

The Republican leader on May 16 told Bloomberg TV that tax reform “will have to be revenue neutral.” These are his words. That is a principle he has advanced for years.

We are not hearing much from Republicans about deficits now. Yet, I repeat, this budget instructs the committees to increase the deficit by \$1.5 trillion. It will be difficult for many of my Republican friends to say that they care about deficits and still vote for this budget.

The GOP budget resolution will also be the first time that my Republican colleagues vote to slash Medicare. The budget spells out over \$400 billion in Medicare cuts, as well as over \$1 trillion in Medicaid cuts—even more than the healthcare bill, and probably the No. 1 reason for its demise was that huge slash to Medicaid.

So it is going to be difficult for my Republican friends and this Republican Party to say that they want to protect Medicare and Medicaid and still vote for this budget. Unfortunately, this will not be the first time Republicans vote to advance a major piece of legislation—changes to our Tax Code—through a hyperpartisan process known as reconciliation. Reconciliation, as has just been documented in an article—I believe it was in Politico, but in one of our leading publications—was never intended for this type of purpose.

With this vote, though, Republicans are saying from the very outset that they don’t really want Democratic input on this bill because they are setting up a process in which they don’t really need Democratic votes. It is honestly a shame. And just as the partisan reconciliation process portended failure for the Republican healthcare bill, it is likely to portend failure here as well.

It is difficult to pass major legislation in the Senate, as it should be. That is what the Founding Fathers intended. That is the true conservatism of our government: checks and balances, no rush. It is even more difficult if you work only with the votes of one party. As I said, that allows a small few, usually on the hard right, to dictate what is in this bill.

My guess is that the vast majority of people here didn’t want to vote for Medicare and Medicaid cuts, but because they couldn’t get enough votes in the House to pass the budget without putting that in, because maybe 30 or 40 Members there insisted on it, it is in there. It is not going to serve you well. If anyone thinks it doesn’t have real effect, look at the PAYGO rules. This is not just the budget. PAYGO, after this budget passes, would insist on slashes in Medicare, 4 percent. That is the law; that is not a rule.

I hope that our colleagues will vote down this bill, and then I promise you, just as we are doing on healthcare, we can come together in a bipartisan way. That doesn’t mean you get everything you like. It probably means more of the tax cuts go to the middle class and

fewer to the wealthy, but there are lots of people on our side of the aisle who want to see small business get a tax cut, who want to see money from overseas come here and be used for jobs, and who want to see a middle-class tax break. We could come up with a bipartisan bill that would make, for the first time in a long time, this body shine.

The Republican Congress, at least at the moment on the path it is on, has abandoned the grand tradition of bipartisanship, working together, which has made this Chamber great through the decades and centuries.

When Republicans need Democratic votes, they come to us. The President and the leader have said: Come vote with us. Make it bipartisan. That is not what bipartisanship is. You don’t craft a bill just within your party and then say: Voting with us is bipartisan. Bipartisanship means you sit down together and you come out with a proposal that a majority of both parties can support. They are not doing that.

Republicans will spend the entire first year of this Congress trying to pass their major agendas through reconciliation or similar vehicles, first with CRAs, then healthcare, now taxes. The majority leader himself said in a speech, “Restoring the Senate,” in 2014 that “when the Senate is allowed to work the way it was designed to, it arrives at a result acceptable to people all along the political spectrum.” But if it’s an “assembly line for one party’s partisan legislative agenda,” it creates “instability and strife” rather than “good, stable law.”

The American people want to see us work together. We may not always succeed. It may not be easy, but we can try.

As I said—and I would say this to my colleagues—there are areas in which we can agree on taxes: Lower middle-class taxes; don’t raise them. Give some relief to small business. Try to bring the money from overseas and put it into infrastructure and job creation. We can work together, but not in this process and not with this awful bill, which favors the wealthy dramatically, raises taxes on the middle class, hurts the deficit—increases the deficit dramatically—and is a partisan process. I hope my Republican friends keep that in mind when they vote today. If you vote this down, I promise you that we will come together in a bipartisan way and work for something that actually could pass, instead of what happened with healthcare. Try it. Try it. Reconciliation—working with one party—failed miserably for you on healthcare, and now we are coming together. Let’s not repeat the same mistake on taxes.

OFFICE OF NATIONAL DRUG CONTROL POLICY
NOMINATION

Finally, Mr. President, I just heard that the nomination of Representative MARINO to lead the Office of National Drug Control Policy has been withdrawn. That is the right decision. The fact that he was nominated in the first place is evidence that the Trump ad-

ministration talks the talk but refuses to walk the walk. The bottom line is that this Congressman supported President Trump but is the wrong person for the job, and I am glad they saw it and withdrew.

I want to salute two of my colleagues who were way out in front on this: Senator MANCHIN, whose State has been ravaged by opioids, and Senator MCCASKILL, who has similar problems, particularly in rural areas, but all over. Senator MCCASKILL has legislation that I think would correct the kinds of ills we have seen in Representative MARINO’s proposals, and I hope that in a bipartisan way we can support them.

The opioid crisis demands that the next drug czar be solely focused on getting communities across the country the help they desperately need, and we hope the administration nominates someone who fits that bill so we can pass that nominee quickly and in a bipartisan way.

I yield the floor.

RESERVATION OF LEADER TIME

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the leadership time is reserved.

CONCLUSION OF MORNING
BUSINESS

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Morning business is closed.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

EXECUTIVE CALENDAR

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the Senate will proceed to executive session and resume consideration of the following nomination, which the clerk will report.

The senior assistant legislative clerk read the nomination of David Joel Trachtenberg, of Virginia, to be a Principal Deputy Under Secretary of Defense.

Mr. SCHUMER. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent all remaining time be yielded back.

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

The question is, Will the Senate advise and consent to the Trachtenberg nomination?

Mr. SCHUMER. Mr. President, I ask for the yeas and nays.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there a sufficient second?

There appears to be a sufficient second.

The clerk will call the roll.

The senior assistant legislative clerk called the roll.

Mr. CORNYN. The following Senators are necessarily absent: the Senator from Mississippi (Mr. COCHRAN), the Senator from Georgia (Mr. ISAKSON), and the Senator from Alabama (Mr. SHELBY).

Mr. DURBIN. I announce that the Senator from New Jersey (Mr. MENENDEZ) is necessarily absent.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. STRANGE). Are there any other Senators in the Chamber desiring to vote?

The result was announced—yeas 79, nays 17, as follows:

[Rollcall Vote No. 218 Ex.]

YEAS—79

Alexander	Flake	Paul
Barrasso	Gardner	Perdue
Bennet	Graham	Peters
Blumenthal	Grassley	Portman
Blunt	Hassan	Reed
Boozman	Hatch	Risch
Burr	Heinrich	Roberts
Capito	Heitkamp	Rounds
Cardin	Heller	Rubio
Carper	Hoeven	Sasse
Casey	Inhofe	Schumer
Cassidy	Johnson	Scott
Collins	Kaine	Shaheen
Coons	Kennedy	Stabenow
Corker	King	Strange
Cornyn	Klobuchar	Sullivan
Cortez Masto	Lankford	Tester
Cotton	Lee	Thune
Crapo	Manchin	Tillis
Cruz	McCain	Toomey
Daines	McCaskill	Udall
Donnelly	McConnell	Warner
Duckworth	Moran	Whitehouse
Enzi	Murkowski	Wicker
Ernst	Murphy	Young
Feinstein	Murray	
Fischer	Nelson	

NAYS—17

Baldwin	Gillibrand	Sanders
Booker	Harris	Schatz
Brown	Hirono	Van Hollen
Cantwell	Leahy	Warren
Durbin	Markey	Wyden
Franken	Merkley	

NOT VOTING—4

Cochran	Menendez
Isakson	Shelby

The nomination was confirmed.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the motion to reconsider is considered made and laid upon the table and the President will be immediately notified of the Senate's action.

LEGISLATIVE SESSION

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate resume legislative session.

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

NATIONAL DEFENSE AUTHORIZATION ACT FOR FISCAL YEAR 2018

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, I ask that the Chair lay before the Senate the House message accompanying H.R. 2810.

The Presiding Officer laid before the Senate the following message from the House of Representatives:

Resolved, That the House disagree to the amendment of the Senate to the bill (H.R. 2810) entitled "An Act to authorize appropriations for fiscal year 2018 for military activities of the Department of Defense, for military construction, and for defense activities of the Department of Energy, to prescribe military personnel strengths for such fiscal year, and for other purposes," and ask a conference with the Senate on the disagreeing votes of the two Houses thereon.

COMPOUND MOTION

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, I move that the Senate insist on its amendment, agree to the request by the House for a conference, and the Presiding Officer appoint the following conferees: Senators MCCAIN, INHOFE, WICKER, FISCHER, COTTON, ROUNDS, ERNST, TILLIS, SULLIVAN, PERDUE, CRUZ, GRAHAM, SASSE, STRANGE, REED, NELSON, MCCASKILL, SHAHEEN, GILLIBRAND, BLUMENTHAL, DONNELLY, HIRONO, KAINE, KING, HEINRICH, WARREN, and PETERS.

Mr. President, I know of no further debate on the motion.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. If there is no further debate on the motion, the question is on agreeing to the motion.

The motion was agreed to.

CONCURRENT RESOLUTION ON THE BUDGET, FISCAL YEAR 2018—MOTION TO PROCEED

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, I move to proceed to H. Con. Res. 71.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The motion is not debatable.

The question is on agreeing to the motion.

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, I ask for the yeas and nays.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there a sufficient second?

There appears to be a sufficient second.

The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk called the roll.

Mr. CORNYN. The following Senators are necessarily absent: the Senator from Mississippi (Mr. COCHRAN) and the Senator from Alabama (Mr. SHELBY).

Mr. DURBIN. I announce that the Senator from New Jersey (Mr. MENENDEZ) is necessarily absent.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. CRUZ). Are there any other Senators in the Chamber desiring to vote?

The result was announced—yeas 50, nays 47, as follows:

[Rollcall Vote No. 219 Leg.]

YEAS—50

Alexander	Flake	Paul
Barrasso	Gardner	Perdue
Blunt	Graham	Portman
Boozman	Grassley	Risch
Burr	Hatch	Roberts
Capito	Heller	Rounds
Cassidy	Hoeven	Rubio
Collins	Inhofe	Sasse
Corker	Isakson	Scott
Cornyn	Johnson	Strange
Cotton	Kennedy	Sullivan
Crapo	Lankford	Thune
Cruz	Lee	Tillis
Daines	McCain	Toomey
Enzi	McConnell	Wicker
Ernst	Moran	Young
Fischer	Murkowski	

NAYS—47

Baldwin	Donnelly	Kaine
Bennet	Duckworth	King
Blumenthal	Durbin	Klobuchar
Booker	Feinstein	Leahy
Brown	Franken	Manchin
Cantwell	Gillibrand	Markey
Cardin	Harris	McCaskill
Carper	Hassan	Merkley
Casey	Heinrich	Murphy
Coons	Heitkamp	Murray
Cortez Masto	Hirono	Nelson

Peters	Shaheen	Warner
Reed	Stabenow	Warren
Sanders	Tester	Whitehouse
Schatz	Udall	Wyden
Schumer	Van Hollen	

NOT VOTING—3

Cochran	Menendez	Shelby
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The motion was agreed to.

CONCURRENT RESOLUTION ON THE BUDGET, FISCAL YEAR 2018

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report the concurrent resolution.

The legislative clerk read as follows:

A concurrent resolution (H. Con. Res. 71) establishing the congressional budget for the United States Government for fiscal year 2018 and setting forth the appropriate budgetary levels for fiscal years 2019 through 2027.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Wyoming.

Mr. ENZI. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the time for the Joint Economic Committee debate be reserved to occur from 4:30 p.m. until 5:45 p.m. today.

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

Mr. ENZI. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that for the duration of the Senate's consideration of H. Con. Res. 71, the majority and Democratic managers of the concurrent resolution, while seated or standing at the managers' desks, be permitted to deliver floor remarks, retrieve, review, and edit documents, and send email and other data communications from text displayed on wireless personal digital assistant devices and tablet devices. I further 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.

Mr. ENZI. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the staff be permitted to make technical and conforming changes to the resolution, if necessary, consistent with the amendments adopted during Senate consideration, including calculating the associated change in the net interest function, and incorporating the effect of such adopted amendments on the budgetary aggregates for Federal revenues, the amount by which the 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.

Mr. ENZI. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the staff be permitted to make technical and conforming changes to the resolution, if necessary, consistent with the amendments adopted during Senate consideration, including calculating the associated change in the net interest function, and incorporating the effect of such adopted amendments on the budgetary aggregates for Federal revenues, the amount by which the 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.

Mr. ENZI. Mr. President, earlier this month, the Senate Budget Committee took an important first step toward tax reform by approving a fiscal year 2018 budget resolution focused on growing America's economy through tax policies that put more money in the hands of hard-working Americans.

This week, we take the next step as the Senate begins debating the budget blueprint to pursue long-overdue tax relief for families and job creators that will jump-start economic growth. It is