

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Oklahoma.

Mr. COBURN. Madam President, I believe under the unanimous consent, I have an hour to speak. I ask unanimous consent that I be allotted an hour to speak.

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

Mr. COBURN. I want to spend a little bit of time this evening talking about motivations, talking about a realistic assessment of where we are and then merge those two things with some of the actions that myself and others in the Senate are doing.

One of the things we all know but we do not like to talk about is the significant, unsustainable course our country is on. Numbers can be really boring, but they are not boring when you apply what is going to happen to our children and grandchildren.

This first chart I have in the Chamber shows Government spending as a percentage of GDP. It has gone higher than that at times of war in the past. But here is where we are today at 2008. We are right around 20 percent. These are not my numbers. These are Government Accountability Office--these are the Medicare and Social Security trustee numbers. If we do not start doing something about wasteful Washington spending, about reform of waste, about elimination of fraud, about duplication of programs--2 or 3 or 20 doing the same thing, none of them doing it efficiently--what is going to happen to us under our current policy is that by 2038 we are going to have 35 percent of our GDP spent by the Government.

Well, what does that really mean? What happens to us when 35 percent of everything we produce comes to the Government and the Government deals it back out? Well, what it really means is less liberty. What it really means is less freedom. Because what it does is it takes the resources of Americans out of their pockets and out of their families and transfers it to a government bureaucracy that then mandates how dollars will be spent.

These numbers are not disputable. Nobody will dispute this is the roadmap we are on. As shown on this chart, this is where we are going. What happens is, the results of that become a markedly lower standard of living for our children and grandchildren. As we look at that, we see other things that are happening to us that are very harmful. As a matter of fact, they are affecting us greatly right now.

The debt held by the public--that is debt that is exclusive of the money we have stolen from Social Security, from Federal employees' retirement funds, from the Inland Waterways Trust Fund, and from about 60 other trust funds the Government continually steals excess money from and spends but does not recognize the debt--that is exclusive of all this. This is the debt that is out there that people have actually bought: T-bills or Treasury notes or Treasury bonds. About a third to 40 percent is now held by foreign governments.

If you think this cannot impact us as a nation, we need to think about what happened when France and England started to take the Suez Canal back from the Egyptians, and because we owned the majority of France's and England's debt, we said: If you do this, we will put your debt on the market. We will collapse your economy. So, consequently, two allies of ours did not do a very foolish thing and, through the economic power we had of owning their debt, we accomplished very powerful foreign policy objectives.

Well, the reverse of that is about to be true for our country when we have \$300 billion to \$500 billion sitting in China today, when we have \$300 billion to \$500 billion sitting in the Middle East. What would happen if they decide to dump our debt? So by being less than fiscally proper, by not being frugal, what we have done is put our foreign policy at risk by having a larger and larger percentage of our debt held by foreign sovereign governments.

As you can see by this chart, what is happening is, in 2008, we are at about 20 percent of our GDP being held by the public. But another 20 percent is internal in terms of what we have stolen. As that rises, the risk to our children, the risk to our Nation, the risk to us for an effective foreign policy--because we are now leveraged by what someone might do with our debt--starts impacting us in a tremendous way.

The other trend that is not sustainable and even more worrisome is the makeup of our GDP as a percentage of the Government, the things we really have not fixed or have not addressed. If you look at our total revenues, which are estimated to be around 20 percent, if they stay historically at that level, how much we take from the Americans--which we are not going to if we are going to maintain the programs of Medicare, Medicaid, and Social Security--but if you leave them there and then you look at the growth of Government that is mandated just on demography alone, just on the fact that the baby boomers--my age--are growing old, what we see is that Social Security rises, Medicare rises, Medicaid rises, but net interest becomes over 50 percent of everything we pay out. Notice all the other functions of Government actually decline. The things that make a difference in your life every day actually get squeezed down.

So we are on an unsustainable course. There is no question we are on an unsustainable course, and we have before us today--the majority leader spoke about introducing a bill. I want to spend a little bit of time talking about the bill. We have not seen the bill. We are guessing what is in the bill--but a bill that is going to spend between \$25 billion and \$50 billion more, is going to create over 77 new programs, is going to grow these numbers even more.

That bill is coming about because myself and several other Senators have refused to allow those bills to go without debate on this floor and without the ability to amend them. Now, some of them are very good things we ought to be about. But we should not be about it until we are going to inculcate and act as Senators the same way every other family in this country has to act; that is, by making a decision based on priorities. If people get to take a vacation this year, they are taking that vacation because they have scrimped somewhere else to be able to afford the fuel, to be able to afford the cost. They

have made a decision within their family budget that what they are doing is a priority compared to the other priorities. Well, the American public is not surprised we refuse to make priorities here. We just go on and pass bills.

Now, you will hear the argument over the next 10 days to 2 weeks, as we debate this bill, that these are just authorizations, that it is not money that is actually spent until it is appropriated. But if you go to the Web site of all of the Senators who are supporting these bills, they have already sent out press releases bragging about what they have done. They intend to spend the money.

So one of three things comes about from that. One is they plan on authorizing it and spending the money; two is they are just gaming their constituency, they are planning on passing the bill but never spending the money, which is highly unlikely, or three is they just want on the bill so they can get a positive parochial benefit and do not really care whether the money gets spent.

Well, this is one Senator who really cares whether the money gets spent. And a lot of these bills we should spend money on. But some of the bills, to pay for them, we ought to get rid of the programs in those agencies that are either duplicative of what we are doing and eliminate the ones that are not working or we ought to pay for any new programs the same way a family does. They get rid of the things they do not think are important.

But to pass somewhere between \$25 billion and \$50 billion worth of new authorizations for spending and not eliminate waste, fraud, abuse, and duplication means we think we are above the American people. Do you know what. The American people already figured that out because the latest survey on whether they think Congress is doing a good or excellent job is only 9 percent of the people in this country. And they are right; we are not. We are totally ignoring the things that every other person in this country has to do in terms of making decisions on how they live.

The debate on this bill is going to be about priorities and choices.

Also, this bill is going to be coming at a time when the No. 1 issue facing Americans is being able to afford enough money to put gas in the car to go to work. I would put forward that we should not spend any time growing the Government in any way or authorizing any new expenditures until we have a comprehensive, totally inclusive energy policy that is going to work for this country for the next 30 years. The reason that is important is our national security is now at risk because we are energy dependent, we are energy insecure.

You heard the majority whip talk about lands that were bid on but are not drilled on. It is the Willie Sutton phenomenon. He robbed banks because that is where the money is. People drill where the oil is. If there is not a high chance of getting oil, they do not drill there.

Every available offshore rig in this country right now is either in repair or drilling. Every other working rig is either under contract or under repair or is out for contract. It would be surprising to most people where we get most of our oil drilling rigs today. Most people do not realize China produces most of them. We have lost our technologic advantage in terms of being competitive just on oil drilling rigs.

The other thing that is disappointing is, we cannot have a debate about priorities in the Senate because we hide behind the fact that this is just an authorization. But the point is, if we think it is important enough to authorize it and we think it is a priority, we ought to think it is important enough to spend the money on. In fact, everybody thinks that except when they get on the Senate floor to debate the fact that they do not want to do the hard work of getting rid of waste, of get getting rid of fraud, of getting rid of abuse, of getting rid of duplication.

For most of the bills that are going to be in here, my staff and I have offered legitimate spending offsets to them. But that is foreign. That is new. We have not always done it that way.

Well, I refer to this chart and this other chart as evidence that we better start doing things a little differently. We better start deauthorizing programs that do not work. We ought to start getting rid of programs that are wasteful. We ought to start fine-tuning the programs that do work but are highly inefficient. And we ought to get rid of programs that are designed to be defrauded and abused.

The Senate is an interesting place by historical standards. By historical standards, this is supposed to be the greatest deliberative body in the world. In the 110th Congress, 890 bills have passed--890. Fifty of them have had debate. Only 50 have had debate. And for most of those, the debate has been extremely limited and shortened through the power of the majority leader, by a technical process of filling the tree, 14 times, where no amendments were available except those of the majority leader, or by granting amendments that were only approved by him and limiting the total time of debate. Well, there is an interesting historical record that I will go through in a minute. But it lessens what our Founders intended for the Senate to be.

From 1912 to 1972, only five times in the U.S. Senate was cloture invoked. That means the decision was made by the U.S. Senate to limit debate.

Our Founders believed the whole purpose of the majority of the Senate was to be the reasoned body, to stand away from emotion, to stand away from the pressured responses of an election every 2 years, and have an open and vigorous debate on every issue.

Two things happened from that. One is Members of the Senate became much better informed. The second thing that happens when we have vigorous open debate is the American people learn something about what is going on. So if we have passed 890 bills this year and 840 of them passed by this procedure called unanimous consent, you didn't

hear any debate, there were no amendments offered, there was no vote taken on those bills. What a loss for the American people.

Now, granted, 72 of them were naming post offices, but what a loss, that we don't have and utilize the tools of the Senate to inform the American people about what we are working on.

There are two things that can come from that. One is, if we are doing a unanimous consent--a procedure where a bill passes and nobody raises an objection to it. It is a process where everybody says: I think this is a bill we ought to do. I think this is a bill we ought to not amend, and I don't think we should vote on it.

So there have been 840 times or 850 times in the 110th Congress when we have said we don't need to do that. So the American people have no idea what we have passed, what the import of it is, because there has been no debate. What the majority leader hopes to bring to the floor is a bill consisting of 40 bills that says: Wait a minute. There are some of us who think we ought to debate these. There are some of us who think we ought to amend these. And there are some of us who think we ought to vote; that we ought to be recorded on how we stand on an issue.

One of the things that has been put out in this debate by unelected staff members is that I have blocked the bills from coming to the Senate floor. Well, everyone in this body knows that isn't true. An individual Senator can't block a bill from coming to the Senate floor. The majority leader has the right to bring any bill to the floor any time he wants.

What the staff members are saying is we want to bring a bill, but we don't want to debate it. We don't want to vote on it. We don't want to have it amended. We don't want the American people to know what we would rather do in secret, what we would rather pass without the American people knowing the details about our business.

So is it any wonder that only 9 percent of the American public has any significant confidence in the Congress to put forward their interests? We are going to be doing this at a time when the No. 1 issue in this country is energy security and energy prices, but we are going to put a bill on the Senate floor that grows the Government, that creates 70 new programs, and spends somewhere between \$25 billion and \$50 billion.

I would tell my colleagues that most people sitting down to their dinner table think we have our priorities messed up, and they are right. We do.

The other thing that is concerning is our Founders made the House of Representatives very much different from the Senate. The Senate was designed to make sure the rights of the minority were always ever present in terms of debate and amendment. Earlier today the majority leader said we had filibustered--my particular party had filibustered--83 times. That is an inaccurate statement.

A filibuster is when someone says: I want to continue talking and I want to continue debating and I want to continue amending--to the point where you try not to pass a bill. The difference between what the majority leader claims and actual truth is, what the minority is asking for is we would just like to be able to amend bills and not have to go to the majority leader, who has now become the "Rules chairman" of the "House," and says only with our approval can we offer an amendment to a bill. It undermines the total tradition of the Senate, but more importantly than that, it undermines truth and transparency in this country because, if you stifle debate, what you do is lose the benefit of the 100 Senators who are here who come from diverse backgrounds with vast and different experiences to have that input into the debate.

So as we become the "House of Representatives," where we don't allow amendments, where we don't allow an open amendment process--and I am not talking about political "gotcha" amendments; I am talking about real amendments to change real bills based on the facts of that bill, and I am talking about pertinent amendments--we are doing great damage to the institution of the Senate.

I have also heard some of my colleagues complain that it is somehow undemocratic for one Senator to stand against 99 Senators. I would not be living up to my oath if I acceded on conscience to do what I thought was wrong for the very people of Oklahoma who sent me here, not to represent just their interests but to pay attention to what our oath says, which is to uphold and fulfill the Constitution of the United States. It is interesting that in that Constitution, there is a section called the Enumerated Powers Act. It is very straightforward. It is very clear in terms of what it spells out, the rules under which the Congress is to operate.

I have introduced, along with my colleague--several other colleagues in the Senate but also my colleague, *John Shadegg*, in the House--the Enumerated Powers Act. This act says we should fulfill article I, section 8. I wish to read that into the *Record* for a minute because I think as American families across this country and American workers and people struggle to meet either health care bills, food bills, or energy bills, the answer is that the Congress has gotten totally off course.

Here is what our Constitution says:

The Congress shall have Power To lay and collect Taxes, Duties, Imposts and Excises, to pay the Debts and provide for the common Defence and general Welfare of the United States; but all Duties, Imposts and Excises shall be uniform throughout the United States.

.....

The Congress shall have the power to:

[B]orrow Money on the credit of the United States;

To regulate Commerce with foreign Nations, and among the several States, and with the Indian Tribes;

To establish a uniform Rule of Naturalization, and uniform Laws on the subject of Bankruptcies throughout the United States;

To coin Money, regulate the Value thereof, and of foreign Coin, and fix the Standard of Weights and Measures;

To provide for the Punishment of counterfeiting the Securities and current Coin of the United States;

To establish Post Offices and post Roads;

To promote the Progress of Science and useful Arts, by securing for limited Times to Authors and Inventors the exclusive Right to their respective Writings and Discoveries;

To constitute Tribunals inferior to the supreme Court;

To define and punish Piracies and Felonies committed on the high Seas, and Offenses against the Law of Nations;

To declare War, grant Letters of Marque and Reprisal, and make Rules concerning Captures on Land and Water;

To raise and support Armies, but no Appropriation of Money to that Use shall be for a longer Term than two Years;

To provide and maintain a Navy;

To make Rules for the Government and Regulation of the land and naval Forces;

To provide for calling forth the Militia to execute the Laws of the Union, suppress Insurrections and repel Invasions;

To provide for organizing, arming, and disciplining, the Militia. ....

To exercise exclusive Legislation in all Cases whatsoever, over such District. ....

To make all Laws which shall be necessary and proper for carrying into Execution the foregoing Powers. ....

The 10th amendment to the Constitution says anything that is not listed right there is exclusively and absolutely the right of the States. That is how we got here. We have abandoned what the Constitution has taught us is our responsibility.

I will tell my colleagues, my guesstimate of the 40 bills that are going to be bound in this omnibus grow-the-government, spend-more-money bill, half of those bills will violate the enumerated powers of the Constitution. Then we wonder how is it that we are

bankrupting our children, how is it that we are undercutting their standard of living for the future, how is it that we have gotten to the point where we are at risk based on the loans that we have taken out to foreign sovereign governments?

What we have missed is what is not controversial to the American people, which is that we should be living within our means because they have to live within their means. This bill is about not living within our means. It is going to be about a lot of other things--a lot of which I support--but mostly the bill is going to be about not living within our means, about growing the Government, spending more money, reaching into areas that are rightly the States' requirements because we have the power to do it.

I wish to make one other point that I think in my lifetime--I am 60 years old, and I have seen a great shift in the legislative bodies in this country. That shift is this: When you take your oath to be a U.S. Senator or Congressman, you take the oath to support and defend and uphold the Constitution of these United States. Nowhere in that oath does it mention your State. What has happened as we have evolved such great power to the Federal Government, the Members of Congress have become parochial. They have decided that in their wisdom, we should be about sending stuff home. We should be about violating the enumerated powers. One is because it feels good to help people--there is no question about that--but No. 2 is it has to do with being liked and getting reelected. It has everything to do with getting reelected.

So what it has become, as opposed to what our Founders envisioned was a national legislature whose goal was long-term thinking to the benefit and the trust and the security for the Nation as a whole, it has devolved into a parochial legislature which spends half of its time trying to fix problems in individual States or communities that violate the enumerated powers listed in our own Constitution.

So we find ourselves with the following facts. If you are born today, if you are born today and end up in a nice swaddling in your mother's arms, here is what you face: Your parents are going to have to raise you, they are going to have to try to afford your college education, which is going to be impossible in 20 years. The reason it is going to be impossible is because we have, out of this red line, put \$400,000 of obligations on every child that is born in this country today and every day forward because we continue to grow the Government. We continue to violate the enumerated powers. We continue to refuse to make hard choices about priorities because someone might get upset.

The interesting thing is the American people get it. You can see that in their level of confidence in this body. Ninety-one percent of the American people say: We don't get it. You are not working on what we want you to work on. You are not fixing the problems we think you should be fixing.

It is because we are fixing what is best for the politicians, not what is best for the country.

Let me give you a few examples of what I suspect will be in this bill. You as an American can decide if you think it is a priority for us right now, knowing that we are going to have at least a \$600 billion deficit this year; we are going to borrow at least \$600 billion from the Chinese and the Middle East. That is \$2,000 for every man, woman, and child in this country.

Here is the first one. Ice age, floods, National Geographic Trail Designation Act. That has to be a priority for us right now, when Americans cannot afford gasoline to get to work. It only costs \$14.5 million over the next 5 years, but it has to be a priority for us, it has to be something that has to happen right now. Why does it have to happen? It is because somebody will look good back home, not because it is a priority for the Nation--and it is certainly not a priority for our children.

So do we need to do that now. Or do we intend to pass the bill, not fund it, and say we did something? Either one of them is dishonorable.

Next is the Star-Spangled Banner and War of 1812 Bicentennial Commission Act. That will create a commission to celebrate the bicentennial and creation of the National Anthem. I don't think there is a problem with doing that. I think we ought to recognize the 200th anniversary of that. The question is, Should we spend \$4 million doing it, when you can probably spend \$100,000 doing it? Only in Washington does it take \$4 million to have a party, to recognize a celebration. That is totally out of touch with the American taxpayers and the priorities they have to make.

How about the Captive Primate Safety Act? It will add nonhuman primates to the list of species that are prohibited from being brought into the country for commerce. That commerce has to do with the scientific integrity and discovery and the utilization of subhuman primates because they are the best way we know to test things before we test them on us. But we are going to limit that. We are only going to spend \$17 million doing that--only \$17 million.

There is \$1.5 billion for the National Capital Transportation Amendment Act. That is Metro. I think we ought to help Metro. But before we help Metro, we ought to demand some accountability and efficiency. They have gotten a billion dollars in Federal grants over the last 3, 4 years. Yet the problems that plague that institution haven't been fixed. They are not addressed in this bill. There is no accountability, no transparency. You cannot see where they are spending the money. There is nobody held accountable for the failure of the retrofit on the old rail cars that were retrofitted and now are not working.

The other question American taxpayers ought to ask is: Why should every other taxpayer in the country pay for the rail transportation of the best paid people in the country, the Federal workforce? Should the average family who makes \$33,000 in Oklahoma pay for the transportation to work of families who average \$75,000 and are commuting on Metro? Inherently, there is something not quite right with that. Yet that will be in this package--\$1.5 billion. We don't have the money, so not only are we going to have to subsidize it now, but we are going to charge it to our kids.

I would say this bill the majority leader is going to bring up isn't going to fit with the priorities of the American people. There are some good things in it. But contrast that with the fact that we have an energy crisis, that we have families who now, compared to a year ago, are spending at least \$2,000 more for energy. I would think the only thing we ought to be working on, the only thing the American people think we ought to be working on would be solving that problem in a comprehensive way. Instead, we are not; we are going to grow that and spend more. We are not going to do long-term solutions for our energy insecurity that puts our Nation at risk in terms of our national security.

Even a cursory look at the history of the Senate shows that the majority leader's decision to construct an omnibus bill to get around true debate and true amendment objections to the broken hotline process violates the tradition of full and open debate and amendment. Following the Revolutionary War, the Founders created a system that protected the people from tyranny. The checks and balances provision was extended to the legislative branch, between the House of Representatives and the Senate. The Framers created the House of Representatives to pass legislation quickly. But the Senate was designed for the opposite purpose. It is supposed to be hard to pass a law up here because it has such a major effect on every American. It needs the cooling in the "coffee cup saucer." It needs to be thought about, debated, discussed, and it needs to be open toward the American people to where they can see it.

James Madison said:

The use of the Senate is consistent in its proceedings with more coolness, more wisdom than the popular branch of government. Its hallmark would not be the majoritism of the House, but the emphasis on the rights of individual Senators to consider and impact legislation.

Impacting legislation is offering amendments. You cannot impact it unless you have the ability to amend it. By wrapping several dozen controversial bills into one omnibus, what the majority leader is attempting to do is override the best traditions of the Senate. But more important, it is to shortchange the American people about what we are doing.

Since we have already passed 850 bills that you have no knowledge of, because they didn't have debate and amendments and they didn't have votes, why is it we should let another 40 bills come through without full debate and full amendments?

There are two examples in history on how the Senate has operated as intended as a bulwark against hasty decisions and bad policy. First was the 1805 impeachment trial of Justice Samuel Chase, and the second was the 1869 impeachment trial of President Andrew Johnson. In order for the Senate to function as intended, it took courageous Senators to stand on principle in the face of adversity. In 1804, President Thomas Jefferson won reelection by a landslide, and his party then was known as the Republican Party--it is now the Democratic Party. They ended up with overwhelming majorities in the House and Senate. Only the judicial branch remained in control of the opposition party, the Federalist Party. The President, buoyed by strong public support, sought to

impeach Federalist judges on the basis of their political stances and a variety of court opinions, leading Jefferson's Republicans to target Justice Chase as one of the most outspoken judges--in other words, to intimidate the judicial branch.

With the distance of history, we can see clearly that Chase's conviction would have undermined the independence of the courts. It would have said we would not have a three-part government, each a careful balance to control the others. That would have gone out the window. In the House, Justice Chase was impeached 73 to 32. All of Jefferson's Republicans voted for it. In the Senate, votes from 23 of the 34 Senators were necessary for conviction, and 25 of those Senators were Jefferson's Republicans. Conviction seemed sure. Yet following a week-long trial in the Senate, 18 voted against conviction, while 16 voted for it. They were five votes short to remove Justice Chase.

Following the ordeal, Vice President Aaron Burr made the following observation:

The Senate is a sanctuary, a citadel of law, of order, and of liberty, and it is here in this exalted refuge--here if anywhere--will resistance be made to the storms of political frenzy and the silent arts of corruption.

I hope my colleagues will consider that last phrase, ``the silent arts of corruption." When the American people look at this body, that is precisely what many Americans see. If any process was in the category of the silent art of corruption, the secretive hotline process, where bills come through with unanimous consent, fits that definition well.

In 1869, in the trial of President Andrew Johnson, a similar matter unfolded. In the years following the Civil War, there was severe strife between the President and Congress over the best way to handle the rejoining of the South with the Union. The Congress, dominated by Members who were determined to humble the Confederacy, was pitted against the President, who was more interested in reconciliation than revenge. After 4 years of battling with President Johnson, the House overwhelmingly voted to impeach him. Every Republican had voted for impeachment. This was a different group of Republicans--the Lincoln Republicans. In the Senate, 36 votes were required for conviction and 41 Senators were Republicans. Once again, conviction seemed sure. However, a group of seven Republicans saw between the momentary chaos and understood the consequences of impeaching Johnson. After it was revealed that the group of seven Republicans planned on voting against removal, a surge of public outrage was thrown down on the Senators. One Senator from Iowa, James Grimes, received so many physical threats that he suffered a stroke 2 days prior to the vote. Nevertheless, all 7 Senators remained resolute and voted not guilty, making the final tally 35 to 19, 1 short for conviction of impeachment.

Both these examples, dealing with impeachment and not legislation specifically, call attention to how the Senate was designed to slow down bad policy. I believe what the majority leader is doing is bad policy, in terms of combining a multitude of bills--1,700 pages of bills that very few offices know the extent of--into one bill, and trumping all

minority rights, which are a sacred and central feature of the Senate that should not be violated.

Our Founders constantly warned about the tyranny of the majority. Madison called the Senate a necessary fence against the majority party, and the primary tool given to the minority was the informal principle of unlimited debate. Between 1917 and 1962, cloture--a motion to stop debate--only happened five times in this body--only five times. Eighty-three times now the majority leader has filed cloture. Why has he done that? He doesn't want the debate. He does not want the debate. Opposite the best traditions of the Senate, the majority leader has filed cloture 83 times.

One last point and I will finish. A hold on a bill is not blocking a bill from coming to the Senate floor. The rights are very clear of the majority leader. The majority leader can bring any bill to the floor anytime he wants. No Senator can stop it. So if you are holding a bill because you are saying I don't agree with a unanimous consent, which means I don't agree that we should not debate, I don't agree that we should not amend, and I don't agree that the public should not have a recorded vote on this bill, that does nothing to stop the bill from coming to the floor. What stops the bill from coming to the floor is the priorities of the majority, not the priorities of any other Senator.

Debate, full, open, honest debate is great for this country. The hotline process with unanimous consent, passing bills in secret the American people don't know about, are not informed about, are not debated in the Senate, are not voted on in the Senate, goes against the tradition of the Senate. But it also robs us of freedom because the knowledge of what we do is as important as what we do. Without that knowledge by the American people, we are not the cooling saucer of thought, debate, calmness, and reason.

The hold, which I have exercised, is the last check against the abusive hotline process. It may be that 70 or 80 Senators want to pass a bill, and that is great. Let's put it on the floor. Let's debate the bill. Let's have options to amend the bill and make people vote on commonsense items such as priorities, getting rid of waste, doing what every American has to do every day, and let's have that debate in front of the American people.

There are 76 programs that are being held currently by a number of Senators. It comes to \$70 billion of new spending. I have yet to have somebody from Oklahoma or any other State in the country tell me that with a \$700 billion deficit this year, with \$10 trillion in debt, with \$1.4 billion in new debt a day and spending \$1 million a minute in debt, that we ought to put \$70 billion more on the backs of the American families. It may be that we need to put 70, but we need to take another 70 off.

So the debate about the bill the majority leader will introduce is going to be a good debate. It will not stop the process. The rules are very clear. We will have a debate. The question will be: Will we have a debate that is open to true amendments, that is a full debate, and that will take the time to make sure every one of these 40 bills is thoroughly vetted with the American public?

The final issues I wish to talk about are some of the bills that are in here.

We reformed the National Institutes of Health last year. We said: Let's get politics out of it. Let's let peer-reviewed science tell us how we spend the money to the greatest benefit to help the greatest number of people. As soon as we passed that bill, we had five or six or seven new bills coming to tell them exactly where to spend the money because we could look good with constituencies, and yet we violated the very bill we passed that said we ought to let science guide us to make good decisions, make the priorities that are out there that help the most number of people with the greatest benefit in terms of science.

There are going to be several bills in the one bill for that. I will gladly and readily defend my opposition to those bills. One is because they do not accomplish what they say they do. And No. 2 is they hurt other people by taking away limited resources, by placing them in a category that somebody else says is more important than what the science would say we can do best.

There is the Emmett Till unsolved civil rights bill. I agree we ought to pass that bill, but I don't think we ought to add that money to our grandkids. I think we ought to get rid of the waste, fraud, abuse, and excesses at the Department of Justice and pay for it. It is a legitimate Federal role. It fits with the enumerated powers. Those were Federal laws violated in the fifties and sixties. But to pass that bill and not get rid of wasteful programs and not get rid of waste says we are only doing half the job. It is easier doing it that way. You don't make anybody mad or upset with you. But you don't do the best thing for our children and our grandchildren, and you certainly don't do the best thing for our country.

It is interesting. I have sent two letters to the prime author of that bill. He has not had the courtesy to answer me once. He held a press conference that impugned I was a racist because I would not let that bill go through.

The fact is, the statements are: You can't work and negotiate bills. We have offered amendments to pay for the bill, with which Mr. Sykes, the main supporter of this bill, agrees. What has happened is it is take it or leave it, no debate, no amendment, no working in the Senate to the best tradition of the body.

So we have this statement made by Senator *Harry Reid* that you can't work with *Coburn*. I tell you, PEPFAR was a great bill. This Senate passed it. We were critical in terms of negotiating that bill. The Second Chance Act, which makes sure that we work against recidivism on prisoners throughout this country, we worked hard and changed that bill. On the Genetic Nondiscrimination Act, we negotiated well and got a great bill for every American so the insurance company can no longer discriminate against you if you have a genetic tendency and they cannot raise your premium. We have done a ton of things, but it is on the small bills which require people to work that we have not been able to accomplish that.

I look forward to the next 2 weeks. I look forward to the weekend. Congress is about to go on vacation. Most Americans today with gas prices cannot go on vacation. And we are going to get a debate this weekend on these 40 bills. We probably won't have done anything significant yet about energy. So we are going to be debating spending \$25 billion, \$50 billion, maybe even \$70 billion more, creating 50, 60, 70 new programs, and you are still going to be paying \$4.10 for your gasoline with no hope 10 years from now that things are going to be any different because we have our priorities wrong. We would rather look good to special interests and pass bills in the dark of night than debate them on the floor and put the priorities that should be in front of this country out there--energy, health care, Social Security reform, \$300 billion worth of waste in the Federal Government every year. Nobody is doing a thing about it. Half the agencies will not even comply with the improper payments law. We have \$3 billion a year spent at the Pentagon maintaining properties they don't want, but the Congress won't pass a true real property reform because it is held up by a homeless act, most of which none of the buildings are capable of being utilized by homeless individuals.

What I say to my colleagues is let's have a debate. Let's see the rumble in America that thinks whether we are doing the right things, the right priorities. Do they want us to go down this road where we strangle the lifeblood economically from our children, we take away their ability to own a home, we take away their ability to get a college education, or should we be about real priorities? And if we are going to spend new money, shouldn't we be about getting rid of some of the \$300 billion that is wasted every year right now?

I don't have to take a poll about that one. That is a 90-plus-percent factor with the American people. It is only in the Senate that we don't get it, that we would rather spend time growing the Government and spending more money than fixing the real problems of this Nation.

I look forward to the debate. I am excited about this weekend. My hope is we will have an open amendment process, one that does justice to the greatest traditions of the Senate but, more importantly, one that does justice to the American family and their children to come.

I yield the floor. I suggest the absence of a quorum.