee, I think I can tell my colleagues something about revenue raisers. In the positions I held on the Finance Committee, I led efforts to identify and enact sensible revenue raisers aimed at closing the tax gap and shutting down tax shelters. And as a senior tax-writing committee member, I continued to look for ways to shut off the unintended tax benefits.

Given this experience, I know what is realistic when it comes to revenue raisers. From 2001 through 2006, Congress enacted over 100 offsets with a combined total of not necessarily a lot of money but still a lot of money compared to this stuff we are talking about here, but it still scored for $1.7 billion over 1 year; over 5 years, $51.5 billion; and over 10 years, $157.9 billion. That is from about 100 offsets.

What other revenue raisers have been identified and scored? The President's last budget, the one we got in February of 2012—and they are supposed to be out every February and we are not going to get it until April 8 now; why I don't know—but the President's budget in 2012 contained a package of a lot of revenue that the Joint Committee on Taxation said would raise $1.4 trillion over 10 years.

The majority party has largely left these revenue-raising proposals untouched over the last 4 years. So if we have a Democratic President of the United States suggesting $1.4 trillion of revenue in his budget, as the suggestion from the White House, and the other side here in the Senate wants to raise a tremendous amount of revenue and they haven't touched it in the last 4 years, what makes us think they are going to touch it now? Is it realistic to think all of these taxes will be raised if even the Democratic President asks for it and his friends on the other side of the aisle—our friends as well—ignored it?

The majority party has, however, identified and specified and voted for tax hikes that amount to $108.3 billion. That is $108.3 billion of identified and scored revenue raisers. That is only about 7.8 percent of the amount that is needed to make this budget work. So we see how unrealistic this budget resolution is.

Based on these facts, what is the likelihood the Finance Committee will be able to come up with revenue raisers of this magnitude? In my view, from my 10 years as chairman and ranking member, that chance is not very high. If that is the case, then what will happen? The revenue side of the budget will be ignored, but the spending side will be followed. The net effect will be a massive tax increase, a bigger deficit, or both.

Now back to the chart. So the revenue-raising well is about 7.8 percent full. We have heard a lot about tax expenditures. As I have said before, the people have been told there are trillions of dollars of spending through the Tax Code. I am going to look at the individual income tax expenditures because the administration and the Democratic leadership have said they want to leave the corporate tax expenditures for lowering rates.

Here is a little irony. The Congressional Budget Act defines refundable tax credits as spending. It makes all the sense in the world because the tax benefits go to individuals who don't pay income tax. These credits are actually paid out in the form of a check in excess of any income tax liability of that individual. However, we won't hear the majority advocate reducing, let alone eliminating, any of those refundable tax credits. In fact, the majority's budget would increase them further. They represent even more significant tax expenditures.

I have another chart here based on the nonpartisan Joint Committee on Taxation data. Here are 10 tax expenditures. The chart shows the top 10 individual income tax expenditures from this year, 2013, through the year 2017. These top 10 expenditures represent 70 percent of the total individual tax expenditures.

No. 7 is the earned income tax credit. That is a refundable tax credit designed for low-income taxpayers.

No. 8 on the list—I won't bother to point to it—is the premium tax credit enacted by ObamaCare. By 2017, this credit will actually make its way into the top five. Like the earned income tax credit, the premium credit is fully refundable.

No. 9 on the chart is the child tax credit which is partially refundable.

For each of these credits, more than half of the value of the benefit is paid out in the form of a government check exceeding tax liabilities. That is direct spending through the Tax Code. Yet these credits are considered off limits by the majority.

So let's take a look at the tax expenditure No. 1. That is the tax-free treatment of employer-provided health care. Americans can look forward to $1 trillion of health care-related taxes coming due over the next 10 years. All of this tax increase is thanks to 21 tax increases contained in ObamaCare. My guess is the majority doesn't want to take on that group.

So No. 2 is tax-deferred retirement savings plans. It is defined benefit plans and section 401(k)-type plans. To be sure, some higher income taxpayers benefit. Defined benefit plans tend to dominate in the unionized world. Section 401(k)-type plans are more common now. Some high-income taxpayers do, in fact, benefit because they are owners of a business and we want them to set up and maintain the plans. About 4 percent of this tax expenditure goes to taxpayers at $1 million or more of income.

No. 3 on the list is the preferential rate for capital gains and dividends. It is true that higher income taxpayers tend to have more capital gains. But a few months ago the rate rose 59 percent with the ObamaCare and fiscal cliff deal tax hikes kicking in. Do we want to choke off more savings and investment?

No. 4 is the deduction for State and local income and real property taxes. The New York Times editorial page is usually very in tune with the majority. An editorial on December 6, 2012, has a title that says it all: ''Keep The State Tax Deduction.'' My guess is that with the heavy hit on heavily taxed blue State taxpayers, the majority will not want to visit that deduction.

No. 5 concerns the American dream of home ownership. It is the home mortgage interest deduction. It disproportionately goes to the middle-income taxpayer. Do we really want to tank the tepid housing recovery now underway?

So look at No. 6. It is the tax benefit from the Medicare benefits the Federal Government pays. We have heard a lot about the Medicare reforms contained in the Ryan budget from the majority. Does the majority want to cut the value of Medicare benefits by taxing them?

I have already discussed Nos. 7, 8, and 9 on the chart which are all refundable credits. They are the earned income tax credit, the premium tax credit, and the child tax credit. Significantly, the premium tax credit makes the list while only being in effect 4 out of the 5 years we have examined.

So how about the last one then, No. 10? It refers to the step-up in basis that occurs on death time transfers. Higher end taxpayers tend to pay the estate tax when they die. This policy ensures they don't pay a double tax on the transfer. Does the majority really want to reopen the estate tax debate that we all thought just ended on January 1?

If we were to expand on this list and look at the top 20 expenditures instead of just the top 10, we would account for 90 percent of the individual tax expenditures. They include such things as charitable deductions, tax incentives for college, and the exclusion of capital gains from the sale of a home. Does the majority want to raise taxes on the backs of college students or cause heartburn for middle-income homeowners when they sell their home?

Well, let's take a step back for a minute. Where does the budget take us? The terms of the budget documents tell us the majority Members say they want to eliminate or curtail spending through the Tax Code—$1 trillion plus another $500 billion if they decide how to spend it. Yet they themselves would vehemently oppose eliminating or reducing tax expenditures that are defined by our budget laws as spending.

I challenge the budget authors to tell me which tax benefits they want to curtail. Do they want to cut back the tax treatment of employer-provided health insurance? Do they want to cut back defined benefit plans or 401(k) plans? Do they want to increase capital gains and dividend rates even further than the 59 percent? Do they want to cut back on the State and local tax deduction? Do they want to cut back on the mortgage interest deduction? Do they want to tax Medicare benefits? Do they want to raise the tax level on death time transfers?

Well, I conclude: This budget represents a dramatic step backward for the American taxpayer. For the first time in 4 years, thank God, we are debating a budget. Yet it repeats the same fiscal pattern of the first term of this Presidency. It spends too much, it taxes too much, and it results in too much new debt.

As former chairman and ranking member—and I suppose this is the fourth or fifth time I have said this, so people get tired of me saying it—but in that former position, I am sorry to say the experience I have had is that this budget doesn't even attempt to match the demands of the Finance Committee with the numbers in this budget.

I hope deficit hawks on both sides of the aisle pay close attention. The only thing certain here is that new spending will occur.

The deficit impact of not realistically dealing with the tax, trade, and health policy spending priorities of the Finance Committee disguises the deficit built into this budget.

I have many other concerns about the budget proposed by the majority. Simply, today, I wanted to let the Senate know how the numbers on the revenue side do not work from the standpoint of the usual stands that people take on closing loopholes and not closing loopholes and based upon what is politically feasible out of the Finance Committee.

As we take up amendments, I am hopeful we can make the budget mesh with the Finance Committee's policy demands.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Alabama.

Mr. SESSIONS. Mr. President, I thank the distinguished ranking member of the Finance Committee. That was a very fine presentation. I believe he is absolutely accurate. It is easy to say we are going to close loopholes and we are going to raise a trillion dollars-plus from closing loopholes. But the Senator just showed, based on the votes of our Democratic colleagues, and others too that it is much harder to harvest money from legitimate tax deductions and credits than a lot of people think.

Would that be fair to say?

Mr. GRASSLEY. Absolutely. And based upon the experience we have had of actually voting on those issues in the past—or the fact that I stated how the President put certain things in his budget of February 2012, and none of those ideas have ever been brought up by the majority party in the period of time they have been before them. So if their own President—when I say their own President, the President of their party—our President proposes that they raise revenue from those places, and they do not do it, it signals to me it is a pretty difficult job to do, and it is not going to be any easier this year than in past years.

Mr. SESSIONS. I thank Senator GRASSLEY so much for his insight on that.

We also have Senator ENZI here, who is a member of the Finance Committee, and is a senior member of the Budget Committee also. He understands these issues deeply.

I yield to Senator ENZI.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Wyoming.

Mr. ENZI. Mr. President, I rise today to share with the American public exactly what they are getting with the majority's budget for the coming year. I will be blunt. It is not good news. In fact, after 4 years of not bringing up a budget for consideration by the Senate, what the majority has offered is a severe disappointment. We have to grow the economy, not the government. But, unfortunately, the majority's budget focuses on growing the government—more taxing, more spending, more government.

During our last break, I had an opportunity to travel around Wyoming. I did about 2,000 miles, and I did a bunch of listening sessions. That is where I just take notes while people tell me what is on their mind. They are not going to be pleased with this budget. In fact, they think the best way to grow jobs is to cut government. And they were very adamant on making sure the sequester happened, which would be the first real cut in government we have had in forever. They recognize that what we usually call a cut is when an agency asks for a billion dollars, and they only get a half a billion dollars in new money. They call that a half billion dollar cut. It is not a cut, it is an increase of half a billion dollars. But around here that would be a

cut. So we do not really do cuts. Sometimes we slow the growth of government, but we do not do cuts.

They actually want to see some action to cut, to balance the budget, and eventually to pay down the debt. They recognize that if interest rates go up, $16 trillion is going to be tough to pay the interest on, let alone pay back any principal, let alone do any other function of government.

So this is a budget that looks out over the next 10 years. It provides for significant tax increases, upwards of $1.5 trillion. But it also provides for significant spending increases. It is not as though we are increasing the revenue so that we could decrease the deficit and eventually decrease the debt. It is so we can add to spending—$162 billion next year alone. It provides for spending increases of 62 percent from today's budget levels.

Any savings are being claimed after the first year—after the first year. We never get to the second year, so the savings never make it—never pan out. It reminds me of a sign I saw on a restaurant. It said: Free drinks tomorrow. Of course, if you came in tomorrow, they said: No, no. Read the sign. It says: Free drinks tomorrow. That is the way we budget around here. We are always promising these things, but the real things do not happen.

Our problem is not that we tax too little but that we spend too much. A budget should serve as the blueprint to get the revenues and the spending aligned. Individuals have budgets. That is what they do. They see how much revenue they have coming in, and they see how much they can spend. They do not see how much they can spend and then see what the revenue is going to be. You cannot live in that kind of a world, but we do here.

Unfortunately, the majority's budget fails miserably in that respect. In fact, it does not balance the budget in any year over the next 10 years. The budget that was offered by the House Republicans, on the other hand, balances the budget in 2023. And, of course, the other side of the aisle talks about what a terrible budget that is. But they got it to balance. They have even introduced and passed budgets in the House for the last several years, and that takes a lot of courage when you know all that is going to happen over in this body is for it to get shot down by the majority. But those budgets have gotten some votes in favor of them.

The President has presented some budgets. The last 2 years, he has not gotten a single vote for his budget. I mean, he was not able to talk a single Democrat into voting for his budget—not one—let alone a Republican.

So the budget that was offered by the House Republicans balances in 2023. I have introduced a bill. It is called the Penny Plan. That cuts spending by 1 percent from every dollar for each of the next 3 years. If we could do that—true cuts—1 percent for each of the next 3 years, the budget would balance in 2016. I really think that is where we need to be—not 2023—2016. And, hopefully, we would not stop the cuts of 1 cent for every dollar. Families across America are having to cut more than that.

When I present this in Wyoming and other places, they say: Well, my wife just got laid off. We had to do a 20-percent cut, so why can't the Federal Government do a 1-penny-out-of-every-dollar cut? That would balance it by 2016. If we kept it going a little more, we would actually be paying down the debt—not just reducing the deficit but paying down the debt.

Our Nation owes $16 trillion, and no one is talking about reducing it. We have to get to balance—the sooner the better—and start paying down the debt. And do not get confused by the language the majority will use. They will say that their budget takes a ''balanced approach.'' But it does not balance. There is a big difference. ''Balanced approach'' to them means ''fair'' tax increases. I am not sure what that means, but that is what they mean by ''balance.'' And it is tax and spend, it is increasing deficits, and increasing debt as far as the eye can see. This is not the plan America needs to get its fiscal house in order. Next year alone, the majority wants to increase spending by nearly $162 billion, and the deficit next year is anticipated to be $152 billion above current projections. Over the next 10 years, deficits are expected to total $5.2 trillion. If we adopt the majority's budget, that is $5.2 trillion in addition to the $16 trillion we already owe. That is not balancing the budget. That is not a balanced approach.

None of this spending is associated with any kind of reforms to the drivers of our out-of-control deficits and debt that will bankrupt—bankrupt—Social Security and Medicare. The majority's budget provides no path to save Social Security and Medicare. They are hoping the Republicans will do that and take all the flak that is involved for it. Well, if we do it soon enough, there is not as much flak as if we do it later.

It has been a shame that we have been years without a budget, and when the majority finally gets around to doing it they do not even address the biggest driver.

Earlier this evening, the majority leader commented that we can learn from the bipartisanship shown by Senators MIKULSKI and SHELBY on their work on the bill that will fund the government for the rest of the year. I think it was a massive opportunity and expenditure of effort that they did. But what I want to point out is that they had the opportunity to work things out together—together. That is bipartisan. That means sitting down together and figuring out what both sides think are the priorities, and seeing if there is not some way to put those into a single budget. I know it has not been done in years, but it is something I imagine America dreams about. I wish the majority would have provided that same opportunity in the Budget Committee. Maybe then the majority would have brought a bipartisan budget to the Senate floor. This does not have to be a shooting match. It can be a realization of a way to match spending with the revenues we have.

I was disheartened last week when I finally received the majority's budget to see that it simply continues the mantra of ''tax and spend.'' We cannot tax the American people every time Congress screws up, every time we overspend. And there are a lot of ways we do overspend.

One of the favorite things around here is to propose a grand new idea, and since that grand new idea would have a huge pricetag on it, we reduce it by saying: We will just make it a demonstration project. We will just do it in five States to start with, with a very minimal budget, and that will prove the value of this project. And practically every one shows they are a valuable project.

Well, at that point the local governments or the States are supposed to take them over and sell it to the rest of the country so that everybody winds up with this tremendous project. That is not what happens. They come back the next year and they say: This worked phenomenally, so we need to expand it to all 50 States because everybody deserves a great program such as this.

Well, we increased it from 5 to 50, so we increased it tenfold, at least. And chances are pretty good that some of those projects are done in small States. So when you put them into big States, they are an even bigger blowup of the budget. That is the way we bust the budget around here—just one of many ways.

Rather than looking for waste and abuse and duplication in government spending—and we know there is some—the majority simply decided to ask the hard-working American public to send in more of their hard-earned dollars to Washington to pay for more spending. These tax increases the majority calls for will hit the middle class. They say it will not hit the middle class. But we did some of the rich, and I noticed, in the alternative minimum tax—that is a great phrase. That sounds like everybody ought to be paying tax, and that is kind of an American principle, but it is not something that happens around here. Over 50 percent of the people do not pay any tax now. But we had this alternative minimum tax so that the rich would pay more. Well, inflation changed it so that 34 million Americans are being hit by that in the middle class. Consequently, we changed it. That is what we do when we try and mess around with classes of people.

To my constituents back home in Wyoming and fellow citizens across the country, let me be clear: It is your money, not the government's money. That is what they were telling me as I traveled around Wyoming for 2,000 miles and did my listening sessions.

They say it is our money. As legislators, we have to do a better job of taking care of the funds they provide us and ensuring that it is spent wisely.

The majority thinks it knows best how to spend the money the American people work hard to make. The budget they have offered seeks more than $1 trillion—let me repeat that: more than $1 trillion—in new taxes over the next 10 years. And debt will still grow by $7 trillion. That would be $23 trillion. That is a lot to pay interest on. Take and figure that out, if you can, with all those zeros that are out there, how much money that amounts to—at some moderate rate, say, 5 percent, because that is what it is anticipated to grow to in that same amount of time. And I think it could go well higher than that. Because if the rest of the world that is loaning us 40 percent of our money decides we are not the best place to put that money, the interest rates will have to go up dramatically in order to encourage the kind of money to keep borrowing $23 trillion—or $16 trillion; that is, if we can balance the budget quickly. In fact, the majority wants to set up a fast-track legislative process to get $975 billion from you as quickly as possible.

Now, we had the discussion earlier about taxes. We thought we had worked the tax problem for everybody and preserved people's taxes for 99 percent of the people. We thought there were going to be some spending cuts coming. Somebody sent me this little chart that I have to share.

This says ''Republican'' on it: OK. I will raise taxes if you promise to cut spending.

Well, Lucy says: It is a deal.

But we have been watching this cartoon for years and years. We know what happens. When we go to pick up the spending cuts, the football suddenly gets lifted out of the way and we end up on our back, the American public winds up on its back. Those are not the kinds of spending cuts we are looking for. We are looking for some real spending cuts, not just a decrease in the growth but some real spending cuts. There is a way to do those.

Wyoming has been faced with probably an 8-percent reduction in its income. How did they handle it? The Governor saw that coming, got a hold of every department and program and said: I need a plan from you for how you would cut 2 percent, how you would cut 4 percent, how you would cut 6 percent, and how you would cut 8 percent. When he got the four plans from every department, he took a look at them to see if they were cutting the worst first—you know, reducing the pain as much as possible. It worked that way. There was hardly a whimper and hardly anything noticeable to the customer; that is, the people who live in Wyoming. That is good management, not an e-mail that goes out that says: Make the cut as painful as possible. That is the sequester we are going through now. That should never happen in any kind of a managed business or a managed government. I guess that would be saying it is not a managed government.

When we took up the budget in committee last week, I offered an amendment to strike the language that provided for the fast-track tax increase process. My amendment was meant to ensure that the tax reform would be conducted in a bipartisan manner, to generate a more efficient, fairer, and simpler Tax Code and spur economic growth rather than raise revenues through legislation that can be passed with a simple majority here in the Senate.

A simple-majority vote would ensure that the minority party's views would receive little, if any, consideration. We would have no input. Debate time and the number of amendments that could be offered to improve the legislation would also be limited. We need to have an open process where all Members can have their voices heard. We simply need to stop dealmaking and start legislating.

We have had the system around here for a while where we work from contrived crises that have very specific dates at which the sky falls and the United States is demolished. Of course, that does generate a lot of publicity and all the media and everything leading up to that crunch. A group goes off and makes a deal. We find out about that deal in the last hour. Our choice at that point is take it or leave it. Well, if the sky is going to fall and America is going to be destroyed, what is the choice?

That is not the way to do it. We have to quit dealmaking and start legislating. The way you legislate is to have the chairman and the ranking member and other interested people on the committee who have a very specific interest in an issue sit down together and see if they cannot work out a basic package. It only has to be a basic package. It does not have to be a comprehensive package. This basic package would then go to committee. That is where the people can turn in amendments and improve it from their viewpoint.

The reason we have so many people in the Senate and in the House is so that we can see as many unintended consequences as possible. But if it does not go through committee, we have turned those people off. We have said: Your views do not count; your amendments do not count. Consequently, we do not end up with a good piece of legislation coming out of committee. If you get it out of committee in good shape, you can get it to the floor in good shape. If you get it to the floor in good shape, you can take additional amendments and improve it maybe more. That has been my experience with this. Yes, there have to be some tough votes with that. That is what we do. That is what we get paid for—legislating, voting.

We have spent the last week working on a continuing resolution. We got to vote three times. There were only requests for 11 more votes. We did not get to vote on those until tonight. So they had it arranged in a very fast process. Some of the people did not actually get their say.

We have to stop dealmaking and start legislating, particularly on big and important issues such as tax reform. We have to get back to a regular process so all Members can give input and improve the legislation.

Senator Gregg and Senator WYDEN worked on income taxes for a long time. Then Senator COATS and Senator WYDEN worked on income taxes for a long time. Now I am working with Senator WYDEN and Senator COATS on income taxes. I think we can come up with something that will work. We can do both the individual and the corporate tax rates at the same time because they are very interrelated. We would not have that big of a tax code if it were not for all of the interrelationships. It is time that we made it simpler and fairer. It can be done, but it is not going to be done on a partisan basis in a very short period of time and get it right. So we have to get back to that regular process so all Members can give input and improve the legislation.

Unfortunately, my amendment was defeated. Every Member of the majority voted against it. But I will try here again on the Senate floor. Senator GRASSLEY, who was a former chairman of the Finance Committee, and I have come together. We will offer an amendment to get rid of the fast-track process and provide for progrowth, revenue-neutral tax reform for corporate, business, and individual taxes.

I have a few other amendments I plan on filing as well to improve this budget. One would provide for a phase-in or transition for any changes to the Tax Code so that people and businesses can plan accordingly and we do not inadvertently put companies out of business or add people to the unemployment rolls.

Another amendment would require that each Federal agency identify and prioritize its programs, its projects, its activities so that they can cut the worst first, as I mentioned in the Wyoming example. That way we get what is the least harmful and least painful. There would be spending reductions. We might even get into duplication between agencies.

Senator COBURN and I did a little study of the health, education, labor, and pension programs. We found there was $9 billion—$9 billion of duplication. You cannot get rid of all of that, but you ought to be able to get rid of half of it. Well, Senator COBURN got so enthused by it that he went and took a look at the rest of government. He found $900 billion a year in duplication. Now, how is that possible? Well, my jurisdiction was rather limited, but what I have jurisdiction over is duplicated in almost every way. Almost every department, agency, and program has

something to do with financial literacy. Based on our budget process, I would say that is probably failing. Maybe we ought to get rid of all duplication.

I will also file an amendment that would provide for protecting and restoring monies in dedicated funds, such as the trust funds, so we will not steal money from other areas to make up for shortfalls, as the majority did with the abandoned mine land money for 10 years that was owed to Wyoming but instead was used to pay for a 2-year highway bill.

Finally, I will file an amendment reflecting the goals of the Marketplace Fairness Act so that we put all businesses, whether brick-and-mortar, online, or catalog, on a level playing field with respect to the collection of sales and use taxes.

The majority's budget would severely harm my home State of Wyoming. The more than $1 trillion in tax increases would mean losses in personal income, household disposable income, and job opportunities. Over the next 10 years, the tax increases would cut personal income in Wyoming over $4 billion. You have to remember, we are a small State. We finally got past the half-million mark in people. So $4 billion is a lot. It would cut household disposable income on an average of $26,000 per household. There would be an average of nearly 1,900 job losses. You have to remember, we only have half a million people. These tax increases clearly are not the recipe for fixing our ailing economy and certainly not the answer for the hard-working folks back home in Wyoming.

When you start with one party doing the drafting—and those who wrote the budget hold the majority on the Budget Committee—you can expect the bill to be one-sided. If you keep on doing what you have been doing, you can expect to get the same result. Unfortunately, I believe that is what we will see this week as we debate the budget on the Senate floor.

The majority kept us in the dark on the last budget until last Wednesday evening. We had to present our opening statements in the Budget Committee before we even saw the budget the majority would offer.

Now, I do have to say in the defense of the majority that is the way it has been for several years, both when the Republicans were in charge and when Democrats were in charge. That does not mean it is right. If you want a good budget, you have to share the information, and share it before people have to comment if you really want good comments.

Then we had to turn around and start voting on the amendments the next morning in the Budget Committee. We were not part of that process. It was on a partisan line.

I was particularly disheartened by one amendment that failed on a party-line vote that was offered by Senator PORTMAN from Ohio. His amendment was simply asking the Congressional Budget Office to provide additional information with the cost estimates it provides on legislation affecting revenues. That is right—he was just asking for additional information. Every Member of the majority voted against it. How could a request for additional information be so partisan? We can and must do better for our constituents and our country.

Several weeks from now, we may see the President's budget proposal. Of course, he will be late to the game since the House and Senate will have already acted on the budget. That would be the first time in over 90 years that would be the case. By the way, his budget was due nearly 2 months ago. I anticipate it will include many of the same things we have here in the Senate majority's budget—more taxes, more spending, more government.

As we are learning all too well with the majority's drive to repeal the recent spending cuts called sequestration, taxes generally go on forever, but spending cuts seldom make it through the year. We were promised spending cuts, but the football is about to be jerked out. We have to grow the economy, not the government. Unfortunately, the majority's budget has it backward: It grows the government at the expense of the economy.

I look forward to the debate on this budget and filing amendments to improve it both for my constituents in Wyoming and my fellow citizens across the country. I know the debate around here has delayed the beginning of the budget process so that we are going to be under a crunch. Perhaps it will go into the weekend and give us an opportunity to do all of the amendments rather than just trying to fatigue us on Friday.

I yield the floor.

Mr. SESSIONS. I thank Senator ENZI. Senator ENZI is an accountant, a businessman. I do not believe any Member of this body has traveled his State more on the ground than he in the last number of years. As a matter of fact, I will say with certainty that is so. He travels constantly, talks to people all over the State.

I just have one question of the Senator. When you talk to people in Wyoming, real people in gas stations——

Mrs. MURRAY. Would the Senator yield for a second on a unanimous consent?

Mr. SESSIONS. I would be pleased to yield.

UNANIMOUS CONSENT AGREEMENT—H.R. 933

Mrs. MURRAY. I ask unanimous consent that the title amendment for H.R. 933 which is at the desk be agreed to.

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

The amendment (No. 176) was agreed to, as follows:

Amend the title to read: ''An Act making consolidated appropriations and further continuing appropriations for the fiscal year ending September 30, 2013, and for other purposes.''

Mr. SESSIONS. So I guess the President here has said: Well, so you know my goal is not to chase a balanced budget just for the sake of balance. But when our colleagues talk about a balanced approach and they have a budget that does not actually balance—I guess what I am saying is that the Senator talks to his constituents more than any Senator here, I am sure. Does the Senator think they really believe we should have a balanced budget, revenue equaling outgo? I ask an accountant that question.

Mr. ENZI. The Wyoming people absolutely think there should be a balanced budget. They do not think it ought to take 10 years to get there. They know how they have to operate. These are just hard-working, ordinary people with big hearts and an interest in jobs and their families. They are not seeing jobs happening. They are not seeing the economy improving. They are seeing taxes rising and people just talking about raising taxes. That is not where they expect us to go. All of them can suggest someplace within their realm of work that there ought to be a change.

Most of them say the best way to improve the economy, the best way to do jobs is just to get the government out of our way. These are people sitting on a tractor, even working in government during the day, thinking of ways their job could be reinvented to maybe be a little bit better. That is how governments can improve. They come up with some commonsense suggestions. I haul it back here, but commonsense doesn't go very far around here. I will keep hauling it, continue talking to people and continue to see what their expectations are, and hopefully we can meet those expectations. It doesn't take an accountant to know we are overspending.

Mr. SESSIONS. The Senator mentioned—which it does seem to me we are doing here by this budget—if it were to pass, we don't have any plans to change what we are doing. The problem is that you haven't sent us enough money. As the Senator indicated, send us more money, and we will all be happy in Washington. That is not what my constituents are telling me they think we should do. What are yours saying?

Mr. ENZI. They are saying there should be quite a changeover back here until we have people who understand that you are not supposed to spend more than you take in. The answer is not charging them more in taxes every time we can't meet that expectation. They already think there are enough programs out here. Sometimes I have to agree with them.

When I started as the chairman of the Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions—HELP—Committee, within my jurisdiction was preschool programs. There were 119 preschool programs. We spent more on preschool than we did on K–12. Senator Kennedy and I were able to get those down to 69 programs. People wonder why we can't get it below 69

programs. Most of them aren't handled by the departments we work with. They are handled by Agriculture, Commerce, and other agencies. We don't get to dabble in those. There are ways we can eliminate duplication and save a little money, but we are not looking for that.

Mr. SESSIONS. Here is the GAO report I think the Senator referred to, the 2012 annual report: ''Opportunities to Reduce Duplication, Overlap and Fragmentation, Achieve Savings, and Enhance Revenue.'' I think my constituents would say this is exactly what you should do. Do yours?

Mr. ENZI. Absolutely. It looks like a tremendous manual. We have a thing called the Government Performance and Results Act, which is where every agency is supposed to list what they do and how we will know they completed it. At the end of the year, they are supposed to evaluate themselves to see if they did what they said they were going to do. Most of them don't report, and those that usually do fail, and that is a lot of what is in that report. The agency is saying: No, we didn't do what we are supposed to do.

Mr. SESSIONS. It is. It lists here on page 51 specific examples. The Senator mentioned duplication. This one is employment of people with disabilities—a very good goal. This is something we would like to see if we can facilitate and help them work. It states: ''Better coordination among 50 programs in nine Federal agencies that support employment of people with disabilities.'' There are 50 programs in 9 agencies. Does the Senator believe we could get more help for the disabled if those programs were consolidated and brought together in a single or a few programs?

Mr. ENZI. One of the things that happen with the programs is they usually get named after some Senator and he is very protective of his particular program. This is one of the things that make it very difficult to eliminate programs. Yes, if the duplication is eliminated, you may put the emphasis on the programs that are really working and that should succeed. That should make a bigger difference to everybody.

Mr. SESSIONS. That is common sense. I thank the Senator so much for his contributions. I do believe the American people have a right to say to us: You fix the duplication. You fix some of this waste. You quit throwing money at Solyndras and hot tubs in Las Vegas before you ask us for any more money.

We haven't done it.

I know fundamentally it is fair to say the Chief Executive of the United States is the person responsible for managing this bureaucracy. We are sort of like an active board of directors that monitors this.

Would the Senator not expect that a really committed President, Chief Executive of the United States, should be sending to us proposals on a regular basis that are based on reports of his Cabinet and sub-Cabinet people to eliminate waste, fraud, and abuse? Wouldn't that help us if we had more support from the President's side?

Mr. ENZI. That is probably the only way it can be done, is to have the President suggest this is leadership, this is management, this is what the White House is supposed to be in charge of and could do.

I also know that even if the President talks about eliminating a program, there will be the 10 good examples from across the United States that actually work that will come in and flood us with comments about how that program cannot be eliminated. This is why I have the penny plan—one cent of every dollar across the board. Then you don't run into that problem. As I said, that would balance in 3 years, not 10 years.

Mr. SESSIONS. If we reduce by 1 percent, one penny out of every dollar of spending for 3 years, the budget would balance in 3 years, 4 years?

Mr. ENZI. Yes. These are the latest figures. After the sequestration and after the fiscal cliff, it came down to that. Before that, it would have taken us 5 years.

Mr. SESSIONS. I thank the Senator for sharing that and thank him for sharing his thoughts with us tonight.

Mr. ENZI. I thank the ranking member for the tremendous job he has done and the hours he and his staff have put into reviewing these things. This is not an easy thing to follow. The book we have is an actual manual. The bill we receive to work from is just a bunch of numbers. It is hard to put that all together, and I thank the Senator for the information he has provided.

Mr. SESSIONS. I thank the Senator. I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Washington.

Mrs. MURRAY. Mr. President, we do have some serious differences of opinions between the two parties when it comes to our values and our priorities. We believe our budget should reflect this, and we are having a good debate. Those differences will be difficult enough to bridge, and we should be able to at least agree on what the facts are.

I wish to take a moment tonight to correct an inaccuracy I have heard a lot in the last few days, including on the floor tonight. We are hearing some Republicans say that the Senate budget includes a $1.5 trillion tax hike. This simply is not true. Here are the facts.

Of the $975 billion in new revenue, which comes from those who can afford it the most, $480 billion is matched with responsible spending cuts to fully replace the sequestration, $100 billion goes toward targeted high-priority infrastructure repair and job training to help restore the recovery, put Americans back to work, and the rest goes to help reduce the deficit.

Unfortunately, rather than seriously considering the credible path we have presented in our budget plan, some Republicans have decided to play games with the numbers, and they are not telling the truth. Instead of subtracting the sequestration replacement portion and the investment package from the $975 billion in total revenue, they are trying to say you should somehow add them all together. They are taking one side of the ledger, combining it with the other side of the ledger, and coming to some conclusion that makes absolutely no sense to us. It would be like handing over $2 to buy a cup of coffee and having someone say: Well, the price was actually $2 plus the value of that coffee. It doesn't make any sense.

You don't have to take my word for it. Fact checkers and reporters have called this claim false and a step too far. The Washington Post Fact Checker even gave it two Pinocchios.

Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent to have printed in the RECORD a story from the Washington Post on this inaccurate claim.

There being no objection, the material was ordered to be printed in the RECORD, as follows:

MITCH MCCONNELL'S CLAIM THAT THE DEMOCRATS PLAN A $1.5 TRILLION TAX HIKE

(By Glenn Kessler)

''Their budget will do more to harm the economy than to help it, and it will let Medicare and Social Security drift closer to bankruptcy. And then there's the Democrats' $1.5 trillion tax hike. Trillion with a T. Let me just repeat that: Any senator who votes for that budget is voting for a $1.5 trillion tax hike, the largest in the history of our country.''

—Senate Minority Leader Mitch McConnell, speech on the Senate floor, March 14, 2013

Shortly after McConnell (R-Ky.) made these comments, Democrats cried foul. The budget plan, they said, has $975 billion in higher taxes, not $1.5 trillion. They point to the summary tables of the budget resolution unveiled by Sen. Patty Murray (D-Wash.), who chairs the Budget Committee. Sure enough, there's a line showing $975 billion in new revenue.

But nothing's ever easy with the budget process in Washington. In fact, it's a morass, with many things open to interpretation, as we discovered as we went back and forth between the Democrats and Republicans—and then consulted with various budget experts.

Let's take a tour through the numbers.

THE FACTS

There are two key parts to this discussion—the actual text of the legislation and what in effect is a glossy marketing document (''Restoring the Promise of American Opportunity''). The legislation does not have many numbers, whereas the marketing document does.

In the marketing document, Murray describes how she will use $480 billion of the tax revenues to reverse part of the automatic spending cuts in the sequester, and another $100 billion for new spending on infrastructure.

The text of the legislation, meanwhile, establishes a bunch of ''deficit neutral reserve funds,'' including one labeled as ''to replace sequestration'' and the other ''to promote employment and job growth.'' But there are no numbers attached to those funds. Meanwhile, the legislation also includes instructions (known as ''reconciliation'') to the Finance Committee to boost revenues by $975 billion.

Deficit neutral means you need a mix of taxes and spending cuts to fulfill your goals.

Republicans assumed that since Murray in her marketing document had said she would boost revenues by $480 billion to pay for the sequester and $100 billion to spend on infrastructure, the language meant that those funds would come from additional taxes. (Depending how you read the document, the $975 billion in new revenues is also slated for ''deficit reduction,'' and the same money in theory can't be used twice.)

Thus $975 billion plus $580 billion equals more than $1.5 trillion.

Democrats say this is ridiculous. They argue that they will apply the $975 billion in new tax revenue to the goals outlined in the document, including applying $480 billion to replace the sequestration cuts. (Another $480 billion to alter the sequester would come from spending cuts.) They cast the reserve funds more as a device to avoid legislative points of order, which would require a 60-vote threshold to overcome, rather than just the 50 votes generally required for a budget resolution.

The whole discussion reminded The Fact Checker of the budget headaches frequently experienced when he covered the budget process many years ago. Fierce battles are often waged over highly arcane matters.

We consulted with a variety of budget experts, and things became even more murky. The consensus was that Republicans have a point—that this was a theoretical possibility—but it was not likely.

G. William Hoagland, senior vice president of the Bipartisan Policy Center and longtime budget sage for Senate Republicans, said the GOP scenario was possible but ''unlikely,'' as the Democrats have ''a clear intention to raise $975 billion in revenues.'' He said that such reserve funds are more to send messages to fellow party members—in other words, to garner votes—as opposed to being substantive items. ''It's grease to make the wheels go around,'' he said.

In sum, he said, he viewed the legislation's reserve-fund language as ''a clumsy way to avoid directly addressing offsetting the sequester.''

Jason Delisle, another former GOP staff member on the Budget Committee now at the New America Foundation, said that ''Republicans are right to say that the wiggle room means the official number is not the official number—that it could be higher if the reserve funds are used. Fair point.''

But Delisle added: ''The Republican argument rests on the assumption that the Democrats bring up a tax-and-spend bill in addition to a reconciliation bill for each and every reserve fund in the budget resolution; thus there are more tax increases in the budget resolution than what they say. I think the Republicans are overstating the likelihood of that scenario.''

Ed Lorenzen, who was a budget policy adviser for House Democrats and is now at the Committee for a Responsible Federal Budget, agreed with Delisle and added that he viewed the reserve funds as ''primarily for procedural accounting purposes to adjust internal budget allocations for points of order.'' He said that ''the reserve fund doesn't require an additional $100 billion in revenues to pay for the $100 billion in stimulus spending; rather it allows the budget committee chairman to adjust the allocations to accommodate $100 billion for stimulus spending in the resolution if the revenues already assumed in the resolution to offset it have been adopted.''

Keith Hennessey, another former GOP budget expert who now teaches at Stanford University, took a darker view.

Democrats, he said, ''want to say the budget [plan] includes $100 billion in new spending for jobs and infrastructure by pointing to the assumption in the non-legislative document, but then say that nothing in the legislative text of the budget resolution requires $100 billion in extra taxes.'' He was especially suspicious of the fact that reserve funds do not have limits—as is sometimes the case in budget resolutions—and said it was perfectly acceptable to argue that the budget ''also allows for another $580 billion in tax increases to offset additional spending increases she [Murray] assumes and promotes aggressively.''

He added: ''If anything I'd argue that even the $1.5 trillion number understates the tax increases allowed by the Murray budget resolution. She's requiring $975 billion in tax increases to reduce future deficits, and allowing for unlimited amounts more to pay for new spending. I find that terrifying.''

THE PINOCCHIO TEST

Clearly, we're in a bit of an expert muddle here, with even Republican-leaning budget wonks lacking a consensus. But let's step back a moment and look at the big picture.

Democrats have repeatedly said they plan to seek $975 billion in additional revenue and would task the Finance Committee to come up with the precise closing of loopholes and such. There may be something vague and suspicious about the reserve funds, but under the GOP scenario, Democrats would also have to vote for even more taxes—which isn't very likely.

Budget resolutions, after all, are basically like a blueprint for a house, with the details filled in later. Both sides try to score political points with the votes that are cast on such documents, but in sum, many of these votes are relatively meaningless.

McConnell could have raised serious questions about what Democrats intended to do with these reserve funds and how they intended to fund them. But instead he has taken a theoretical possibility and turned it into a hard fact: ''Any senator who votes for that budget is voting for a $1.5 trillion tax hike, the largest in the history of our country.''

That's going a step too far.

Mrs. MURRAY. We are having an important conversation about the direction of our country, what kind of Nation we want to leave to our children and grandchildren. It will not be easy to reach a deal. We are working very hard to get a budget passed out of the Senate and to move forward from there. This is what the American people expect. It is what they deserve.

I hope our colleagues will stick to the facts and not try to muddy the water and help us focus on the urgent task at hand.

Mr. President, I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Alabama.

Mr. SESSIONS. Mr. President, another thing that I think is important and that we do agree on is the concept that our plan should be to create growth, jobs, and prosperity. A budget-balancing exercise must be a part of that whole vision of how we make America a better, more prosperous place. What we are learning is that we can't borrow our way to prosperity.

I will never forget being in Evergreen, AL, a few years ago at a townhall meeting when a nice African-American gentleman stood up. He said, ''My daddy always told me you can't borrow your way out of debt.''

If you think about it, that is basically what we are saying we are going to do. We are saying it is not a spending problem. This is not the problem we have. The problem we have is that we don't have enough money.

We have two solutions: One is to borrow more money, and the other is to tax more, taking money from people who otherwise would use it in the economy to invest, expand businesses and the like, or raise—increase spending or borrow the money, adding to our debt.

Debt accumulates over time. Each billion dollars, trillion dollars that is added to the debt, we pay interest on. People lend us that money. A lot of people haven't thought about it much, but we have to pay interest on it. It is projected by the budget before us today that in 10 years we will be paying $800 billion—virtually $800 billion a year in interest. Think about this. Interest on our debt will be almost $800 billion a year. Under the CBO current baseline it is a similar number. The Defense Department budget, which is actually being reduced—one of our largest—is $500 billion, Social Security is about $750 billion, and Medicare is about the same or a little smaller. It would exceed every other budget item in our budget—interest on the debt—every year.

We have been wrestling, nickeling and diming, cobbling together money for a budget for our highways—$40 billion or so we could put together and have a program that doesn't cut our highway funding. We have more efficient cars, people are not buying as much gas, and taxes aren't as much as we projected they would be a number of years ago. It is getting to be a tight budget. We spend about $40 billion—maybe a little more now—on the highway budget every year. This is maybe 1.1 percent of the total Federal Government budget.

We will be spending $800 billion on interest each year. The money we spend on interest produces us nothing. All it does is help remind us of the good old high time we had back in 2008, 2009, 2010, 2011, 2012, 2013, when we were spending and borrowing. We can think back: Wasn't that a great time when interest rates were unbelievably, artificially low. They will not stay at that rate; they are going up. We have had a great time, but the piper is going to demand his due as the years go by. It is just a fact.

This is how countries get in trouble. Greece and all of those countries in trouble in Europe, their debt became so high, their interest rates started going up. People were afraid to lend them money, and they wouldn't lend them more money unless there was more interest. All of a sudden, their interest payments were so large that their whole economy and governments were threatened. I think this is a big deal.

We keep hearing that spending is not the problem. I would like to talk about this a little bit because it is very important.

NANCY PELOSI, minority leader in the House, said this earlier this year: ''So

it is almost a false argument to say we have a spending problem.''

We don't have a spending problem. The American people need to send us more money, I guess is what she would say. No, don't look at these duplicative programs; don't look where we are wasting money. It is important. You can't have austerity and actually cancel a worthless government program. They somehow might lose their job and the country will sink into the ocean. America will be better, our economy will be stronger, if we are leaner and more productive as a government. Surely, we can agree on that. Surely, we can't maintain, as Paul Krugman did the other day—unless he is advising the Democratic majority in the Senate—that even wasteful Defense Department spending shouldn't be cut because we want to stimulate the economy with borrowed money, throwing money at programs that are no good. That is no way to do business.

STENY HOYER, one of the Democratic leaders in the House, says: Does the country have a spending problem? The country has a paying-for problem. We don't pay enough, Mr. HOYER says. Mr. HOYER says we need to pay more to Washington so Washington can keep spending.

We are not changing. It is the American people's fault. Don't you know, we are investing for you. Give us more money so we can invest. Don't you think all these programs work? Aren't they doing great? No, we are not going to reform them. We can't cut a single one—children will be thrown into the streets; old people won't have drugs for their health care. And all of this because of a modest reduction in the growth of spending?

Congressman RYAN has demonstrated, and the numbers are absolutely clear, that we can increase spending by 3.4 percent a year, and the budget will balance in 10 years. We don't even have to cut spending. We have to reduce the rate of growth in spending from around 5.4 percent to 3.4 percent and the budget balances. But President Obama says he is not interested in balancing the budget. My goal is not to chase a balanced budget, he says.

I know my colleagues have used the word ''balanced.'' I said earlier they used the word ''balanced'' tonight 14 times, but I have been corrected. It is 24 times already tonight that my colleagues have used the word ''balanced'' in relation to this budget that never balances and never will balance because they are not concerned about balancing the budget. That is not what it is about with them. They think bringing the budget into balance, as most States have to do, as all cities and counties have to do, is austerity. Oh, we can't have austerity. That might hurt the government. Somebody might lose their job. They no longer would be paid to do some worthless job that doesn't produce anything. We have to keep paying them anyway because it would be austere to cut that out.

Senator HARKIN said in February: We have the richest Nation in the world. If we are so rich, why are we so broke? Is it a spending problem? No, it's because we have a misallocation of capital, a misallocation of wealth. If we are so rich, why are we broke, he says. Is it a spending problem? No, it is because we have a misallocation of capital, a misallocation of wealth.

What he means is the government hasn't taken enough wealth from the American people who worked hard and earned it, so they can distribute it around. That is what he means; that we are entitled to more of it from the economy, and we can extract more of it and then we can pass it out and we can tell all the people who get our checks how much we did for them. By the way, we ask them to vote for us while we are at it. See what I sent you? I need your vote now. By the way, these awful Republicans, they are talking about taking those checks away. You might not get all that money now, or you might get $98 instead of $100, and I am going to protect you.

So this is the politics of this thing. It is clear we have a mentality around here that is not healthy, and the mentality is that it is not a spending problem and we don't have to cut spending and the Democratic budget increases spending over the baseline we are on. It raises taxes. We will submit a document for the record that we think shows we have $1.5 trillion in tax increases in this bill. But whether it is $1.5 trillion or $1 trillion, the deal is that spending goes up, and there is virtually no alteration in the debt course of America over the next 10 years.

So why is it that it is a spending problem? Let me explain it. It actually came to me more clearly during a hearing recently where Mr. Elmendorf, who is the Director of CBO, the Congressional Budget Office—and a very smart man and a decent individual—was talking about the growth in spending and taxes and the tax increases that just occurred and that sort of thing. This is the story.

I asked him this: If we raised enough taxes to balance the budget today, and if the economy is growing at 2 percent, would the taxes grow at about 2 percent a year?

He said: Yes. They work hard to figure out what kind of tax growth it is, but taxes basically grow with the economy. As more people are working, the economy grows, and they pay more taxes. If they grow at 4 percent, the government takes in more money than if it grows at 2 percent.

But the question was, What if spending is growing at 5 percent? Even if we raise enough money today to close the $1.2 billion deficit we had last year to zero, and the economy is growing at 2 percent, and spending is growing at 5 percent, we will immediately start off on an unsustainable debt course.

So I asked him: Well, then, that is the definition of an unsustainable course, isn't it; that you are on a path to raise spending more than you are on a path to have revenue come up?

And that is where we are. We can't keep raising taxes and keep allowing our spending rate to increase beyond what the economy will sustain. This economy, this government, this America that has produced the greatest wealth, the greatest freedom, the greatest prosperity, the greatest growth, the greatest innovation the world has ever known was not built on a state-dominated economy. It is not a socialist government state; it is not a European economy. It is a growth economy. We will make a mistake that we will regret, and it will be a colossal error for the future of this country if we alter that great characteristic of this fabulous country of which we are a part.

We are a government of limited powers, a constitutionally controlled government. It does not dominate our economy. It does not dominate the people's lives. People are free, and they should be encouraged to be independent and resourceful and to take care of themselves and their families. When they have a hard time, we need to help them. We have programs that spend $750 billion a year. I kid you not.

If you cobble together all the means-tested welfare programs that go to some—well, Medicaid. Medicaid is a free program for people whose income is below a certain level. Medicaid is a means-tested welfare social program, and there are a lot of them. It is the biggest. But you put all those together and it amounts to $750 billion a year in expenses or outflow. There are at least 83 of these programs, which are not brought together. They have independence, an independent management, different and independent departments of our government. They are not coordinated.

What we need to do when a person is hurting and they have lost their job and they need food stamps and TANF and unemployment compensation and other benefits that they are entitled to, and will get—and will continue to get, at least that kind of compensation—we need to be producing a system where these programs are brought together. We need to meet with that person—perhaps a single mom who has lost her job, maybe a young person who hasn't been able to find work—and we need to use some of those monies instead of just sending aid out and a person comes in every month and signs up and gets a benefit to help that person. What kind of skills do they need? Do they need an automobile to go to work? How can we help them move from dependency to independence? How can we help them create a healthy life for themselves, their family and their future? That is where we need to focus, and we are not doing that. We are not even close to that.

The 1996 welfare reform accomplished a lot of that. The number of children in poverty dropped dramatically. They

did a lot of reform. The welfare office became an employment office in many areas of the country. It helped people move into an advanced lifestyle and away from dependency. But we have gradually drifted through the Bush years and into the Obama years to where those qualities of that program have been undermined, and President Obama is overtly advocating relaxing some of the rules that mandate work requirements for some of the people involved. He is retreating, too, and that is the wrong way to go.

We have a group of our excellent Senators—fine people—meeting in secret. Maybe they are down the hall now. I don't know where they are, but they are plotting right now on how to pass an immigration plan. We just can't wait to see what it is so we can just vote for whatever they decide we ought to have. You know what they tell us? We can't get workers. We have to have foreign workers. Yet we have never had more people on welfare, never had more people on food stamps.

In 2001 we spent $20 billion on food stamps. Last year we spent $80 billion on food stamps. It has gone up fourfold, but we are told there are not enough Americans to do work. Somehow this welfare office needs to be dealing with this problem, and we need to have a consolidated program. But there is no plan in this budget, and no plan that has been offered on the floor.

Any time anybody makes a suggestion that we make reform, they get attacked. I have been attacked. I offered an amendment when the Agriculture bill was moving last year and we were on track to spend $800 billion over 10 years on food stamps. We found there was a categorical eligibility provision that was being abused substantially, allowing people who basically did not qualify for food stamps under the program to get the food stamps. So I proposed to close it. It would have saved $10 billion. We would spend $790 billion over 10 years rather than $800 billion. And I was attacked. I was kind of shocked, really. It was said that I was trying to balance the budget on the backs of hungry people. I wasn't trying to balance the budget on hungry people, I was trying to close an abuse of the program and, actually, thankfully, would have saved $10 billion—$1 billion a year over 10 years.

So this is where we are. We have a firm resistance to reform throughout the system, and it is not a little bit of money. These 80-some-odd welfare programs—hold your hat—over the next 10 years are supposed to grow, as predicted by the Congressional Budget Office, by 80 percent—80 percent.

My fine budget staff has looked at those numbers and they have concluded if we could improve those 83 programs and let them grow at 60 percent instead of 80 percent, we could save the taxpayers $1 trillion over 10 years.

I kid you not, $1 trillion. This goes a long way toward balancing our budget and helps us in a lot of different ways. If it is done right, it will be better for the people who need help than the present 83 disjointed programs that have no coherence and no focus on helping poor people actually improve their lives.

I grew up in the country. I grew up with poor people. I was poor. We didn't have central heating. I have no doubt our income was below the poverty line most of the time I was growing up. We had a garden. My daddy had a country store. We got by. But we didn't have any money. I remember when we got our first air conditioner—and it gets hot in Alabama. We moved from one room to the other when you turned it off. You didn't want to pay for electricity you didn't need. We had a fireplace in the living room. That was the only heat we had. The fireplace burned in the winter all the time. We cut our own wood. I worked construction in the summers both summers I was going to college, saving a few bucks being a carpenter's helper and working out in the Alabama heat. It didn't hurt me. And this idea that people aren't willing to work and we have to import foreign labor and we have to give people welfare because we can't find them a job, while businesses say we don't have enough workers, is somehow a messed-up idea. This is not helping. We have got to confront this problem. There is no plan to confront this problem or talk about it in any realistic way. It is time for us to be honest about this country's problems.

We do have a spending problem. Spending is going up faster than the economy is growing, and it will always create a deficit. You can't create something out of nothing. Julie Andrews sang, ''Nothing comes from nothing. Nothing ever could.'' That is so true. So we need to have a government that is leaner, that is more productive, that does more for the American people than it is doing now for less money.

My office has been spending less than we are allocated every year. I believe this year the Senate has reduced its budget about 10 percent over the last couple of years. I am down about 20 percent. This idea that you can't cut spending throughout this government is one of the most ridiculous ideas that has ever been raised.

I was a U.S. Attorney. I managed an office of lawyers and staff. When Ronald Reagan came in and we didn't have any money, we watched every dime we spent. The former Deputy Attorney General of the United States, Larry Thompson, was from Atlanta and I was U.S. Attorney in Alabama. We were such dyed-in-the-wool frugal Reagan hawks, when we were made U.S. Attorney we came to a conference and we roomed together, in separate beds, but we thought it was cheaper and saved money for the taxpayers. This is the kind of mentality that needs to get back into what we are doing, and I would say that it is time for us to confront this.

The vision of the Members of this side, and I think a lot of Members of that side, is not that far apart. But I want to be clear about a couple things. This budget needs to be put on a path to balance. It can be done without cutting spending in any dramatic way. All you have to do is reduce the rate of growth in spending. The budget will balance in 10 years. We need to do that. We need to plan to do that. As I explained before, the debt is already pulling down economic growth in America. It is pulling down the growth we have. The debt has reached such a level, 104 percent of GDP, that it is above the limit and the level that the International Monetary Fund, the Bank for International Settlements, the European Central Bank, and the Rogoff-Reinhart study say begins to pull down growth. We are losing jobs, we are losing promotions, we are losing pay raises as a result of this debt right now.

We share the view on both sides of the aisle that we need to be looking to create growth. Our colleagues say, Let's keep doing what we have been doing the last number of years. We have another stimulus package, we have another $100 billion, and we are going to borrow this money because we are already in debt, and to spend an additional $100 billion requires borrowing an additional $100 billion, so we are going to borrow $100 billion and we are going to spend it, and this is going to make the economy stronger. Sorry. We have been there, done that. We say no. We have got to end this mentality. We need to make this government leaner and more productive. We need to have this government do things that create growth and jobs that do not add to the debt.

What are some of those things? Simplified taxes, eliminate unnecessary regulations, more American energy. Those are the kinds of things we can do that don't cost money that create jobs. Complete the Keystone Pipeline. Don't keep sending money to Venezuela or Saudi Arabia. Create jobs in America. Ask the people in North Dakota; they have got growth and prosperity as a result of energy production. These are the kinds of things we can do and we believe in and will continue to work for.

I would say that maybe, even though we have a big difference—and this budget will be quite different from the House budget—I don't say it is impossible that in conference some sort of more global agreement could be reached to put America on a sound path. We will have to deal with the entitlements. Entitlements represent half of the spending—and, with interest, more than half of the spending. Medicare, Social Security, those are growing well above the inflation rate and their growth level needs to be contained a little bit. We can make them sound, and people can retire and know that Medicare will be there for them, it won't fail, and that Social Security

will be there for them, it won't fail. And we are going to stop adding to our debt until it reaches such a level that it could not only slow growth but could cause a financial crisis, as we had in 2007, and as they are having now in some of the European countries and that so many countries have had over the years.

We are excited to have a budget on the floor for the first time in 4 years. It does provide an opportunity for the American people—as our chair, Senator MURRAY, said—to compare the visions for America. It also provides an opportunity for our Members to learn about what things cost, how much you can get through tax increases, what kind of spending cuts are required, whether we have to cut or how much we can grow spending and still balance the budget. These kinds of things are learned when a bill actually goes to the floor.

Mr. President, I yield the floor and 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. SESSIONS. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. KAINE). Without objection, it is so ordered.

Mr. SESSIONS. Mr. President, President Obama, being interviewed on ABC by George Stephanopoulos, not only said ''my goal is not to chase—a balanced budget'' but he also said, ''we don't have an immediate crisis in terms of debt,'' and ''in fact, for the next 10 years, it's gonna be in a sustainable place.''

I would say two things about that. He appointed Mr. Erskine Bowles to be chairman of the fiscal commission. They spent quite a lot of time working on this debt question. They took testimony from experts, they examined documents, and they did what a good, public, spirited group would do. Mr. Bowles was Chief of Staff for President Clinton and a very successful businessman. Alan Simpson, his Cochair, was a former Republican Senator from Wyoming.

That is not what they told us. In the committee, 2 years ago, in the Budget Committee—maybe a little over 2 years now—they gave a joint statement in which they said this Nation has never faced a more predictable financial crisis.

What they were saying was the level of debt we are operating on, the unsustainability of the debt path, was so great that we will have some sort of fiscal crisis.

I remember about that same time, the Chairman of the Fed, Mr. Bernanke, testified that we have all these outyears and we talk about the debt numbers and all that, but we don't have to worry about them. I am paraphrasing, but this was pretty close to what he said. I think these were his exact words: But it will never happen.

What he basically told us was there would be a fiscal crisis before we get this far down the road—the demographics, the aging population, fewer workers, greater debt every year—mushrooming in the outyears.

I am troubled the President thinks that as a matter of fact, the next 10 years is going to be in a sustainable place. I don't believe he knows that. I will tell my colleagues a couple reasons why. Senator STABENOW had a chart about how great the economy or the fiscal situation of the country looked about the time President Bush took office. The last month of President Clinton's term in office was negative growth. I think that was the first month of negative growth in maybe 8 years. In fact, when President Clinton took office, he didn't inherit a recession, regardless of what the myth is around here. Former President Bush did have a recession in his second year or so of his term and he took action and the economy bounced back. About the time President Clinton took office, the economy was growing and it continued to grow through the decade. We don't know all the forces. We talk about it. We play politics about it. But nobody knows precisely what moves an economy, whether it was something 10 years ago or something 10 months ago that caused the difficulty. We make guesses and we do our best judgment.

So here we go. In early 2000, I am on the Budget Committee and Mr. Greenspan testified—the maestro, the guru, the Federal Reserve Chairman, the greatest we had ever had; the economy had long years of growth. He told the committee we are going to have surpluses as far as the eye can see. He discussed with the Budget Committee what would happen when we had all these surpluses and we would pay down the entire debt of the United States of America. Then he asked us what we would do. What is the Federal Government going to do with the extra money? Are they going to buy the bonds of Venezuela? Does it buy British bonds? What does it do with its money? Does it buy property? This was the mindset in early 2000, and he was the Federal Reserve Chairman. Didn't he see the demographics? Didn't he recognize—there was a little caution in his statement, but he was very positive.

I went back and read it again recently, because it teaches me that this man, at the peak of his powers—one of the greatest economic minds in history; at least it was so felt at that time—completely missed it, I have to tell my colleagues. He didn't think we had a problem in the future with debt. He didn't say by 2009 we are going to be running trillion-dollar deficits, right? So this makes me a bit humble about our ability to predict.

Mr. Bowles said we are on a path to a debt crisis. That is what he told us in the committee. I believe Chairman Conrad or ranking member Judd Gregg asked him: When?

He said: I think about 2 years.

Two years came and we didn't have a debt crisis. So now the President of the United States is saying we can continue for 10 years, no problem, no worries. I am happy. You are happy. We don't have to cut spending. We need to keep borrowing. We need to keep running up debt because we absolutely don't want to have austerity. We don't want to have austerity. We want to be happy and spend. So that is the deal.

I am telling my colleagues, nobody knows. It can happen just that quick. Kent Conrad told me—we were standing right over there—he said the rate we are heading is coming off that wall like a rubber ball at warp speed. He was on the debt commission, the fiscal commission. He was worried about the fact of our unsustainability on the debt course.

Things look good. The Sun is shining out there today. We don't want to talk about that. Who wants to be negative? Who wants to be Dr. Doom? Do my colleagues remember Dr. Doom or Nouriel Roubini, who said: We were going to have a debt crisis in 2005 or 2006. I am not sure when he predicted that. He said: The banks are borrowing too much money. It is unsustainable. We are going to have a crisis.

Months went by and we didn't have a crisis. One year went by, we didn't have a crisis. They mocked him. They called him Dr. Gloom. After 2007, when the bottom fell out and we had the worst recession since World War II, the reasons it happened were just what Mr. Roubini said. People said: Dr. Gloom wasn't so wrong after all. Maybe we should have listened to him.

I am just telling my colleagues, I believe we have a responsibility as men and women of public service, managing the finances of the United States of America, and we have a President who is in denial.

I think it is time for this Congress to assert itself and say we are not going to risk this country. I believe our debt is already too high. I believe it without a doubt. It is a fact. The Rogoff and Reinhart study was based on public debt, and our public debt is now over 100 percent of GDP. It is greater than the entire economy. That means we pull down and we place our country at risk because we are slowing growth, as I indicated earlier.

But this is what Secretary Geithner said in 2011 before the Budget Committee. I asked him what did he think about the Rogoff and Reinhart study, because it was troubling to the committee. Everybody on the committee knew about it. The fiscal commission people had consulted about it. We had Carmen Reinhart testify before the committee and then again a little later. So I asked him about it. This was his answer to my question to him, as I recall:

> It's an excellent study. And you could say in some ways what you summarize from it, understates the risks, because it's not just that governments or countries that live with very high debt-to-GDP ratios are consigned to weaker growth.

As I have been contending throughout the day—

They're consigned to the damage that comes from periodic financial crises as well.

February 17, 2011, Secretary Geithner, President Obama's own Secretary.

So he was warning us that when the debt gets this high, we are in a danger zone.

We know there are some countries that have more difficult problems than we. There was an article recently from the CATO Institute talking about some of the countries in the world. Japan is one of the most dangerous. What if the third, fourth largest economy in the world, Japan—one of our key trading partners—was to have an economic collapse such as Greece? Do my colleagues think it can't happen? I don't think it can't happen. I don't know. They are running way too high a debt-to-GDP ratio. Their population is aging even more quickly than ours.

Then we have France and Spain and Italy. Any one of those countries had an economy so large they can't be bailed out like Greece. What would happen if Europe were to go into turmoil? I am not predicting that to happen, but I am telling my colleagues we are on a path where I don't believe any responsible person can say it couldn't happen to us, and we could be embroiled in this too. The worst thing that could happen to us is we have to face a fiscal crisis where we get our debt under control at a time when the country is in a recession as a result of financial mismanagement. It would make it be an utter nightmare. As many experts have said, we have shifted a lot of debt from the private sector to the government. The government picked up liabilities it had no business picking up and the result is it has increased its debt substantially.

I am very concerned that we not treat this lightly. I am very unhappy the President of the United States who, to my knowledge, never had an economics course in his entire life—a community organizer—is going on national television when the needle of our debt is in the red zone, by any estimation, and he blithely says: We don't have an immediate crisis in terms of debt. In fact, for the next 10 years, it is going to be in a sustainable place.

I don't believe he is correct to say that. I have not heard any economists say that with full authority, certainly not a lot of them, and I am worried about where we are.

There is another chart I wanted to show about the question of taxes. This is a chart that I saw in Barron's magazine just a few weeks ago. Gene Epstein did this chart. On the cover of Barron's was a picture of the President, having made his State of the Union Address, and the caption on the front of the newspaper was ''The way to Greece'' or something like that, and it was a very serious analysis of the deep, systemic debt problems this Nation has, and a plea for us to act, to move forward and avoid the risks we are now undertaking.

One part of what they did was to actually analyze what we could do with more taxes, particularly taxes on upper income people, and they ran the numbers. I believe this is an accurate run of the numbers. On the left side, it has the public debt as a percentage of the GDP and on the right at the bottom are the years over time. Mr. Epstein ran it based on increasing taxes and increasing taxes a lot.

His first run was the purple line, how much the debt would go up; how much the debt would go up if the current tax rate stayed in effect. This is the purple line. It grows a little faster than the green line and the red line. It grows a little faster because the taxes are a little lower than his next two estimates.

Then he estimated for the wealthy people who were raised from 35 to 40 percent, what if they were raised to 50 percent? In Alabama, it is about average. We have a 5-percent income tax in our State. So for the wealthy, making it 50 percent, plus paying 5 percent to the State, he is paying a pretty big chunk of his money right off the top. But let's assume it went up there. It has almost no impact on the debt course of America according to the Barron's analysis.

The third one, the red one is based on raising the tax rate of upper income people to 50 percent and then rolling back all the tax cuts President Bush had for the lower income people, the middle-class people who got substantial reductions in their rates and we have been operating that for about 13 years now and we made those permanent.

President Bush was attacked for having tax cuts, but I am pleased to see my Democratic colleagues are joining with the Republicans to make 99 percent of those tax rates permanent. It must not have been so evil if everybody overwhelmingly voted to make them permanent. So if we raised all those rates and had a 50-percent tax increase on the wealthy, we still hadn't changed the debt course of America.

What does that say? It says the debt problem in America is a spending problem, and a big part of that spending problem is the huge mandatory programs we have.

I am a lawyer. What is a mandatory program? It means when you reach 66, 67, you walk in and ask for your Social Security check and they have to pay you whether there is any money in the bank or not, whether the government has any money or not. The government has to borrow the money and pay your check because you are entitled to it as a matter of law at a certain age you qualify. Many of our entitlement programs are based on income. If your income is below a certain level, you are entitled to the money whether Uncle Sam has it or not, and that is based on law. That is based on legislation Congress passed that entitled people under certain circumstances to obtain Federal money and get it as a matter of entitlement.

When those programs are surging at 6 percent a year—Medicaid, the poor person's insurance program is projected to grow 8 percent a year over the next decade, 117 percent over the next 10 years—when those programs are growing at that rate and the economy is growing at 2 percent, you have a problem. You do not have to go to the Harvard Business School to know that. You really do not have to go to Harvard to know that.

When I talk to the American people, they understand it fully. They expect that we are going to have to make tough choices in this country to get the country on the right path, and they are girding themselves to support such tough choices, but they want them fair. They are willing to tighten their belt, but they do not want somebody who never works and lays around and watches TV all day, the soap operas, to have an advantage over people who are out working hard every day. But, anyway, people are prepared for that. The good news is, that as the economy grows, we do not have to cut spending, we just have to reduce the rate of growth in spending. This is not a myth I am talking about. This is absolute fact. You can spend more. This government can spend more every year. We can spend more at the rate of 3.4 percent, instead of increasing it at 5.4 percent, and the budget balances over 10 years. How much better is that? Most people think we have to have cuts across the board.

Now some programs are going to have to be cut. And let's be frank. What is the real challenge for us? Social Security and Medicare are great programs that our seniors depend on, and can grow steadily, can grow more than 3.4 percent, really. But those programs have a double problem. Not only do we want to see a cost of living occur for our seniors, but we have more seniors on the program every year. So this makes the numbers harder to deal with.

So you can say: Well, Social Security is just going to grow 4 percent instead of 5.5 percent and people will not lose much money. They will get a $4 increase instead of a $5.5 increase. No, no, it is more complicated than that because since you have more people on Social Security and Medicare, because of the age of the population that we have, it will be a larger impact than that—not disastrous, sustainable.

And we can do other things. We can say: Well, we want to work a little longer. We want to change the rate of the increase, the inflation index that most experts tell us should be altered under a new system that would save some money on the inflation index. So that is the kind of thing people have been talking about. The Gang of 6 talked about it. The President talked about it. Vice President BIDEN talked about it. The debt commission talked about it. The gang, the 12 people, in the

Budget Control Act, tried to talk about a serious alteration of our spending path in which we fix Social Security and put it on a sound path, we fix Medicare and put it on a sound path, and we fix the entire budget of the United States in a way that is sustainable.

I would say people I talk to in the business community, people I talk to who testify before the committee, experts and just common people, tell me repeatedly: If you guys put this country on a sound path, so we knew we could see what the future is, we could plan for the future, and we would know our finances are getting better and moving to a balanced budget instead of getting worse. We believe people would not lose money, they would spend more money. We would have more growth. More people would be working and not drawing welfare and unemployment insurance, and the budget of the United States would start improving right there because more people would pay taxes and fewer people would need help from the government.

That is the spiral we need to be on. We are now still muddling through with exceedingly low growth, and they are still predicting low inflation. So you consider Social Security, maybe increasing it 6 percent a year, and inflation is just 2 percent. The Congressional Budget Office is predicting that inflation will be 2.2 percent, I think, a year, equaling almost 25 percent over 10 years. That is how much inflation will add over 10 years. Who knows? But we have kept low rates longer than anybody thought. The economy is not moving. If the economy actually jumped 4 percent or 5 percent growth for 2 or 3 years, you probably would have a jump in inflation. Obviously, CBO is not expecting that. They are expecting only slow growth over the next 10 years, and I think that is consistent with the consensus of independent analysts. So I wanted to share that thought.

The question before the House is—and all our colleagues need to confront it honestly—is this budget the kind of budget that puts America on a sound path? Is it what we need to do at this moment in history to change the debt course of America, to create confidence, to create the kind of growth that will increase that 2-percent growth, to get it to 3, 3.5, 4 percent?

Just 2 years ago, the Congressional Budget Office projected growth for 2013—the year we are in—would be 4.6 percent. The year before that, they predicted, last year, 2012, that we would have over 3 percent, 3.6 percent, something like that, growth. We have fallen way below that both years. I think the reason is the debt is pulling down growth, at least that is part of the reason. But regardless, the truth is, we are having to adjust ourselves to what Bill Gross at PIMCO, the largest bond group in the world, would call a new normal. The new normal is, we are not likely to see 5, 6-percent growth even in really great times in the next 10 or 15 years—maybe the next 20 or 30 years. We are just not likely to, for a lot of reasons. Of course, nobody knows. Mr. Greenspan thought we were going to have surpluses, and we did not. And we could have growth we are not expecting. Nobody knows. But we just have to make the best judgment we have, and the best judgment we have is that we are not on a sound path.

So we are responsible leaders, and we have to ask ourselves, is the budget here going to do the right thing? We must remember and can never forget who will suffer the most if we have a fiscal crisis. Won't it be the poor? Won't it be the people in the most fragile working environments? Won't it be the people with less skills? Won't they be the ones who would suffer the most? Don't we have an obligation as a Senate to reach out to the House and say: We get it. This is dangerous. We do not know for sure where we are going. But we know. Shame on us if we allow decent, hard-working people—struggling to get by right now—to get hammered by another fiscal crisis that Erskine Bowles and Alan Simpson virtually guaranteed was on the way?

I think we have a duty. I think we have a responsibility. I think when the American people find out it is not going to take massive slashing of spending, as our colleagues say—a lot of the programs can be more efficient than they have ever been, and we get just as much benefit, even if they do not get as much money. There has not been any reform, any management improvements in this government in decades.

I will just say politically, I thought that was the greatest offer Governor Romney had. He was a very good manager. In my opinion, we have had enough speechmakers, we have had enough war Presidents, we have had enough grand and glorious stuff. We need somebody to run this government, like the Presiding Officer ran the State of Virginia. It takes hard work, and you have to stay on top of it. It would have been great for us to have had a real top management, so that every Cabinet person, when they are hired, understands they have a duty to produce more for less for the American people, and every subcabinet and subcabinet and subcabinet person, and every department head gets the message, from top leadership on down: You are expected—as Larry Thompson and I did—to share a hotel room if need be to save running up debt in the U.S. Government.

This budget does not do it. I think we quoted earlier what the Washington Post said on March 15:

> In short, this [budget] document gives voters no reason to believe that Democrats have a viable plan for—or even a responsible public assessment of—the country's long-term fiscal predicament.

That is a serious condemnation.

What about USA Today, I guess maybe the widest read publication of its kind in the country? A USA Today editorial:

> The plan produced by the Senate Budget Committee Chairman Patty Murray . . . is a disappointing document. It is a namby-pamby plan that underwhelms at every turn. The Murray budget neither balances the budget nor reins in entitlements . . . the nation would be helped if Democrats were to embrace Ryan's goal of a balanced budget.

That is USA Today. They are not a rightwing publication, but they have written some good material on the budget. So has the Washington Post. Both of those have covered the budget situation more than most publications—both of them—and they have been trying to say to the Congress and to the President: You guys need to get together and do something. So both these editorials reflect a very informed judgment by two independent publications of national repute that the Senate—which they have been watching—has failed to produce a budget that puts the country on a sound path. I just have to tell you, I think they are totally correct. I wish it were not so.

Investor's Business Daily:

> [An] IBD review of the budget data shows that the Senate vastly overstates the size of its spending cuts.

Boy, that is correct. They vastly overstate how much spending is cut in this bill. It goes on to say:

> In fact, it could be that the Senate [budget] would, if enacted, increase federal spending by hundreds of billions of dollars.

Was Investor's Business Daily correct? Yes. Spending increases under this budget. Spending is not decreased at all under this budget, although we are told that it does. And we are told 20-some-odd times it is a balanced plan. They even go so far as to say it is a balanced budget. They have said it is a balanced plan so much, they started saying it is a balanced budget. It is nothing nowhere close to being a balanced budget. What they mean by ''balanced'' is, they promised that there will be $1 trillion in tax increases and $1 trillion in spending reductions. And it increases spending. Give me a break. There is not a one-to-one. It increases spending. There is no cut in spending off the current law we are now on.

They tried to claim credit for the Budget Control Act almost 2 years ago. President Obama resisted that. You remember how he just threatened the whole government was going to sink into the ocean? Why? Because we would not raise the debt ceiling. The Republicans said: We have to have some cuts, Mr. President. We have to do something about the debt course. We cannot continue. We are not going to allow you to continue running with the credit card of the people of America if you do not show that you are changing your habits and you are containing some of your lust to spend.

So, finally, an agreement. He hated it worse than anything. Finally, an agreement was done. He signed it. I agree if you will raise my debt ceiling right now, for $2.1 trillion, I promise in

the future that I will cut spending $2.1 trillion. Over 10 years. If you let me do it over 10 years, OK, I will sign it. But I have to have my debt ceiling now.

Less than 2 years later we have already increased the debt ceiling $2.1 trillion. We are right up there again having to raise the debt ceiling again. It will be a matter of weeks that this has to be confronted again. Well, what about the spending cuts?

Before the ink was dry on that agreement signed by the President himself—I have the document right here. In blue ink, ''Barack Obama'' right there, agree to cut $2.1 trillion in spending over 10 years. This was not a big cut. If spending were flat for 10 years, we would have spent $37 trillion. As I recall, if under the baseline then in effect we were expected to grow to $49 trillion over 10 years—$49 trillion. This would have reduced it to $47 trillion.

So we reduced the growth of spending from $37 trillion to $47 trillion instead of $49 trillion. You would have thought we were throwing the sink in the country into the ocean. But in January, 6 months later, he proposes a budget which wipes out 60 percent of that agreement, those savings. So I am just going to tell you the way I felt. I have talked to my Republican colleagues. You know, we all—none of us are perfect. Sometimes we make improvident promises. We cannot just fulfill them. We cannot honor them. I try not to do that, but I have done it. Any person who is honest knows they have had to face those choices. But I am not voting to change the sequester. I am prepared to change it, and I support totally the spreading out of the cuts. They are too much on the Defense Department. I can explain how much it hammers the Defense Department. It is not acceptable.

But I am going to tell you, I told the American people that the Congress of the United States agreed to cut $2.1 trillion in exchange for raising the debt ceiling $2.1 trillion. And 6 months later, I am not changing; 18 months later, I am not changing. If we give up on that, we have no credibility whatsoever. The American people should never trust this Congress again. They ought to vote all of us out of office.

That was a solemn promise made before the whole world that we would sustain these cuts. President Obama has not stopped trying to eliminate them. This budget does just that. It eliminates 60 percent of the Budget Control Act cuts. It eliminates the sequester entirely. It is absolutely unacceptable. It will not happen. I do not know why anybody would want to vote for the budget. A vote for this budget is a vote to go back on a promise that was made in August 2011 to act a little bit responsibly when the debt ceiling of the country was raised.

The Wall Street Journal, March 15, right after the budget comes out. They have been very critical. This is just one of them. Well, first, Politico, March 17. A Washington beltway publication, Politico—they like to dig up stuff. This is what they said, ''To win over her caucus, Murray begins from the left of Obama himself.''

Apparently, Politico's conclusion is that the budget that came through committee was driven by people to the left of President Obama. I know this: Last year the chairman of the Budget Committee, Kent Conrad, was prepared to bring a budget to the floor. My staff and I spent weeks preparing for the markup. They met in a Democratic conference. Some of the more liberal members hollered they could not accept Kent Conrad's budget, the Democratic budget he was going to set forth. So they, basically, refused to let him mark up a budget in the Budget Committee and refused to bring it to the floor of the Senate even though U.S. law called for the Budget Committee to have hearings and called for a bill to be brought to the floor. They just refused to do it in violation of plain law.

So the Wall Street Journal said: The bill manages the unique achievement of offering no net nondefense spending cuts and no entitlement reform worth the name, while proposing to raise $1.5 trillion in new tax revenue in such a way that would ruin the prospects for bipartisan tax reform.

Let me stop right there. Our colleagues keep saying we are going to close loopholes and we are going to raise revenue and nobody is going to have to pay more. Well, these loopholes, as Senator GRASSLEY showed us from the Finance Committee chart, these are real serious deductions. They are programs that are deeply entrenched, and many of them our Democratic colleagues have protected and expanded with great tenacity. They will never vote to give them up probably unless some epiphany occurs around here. So how are we going to get tax reform?

Last week at the Budget Committee hearing the chief Democratic witness testified that he believes the corporate tax rate in America was unacceptably high, that we now have the highest corporate tax rate in the developed world, and that 35 percent is not acceptable. He said it needs to be the mid-twenties. This is not the Republican witness, but the Republican witness agreed with him. Most Republicans agreed with this approach. Many of the Democrats did.

So he said: You close loopholes on corporations, make the tax simpler, more growth oriented, you can bring the tax rate down to 25 percent without in any way losing revenue. You can make it revenue neutral. So that was an interesting thing.

I asked him as a followup: But if you close the loopholes on corporations, if you close the loopholes on corporations and raise revenue, do you not need that money so you can reduce the rate from 35 to 25?

He said: Yes. All of it should be dedicated to rate reduction. We have Senator RON WYDEN, a Democratic Senator, Senator MAX BAUCUS, the chairman of the Finance Committee, all believe this needs to be done.

A lot of work has been done on this for several years. The President has even indicated that this is the kind of approach that is worthwhile. But our colleagues, claiming they are going to close loopholes, do not save the money for tax reduction. They want to take the new revenue raised from closing loopholes and spend it. Then it is not available for the bipartisan tax reform to which the Wall Street Journal made a reference.

That is when I asked the witness: Do you not have to save this money to reduce rates at the end of the year?

He said: Yes, you have to save these loopholes, these deductions—really most of them are perfectly legitimate deductions that businesses use. But they are going to take them away from them, in effect raising the amount of taxes they pay. But they were going to bring the rates down.

That is the bipartisan plan that was in the works for a long time. Mr. Kleinbard is our witness. This is what he said: Corporate income tax statutory rate of 35 percent is today far outside world norms. The rate needs to come down. I, therefore, conceive of corporate tax reform as a roughly revenue-neutral undertaking in which the corporate tax base will be broadened through closing business tax expenditures and loopholes and the resulting revenues used to pay down the corporate rate.

That was March 5 in our committee. I know a lot of Senators, Democrats on the committee, agreed with that. If we look at the budget, the new revenue obtained from closing loopholes, really closing deductions and some tax expenditures—liberals have started calling deductions tax expenditures. So if you have a charitable deduction or you have an interest deduction or you have some sort of depreciation as a business, those are not deductions anymore. They have become tax expenditures. So it is like the United States Government is mad at you because you did not send enough money.

But the truth is, it is the corporate person's money or the corporation's money or the private individual's money. When you eliminate his deductions, you make him or her pay more taxes. So Mr. Kleinbard was crystal clear. This is what the bipartisan discussions have been. The Wall Street Journal is exactly right. If you spend that money that you raised from closing loopholes, expenditures, and deductions, you do not have it to reduce rates. You cannot fix the tax reform.

The Wall Street Journal goes on to say:

> As a statement of governing principles, the Senate Democratic budget shows that if they get the chance, they would govern like they did in 2009 and 2010. Much higher taxes to fund much higher spending to finance a much bigger government. It is the status quo only more so.

I have to say, I think that is correct. Hard for me to understand how anybody can dispute that. Next. I have

been saying—I have not heard much pushback—that the sequester elimination which allows the expenditure of $1.2 trillion more than we are presently on a path to extend, that this elimination of the sequester was not scored in the Democratic budget.

When I asked the staff members, he said: Well, you know, we never did intend to make that permanent. It was always temporary. Then he said: Well, we got billions of dollars in PAUL RYAN's budgets over here.

I said: No, no. I am talking about this budget. You claim you are not scoring, as an increase in spending, $1.2 trillion, which you allowed to occur by eliminating the reduction in spending required in current law that is part of the law of the United States today and will not be changed?

This is baloney. Surely, Congress will never change this. Surely, we will not go back on the promise we made in 2011 when we raised the debt ceiling. But, anyway, this is what the Associated Press said about it: Because the Democrats want to restore $1.2 trillion in automatic spending cuts over the same period, cuts imposed by Washington's failure to reach a broader budget pact—the committee did not reach an agreement, so these automatic cuts occurred—MURRAY's blueprint increases spending slightly when compared with current policy.

So you take the $1.2 trillion there, and you have tax increases over here, but the increases in spending are greater than the taxes. They conclude that it increases spending overall, increases spending overall.

The chairman, and probably the Budget Committee Members who support this, want to assert somehow this is a one-for-one budget, a balanced plan, a balanced budget amendment. You have $1 trillion in tax increases and $1 trillion in spending cuts, but they are not there.

This chart is a very important chart on the subject I am talking about. It is, I believe, pretty much not disputable. I don't like to raise this, but I am not going to take it.

Mr. Lew came before our committee, the Director of the Office of Management and Budget, and he said our budget will not add to the debt, spends only money we have and puts us on a path to pay down the deficit.

I asked Mr. Lew—he said it on national television, CNN with Candy Crowley. He said it with other networks too when he announced his budget. Three days later, he was at the Budget Committee. I asked him was that accurate. He said it was accurate.

It absolutely was not accurate. His budget never produced a single year in which the deficit fell below $600 billion. Yet he told the American people squarely in the eye his budget would stop adding to the debt, spend only money we have, and allow us to pay down the debt.

This is one of the greatest misrepresentations in history. We are never going to have bipartisan agreement in this Congress until we learn to be honest about numbers. This budget is not honest about numbers, I need to tell you.

They claim a big savings and big reduction in spending and totally overlook this. Where is the deficit? They claim they reduce the deficit by $ 1.85 trillion, $1.850 billion. Let's look at that number. What about the sequester I have been talking about? They eliminate sequester and spending goes up $1.223 trillion.

Was this scored in their number? No. They tell us we have 1.85, and we have to take off 1.2 because they didn't score the obvious increase in spending that their budget plan for the next 10 years includes. Take that off. We have looked at it more carefully. It took us a while to find this and took a while to get these in the budget numbers, but we have a good staff.

They found out, unlike what we thought at first, there was no pay-for for the doctors. For the last number of years, we found the payment schedule for doctors is totally inadequate based on a law passed in the nineties which has cut their payment to a degree that if we cut them another 20-some-odd percent, they would quit taking patients. They couldn't operate.

We put the money in every year because we need to put the money in or else they will not treat our patients. They can't afford to. Everybody, Republicans and Democrats, we hate it. We wish it weren't so, but it is every year we need to confront this thing which should have long been made a permanent fix. Every year it hasn't been, so every year we need to find the money.

We also found the 2009 stimulus extension in the bill which continued more borrowing and spending for a stimulus was not accounted for. You add those, and there is another $348 billion which ought to be scored. It leaves us with a subtotal of $279 billion. That sounds nice, but that is not correct.

Where are we next? Is there anything in this budget we have found that is not sound, gimmicky, which misrepresents the facts? Yes, there is, a big one. That is the war spending.

President Obama has long been very late in producing his budget. It should have been here in the Senate February 4, and it still hasn't been produced. It is one of the oddest things I have ever seen. He basically punted to the Congress and refused to lay out the budget the law requires him to submit. He violates it all the time.

People ask me all the time, why does the President not follow the law? It is a very bad thing. He should follow the law. He sets a bad example. Children around this country, adults around this country, when they find out the President ignores law, the Senate ignores law, it is not good for America. We are a nation of laws.

The President, the last budget he sent, last January of 1 year ago, he laid out what he projected the costs would be for the war on terror. He is bringing those costs down dramatically, some say too fast, some say not fast enough, but they are coming down dramatically. He projects, however, we are still going to have military efforts against our enemy with whom we are at war, al-Qaida, for the next 10 years.

That costs money. He projected the cost over 10 years for the war on terror would be $467 billion. I think that is pretty close to accurate. You could give or take a little bit, but apparently we are not stopping drone attacks.

I just met with our Ambassador who is negotiating an agreement with Afghanistan. We are projecting to have troops over there for a long time. More and more are in the support role, but it is an expense to maintain the war against terror.

We are free to attack al-Qaida wherever they are. We have people in Iraq, Yemen, Mali, and different places throughout the world where our interests have been threatened, and that costs money.

What did our good friends on the Senate Budget Committee do? They needed more money in savings. They wanted to say they cut spending. They came up with a clever idea; we will just cut all the war spending and pretend we will not spend it. That is it. OK. We will just pretend we are not going to spend that much.

One year from that, the total amount they say we are going to spend over 10 years is not $467 billion, it is 75. The last 8 years will be zero, so we spend 75 over 2 years, and we will not spend any more money. There will be peace in the world, we will not have to chase al-Qaida, we will not need drones, troops, and special forces operating around the world. We will be completely out of Iraq and Afghanistan. Won't that be great? Let's just play it that way.

I have to tell you, they know that is not going to happen. Even President Obama is projecting substantial reductions.

If you take that down, what we find is the budget doesn't reduce the deficit at all. The budget increases the deficit based on the course we are on today, apples to apples, oranges to oranges.

We are not playing around with different baselines to gimmick it up. This is the right way to analyze the situation.

I just have to say, the American people need to know the budget before us does not do what it says it will do. Even what it says it will do is insufficient, but it doesn't come close to doing what it says, and it is not close to doing what is needed. It will never balance the budget, not in 10 years, not in any time. It makes no changes, none, to the deeply troubling surging growth of our entitlement programs, welfare programs, of Medicaid; the 83 means-tested welfare programs which are expected to grow 80 percent over the next 10 years, there are no changes.

There is no reform there we believe in. I am disappointed. Presumably, we

may see it pass out of the Senate on a party-line vote, go to the House, and we will see what happens in conference. Could anything come out of conference? It is possible. I am not overconfident, particularly if we can't get Members of the Senate to lay out good numbers.

How can we negotiate with a person such as PAUL RYAN, who absolutely knows what is up and what is down? There is not a person in America who knows the numbers better than PAUL RYAN.

He has integrity. He works hard. He has dedicated himself to mastering this subject. He has mastered it, and he has laid out a plan. I am not saying I agree with everything in his plan. It is not before us. He has laid out a plan. He is prepared to negotiate, to discuss with people who are willing to discuss how to reach some compromise and some consensus on some of the things we need to do. It is very hard to do that if you are putting up bogus numbers such as this.

What about The Hill, another one of the inside Washington publications. On March 13, The Hill reported:

> Murray argues that her budget cuts $1.85 trillion from deficits over 10 years. But once the sequester cuts are turned off, Murray's budget appears to reduce deficits by about $800 billion, using the Congressional Budget Office's baseline. The Murray budget does not contain net spending cuts with the sequester turned off.

We score here about 700 after you take that—645. They estimated 8, but essentially they are making the same point. The budget the Democrats produced did not score the sequester.

As we wrestle with these issues, talking about spending and how we create growth in our economy—and all of us want growth—we just contend growth is better achieved through progrowth policies than by borrowing and spending.

I wish to say there is academic research which validates that opinion. Senator MURRAY's budget, the Democratic budget, proposes yet more stimulus and proposes a 60-percent increase in spending over the next 10 years, a $162 billion increase over next year alone.

This is an increase in spending next year, not a reduction, of 162 next year. It is a fair criticism around here that the only budget that counts is the next year. It does tend to control next year, but it often normally gets altered before the second, third, fourth, fifth, sixth, seventh, eighth, ninth, and tenth, but it doesn't tell us a plan.

I contend reducing excessive spending without increasing taxes makes the economy stronger, not weaker. Let's look at this. Real evidence supports this. It shows reducing spending can help an economy which has too much debt. A Harvard University study which I think all of us have seen, the OECD, developed nations, looked at 107 different periods of fiscal adjustments in these nations.

This is what they have found:

> Spending cuts are much more effective than tax increases in stabilizing the debt and avoiding economic downturn.

I believe that is accurate. If it is, that is very important for us to know. Many countries have reduced spending and had large increases in job growth thereafter.

You would hear our Members say: Oh, you can't cut spending; it will hurt job growth. You could have something in the short term, but these countries have had substantial increases in job growth after cutting spending—Austria, Denmark, Finland, Estonia, Netherlands, Norway, Sweden. This chart gives some of that insight: ''Job Gains 5 years After Successful Spending Reductions.'' Look at these again. Japan in 1987 had an 8.6-percent growth; Canada in 1997 had 11.1 percent; Netherlands in 1997, 9.5 percent; United States in 1997, after spending reductions, 5.2 percent. That is when we were on the path to balance the budget. That was when Newt Gingrich and the House Republicans met with President Clinton and negotiated and fought and wrestled and shut the government down and cut spending and the economy grew. And then Sweden, in 1998, had 6.5 percent growth. The average job growth over these five countries was 8 percent after cutting spending.

One I noticed on here is really something we should consider; that is, the small country of Estonia, which was part of the Soviet Union, dominated by Russia and the Communists. It is a great little country in the Baltics. I was there 2 years ago. Senator Jon Kyl took us there. They had just suffered through the same financial catastrophe in 2007 to 2008 that we had, but it hit them worse. They had a larger drop in GDP than we did, and it was very damaging. They had to decide what to do about it, so they began to consider what to do about it, and they didn't go for this idea that they had to borrow, borrow, borrow so they could keep spending because the revenue had dropped so much and they were going to keep spending at the same level. That isn't what the Estonians decided to do. This new democracy, this free enterprise, this free country, so excited about their future, do you know what they did? They cut spending. They cut spending big time—big time.

This is what a Cabinet member told me. We had dinner, a group of us, and he said Cabinet people had their pay cut 40 percent. He said their pay was cut 40 percent, and he said: But I can tell you who is really mad and giving me a hard time.

I said: Who is that?

He said: My wife. She is a doctor. We hammered them too.

So Estonia hardly had a debt increase at all. Now Estonia has been showing some of the fastest growth of any country in Europe, maybe any country in the developed world. So cutting spending, making their government leaner, more productive, and people taking pay cuts did not destroy their economy. It allowed them to bounce back quite successfully. I am so proud to see their numbers continue to be great economically because they were courageous. The first thing their leaders did was take pay cuts themselves.

Other countries have not followed this path. Other countries haven't tightened their belts or they have relied too heavily on tax increases to reduce deficits. These countries have not fared as well. Greece, Portugal, the United Kingdom and Spain all have had big tax increases as part of their deficit reduction plans, and these results are confirmed by studies at the International Monetary Fund, the University of Chicago, and the University of California.

So we spent $830 billion on stimulus in early 2009. That passed through here without my vote, and I opposed it at the time vigorously. But it was passed, and every dime of it was borrowed. We didn't have the money. We were in debt. But the geniuses said we have to stimulate the economy. Oh, if we don't borrow money and spend it, we will sink into oblivion. It wasn't what Estonia did, but we did that. We spent the money, and we haven't seen the growth we needed. We helped surge our debt.

We continue to spend substantially. We continue to run up debt the likes of which we have never seen before. I believe that debt right now is slowing economic growth and that debt right now could be a threat to our financial security in the future. It is sad to see us go in that direction.

Spending reductions are doable. We can do this. A lot of people think it is not possible. They get depressed, and every time someone talks about spending reductions, people start whining: It can't be done. It can't be done. We will hurt the Defense Department because the cuts on the Defense Department were too great.

But the Defense Department will still be there if we don't fix it the way these cuts are imposed. It will still be there—and who knows, it could be stronger.

I am worried about it. In fact, the way the sequester was crafted, at the request of the President, one-half of all the cuts in the entire $1.2 trillion in cuts fell on the Defense Department, which makes up one-sixth of the Federal Government. So these cuts fell on the Defense Department disproportionately. Medicaid was increasing at 8 percent a year, no cuts; food stamps had gone up from $20 billion to $80 billion in 11 years—fourfold—but got no cuts; and, of course, Social Security had no cuts. There was a 2-percent maximum reduction trim on Medicare providers, which are the doctors and hospitals. They had a minor cut. So a huge portion of the budget had none, but the Defense Department took a huge, huge cut. It was not smart the way we did it, but the amount of cuts, if properly allocated across the entire government's spending, would have little impact on

reducing growth but would really begin to solidify public confidence that we have a smart plan to get out of this debt.

If we just slow the spending growth to 3.4 percent a year over the next 10 years, we could balance this budget without raising taxes. You have heard that said. It is true. This is true. We do not have to have substantial spending cuts; we can do it and still have growth.

Some programs need to be cut. Some programs have to be cut. Some programs are growing much faster than 3.4 percent. Medicaid is growing at 8 percent. It needs to be reformed. We can't sustain that kind of increase year after year after year.

Most Americans know the old story about the rule of seven. If you increase something at 7 percent a year on your savings account, it doubles in 10 years. So if you have 8 percent, you are seeing a 117-percent increase in spending over 10 years.

So if we allow 3.4 percent a year in spending growth, that means we would spend $11,000 per person in 2022, 10 years out—$11,000 per person by the Federal Government. That is a higher rate of spending per person than we had in 2007. Yet we are going broke.

We can reduce spending without affecting services. We can. Federal programs—many of them—are very wasteful, very inefficient, duplicative, and subject to fraud. I just held up the GAO 2012 report that listed a pile—page after page—of programs that are wasteful, duplicative, and so forth. We have social service, domestic disaster assistance, Internal Revenue Service enforcement efforts that all have duplicative gaps and are not properly managed. They talk about how the programs are duplicative, how the programs are mismanaged, how they need to be tightened up, and there is a whole list of these things. There are about 50 different major programs—51—that need reform. We haven't done any of that.

What does Congress say to the American people? Well, we don't have time to execute, carry out, or study GAO's report. That is too much work. Just send us more money. No, we don't have time to do this. You don't understand—these little programs, they do not save much money. They do not make any difference. We don't have to focus on them. Send us more money. You have to send us more money.

I think the American people may be getting tired of this.

Nine different agencies, according to GAO, run over 50 job-training programs for people with disabilities. This budget proposes to create more. We had an amendment offered at the Budget Committee that would create another job program. I mean, we have them all over the place. It sounded like a good idea. Something good happened in some State, so we have a plan to offer Federal legislation to do it here or expand it.

Last year alone, Washington paid out $44 billion to people who, through deceit or error, did not deserve Medicare payments. Let me repeat. Forty-four billion dollars was paid out to people who, through deceit or error, did not deserve Medicare payments. That is more money than we spend running our national parks, the FBI, the Federal Aviation Administration, the Army Corps of Engineers' civil works projects, and the Internal Revenue Service combined. Forty-four billion is a lot. That is just about what the Federal highway budget is—$44 billion. Fraud, deceit, and error out the door in Medicare alone.

Well, Mr. President, we have been at it a long time. I am very unhappy that the budget process has been shifted to the end of the week. I am very unhappy that we are at a point where we are not going to have as full a debate because people are going to be stressed, they are going to be here at night and maybe into the weekend. Somebody may say: Well, SESSIONS, it is your fault. Why don't you just yield back this time? But it would take every Senator here to yield back the time. And if I did, I am sure somebody would object. And I am not yielding back time now.

We have problems. We can yield, we can work through the night, we can compromise tonight and maybe save a few hours, or we can work to be as accommodating to our colleagues as we can. I am willing to do that. But I just have to say that this budget should have been up earlier. We should have reached an agreement with Senators MORAN and AYOTTE and given them amendments early in the week or last week, and we could have had the budget up Monday. We wouldn't have had all this fuss. We would have had Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday, and we would have had a full day, completed all amendments, and been out of here. But, oh no, I think there is something to the fact that it was considered to be a good idea just to carry this budget over to the end of the week and that Senators would want to leave and we would just wrap it all up, do it in the dead of night so the American people wouldn't see, perhaps, what is going to be done, wouldn't pay much attention to the votes, and we could get out of here and do the least possible public discussion of this bad budget that we can.

Now, some might say: Well, that is really not so.

I think it is so. We haven't had a budget on the floor for 4 years. Why? Senator REID said publicly that it is foolish to have a budget. Why did he say that? He meant it was foolish politically. I have said this before. He knows how I feel about it.

He said it was foolish—politically, basically—to have a budget. Why? Because writing a budget requires a party to lay out their vision for the future, to be prepared to defend it in public debate, and to have amendments on it. He has been controlling this Senate to a degree no majority leader has ever controlled the Senate, and the one thing he is not able to control is the budget process: You have 50 hours and virtually unlimited amendments. He didn't want to do that. So he was willing to violate the law of the United States and not bring up a budget so he wouldn't have to do this.

Finally, this year the House got fed up. They have been passing an honest budget that lays out a future plan for America. They have defended it publicly. They have taken unfair attacks and abuse for doing their duty every year—like they are supposed to do.

So they sent over a bill this year. It said: No budget, no pay, Congress. If you don't bring up your budget, you don't get paid. So now we have a budget for the first time in 4 years. Maybe the House should be given a medal for that.

But I am not happy. I don't believe we are doing this right. I was disappointed that for the first time in 3 years, when a budget was brought up in the Senate committee, we had statements made one afternoon for a few hours before we even saw the chairman's mark. It was produced after that, and we had 1 day—the next day—to offer amendments. That wasn't a very good process, in my view.

If we really want to deal with the debt—the greatest danger of our time—and deal with it properly, why wouldn't we want to have an open public hearing? Why wouldn't we have had expert witnesses all year to help talk to us? We had a few hearings, but we could have had a lot more because this has complex questions for us to decide. We should have had more time in committee, and we should have had full time on the floor of the Senate. So I don't make any bones about it. I wish we had done it differently.

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

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

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

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

## MORNING BUSINESS

Mrs. MURRAY. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate proceed to a period of morning business, with Senators permitted to speak for up to 10 minutes each.

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

## PRESIDENT'S MIDDLE EAST TRIP

Mr. LEAHY. Mr. President, President Obama arrived in the Middle East today. It is his first visit as President to Israel and the West Bank.

Some in the press have focused on the fact that the White House has lowered expectations for what will be accomplished in the 3 days of the President's visit. Others, including Members