

When it comes to tax cuts for big corporations and the rich, deficits are no impediment, but now that these tax cuts are in place, I predict that deficits will once again morph into a dire problem, a scourge on the Nation, an excuse for Republicans to target Medicare, Medicaid, and Social Security.

That has been the playbook since the Bush era: explode the deficit with tax cuts for the rich and powerful, then use the deficit they created as a reason to cut Social Security and Medicare.

Lo and behold, this week the majority in the House will vote on a balanced budget amendment—a way for Republicans to force cuts to Medicare and Medicaid and Social Security. It is hard to believe they can say it with a straight face, but we will hear Republican Members say this week that Washington needs to get its fiscal House in order, only a few months after they added \$1.5 trillion to the deficit by tax cuts that mainly benefited the wealthy and the powerful. It is the height of hypocrisy.

The American people deserve better than this patronizing Kabuki theater. They deserve a Congress squarely focused on helping the middle class, not the powerful, not the special interests, not those at the very top of the economic ladder. So far, this Republican Congress has shown it is not up to the job, and every day more and more Americans realize that.

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.

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 Madam President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mrs. ERNST). Without objection, it is so ordered.

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 to resume consideration of the following nomination, which the clerk will report.

The senior assistant legislative clerk read the nomination of Claria Horn Boom, of Kentucky, to be United States District Judge for the Eastern and Western Districts of Kentucky.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Hawaii.

Ms. HIRONO. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent that I be permitted to place a maile lei on the lectern during my remarks.

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

REMEMBERING DANIEL KAHIKINA AKAKA

Ms. HIRONO. Madam President, I rise today in remembrance of Senator Daniel Kahikina Akaka. Senator Akaka, who served in the Senate for 23 years and sat at this desk, passed away on Friday morning, with his wife of nearly 70 years, Millie, and his extended family at his side.

Since his passing, people across Hawaii have shared their memories of and tributes to Senator Akaka. Each of their stories has a common thread—Senator Akaka's dedication to living with "aloha." Senator Akaka embodied the "aloha" spirit. From meeting nearly every Hawaii family who came to his office for a Capitol tour to serving as a tireless advocate for veterans, the Native Hawaiian community, and Hawaii families, Senator Akaka's care, empathy, and compassion were evident to everyone who knew him.

When I was elected to the Senate, I requested Senator Akaka's desk to be my desk. I did this because it represented continuity as Senator Akaka's successor, and the desk is a symbol to me of his years of service and the "aloha" he had for this body and the people of Hawaii.

The last time I saw Senator Akaka was at last year's American Logistics Association Hawaii conference. This gathering brings together Hawaii businesses from across the State to market their products for sale to military commissaries. Over 20 years ago, Senator Akaka worked with small businesses and the military commissary network to create this conference because he understood how much receiving a commissary contract would mean to Hawaii's businesses, especially Hawaii's small businesses.

The conference started with one small table with a few products and grew to an entire ballroom full of local products and entrepreneurs. Last year, the conference was named for Senator Akaka.

That is who Senator Akaka was. He brought people together to solve problems and create opportunities. His legislative style wasn't flashy or over the top. He put his head down and got to work, and he built relationships with colleagues to get things done.

Senator Akaka's work on behalf of our Nation's veterans also reflected his persistent, effective style. After serving in World War II, Senator Akaka went to college under the GI bill and became an educator. As chairman of the Senate Veterans' Affairs Committee, he was a strong advocate for expanding the GI bill for a new generation of veterans. He authored the post-9/11 GI bill, which was signed into law in 2011.

Senator Akaka also championed the cause of the Filipino veterans of World War II in Congress. These veterans fought for the United States but were denied the benefits and citizenship they were promised. Senator Akaka introduced legislation that would restore these veterans' benefits and, with his leadership, this bill passed the Senate.

Later he and Senator Inouye successfully included language in the 2009 stimulus bill that provided onetime payments for these Filipino veterans through the newly created Filipino Veterans Equity Compensation Fund.

Senator Akaka also introduced bipartisan legislation to allow these veterans to reunite with their children and families in the United States. While this bill did not pass, President Obama established through executive order the Filipino World War II Veterans Parole Program in 2016 to allow the children of these veterans to reunite with their parents in the United States. Some of these veterans have been waiting for decades to reunite with their children.

Although Senator Akaka had retired, his insistence on bipartisanship helped to build broad support for President Obama's decision to issue this Executive order.

Senator Akaka was also instrumental in building support to award the Filipino Veterans of World War II the Congressional Gold Medal that passed in 2016, after years of continued effort.

Senator Akaka was also a champion for America's Native people and served as chairman of the Senate Indian Affairs Committee. As the first Native Hawaiian to serve in the U.S. Senate, Senator Akaka fought to expand funding for Native Hawaiian healthcare, education, and housing programs.

In 1993, President Clinton signed into law Senator Akaka's apology resolution, which acknowledged the Federal Government's role in the overthrow of the Hawaiian Kingdom in 1893. The resolution's unanimous passage marked the 100th anniversary of the overthrow and was a watershed moment for Native Hawaiians. It served as the first official admission by the United States of the role it played in the overthrow of the Hawaiian Kingdom.

Senator Akaka later worked on the Hawaiian Home Lands Recovery Act. This law required the United States to make the Hawaiian homelands whole by ensuring a repayment of lost use of lands originally set aside by Congress but which were nevertheless transferred to or otherwise acquired by the Federal Government.

The apology resolution and the Lands Recovery Act provided the foundation for Senator Akaka's namesake legislation—the Native Hawaiian Government Reorganization Act, often referred to as the Akaka bill, to establish a process to secure Federal recognition for Native Hawaiians to achieve parity with the Alaska Natives and American Indians.

When I served in the House of Representatives, I introduced the House companion to the Akaka bill and testified about the importance of passing this legislation in both the U.S. House and the U.S. Senate. Senator Akaka reintroduced the Akaka bill for more than 10 years, but it did not pass before he retired.