

those quotes. I will do that the next time I take the floor. When the Bush budget came down and we saw what happened with the Bush budgets, they were adopted by Republicans, and they received lots of votes from their side, unanimous. All we had out of that was unemployment and deficits. They said: Oh, this is going to be a great budget. They are wrong. They have been wrong—wrong on the Clinton budget, wrong on the Bush budget, and now they are wrong on the Obama budget.

As one Senator, I wish to say this: I never forget. I forgive all the time, but I never forget. I have these quotes. They are real. They are in the RECORD. I am going to bring them out constantly.

Remember, when you hear these Republicans come out and trash Barack Obama's budget, it is the same thing they did to the Clinton budget and they were wrong—wrong then and they are wrong now.

We have to give this President the support he needs. Not that we are going to give every line—I don't agree with every line in it—but basically the thrust of what he wants, the investments and the deficit reduction.

Mr. President, I yield the floor, and I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The clerk will call the roll.

The assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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 President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Without objection, it is so ordered.

APPROPRIATIONS PROCESS

Mr. CORKER. Mr. President, I rise today to talk about the appropriations process we conduct here in the Senate, and have come here, as you have, in the not too distant past and been absolutely amazed by the lack of fiscal discipline that exists here in Washington. I know the Presiding Officer probably shares some of my views about the way we go through the appropriations process and the fact that at the end of the year, on many occasions, we end up with a large omnibus bill that does not give the American public, certainly not Senators and House Members, the ability to actually go through this process in a thoughtful way that respects the fact that these are our citizens' resources which we tend to bulk together in a way that it is not transparent.

Our President, on March 11—and I agree with him very much on this—said that future spending bills should be debated and voted on in an orderly way and sent to his desk without delay or obstruction so we don't face another massive last-minute omnibus bill like this one—and he was talking about the bill that we passed. I could not agree more with the President in that regard. I think what we have seen is that we have not had the ability to examine

the thousands of earmarks that are placed in these bills. We have not had a process that is transparent. In an effort to aid this process in such a manner that we do have some degree of fiscal discipline in this body, 41 Republican Senators have signed a letter which states that we believe that by the August recess at least eight appropriations bills should be voted on in singular fashion—eight single bills by the August recess.

This body has on many occasions taken up each appropriations bill by itself, fully debated it, discussed the earmarks, discussed the things that cause these bills not to be appropriate, had amendments, and passed these bills out of the Senate. So these 41 Republicans stand together urging the leader of the Senate, urging the Appropriations Committee to follow this best way of doing business, and that is to vote on these bills individually. Obviously, we hope this occurs. And certainly as part of the Senate process, in the event that we are not able to meet those objectives, we will avail ourselves of all appropriate procedural methods to ensure that is the case.

Mr. President, I thank you for the time this morning, and I ask unanimous consent to have printed in the RECORD the letter signed by all 41 Republican Senators.

There being no objection, the material was ordered to be printed in the RECORD, as follows:

U.S. SENATE,

Washington, DC, March 24, 2009.

Hon. HARRY REID,
Majority Leader, U.S. Senate,
Washington, DC.

DEAR MAJORITY LEADER REID: As you develop the legislative calendar for the rest of this fiscal year we believe it is critical to allocate an appropriate amount of time for the Senate to consider, vote and initiate the conference process on each of the twelve appropriations bills independently through a deliberative and transparent process on the Senate floor.

For a variety of reasons, over the past several years, the Senate has failed to debate, amend and pass each of the bills separately prior to the end of the fiscal year. Far too often this has resulted in the creation of omnibus appropriations bills that have been brought to the floor so late in the fiscal year that Senators have been forced to either pass a continuing resolution, shut down government or consider an omnibus bill. These omnibus bills have not allowed for adequate public review and have clouded what should otherwise be a transparent process. As our President said on March 11, 2009, he expects future spending bills to be, "... debated and voted on in an orderly way and sent to (his) desk without delay or obstruction so that we don't face another massive, last minute omnibus bill like this one."

The Senate should begin floor consideration of the appropriations bills during the early summer months to ensure that an appropriate amount of time is available to examine, debate and vote on amendments to the bills. We believe the Senate should pass at least eight of the appropriations bills by the August recess. In order to press for a more transparent process, we will consider using all available procedural tools to guarantee regular order for appropriations bills.

Noting our intentions, we hope you will plan accordingly as you work with the lead-

ership of the House to develop the legislative calendar for the rest of this fiscal year. Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Bob Corker; Thad Cochran; John McCain; Judd Gregg; Roger F. Wicker; Jeff Sessions; David Vitter; Jim DeMint; John Thune; Lindsey Graham; Lamar Alexander; John Ensign; Saxby Chambliss; James M. Inhofe; Tom Coburn; Robert F. Bennett; Jon Kyl; Richard Burr; Mel Martinez; James E. Risch; John Barrasso; Michael B. Enzi; Christopher S. Bond; Pat Roberts; George V. Voinovich; Chuck Grassley; Mike Johanns; Arien Specter; Richard C. Shelby; Mike Crapo; John Cornyn; Orrin G. Hatch; Olympia J. Snowe; Susan M. Collins; Richard G. Lugar; Johnny Isakson; Kay Bailey Hutchison; Lisa Murkowski; Jim Bunning; Sam Brownback; Mitch McConnell.

Mr. CORKER. Mr. President, I yield the floor, and I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Without objection, it is so ordered.

Mr. ALEXANDER. Would the Chair please advise me when I have used 10 minutes.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The Chair will do so.

THE BUDGET

Mr. ALEXANDER. Mr. President, one of the encouraging things that happened in Washington this year is that the President sent us a budget that was more transparent and more open than previous budgets. It was a 10-year budget instead of 5 years. It gave us a blueprint for the future in that way, the way we ought to be thinking about things. It included some things that had not been included before: the cost of the war; the so-called AMT fix—to address the millionaire's tax the Congress passed in the 1960s designed to catch 155 people who were not paying any taxes, but today will catch 28 million people, mostly middle-class Americans, unless we fix it; and what around here is irreverently called the "doc fix," to deal with the mandated 20-percent cut in what Medicare pays its physicians. That cut in physician payments is not going to happen, we know that, so the President included that in the budget. There was money for helping to fix the banks, to get the toxic assets out of the banks and get credit flowing again, get the economy moving again, and that was in the budget.

On big issues like health care, the President said: Let's work in a bipartisan way. I invite the Congress to come up with a bill. Many Members of Congress said the same thing. The President held a health care summit earlier this month. I agree with the President we should try to reform