

## FISCAL PRIORITIES

Mrs. BOXER. Madam President, I listened very carefully to my Republican colleagues who have come to the floor blaming the Democrats and the President for everything you can imagine, including the high price of gasoline and deficits as far as the eye can see.

I wish to say to Senator MANCHIN, I am going to make some very brief remarks about H.R. 1 and then yield to you for 5 minutes.

I respect the right of any colleague to say whatever he or she wants on the floor. But I also wish to tell the American people who may be following this debate, that in truth, in the last many years, 40 years, the only party to balance the budget was the Democrats. Bill Clinton, in his Presidency, not only took a deficit brought about by Republican Presidents, not only did he balance the budget with us, but we created surpluses. Guess what. Twenty-three million jobs.

Compare that to George W. Bush. He created huge deficits, handed President Obama a tremendous debt and deficits—I will get the exact numbers—and created 1 million jobs, compared to 23 million jobs.

I appreciate the lectures from my Republican friends, but look at any measure: job creation, budget balancing, stock market. Check it out, America. These are facts that are in the history books. So please do not lecture us about how to balance the budget. We know how to do it. The way you do it is cut waste, cut fraud, cut abuse, make sure everything you spend is essentially justifiable by the results, by the benefits, and invest in our people so if they lose a job, we invest in worker training, invest in our people, invest in science and technology, invest in health research, invest in our children.

If you follow that method, we will not only balance the budget, we will create jobs. We know their approach, H.R. 1, which they support, would devastate this economy, barely doing anything about the deficit. Most amazingly, they do not think billionaires should pay even a little bit higher tax rate than people who are earning \$150,000—billionaires, multimillionaires. It does not make any sense.

So with that as an opening, I am very pleased to yield to the Senator from West Virginia, Mr. MANCHIN, for 5 minutes.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from West Virginia.

## PRESIDENTIAL LEADERSHIP

Mr. MANCHIN. Madam President, I rise today to express my deep concerns with the two widely divergent proposals for a continuing resolution that will be presented to us here today.

Now, I may be just a freshman Senator, but I will be blunt—this whole process does not make a lot of sense to me, and, I am afraid it doesn't make sense to a lot of West Virginians or most Americans.

We will likely have votes on two proposals today, and both options are partisan and unrealistic. And neither one will pass.

The first is a Democratic proposal that does not go far enough. This proposal, which calls for \$6.5 billion in new cuts, utterly ignores our fiscal reality. Our Nation is badly in debt and spending at absolutely unsustainable and out-of-control levels. In February alone, the Federal Government outspent revenues by an unacceptable \$223 billion. We must turn our financial ship around, but the Senate proposal continues to sail forward as if there is no storm on the horizon.

On the other hand, we could choose a second even more flawed measure: a House GOP proposal that blindly hacks the budget with no sense of our priorities or of our values as a country. I did not grow up in an America that would carelessly cut Hear Start and make the playing field even harder for kids born into poverty. Our America should not cut funding for veterans or for border security or for first responders or especially for our children without at least discussing the alternatives.

The bottom line, however, is this: Democrats and Republicans are being asked to vote on wildly different proposals for reining in spending. Republicans will say Democrats do not go far enough. Democrats will say Republicans go too far. The truth is both are right, and both proposals will fail. Worse still, everyone in Congress knows they will fail.

The more important question is this, Why are we engaging in this political theater?

Why are we voting on partisan proposals that we know will fail, that we all know do not balance our Nation's priorities with the need to get our fiscal house in order?

Why are we doing all this when the most powerful person in these negotiations, our President, has failed to lead this debate or offer a serious proposal for spending and cuts that he would be willing to fight for?

How does that make sense?

The truth is that this debate, as important as it is, will not be decided by House Republicans and Senate Democrats negotiating with each other or past each other. This debate will be decided when the President leads these tough negotiations.

And right now that is not happening.

I know it is not easy. I know that it takes compromise. I know that it will be partisan and difficult. I know that everyone will have to give up something and no one will want to relinquish anything. But that is what the American people are demanding.

Respectfully, I am asking President Obama to take this challenge head on, bring people together and propose a compromise plan for dealing with our Nation's fiscal challenges, both now and for the future.

For me, when I was Governor of the great State of West Virginia, dealing

with our State's problems required bringing together a diverse and strong-willed group of legislators. But I did, because that was my responsibility. By working together, we were able to tackle the tough fiscal problems that our State faced and we did it while setting our priorities and protecting the most vulnerable in our State.

The bottom line is the President is the leader of this great Nation, and when it comes to an issue of significant national importance, the President must lead—not the majority leader or Speaker but the President.

He must sit down with leaders of both parties and help hammer out a real bipartisan compromise that moves our Nation forward and establishes the priorities that represent our values and all hard-working families.

And I truly believe that he can do it. And when we finally do come together and agree to a bipartisan solution, we will not only set a new tone for our Nation but we can start to focus on what the American people sent all of us here to do: start working together to create a more prosperous future for our children and our families, and be the America we all know we can be.

I thank the Chair. I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The majority leader.

Mr. REID. Madam President, I am going to use leader time. I am wondering how long Senator BOXER is going to take.

Mrs. BOXER. We have a number of people coming for 30 minutes.

Mr. REID. Madam President, I will use leader time.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator has that right.

Mr. REID. Madam President, since the moment Republican Representatives passed their budget, the now infamous H.R. 1—it was their No. 1 issue in the House of Representatives—the country has been waiting to see whether the Senate would repeat the House's mistake in passing it. The House has passed it.

The plan the tea party pushed through the House is an irresponsible plan. It is a reckless plan. It is dangerous for the health of our economy and certainly the citizens of our great country.

In the last few days, I have come to the floor and explained at length the damage this tea party plan would do in the short term and in the long term. Let me now again talk, briefly, about a few of the things I have talked about before—but I will talk about them again. Here are some of the consequences.

H.R. 1 will fire 700,000 Americans, 6,000 Nevadans. Our budget would create jobs, not cost jobs. It will kick 200,000 Head Start students, the poorest of the poor, little boys and girls trying to get started in life, it will kick them off their ability to learn to read and do elementary math. Hundreds in Nevada will suffer from that. This is a very successful early education program. Head Start works.