The Senator from Indiana.

Mr. COATS. Mr. President, it is my understanding that we are in morning business with permission to speak for up to 10 minutes.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator is correct.

WASTEFUL SPENDING

Mr. COATS. Mr. President, when I reran for the Senate in 2010, there were two major issues that dominated the campaign and that continue to dominate the discussion and debate in the Senate postelection. One was the Affordable Care Act, now called ObamaCare, which was pushed through without any bipartisan support. There was a lot of concern among the American people about the impact this would have on their lives. That was an issue of intense discussion and debate during that campaign.

The second was the plunge into debt at a level Americans had never seen before in the history of the country. It took nearly 200 years, from the beginning of our Nation until 1981, to reach the $1 trillion debt mark. That is a lot of governing. That is a lot of growth of America. But we were essentially on a path—including expenditures for war and so forth—that didn't take us deeply into debt relative to our gross domestic product.

All of a sudden, in 2010, there was the revelation that debt held by the public was rapidly nearing the $10 trillion mark—a tenfold increase in less than 30 years. It took 190 plus years to get to the first $1 trillion and only 30 years to add ten times that amount. That was a hot topic of debate during the 2010 election. During that election, the American people came out in significant numbers and said: Get to Washington and do something about this.

In the background, a debt clock was ticking away, and not only on my website but clocks around the country at different times, and people were astonished at how fast those numbers were churning.

That led to a pretty intense effort on the part of both parties and on the part of many organizations. I can remember Simpson-Bowles—a former Chief of Staff of President Bill Clinton along with a former distinguished Senator from Wyoming, a Republican and a Democrat together—Simpson-Bowles. The public was getting behind this—a $4 trillion, over 10 year fix to the problem. It was pretty dramatic, yet there was a lot of momentum for it. That was shot down, unfortunately, by the President when it was presented.

Following that, we had the Gang of 6, a bipartisan effort, and the Joint Committee on Deficit Reduction—the group of 12, 6 Democrats and 6 Republicans working diligently to try to put something together, along with outside organizations, to fix the debt. There were any number of these—the Domenici Rivlin task force—proposals that were worked on together in a bipartisan way, realizing that as the debt was continuing to accumulate it was going to have major negative consequences to the future of our children and grandchildren and perhaps even our own generation.

We stand here today, having gone through all that—the Vitter committee, which I was a part of; eight of us agreeing with the President, with no staff and no press, closed room, months and months and months of negotiation—only once again to come up short. Ultimately, we sacrificed so many things we thought we needed to do just to get something going. But once again it was shot down in the end by a President who really wasn't willing to accept even the provisions he had proposed in his budget proposal that was publicly proposed. We took those and said: Can we at least do these, Mr. President? You have announced this is your initiative. But it was a no go.

Well, as a member of the Committee on Appropriations, I then tried to work with various agencies. They all had to come before us to make their requests known for the coming year. I asked them: Do you have a plan B in place? What do you mean plan B? What is plan B all about?

Plan B is the fact that mandatory spending is running away with our budget and the available amount of money for your discretionary spending is shrinking every year. So what is your plan B in terms of having less money available, whether it is for health care, for education, for building roads? All of the discretionary issues that fall under the discretionary spending that we are in control of, we no longer have control of. That is shrinking and you are going to have to do more with less. And I asked that they provide a plan B before they could get my clearance in terms of supporting their requests.

They never came forward. No, we have to stay with what the President's budget is and so forth. So here we are now, over $8 trillion more than where we were in 2010, and an $18 trillion-plus deficit.

Everyone knows this is unsustainable. Everyone in America knows we are careening toward insolvency, with an inability to cover even some of the most basic functions of government.

I talk to agencies about a policy of triage. I suggested they separate out what they absolutely essentially have to do and we will fund it. Then part B is what they would like to do if they had the money to do it. Part C is their asking: Why are we doing that in the first place or that program is long past its need, its existence or it hasn't worked. Let's start there, with part C, and let's get rid of excess spending that has no real function going forward or it is duplication or fraud or waste or whatever.

That leads me now to this poster. I have kind of gone from acting like the President's Chief of Staff to the co-chair of the ''go big guy'' in terms of what we need to do. We can't go there, but maybe we can go a little. And we are all the way down now to what I call ''waste of the week.''

Let us at least identify those things that the Government Accountability Office and the Congressional Budget Office have identified as those things we know don't work, that we know are a waste, that we know are duplication, and let's see if we can get at least some start in terms of dealing with this debt.

Senator Coburn took the lead on that in the last several sessions of Congress. We are going to miss him because no one can do it better than he did in pointing out and really embarrassing a lot of us in asking: Why are we funding that? I am not trying to take his place. But I did, with my staff, come up with the idea to at least let our colleagues know—those who say we can't cut a penny more, we have cut too much—that, yes, we can cut more. We can at least do something to address this debt or have money to offset a needed funding program.

So we are going to inaugurate ''waste of the week'' today. In its debut, I will go back to something I tried to amend when we were addressing the unemployment insurance issue. Ultimately, I was not able to offer the amendment thanks to the majority leader's filling of the tree and not allowing any amendments. I made a big stink about it. I didn't understand why we could not at least take that up.

So waste of the week this week is the cost to the taxpayer for those in the safety net receiving Social Security Disability Insurance or unemployment insurance and getting checks from both agencies.

Now, if you can prove to the appropriate government agency that you can't work, you can be eligible if you go through the process for Social Security Disability Insurance. But if you go to the Social Security Disability Insurance agency and make your claim, you can't then go to the unemployment insurance agency and say you can't work, that you can't find work, that you are able to work but that you need to get that check from that agency. What has been documented now is the fact that there are very significant numbers of people who are gaming this issue and receiving checks from both agencies.

Either you can work or you can't work. You are eligible for one safety net program or the other, but not both. That totals $5.7 billion of duplication.

My amendment that I had offered under the unemployment insurance extension in the last Congress was simply to say you can't do both, and we are going to put procedures in place so we can find out who is doing both.

One would think this would be pretty simple, even in the paper age, but we are in the digital age. I don't understand why the people administering

this can't simply take the Social Security number and plug it into unemployment insurance and say: Do you have this person's name with this Social Security number? Are they receiving unemployment insurance? Or vice versa. It ought to be the push of a button on a computer so that it is not all that costly and makes a great deal of sense.

The worst they would have to do is pick up the phone and say: I have John Doe here whose Social Security number is X. He is applying for Social Security Disability Insurance. Do you have him on the unemployment role? Or vice versa. I am sorry, Mr. Doe, but you can't do both, and you are gaming the system. This duplication of benefits costs $5.7 billion. That is a pretty good savings.

This is the first of what will be a weekly presentation of programs that are no longer needed, that are duplicative, where there is fraud or waste involved. I am going to bring this forward every week, and we are going to try to add it all up.

We start here with $5.7 billion, and I have my spending thermometer going up to $100 billion. I think we can go much higher than that. Tom Coburn said we could, through his Wastebook and the work he has done.

So we have already inked it in here. We are going to start filling this in by coming here every week.

People may say: Well, that is small change. Look, $5.7 billion is not small change. In comparison to our debt, does it solve the problem? Absolutely not. It is at least a start. Can we at least not come together in sensible things such as this and at least get started in the right direction?

In the meantime, I think we are still going to be pushed into situations by crisis, when no longer the countenance of the investment world in America in terms of the rate of return is acceptable, because the debt continues to accumulate.

So here we are, back to 2010, back to where we were. I know it is not talked about very much at this stage. We have foreign policy issues and domestic issues we have to engage in. But the clock is ticking away, minute after minute, second after second, and it is a continued plunge of the deficit spending—borrowing money we don't have in order to pay for things we need, but also paying for things we don't need.

So I will be here every week with a new proposal. We will be filling in this chart, and hopefully at least start us on the process once again of getting through to one major challenge we have here in this Senate, the Congress, and the executive branch, and that is dealing with our debt. It is generational theft. It is putting the burden on our children and grandchildren, and even on workers here today. It is holding down our economy. It is one of the major challenges this Congress has not successfully addressed and which this administration has not successfully addressed. It is kicking the can down the road to the extreme, and we do not need to forget that. We need to emphasize it. This is my small step, after many large steps that have failed, to try to continue to alert the American people and alert my colleagues that there is money we can save and spend and run a much more efficient, effective government.

I yield the floor.

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

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

PRINCIPLED STEWARDSHIP OF THE AMERICAN WEST

Mr. BARRASSO. Mr. President, over the past week while I was home in Wyoming traveling around our State, I had a chance to talk with students about their hopes for the future, and I talked with many small business owners about their efforts in trying to create jobs.

The people of Wyoming work hard and take seriously the Western values of family and community. They are committed—they are committed—to preserving the West's role in providing natural resources that improve the lives of millions of people all across America.

This commitment is shared by the Senate Western Caucus—a caucus which I chair in the Senate—as well as is shared by the Congressional Western Caucus under the leadership of Wyoming Congressman CYNTHIA LUMMIS.

Recently, we released a joint report titled ''Principled Stewardship of the American West.'' This new report has details about specific things we should be doing right here in Congress, specific things Washington should let the people in the West do for themselves. The whole report is available on my Web site, Barrasso.senate.gov.

Now I want to talk about four specific principles that guide the work of the Western Caucus that are contained in this very report. These principles are based on the idea that the people who live on the land are the best stewards of the land. Our main goal is to empower the residents, the workers, and the leaders in the West and local leaders throughout the country to make the decisions that best serve their families and their communities. These principles stand in stark contrast to the failed approach Washington has taken for far too long.

The first principle in our report has to do with energy. The members of the Western Caucus are united. We will promote access to our Nation's abundant, affordable, secure, diverse, and reliable energy and mineral resources. That means increasing energy security for the United States. We can do that by producing more energy responsibly right here at home. It also means opening access to international markets so we can help the energy security of our allies as well.

The second principle we talk about in the report ''Principled Stewardship of the American West'' focuses on environmental stewardship in the West. We take very seriously our commitment to ensuring the health of the land, the wildlife, and the environment. Thousands of people are working across the West to protect our communities. These are people who live in the West, not bureaucrats in Washington, DC. Nobody is better qualified than the people who actually walk the land and breathe the air they are trying to protect.

Our report encourages locally led conservation partnerships to build on the work being done by people who rely on the health and the safety of the land. This means making sure regulators base their decisions on science, not on personal ideology, and that their work is done out in the open. On this front I will be introducing legislation to stop the Environmental Protection Agency's takeover of the waters of the United States.

The third principle in this report focuses on agriculture and forestry. As an environmental stewardship, the Western Caucus believes the States are better equipped than Washington to develop good farm policies. Crops, breeds of livestock, soil types, and the growing seasons vary greatly across this country. These factors come together in the West very differently from what might be seen in the Northeast or in the South. A bureaucrat in Washington simply cannot write regulations that cover every part of the country with any hope of success. Western States must be allowed to make these decisions for themselves to help the farming and ranching way of life continue to thrive in America.

One task we can do at the national level is to promote active management of our forests to ensure that our forests remain healthy. As many as 82 million acres of our National Forest System need treatment to deal with the threats of fire, insects, and invasive species. When forests deteriorate, they are more vulnerable to wildfire. Fires cause erosion and threaten water quality. When forests get overgrown and unhealthy, they stifle habitats critical for deer, elk, wild turkeys, and other animals. The members of the Western Caucus know how important it is to responsibly manage our national forests, and we will push for legislation to make sure that continues to happen.

Finally, the report focuses on a Western approach to judicial and regulatory reform. This includes stopping the lawsuit abuse that special interest groups have used to set public policy without the public actually being involved. It includes protecting private property owners from excessive Washington regulations.