

and engineers—as the House Republican budget calls for—cutting back their research by 40 to 50 percent for the remainder of the year, slows down the use of the Advanced Photon Source, which is utilized by virtually every major pharmaceutical company.

The question may be asked: Does it work? Here is living proof—Kaletra, the most widely prescribed drug for fighting AIDS, developed at the Argonne National Laboratory.

The House Republicans say: Slow down, stop, we will get back to you later. Can we say that in a world that demands innovation and research and that is looking for solutions to problems? If we cut \$1.1 billion from this account, as the House Republican budget suggests, facilities at the National Laboratories in my State and across the country will shut down and workers will be laid off. That is a simple reality.

I am not coming to the floor and engaging in scare tactics. This is what the Directors of the National Laboratories have told me. If these centers and Laboratories are closed, private companies—Eli Lilly, Texas Instruments, GE Research, and 3M—have a choice. If our Laboratories are closed, they will find labs overseas, outside the United States. Does that help our economy? Does that create jobs in America—to cut research?

The House Republican budget cuts this research and innovation and welcomes these companies to leave and go overseas to create jobs. Could we possibly be envisioning that at a moment when we have so much unemployment and we are facing a recession in this country?

Japan, China, and Europe are ready to receive these research projects. They are building facilities in the hopes that these companies will decide they are more reliable than the United States. That is what the House Republican budget threatens. Whether it is in medical research, energy research, or finding new drugs, unless we make a commitment that people can count on, that research is going overseas and jobs will flow with that research to other countries and not to America.

We need to cut the budget and reduce our deficit, no doubt about it. Let's not do so in a way that costs America jobs and cuts off American innovation at the knees. The spending bill before the House of Representatives is going to cripple our economy at a time when it is just starting to recover. Economists tell us the House Republican budget will cost us more than 700,000 jobs. That is not the way to move America forward.

We can find a way to eliminate tax loopholes and benefits, improve the way we spend money, and thoughtfully—thoughtfully—decrease our spending. These are elements of a sustainable plan for reaching the budget balance we are seeking and, equally important, the economic growth we need. We cannot balance the budget of

America with 15 million people out of work. We have to build an economy that creates good-paying jobs and people drawing paychecks who pay their taxes. That sustains government growth as well as economic growth.

I am going to be working with my colleagues in the Senate to come up with a better approach than the House Republican budget, and I certainly believe we can and should.

WESTWOOD COLLEGE AND THE GI BILL

Mr. DURBIN. Madam President, I have come to the Senate floor a number of times over the past year to speak about my concerns about the rapid growth of for-profit colleges. I believe some for-profit colleges are quality institutions, but I also believe many are taking advantage of Federal taxpayer dollars and doing more harm than good for unsuspecting students. In no area is this issue more important than when it comes to our veterans.

A few years ago, I proudly joined Senator JAMES WEBB of Virginia, who said to me when he came to the Senate 5 years ago: I want to pass a new GI bill. It is my No. 1 priority. And he did it. Thank goodness, he did. This is a man—a veteran of the Vietnam conflict who served in the U.S. Marines and later as Secretary of the Navy—who knows what he is talking about when it comes to veterans. He helped put together the modern GI bill, and I am proud to have voted for it, as many of us did.

When we passed that bill, we provided veterans with improved benefits to go to college. Veterans can receive up to \$17,000 a year to cover the cost of tuition, fees, housing, and supplies at the college of their choice. Veterans can also access private schools through the Yellow Ribbon Program, which allows the VA to pay a portion of private school tuition under agreements with these schools.

A lot of students are using the GI bill to attend for-profit colleges which are far more expensive than their public counterparts and even more expensive than many private not-for-profit universities. There is a rapid growth in veteran enrollment in these for-profit schools. For-profit schools cost an average of \$14,000 a year compared to \$2,500 a year at public 2-year colleges and \$7,000 at public 4-year universities.

In the first year of the post-9/11 GI bill implementation, the Veterans' Administration spent \$697 million on students attending public schools and \$640 million on students attending for-profit schools—almost the same. But we educated far more students for our money in public schools—203,000 students at public schools compared to 76,000 at for-profit schools, which charge two or three times as much for tuition and obviously educate one-half to one-third of what the public schools educated.

The top five for-profit recipients of the post-9/11 dollars received over \$320

million from the Department of Veterans Affairs last year: ITT received \$79 million; Apollo, which is the University of Phoenix, \$76.9 million; Education Management Corporation, \$60.5 million; Career Education Corporation, \$58.2 million; and DeVry, \$47.9 million.

There are reports of for-profit colleges aggressively targeting military servicemembers and veterans with expensive ad campaigns and hundreds of recruiters. One prominent for-profit college has 452 recruiters focusing on recruiting veterans out of the military. Another employs 300. Why do they want these students? Because when they bring the students in under the GI bill, they get compensated at higher levels by the Federal Government. We have a limit that says that none of these for-profit schools can take more than 90 percent of their revenue out of the Federal Treasury. That is money that comes in through Pell grants and Federal college loans. When it comes to the GI bill, we raised the 90 percent. So these schools that argue: We are just in the private sector, just little businesses, get more than 90 percent of their revenue from the Federal Government. They are the most heavily subsidized private businesses in America. It is time for us to ask, Are the taxpayers getting their money's worth? Are the veterans getting their money's worth?

It is troublesome when these schools spend so much money on recruiting students instead of educating them. I am concerned. The current system allows for-profit colleges to earn millions of dollars from taxpayer-funded programs while providing a low-quality education to students. We need to put the brakes on for-profit colleges that are targeting veterans to reap profits from taxpayers' dollars.

Last week, the Department of Veterans Affairs announced that it and the Texas Veterans Commission had disqualified three Texas campuses of Westwood College. They could no longer receive GI bill benefits. Westwood College is a for-profit college based out of Colorado, with 17 locations in 6 States—several in Illinois.

When I drive to O'Hare, I am on the Kennedy Expressway, and I look up and there is this office building and a big, huge sign, "Westwood College." Wow, the campus of Westwood College.

I know one of the students who went to Westwood College. This is a young lady who decided she needed to improve her life after high school and wanted to get into law enforcement. She enrolled at Westwood College to get a bachelor's degree in law enforcement. Five years later, they handed her a diploma at Westwood College. She went to the Chicago police department, and they said: We don't recognize that college; that is not a real college. All of the law enforcement in the region said to her: Westwood is not a real college; this is not a real diploma. She learned that to her disappointment, and she also learned to her disappointment that she had incurred

\$90,000 in college student loans for this worthless Westwood College diploma.

Now the Veterans' Administration has disqualified three Westwood College campuses in Texas for their recruiting tactics when it comes to our veterans—a lesson learned and a word of warning. This action against Westwood was in response to findings of erroneous, deceptive, misleading advertising and enrollment practices at the Houston South, Dallas, and Fort Worth campuses.

The Department of Veterans Affairs began its investigation after the GAO report on recruiting practices at for-profit colleges. They sent undercover applicants to 15 of these for-profit colleges. They found that all 15 made deceptive or otherwise questionable statements to potential applicants, including Westwood. Investigators found admissions representatives at Westwood misstating the cost of programs, failing to disclose graduation rates, and even suggesting that applicants falsify Federal financial aid forms.

When asked about the cost of the program by the undercover investigator, the recruiter replied:

It depends on the program. Usually a bachelor's program, coming in with no college credits, this could be—it could range from \$50,000 to \$75,000. Most schools, more traditional schools, you're looking at about \$100,000 to \$150,000 to \$200,000.

That isn't true. To obtain the same degree from a public university in Texas would cost the student \$36,000.

Another financial aid counselor told a student with \$250,000 in the bank that he should not report that money on his Federal financial aid forms, counter to Department of Education requirements.

The Westwood representative said, "Frankly, in my opinion, they don't need to know how much cash you have."

In December, the Texas Workforce Commission fined Westwood College \$41,000 and put its Texas campuses on probation for the high-pressure recruiting practices that GAO discovered. And Westwood's online operation was put out of business in Texas for operating without a certificate of approval. Wisconsin has also banned Westwood from enrolling its students online.

These are not the only problems that have arisen at Westwood College. Former recruiters have spoken out about the high-pressure sales tactics they were encouraged to use at Westwood. Recruiters talk about how they were given a script and told to make prospective students "feel their pain."

Joshua Prun testified before the Senate HELP Committee as an admissions officer for Westwood College. He testified about how he was taught that enrolling a student was a psychological game.

Recruiters told students that they could only be accepted into Westwood by interviewing with and securing a

recommendation from an admissions representative. But in reality there was no standard for enrollment.

Joshua testified:

A student only needed a high school diploma or GED and \$100 for the application fee. This fake interview would allow the representative to ask students questions to uncover a student's motivators and pain points—their hopes, fears, and insecurities—all of which would later be used to pressure a student to enroll.

And I have heard from a number of former students of Westwood College in my State. They tell me of being lied to by recruiters and being buried under a mountain of debt for a degree that they are afraid will be worthless.

Westwood College is accredited by a national accrediting agency. Because Westwood lacks regional accreditation, some employers such as the Illinois State Police will not consider graduates for employment.

It also means that credits from Westwood College will not be accepted by most traditional public and non-profit colleges.

Westwood admits this on its Web site, which states:

Credits earned at Westwood College are typically not transferable to other colleges or universities.

How do they explain this to prospective students on the Web site?

As a career-focused college, we offer a hands-on approach to learning that's different—though, we believe, no less valuable—than approaches students may experience at other colleges and universities.

But the real story is that traditional colleges do not view credits earned at Westwood as equivalent to their courses.

Jason Longmore is a Navy veteran from Colorado who spent 6 months at Westwood College. His story was recently highlighted in a New York Times article. About his experience, Jason says "I felt like I made a horrible, horrible decision." After 6 months, he left and had to repeat classes elsewhere because his Westwood credits wouldn't transfer.

I have heard similar stories from my constituents. Bret, from Rockford, attended Westwood for a year and a half. He told me that his education was very low in quality and that his credits weren't accepted at any traditional schools. He says, "I now have a mountain of debt and literally a degree that means absolutely nothing."

When I met with a former Westwood College student named Michelle in Chicago, she told me that Westwood repeatedly promised that regional accreditation was right around the corner.

That never happened. Westwood College was pursuing accreditation from the Higher Learning Commission, a regional accrediting agency. The Higher Learning Commission declined to accredit Westwood and its application was withdrawn last November.

And at least one Westwood campus is in trouble with its national accreditor as well.

The Accrediting Commission of Career Schools and Colleges placed Westwood's Denver North campus on probation in September. The accreditor's notice states that Westwood "has not demonstrated compliance with the Commission's requirements relative to student achievement outcomes" and that it "is gravely concerned about the recruiting activities of the system of Westwood affiliated institutions."

Many students who enroll at Westwood aren't sticking around long enough to graduate.

The Senate HELP Committee made official information requests of 30 for-profit companies, including the company that owns Westwood.

According to that information, 2,500 students were enrolled as associate's degree students in 2008–2009. By September 2010, 57.6 percent of those students had withdrawn from the school.

One of the Westwood campuses in Illinois has a graduation rate of just 32 percent.

The evidence suggests that Westwood may be more focused on enrolling students than supporting their academic success. I am glad to see the VA take action to address this issue.

Congress gave the VA additional tools to do so at the end of our last session with the Post-9/11 GI Bill Improvements Act of 2010.

The VA will soon have greater flexibility to act on its own to disapprove courses at schools that abuse student-veterans.

We also gave the State approving agencies, which work hand-in-hand with the VA to monitor course quality, authority to disapprove courses provided at schools that fail to follow the rules, regardless of the State in which the school is located.

These are important changes to VA's oversight authority at a time when distance learning takes on greater significance and for-profit schools are recruiting nationwide from call centers in various locations.

I am glad that the VA has taken action to identify colleges like Westwood using abusive practices and end their participation in the VA education benefits program. But we have to do more for our veterans and all our students.

I don't think Westwood will be the only college facing scrutiny under the G.I. bill program. I met with Secretary Shinseki this week and asked him to take more aggressive steps to identify colleges misusing the G.I. bill program. Veterans deserve to know that they have real support at their school and that their education will be meaningful when they are considering college or enrolled in college.

I will continue to work with my colleagues, including Chairman HARKIN and Senator WEBB, to address this important issue.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The Senator from Missouri.

HEALTH CARE AND JOB CREATION

Mr. BLUNT. Madam President, next Wednesday marks the first anniversary of the day President Obama signed the bill into law that, in my opinion and in the opinion of most Americans, is the greatest involvement in our Nation's health care system in history.

What we see, as that law is discussed, as it is challenged in court, is a bill that was signed into law that was full of problems when it was signed into law. It was a bill full of constitutional questions, and, in fact, while some courts have said it may be constitutional, others have said it is not.

It was a bill where the courts say the Federal Government cannot make you buy a commercially available product, then the same people who were saying a year ago that this requirement is not a tax are saying: Maybe it is a tax. Maybe the Constitution allows us to define that particular purpose as a tax on the American people.

But a year ago, they were saying: This is not a tax at all. This is definitely not a tax. There is no way this could ever be interpreted as a tax.

But when courts say you cannot do this the way this bill does it, suddenly they try to reinvent what the law was designed to do.

One of the reasons this bill has so many of these problems is there was a rush to get a bill into law, a bill with more government control of health care into law, a bill that could not have passed the Senate the day the President signed it into law. A bill that was full of concerns, a bill that the Senate voted on never believing that it actually would become law but would create a vehicle to become law, became the only option the House leaders thought was available to them, and they passed it. They passed it without the kind of process that would have produced a law that could stand a constitutional challenge, produced a law to which Americans would be more responsive.

While I believe the law was misguided in its concept, more importantly, it was put together in what I think will be seen as the worst possible way—a rush to judgment, to get a law on the books. Now the people who voted for the law are saying things like: There may be a better way than an individual requirement that everybody buy a specified, defined insurance policy. Not all the people are saying that but some are. They are saying: Maybe we ought to look for that better way. The time to look for that better way was before the bill was signed into law, not after it was signed into law. Even the White House is saying: Certainly let's work together to change this. This is headed in fundamentally so much the wrong direction, changing it would not be the best option.

Already in the Senate we have voted not to vote on a repeal of this law that would allow us to replace it with better things. Unless those votes change, that

will not happen this year. But the view that Americans have of this law is not likely to change either. I certainly do not believe government has the authority in the Constitution to penalize people for not buying a commercially available product.

Sometimes people say that the States require that under their constitution, to buy auto insurance if you drive a car. No. 1, that is a State decision, and No. 2, they do not require you to drive a car. You don't have to have that particular product if you do not make that decision. This gives you no options but to pay a penalty or to do what the government says you have to do.

During the debate surrounding this bill and immediately following the enactment of the bill, the American people began to tell us that this was not the approach they wanted. In Missouri, where I am from, the first place that had an issue on the ballot where voters could speak about whether they wanted to be part of this new concept of more government control of health care, 71 percent of them said they did not want to be part of it. That was in a primary election. Hundreds of thousands of people voted and 71 percent of them said: We do not want to go in this direction.

Missouri is a State that generally is pretty reflective of the country in our elections, in our economy, in how our population comes together. Madam President, 71 percent of them said: Let's not do this; let's do something besides this. They had a sense that this was a misguided plan that put government between them and their doctors, that had as one of its major tenets that the government would describe a certain regimen of care that would have to be followed for doctors and hospitals to be reimbursed. Missourians by and large believe this significantly changes—some would say implodes—our current health care system.

To make it worse, this law cuts Medicare by \$500 billion, not to save Medicare or improve Medicare, but it cuts Medicare by \$500 billion so we could start another health care program. This makes so little sense as we look at Medicare—one of our major challenges as the demographics of the population change. Medicare is one of the areas where we know that in a handful of years, Medicare will face a generation of great challenge. We look for savings in Medicare not to save Medicare but to start a new program. That would be totally unacceptable anywhere except Washington, DC. It makes as little sense to people as the idea that we could come up with a new \$1 trillion program over a handful of years and say that is going to save money. Nobody believes that.

When you look at the greater concept of what this law will do, if it is ever implemented, to change the relationship of people and their government, I can't think of anything, besides the government taking over the economy,

that actually has greater potential to change that relationship than the government having more control of your health care. What more controlling element could the government look to than your health care and your family's health care to make sure that you never got on the wrong side of that government? It does change that relationship.

It also creates real uncertainty in what should be the No. 1 goal in America today: private sector job creation. If a year ago the President would have signed bills into law that encouraged private sector job creation or created more certainty about our health care costs, about our utility bills, about our taxes, about regulation, rather than signing this bill into law, I believe we would be much further down the road toward seeing private sector jobs, jobs that create taxpayers that help government provide the services only government can provide. We would be much further down that road.

The very clear message I and others heard all over the country in the last year was, we do not want to create these jobs with all of these issues out there not yet really decided and if they are decided, likely to be decided in a way that makes that job-creating decision less of a good situation than it would have been otherwise.

Cap and trade, in the middle of the country, in Missouri, the sixth most dependent State on coal for its utilities—the estimate was that it would double the utility bills in a dozen years. What is the job-creation message there?

We are exactly where we were 2 years ago on the tax question because just a few months ago the President signed a bill that extended current tax policies but only for 2 years. So we are no further down the road on that question than we were 2 years ago today.

The President calls for regulations that make sense. I join him in that. But we see none of that coming from the regulating authorities right now. The clear message people had was, they would like the government to create more certainty in the areas the government controls so they can decide whether they want to take the certain risk you always have when you create a job.

I was in northwest Missouri not too long after this bill was signed into law 1 year ago and very well remember a conversation I had with someone whose business was going well. In fact, he said: I have 47 employees. You will remember the bill creates a threshold of 50, that you have different kinds of obligations and regulations once you get to 50—over 50 employees—than you had before that. He said: I have 47 employees. I need to hire six more people right now. But I have looked at this health care law, my accountants have looked at this health care law, and we are not going to get 1 employee closer to 50 than we are right now.

So there are six jobs that did not get created. His view of what to do about