

find ourselves. But it wouldn't lead to the erosion of seniors' retirement security or it wouldn't lock in special interest tax breaks.

So I say to all of my colleagues, it is time to put aside our political differences, check our ultimatums at the door, and let's work across the aisle and challenge ourselves to put our country first through balancing the budget.

Our debt is \$15 trillion and it is growing. The bipartisan cochairmen of President Obama's commission on the debt have called our debt a cancer, and the former Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, Admiral Mullen, has said it is the single biggest threat to our national security. It is clear it is time to act. We have run out of time to act.

So, as I close, I just want to say the American people have demanded we get our fiscal house in order. As usual, they are a few steps ahead of us, and it is now time for us in the Congress to catch up. So I am asking my colleagues of both parties and both Chambers to support my proposal. This is the right approach. It will enhance our economic security. It will ensure that we keep faith with our children. We shouldn't pass off this unsustainable debt to our children.

Madam President, I urge my colleagues to support this important proposal. I yield the floor, and I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. HATCH. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

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

Mr. HATCH. How much time do I have?

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. There remains 45 seconds.

Mr. HATCH. I ask unanimous consent that I be able to complete these remarks. It might take a few seconds beyond.

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

Mr. HATCH. Madam President, critics suggest a vote for our balanced budget amendment is a waste of the Chamber's time. That is pure bunk.

The same folks who say we should not be voting on the Republicans' balanced budget amendment have also offered up their own amendment to show their constituents that they too want to balance the budget.

I can tell you now that it is the Democratic alternative that misses the point, for a number of reasons. One, it doesn't address the true crisis. We have a crisis of spending. We are \$15 trillion in debt, and the Democratic alternative does nothing to address it.

No. 2, it carves out massive portions of government spending from their def-

inition of Federal outlays. No. 3, even its balance requirements, the most basic feature of any balanced budget amendment, are easily overridden. No. 4, there is no cap on Federal spending. And, No. 5, there is no supermajority requirement for tax increases.

Put it all together and this is what you get with the Democratic balanced budget amendment. You get a constitutional amendment that is going to force Congress to raise taxes on families and businesses to pay for out-of-control government spending. The Democratic alternative should be rejected. It might look good from a distance but up close it does not even begin to address our Nation's fiscal crisis.

I yield the floor.

CONCLUSION OF MORNING BUSINESS

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Morning business is closed.

PROPOSING AN AMENDMENT TO THE CONSTITUTION RELATIVE TO REQUIRING A BALANCED BUDGET—S.J. RES. 24

PROPOSING AN AMENDMENT TO THE CONSTITUTION OF THE UNITED STATES RELATIVE TO BALANCING THE BUDGET—S.J. RES. 10—Resumed

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Under the previous order, the Senate will resume the en bloc consideration of S.J. Res. 10 and S.J. Res. 24, which the clerk will report.

The legislative clerk read as follows:

A joint resolution (S.J. Res. 24) proposing an amendment to the Constitution relative to requiring a balanced budget.

A joint resolution (S.J. Res. 10) proposing an amendment to the Constitution of the United States relative to balancing the budget.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Under the previous order, there is 5 minutes of debate equally divided prior to votes on passage of the measures.

The Republican leader is recognized.

Mr. McCONNELL. Madam President, yesterday and today my Republican colleagues here in the Senate have been coming to the floor one after another to deliver a simple, urgent message, one that I hear every time I am home in Kentucky: Washington simply must change course. The spending spree must end. We must put our Nation's fiscal house in order before it is too late.

This is not a partisan message. Everyone recognizes that both parties played a role in getting us to this point. But let's be clear, Republicans are the only ones in Congress right now who are attempting to do something meaningful about fiscal restraint. The only way we will actually achieve it is by acting together on serious legisla-

tion such as the balanced budget amendment Republicans are voting on today—not through thinly veiled cover votes such as the one Democrats plan to hold alongside this morning.

For nearly 3 years now, Republicans have stood up to the fiscal recklessness of this administration and pleaded with the President and Democrats in Congress to stop the spending spree—stop it—and work with us on a serious plan to put our Nation's fiscal house in order.

For nearly 3 years we have met nothing but resistance. I even read this week that some Democrats in Congress actually view our insistence on fiscal responsibility as a good political issue for them. They say Americans have moved on, that they do not want to hear about fiscal restraint anymore. Apparently these Democrats are content to let this crisis continue to build and build until it pops up in the polls again.

What Republicans have been saying this week is that we do not have that luxury. We cannot wait for a European-style calamity to happen right here to finally do something about our fiscal problems, nor should we want to. After all, we were not elected to get re-elected. We were elected to recognize the Nation's problems and to face up to them with foresight and with courage.

That is why Republicans have kept up our call for a serious and effective balanced budget amendment. We have seen all the statistics—that Congress now borrows more than 40 cents for every dollar it spends; that interest payments on the debt alone will soon crowd out spending on things such as education and defense; that annual deficits under this President routinely double and triple the previous record.

We know where it has gotten us. Under this President, the national debt has rocketed from \$10.1 trillion all the way up to 15.1 trillion, more than a 40-percent increase in the national debt under this President in a record time of less than 3 years, a run of fiscal mismanagement only matched in its recklessness by total unwillingness to correct it.

The President's most recent budget was so irresponsible that not a single Member of the Senate voted for it, not one. The President's budget was voted down unanimously here in the Senate.

What about the first ever downgrade of U.S. debt, did that prompt action? Not in this White House. It prompted a round of "shoot the messenger" instead. This President's entire approach to our Nation's fiscal problems has been to sit back and blame somebody else, even as he continues to make all of these problems worse.

There was a time when President Obama claimed to believe in the importance of paying our debts. As a Senator he stood on this very floor and chastised his predecessor for even asking the Congress to raise the Nation's debt limit. He called it a failure of leadership. Yet earlier this year, as President

he demanded that Congress approve the single largest debt limit increase ever requested by a U.S. President—without any plan at all to cover the cost. It was this kind of fiscal recklessness that roused Republicans to recommit ourselves to the idea that, if we are going to preserve the American dream for our children, Congress has to stop spending more than it takes in, and it was the Democrats' resistance to that idea that convinced us the only way to make sure it happens is through a constitutional amendment that actually requires it.

For too long, the politics of the moment or of the next election have been put ahead of Congress's responsibility to balance the books. Too many promises have been made that cannot possibly ever be kept, and now the time for serious action has come; we must prevent what is happening in Europe from happening here.

That is what our balanced budget amendment would do. By permanently limiting Congressional spending to the historical norm of 18 percent of gross national product, and through a new three-fifths supermajority of both Houses of Congress to raise the debt limit, the balanced budget amendment Republicans are proposing today would go a long way in preventing that day of reckoning from happening right here in America. Every single Senator should support it.

Democrats here in Washington know the American people want Congress to get its fiscal house in order. That is why they proposed a balanced budget amendment of their own. Unfortunately, they have no real intention of passing it. If they did, they would join us in supporting a bill that we know would lead to the kind of fiscal restraint the American people are asking for.

I ask my friends on the other side to join us. It is not too late. We are only going to solve this problem together. Republicans are doing our part. We need them to do theirs. The American people are asking us to act. Let's do it. If this President will not take America's fiscal problems seriously, Congress should do it for him.

I yield the floor.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The Senator from Colorado.

Mr. UDALL of Colorado. Mr. President, as I rise to ask for the yeas and nays on the amendment, I point out my amendment is not a cover amendment. It includes many of the principles and provisions the House considered in a balanced budget amendment they voted on recently, and it also contains many of the provisions and principles that this body in the 1990s considered when Paul Simon and Senator HATCH and many others led on a balanced budget amendment proposal.

With that, I ask for the yeas and nays on S.J. Res. 24.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Is there a sufficient second?

There appears to be a sufficient second.

The question is, Shall the joint resolution pass?

The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk called the roll.

The yeas and nays resulted—yeas 21, nays 79, as follows:

[Rollcall Vote No. 228 Leg.]

YEAS—21

Baucus	Feinstein	McCaskill
Begich	Gillibrand	Nelson (NE)
Bennet	Hagan	Nelson (FL)
Blumenthal	Heller	Stabenow
Brown (OH)	Klobuchar	Tester
Carper	Kohl	Udall (CO)
Casey	Manchin	Wyden

NAYS—79

Akaka	Grassley	Murkowski
Alexander	Harkin	Murray
Ayotte	Hatch	Paul
Barrasso	Hoeben	Portman
Bingaman	Hutchison	Pryor
Blunt	Inhofe	Reed
Boozman	Inouye	Reid
Boxer	Isakson	Risch
Brown (MA)	Johanns	Roberts
Burr	Johnson (SD)	Rockefeller
Cantwell	Johnson (WI)	Rubio
Cardin	Kerry	Sanders
Chambliss	Kirk	Schumer
Coats	Kyl	Sessions
Coburn	Landrieu	Shaheen
Cochran	Lautenberg	Shelby
Collins	Leahy	Snowe
Conrad	Lee	Thune
Coons	Levin	Toomey
Corker	Lieberman	Udall (NM)
Cornyn	Lugar	Vitter
Crapo	McCain	Warner
DeMint	McConnell	Webb
Durbin	Menendez	Whitehouse
Enzi	Merkley	Wicker
Franken	Mikulski	
Graham	Moran	

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. On this vote, the yeas are 21, the nays are 79. Two-thirds of the Senate duly chosen and sworn not having voted in the affirmative, the joint resolution is rejected.

S. J. RES. 10

Under the previous order, there will now be 2 minutes of debate, equally divided, prior to a vote on S.J. Res. 10.

Who yields time? The Senator from Utah.

Mr. HATCH. Madam President, this is the last chance to vote for a constitutional amendment that will truly do something, that will tie the hands of Congress so they have to live within fiscal constraints. We are taxing and spending this country into bankruptcy. We have a \$15 trillion-plus national debt, growing to \$20 trillion to \$30 trillion. We don't have any restraint around here.

People say: If we just live up to the Constitution and restrain ourselves, we can do that. They have been saying that for 35 years. The only time we have come to a balanced budget around here is when we had the first Republican Congress in over 40 years and we had a President who was willing to support it.

This is our chance to try to do something for our country that will stop the outrageous, out-of-control spending. We need to do it. This amendment is the only one that can do it.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The Senator from Vermont.

Mr. LEAHY. Madam President, I have actually voted for a balanced

budget. Democrats in this Chamber and in the other Chamber voted for one and it passed. Not a single Republican voted for it. During the Clinton administration, we were able to balance the budget and start paying down the debt. A huge surplus was left to his successor and it was squandered by that administration.

We should not enshrine the extreme provisions in the current proposal in our Constitution. We should not make it more difficult for Congress to respond to economic and natural disasters. Proponents of this amendment say: Let's let the courts make these decisions. Let us not transform our courts into budget-cutting bodies. They are not equipped to perform that role. Even Justice Scalia, testifying before our committee, laughed at the idea that they could do that.

The Hatch-McConnell proposal will do nothing to spur economic growth or ease the partisan gridlock in the Congress. It will do the opposite. It will enshrine bad fiscal policy in the Constitution. A vote for this proposal is a vote for dramatic cuts in Social Security, Medicare, and veterans' benefits.

Partisan efforts like this may be good bumper-sticker politics, but they are bad solutions. I wish those who say they revere the Constitution would show it the respect it deserves rather than treating it like a blog entry.

I urge Senators to oppose this radical and ill-considered proposal to amend our Constitution.

Mr. VITTER. Madam President, I ask for the yeas and nays.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Is there a sufficient second? There appears to be a sufficient second.

The question is, Shall the joint resolution pass?

The clerk will call the roll.

The assistant legislative clerk called the roll.

The result was announced—yeas 47, nays 53, as follows:

[Rollcall Vote No. 229 Leg.]

YEAS—47

Alexander	Enzi	McConnell
Ayotte	Graham	Moran
Barrasso	Grassley	Murkowski
Blunt	Hatch	Paul
Boozman	Heller	Portman
Brown (MA)	Hoeben	Risch
Burr	Hutchison	Roberts
Chambliss	Inhofe	Rubio
Coats	Isakson	Sessions
Coburn	Johanns	Shelby
Cochran	Johnson (WI)	Snowe
Collins	Kirk	Thune
Corker	Kyl	Toomey
Cornyn	Lee	Vitter
Crapo	Lugar	Wicker
DeMint	McCain	

NAYS—53

Akaka	Conrad	Kohl
Baucus	Coons	Landrieu
Begich	Durbin	Lautenberg
Bennet	Feinstein	Leahy
Bingaman	Franken	Levin
Blumenthal	Gillibrand	Lieberman
Boxer	Hagan	Manchin
Brown (OH)	Harkin	McCaskill
Cantwell	Inouye	Menendez
Cardin	Johnson (SD)	Merkley
Carper	Kerry	Mikulski
Casey	Klobuchar	Murray

Nelson (NE)	Sanders	Udall (NM)
Nelson (FL)	Schumer	Warner
Pryor	Shaheen	Webb
Reed	Stabenow	Whitehouse
Reid	Tester	Wyden
Rockefeller	Udall (CO)	

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. On this vote, the yeas are 47, the nays are 53. Two-thirds of the Senators voting not having voted in the affirmative, the joint resolution is rejected.

The Senator from Illinois.

MORNING BUSINESS

Mr. DURBIN. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate proceed to a period of morning business until 5 p.m., with Senators permitted to speak for up to 10 minutes each.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Is there objection?

Without objection, it is so ordered.

UNANIMOUS CONSENT REQUEST— H.R. 3630

Mr. DURBIN. Madam President, last night the House of Representatives passed a tax cut bill, one that is doomed in the Senate and that the President has made it clear he will not sign.

It is important for us to move beyond this stalemate on an important issue that will literally affect 160 million working Americans.

Currently those working families enjoy a 2-percent payroll tax cut. For the average family in Illinois with a \$50,000 annual income, it means \$1,000 a year or more in terms of a tax cut. So if we fail to continue this payroll tax cut, families across Illinois and across America are going to see an increase in their payroll taxes of about \$100 to \$125 dollars a month. We cannot let that happen. These families are struggling paycheck to paycheck. We want to help them. We want to make sure we help this economy by putting more life into it, which creates more opportunity for profitability for business and new jobs.

We also need to maintain our unemployment insurance which we have provided during these difficult times for those families struggling to find work.

At this point it is clear we should move immediately—immediately—to consideration of the House tax cut bill, a bill which passed the House and should be taken up immediately in the Senate. There is no reason for delay. It has to be done before we go home. Let's not waste any more time. Let's bring it to a vote.

Therefore, I ask unanimous consent the Senate proceed to the consideration of H.R. 3630, which was just received in the Senate from the House; that there be 2 hours of debate equally divided between the two leaders or their designees prior to a vote on passage of the bill; that no amendments be in order prior to the vote, and that the vote on passage be subject to a 60-affirmative vote threshold; further, that if the bill is not passed, it remain the pending business and the majority leader be recognized.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. FRANKEN). Is there objection?

Mrs. HUTCHISON. Mr. President, I object on behalf of our leader. This is a matter that needs to be decided between our two leaders. That has not been done. The bill has just come over. There needs to be some time. Certainly we hope in the future to vote on it at a time when the two leaders can agree.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Objection is heard.

Mr. DURBIN. Mr. President, I thank the Senator from Texas. I know her objection was on behalf of the Republican Senate leader. I would appeal to him and all Republicans on that side of the aisle, let's get down to the business of extending this payroll tax cut for working families and maintaining the unemployment insurance to help millions of Americans. Let's get it done before we even consider leaving for this holiday season.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Texas.

KEYSTONE XL PIPELINE

Mrs. HUTCHISON. Mr. President, at a time when our economy is staggering and global unrest is making long-term energy supplies uncertain, we are going to eventually be able to take up a bill that has been passed by the House that would bypass the President's decision to postpone until 2013, after the elections next year, a domestic infrastructure project that promises 20,000 immediate jobs, and 118,000 spinoff jobs, and provides a stable energy source from our trusted neighbor Canada.

After 3 years of unprecedented reviews by State and Federal agencies, the administration decided to delay the Keystone XL pipeline until after the 2012 election. Why? It would seem obvious that this is a decision that could now be made. The studies have been done. The jobs are needed. This is a privately financed traditional energy project. It is truly shovel ready. It is not a temporary government stimulus program based on wishful thinking, looking for things that can be done around the country. It is ready to go and it is privately financed, so there are no taxpayer dollars involved.

The pipeline is our Nation's access to the estimated 170 billion barrels of recoverable oil in western Canadian tar sands. It will provide energy from a reliable trading partner and friend, lessening our dependence on oil from turbulent Middle East and North African countries and from dictators and terrorism-supporting regimes in South America.

This turmoil leads to price spikes and supply interruptions that threaten our economy and our national security. If we can go forward with the pipeline project, it would have a tremendous impact on our Nation, where the project could stimulate \$2.3 billion in new spending and generate more than \$48 million in new tax revenues just in my home State of Texas.

The pipeline construction would result in 700,000 additional barrels of oils per day being sent to refineries in Texas. Our State's 26 refineries account for more than 25 percent of the total U.S. oil production, which is approximately 5 percent of worldwide capacity. Texas refineries working at capacity are of great benefit to the consumers of America. Oil is provided faster and more efficiently to domestic consumers and industry, bringing down the cost of energy to everyone in our country.

Last night the House approved this legislation. President Obama continues to threaten to veto any bill that comes to his desk that involves the Keystone pipeline. So I think it is fair to ask: What is his plan? The administration recently announced the President's 5-year blueprint for the future of America's energy resources. For example, the plan limits the offshore energy development to less than 3 percent of offshore areas.

The administration is decreasing our energy resources while other countries continue to increase their energy wealth, just off our coast in some instances, some as close as 25 miles from the U.S. waters. With the right policies, the oil and gas industry could create 1.4 million new jobs and raise \$800 billion of additional government revenue by 2030. That would come from people working. That would come from people in the economy buying things, creating new jobs, and paying taxes because they are earning money. That is the way we should increase revenue in this country, not by stimulus programs that add to our deficit and to the debt that is going to be inherited by our children.

The administration is determined to pursue policies that limit our utilization of our own natural resources. Most other countries in the world are trying to develop their natural resources, and some do not have natural resources and wish they did. America has them but we are not using them.

We could—with a single pipeline—do something that would lower the cost of energy and create new jobs and raise additional government revenue. The fact that we are debating this project today in the face of a frozen economy and rising energy insecurity is unthinkable. We do not need more Solyndra fiascos. We do not need to waste additional billions of taxpayer dollars to support failed businesses that would not exist without federal subsidies.

This pipeline has not one taxpayer dollar in it. It is privately funded and will create private industry jobs that would be jobs that create more revenue for our country through the spending and the creation of still further jobs.

We would be doing it with a trusted neighbor and ally, Canada. This is something we should do. I would love to see us do it in a bipartisan way in this Senate as the House has already done.