

President Obama's request that we pass a stimulus package, a spending bill and tax cut package that will reinvigorate this economy and try to stop the loss of jobs in America.

It is troubling to hear the frequent criticism from the Republican side that this is going to add to our deficit. No one doubts that. We are talking about the need to spend money immediately to stop the downward spiral of our economy. It will surely add to the deficit. But doing nothing, taking the approach that has been espoused by many on the other side of the aisle, will lead to even greater deficits and more suffering.

What we are trying to do is to step in with this tourniquet and try to stop the bleeding in this economy so we can turn it around for the families and businesses that are suffering today.

It troubles me, as I hear the Republican leader come and tell us of their concerns about deficits. I think, frankly, the air in the Senate Chamber leads to political amnesia, because many of the critics of our current efforts have forgotten that when President Bush came to office 8 years ago, he inherited a surplus from the Clinton administration—a surplus. We were giving longevity to the Social Security Program because we had a surplus in the Treasury. What happened to that surplus? I will tell you what happened. President Bush, George W. Bush, inherited the debt of the United States, the accumulated debt of every President from George Washington to George W. Bush, which was \$5 trillion.

At the end of his 8 years we had more than doubled the national debt of America. His decisions to double that debt by a war he did not pay for and tax cuts for wealthy people at a time when we should not have had tax cuts were endorsed by that side of the aisle. They stood in approval of President Bush's policies that doubled the national debt from \$5 trillion to \$10 trillion.

President Obama, 3 weeks ago, inherited the worst economic crisis since Franklin Roosevelt came to office in 1933 with the Great Depression. He is doing everything in his power to turn this around and he knows we need to spend money into this economy to create and save 3 to 4 million jobs. The criticism from the other side of the aisle is it is going to add to the national debt. Where have these tears been for the last 8 years when their President doubled the national debt?

I am also troubled by the fact that when this package came before the Congress, many Republican Senators who refused to vote for it added costs to the package. A Senator from Iowa in the Finance Committee added an amendment that cost \$70 billion to the package and then said he couldn't vote for the package because it costs too much. A Senator from Georgia added anywhere from \$11 to \$30 billion, depending on the best estimate, to the cost of the package and then said he

couldn't vote for the package because it costs too much.

I have to tell you, I do not believe that the message from the other side of the aisle is consistent.

Three Republican Senators have had the courage to step up and say we will work with you, we will come together and try to solve this problem. I salute them—Senators SNOWE and COLLINS of Maine and Senator SPECTER of Pennsylvania. But, they said, if you are going to do that we want to reduce the cost of the package.

I did not happen to agree with that approach, but I am prepared to compromise. I am prepared to work with them. It took \$100 billion out of this package, this recovery and reinvestment package. Frankly, I do not, as I said, agree with that—at a time we had to basically come together if we were going to have any agreement.

Now the Senate Republican leader comes to the floor and criticizes the cuts in the package. Why did the amount of tax cuts for families go from \$500 to \$400? It was because the Republican Senators said we want to bring down the cost and that was one of the ways we did it. I can't follow the logic, if there is any, on the other side of the aisle—criticizing adding to the deficit after they doubled it over the last 8 years, then criticizing cuts in the package, reducing its spending when in fact they say it costs too much, and offering amendments on that side of the aisle to add cost to the package and then arguing that it is too expensive. It is completely inconsistent. Their arguments are completely inconsistent and I think the American people know it.

They want Congress to come together and find solutions. They want partnership, not partisanship. They want us to stop squabbling and start working together. That is what we are trying to do, even today. It is hard. It is difficult. We are trying to find the votes to make this happen. It is essential that we do.

READING THE GETTYSBURG ADDRESS ON THE BICENTENNIAL OF ABRAHAM LINCOLN'S BIRTH

Mr. DURBIN. Mr. President, today marks the bicentennial of the birth of America's greatest President, Abraham Lincoln. This morning, as part of the nationwide celebration of this historic anniversary, the Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library and Museum in my hometown of Springfield, IL, is sponsoring a simultaneous reading of the Gettysburg Address by schoolchildren from coast to coast. I remember as a schoolchild memorizing the Gettysburg Address. I am happy to see that a new generation of American children is studying what many consider to be the greatest speech in our Nation's history.

But we can all learn from Lincoln. We are never too old. So this morning we in the Senate will also listen to the speech that many consider the greatest

summation in our Nation's history of the meaning and price of freedom.

After that, some of us will take the floor and share our thoughts on President Lincoln's immortal words and his powerful and enduring legacy.

These are the words President Abraham Lincoln spoke on the blood-drenched battlefield in Gettysburg, PA, on November 19, 1863:

Four score and seven years ago our fathers brought forth, on this continent, a new nation, conceived in Liberty, and dedicated to the proposition that all men are created equal.

Now we are engaged in a great civil war, testing whether that nation, or any nation so conceived and so dedicated, can long endure. We are met on a great battle-field of that war. We have come to dedicate a portion of that field, as a final resting place for those who here gave their lives that that nation might live. It is altogether fitting and proper that we should do this.

But, in a larger sense, we cannot dedicate—we cannot consecrate—we cannot hallow—this ground. The brave men, living and dead, who struggled here, have consecrated it, far above our poor power to add or detract. The world will little note, nor long remember what we say here, but it can never forget what they did here. It is for us the living, rather, to be dedicated here to the unfinished work which they who fought here have thus far so nobly advanced. It is rather for us to be here dedicated to the great task remaining before us—that from these honored dead we take increased devotion to that cause for which they gave the last full measure of devotion—that we here highly resolve that these dead shall not have died in vain—that this nation, under God, shall have a new birth of freedom—and that government of the people, by the people, for the people, shall not perish from the earth.

The Battle of Gettysburg in Pennsylvania was the largest battle ever fought on American soil. In the third summer of the Civil War, the Army of the Potomac met the Army of Northern Virginia at a crossroads near the small market town of Gettysburg, PA. For 3 brutal days, from July 1 to July 3, more than 160,000 American soldiers clashed in what would prove to be a decisive Union victory and a turning point in the war.

When the cannons and guns fell silent on July 4, our Nation's birthday, more than 51,000 Confederate and Union soldiers were wounded, missing, or dead. And 4½ months later, when President Lincoln traveled to Gettysburg to help dedicate America's first national cemetery, the battlefield was still covered with scars and signs of the carnage.

One soldier recalled, “. . . all about were traces of the fierce conflict. Rifle pits, cut and scarred trees, broken fences, pieces of artillery wagons and harness, scraps of blue and gray clothing, bent canteens. . . .”

President Lincoln was not supposed to be the main speaker at this dedication. In fact, there was a 2-hour speech given by Edward Everett, who was considered one of the great orators of his day. Abraham Lincoln's remarks took 2 minutes. They were so brief that when he finished, many in the crowd of

30,000 were not even sure he had spoken. Yet his words continue to inspire the world and the Nation today. In 272 words is what it took for President Lincoln to explain to a war-weary nation why it must continue to fight. He called on the Nation to look up from the devastation and division of the war to a higher purpose. He redefined the meaning and the value of the continuing struggle: "that these dead shall not have died in vain; that this nation shall have a new birth of freedom."

He said that the ceremony at Gettysburg was more than the consecration of a cemetery; it represented an opportunity and an obligation for us, the living, to finish the work of those who had fallen there, to ensure that "this government of the people, by the people, and for the people shall not perish from the earth."

It may have been the greatest speech in American history. Yet, after President Lincoln delivered it, there was only polite applause. On his trip back to Washington, Lincoln expressed disappointment. He said of his address, "It was a flat failure. I am distressed about it. I ought to have prepared it with more care."

The Chicago Times was even less charitable. They editorialized and said:

The cheek of every American must tingle with shame as he reads the silly, flat and dishwatery utterances of the president.

Edward Everett, the famed orator and former Governor of Massachusetts who had been the main speaker at Gettysburg, was one of the first to recognize the greatness of Lincoln's words. Within days, he wrote to the President, "I should be glad if I could flatter myself that I came as near to the central idea of the occasion, in two hours, as you did in two minutes."

In June 1865, in his eulogy to the fallen President, the fiery abolitionist Senator Charles Sumner called the Gettysburg Address "a monumental act." He said President Lincoln had been mistaken when he predicted that "the world will little note, nor long remember what we say here." The truth, Senator Sumner said, is that "[t]he world noted at once what he said, and will never cease to remember it. The battle itself was less important than the speech."

President Lincoln did not live to see his legacy: a United States of America that has endured, a nation so far removed from the hated institution of legalized human slavery that today President Lincoln's old office in the White House is occupied by our first African-American President.

As we commemorate today the 200th birthday of the man whose leadership saved our Union, saved our Nation and created a new birth of freedom, let us pledge that we too will dedicate ourselves to preserving his legacy and continuing the still-unfinished work for America.

I yield the floor.

COMMENDING THE GUEST CHAPLAIN

Mr. WEBB. Mr. President, I rise today to speak about today's guest Chaplain, Reverend Marshal Ausberry of Antioch Baptist Church, located in Fairfax Station, VA. I am pleased to welcome Dr. Ausberry to the U.S. Senate today.

Dr. Ausberry holds a master of divinity degree from the Samuel DeWitt Proctor School of Theology at Virginia Union University and a doctorate of ministry degree in preaching at Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary. He and his wife Robyn have been married for nearly 30 years, and have three children: Marshal Jr., Rian, and Mycah.

Antioch Baptist Church was founded in January 1989, and in its 20th year continues to bring its mission and ministry to the greater DC metro area. Since 1995, Dr. Ausberry has led this vibrant and robust congregation, expanding not only their membership, but their outreach and community involvement as well.

Through the dozens of missions and ministries at Antioch, Dr. Ausberry has made a profound impact on the lives of many members of not only my constituency but those throughout the DC metro area. I am certain that he will continue to guide his congregation for many years to come, and I look forward to seeing the direction of Antioch Baptist Church under his leadership.

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. LEAHY. I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. UDALL of New Mexico). Without objection, it is so ordered.

RESERVATION OF LEADER TIME

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the leadership time is reserved.

MORNING BUSINESS

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the Senate will proceed to a period of morning business, with Senators permitted to speak therein for up to 10 minutes each.

The Senator from Vermont.

ECONOMIC STIMULUS

Mr. LEAHY. Mr. President, I wish to state my strong support of the economic recovery plan because the American people and their communities need it to create jobs, to stabilize the economy, and to protect those who have been most hurt by the current global economic and financial crises.

Many Americans, especially my fellow Vermonters who have watched this process, look at the resistance the eco-

nomics recovery plan has met from many on the other side of the aisle, and they are somewhat dispirited. They remember how readily Congress rubberstamped hundreds of billions of dollars the previous administration earmarked for Iraq. Now they see how difficult it has been to get bipartisan approval for investments here at home that are desperately needed to jump start an economy that is in the midst of the worst economic crisis since the Great Depression.

I call on fellow Senators—who were willing and eager to vote for billions of dollars to rebuild the infrastructure of Iraq, who were willing to vote for billions of dollars to create jobs in Iraq, who were willing to vote for billions of dollars to help law enforcement in Iraq—to focus on the needs we have here at home. Let's spend some of that money in America to repair our infrastructure, to create jobs in America, and to help law enforcement in America.

No one disputes the clear fact that we are confronting the most severe economic problem we have had in generations. The U.S. economy has been in recession since December 2007. America's GDP declined 3.8 percent in the fourth quarter of 2008, the steepest drop since 1982. The United States lost 2.6 million jobs last year, the most since 1945. Last week we learned the U.S. economy shed almost 600,000 jobs in January, putting the unemployment rate at 7.6 percent.

In Vermont, not only has the amount of credit available to small businesses shrunk significantly, but our unemployment rate jumped to 6.4 percent in December. That is the highest it has been in 15 years. Vermont is not alone in this struggle. Workers, businesses, State and local governments all across the country face mounting debt, slumping orders, and sagging budgets.

To respond to this extraordinary crisis, I agree with President Obama and the vast majority of Americans that we have to act quickly and responsibly to pass an economic recovery and job creation plan as bold as the challenges we face. Americans want jobs. They want to work. They want to support their families. We have to help create those jobs. If we act now to strengthen our economy and invest in America's future, we can create good-paying jobs, we can cut taxes for working families, and we can make responsible investments in our future.

Our first priority should be to put America back to work. This economic recovery plan will help create or save over three million jobs, including an entire generation of green jobs that will make public and private investments in renewable energy and make America more energy efficient.

Investing in our country's infrastructure and education will do more than create jobs today—it can put us on a long-term path toward prosperity. Rebuilding our roads and bridges, expanding broadband access to rural communities; making our energy grid smart