to retire, and the once great Yankees began to slide.

Those were not easy years to root for the Yankees. People forget. Throughout the late sixties and early seventies, the Yankees were consistently one of the worst performing teams in Major League Baseball.

But all that changed when George Steinbrenner bought the team in 1973. He brought to the Yankees a new hope that turned around this period of decline. By 1976, the Yankees were back in the World Series, and in 1977 and 1978, we brought the championship back home to New York.

Since then, the Yankees have once again become a household name in New York and around the country. They have won 11 American League pennants and 7 World Championships. The Yankees went, the day George Steinbrenner took them over, from being a mediocre team to the preeminent sports franchise in the world.

George Steinbrenner did that. He turned a scrappy group of baseball players into a team New Yorkers are proud to support.

The Yankees of his day are reminiscent of the Yankees of the twenties, thirties, forties, fifties, and the early sixties. All New Yorkers and baseball fans owe George Steinbrenner a huge thank you for changing the face of American baseball.

He was even beloved in Florida. Legends Field, the Yankees' spring training facility in Tampa, was renamed Steinbrenner Field in March 2008 in his honor by the Hillsborough County Commission and the Tampa City Council.

He was a giant in baseball innovation, making baseball a truly global game.

I, along with millions of Yankee fans—many not even in the State of New York—are thankful for the countless hours of joy we have experienced watching his team at the stadium or following them on television or radio. George Steinbrenner was truly a New York icon.

My thoughts and my condolences go out to his loved ones, to the whole Yankee family, and to the millions of New York baseball fans. We have lost our giant.

RECESS

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the Senate stands in recess until 2:15 p.m.

Thereupon, the Senate, at 12:35 p.m., recessed until 2:15 p.m. and reassembled when called to order by the Presiding Officer (Mr. BEGICH).

Mrs. MURRAY. Mr. President, I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The assistant bill clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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 President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

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

FREEZING APPROPRIATIONS

Mr. ALEXANDER. Mr. President, I have a statement that I would like to make, first on a letter and announcement that all the Republican members of the Senate Appropriations Committee have sent to the chairman of the committee today.

Because Federal spending and debt are at crisis levels, Republican Senators on the Senate Appropriations Committee are asking our Democratic colleagues to join us in supporting the Sessions-McCaskill freeze on discretionary Federal spending. Every Republican—every one of us—and 17 Democratic Senators already have voted for the Sessions-McCaskill amendment this session several times.

The amendment would basically freeze Federal discretionary appropriations—both military and nonmilitary—which constitute about 38 percent of the Federal budget. This action by the Senate members of the Appropriations Committee is especially important this year because the Democratic Congress has refused to produce a budget.

Here we are, at a time when almost every American is deeply worried about the level of Federal debt and the level of Federal spending, and the first thing we would expect the Congress to do before it plans for next year is to produce a budget that would be able to restrain this spending—both the discretionary part of it, the kind we appropriate year after year—and begin to deal with the entitlements—the mandatory spending that is on automatic pilot. The Democratic Congress has not produced that budget for next year, and it indicates it will not. So it, therefore, is the first job of the members of the Appropriations Committee to decide how much we can spend.

Year in and year out we decide where and how we spend the money. That is the constitutional responsibility of Congress under article I, and that is the job we do. Perhaps we haven't paid as much attention to the first responsibility as we should. Perhaps we have relied too much on the Budget Committee. Well, not this year. What we are saying is, if we are going to be members of the Senate Appropriations Committee, and if our responsibility is to deal with Federal spending, then the first question we should decide is how much Federal spending.

At a time when Federal spending and debt is at crisis levels, when the President's 10-year budget, up through the year 2018, would double the debt and triple the debt, it is our responsibility to get this under control.

So our recommendation—and it is a serious recommendation, and one we hope and believe our colleagues who are Democrats on the Appropriations Committee will be able to accept because it is a bipartisan proposal that has already, as I mentioned, received between 16 and 18 Democratic votes on the floor of the Senate, and every single one of the 41 Republican Senators—is that we essentially freeze spending in the discretionary accounts, both military and nonmilitary, between this year and next year.

The Federal debt is a crisis that is imposing a burden on our children and our grandchildren that they will not be able to pay. It is our responsibility to deal with it and to begin to deal with it now. A Sessions-McCaskill freeze on Federal discretionary spending for next year is an important first step. The next step would then be getting entitlement spending under control, which we should move on as rapidly as possible.

Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent to have printed in the RECORD a copy of the letter from Republican members of the Senate Appropriations Committee which I referred to earlier in my remarks.

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

U.S. SENATE,
COMMITTEE ON APPROPRIATIONS,
Washington, DC, July 13, 2010.

DEAR MR. CHAIRMAN: As Republican members of the Appropriations Committee, we are writing to express our views regarding the Fiscal Year 2011 appropriations process.

The Committee is operating in a particularly difficult environment during this Congress. The enormity of the Federal debt poses a direct threat to our national security and demands restraint of Federal spending. Developing a consensus approach to funding the operations of the Federal government in such an environment is a significant challenge.

Despite the clear need for a long term plan that would bring our nation's debt under control, it is apparent that Congress will be denied the opportunity to debate a Federal budget this year. Our Committee will instead be compelled to choose a discretionary top-line number outside the context of a comprehensive budget resolution.

Over the last two years discretionary spending has increased by 17%, not including stimulus spending. With stimulus spending included the increase soars to 84%. We note that a bipartisan majority of the Senate has voted several times in recent months on the Sessions-McCaskill proposal to impose a discretionary top-line for Fiscal Year 2011 that essentially freezes non-defense spending, and which would result in significant reductions in spending from the President's budget proposal. This is a clear indication of the broad concern that exists about levels of Federal spending.

We are confident that, working together, our Committee can produce bills that responsibly address fundamental government needs in a fiscally responsible manner. We will not, however, be able to support appropriations bills that do not conform to this top-line number.

Sincerely,

Mitch McConnell, Thad Cochran, Judd Gregg, Lamar Alexander, Susan Collins, Bob Bennett, Kit Bond, Richard Shelby, Kay Bailey Hutchison, Sam Brownback, George V. Voinovich, Lisa Murkowski.

NUCLEAR POWER

Mr. ALEXANDER. Mr. President, 40 years ago, at the time of the first