

my plan to save Medicare, here is my plan to save Medicaid, here is my plan to fix the debt, and I want bipartisan support to do that, he will get it. At first, because it is a difficult issue, everybody will say: Oh, no, we can't do it that way. We need to sit down, talk, and come up with a result. I think the Republican leader has shown he is prepared and willing to do that. He has said it and done it on other issues. I don't know what else the rest of us can do to show that.

What I am trying to respectfully say today, as much as anything, to the President of the United States is congratulations on your inauguration. I was there. I was proud to participate in it and have the opportunity to speak for a minute and a half about why we celebrate for the 57th time the inauguration of an American President. We celebrate it because our country is distinguished from most other countries in the world by the peaceful transition or reaffirmation of the largest amount of power in the world. We have our political contests, and then we have the restraint to respect the results.

After winning the election, it is important, first, to get the fiscal house in order. The time to do it is while we have a divided government. The time to do it is while the President is at the peak of his popularity. The time to do it is while the House of Representatives—the Republican House—has created a window of 2 or 3 months to deal with all the fiscal issues. The time to do it is after 2 years of discussion with Republicans and Democrats in a bipartisan way about the need to fix the debt and the importance of it for the country.

My hope is that as the President and his advisers look at the Senate, they see a willingness to solve the problem of fixing the debt in a bipartisan way. I get the feeling they don't believe that about us. I don't know what else we can do to cause them to believe that. There is not the same kind of comfortable, back-and-forth relationship there should be. I have heard some people say: Well, the Johnson-Dirksen days are ancient history. That was a long time ago. However, human nature doesn't change. Human nature doesn't change in 50 years, 100 years, or 500 years.

There is plenty of good will across the aisle and on this side of the aisle, at the beginning of this term, to work with a newly inaugurated President and say: Mr. President, we are ready to fix the debt. Provide us the leadership. No great crisis is ever solved without Presidential leadership in the United States. You are the President; you are the only one who can lay out the plan. We will then consider it, amend it, argue about it, change it, and pass it. After that, we can get onto the President's agenda, about which we will have a difference of opinion, but he will go down in history as the man who was willing to do something hard within his own party, which was to fix the debt

and save the programs seniors depend upon to pay their medical bills.

I hope I can say that in the spirit of someone who participated in the inauguration and admires the President's considerable abilities. I hope he and his advisers stop, take a look, and say: Maybe we were wrong. Maybe this is the time to do it. Maybe we are the only ones who can do it, so let's make a proposal and get started.

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

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The clerk will call the roll.

The assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

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

THE BUDGET

Mr. SESSIONS. Madam President, I was pleased to hear a few days ago that Senator SCHUMER said we would have a budget in the Senate. It has been now, I think, about 1,370 days, give or take, since we have had a budget in the Senate, even though plain statutory law requires the Congress to have a budget. Now Senator MURRAY has followed up today, I believe, with a quote saying: "... the Senate will once again return to regular order and move a budget resolution through the Budget Committee and to the Senate floor."

So the Budget Committee has not been meeting. It has not been doing its duty. As the ranking Republican on the Budget Committee, I have been aghast at the process and have talked about it for now for over 1,000 days. So this will be a good step.

My colleagues would like to suggest somehow that they decided to do this out of the goodness of their hearts because it is the right thing to do. But I think the American people have had a belly full of this.

The U.S. House of Representatives has repeatedly passed budgets, but the Senate has refused to even bring one up in committee or on the floor for over 2 years now. They have said they are raising the debt limit for about 3 months, but they have declared that the Senate does not get paid until we have a budget. Right now there is no punishment for not passing a budget. I was a Federal prosecutor for over 15 years and know how to read a code. It has no penalty for failing to pass a budget. It says the Senate should bring up a budget. It should complete the budget process in committee by April 1 and then the full Senate should take it up and it should be completed by April 15. The Senate is given priority: 50 hours of debate, virtually unlimited amendments—an opportunity to debate the financial condition of America.

That is why it has not happened. Senator REID, the Democratic leader for

the last several years, has said it would be foolish to have a budget. What he meant was that it would be foolish politically. Because when you bring up a budget, this is a tough thing. The House did that.

PAUL RYAN offered a historic budget that would change the debt course of America and put us on a sound path. They had to make some tough choices. So they were, of course, attacked in the election—Oh, these are horrible people; they want to throw old people off the cliff and that kind of thing and it was irresponsible—while during this entire process, the Senate was in direct violation of Federal law that required us to bring up a budget. We did not bring it up because it would be foolish, foolish politically, because we have to take tough votes. We have to stand and be counted. Numbers have to be analyzed: How much are you truly going to raise taxes? Oh, well, is that going to change the debt course?

Is this latest \$600 billion tax increase going to change the debt course of America? No; it is not. Our deficit last year was about \$1,080 billion. How much would this tax increase, this \$600 billion, have changed that? That is \$60 billion a year. Instead of \$1,080 billion or so in deficit, our deficit would have been \$1,020 billion. Is that going to fix our problem? No, it will not.

These are difficult problems. These are very difficult problems, and it is not going to be easy. But it was easy to attack the House while not producing a budget. It is a pretty flabbergasting thing to me. So I am glad we are now going to have this process. It will not be easy for Republicans. It will not be easy for Democrats. But what are we paid to do? What responsibility do we have as the Congress—that has the power of the purse—if not discussing the great issues of our time?

We are on an unsustainable debt path. Last year there was another trillion-dollar deficit, and they are projecting we will have a trillion-dollar deficit this year. That is 5 consecutive years of trillion-dollar deficits. I know President Bush was criticized, and correctly sometimes, for spending too much. The highest deficit he ever had in 8 years was \$470 billion. The year before he left it was \$160 billion. President Obama has averaged well over \$1,000 billion a year in an annual deficit ever since.

This is not sustainable, as every expert has told us time and time again. So I am worried about it. Maybe we can move out of these secret meetings where the Senate just sits around and we wait for the people to appear, write us a bill at midnight on December 31—actually 1 a.m. on January 1—that is supposed to handle it and nobody has even read it.

That is what we have been doing for the last 4 years. It has worked out good politically because it has kept an honest discussion of the dangerous path we are on from being part of the public debate. We have to have it part of the

public debate. I am not saying this budget, if it moves through the Senate, is going to solve our problems and that it will be adopted. I am not saying that. But I do believe the American people will understand better the challenges we face and Senators will understand better the challenges we face, how deep they are, how systemic they are.

In 2011, after Republicans won a victory in the midterm elections, there was hope we would have a new budget from the President, that he would reach out to the House that had gotten a Republican majority for a change—they took back the majority, and there were more Republicans in the Senate—and that the President was going to produce a budget that would put us on the right path and maybe a historic path that would help make Social Security and Medicare sustainable, preserve those programs so people can go to bed at night and feel confident these programs not going to go bankrupt and there are not going to be dramatic cuts. We can do that. It would take some belt-tightening, but we could do that. Yet the administration refused: You are just partisan, SESSIONS.

I am saying, without fear of contradiction by anybody who knows what has happened, that this administration basically has not wanted to talk about those deep spending issues that amount to more than half the money we spend.

That was a challenge. Maybe that logjam has broken and this budget process will give us an opportunity to move forward.

I do not like to be critical of nominees or anyone. I try to be as courteous and respectful as we can to people whom we deal with on a regular basis in the Congress. But I have to share with my colleagues a deep feeling that we have a serious credibility problem with credibility on debt and financing. We have to end that credibility problem. We have to be honest and deal with real numbers.

In January of 2011, Mr. Jack Lew, the then-Director of the Office of Management and Budget, with a substantial staff—one of their primary duties is to produce a budget every year—submitted the President's Budget to Congress. The President always submits a budget—it has been late, but they have always sent them over. The Senate has not moved budgets like it is required to, but every President has always sent over a budget. There was great hope that the budget would be the kind of breakthrough—with a Republican House and a Democratic President and a Democratic Senate—that somehow this would be an opportunity for historic agreement to put America on a sound path and get us off these trillion-dollar deficits, put us on a path to a balanced budget and do the kind of things that are necessary for the welfare of our country.

Mr. Lew produced the budget, and he went on television immediately and talked about it. On Wednesday of that

week, he was going to be before the Budget Committee, but this is what he said in his CNN Sunday morning interview about his budget. I would ask you to listen to these words, colleagues and friends, anybody who is watching, and see what they mean to you. He said:

Our budget will get us, over the next several years, to the point where we can look the American people in the eye and say we're not adding to the debt anymore; we're spending money that we have each year—

Money that we have each year—
and then we can work on bringing down our national debt.

That was on CNN.

So he appeared before the Budget Committee and I asked him if that was an accurate statement; did he stand by that. He said: Yes, sir, and he never wavered from that.

I will just say that as part of the budget process we get a stack of documents—this much—from Mr. Lew's office. The Office of Management and Budget submits them—supporting documents—as part of their process. They are easily ascertainable. The numbers are not in dispute.

The lowest single deficit over 10 years that Mr. Lew projected was more than \$600 billion. In other words, there was never a balanced budget, never paying down the debt, never a single year we were not borrowing at least \$600 billion.

None of what he said is accurate. It is breathtaking. I called it the greatest financial misrepresentation in history. It would have added \$13 trillion to the debt of the United States over 10 years, by his own estimate, not stuff I made up. Yet he said we are not going to be adding to the debt anymore.

So I thought, if a businessman reported to potential stock purchasers, our company is on the right track, we are not adding to our debt anymore—we are going to look the American people in the eye and say we're not adding to the debt anymore, we are spending only money we have—you are borrowing—the least amount of money you have borrowed in a single year is \$600 billion, larger than President Bush ever had in 8 years as President.

When I asked him about it, he insisted that it was true. So we have got a problem here, and that is why I am not going to support Mr. Lew for the Secretary of the Treasury. I am not going to vote for him. I believe he knew exactly what he was saying. He produced a budget that was panned by virtually every editorial board in America. They hammered it as failing to meet the challenge of our time, and he knew it was that way. He is not a person who doesn't understand these issues. He knew what it was all about. But they decided they would go out and spin it this way. They would say it did what the American people wanted.

I hate to be this harsh, but there is only one conclusion. They decided to produce a budget that did not change the debt course of America and left us on an unsustainable path. Even their

own numbers show that, but they would tell the American people this, say it was fixed, and maybe lull them into a false sense of confidence.

Then they attacked PAUL RYAN of the Republican House for producing a realistic budget. It wasn't a dramatic budget, it didn't even balance in 10 years, but it changed us and put us on a sound path. They would attack him as not caring about people, and for 2 years that is what has happened.

Once we bring a budget to the floor of this Senate, Republicans and Democrats are going to find out this is a very difficult situation we are in. The challenge is going to be very difficult, and we are going to have a hard time dealing with it.

Mr. Lew didn't just make that comment to CNN, in case you think I am exaggerating here. He also said this in an NPR, National Public Radio, interview on February 15, 2011, the day, I believe, of a Budget Committee hearing:

If we're able to reduce the deficit to the point where we can pay for our spending and invest in the future, that is an enormous accomplishment. This budget has specific proposals that would do that.

He looked the American people in the eye, or, I guess, talked to their ears on NPR, and said his "budget has specific proposals" that would put us in a position to pay for our spending and invest in the future and reduce our deficit.

He went on to say on February 15, 2011, at the Budget Committee hearing—and I think this was my question, Was this an accurate statement that you made, Mr. OMB Director?

He said:

It's an accurate statement that our current spending will not be increasing the debt. We've stopped spending money that we don't have.

I mean, I almost can't read those words without the hair standing up on the back of my neck. The Director of the Office of Management and Budget appeared before the U.S. Senate Budget Committee, and he said, "it's an accurate statement," this baloney, "it's an accurate statement that our current spending will not be increasing the debt . . . We've stopped spending money that we don't have."

Nothing could be further from the truth—the lowest single deficit was \$600 billion.

What about on a different CNN interview on February 14, 2011:

It [the budget] takes real actions now so that between now and 5 years from now we can get our deficit under control so that we can stabilize things so that we're not adding to the debt anymore.

He promised, and looked the American people in the eye and said, in 5 years, we are not going to be adding to the debt anymore. He knew exactly what he was saying. He knew exactly what he wanted the American people to hear. There is no ambiguity about it, and it was utterly false.

February 13, 2011, on ABC, he said:

This budget has a lot of pain, [but] it does the job, it cuts the deficit in half by the end

of the President's first term . . . It's going to take us a lot of hard work just to take us to the point where we're not adding to the debt.

There is not one year that they are not adding to the debt.

In the seventh, eighth, ninth, tenth years of the budget that Jack Lew presented, when you look at his real numbers, the deficit was going up each year. So it was not a fix to our debt problem.

Then he says this on the White House blog, February 13, 2011:

Like every family, we have to tighten our belts and live within our means while we're investing in the things that we need to have a strong and secure future . . . We know that you have to stabilize where we're going before you can move on and solve the rest of the problem. This budget does that.

So it is going to stabilize us and move us forward.

Well, as I say, that was not well received. The New York Times wrote this on February 5, 2011. That was his op-ed. I won't go into the editorials, but a whole list of those were critical of Mr. Lew.

I would just say this, we are in a difficult financial position. We need honesty, we need a budget that is truthful, we need the regular order so the Budget Committee does its work, and then it comes to the floor of the U.S. Senate—this will be first time in over a thousand days—it guarantees 50 hours of debate, it can't be filibustered, it can be passed with a simple majority, we will know what is in it, and people can offer amendments. That is what should have been happening for a long time that has not been happening. That is what the law requires, and that should be completed by April 15 of this year.

As we go forward, I am confident that we will be better served by public discussion of our debt, not secret meetings. I have been critical of them. I had hoped that some of them would ripen into some good solutions, but all we have had is temporary “kick the can down the road” maneuvers, and nothing substantial has been done to change the debt course of America.

By the way, when Mr. Erskine Bowles, whom President Obama appointed to head his fiscal commission, saw this budget in 2011, he said it goes nowhere near where they will have to go to resolve our fiscal nightmare. Everybody knew this budget wouldn't do the job, and that is why it was never brought through the process, and that is why it wasn't brought to the floor for a full budget analysis in committee and in debate on the floor.

So as we go forward, I will be meeting with our new chairman, Senator MURRAY. She is a great, tough advocate for her values, but she is a good person to work with. I have told her we will try to work with her, but we are going to talk about the great issues of our time, the difficulties we face, and see if we can't make this system work better and try to put this country on a sound financial footing.

We can do it. We can get this country on a sound path. It is not impossible, but anybody who thinks it will be easy is wrong. This is going to take some hard work. As we do that in a bipartisan, open way in the committee, on the floor of the Senate, the American people will be able to digest the difficulty of some of our challenges, and so will our Members in Congress. In the end, that, I think, leaves us in the best position to reach the kind of agreement, compromise, solution, that can put us on the right path, because everybody is going to have to swallow a little bit.

I yield the floor.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The Senator from Iowa.

THE BUDGET AND THE DEFICIT

Mr. HARKIN. Madam President, I couldn't help but listen to the words of my friend from Alabama regarding the debt and deficit, and then to be reminded that we did balance the budget not too long ago. In fact, in 1993, we passed a tax bill here in the Senate and in the House—it was signed into law by President Clinton—which set us on a course to reduce the deficit. In fact, by the years 1999 and 2000, we balanced the budget. We had a surplus. Can you imagine that? We had a surplus for 3 years in a row. The Congressional Budget Office and OMB said that if we had continued on that pathway, we would have fully paid off the national debt by 2010.

When I hear my friends on the Republican side talk about reducing the deficit and the debt, we did that. When the Democrats were in charge of the Senate and the House and we had the Presidency, I would also point out that not one Republican on that side of the aisle voted for that bill in 1993. I can remember standing here and debating with my friend from Texas at that time on this bill, and there were all kinds of dire warnings that if this bill passed, we were going to have depressions and recessions; the business community would stop, and it would be the worst thing that ever happened to this country if we passed the Clinton tax proposal. Well, we passed it, but without one Republican vote.

And what happened? We had the largest spurt of economic growth this country had seen almost since the 1950s and 1960s. This was to the point to where, as I said, by the end of the 1990s we had a balanced budget and we had a surplus.

Then President Bush comes into office, and we had surpluses, enough to retire the entire national debt by the year 2010. So what did President Bush say? Well, now we are going to give tax cuts. They pushed through this big tax cut bill for which this Senator did not vote.

That tax cut bill gave a lot away to corporations and to the wealthy of this country, so that they didn't have to pay their fair share. Also, there were

two wars we didn't pay for, plus a recession, and now we are in this huge deficit.

We know how to get ourselves out of this fix. We did it in 1993. It was by having the people in this country pay their fair share of taxes, to make sure that corporations, to make sure that those who enjoy the benefits of living in this free and productive society, pay their fair share. This is for all of us to raise the revenues necessary to meet our obligations in education, health, infrastructure building, the security of our Nation, and also to raise enough revenues so we can reduce the deficit.

But it can only be done with fairness and with fair sharing by all, and that is what President Obama has spoken about. He spoke about that in his inaugural address. That is what we have been talking about here for a long time; that is, shared sacrifice on behalf of all, and to make sure that all pay their fair share of taxes in this country so we can once again do what we did in 1993. We can do it again if only my friends on the Republican side will join with us in making sure we raise the necessary revenues to get us out of this hole.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Ms. BALDWIN). The Senator from Missouri.

EXTENSION OF MORNING BUSINESS

Mrs. MCCASKILL. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent that the period of morning business be extended until 2 p.m. today, and that all provisions of the previous order remain in effect.

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

The Senator from Missouri.

REMEMBERING STAN MUSIAL

Mr. BLUNT. Madam President, first of all, this is the first time I have spoken on the floor when you were in the chair. Welcome to the Senate and welcome to the presiding chair.

I want to talk for a few minutes today about a baseball great, a Missouri great, Stan Musial, who passed away on Saturday at the age of 92. Stan Musial was born in November 1920 in Denora, PA. His title was Stan “The Man.” He was the youngest of six children. When he wasn't called Stan “The Man,” he was just a guy who worked at a company as a young man, whose dad was a Polish immigrant, whose mother was of Czechoslovakian ancestry, and whose dreams were probably not to become a professional baseball player but who was, indeed, a great athlete from the very start.

In his remarks, when he presented Stan Musial the Medal of Freedom in 2011, President Obama said the following:

Stan matched his hustle with humility. He retired with 17 records—even as he missed a season in his prime to serve his country in