

building 100. But if we tried to build 60 or 65 more, it would take us 30 or 40 years and cost us \$½ trillion. That is if we could even do it.

Another reason I think this will work is because it is easy for consumers, and I am one. For 2 years, I drove a Toyota Prius, and it had an A123 battery in it. I increased my mileage to about 80 or 90 miles a gallon. I just plugged it in at night at home. Very simple. I now have a Nissan Leaf. It is all electric. I have an apartment nearby the Capitol. I just plug it in at night. I don't even have a charger. I just plug it into the wall, and I can drive it about 2 hours every day and plug it in at night. I have not bought any gas since January, since I got my Leaf in Washington, DC.

I have had no problems, either with the modified Toyota Prius that I drove for 2 years, or with the Nissan Leaf that I have driven now for about half a year. Almost every car company is making electric cars today or will soon have them on the market.

So if the extra electricity is available—and electric vehicles are easy to use, and car companies are making them, then why do we need for the government to be involved? That is a good question. For one thing, it is the urgency of the problem: \$4 gasoline is killing our economy. It is throwing a big wet blanket over it.

The only solution is find more, use less. This is the best way to use less. To my Republican colleagues, I have said before our Committee, and I would say today what we have been saying for 3 years in our caucus: Find more and use less.

We have criticized Democrats for wanting to use less without really wanting to find more, and we are subject to the same criticism if we want to find more—which I think we should—offshore, on Federal lands, and in Alaska, and then we do not have a credible way to use less. Electric cars and trucks are the best way to use less.

Another criticism is that our bill interferes with the marketplace. It does, but in a short-term and limited way. Short-term incentives for new technologies—to jump-start nuclear energy, to jump-start natural gas truck fleets, to jump-start electric cars and trucks in 4 to 5 years—I think are appropriate, given the urgency of the problem. If I am here in 5 years, I will be the first to say this should be the end of it. If I am not, I will come back and argue for its repeal.

Finally, conservative groups across the country have said national security demands that we do this. Gary Bauer, president of American Values, as well as Richard Land, president of the Ethics and Religious Liberty Commission, endorsed our bill last year, saying that national security concerns overwhelm any opposition to it, and it is the best way to displace our use of oil. That was them talking.

Can we afford it? Well, our proposal is \$1 billion cheaper, it is an authorization bill, and we should be setting priorities.

There is some suggestion that this committee should also appropriate the money. I would respectfully suggest that we are in a 2-year period where we have no earmarks because authorizers didn't like appropriators authorizing. Well, let's be consistent and say to authorizers, "You shouldn't be appropriating." Let's just do the job of authorizing. Senator MERKLEY and I have agreed that we will not try to pass this bill when it comes to the floor unless we can agree to do it in a way that does not add to the debt.

So, in summary, I would say it is time to address \$4 gasoline and high energy prices. To do that, we need to find more American energy—offshore, on Federal lands, and in Alaska—but we also need to use less. The single best way to use less is to jump-start the use of electric cars and trucks. Electricity is just a delivery system. The fuel comes from a whole variety of things: natural gas, coal, and other things.

So we jump-start the use of that huge resource that we have just sitting there unused every single night. Our committee approved this bill once before. The problem is worse today than it was when they approved it last year. The bill costs less than it did when they approved it last year. It is an appropriate role for the Federal Government. We will work to make sure if this body were to pass it that it does not increase the debt.

I urge my colleagues to report the bill to the floor and to consider encouraging electric cars and trucks as the single best way to use less energy and reduce the use and reduce the cost of gasoline.

I thank the Senator from Alabama for his courtesy and for listening to my remarks.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Alabama.

ADJOURNMENT RESOLUTION

Mr. SESSIONS. Mr. President, today the Senate declined to vote on whether to recess. Someone said the Republicans blocked the Senate from recessing. That is not correct. Republicans wrote a letter to the majority leader and said we should not recess until we have plans set forth and begin to take action to deal with the budget that we have not passed that is required by law to be passed.

That is what was done. So when it comes down to the moment to move to recess and vote to recess, as we are required to do to have a recess, a unanimous consent, or an actual vote, the majority leader chose not to vote. I guess he wanted to protect his members from having to actually be recorded voting to recess this body when we have not done our work.

The Budget Act, in the United States Code, in the Code book, the Budget Act requires that the Senate commence markup hearings in the Budget Com-

mittee by April 1 and that a budget be produced by April 15. Congress does not go to jail if it is not passed, I will acknowledge. There is no fine. Perhaps there should have been.

Congress writes laws. I guess they make sure that no consequences occur when they apply to them and they do not comply with their duties.

The majority leader decided to keep us in pro forma session through the week but to do it in a way that guarantees we will take no action on a budget. This is a sad thing. It is not a little bitty matter. Our Congress knows we are in a serious national crisis. I think we can't deny it, and we have to figure out how to respond to it.

I hope this letter—and I will make it a part of the RECORD—to the majority leader will have some impact on our colleagues and cause them to reconsider the actions that have been taken so far. This is what it says:

DEAR MAJORITY LEADER REID: Today marks the 757th day since Congress last adopted a conference report on a budget resolution. But while the Republican House has met its obligations this year, the Democrat-led Senate remains in open defiance of the law—last year the Senate did not even call up a budget for a vote and this year the Senate Budget Committee has not even marked up a resolution, as required under Sec. 300 of the Congressional Budget Act of 1974.

Despite this dubious distinction, the Senate plans to adjourn for a week-long recess on Friday to coincide with Memorial Day, a holiday that honors our men and women in uniform. As our service members put their lives on the line to defend this nation, surely the least Congress can do is produce a plan to confront the debt that is placing the whole country at risk. House Republicans put forward just such a budget weeks ago—an honest plan for prosperity to overcome this nation's dangerously rising debt, cut wasteful Washington spending, and make our economy more competitive.

But, in this time of economic danger, the Senate continues to stonewall any and all action on a FY2012 budget. For this reason, we respectfully request that you delay any adjournment of this body until you or members of your party in the Senate bring forward a budget resolution and schedule a meeting of the Budget Committee—a power which resides solely with the majority—to work on that budget.

In an interview last week, you stated, "There's no need to have a Democratic budget in my opinion . . . It would be foolish for us to do a budget at this stage." We find these remarks shocking, especially given the state of our fiscal affairs: the co-chairs of President Obama's own fiscal commission recently warned that, if we do not take swift and serious action to address our rising debt, the United States faces "the most predictable economic crisis in its history."

The House completed its work on the FY2012 budget resolution on April 15th. But no budget can become binding until the Senate acts. In our view it would be an astounding abandonment of responsibility for the Senate to go on recess without having taken any steps to produce a budget. We hope that, as required by law and in your capacity as Majority Leader, you change course and follow the example of the Republican-led House and provide the American people with the honest leadership and the honest budget they deserve.

Until a budget plan is made public, and until that plan is scheduled for committee

action, on what basis can the Senate justify returning home for a one-week vacation and recess while our spending and debt continue to spiral dangerously out of control?

We appreciate your thoughtful consideration of this request and welcome any questions you might have.

We are out of sorts. The American people are not happy with this Congress. They say our polling numbers are the lowest they can get. In last fall's election, there was a shellacking, particularly of the big spenders, the ones who want to have more government programs and create more debt. There was an accounting and I guess there will be an accounting in the next election and we all better be sure we have tried to respond faithfully to the challenges America faces.

What has happened this week is a mockery, a sham, a joke. We had four votes yesterday. Each one of them was carefully and sophisticatedly structured to fail. The one that failed the biggest was President Obama's budget. It was voted down unanimously by this body, with zero votes. It was all designed to suggest it is impossible for the Senate to pass a budget. But the Senate doesn't even require a supermajority to pass a budget. Under the Budget Act that we have, it provides that it has a preference, has to be brought up properly, and can be passed with a simple majority.

The Democratic majority, similar to Republican majorities in the past, have to choose will they seek to pass a budget that has the broad support of both parties or will they simply use their majority and pass their budget? You should do one or the other. A good, bipartisan budget is always preferable, but sometimes we have different opinions. So if you have a different view from the other party and you can't reach an agreement, you have a majority, you can pass your budget. You know, when you do that, what happens. When you pass your budget, what happens? You lay out for the American people what you believe. It is one thing to criticize someone else, it is another thing to tell the world what you believe. The House has told the world what they think would be an effective budget for the future. What does the Senate say? Nothing. We haven't even commenced a markup in the Budget Committee.

A budget sets forth your vision for the future. It tells how much you want to cut taxes or raise taxes. It tells how much you want to raise spending or reduce spending. It says how much debt you expect to accumulate over the years to come or whether you would reach a surplus or a balanced budget. That is what a budget does. It holds you accountable. You have to defend it. You have to say what it is.

One thing I have been proud about is that the Republicans over in the House met their duty and produced a budget and they are prepared to defend it. Congressman RYAN knows what he is talking about. He worked on that budget and he is prepared to defend it. It

has been terribly misrepresented, but he is prepared to defend it, explain it, and talk to anybody about it.

But if our colleagues in the Senate fail to produce a budget—don't produce one at all—it is kind of hard to hold them to account, isn't it? That is why it is pretty clear that Senator REID said: Why, it is foolish for us to have a budget. It is foolish for us to have a budget because we would then be in a position to be held accountable. Was he talking about foolish for America to have a budget? Was he expressing a view that it is better for America that we have a budget? No. When he said it is foolish for us to produce a Democratic budget, he was talking purely politically. He was saying we think it is smart politics for us not to put our necks on the line to actually expose to the American people what we believe in. We would rather be in a position to criticize those people in the House who actually had the gumption—I guess he would say the foolish sense—to pass a budget and tell the American people what they think.

I have to say that is not a good situation. We didn't have a budget last year. We are not having one this year. Is there any wonder, then, our deficits continue to spiral out of control to a degree that we have never, ever seen before?

Many criticized President Bush—and so did I—for the \$450 billion budget deficit he produced. I thought it was a stunning number. Since President Obama has been President, the budget deficits have been \$1.2 trillion, \$1.3 trillion, and by September 30, it is projected to be about \$1.5 trillion. We will take in \$2.2 trillion this year, we expect, and we will spend \$3.7 trillion. Forty cents-plus of every \$1 we spend is borrowed. We are not confronting that.

So we are taking a recess. When it came time to vote to recess, the majority leader figured out a way to not have to actually vote to go home because, I guess, his Members felt they would be embarrassed if they had to vote to go home after being in violation of the United States Code to produce a budget.

This is not going away. This issue is not going away. Every expert, including the chairman of the fiscal commission formed by President Obama, the chairman of which he appointed Mr. Erskine Bowles, told us in a written statement, delivered by Mr. Bowles and Cochairman Simpson, that this Nation has never faced a more predictable financial crisis. We are heading toward that wall at warp speed. We can have a financial crisis. In fact, Mr. Bowles was asked by our chairman, Senator CONRAD: When do you think this crisis might occur? He said: Two years, maybe less. Alan Simpson said: I think maybe 1 year.

Surely, we have to get off the debt path we are on, spending so much more than we take in, and 40 cents of every \$1 we spend is borrowed and we pay interest on it. The interest has the po-

tential to damage our economy in a very significant and substantial way. It could put us in another recession. That is what Mr. Bowles was talking about—a debt crisis, another recession. Maybe it could be perhaps worse than the one we are in. Our projection for a fragile growth is not coming back as much as we would like it to. One reason, expert economists tell us, is that we are carrying too much debt and that has the potential to pull down our economy.

I think we are in a crisis. I think the economy is so naturally strong, the American people have so many capabilities and such a good work ethic that if we get the economy under control and our fiscal house in Washington under control, I believe the economy will come back. But we need to do it now, and every day we delay increases the risk that we will have a crisis occur.

I thank the Chair. I saw my colleague, Senator KLOBUCHAR. I know she wants to speak tonight. I will repeat that this matter is not over. We are in a long-term battle for the future of America. We are in a long-term battle for the financial security of our Nation. Yes, it is about our grandchildren. But as Mr. Bowles told us and Alan Simpson told us and Alan Greenspan told us, we could have a debt crisis in just a few years. Would that not be a disaster—because of our failure to respond to the extraordinary debt we are incurring, that we have a financial crisis that could put us back into recession. I hope not. I don't think that is going to happen this year, but I don't know. We have been warned it might. It is scary.

So we are going to continue to talk about this. We are going to continue to use the rules of the Senate to try to force the Senate to comply with the rules of the United States Code that says we should have a budget. We have had 757 days without a budget. How many more will it be before we have a budget? We will continue that battle. It is going to be a battle for the financial future of our country. Hopefully, we will be successful and somehow, somehow, as the pressure builds and the American people continue to have their voices heard, the White House, which today has been oblivious to these challenges, that the Democratic Senate, which has been oblivious to these challenges, will somehow get on board and seriously work with the House to confront the challenges we face and put us on a sound path to financial security for the future.

TRIBUTE TO BRADLEY HAYES

Mr. SESSIONS. Mr. President, I rise today to say a few words on the departure of Bradley Hayes, a valued, longtime member of my Judiciary Committee staff. Although I will feel the loss of his knowledge and enthusiasm, I am pleased that he is moving on to a new phase in his career.

Bradley had a wonderful upbringing in his home town of Mobile, AL, and a