

are we supposed to find out about it? Whistleblowers are very helpful.

It happens that President Obama's signing statement contended that this provision did not detract from his authority to direct department heads to supervise employee communication with Congress. Worse, it said this authority would be used when employee communication would reveal "confidential information."

This signing statement, if carried out, would undermine congressional instructions as enacted into law, and it would harm the ability of Congress to conduct its constitutional duty to conduct oversight of the executive branch.

Then just this week, the President flipped again on yet another subject. In 2009, he said he was "pledging to cut the deficit we inherited in half by the end of my first term in office."

At the time he was sworn in, the deficit was \$1.3 trillion. The fiscal year 2013 budget the President has just proposed would create a \$900 billion deficit—much more than half of the 2009 level that he promised to cut in half. This is true even after he proposes to raise taxes, since the amount of the new government spending he seeks is so enormous.

This is a long list of flip-flops, of failure to keep commitments, and hypocrisy. There are others as well.

I give the President the benefit of the doubt in his altered views of the PATRIOT Act, Guantanamo, and other national security issues. He holds an office in which he sees daily the unrelenting national security threats the country faces. But for the other issues I have raised, the consistency of the Obama administration is its inconsistency.

I yield the floor.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The Senator from Indiana.

Mr. COATS. Mr. President, I am not sure what the order is here. I am happy to defer to whatever has been agreed to.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. There is 7½ minutes remaining on the Republican side.

Mr. COATS. I will try to do less, and I thank the Chair.

#### THE BUDGET

Mr. COATS. This is the third anniversary of the President's nearly \$1 trillion stimulus bill. But it is not an anniversary worth celebrating.

Back then, the Obama administration promised the American people that the stimulus bill, if passed, would keep unemployment below 8 percent and create 3.5 million jobs. So let's look at where we are today.

The unemployment rate has remained above 8 percent for a record 36 months, and our economy has lost nearly one-half million jobs since the stimulus was passed.

We can't conclude anything else other than the fact that the stimulus has failed—and failed badly. It was a

misuse of hard-earned taxpayer dollars, and it proves that when government tries to pick winners, many of their choices such as Solyndra, turn out to be losers and all that at the expense of the American taxpayer.

By looking at the President's budget proposal that we are going to be dealing with this year for the next fiscal year, it appears the administration has not learned from its past mistakes.

Despite some glimmers of hope for improvement in our economy, today millions of Americans awoke across the country without a job.

This morning, millions of Americans are wondering how to make their next mortgage payment, how to pay for their medical bills, and how to fill up their gas tanks without breaking the bank. But little is being done here in Washington to address this. While it is obvious that there are no silver bullets or short-term fixes to this problem, we have not taken the necessary steps to get ahold of our larger fiscal issue and problem—the growing red ink and debt our economy is being burdened with through the policies that are enacted and not enacted here in Washington.

The Obama budget is out of touch with the reality of our fiscal situation. The President's fiscal year 2013 budget increases spending every year, proposes the largest tax increase in history, burdens the country with more debt, and never balances the budget. As we have seen before, the administration's budget principles cannot be anything but spend more, borrow more, and tax more. This is a failed approach, it is dropping us deeper and deeper into debt, and making our solutions more difficult every day that we spend more than we take in.

One of the major things we have not addressed this year because we have not exhibited the will to do so is failure to address entitlements. Entitlements and mandatory spending plus the interest we pay on borrowed debt continue to eat up ever more of our budget, a larger and ever growing percentage which will continue over the next years at a staggering number. It simply is not sustainable. While we must work to save our safety net programs that we have promised the American people, we need to understand that doing nothing makes the situation worse and does not do anything to help retirees. We have to be honest—with those retirees and those nearing retirement and those who are looking to the future—about the solvency of the Social Security trust fund and the solvency of the Medicare trust fund.

Medicare is projected to go broke by 2024. Over the next decade, Social Security spending will grow by 6 percent annually, and by 2026, benefits for all retirees will have to be cut by a minimum of 23 percent if we are to keep the trust fund solvent. The gravest threat to Medicare and Social Security is doing nothing. We in fact are doing nothing.

We will have legislation to vote on here today that further exacerbates the

problem of the Social Security trust fund. This is couched as a tax break for American people to be extended as a result of a payroll tax cut on their Social Security contributions. So instead of putting today's requirement of a percentage of your income into the Social Security trust fund for the benefit of retirees and our own retirement when we finish our careers, and the American people's retirement, we are deducting from that trust fund money that is going to have to be paid back. It is a shell game. We are telling the American people they are going to continue for the next year to get a payroll tax cut but the tax cut is taken out of the contribution to the Social Security trust fund. I am amazed that AARP or Save Social Security or all the entities that put ads on the air and send mailers to people around the country that say don't let Congress cut our Medicare funds, don't let Congress cut our Social Security—where are they today, saying Congress is robbing our Social Security trust fund and then they call this a tax cut?

Be honest with the American people. We are simply taking money from the trust fund for retiree benefits, making Social Security come closer and closer to bankruptcy and insolvency, at the same time not telling the American people that this so-called tax cut is robbing that fund.

We will be presented with a vote today to be honest with the American people, saying you have a shell game going on here that will have to be repaired, probably with borrowed dollars, that is going to make our situation worse, yet we go home and say we have extended a tax cut for you. Let's at least be honest with the American people and straight out and tell them we are taking the money out of your Social Security trust fund to extend the program here to give you a so-called tax break. It is a shell game. It is going to have to be repaid.

I think it is clear that we simply have not addressed the fundamental problems underlying the fiscal situation that exists here in the United States. Until we level with the American people and until we have the will to step forward and do what is necessary to save this country from default, to save these social safety net programs from default, we will be continuing what has been done in the past, and that is leaving us in an ever more precarious position.

I yield the floor.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The Senator from New Hampshire.

#### WOMEN'S HEALTH CARE

Mrs. SHAHEEN. Mr. President I come to the floor today with a number of my women Senate colleagues to talk about what happened yesterday at the House Committee on Oversight and Government Reform. They held a hearing on the administration's decision to