

programs that really will provide benefit to, we hope, large groups in our country.

The bill reflects compromises on both sides. The people of this country send 100 different people to the Senate and 435 different people to the House to vote and to make decisions that reach conclusions. This bill does that. All 12 of these bills we will vote on sometime in the next 3 days do that. They allow us to defend the country and to meet the obligations that people have asked the government to look at for them and hopefully do that in a way that produces real results.

I yield the floor.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The senior assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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 Madam President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

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

BATTLE OF THE BULGE

Mr. BARRASSO. Madam President, I come to the floor today to mark the 75th anniversary of the epic Battle of the Bulge. It was an incredible battle in World War II. To quote British Prime Minister Winston Churchill, this was "the greatest American battle of the war."

It was an incredible privilege to join veterans this past weekend at the 75th anniversary ceremonies in Luxembourg and Belgium. Remember, it was 75 years ago. The youngest among these veterans, if they went into the service at the age of 18, would, as of today, be 93 years old.

The World War II Memorial in Washington pays special tribute to the 16 million Americans who served and especially to the 400,000 who gave their lives for our freedom. There are two flagpoles at that memorial, and at the base of these flagpoles are the words "Americans came to liberate, not to conquer, to restore freedom and to end tyranny." In winning World War II, this generation gave their all to ensure that we continue to live in freedom. These heroes didn't return home until the war was over.

This weekend, we recognized a number of veterans who are still with us who helped win the pivotal Battle of the Bulge. For these soldiers, the brutality of the battle came in the bitter cold of winter. They battled the elements—wet snow, intense cold, and freezing fog. Every one of them suffered from hyperthermia, trench foot, frostbite, and illness. They shivered in their foxholes. They shivered from frigid conditions and maybe some from fright. I speak with deep appreciation and admiration and awe for their efforts, their excellence, and their remarkable endurance.

The battle began on December 16, 1944. That is when Germany launched a

surprise attack on the Allied forces in Europe. The Allied troops were generally outnumbered by more than three to one. In addition to the harsh weather, they faced treacherous terrain. Still, GEN Dwight David Eisenhower spoke with confidence. He said: "United in this determination and with unshakable faith in the cause for which we fight, we will with God's help go forward to our greatest victory." The Germans sought to divide and destroy the Allies, but it was the Allies who ultimately crushed the German Army.

The Bulge was one of the most punishing battles in the history of the U.S. military. Most of the 650,000 Allied troops were Americans. From December 16, 1944, to January 29, 1945, the Americans suffered 75,482 casualties; 8,407 were killed. The brave soldiers who fought in this brutal battle saved the free world.

Every soldier was a hero, and every soldier has a story to tell. My father, CPL John Barrasso, was one of those heroes. He reported to duty to the Pennsylvania Army National Guard in 1941, 4 days after the Japanese attacked Pearl Harbor. He didn't return home for 4 years.

He was a gun crewman in the 108th Field Artillery Battalion of the 28th Infantry Division. He wore on his arm the red keystone patch. The Germans called the patch the Bloody Bucket, referring to the ferocity of its fighters.

He was one who landed at Omaha Beach, but he was always clear to point out that he wasn't there on that very first day. That is how humble these men are. He landed in Normandy in July of 1944. They beat back the German Army through France and then into the fiercest battle of them all. In combat for nearly 200 days, they fought against 45 of the 90 German Army divisions. He was awarded five Bronze Stars.

I have with me my dad's dog tags from World War II, along with his military prayer book. On the front it says "My Military Missal." On the back cover is a rosary, and there is a cross, as well as the beads, and you could work your way through the beads in your hand in your pocket in a foxhole, praying the rosary, as many of them did. I would point out that these beads are very well worn. My father was a man who always put his family, his faith, and his country first.

On this, the 75th anniversary of the Battle of the Bulge, we honor the heroic and selfless efforts of our Allied forces. Their triumph over evil speaks to the core strengths of courage, character, and commitment.

We will forever give thanks for all of our World War II veterans and their families. We will never forget those who made the ultimate sacrifice. And we will always remember the valiant Allied forces who saved the free world.

In closing, I want to wish everyone—especially our dedicated men and women in uniform—a very Merry Christmas, a Happy Holidays, and a Happy New Year.

I yield the floor.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The senior assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Utah.

TRIBUTE TO NEWELL HARWARD

Mr. ROMNEY. Madam President, I rise today to honor the extraordinary service of one of Utah's most dedicated county commissioners, Mr. Newell Harward. He has served Wayne County for the past 7 years, but he has taken on responsibility well beyond that, advocating for rural Utah with honor and distinction as chairman of the Six County Association of Governments. Newell has had an esteemed career and life of service to family, country, and God.

Growing up on the family farm in Loa, UT, Newell gained an early appreciation for the value of community, family, and hard work. He also developed a spirit of adventure, later serving a mission abroad in Scotland and joining the Wayne County Flying Club.

As the founder of Harward and Rees Construction, Newell is also an entrepreneur whose craftsmanship is literally built into Utah's infrastructure. His company has undertaken everything from city water projects, designs at Lake Powell, to a new bridge over Hell's Backbone in Southern Utah.

Newell is perhaps most widely known as a public servant who was elected to serve as Wayne County commissioner. After 4 years, Newell considered stepping down due to illness, but he was undeterred. With a writing campaign, Newell Harward was reelected in a landslide. In October of this year, the President welcomed Newell to the White House to recognize him for his lifelong advocacy on behalf of rural Americans.

A true appreciation for Newell's life of service would be incomplete without recognizing his unwavering faith and service to the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. Newell has served in three bishoprics, as bishop of a large ward, and in the stake presidency. As a loving father to Kelly, Lynette, Sarah, Shonna, Carol, and Travis, a grandfather to 18, and a great-grandfather to 3, Newell has left an indelible mark on Wayne County, the great State of Utah, and indeed our Nation.

All of us should strive to live our lives as Newell does, with an overwhelming love of family and community, an enduring faith, and a boundless spirit of adventure.

Newell, Gloria, and their family continue to be in our prayers as they fight health challenges with great courage. May God bless the Harward family.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The senior assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. SCOTT of Florida). Without objection, it is so ordered.

BIPARTISAN CONGRESSIONAL REFORM ACT

Mr. ENZI. Mr. President, I rise to discuss the Bipartisan Congressional Reform Act I introduced with Senator WHITEHOUSE and many of my colleagues.

Last month, the Senate Budget Committee approved our legislation—that is the Senate Budget Committee—by a vote of 15 to 6, marking the first major legislation reported by the committee on a bipartisan basis in nearly 30 years. I am pleased that 21 Senators have now joined Senator WHITEHOUSE and me as cosponsors of this bill.

Since I became chairman of the Budget Committee, we have had more than a dozen hearings on budget process reform. We have met with budgeting experts, including some outstanding State officials, and we have listened to insights and concerns shared by colleagues on both sides of the aisle. Along the way, we collected a lot of good ideas that we tried to incorporate into our bill, and I thank all those who contributed.

Now, this legislation will not solve all of our fiscal challenges. It does, however, represent a good-faith, bipartisan effort to reform our budget process in a way that encourages long-term planning, realistic and responsible budget assumptions, and the end to the brinksmanship surrounding our Nation's statutory debt limit.

This bill will also make evident what needs to be done next. I think we struck a pretty good balance. The Committee for a Responsible Federal Budget says the bill “would improve transparency and accountability in the budget process” and would “make the budget resolution into a more effective governing tool.”

According to the Concord Coalition, which was founded by some Democrats, “This legislation would move the budget process in a very positive direction.”

Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the letters from the Committee for a Responsible Federal Budget and the Concord Coalition be printed in the RECORD at the conclusion of my remarks.

The reason I am giving the speech is to clarify some misunderstandings of other groups that were commenting on most of the original version of the bill before amendments from both parties were adopted in committee.

I will not detail all the reforms in this bill now, but I would like to highlight a handful of key elements of the bill and hopefully clear up some misunderstanding about it.

First of all, our bill tries to ensure that we have better information on which to base budgets. Imagine this for

a moment. It would require better information on which to base budgets and more active engagement from the tax-writing and each of the spending committees to ensure that every corner of the Federal budget is scrutinized and that budgets are realistic.

It would also require the Congressional Budget Office and the Government Accountability Office conduct portfolio reviews of Federal spending and tax expenditures to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of Federal programs.

Here is what that means: It means grouping projects regardless of which Cabinet Department has jurisdiction so we can see all that we are doing.

Use housing, for instance. We have 160 programs under 20 agencies. I can only see 5 reasons—not 160—and they should all be under one jurisdiction, not several Cabinet jurisdictions. So, currently, nobody is in charge of setting goals or seeing if they are effective. We are paying multiple administrators to argue over jurisdiction rather than results—160 of them.

Secondly, our bill would reorient the budget process from a yearly to a biannual cycle. Right now, under the Congressional Budget Act of 1974, Congress is supposed to approve a budget resolution each year that sets discretionary spending levels and provides fiscal parameters for a legislation brought to the Senate floor.

The budget resolution can also provide special instructions through a process called reconciliation. What that means is that instructions are given to authorizing and tax-writing committees to develop legislation to achieve hopeful and specific budgetary targets. For a variety of reasons, this process has not worked very well in recent years. Instead, Congress resorts to passing a series of 2-year deals that set discretionary spending limits rather than approving the budget.

I need to explain that word “discretionary.” Out of all the Federal dollars spent, Congress only votes on about 30 percent of the money spent each year. Seventy percent of the spending is on autopilot. That is mandated to be spent. Discretionary spending is the little amount that Congress actually votes on.

Under our bill, Congress would approve a budget resolution in the first year of a biennium that would, among other things, provide appropriators 2 years of discretionary spending totals, similar to a practice in recent years. Leadership, not the Budget Committee, has been negotiating these 2-year spending deals.

Thirdly, the bill would make significant reforms to the content of the budget resolution. Discretionary spending totals would be included in the resolution text, where individual Members could amend them. Mandatory spending totals would be broken up by budget function so we could see trends in portfolios of Federal spending.

Here is something really new. The budget resolution would also be re-

quired to include a target ratio of debt-to-gross domestic product, or GDP, which is generally viewed as the best measure of the country's ability to repay its debt. The hope is that by focusing on our debt-to-GDP target, we could put our country on a glide slope toward a more sustainable fiscal future. Under the reform bill, that glide slope can be cutting spending, raising revenue, or both.

Fourth, the bill would provide a mechanism to conform our country's statutory debt limit to the levels in the resolution. This will help incorporate the debt limit into our fiscal planning and provide a powerful incentive to ensure that the targets set in the resolution are attainable.

Neither side relishes voting to increase the debt limit, as it is easy fodder for political opponents. Yet there is nearly universal agreement that default would be unacceptable. Our bill tackles this issue in a way that it maintains the debt limit as a tool to ensure fiscal responsibility, while removing the brinksmanship surrounding the potential default.

Fifth, our bill would provide a means to initiate reconciliation in the second year of the biennium if Congress isn't living by its fiscal plan. There has been a lot of confusion about this process, so let me take a moment to explain it.

As I just mentioned, under our bill, each budget resolution would include 2 years' worth of discretionary spending levels and a debt-to-GDP target for the final year of the budget. That means each new Congress would set its own spending levels and debt targets in its budget agreement, and it would not be bound by the targets established by its predecessors.

If, in the second year of the biennium, the Congressional Budget Office finds that Congress is not on track to meet its debt-to-GDP target, then a special reconciliation process is made available. This is akin to what can already be done under current law if you pass a budget resolution in the second year of Congress, but because we are giving appropriators 2 years of discretionary spending levels upfront, we created a new process in the second year if Congress misses its fiscal goals. Contrary to a misconception that has been circulated, however, there is nothing automatic about this process.

Before reconciliation can proceed, the Senate Budget Committee, which will be renamed the Committee on Fiscal Control and the Budget, would need to approve a resolution providing deficit-reducing reconciliation instructions to one or more committees.

That resolution, which would be amendable, would then be considered by the full Senate. We have added protections to ensure that Senators have the ability to offer amendments and have built in flexibility for unforeseen realities, including economic downturns. We also applied the existing burden rule to this process, which means it cannot be used to make changes to Social Security.