

access to care and protection from poverty that President Truman envisioned 65 years ago, and Medicare and Medicaid do not only protect seniors from poverty, they also protect those seniors' children. Forty-six years ago, middle-class families often spent themselves into the poorhouse honoring their commitment to their moms and dads. Today's seniors and their children have the security that Medicare and Medicaid will be there to honor that commitment—to providing health care and nursing home care when they need it.

But Medicare doesn't only save American seniors money, it saves their lives. In 1964, just before Medicare was signed into law, seniors lived an average of not quite 70 years. Today the national average is more than 78 years. There is, perhaps, no achievement greater than that. This law literally extended Americans' life expectancy. Forty-six years ago, before signing Medicare into law, President Johnson made this vow:

No longer will this Nation refuse the hand of justice to those who have given a lifetime of service and wisdom and labor to the progress of this progressive country.

Democrats intend to honor that solemn vow of President Johnson. But today Medicare is under siege. Republicans would trade away the health and safety of today's seniors for the sake of tax breaks for billionaires, wealthy oil companies, and corporations that ship jobs overseas. They would trade that sense of security, that "hand of justice" Johnson described, for the sake of tax breaks on their corporate jets and their yachts. Their ideological budget would end Medicare as we know it, once again subjecting seniors to the rising costs of health care. Democrats refuse to let that happen.

A lot has changed since 1966 and that law. New technologies and medicines are there for diabetes, Alzheimer's, Parkinson's. We now have hip replacements and chemotherapy, all pioneered in the late 1960s, and they are now performed in the United States every single day. Medicine has changed for the better.

But one thing has not changed. Seniors need Medicare. In fact, the rising cost of health care today means seniors need Medicare's protection more now than ever. That is why we will never stop fighting to preserve this successful program. As long as I am in the Senate, I will oppose Republican plans to weaken or undermine it, because the Republicans' plan to weaken Medicare is an idea whose time will never come.

Madam President, 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. McCONNELL. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

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

#### RECOGNITION OF THE MINORITY LEADER

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The minority leader is recognized.

#### BALANCED BUDGET AMENDMENT

Mr. McCONNELL. Madam President, over the past several days the American people have watched a serious debate unfold right here in Washington about our Nation's debt and about the future of our economy, and for many the debate has been extremely illuminating. It has done a lot to clarify where the two parties stand. Both sides agree that our deficits and our debt are unsustainable. But beyond that, the differences are stark.

Republicans believe if you increase spending to the point that you can no longer pay the bills, then you need to find a way to cut costs. Democrats seem to think if you increase spending to the point that you can no longer pay the bills, you need to find other people to pick up the tab. This is a fundamental difference between the two parties.

Republicans think Democrats should be held accountable for the way they have mismanaged the national checkbook over the past 2 years and Democrats seem to think that taxpayers should take the hit.

Democrats spend beyond their means and now they expect a bailout from the taxpayers. That is what this debate is all about. It is about holding Washington accountable, for a change. It is about drawing a line in the sand and saying, no, the taxpayers will not bail out politicians. It is about refusing to subsidize the Democrats' irresponsible spending habits another day. Democrats have shown through their reckless spending over the past 2 years that they are not at all concerned about our fiscal future. They should not expect to be rewarded for that.

The entire Democratic approach to this debate has been astonishing, really. I mean, here we are in the midst of two national crises: 14 million unemployed and more than \$14 trillion in debt—14 million unemployed and \$14 trillion in debt—chronic unemployment and record deficits and debt. And what are the Democrats proposing? Higher taxes and more spending. In the middle of a jobs crisis they want to slam already struggling businesses with a massive tax hike. In the middle of a debt crisis they want to borrow and spend more money as a solution to the problem. This is not a negotiation, it is a parody.

In a discussion about reducing the debt, they want to increase spending. Let me say that again. In a discussion about reducing the debt, they want to increase spending. In the middle of a jobs crisis they want to raise taxes—even as they claim to support job creation. Which is it? Yesterday the President went to a manufacturing plant to

tout jobs. Yet even as he was speaking, his administration was looking to saddle manufacturing companies, including the one he was visiting yesterday, with billions of dollars in new taxes.

According to a letter from a group of trade associations, including the National Association of Manufacturers, this particular tax would be "devastating" to manufacturers. The President himself said as recently as 6 months ago that keeping taxes where they are enables businesses to hire more workers. Six months ago the President said that. In other words, he was saying that raising taxes leads to fewer jobs. So he can call for tax hikes but he cannot call for tax hikes and job creation. It is one or the other—six months ago making the argument that tax hikes lose jobs; today out touting jobs on the one hand and pushing for higher taxes on the other. He can't have it both ways.

The Democrats' spending spree has brought us to the brink of an economic calamity and now they are telling taxpayers they will not do anything to prevent it unless the taxpayers hand over more money in the form of tax hikes. And they have the nerve to call their critics immoral. I want to know what you call spending trillions more than you have and then expecting others to pick up the tab; that is what this is all about, spending trillions more than you have and expecting somebody else to pick up the tab.

Does anybody seriously propose tax hikes as a solution to a job crisis? Who proposes more spending as a solution to a debt crisis? Who thinks if we raise the debt limit now without enacting serious spending cuts and meaningful reforms first it will lead to greater fiscal discipline later? There is an important principle at stake in this debate. It is not about rich versus poor. It is not about an election. It is about whether Washington will ever be held accountable for its mistakes. That is why Republicans refuse to let the taxpayers take the hit when it comes to reducing the debt, and that is why all 47 Republicans in the Senate support a balanced budget amendment to the U.S. Constitution.

The debate we have been having over the past few days shows more than ever why we need a balanced budget amendment in Congress. A balanced budget amendment would require that lawmakers stop spending money we don't have. When we come back after July 4, we will fight for an opportunity to vote for it. Broke or balanced, that is the choice. The American people should know where their Senators stand on this issue of accountability. Senators can talk all day long about the importance of balancing the books and living within our means, but a vote in favor of the balanced budget amendment will show we actually mean it. A vote against it will show that they don't.

Look, no one denies that both parties are guilty of spending beyond our means. But this White House has taken