

rise—and rise dramatically in future years with 10,000 baby boomers retiring every day.

Let me repeat that: 10,000 baby boomers are reaching retirement age each day, adding to the cost of Medicare, Medicaid, and Social Security.

We have known this was coming for years. We have known it was coming for decades; that an amazing number of people born post-World War II now have worked their way to the point of retirement. This has had an impact on our economy, whether they were babies needing more cribs and diapers, whether they were young children going to elementary school and we needed more schools, going to secondary colleges and universities and we needed to expand those, working their way through the economy, having children—a dramatic impact with this bulge of baby boom babies growing up and working their way through the system. Yet while we knew all this was coming, Congress and the administration repeatedly said: We will deal with this later. It is a crisis, we know, but it is just too tough to deal with now.

What I am afraid of is that this latest report which came out and provided a little bit of relief, a little bit of wiggle room, but it did nothing to solve the long-term problem. What I am concerned about is that this report may be used to basically say we don't have to do anything now.

What is the impact? The nonpartisan Congressional Budget Office reported earlier this year that spending on mandatory programs and interest on the debt—because we have to borrow to cover this cost—will consume 91 percent of all Federal revenues 10 years from now. Already it is putting the squeeze on discretionary spending because what this means is that all other spending priorities are being squeezed out by spending on Medicare, Medicaid and Social Security and some of the other mandatory programs.

If we are interested in a strong national defense, in a solid education system, infrastructure and bridges and paving roads, medical research, food and drug safety, homeland security, border security—and other programs, these programs are getting squeezed every day in terms of the amount of resources available.

Why these groups don't form a coalition and come marching through the Halls of Congress and demand that we take action now on runaway mandatory spending, because it is simply wiping out their programs, is beyond me. But it is the nature of the political beast to postpone the tough stuff, to not have to get to the point where they have to tell anybody no because we want everybody to love us so they will vote for us in the next election. It is incomprehensible that we continue to put this off day after day, month after month, year after year, election after election.

I have been around a while. How many times have we heard people say

we will do that after the next election? That was the mantra in the 2012 Presidential election. Well, no. You see, the President couldn't step up and do this and the ruling party couldn't step up and do this because we had a Presidential election. They said that as soon as the election takes place, then we will have a period of time where we have been reelected to office or we have new Members coming in and we will not have the pressure of an election before us and we will address this problem.

Here we are now into the sixth month of this year, when everyone knows that the first 100 days of the new administration—or a second-term in this case—is the best time to enact long-term good legislation that addresses major problems—the days are slip-sliding away. The days are counting, and we continue debate and talk about and interject issues here that, yes, have importance but don't begin to rise to the level of importance of the need to address our fiscal situation.

The other thing I don't understand is why the young people of this country aren't standing up and demanding that we take action, because we are taking money away from them. We are diminishing their future. We are leaving them with a debt burden they may not be able to pay.

The International Monetary Fund put out a report recently that to cover current obligations for young people, they—not us—will have to pay either 35 percent more in taxes to keep these mandatory funds alive and solvent or receive 35 percent fewer benefits. This is at a time when our Nation's youth already face an unemployment crisis.

It is unconscionable. It is immoral for us to defer and to delay and to simply say we can't take care of these issues now and then move on through our lives, reap the benefits that come from some of these programs, and then hand it over to our children and say: Good luck. You are either going to pay one-third more in taxes or you are going to get one-third less in benefits, lifetime savings, Social Security for your retirement, health care coverage for your later years. Good luck with that one. But we couldn't summon the will to do it. We couldn't bring ourselves to make the hard choices.

Are we going to step up to the plate and be responsible? What is our legacy going to be for those of us who are serving now? What are we going to tell our children and grandchildren? Will we say sorry, we just weren't able to do it? It was just too tough politically, we are worried about the folks back home that they might not take it the right way. It requires a little bit of sacrifice to reform these programs—actually, to save the programs—before they go broke. But, no, we just couldn't do it. The President? No; kind of AWOL on this, hasn't stepped up. We thought for sure that after reelection, not being elected again, we would get some kind of leadership.

I see it slip-sliding away, and now we are faced with that ultimate day of crisis when it hits and we have to make painful choices because we have no other choice.

So why don't we take the rational approach? Why don't we have leadership that steps up and basically says this is what we need to do? Why don't we put the future of America and the future of our children and grandchildren and succeeding generations ahead of our own political interests? It is selfish not to do so. I think it is unconscionable. I think it is immoral for us to continue doing this.

So I am going to continue to come to the floor as much as I can—I have been doing this all year—and I am going to continue to urge the President to work with us. I am not making this a partisan issue. We are working with people across the aisle who understand this and want to do something about it. But we know we can't get it done without the President taking leadership and standing up and working with us.

There is a little bit going on right now, but here we are, 6 months later, and we are not making the progress we need to make.

In the end, maybe we will pass another patch of legislation—a little patch here, a little patch there—and we will deal with the big thing later. We just can't do it now.

For the sake of the future of this country, for the sake of the future of our children and grandchildren, for living up to our sworn oath to do what is necessary to continue the great story of democracy in this Nation, we need to step up and do this. These reforms are necessary. We all know it. We know the numbers. We know they are unsustainable. We know we must address it.

I urge my colleagues to do whatever is necessary to make the tough choices. Interestingly enough, that legacy, if we stand up to do it, will be worth whatever results or consequences come from our making these decisions.

I yield the floor.

CONCLUSION OF MORNING BUSINESS

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Morning business is closed.

AGRICULTURE REFORM, FOOD, AND JOBS ACT OF 2013

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the Senate will resume consideration of S. 954, which the clerk will report.

The assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

A bill (S. 954) to reauthorize agriculture programs through 2018.

Pending:

Stabenow (for Leahy) amendment No. 998, to establish a pilot program for gigabit Internet projects in rural areas.