

the Board of Visitors of the U. S. Military Academy.

The Chair, on behalf of the Vice President, pursuant to 10 U.S.C. 6968(a), appoints the following Senators to the Board of Visitors of the U. S. Naval Academy: the Senator from Illinois, Mr. KIRK, from the Committee on Appropriations, and, the Senator from Arizona, Mr. MCCAIN, from the Committee on Armed Services.

The Chair, on behalf of the Vice President, pursuant to title 46, Section 1295(b), of the U.S. Code, as amended by Public Law 101-595, and upon the recommendation of the chairman of the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation, appoints the following Senators to the Board of Visitors of the U. S. Merchant Marine Academy: the Senator from Georgia, Mr. ISAKSON, from the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation, and the Senator from Arkansas, Mr. BOOZMAN, at large.

The Chair, on behalf of the Vice President, pursuant to Public Law 70-770, appoints the Senator from Mississippi, Mr. COCHRAN, to the Migratory Bird Conservation Commission.

The Chair, on behalf of the Vice President, pursuant to Public Law 93-642, appoints the following Senator to be a member of the Board of Trustees of the Harry S. Truman Scholarship Foundation: the Honorable ROY BLUNT of Missouri, vice the Honorable Kit Bond of Missouri.

SMALL BUSINESS JOBS BILL

Mr. REID. Mr. President, we are working on a way to move forward on the small business jobs bill. Staff has been working on this today. We have quite a number of amendments on which we are trying to get an agreement. We have not been successful yet. I hope we can be tomorrow because we need to wrap up that bill in anticipation of the work we have to do on passing the continuing resolution for the rest of this fiscal year.

ORDERS FOR WEDNESDAY, APRIL 13, 2011

Mr. REID. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that when the Senate completes its business today, it adjourn until 9:30 a.m. on Wednesday, April 13; that following the prayer and pledge, the Journal of proceedings be approved to date, the morning hour be deemed expired, the time for the two leaders be reserved for their use later in the day, and the Senate proceed to a period of morning business for debate only until 3 p.m., with Senators permitted to speak therein for up to 10 minutes each, with the Republicans controlling the time from 11:30 a.m. until 12:30 p.m. for the purpose of a colloquy, and the majority controlling the time from 1 p.m. until 2 p.m., and the majority leader recognized at 3 p.m.

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

PROGRAM

Mr. REID. As I indicated, Mr. President, we are working to complete action on the small business jobs bill that Chairman LANDRIEU has been so patient in helping us move forward.

In addition, the text of the long-term CR has been filed in the House and is available for everyone's review. It is on the Internet. People can read it there also. We expect to receive it from the House on Thursday. Senators are encouraged to come to the floor to debate it tomorrow. Senators will be notified when votes are scheduled.

ORDER FOR ADJOURNMENT

Mr. REID. Mr. President, if there is no further business to come before the Senate, I ask unanimous consent that it adjourn under the previous order, following the remarks of Senator HARKIN, which will not exceed 15 minutes.

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

BUDGET PRIORITIES

Mr. HARKIN. Mr. President, there is one point on which every Senator agrees, Democrats and Republicans alike: The economic recovery is starting to gain strength, and it is time to focus our attention on reducing deficits and restoring fiscal discipline. The current deficits are unsustainable and present a very real danger to our Nation's future economic prosperity; however, there is sharp disagreement as to how best to achieve that shared goal.

Along with other Democratic Senators, I advocate a balanced approach that includes spending cuts and necessary revenue increases while continuing to make crucial investments in education, infrastructure, and research, the investments that are absolutely essential if we are going to stay competitive in a global economy. We know this approach can work because it is what we did under President Clinton's leadership in the 1990s. That budget at that time created large surpluses and put us on the track to completely eliminating the national debt within a decade. It also created a brief era of shared prosperity with 22 million new jobs and 116 consecutive months of economic expansion.

By contrast most Republican Senators favor an approach that I consider to be unbalanced, unfair, and highly unlikely to succeed. We have now had nearly a week to evaluate the House Republicans' budget proposal for 2012 and beyond—the so-called Ryan budget. Let's look at what this truly radical budget plan would do.

It completely dismantles Medicare and Medicaid.

It concentrates two-thirds of its spending cuts on programs serving the most disadvantaged people in our society, including seniors and people with disabilities, even as it preserves huge subsidies for special interests.

It exempts corporations and wealthy individuals from shared sacrifice in order to bring deficits under control. To the contrary, this Republican tea party plan locks in the Bush tax cuts for the wealthy—tax cuts that were passed 10 years ago when we were looking at budget surpluses as far as the eye could see.

Well, under our present circumstances, the wealthy don't need these tax breaks, and we can't afford them. This budget of Mr. RYAN's and Republicans slashes the tax rate from 35 percent to 25 percent. That is the lowest level since 1931. Indeed, this so-called deficit reduction plan includes tax cuts that would cost \$2.9 trillion over the next 10 years compared to the CBO baseline, and that is according to the nonpartisan Tax Policy Institute.

This tea party budget plan repeals the new health reform law, stripping 34 million nonelderly Americans of health coverage and eliminating all the consumer protections in the law, including the ban on discrimination based on pre-existing conditions.

This budget of the Republicans repeals the Dodd-Frank Wall Street reform law, allowing financial manipulators to return to the same reckless practices that led to the financial collapse, to the great recession, and to much of our current huge budget deficits.

This budget cuts the maximum Pell grant award even as more students are enrolling in higher education to give themselves the skills they need for the modern economy.

How bizarre that several pundits have called this Republican tea party budget plan "courageous." There is nothing courageous about targeting the most vulnerable people in our society for the overwhelming share of cuts. There is nothing courageous about giving another huge tax cut bonanza to those who have seen their incomes skyrocket in recent years. There is nothing courageous about destroying the retirement security of tens of millions of American seniors, including dismantling Medicare and hacking away at Social Security. There is nothing courageous about gutting Medicaid, the program that millions of seniors and people with disabilities depend on to pay for care such as nursing home care or home health aids.

Let's be clear. There is nothing courageous in this Republican tea party budget. To the contrary, I suggest it is a cowardly budget. It is a bully's budget. In this budget the powerful and the privilege attack the weak and the vulnerable.

We all understand what is going on. Republicans are seizing on the budget crisis as a pretext for ramming through a longstanding ideological wish list. At the State level—in Iowa, Wisconsin, Ohio, and elsewhere—Republicans are using the budget crisis as a pretext for an assault on public workers, including teachers and firefighters and others. On Capitol Hill they are using it to try

to, as I said, defund health care reform, to destroy Medicare and Medicaid, Social Security, and, yes, to cut tax rates even more deeply for corporations and the wealthiest in our society.

This tea party budget is an unprecedented assault on middle-class and working Americans. It would drive down Americans' standard of living, shred the economic safety net, reduce access to health care and higher education, and do grave damage to our public schools and their ability to prepare the next generation for the jobs of the future.

Make no mistake. It is not about reducing budget deficits. Republican Governors and Republicans in Congress are demanding budget cuts to programs on which the middle class rely at the same time they continue to push for tax cuts for large corporations and the wealthy.

Call this what it is: Republicans have openly declared class warfare. Republican Governors have the gall to attack teachers, firefighters, police officers, and other public employees as—in the words of Indiana Gov. Mitch Daniels—"the privileged elite"—the privileged elite.

Our police, our firefighters, our public employees are the privileged elite? Why? Well, I suppose because they actually have pensions. They have decent jobs, decent wages, access to health care. For heaven's sake, we shouldn't be dragging people down because they have a middle-class life. We should be working day and night to give every American a decent standard of living, to shore up the middle class rather than tearing it down.

I suppose, to Governor Daniels and others, if the middle class are the privileged elite, then I guess the middle class today are those who are making minimum wage, working at dead-end jobs. Is that the new middle class?

Meanwhile, as Republicans at the State and national level go after the health care and retirement security of middle-class Americans—again, they are going all out to pass new tax breaks for those who have already been showered with tremendous breaks in the past. The tax cuts the congressional Republicans secured in December—that is what was passed in December—will add a whopping \$354 billion to the deficit this year and even more next year. The Congressional Budget Office estimates that the tax cuts in the new House budget would cost the Treasury \$2.9 trillion over 10 years. Yet now these very same Republicans claim they are worried about the deficit.

Well, they are not fooling anyone. This is not about deficit reduction, it is about ideology. Republicans are taking a meat ax to programs for the middle class—everything from cancer research to education to transportation to health care—and they are gutting the safety net for the elderly, the poor, and people with disabilities.

It is the same old GOP game plan: Give huge, unaffordable tax cuts to

corporations and the wealthy while enacting budget cuts that assist the middle class and the most vulnerable.

This new tea party Republican budget gives new meaning to the word "extreme." Let's look at what they have proposed. This budget dismantles Medicare, creating a new private voucher program so future seniors would have to pay out of pocket for many life-saving health care costs. It does nothing to control health care costs. It simply shifts the costs to the elderly individuals.

Get this: The Congressional Budget Office estimates that by 2030, under the Republican budget plan, seniors would have to pay two-thirds of the cost of their health coverage.

Future seniors would see their out-of-pocket costs more than double to \$12,500 a year. At the same time, the benefits would be cut in half—in just 20 years. Think about that. People who are now in their forties, looking to when they get on Medicare, will have their benefits cut in half, but they will pay twice as much for it under the voucher system.

This tea party Republican budget reopens the prescription drug doughnut hole which we have set in motion to close under the affordable care act. That would require seniors to pay \$3,600 a year more for prescription drugs.

The Republican tea party block grants Medicaid and cuts \$1 trillion in health care services, which would end vital services disabled Americans depend on, such as coverage for home health aides, assistance services so they can get a job, or going to a nursing home if that is the only option. By shifting costs to the States, this would worsen our State budget deficits.

The Republican budget proposal doesn't stop at dismantling the safety net and programs seniors rely on for a secure retirement. This budget plan makes profound and destructive cuts to the entire range of programs that underpin the American middle-class standard of living, everything from education, student grants and loans, law enforcement, clean air and clean water, food safety, biomedical research, highways, bridges, and infrastructure—in short, all of the programs and services middle-class Americans rely on for a decent way of life and the promise that enhances the ability of the private sector to grow and provide more jobs.

The Republican assault on the middle class is breathtaking both in scope and depth. It could not come at a worse time for working Americans, who are already under enormous strain. It is no secret that people are working harder and longer than ever before, but they still can't seem to meet the cost of basic, everyday needs such as education, transportation, and housing, let alone save enough to support themselves in their old age. Even before the great recession, working people weren't sharing in our Nation's prosperity.

The shared prosperity of the years after World War II created an expanding middle class, a soaring standard of living. But these wages—real wages—peaked in the 1970s, and they have been stagnant ever since. Think about that. They peaked in about 1979. Since 1979, real wages have not gone up. You wonder why middle-class Americans are so upset about what is going on. They realize this. They may not be able to put it in exact language, but I can tell you that middle-class families know what has happened to them. They know they have lost their earning power.

Middle-class jobs are also being shipped overseas—a trend actually encouraged by our Tax Code. Income inequality in America is reaching Third-World levels. Job security, savings, and pensions are disappearing, along with the American dream.

Now, with working Americans barely making ends meet, just barely holding on to a decent way of life, the Republicans have proposed a budget—make no mistake—that will destroy what is left of the middle class in this country. I could not disagree more strenuously with this approach. The future of our Nation depends on our ability to ensure that everybody benefits from economic growth. It means putting policies into place that build a strong and vibrant middle class with good jobs, fair wages, and good benefits. That is the America I want to see—one where people who work hard and play by the rules can live a decent life. Tragically, the tea party budget plan would take us in exactly the opposite direction. It would gut the whole range of programs that support the middle class in this country. It would dismantle the safety net for those with disabilities and for the poor—a safety net that has been painstakingly created over the last 80 years.

This Republican budget plan not only turns the clock back to before the Great Society programs of Pell grants, housing, and support for people in the middle class, it would turn it back to even before the New Deal. It would gut all Federal support that is basic for education. It would all but eliminate Federal support for infrastructure, which means we will fall even further behind China and the European Union, which are investing massively in everything from ultramodern ports, to high-speed rail, to state-of-the-art roads and bridges. Right now, China is investing between 8 and 10 percent of its GDP in infrastructure. We are at 2 percent and going down.

Indeed, this tea party budget aims to dismantle the Federal Government as we know it. It proposes to shrink discretionary spending—including defense—and other minor mandatory program spending from 12 percent of GDP last year to 6 percent of GDP in 2022 and to just 3.5 percent of GDP per year in the long run. Think about that. It would shrink discretionary spending and other mandatory spending from 12 percent of the budget last year to about 3.5 percent of the budget over the

long run. Well, that is about the same level of Federal spending during the Presidency of Calvin Coolidge, nearly a century ago, when defense spending was very small and there was very little, if any, support for education and the infrastructure of our country. We don't live in the era of Calvin Coolidge any longer, but this budget would take us back to that time.

Adding insult to injury, this budget plan makes a mockery of the concept of shared sacrifice to reduce deficits. Apparently, it wasn't enough to bail out the Wall Street bankers whose reckless gambling and risk-taking created the great recession; now we are being asked to cut programs for working Americans so that Wall Street can get another giant tax cut.

This Republican tea party budget is built on bad priorities, bad policy, and just plain bad values. As columnist E.J. Dionne points out, Americans can see "how radical the new conservatives in Washington are, and the extent to which some politicians would transfer even more resources from the have-nots and the have-a-littles to the have-a-lots."

Going back to the 1930s, the American people have supported and strengthened an unwritten social contract. That social contract says that we will prepare our young, care for our elderly, and build a safety net for those who fall, who become disabled or sick. That unwritten social contract says that if you work hard and play by the rules, you will be able to rise to the middle class or even beyond. That social contract says that if you start at the bottom, you will have a ladder of opportunity to the middle class. It says that a cardinal rule of government is to provide a ladder of opportunity so that every American can realistically aspire to the American dream.

But in one fell swoop, this Republican budget rips up that social contract. It replaces it with a winner-takes-all philosophy that tells struggling, aspiring people and communities across America: You are on your own.

If you are a low-income high school student who can only afford college with the help of a generous Pell grant, this budget says: Tough luck. You are on your own.

If you are a working couple with two kids who can't scrape together enough money to purchase decent health insurance, this budget says: Tough luck. You are on your own.

If you are a poor rural community that needs assistance to pay for a new sewer system or a flood control project, this budget says: Tough luck. You are on your own.

If you are a poor, urban community struggling to find funding to create high-quality K-12 public schools for your children, this budget says: Tough luck. You are on your own.

If you are a retiree with serious health problems and can't afford the big out-of-pocket costs in this Republican plan to do away with Medicare or if your health insurance company abruptly cancels your policy, this budget says: Tough luck. You are on your own.

If you are a low-income family who counts on Federal nutrition assistance and you are trying to decide whether to spend scarce dollars on food or medicine, this budget says: Tough luck. You are on your own.

Mr. President, this would not be the America we have come to know and love. It is not the kind of America my grandparents and your grandparents or our fathers and mothers built for us and for future generations. It is not the America that built the best middle class history has ever seen. This budget is not the kind of America my friends and neighbors in Iowa would find acceptable.

So, mark my words, this budget is not a courageous budget. As I said, it is a cowardly budget, a bully budget. And the American people will not stand for this unwise, unbalanced, unfair assault on their economic security, their way of life, and the America our grandparents and our parents built for us and for future generations.

Mr. President, I will oppose with every fiber of my being these grossly, misguided proposals in every way I can. And I can assure you, Mr. President, the American people will not stand for this tea party Republican budget either.

MEASURE READ THE FIRST
TIME—H.J. RES. 37

Mr. HARKIN. Mr. President, I understand there is a House joint resolution at the desk, and I ask for its first reading.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. BENNET). The clerk will read the joint resolution by title for the first time.

The legislative clerk read as follows:

A joint resolution (H.J. Res. 37) disapproving the rule submitted by the Federal Communications Commission with respect to regulating the Internet and broadband industry practices.

Mr. HARKIN. I now ask for its second reading, and in order to place the joint resolution on the calendar under the provisions of rule XIV, I object.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Objection is heard. The joint resolution will be read the second time on the next legislative day.

ADJOURNMENT UNTIL 9:30 A.M.
TOMORROW

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the Senate stands adjourned until 9:30 a.m. tomorrow.

Thereupon, the Senate, at 6:31 p.m., adjourned until Wednesday, April 13, 2011, at 9:30 a.m.

CONFIRMATIONS

Executive nominations confirmed by the Senate April 12, 2011:

THE JUDICIARY

VINCENT L. BRICCETTI, OF NEW YORK, TO BE UNITED STATES DISTRICT JUDGE FOR THE SOUTHERN DISTRICT OF NEW YORK.

JOHN A. KRONSTADT, OF CALIFORNIA, TO BE UNITED STATES DISTRICT JUDGE FOR THE CENTRAL DISTRICT OF CALIFORNIA.