than sending it back to the government.

As far as fiscal responsibility goes, his budget does some good things. It continues Democrats' efforts to reduce the deficit and restore fiscal responsibility to the government.

This budget comes with a lot of zeros. Its numbers are in the millions, billions, and trillions. It is easy to mischaracterize those numbers and what they mean, but let's keep some perspective. When you look at this budget as a share of our entire economy, it will cut the deficit by more than half in 2 years. It is not the last thing we will do to slash the deficit, but it is a good, promising start.

The President also has endorsed the pay-as-you-go rules the Senate approved last week, as well as a commission dedicated to reducing the deficit, which I support. Unfortunately, many of our Republican colleagues do not. They voted in unison against pay-as-you-go—the simple concept that we should only spend what we as a government have. Some Republican Senators who sponsored the legislation creating the deficit-reduction commission turned right around and voted against their own bill when it came before the Senate. Had they voted with us—if they had voted the way the bill was sponsored—it would have passed. We had 53 votes. One Senator was gone because of a funeral. There are 54 Democrats, and with 7 Republicans, that would have brought us to 61.

It is a real shame. People worked on this so hard, and one of those who did so is the Presiding Officer. The Presiding Officer is an expert at balancing budgets, having been Governor of the Commonwealth of Virginia, and the Presiding Officer used that knowledge to work with Senator CONRAD and others to bring about the pay-go rules and to bring about this deficit-reduction commission. Then to have people who sponsored the legislation vote against it is hard to comprehend. This budget knows our economy and our future cannot afford partisan games such as that.

As far as Nevada is concerned, the recession has hit Nevada harder than most every other State. Nevadans will benefit more than nearly any other State's citizens when we see the implementation of the job-creating and money-saving ideas in this budget.

Nevada will also benefit in another very specific way. The President has declared dead the dreadful plan called Yucca Mountain—to turn a piece of the magnificent Nevada desert just outside of Las Vegas into a national dumping ground for dangerous nuclear waste. This budget ends funding for that reckless project and pulls its license application.

That means families in Nevada and throughout America no longer have to worry about trucks and trains loaded with tons of the most toxic nuclear waste known to man passing by their children's schools, their neighborhoods, parks, and their own backyards. It means we will all be safer.

The President's plan will walk us further down the path toward economic recovery, but we still have a long way to go. Let's keep in mind this budget is merely a blueprint, not a silver bullet. It will guide Congress, not restrict us.

No matter what the items and numbers are in this document, neither Democrats nor Republicans should ever forget that every single dollar in this budget belongs to the American people. We know we cannot make our economy work again for the middle class unless we invest taxpayers' money as responsibly and efficiently and as transparently as possible. Senate Democrats are committed to doing just that.

RESERVATION OF LEADER TIME

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Under the previous order, leadership time is reserved.

MORNING BUSINESS

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Under the previous order, there will be a period of morning business until 3 p.m., with Senators permitted to speak for up to 10 minutes each.

Mr. REID. Mr. President, 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. LIEBERMAN. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

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

Mr. LIEBERMAN. Mr. President, I cannot help but note that the occupant of the chair presides not only over the Senate but other organizations to which I am privileged to belong.

I ask to proceed as in morning business.

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

NOMINATION OF MARTHA N. JOHNSON

Mr. LIEBERMAN. Mr. President, later this afternoon, the Senate will vote on a cloture motion on the nomination of Patricia Smith to be Solicitor of the Department of Labor. Last Friday, I believe, Senator REID also filed a cloture motion on another nomination, and it is that nomination I would like to talk about because it comes out of the Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs Committee, which I am privileged to chair. That is the nomination of Martha Johnson to be Administrator of the General Services Administration.

It has become unfortunate practice, I believe, that Members have been holding up Executive nominations, in some cases, and I am confident it is the case with regard to Martha Johnson, for reasons unrelated to her qualifications. She is extremely well qualified and very much needed at the General Services Administration, as I will note in a moment.

As I understand the process we will follow this week—presuming, as I hope will be the case, that cloture is granted later this afternoon, when we vote on the nominee for Solicitor of the Department of Labor, whenever the vote on that nomination occurs—hopefully, sooner than later this week—immediately thereafter, we will go to a vote on cloture on this nomination of Martha Johnson. In anticipation of that, I wished to speak to my colleagues about what is coming.

She is an extraordinary nominee, in my opinion, for a job that is critically important to the efficient operation of the Federal Government, about which a lot of us have been speaking with intensity in recent times. She is a former Chief of Staff at the General Services Administration, so she comes with some background that will give her the opportunity to hit the ground running, and that is important in an agency that has not had a permanent leader since April of 2008. Here we are in February of 2010. GSA has not had a permanent leader since April 2008, when the former Director was asked to resign by the previous administration. Since then, the agency has had five Acting Administrators. It is obviously time for stable leadership.

The Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs Committee unanimously endorsed her nomination last June, more than a half year ago. Since that time, GSA has undergone several changes in top management, including the departure of the Chief of Staff and the retirement of the Deputy Administrator. So it has been very frustrating for the members of our committee to see such a qualified nominee being held up in the Senate for more than a half year because of a hold that had nothing to do with the nominee's qualifications.

I wish to speak for a moment to my colleagues about the full scope of GSA's responsibilities. It is a critically important agency of our Government that mostly works out of the spotlight. GSA is often called the Federal Government's landlord because it provides workspace and office services for almost every Federal office and agency across our country, from court houses to ports of entry. With 8,600 buildings and $500 billion in assets under its control, GSA must be either the largest property management organization in the world or certainly one of the top and largest property management organizations in the world. But GSA actually is far more than just the Federal Government's landlord. It has 12,000 employees spread across the country in 11 districts. They help guide Federal spending on everything from basic office equipment to the Federal fleet of

more than 200,000 vehicles owned and leased by the U.S. Government. GSA's purchasing divisions have broad effect on the rest of the economy since, as an early acquirer of new technologies, including green technologies, the agency has helped and will continue to help spur production that brings down costs and makes these technologies available and affordable to the broader consumer market. GSA is that important, that it can help build a market for an innovative transformational technology.

In fact, the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act, commonly known as the Stimulus Act, which we adopted last year, gave GSA specific responsibility to help green the Federal Government by providing $5 billion to make Federal buildings more energy efficient and $300 million to buy more fuel-efficient vehicles for the Federal fleet.

GSA also has wide responsibilities for providing information technology and telecommunications services for Federal agencies. With its leadership, GSA can ensure that the Federal Government is using cutting-edge technology to lower costs, better engage with citizens and detect and defend against cyber threats. In other words, GSA spends so much money every year acquiring information technology systems that if it requires the providers to put together systems that are resistant and defensive to the kinds of cyber attacks that, unfortunately, public and private information networks are under today, it can drive that technology development, which then will be more broadly available to the private sector as it acquires information technology equipment.

A lot of big and important responsibilities are there, meaning the agency is in need of strong leadership. If confirmed, Ms. Johnson will face many challenges, and I wish to take a moment to lay out for my colleagues a few which have come to the attention of our committee, which has oversight of GSA. In the area of procurement, contracts negotiated by GSA must leverage the vast buying power of the Federal Government so agencies get more value for the taxpayers' dollar. Last year, Federal agencies bought approximately $53 billion of goods and services right off GSA schedules and other GSA contracts, which offer everything from office supplies to human resource services, to security equipment, to energy management services and through other contracts negotiated by GSA. Having GSA negotiate these procurement agreements lets these customer agencies stay focused on their core missions. In other words, the agencies do not have to get into all the back-and-forth details on negotiating these contracts. The experts at GSA do it for them. The agencies can focus on what they are supposed to be doing.

Some agencies, if I may speak directly, have lost confidence of the ability of GSA to provide the best products at the best prices and have begun to negotiate their own contracts or interagency contracts. This duplicates services offered by GSA. It is effectively a waste of Federal money and effectively also defeats the purpose of GSA, which was created by President Harry S. Truman, in 1949, with the specific intent of streamlining the Federal Government's purchasing process so every agency of the Federal Government did not have its own separate purchasing division that may have done well or not so well but certainly not as efficiently as one for the whole Federal Government.

The second problem, similar to this one, exists in GSA's property management activities, with agencies sometimes questioning whether GSA has now met their needs in the most cost-effective manner.

Another problem a new administrator must address is the amount of excess or underutilized property owned by the Federal Government. The Office of Management and Budget has reported—these are stunning numbers—that the Federal Government owns 21,000 buildings, worth about $18 billion, that are underused or no longer needed, but they are sitting there. In effect, the GAO, the Government Accountability Office, has put the management of Federal property on their high-risk list for this reason. Not all those properties are under GSA's control, but one of its jobs is to help other agencies dispose of excess property. That is another reason why we need a full-time administrator there.

Think about it, $18 billion. The freeze the President has announced—which I support—doesn't come to much more than that, when you think about the potential for selling some of this property and bringing more revenue to the government.

Let me come back to Martha Johnson. This is a job with big challenges, as I have described, in part. She brings a tremendous wealth of experience in the private, nonprofit, and government sectors. She has a B.A. in economics and history from Oberlin College and a masters in business from Yale Business School. After graduating from Yale, Ms. Johnson began her career in the private sector at Cummins Engines Company. She had a series of other management positions in the private sector and then was called on by the Clinton administration to be the Associate Deputy Secretary of Commerce and then, as I mentioned earlier, Chief of Staff of GSA from 1996 to 2001—very relevant and indispensable experience.

After leaving government, Ms. Johnson was a vice president for the Council for Excellence in Government, which is a nonpartisan, nonprofit organization dedicated to increasing the effectiveness of government at all levels, and most recently she has served as vice president at Computer Sciences Corporation. She is extremely well qualified, has broad qualifications, including extensive experience at GSA.

All these varied experiences make Martha Johnson a perfect fit for the responsibilities and challenges she will face as GSA Administrator. The fact is, she, Martha Johnson, has had broad bipartisan support. I urge my colleagues to vote yes on cloture. I even preserve the hope that there may be a decision to vitiate the cloture vote, that we go right to a final vote, and we confirm this excellent nominee so she can go to work for the American people.

I yield the floor and 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. KYL. Mr. 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.

THE BUDGET

Mr. KYL. Mr. President, during the past few weeks, President Obama has repeatedly professed a commitment to clamp down on out-of-control spending and on deficits. That new development, of course, appeals to many Americans who have become increasingly frustrated with the trillions of dollars in new debt that has been racked up by this administration.

The President's newly released budget tells a different story, and it is not one of fiscal responsibility. Just look at the front-page headlines from many of today's morning newspapers and you will see a helpful review of what they think of the budget.

The Wall Street Journal: ''U.S. Deficit to Hit All-Time High.''

The Washington Post: ''White House Expects the Deficit to Approach a Record $1.6 Trillion This Year.''

The Washington Times: ''White House Says the Government Will Run Huge Deficits for the Foreseeable Future.''

The publication Politico: ''Five Years, $5.08 Trillion in Debt.''

In other words, this $3.8-trillion budget is another sea of red ink, more of the same record spending and debt that have come to characterize this administration.

Let me go over some important numbers. Under the President's budget, the deficit, which is the gap between total revenues and total spending in a given year, will reach a whopping $1.56 trillion for the fiscal year 2010. For fiscal year 2011, the deficit is projected to be $1.3 trillion. That will mark the third year in a row of trillion-dollar-plus deficits, beginning in 2009. These 3 years of deficits are more than the total accumulated debt from George Washington to George W. Bush. The President's budget also virtually doubles the debt held by the public over 5 years and virtually triples it over 10. It exceeds 60 percent of the GDP as a share of the economy this year. That surpasses last year's 50-year high.

Interest payments will more than quadruple by the end of the decade,