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Senate

The Senate met at 10:30 a.m. and was called to order by the Honorable HEIDI HEITKAMP, a Senator from the State of North Dakota.

PRAYER

The Chaplain, Dr. Barry C. Black, offered the following prayer:

Let us pray.

O God, in whose presence our souls take delight, to whom in affliction we call, forgive us for continuing to sow to the wind even when hearing the sounds of the approaching whirlwind.

Lord, when our Federal shutdown delays payments of death benefits to the families of children dying on far-away battlefields, it is time for our lawmakers to say "enough is enough." Cover our shame with the robe of Your righteousness. Forgive us, reform us, and make us whole.

We pray in Your merciful Name. Amen.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The Presiding Officer led the Pledge of Allegiance, as follows:

I pledge allegiance to the Flag of the United States of America, and to the Republic for which it stands, one nation under God, indivisible, with liberty and justice for all.

APPOINTMENT OF ACTING PRESIDENT PRO TEMPORE

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will please read a communication to the Senate from the President pro tempore (Mr. LEAHY).

The legislative clerk read the following letter:

U.S. SENATE,
PRESIDENT PRO TEMPORE,
Washington, DC, October 9, 2013.

To the Senate:

Under the provisions of rule I, paragraph 3, of the Standing Rules of the Senate, I hereby appoint the Honorable HEIDI HEITKAMP, a Senator from the State of North Dakota, to perform the duties of the Chair.

PATRICK J. LEAHY,
President pro tempore.

Ms. HEITKAMP thereupon assumed the Chair as Acting President pro tempore.

RECOGNITION OF THE MAJORITY LEADER

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The majority leader is recognized.

SCHEDULE

Mr. REID. Following leader remarks the Senate will be in a period of morning business for debate only until 2 p.m., with Senators permitted to speak therein for up to 10 minutes each.

MEASURES READ THE SECOND TIME

Mr. REID. There are two measures at the desk due for a second reading.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The clerk will read the bills by title for the second time.

The legislative clerk read as follows:

A bill (S. 1569) to ensure the complete and timely payment of the obligations of the United States Government until December 31, 2014.

A joint resolution (H.J. Res. 77) making continuing appropriations for the Food and Drug Administration for fiscal year 2014, and for other purposes.

Mr. REID. Madam President, I would object to any further proceedings with respect to these measures en bloc.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Objection is heard.

The bills will be placed on the calendar under rule XIV.

DEBT DEFAULT

Mr. REID. Madam President, it is very hard to find, on occasion, common ground in Washington. Of late, it has been hard all the time.

There is one thing on which Republicans and Democrats should be able to

agree: there is no more important issue before Congress than to prevent a catastrophic default on our debt. Default would put our economy in grave danger, and that is a gross understatement. I have said it, so many of my Republican colleagues have said it, and the business community is shouting it from the rooftops.

Goldman Sachs CEO Lloyd Blankfein said this about averting default—he is not known as a great liberal or outstanding Democrat, but he is known as a great businessman. He said:

While the current government shutdown is unfortunate, the impacts of a debt default would be magnitudes worse and should not even be considered a viable option. The economic damage associated with default or near default would be severe and have serious consequences for the recovery of the U.S. and global economy.

That was amplified the last couple of days by Christine Lagarde, head of IMF, who says this is just awful for the world economy.

The world economy affects us. We affect it. No country in the world affects the world economy more than we do. We are going to affect it in a very negative fashion, which will have tremendous negative consequences for us.

There are some Republicans in Congress threatening default, even elated that we are going to have one, saying it doesn't really matter.

Warren Buffett said that using the threat of default to extract political payment "ought to be banned as a weapon. . . . It should be like nuclear bombs, basically too horrible to use." Warren Buffett said this, and his father was a Republican Member of Congress.

Business leaders are begging us to do the right thing and to do it now, quickly. In addition to America's reputation in the world, the bedrock of the global economy is at stake, as I have already stated.

Yesterday a bill was introduced that would remove the specter of default and allow the United States to pay its bills with no preconditions or strings

• This "bullet" symbol identifies statements or insertions which are not spoken by a Member of the Senate on the floor.



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attached. Republicans and Democrats may have our differences, but neither side should hold the full faith and credit of the United States hostage while we resolve them.

Let's reopen the government. Speaker BOEHNER could end this government shutdown today, an hour from now, by letting the House—the entire House—vote on the Senate's clean bill and reopen the government. When the Speaker is on national TV and other places saying: We don't have the votes, he will never know that because he won't let the measure come to the floor. Of course it has enough votes.

Let's reopen the government and pay our bills. There is no reason for Republicans to drag out this process and force the Nation's economy ever closer to an economically catastrophic default. Then let's negotiate. Two hundred days ago to the day, Senate Democrats passed a budget, led by Senator MURRAY, that reflects our priorities. Since then we have asked 20 times to negotiate a compromise within our budget and the one passed by Republicans in the House. We are not afraid to negotiate, but we need someone to negotiate with. We need a dancing partner. If Republicans end this irresponsible, as it appears now, government shutdown, remove the threat of a cataclysmic default, and stop objecting to a budget conference, we could start negotiating now.

Republicans have already been so harsh on rhetoric. Republicans have already done enough harm to our economy with a reckless shutdown designed to undermine the law of the land, ObamaCare. But the consequences of a first-in-history default on the debt would be far worse—even worse than the 2008 financial crisis from which we are still recovering. Two years ago, the last time the Republicans flirted with this terrible idea, America's credit rating was downgraded for the first time in the history of our great country. The stock market dropped 2,000 points. It has already dropped 7 or 8 percent over the last few weeks.

Raising the debt limit doesn't cost taxpayers a single dime, and Republicans shouldn't claim it does because it doesn't. That is certainly not what they claimed when George W. Bush raised the debt ceiling seven times. Congress has raised the debt limit more than 90 times since it was created in 1939, the majority of those times with Republican Presidents. Ronald Reagan asked Congress to raise the limit 18 times—twice as many as any other President. He, being the great orator he was, said that to do what is being done now, to use an example of why someone should never do that, he called it “outrageous.”

Raising the debt ceiling simply allows payment of bills we have already incurred—bills for wars and tax breaks paid for with borrowed money—and basically the simple operation of our government.

I heard one Republican Senator today—I read about it—he said: Well,

we have enough money coming in to pay the interest.

Social Security payments would not go forward, and that is only the beginning.

To even consider defaulting on these obligations or to use the threat of default to extract concessions is terribly irresponsible in a negative fashion.

Republican Governor Jon Huntsman, Governor of Utah, an extremely liberal State, said this about the current Republican brinkmanship over default:

It's pretty sad, pretty pathetic for the greatest economy on Earth to be experiencing this . . . Russian roulette with our . . . economy.

He continued:

We have to see it as an economic issue. . . . If you think the government shutdown is a big deal, that's a hand grenade compared to a thermonuclear weapon that would be hitting the debt ceiling.

Yesterday the minority leader suggested that the only way to disarm this weapon is for me to engage in one-on-one talks with the Speaker of the House. I am happy to talk to JOHN BOEHNER anytime. We have talked. But it is obvious to me that no amount of talking will make Speaker BOEHNER either willing or able to end this shutdown and prevent a catastrophic default.

In fact, as my friend the senior Senator from Arizona said yesterday, it is time for the Senate to deal and to lead. He is right. We have an issue coming before us momentarily—the debt ceiling. We have to be the Senate, lead, get that passed, and send it over to the House of Representatives. We have already passed a bill to reopen the government. We have already done that. We are going to go a step further. Senate Democrats have introduced legislation to avert a default on this Nation's obligations.

I say to my Republican colleagues in the Senate, the time for misleading rhetoric is through, and the time for responsible leadership is here. We are happy to work with our Republican colleagues, open the government, pay our bills, and negotiate anything—anything they wish to talk about.

RESERVATION OF LEADER TIME

Mr. REID. Would the Chair announce the business of the day.

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

MORNING BUSINESS

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Under the previous order, the Senate will be in a period of morning business for debate only until 2 p.m., with Senators permitted to speak therein for up to 10 minutes each.

The assistant majority leader.

CONTINUING APPROPRIATIONS

Mr. DURBIN. Each morning, the Senate opens with the customary prayer

by our Chaplain and the Pledge of Allegiance. This is an opportunity for Members of the Senate to reflect on two important things: first, our mission on Earth not only as elected officials but as human beings and, second, our devotion and loyalty to this great country.

I have listened to most of the prayers that have been offered over the past 9 days of the government shutdown by Dr. Barry Black. He is a retired admiral from the U.S. Navy and came again before us this morning to offer a prayer. This prayer had a very important message. It was short and direct. He talked about this government shutdown. He reflected on the fact that we literally have families who in the last few days had that awful knock on the door where they were told their son or daughter had died in service to his country in the U.S. military. There were 5 over the weekend and I understand 17 over the course of this government shutdown.

Sadly, the support we always give to these families is not there. It is not there. Customarily, within 24 to 36 hours they are given a sum of money in advance on the benefits that soldier earned so they can take care of funeral expenses and the obvious needs of their family. We can't do that because the government is shut down. That awful knock on the door was not followed by the consolation of this government helping these families. We offered to many of these families an opportunity to come and to be there to welcome, at Dover Air Force Base in Delaware, the return of their fallen hero. We can't offer them that benefit because the government is shut down.

Dr. Black said to all of us this morning, all of those who believe a government shutdown is just another political gambit—what he said, we should remember, and his words were direct and simple: Enough is enough. Enough is enough.

It isn't only a matter of these families losing that loving son, daughter, husband, wife, brother, or sister; it is a matter that our government that asked them to risk their lives for this great Nation will not stand by them in this moment of grief.

Yesterday, the junior Senator from Texas came in and said: Oh, I think we have already voted to take care of that. It is not true. What is happening now is the House of Representatives—the House of Representatives, which refuses to reopen the government—is scurrying to pass a little bill that will take care of these families. Let's get that bill in, they said. We don't want to face the embarrassment of another headline like this.

That isn't enough. It isn't nearly enough because the embarrassment of this government shutdown goes beyond this grievous situation with these bereaving families. It goes to so many different levels.

Think about this for a moment: In the United States of America, when it

comes to infant formula for babies, 60 percent of the infant formula is sold through one government program called WIC—Women, Infants, and Children Program. It is a program that brings in pregnant mothers and moms with new babies and does its level best to make sure those babies are healthy and off to a good start in life.

In my State of Illinois, in the largest county, Cook County, 50,000 mothers depend on WIC—the WIC Program that provides the basics for healthy moms and healthy babies. The WIC Program runs out of money this month. When it does, the support for these families, for these moms, and for these babies is in danger.

Why are we doing this? Is this part of the Republican strategy—sick babies, mothers unprepared to deliver? Is that part of their strategy? Is that their leverage for what they want to achieve? If it is, I have three words for them: Enough is enough.

I just left my office where I had a group of people from my State visiting for whom I have a special affection. They are with what is known as the Primary Health Care Association, and I will bet the Chair has a similar association of some type in her State of North Dakota. These are the folks who open the clinics in the neighborhoods and small towns so that people who aren't wealthy have access to a doctor and a nurse. I love them, I just love them to pieces because they have invested their whole lives in helping folks who are often ignored. They told me that despite the sadness they feel, and even the anger over this government shutdown, there is a feeling of elation now that the insurance exchanges are open under the Affordable Care Act. They say people are coming in and saying: You won't believe it, but I qualify for health insurance for the first time in my life. These are the clients, these are the people they help every day, and now these people have the peace of mind of health insurance.

That drives some on the other side crazy—to think ObamaCare will go forward and provide this kind of help. In my State, over 250,000 people have already visited the Web sites. They are signing up now for health insurance, many of them for the first time. Ours isn't the most successful State. It appears that per capita the State of Kentucky is one of the most successful, with some 10,000 people already signing up for health insurance—health insurance they otherwise can't afford or don't have.

This is part of the debate in Washington. The Republicans, many of them, are arguing we have to shut down the government, we have to shut down ObamaCare, we have to stop these people from signing up for health insurance. It is not going to work. They cannot reverse history. This is a law that has been on the books almost 4 years, enacted by Congress, signed by the President, judged constitutional by the U.S. Supreme Court—a law on

which we have had a referendum in a Presidential election. When President Obama stood up and said: I am going to fight for affordable health care and health care reform, and the Republican candidate said: I will abolish it, President Obama won that reelection by 5 million votes. That is the verdict of history. That is the judgment of the American people. That is how we guide a democracy.

There are some very wealthy, very extreme who will never accept the results of an election. They think with enough money they can overcome the voice of democracy. They are wrong, and that is why what we are setting about to do here is to reopen this government, pay our debts, and then work out whatever remains in terms of issues.

I ask my staff each morning to give me a list of what is happening because of this government shutdown. I can't keep up with it—I mean, page after page, issue after issue. Here is one. There is a major salmonella outbreak affecting hundreds of people in many States right now. The U.S. Department of Agriculture's Food Safety and Inspection Service has announced an estimated 278 people across 18 States, mostly in California, have been reported ill. They are working with the Centers for Disease Control, along with State and local officials, to track that. But that said, we have to understand that with a government shutdown these agencies are not fully staffed.

Families and children across America are vulnerable because of this Republican shutdown strategy. For some, it will mean an illness they will get over in a few days. For others, it could be more serious. The words of the chaplain ring in my ears: Enough is enough.

We keep hearing about this piecemeal approach of the House of Representatives, where when they see these ghastly headlines of bereaving families who are denied the basic benefits that we offer families of those who have fallen in service to America—when they face that embarrassment—they quickly manufacture a little spending bill to cover it, saying: Oh, we will take care of that one. Chuck E. Cheese's calls it whack-a-mole. And that is what they are doing. Each time a story pops up, they try to knock it back down.

The Center for American Progress has done a review of the 14 bills passed by the House. They find approximately \$83 billion in funding—just about \$6 billion a bill. The total amount of non-defense funding in the original House-passed continuing resolution was \$469 billion. Therefore, the House bills that already have passed and are currently under consideration make up less than 18 percent of the total. So for all the efforts of the House of Representatives, sending over these bills to react to embarrassments from their government shutdown, they can't keep up with it.

The simple honest answer is to open the government. We have passed the

bill and sent it to Speaker BOEHNER. He is living in political fear of calling that bill because he knows it will pass. The Democrats overwhelmingly will support it, and enough moderate Republicans will step up to reopen this government, and Speaker BOEHNER cannot accept that reality. He is afraid to call a vote.

How many more embarrassing moments will we have, reporting on situations such as these poor families who have given their all, who have lost their loved ones, and now they are asked to suffer because of the Republican shutdown? It has to come to an end.

Yesterday on the floor I appealed to moderate Republicans in the Senate to step up—step up and join us. We are going to have a bill before us in a short time—I hope sooner rather than later—that is going to avoid a default on America's debt. If we default on October 17, it will be the first time in the history of the United States that will have occurred. It will have a devastating impact on businesses, on jobs, and on the savings of Americans.

If you have a savings account, if you have a retirement account, have you been watching it over the last several days? Have you seen what the Republican shutdown has done for your plans, for your future and your family? This is unacceptable, and it will get dramatically worse unless we pass, in a bipartisan fashion, this extension of the debt limit for the United States of America. This will be a chance for moderate Republicans in the Senate to speak up and stand up.

Before I close, I want to say a special word about my colleague, my Republican Senate colleague MARK KIRK, who announced this week he would vote for a clean debt ceiling. I have said it back home, and I will say it here on the floor. It is the right thing to do for my colleague. It is the right thing to do for America. But I want to express my appreciation for his leadership. I hope his example of stepping up and saying he is going to put the country first before his party is one that will be followed by other Members on his side of the aisle.

Madam President, I yield the floor.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The Senator from Wyoming.

HEALTH CARE EXCHANGES

Mr. BARRASSO. Madam President, I appreciate the comments of my colleague from Illinois, and I have heard him make reference to the insurance exchanges that opened last week. It was 1 week ago President Obama's health insurance exchanges opened, and by all accounts it was a complete disaster.

The administration had 3½ years to prepare for the big launch. It spent months and millions of dollars advertising the start date. Yet on October 1, the American people had their first chance to sign up, and the exchanges flopped. It was a complete fiasco.

The administration tried to say it was caught off guard. They said they were caught off guard by too many people going to the Web site on the first day. Even Saturday Night Live ridiculed the excuse. They said: That is like 1-800-Flowers getting caught off guard on Valentine's Day.

There were glitches the first day, but they lasted the whole week—the entire first week. The question is, Did the administration finally get its act together? Well, actually, no, it didn't. The past weekend they had to pull down the Web site to try to fix some of the worst problems. USA TODAY, a newspaper whose editorials have actually in the past supported the health care law, had as yesterday's headline: "Health sites generate more error messages than coverage." That was the headline. The subheadline: "Exchange launch turns into an inexcusable mess."

An inexcusable mess. And they go on: . . . the administration managed to turn the experience for most of those visitors into a nightmare. Websites crashed, refused to load, or offered bizarre and incomprehensible choices. Even though the system was shut down for repairs over the weekend, Monday's early reports continued to suggest an epic screw-up.

The front page of the Wall Street Journal on Monday read: "Software, Design Defects Cripple Health-Care Website."

One does not take down a Web site for minor glitches. These are signs of major trouble. Some of us have been warning that the administration has failed to prepare properly. We said there would be security holes that would expose people to fraud and identity theft. It turns out the administration didn't even get to the point where the security flaws would actually matter early on because people couldn't even start entering their personal information. The exchanges were failing to launch. People got repeated error messages, and they couldn't fill out forms or applications. They couldn't create an account to start looking at the most basic of information to even make comparisons. When they tried to telephone to get help, they found long wait times and they got disconnected entirely. Even the administration's biggest cheerleaders admitted defeat. One reporter at MSNBC spent so much time trying to show viewers how to sign up for the exchange Web site on line that she actually gave up. They were playing this on television. She finally threw in the towel saying:

If I were signing up for myself, this is where my patience would be exhausted.

The Wall Street Journal tried to find out what went wrong. It talked to computer experts, who looked at the healthcare.gov Web site, and what the computer experts said is, "The site appeared to be built on a sloppy software foundation." According to those experts, "such a hastily constructed website"—and, of course, they had 3½ years—"may not have been able to

withstand the online demand last week."

Even the far-left Wonkblog at the Washington Post couldn't believe how badly the administration had failed. One of its columnists wrote:

The Obama administration did itself—and the millions of people who wanted to explore signing up—a terrible disservice by building a Web site that, four days into launch, is still unusable for most Americans.

It wasn't supposed to happen this way. President Obama promised using the exchanges would be like, in his words, shopping on amazon.com. Well, Amazon can handle 13 or 14 million transactions every day with no problem. There are over 5,000 Web sites generating more traffic than health care.gov.

So how many people were able to successfully enroll in the health care exchanges on the first day? We have no idea. The administration doesn't want to talk about it. First, they said: We are thrilled so many people were checking out the Web site. By Sunday, Treasury Secretary Jack Lew was on multiple television shows refusing to answer questions about how many people had enrolled and just repeating the White House talking points. He claimed 4.7 million people had visited.

If they are willing to tell us how many people have visited the Web site, why won't they tell us how many people actually got coverage?

The administration says they won't provide any data to back up its claims until at least November.

Remember, California claimed 5 million people visited their Web site for its own State exchange for the first day. They later had to back up and say that wasn't true. It turns out they had 645,000 visitors—less than 1 million, not the 5 million they claimed. That is a State that spent \$313 million on their site and it couldn't handle even that many people, because they had trouble.

President Obama said he was going to have the most transparent administration in history. The health care law is this administration's signature accomplishment. October 1 was the day they had been working toward for more than 3 years, and now the President won't tell the American people—won't tell any of us how many people have even signed up for health insurance. Why not? What is the President trying to hide?

CNN looked into the 24 States that set up their own insurance exchanges under the law. They found that as of last Friday, about 52,000 applications had been started. That is not how many people have actually completed their application successfully; it is just they have started. It is not how many people have gotten insurance; that is just how many people get to the point of starting their application.

Even if the Obama administration fixes the technical problems with its health insurance Web site, it will not have fixed the many problems with its health care law. The law will still not

give people the lower cost, high-quality care they wanted—which is the reason we needed health care reform in the first place. But I think the American people will hold the President to his promises and hold the Washington Democrats who voted for this law to their promises.

The President, right before the exchanges opened, said coverage in the exchanges should cost less than your cell phone bill. He said you should be able to keep your doctor. And he said it would be as easy and secure as amazon.com. So far, the President's health care law has failed on all of these. That was exactly what many of us warned would happen.

It doesn't matter if the ObamaCare exchange system failures happened because of heavy traffic or because of design flaws. The administration officials should be embarrassed, but they should not be surprised. Republicans warned the exchanges were not ready for prime time, but the President and Democrats ignored calls for a delay.

Why is the administration insisting now on fining people—fining people who don't have insurance, even though they can't sign up on the Web site successfully? The President unilaterally gave big businesses a 1-year delay in the employer mandate. Workers should get the same break that bosses get. If bosses get a 1-year delay in penalties, why shouldn't hard-working men and women all across the country get a 1-year delay of the individual mandate?

President Obama should have delayed the launch of his insurance exchange until it was ready. That would have been the fair thing to do. It is still the right thing to do. It is also the fair and right thing to give individual Americans the same delay of the mandate that the President has unilaterally—without the action of Congress—given to businesses all around this country.

Madam President, 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. BLUMENTHAL. 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.

CONTINUING APPROPRIATIONS

Mr. BLUMENTHAL. Madam President, yesterday the Veterans Affairs Administration announced it would furlough 7,000 Veterans Benefits Administration employees, and as a result activities and services in the following areas would be suspended: The education call center, personal interviews and hearings at regional offices, education and vocational counseling, outreach programs including at military facilities, the VetSuccess Program on campuses.

But this announcement is only the beginning of the contraction in the

services and activities of the VA. In fact, VA also announced that at the end of the month it will run out of funding for compensation, pension, educational and vocational rehabilitation, and employment benefits.

What does that mean for America? What are the consequences of the VA saying this shutdown means we are shutting our doors to processing and paying the claims of men and women who have served this country, who have been disabled as a consequence of that service, who have earned educational benefits so they can come back and continue to contribute to this country? What that means to America is we are in effect defaulting and failing on a core obligation this country has to men and women who serve and sacrifice. America is failing to keep faith with its veterans, and America is failing on one of its most essential obligations.

We ought to be ashamed and embarrassed that 7,000 men and women, who want nothing more than to help their fellow veterans—in fact, half of those 7,000 men and women at the VA are themselves veterans—have been told: Go home. In fact, at the end of the month the benefits, pensions, and educational benefits that are received by veterans will have to be suspended because the VA is running out of money. Right now it is in effect continuing on the leftover money, which will last only through the end of this month.

I spoke this morning to a veteran named Jordan Massa, a native of Bridgeport, who served for 6 years in the U.S. Army as an infantryman, including two tours in Iraq. Jordan Massa was injured in an IED explosion, a roadside bomb, that left him severely disabled with ear and back wounds as well as posttraumatic stress. Jordan Massa waited for 2 years after he applied for the benefits he needs and deserves, until October 1—just days ago—when he heard the good news that he would be receiving the disability benefits to which he is entitled—not as an act of charity or beneficence; he is entitled to those disability benefits. Now Jordan Massa is on the verge of being denied the benefits he needs and deserves because of this shutdown. A Connecticut native, awarded the Purple Heart, he has been a student at Tunxis, and has sought to help other veterans as a counselor—giving back to this country even after his service in uniform.

I spoke also to Aaron Jones, who works at the South Park Inn Shelter, which serves homeless veterans in Hartford. That shelter is full.

There are thousands of homeless veterans in Connecticut and millions across the country who also are a mark of shame and embarrassment for this country. The greatest Nation in the history of the world is failing to provide for men and women who have worn the uniform and now are homeless.

He is telling me the government shutdown has created an additional ob-

stacle to those veterans who want to leave that shelter to find permanent housing. Some are there for emergency, about 7; some are there in transitional housing, about 10; and they want to resume productive and constructive lives. This shutdown has created an additional obstacle to their doing so. In fact, for Aaron himself, who is a veteran and served in the National Guard, a tour in Bosnia, a tour in Iraq, this shutdown is a horrendous obstacle.

At this moment as I speak on the floor there is a House hearing. The House Committee on Veterans' Affairs has, as its principal witness, the head of the VA, General Shinseki, who has served this Nation with distinction and dedication and has sought valiantly to reduce the backlog in disability claims and to provide benefits more efficiently and effectively to our veterans.

Rather than using General Shinseki as a political punching bag, the House should simply have a vote. They should vote on a simple, straightforward, no-strings-attached funding resolution that would enable those 7,000 VA employees to come back to work and serve the people they love. It would provide for other essential services, whether at NIH serving cancer victims or the other agencies that work with the VA to help serve our veterans, such as the Department of Labor and the Department of Housing and Urban Development. The piecemeal approach the House is taking, a "cause du jour" approach to governing, is simply inadequate and irresponsible. The bill they have sent to us, while it deals with the VA, would not provide for those other agencies that are essential to the VA's work, whether in training or housing or processing claims.

This Nation should be embarrassed and ashamed. This legislature ought to be embarrassed and ashamed that it is failing to keep faith with Jordan Massa, with the folks who live at the South Park Inn Shelter, and countless other veterans in Connecticut and across this country who are entitled to benefits, pensions, and processing of their disability claims so they can receive what they deserve and need. If the House votes it will pass a simple, straightforward funding resolution, if the House is permitted to simply say yea or nay to that very straightforward, simple measure, this Nation will keep faith with Jordan Massa, with Aaron Jones, and with the countless millions of other veterans who at the end of this month will lose the benefits and pensions they are entitled to receive as a result of their service and sacrifice to this Nation.

I ask the Speaker of the House to simply allow a vote. Let the House vote so we can open government, pay our debts, and then reach a budget that is comprehensive and responsible and meets the needs of those veterans and many other Americans who are harmed and handicapped, enduring hardship as a result of the failure of that body. It

is a small minority in one branch of the legislature, one branch of our government that is failing our Nation.

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

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

The assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. ROBERTS. Madam 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. ROBERTS. I understand we are in morning business. I ask consent to speak for 15 minutes.

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

Mr. ROBERTS. Madam President, I wish to talk a little bit about the government shutdown—what else. It is my understanding that my colleagues across the aisle, I understand I will not have the opportunity to speak to any one of them, but should they come out on the floor—they are out on the Senate Capitol steps exhorting the House to send something they prefer over or to simply end the shutdown with a clean bill. I however would have suggested they would go over to the House steps as a gesture of good will. I am not sure any Member of the House—I know when I was in the House, I am not sure I would have appreciated either party getting on the Capitol steps and urging me to do something when I was in the House. But be that as it may, perhaps it is a good will effort as opposed to further demands.

I want to make sure everybody in Kansas is aware—and I know I speak for everybody on our side—the Republican side of the aisle did not want to shut down the government. As everybody knows, we have the current continuing resolution. I am sorry we have to continue to go through continuing resolutions. This is where we bundle up everything from appropriations bills, some of which have already been worked through, and then simply meld them together into a continuing resolution. We do not do appropriations bills anymore. That would be called regular order. I truly resent this. I find this most unfortunate.

So here we are, trying to consider how to fund the government. Many of us believe this funding measure should do everything possible to also control spending. That seems to be the real issue. Chief among these proposals would be to defund or at least delay the health care reform law. My colleagues and I have supported multiple measures to try to avoid a shutdown.

In the past few weeks Republicans have offered no fewer than three solutions to avoid the government shutdown, and I voted to keep the government open every single time. Most recently, the House is passing mini-CRs to open the government piece by piece because we cannot come to an agreement on a continuing resolution. Most

people, if they pay attention to the media—or if the media even covers this—understand what the House is trying to do, which is to open the government piece by piece. The first item of business would be to certainly fund the Veterans' Administration. We have all seen what is going on down at the World War II Memorial and, unfortunately, at the Marine Corps War Memorial as well, where we have yet to break the barrier. Being the senior marine in the Congress, I may lead a charge at the memorial sometime later this week. I have not made up my mind yet.

At any rate, that is just not reasonable. There are a lot of things being done, including no death benefits for people who have paid the ultimate sacrifice recently in the current wars that continue to go on. That is abhorrent. Why that decision was made by the Department of Defense I do not know.

At any rate, the House is trying to target these particular items, most of which have been identified by the President. So these mini-CRs by the House mirror what the President says in regards to the hurt that is being caused by the shutdown. What the President identifies, the House is trying to fix and then send over to the Senate. It is very unclear whether the majority leader will even allow a vote in regard to these measures. Senator CRUZ spoke to this in regards to a plan A, when we were discussing this in the Republican conference.

At any rate, the majority leader has refused to consider a single one. So this debate is not about shutting down the government, it is actually in part to protect Americans from what I call the disastrous health care law that is damaging our economy, raising taxes, and costing people their jobs. It is about a President who is unwilling to lead, unwilling to even come to the table to negotiate.

The President is now indicating he might want to negotiate on a short-term continuing resolution, but we do not have an agenda. We have had quite a few people offer plans. The distinguished Senator from Maine, SUSAN COLLINS, has a plan—it should be a bipartisan plan—that calls for a short continuing resolution, repeal of the medical device tax, and then fixing the sequester so the different agencies would have the authority to pick and choose how to meet the guidelines with regard to the Budget Control Act. Then it allows oversight responsibility to the Appropriations Committee to take a look at what the various Secretaries would do and make sure that is all right. This would be plan B.

We have a plan C by PAUL RYAN that I just read about in the Wall Street Journal. So we are not lacking in plans. What we are lacking is a room. We don't have a room, we don't have a table, we don't have chairs, and we don't have anybody in the chairs, they don't want anybody in the chairs. By the way, I would just as soon not have

another supercommittee that turned out to be not very super, selected by leadership. We could have the Finance Committee, which has jurisdiction, and the Ways and Means Committee in the House, which has jurisdiction, and I will bet we could come up with something that would be reasonable. At any rate, it is still about the majority leader insisting, no, he is not going to consider something like this. Unless, of course, the President would change his mind—and I hope he does.

My colleagues across the aisle have refused to consider even the most moderate proposals such as repealing the medical device tax as recommended by Senator COLLINS and ensuring that Members of Congress and their staff are treated the same as the average American in the ObamaCare exchanges.

Let me repeat that: that Members of Congress and their staff are treated the same as average Americans in the ObamaCare exchanges. When that came up in the Finance Committee, long before ObamaCare was passed or, for that matter, before it left the Finance Committee to go behind closed doors, in the majority leader's office—where I think he was singing with Mr. Rich, in terms of singing behind closed doors, but that is another story—at any rate, that first time I think it was Senator GRASSLEY who said he thinks it is only right that Members of Congress and their staff live under the same rules. He proposed that amendment. I voted for it then and I would again. It did pass then and, of course, now it is defeated by those across the aisle.

After failing to pass a budget last year and the 3 years prior to that or to pass a single funding measure this year, the Federal Government has been operating under a stopgap measure, as I mentioned before, called a continuing resolution. This is not what the people of Kansas expect from their government.

Despite multiple disruptions and critical delays, the exchanges became active as of October 1, about a week ago. However, since then we have heard feedback that the exchanges are off to a rocky start, are unusable or totally disappointing, fraught with frequent error and messages from a failure of a major software component. That is also not what people expected from any government program, and certainly not what has been sold as the President's signature domestic achievement.

Unfortunately, this was not unexpected for those of us who have opposed the law since the beginning, but it does bring up an issue. If you watch the news media—and for that matter, the comedy shows that follow later in the evening—there is always somebody who is trying to sign up on a computer and following the instructions given by the Department of Health and Human Services.

After you log on, the first page shows a smiling face, and then you get maybe three questions. I was interested in one of the questions I heard had been

asked: What do you eat? What is your favorite food?

If that's true what on Earth does that have to do with signing up for ObamaCare? Maybe they are concerned with somebody they feel might be obese or something like that, and maybe that is the person who ought to be signing up. I just don't know.

I know when I went through the first 16 pages—when I was reviewing as a member of the Finance Committee—of the draft on how you sign up, I got to page 3, and must say I would not give any database that kind of personal information. I think part of the delay is probably caught up on that. But you can't even get past page 3, and then it says you must wait.

I don't know how long we are going to wait. I know the President has called it simply glitches and bumps in the road. I think the front page of the Washington Post saying that many people had warned the administration that this was not going to work is certainly pertinent with regards to this discussion. I would offer up that these are system failures as opposed to bumps and glitches. I don't know when this is going to be worked out.

Despite a government shutdown, my colleagues across the aisle will not even consider solutions which acknowledge the widespread concerns expressed by the American people have with ObamaCare.

Let me also point out something else. The nominee to be the new head of the IRS—I asked him first why on Earth he would want to take on that job. He said, I am Mr. Fix-it, and that is what his resume says. I asked him a couple of questions, and I wished him well. I said: How are you going to implement and enforce this fine that is going to be on everybody if they don't sign up? I understand, from the administration, that nobody has to submit their eligibility requirements with regards to income. This is going to lead to fraud, abuse, and scamming. Second, you can't even sign up to begin with, and third, how on Earth is the IRS going to find anybody when they do not have the information or capability to do that?

I asked the distinguished nominee, who will come before the Finance Committee, where I will ask him again: How are you going to do that? He said: I need 8,000 more people. I said: What do you think the chances of that happening are around here? They would have to be trained, right? He said: Right.

They don't even have the people to enforce this if, in fact, they are going to enforce the fine. So why not just tell the American people: I am sorry, but we are not ready to fine people. We are not ready to have people declare their eligibility with regards to income, and we are not ready to sign people up yet because of the glitches, bumps, or failures in the system. So just delay it. Maybe they could delay it—as one prominent newscaster has proposed—

and just say: Look, if you want it, sign up for it, do. If you don't, you don't have to. You won't have to anyway because you are not going to get fined because the IRS has no capability to fine people. How are they going to do that? Are they going to cut your rebate check? Most of the people don't even get rebate checks. This is a mess that is just falling apart.

I, for one, am going to do everything I can to not let this stalemate stand. I am a senior member on the Finance Committee. I would encourage my colleagues basically that we meet, and that we discuss a continuing resolution that would extend funding out and allow us to try to work together on the systemic problems that face us with regards to the national debt.

I want to work toward a solution. I am going to do everything in my power to bring my colleagues to the table. I think they want to come to the table. We have a lot of responsible and good people interested who want this to end just like this side wants it to end. But we race headlong into another debt ceiling debate with the President in the exact same position as he is in the shutdown—unwilling to lead, unwilling to even come to the table, and we still have the majority leader saying no. We have White House officials running to the media declaring that we will default on our debt, the sky will fall, and this will be the fault of Republicans. These claims of inevitable default are false given the operation of the government and the cash flowing into the Treasury each month. They are clearly posturing—and dangerously posturing at that. No one wants a default or a shutdown by shotgun. Nobody wants a default—least of all me. It is the height of irresponsibility to make these claims and all along the way refuse to negotiate.

What we are asking for, and what we must do, is very simple: Consider a debt limit extension and budget changes at the same time, which would allow us to address our debt problem. Contrary to what Secretary Lew and other administration officials say, this is how these issues are handled. This is regular order. The debt limit, for at least the last 27 years, except for one small extension, has been attached to larger spending cuts and budget reforms. This is not unprecedented. This is how we do business. This is regular order.

The President's position is at odds with the stance taken by his predecessors from both parties. They saw the common sense of coupling deficit reduction with the extension of the debt limit. It is hard to figure out the President's thinking on this. Maybe now that a huge portion of Federal spending is on autopilot, he simply wants a blank check to fund the government with automatic increases in the debt limit. I want to mention something else that bothers me. I would like to go into negotiations with at least certain things that are guaran-

tees, things which have been guaranteed before. I am talking about guarantees in the Budget Control Act, and I am talking about the so-called fiscal cliff. The fiscal cliff protected 99 percent of Americans from a tax increase and had an estate tax reform that made sense and some real progress on capital gains.

The Budget Control Act, as we all know, led to the sequester. Again, Senator COLLINS has a plan that would fix the sequester and would give people more flexibility on how to do it, but also with oversight by the appropriations committees to make sure it is done right.

In meeting with the President—and he indicated in a press conference the other day that maybe he would invite more people to the White House. I appreciated being invited to the White House about 6 months ago. The subject came to a grand bargain. We were asking how this would work out.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The Senator's time has expired.

Mr. ROBERTS. Madam President, I ask for an additional 5 minutes if I may have it.

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

Mr. ROBERTS. Thank you, Madam President. I will try to wrap up. I appreciate the courtesy of the Senator who wishes to speak. I will try to get this done.

We were meeting with the President. I was bringing up the issue of regulations, but the rest of the people were talking about a grand bargain and what could happen. The President said on tax reform: Why can't we start with a clean page? Basically everybody agreed. And then he said we could also take mortgage interest, charitable giving, retirement, and we can means-test those and start from there. I thought, oh boy, here we go again—income redistribution. That is not the answer.

I would just say that before we enter into any negotiations, we ought to make sure that the Budget Control Act and the fiscal cliff bill, which were negotiated in good faith with the Vice President and which have resulted in lower spending, in the first actual decreases in spending by the Federal Government since the Korean War. That is unbelievable.

So in going to negotiate, I don't want to give up in regards to those decreases, and I don't want a situation where the President has said: I gave to you on CPI so I need \$800 billion in revenue. The distinguished majority leader has said it is \$1 trillion. So if we are going to raise \$1 trillion in revenue, then here we go again and whatever negotiations come down the pike are going to be more spending and more taxes. People are just figuring out what their tax bill is going to be with ObamaCare. We don't need a situation where we sit down and negotiate simply for more taxes and spending. Without going into the constitutional im-

plications of granting any authority on autopilot to the President, I would say I am adamantly opposed to giving any President that much control over the budget.

Why does all of this matter? Why am I making this speech? Why is my friend across the aisle going to make her speech? The debt limit is currently \$16.7 trillion. The debt has increased about \$6 trillion since the President took office—more than any other President in our history. The main source of this tremendous growth in our debt is entitlement spending, Social Security, Medicare, Medicaid. PAUL RYAN has a plan to fix that. It ought to at least be on the table, and that way we can see a path for where we can go with it.

Without changes, spending on these programs is expected to grow by 79 percent over the next 10 years. In fact, by law, there is no upper limit on how much we spend on these programs. This spending—added to interest payments on the debt—will make up close to 65 percent of the budget in 10 years. By then we won't have any discretionary spending.

The Congressional Budget Office reports that we remain on an unsustainable path. All we are asking—prudently, I hope—is that any increase in the Federal debt limit needs to be coupled with real, tangible cuts in discretionary spending and meaningful, structural reform to entitlement spending. We need to get this done to rein in our unsustainable debt and to ensure that these programs are there for our children and our grandchildren.

Madam President, I ask unanimous consent that an article by Thomas Sowell, a senior fellow at the Hoover Institution from Stanford University be printed in the RECORD at this time.

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

[From the Standard Times, Oct. 6, 2013]

WHO SHUT DOWN THE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT?

(By Thomas Sowell)

SAN ANGELO, TX.—Even when it comes to something as basic, and apparently as simple and straightforward, as the question of who shut down the federal government, there are diametrically opposite answers, depending on whether you talk to Democrats or to Republicans.

There is really nothing complicated about the facts. The Republican-controlled House of Representatives voted all the money required to keep all government activities going—except for Obamacare. This is not a matter of opinion. You can check the Congressional Record.

As for the House of Representatives' right to grant or withhold money, that is not a matter of opinion either. You can check the Constitution of the United States. All spending bills must originate in the House of Representatives, which means that congressmen there have a right to decide whether or not they want to spend money on a particular government activity.

Whether Obamacare is good, bad or indifferent is a matter of opinion. But it is a matter of fact that members of the House of Representatives have a right to make spending decisions based on their opinion.

Obamacare is indeed “the law of the land,” as its supporters keep saying, and the Supreme Court has upheld its constitutionality. But the whole point of having a division of powers within the federal government is that each branch can decide independently what it wants to do or not do, regardless of what the other branches do, when exercising the powers specifically granted to that branch by the Constitution.

The hundreds of thousands of government workers who have been laid off are not idle because the House of Representatives did not vote enough money to pay their salaries or the other expenses of their agencies—unless they are in an agency that would administer Obamacare.

Since we cannot read minds, we cannot say who—if anybody—“wants to shut down the government.” But we do know who had the option to keep the government running and chose not to.

The money voted by the House of Representatives covered everything that the government does, except for Obamacare. The Senate chose not to vote to authorize that money to be spent, because it did not include money for Obamacare.

Senate Majority Leader Harry Reid says that he wants a “clean” bill from the House of Representatives, and some in the media keep repeating the word “clean” like a mantra. But what is unclear about not giving Reid everything he wants?

If Reid and President Barack Obama refuse to accept the money required to run the government, because it leaves out the money they want to run Obamacare, that is their right. But that is also their responsibility. You cannot blame other people for not giving you everything you want. And it is a fraud to blame them when you refuse to use the money they did vote, even when it is ample to pay for everything else in the government.

When Obama keeps claiming that it is some new outrage for those who control the money to try to change government policy by granting or withholding money, that is simply a bald-faced lie. You can check the history of other examples of “legislation by appropriation,” as it used to be called.

Whether legislation by appropriation is a good idea or a bad idea is a matter of opinion. But whether it is both legal and not unprecedented is a matter of fact.

Perhaps the biggest of the big lies is that the government will not be able to pay what it owes on the national debt, creating a danger of default. Tax money keeps coming into the treasury during the shutdown, and it vastly exceeds the interest that has to be paid on the national debt.

Even if the debt ceiling is not lifted, that only means that government is not allowed to run up new debt. But that does not mean that it is unable to pay the interest on existing debt.

None of this is rocket science. But unless the Republicans get their side of the story out—and articulation has never been their strong suit—the lies will win. More important, the whole country will lose.

Mr. ROBERTS. I yield back any time I may have.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from New Hampshire.

Mrs. SHAHEEN. Madam President, as my colleague from Kansas said, I also came to the floor today to talk about the unnecessary government shutdown that is continuing and is having widespread ramifications in New Hampshire and across the country.

I would like to respond to some of what he said about the Budget Control

Act and about the current state of the deficit. The fact is the deficit, under this President, has been reduced by more than 50 percent since he took office. It is on course to reach a little over 4 percent of GDP by the end of 2015, I believe. By 2023 it is expected to get even lower—down to a little over 2 percent. There is no doubt that we need a plan to deal with the long-term debt and deficits of this country.

Most of us who supported the Budget Control Act thought that was what we had done. We put a committee in place that was actually going to come up with an agreement on how we could get to a long-term plan to deal with this country's debt and deficits. It is really unfortunate that some of the people who were appointed to that committee didn't share in that commitment.

I think it is important to remind us all where we are. We have made significant improvements on reducing the deficit in this country. We have been willing to look at a long-term agreement to deal with the debt and deficit, and I think that is what we ought to do. I would hope that as the result of this government shutdown, we can get some agreement from both sides of the aisle to actually do this.

My main purpose in coming to the floor today is to talk again about the impact of the shutdown on too many people who were caught in the middle between this unnecessary inflicted crisis that we are seeing in Washington and the impact that it is having on families, small businesses, the economy of New Hampshire, and the country.

We are now in the ninth day of the shutdown. In New Hampshire we have seen hundreds of Federal workers who have been furloughed. Some of those workers are back to work. Fortunately, at the Portsmouth Naval Shipyard most of those people are back to work, and that is very good news. We still have people at the Forest Service, and we have people who work for the Federal Government in other capacities all over the State who have not been fortunate enough to be called back to work.

I would just remind everybody that even for those people who are back at work, they are not being paid. They are working without pay.

In New Hampshire Small Business Administration loans have been halted, and that is true across the country. The Federal Housing Administration and VA loans have been slowed down. At the White Mountain National Forest, which is a Federal forest that hosts more visitors than Yosemite and Yellowstone National Parks combined, people who are traveling through our beautiful White Mountain National Forest at this time of the year so they can look at the foliage are not even able to use the restrooms because of the shutdown.

This morning I wanted to speak about some of those businesses I have heard from who are being hurt by the

shutdown. New Hampshire is truly a small business State. Ninety-six percent of employers in the Granite State are considered small businesses and they are the backbone of our economy. They are also where most of the new jobs are going to come from.

Two out of every three new jobs in the United States is created by a small business, but the shutdown is hitting them hard. I heard this morning from two of our businesses that have been established in the State for a long time. They have national reputations.

Titeflex, which is an aerospace company in the lakes region, does a lot of business for the Department of Defense and they also provide supplies to larger companies. They told me their inventory is piling up on their docks now because they don't have anybody to inspect it, because those Federal officials who do that are not working. They are furloughed. They said it is really going to be a problem in 10 days if they don't get this resolved, when they have to report to the corporation their bottom line numbers, which will show on their reports, and that will affect their company.

Then I also heard from some representatives of Smith Tubular, which is a medical device equipment company that does business with the VA and with the military, and they also do a lot of work with the FDA. They said they are seeing their contracts affected, and they have heard from FDA that they couldn't provide the payments they normally provide to them because there is nobody at FDA to process those payments. So that is having an effect on the ability of businesses to innovate, to provide the products that are needed.

We have seen an impact on lending in New Hampshire. The Small Business Administration has reported that loans are not being originated. One does not need a Ph.D. in economics to understand that if small businesses can't access capital and credit, there are real economic consequences. One of our largest SBA lenders in New Hampshire is a company called the Granite State Development Corporation. Twenty of their loans are on hold already because of the shutdown.

Then this morning I heard from a community bank in New Hampshire called Provident Bank that it has about half a dozen SBA loans being held up right now. One of those loans is for a newly starting up entrepreneur who wants to open an Orange Leaf Frozen Yogurt franchise in New Hampshire. All the paperwork is ready to go, but Provident Bank can't get the final approval for the loan until the SBA is up and running again. So if the shutdown continues, Provident Bank is concerned that interest rates are going to rise, and if interest rates rise, the cost of borrowing for small businesses is going to go up.

As the Presiding Officer knows, because her State is much like New Hampshire with a lot of small businesses, access to credit is the lifeblood

of those small businesses. Right now, we are preventing them from getting the help they need.

Then we have small businesses in New Hampshire that rely on consumer demand. I heard from Charles Moulton, who is the owner of a New Hampshire maple syrup company called New Hampshire Gold. This is the time of year when people are coming to see the foliage and sample our maple syrup in New Hampshire. He has four employees and his maple syrup company has a storefront in New Hampshire, but it also sells one of their signature products, their maple syrup, to Zion National Park in Utah—kind of an unlikely location for a New Hampshire maple syrup, but New Hampshire Gold sells to tourists who come there from all over the world during the summer and early fall. But now, because Zion National Park is shut down, as are all of our national parks, New Hampshire Gold sales have dried up. While they continue to sell in Concord, NH, in their retail store, much of the cushion they needed to get through the winter into next year comes from that location at Zion. They can't afford to lose those dollars as they are thinking about how to get through the rest of this year.

New Hampshire Gold is just one of the thousands of small businesses that have been hurt by the shutdown of our national parks. Visitors to the parks spend nearly \$13 billion a year in regions within 60 miles of the parks. This shutdown is hurting not just visitors to those parks; it is hurting small businesses such as New Hampshire Gold and all of the other small businesses around our parks who depend on that tourism business.

There is no doubt this shutdown is hurting our economy. Economist Mark Zandi projected that a 3-to-4-week shutdown would reduce gross domestic product by 1.4 percent during the fourth quarter. He noted that the projection likely underestimates the economic fallout, since it doesn't fully account for the impact of such a lengthy shutdown on consumers, businesses, and investor psychology.

The bottom line is clear: The shutdown is bad for our economy, it is bad for middle-class families, and it is bad for the country.

As we look at the looming deadline for when we need to raise the debt ceiling so we can pay the bills this country has incurred, there is potentially even greater fallout for America. Holding the economy and critical services hostage to score political points is irresponsible. We need to open the government. We need to raise the debt ceiling so we can pay our bills. With the economy finally showing signs of improvement, the last thing we should be doing is what is happening right now.

I am hopeful the House will do what is right. I am hopeful they will pass a short-term funding bill. That action will get our government running again, and then we can continue to negotiate

on what we need to do to address the long-term debt and deficits in the country, as well as talk about where we need to invest to make sure this country stays competitive in the future.

I yield the floor.

QUORUM CALL

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Ms. BALDWIN). The clerk will call the roll.

The bill clerk proceeded to call the roll and the following Senators entered the Chamber and answered to their names:

[Quorum No. 4]

Baldwin	Heitkamp	Nelson
Bennet	Hirono	Reed
Blumenthal	Johnson (SD)	Reid
Boxer	Kaine	Sanders
Casey	Klobuchar	Schatz
Coons	Leahy	Schumer
Durbin	Merkley	Stabenow
Franken	Murphy	Warner
Heinrich	Murray	Warren

The PRESIDENT pro tempore. A quorum is not present.

The majority leader.

Mr. REID. Mr. President, I move to instruct the Sergeant at Arms to request the presence of absent Senators, and I ask for the yeas and nays.

The PRESIDENT pro tempore. Is there a sufficient second?

There is a sufficient second.

The question is on agreeing to the motion.

The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk called the roll.

Mr. DURBIN. I announce that the Senator from Alaska (Mr. BEGICH), is necessarily absent.

Mr. CORNYN. The following Senators are necessarily absent: the Senator from Oklahoma (Mr. INHOFE), the Senator from Kentucky (Mr. PAUL), and the Senator from Louisiana (Mr. VITTER).

The PRESIDENT pro tempore. Are there any other Senators in the Chamber desiring to vote?

The result was announced—yeas 78, nays 18, as follows:

[Rollcall Vote No. 215 Leg.]

YEAS—78

Ayotte	Graham	Mikulski
Baldwin	Grassley	Murkowski
Baucus	Hagan	Murphy
Bennet	Harkin	Murray
Blumenthal	Hatch	Nelson
Boozman	Heinrich	Portman
Boxer	Heitkamp	Pryor
Brown	Hirono	Reed
Cantwell	Hoeven	Reid
Cardin	Isakson	Rockefeller
Carper	Johanns	Rubio
Casey	Johnson (SD)	Sanders
Chambliss	Kaine	Schatz
Chiesa	King	Schumer
Coats	Kirk	Shaheen
Cochran	Klobuchar	Shelby
Collins	Landrieu	Stabenow
Coons	Leahy	Tester
Corker	Levin	Toomey
Donnelly	Manchin	Udall (CO)
Durbin	Markey	Udall (NM)
Feinstein	McCain	Warner
Fischer	McCaskill	Warren
Flake	McConnell	Whitehouse
Franken	Menendez	Wicker
Gillibrand	Merkley	Wyden

NAYS—18

Alexander	Crapo	Moran
Barrasso	Cruz	Risch
Blunt	Enzi	Roberts
Burr	Heller	Scott
Coburn	Johnson (WI)	Sessions
Cornyn	Lee	Thune

NOT VOTING—4

Begich	Paul
Inhofe	Vitter

The motion was agreed to.

The PRESIDENT pro tempore. A quorum is present.

The senior Senator from Washington. Mrs. MURRAY. Mr. President, when a house is on fire, the reasonable thing to do is put it out and then figure out what happened to prevent the next one.

When a ship is headed toward rocks, the reasonable thing is to steer away and then work on charting a better course.

When a government is shut down and is headed toward a default that economists would say is catastrophic, the reasonable thing to do is end the crisis, steer away from the next one, and work together on a long-term plan to avoid these crises in the future.

We are now in the second week of this absolutely unnecessary government shutdown. Every day we are hearing more and more about the tremendous impact this is having on our families and our communities across the country. It is only going to get worse.

We can end this today. It does not have to continue. We are holding the door open for our Republican colleagues to join us in putting a stop to this madness. All they need to do is come in. Senate Democrats have spent the past 6 months trying to get Republicans to join us at the table in a budget conference. We knew there were two options: conference or crisis—working together toward a bipartisan budget deal or lurching separately into a completely avoidable government shutdown.

A number of Republicans joined us in a push for negotiations, but no matter how many times we tried, we were blocked. We were pushed to this point by a refusal to negotiate, and now the only path forward is for the House to end the crisis and then join us at the table at which we have been waiting to sit for 6 months.

Democrats want to negotiate. We want to have this conversation. We think the only way out of this cycle of constant crisis is for the two sides to work together, to make some compromises and get to a fair and responsible long-term deal. But it does not make sense to do that while our families and our communities are being hurt by this government shutdown and while the threat of a default hangs over their heads.

I served on the supercommittee. I worked with my colleagues to write and pass our budget here in the Senate. I know Democrats and Republicans have some serious differences when it comes to our budget values and our priorities, and I absolutely believe we owe it to the American people to try to

bridge that divide and to find common ground. But are we really going to ask them to wait patiently, continue suffering through this shutdown, keep watching as we cruise toward an economic calamity while another supercommittee gets together and has a conversation? That does not make sense. Let's have those conversations, let's have those negotiations, but let's end this crisis and get to work.

Yesterday I heard something from the Speaker. He said he didn't want to end the shutdown or address the debt limit now because that would be "unconditional surrender to the President." Have we really come to the point where simply allowing the government to open is considered by one party to be a political loss? Are we really in a place where the majority of one Chamber in one branch of government believes allowing the United States of America to pay its bills is a major concession?

I say to my Republican friends who are here today, imagine if our roles were reversed. For example, I have been working very hard this year to write an early childhood education bill that I am passionate about, and I believe it will really help our children and our families. I suspect there are a few people in this Chamber today, including several on the Republican side, who could one day see themselves in the White House. If that day were to come, what would my Republican colleagues do if I said to them that if they did not pass my bill to expand pre-K, I would get all the Democrats together and we would refuse to pass any spending bills until we got what we wanted? And if that led to a government shutdown because they refused to let my bill pass, what would they do if I demanded a supercommittee to discuss ways to invest in our children before I allowed a vote to open the government again? I would humbly suggest that my Republican colleagues would say exactly what Democrats are saying now: This is not a legitimate way to negotiate, and the only path forward is to end this crisis and then have a conversation.

The great American system we hold so dear—our democracy that is the envy of the world—simply cannot work if a minority of Members can threaten to shut down the government or devastate the economy if they do not get their way on an issue—any issue. That is not what Democrats did when we were in the minority, and it is not what we should do should that day come again. Our system was designed to push both sides toward negotiations in a divided government, to encourage negotiation and movement toward common ground. It breaks down when one side refuses to negotiate in advance of a crisis, and it falls apart when a minority refuses to allow the basic functions of our government to perform unless their demands are met.

I know all of my colleagues, Democrats and Republicans, came here to

fight for their constituents, to solve problems, to make this country work better. I know there is nobody here today—not a single Senator—who was sent here to shut the government down or to push this country toward an unprecedented default on our loans. And I know so many of my colleagues, Democrats and Republicans, are sick of the constant crises. They hate seeing their constituents get hurt.

As my friend the Senator from Arizona said yesterday, I think we should find a way to sit down and find a way out of these dead ends. That is what I am here today to offer—a way out, a path forward. It is not a defeat of one side or the other, it is certainly not any kind of surrender, but it would allow us to get out of this mess that has been created and open a path to negotiations so we can avoid the next one. I am going to ask consent once again to start a budget conference as soon as the current crisis has ended. Democrats have made it clear we want to negotiate. We couldn't have made it more clear. We will sit down and negotiate over anything the Republicans want, and we pledge to work as hard as we can for as long as it takes until we get a fair long-term budget deal to end these constant crises. But first this current crisis needs to end and the threat of the next one needs to be lifted.

Republicans don't need a hostage. There are plenty of things Democrats want out of a long-term deal for which we are very interested in making some compromises. So I urge my Republican colleagues to please consider taking us up on this offer. We can end this today. We can do the right thing for our families and the communities we represent, and we can get back to work helping people, solving problems, and working together.

UNANIMOUS CONSENT REQUEST—H. CON. RES. 25

I respectfully ask unanimous consent that when the Senate receives a message from the House that they have receded from their amendment and concurred in the amendment of the Senate with respect to H.J. Res. 59, the Senate then proceed to the consideration of Calendar No. 33, H. Con. Res. 25; that the amendment at the desk, which is the text of S. Con. Res. 8, the budget resolution passed by the Senate, be inserted in lieu thereof; that H. Con. Res. 25, as amended, be agreed to; that the motion to reconsider be considered made and laid upon the table; that the Senate proceed to vote on a motion to insist on its amendment, request a conference with the House on the disagreeing votes of the two Houses, and authorize the Chair to appoint conferees on the part of the Senate; with all of the above occurring with no intervening action or debate.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Ms. BALDWIN). Is there objection?

The Republican whip.

Mr. CORNYN. Madam President, reserving the right to object, on this side of the aisle we agree it is good to nego-

tiate, and we should. I would only hope the President of the United States would be a part of that negotiation in order to make it successful.

But I would ask my friend why the request is contingent on passage of the House continuing resolution. The Democrats have already rejected the House's request to go to conference on the CR, seemingly in contrast to what they are now asking for, which is a negotiation.

Hopefully, we will pass H.R. 3273, the Deficit Reduction and Economic Growth Working Group Act, which will create a bicameral, bipartisan group to address the CR and the debt limit situation.

But on the Republican side, again I would say to our friends that we have a longstanding request to make sure reconciliation instructions are not in order in a budget conference so that the debt limit can be increased on a strictly party-line vote.

We happen to think it is a problem if the debt ceiling is raised as the Democrats are requesting, that we would see the debt go up by 68 percent under this President—more than all other Presidents in American history who preceded him. We think that is a bad idea.

So I would ask the distinguished Senator from Washington whether she would consider an amended unanimous consent request, and we would ask that the Senate, by way of amendment to her request, proceed to the consideration of Calendar No. 33, H. Con. Res. 25; that the amendment at the desk, which is the text of S. Con. Res. 8, the budget resolution passed by the Senate, be inserted in lieu thereof; that H. Con. Res. 25 be amended, be agreed to; that the motion to reconsider be considered made and laid upon the table; that the Senate proceed to a vote on the motion to insist on its amendment, request a conference with the House on the disagreeing votes of the two Houses, and authorize the Chair to appoint conferees on the part of the Senate; with all of the above occurring with no intervening action or debate; and I would further ask unanimous consent that it not be in order for the Senate to consider a conference report that includes reconciliation instructions to raise the debt limit.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Will the Senator from Washington so modify her request?

Mrs. MURRAY. Reserving the right to object, let me make one observation, which is that sometimes I think those who have been objecting now 21 times to our request to go to conference have forgotten whom I would be conferencing with, which is the Republican House majority. What they fight so adamantly and strongly for here in the Senate will be well and ably represented in a conference committee. That is the point of a conference committee. That is what our democracy was set up to do in a divided government, where we have the opportunity to do that.

Having a conference committee to work out our budget agreement is exactly what I have asked for, but I will object because what the Senator's request does is simply say: We are going to keep our government closed. We are not going to allow people to do the functions that are so desperately needed. We are going to stay closed, and we are going to hold that hostage.

As I said so clearly when I spoke before, we need to open the government, we need to pay our bills, and we need to negotiate. That is what our request does, that is what the Republican request does not do, and so I object.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Objection is heard to the modified request.

Is there objection to the original unanimous consent request?

Mr. CORNYN. I object.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Objection is heard.

The assistant majority leader.

Mr. DURBIN. Madam President, I thank the Senator from Washington for her 21st time in coming to the floor of the Senate and asking the Republicans to join us in a conference committee to resolve budget differences between the House and the Senate. Twenty-one times Senator MURRAY has come to this floor simply asking to negotiate, and the Republicans, who have been arguing that we don't negotiate, turned her down 21 times—the latest by the senior Senator from Texas. The junior Senator from Texas shut down the government over the notion of defunding ObamaCare, and now the senior Senator from Texas has said he objects to going to a conference committee to resolve our differences, Republicans and Democrats, between the House and the Senate.

If we are going to restore this Senate to the orderly process, what the Senator from Washington has asked for is very basic—open the government.

This morning the Chaplain of the Senate started by acknowledging the five families who were notified, after they had lost a military member—a son, a husband, a brother in Afghanistan over the weekend—he noted that in their bereavement they were being denied the basic benefits this government gives to these grieving families after they have lost someone in uniform. The Chaplain of the Senate said it this morning: Enough is enough.

This notion that closing down our government and keeping it closed is somehow acceptable political conduct is outrageous. We just left a press conference where Maryland Senators MIKULSKI and CARDIN, and Senator Kaine and Senator WARNER of Virginia, spoke about the impact to their local economies and the loss of these jobs with this government shutdown. I can tell stories of Illinois, with 50,000 Federal workers who have either been furloughed or their checks are being withheld for the most part. This is unnecessary, and it is unacceptable.

We were in the midst of a terrible accident last week, right before October

1. A train ran into one of our Metro trains coming back from the airport, and 30 people were sent to the hospital. The National Transportation Safety Board went out to investigate the accident to find out what led to this terrible thing. They had to leave at midnight on October 1, after having collected what evidence they could, because the government was shut down. The investigation was suspended. That is one small example. There are the five families who are grieving. And it goes on and on.

What we hear from the Republicans is we will take care of each of these as it arises. We will pick out the vital functions of government. So far, all of the bills passed by the House of Representatives combined represent only 18 percent of the domestic discretionary budget of the United States.

So each day, as another tragedy occurs, as another embarrassment to this Republican strategy emerges, they will try to find a way to fix that story, to fix that problem. It is time for us to fix our sights on a solution that is befitting the great Nation of America: Open the government and pay our bills while we negotiate.

That is the only responsible way to approach it. I am sorry that for the 21st time the Republicans have come to the floor and denied the request by the Senate Budget Committee chair, Senator MURRAY of Washington, to sit down and negotiate. Twenty-one times Republicans have refused to allow us to enter into a bipartisan negotiation. That is why we face the problems we do today.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Alabama.

Mr. SESSIONS. Madam President, it is a good thing that Democrats for the first time in 4 years passed a budget—at least brought one to the floor and passed it on a strictly partisan basis. Before that, they not only didn't pass one, they didn't bring one to the floor for 4 years and refused to do so, even though a specific provision of the United States Code actually required them to do so. It was a stunning development.

Senator Conrad, then the Democratic chair of the Budget Committee, wanted to bring up budgets, fought to bring up budgets, and one time said he was going to bring up a budget. But Senator DURBIN and others in the leadership apparently had a vote, and they voted against him. Senator MURRAY, to her credit, has gotten a budget through. The Presiding Officer is a member of that committee, and they got a budget through this year, which was a good thing. I am not sure, but I suspect Senator MURRAY was one of those who blocked Senator Conrad from even bringing up a budget for 4 years. So I think it is a bit aggressive to say Republicans are blocking a budget when the history is they haven't even voted on one.

Secondly, there are Members on this side of the aisle who simply say the

legislation necessary to raise the debt ceiling again should be passed—like legislation should be passed—on the floor of the Senate, and it would require a 60-vote point of order where you have to have 60 votes to pass.

In conference, a raising of the debt ceiling would be put on the budget which only requires 51 votes for passage. We have simply said we would allow the budget to go to conference and agree to conference, but we want a commitment that our Democratic colleagues will not try to sneak through raising the debt ceiling on the budget—which doesn't require but 51 votes. Our colleagues have flatly refused. If they would make that agreement, we would go to conference.

I think our Democratic majority should agree to that. They have indicated they don't intend to put it on the budget. One time Senator DURBIN said he didn't think it was appropriate to put it on the budget. If so, let's make clear we are not going to gimmick it up and add that to it.

The reason we have had such contention at this point in history is that we are facing fundamental challenges relevant to the whole future of America financially. It is a time of great importance. The American people understand this. The American people want us to take action to place this country on a sound financial path.

So we are heading to the debt ceiling. By law we limit the amount of money Congress can borrow and how much money we can spend above our current level. We are now spending about \$3,500 billion a year and we are taking in about \$2,800 billion a year. Think about it. That is what we are doing every year, and it is unsustainable.

In August of 2011 we faced a debt ceiling, and the American people told Congress: We want to clip back on your credit card. You are not going to continue to borrow this much money every year. Before you raise the debt ceiling, we want you to show that you are going to be more frugal and are going to manage our money better.

Republicans dug their heels in and said, Mr. President, we are not going to raise the debt ceiling until you agree to some financial constraints and that you are not going to keep spending recklessly every year.

After a tense time, a committee was formed and an agreement was reached, and this is what we agreed to: First, we would raise the debt ceiling \$2.1 trillion. Then, over the next 10 years we would reduce the projected growth of spending by \$2.1 trillion—one for one, as Speaker BOEHNER said.

So it gave Congress 10 years to find cuts. But in a little over 2 years, we have already borrowed another \$2 trillion. We have hit the debt ceiling cap again, and we have not yet come close to saving the \$2 trillion we promised to save.

And by the way, these are not really cuts. When you look at the U.S. budget, the budget was projected to increase spending from \$37 trillion over

10 years to \$47 trillion over 10 years. With the Budget Control Act, spending would increase from \$37 trillion to \$45 trillion over 10 years. That is not really a cut in spending, is it?

Yes, the way it has been carried out hits some departments more than others—particularly the Defense Department—and we need to adjust that. But fundamentally, the reduction in the growth of spending that was part of the BCA last year was not extreme, not irresponsible, and should and must be preserved.

But colleagues, the President of the United States, after signing that agreement in August—the sequester is part of the BCA. It was all part of the same deal that created the \$2.1 trillion in savings. In January, after that August, he proposed a budget that would increase spending another \$1 trillion and would raise taxes \$1 trillion. That is basically what our colleagues passed in their budget this year: to spend \$1 trillion more than the Budget Control Act said we should spend and raise taxes another \$1 trillion over 10 years.

This is a total abdication of the promise we made to the American people. We said, OK, American people, we are going to vote to raise the debt ceiling. A lot of people didn't like any raising of the debt ceiling. Phone calls to my office were against any raising. People said, It is time for you guys to live within your means like I have to do in my house.

So we raised it. But we promised we wouldn't spend so much. We promised we would reduce spending by \$2.1 trillion, but over 10 years. Do you know what a lot of cynics around here said? They said, Congress won't adhere to that. That is just a bunch of baloney. They promise that all the time, and then they breach their promises all the time. That is why the country is going broke.

That is exactly what the President did in January of 2012, 6 months after the agreement—he proposed to spend another \$1 trillion above the amount of money we agreed to spend 6 months before. Why?

I didn't really want to sign that agreement. I didn't really want to cut that much money. So I am not bound by it. I didn't make a promise to the American people. I forgot all about that. That was 6 months ago. Oh, a 10-year promise, that we are going to contain the growth of spending for 10 years? Forget that. I don't want to do that. I want to spend more. I have investments I want to make. I have taxes I want to increase.

This is fundamentally what is occurring here. So we have got to stand firm and adhere at least to the containment of growth in spending in the Budget Control Act. We have to. Failure to do that is a capitulation in our promises to the American people, a total abandonment of any pretension that we will be fiscally responsible in this body. It is just unthinkable that we would abandon the limits we had in the Budget Control Act.

The sad truth is the Budget Control Act reductions in the growth of spending do not come close to putting us on a firm financial footing. We are still on an unsustainable debt course, as our Congressional Budget Office has told us.

Yes, we have seen a reduction in the deficits this year of \$600 billion. People say that is great.

George Bush has been called profligate, and sometimes he was. The highest deficit he ever had was \$470 billion. The year before his last year in office was \$167 billion.

President Obama in his 6 years will have averaged almost \$1 trillion a year in deficits. We have never, ever come close to that kind of deficit before in the history of the Republic.

So what does a budget say that says we want to tax people \$1 trillion more and spend more money under these circumstances? I will tell you what it says.

From the President and the majority here in the Senate, it says: It is not our problem. We can't find any more ways to reduce the growth of spending. We can't save another dime. You people just don't understand. There is no way we can save any more money. We have a problem, though. And do you know who is responsible for it? You, the American people. It is your fault. You won't give us enough money. If you would just send more money, another \$1 trillion, another \$2 trillion, another \$600 billion which was passed in January, just another few hundred billion more or a trillion here and a trillion there in taxes, why, we could solve all of the problems. Send us more money. And by the way, we will use that money to create government programs and government bureaucracies that impose great costs on the American economy and have in fact resulted in the declining wages of American workers to a degree that is not acceptable.

We need a growth-oriented, lean government—a lean government that serves the people for the least possible cost and reduces these deficits. Deficits themselves are pulling down the economic growth in our country. The size of our debt is so large, we have never had anything like it, it is already beginning to diminish the prospects for growth in our economy and reduces job creation and reduces wages.

I know we are in a tough time now. We certainly need to work our way out of this. But the President negotiated over the debt ceiling in August of 2011, and we made at least a step forward. In fact, it was the most significant fiscal step this country has taken, maybe in decades, and for the last 2 years we have actually spent less money than the year before. Think about it. To hear people talk, they would think the country is going to collapse.

But we have had a modest reduction in spending, and that has been good. It has been good. But it is not nearly enough to put us on a sustained path.

We need to save Social Security, we need to strengthen and save Medicare,

we cannot afford the Affordable Care Act. We have witnessed a total misrepresentation on the Affordable Care Act with regard to its cost. The Government Accounting Office, an independent auditor, has told us it is going to add at least \$6 trillion to the debt of the United States over the long term under its likely set of assumptions. It does not pay for itself—nowhere close. It is as unstable financially as Social Security is over the long term.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The time of the Senator has expired.

Mr. SESSIONS. Let's keep working. Maybe we can develop some ways to confront our financial problems. It is absolutely critical that we do that. We have a moral responsibility to do that and we have to start working together to achieve it. I think the President needs to back off his statements that he will not negotiate on the continuing resolution or the debt ceiling.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Oregon.

Mr. MERKLEY. Madam President, I ask my colleague from Alabama, if he has a moment or two more, after I read an official consent request, if he might stay for a moment and answer a question about how that budget conference committee works?

Mr. SESSIONS. I have a moment.

Mr. MERKLEY. Madam President, through the Chair, I want to pose a question about the budget conference committee. I think it is something that has puzzled a lot of people across America.

We hear some folks standing and giving speeches saying for 6 months we have been trying to get a conference committee and we have other folks who are standing and saying we will be glad to go to conference as long as there is a deal beforehand on exactly what is done in the conference committee.

In that regard, I thought it would be useful to have a little bit of perspective here. My understanding is that anything that comes out of the budget conference committee would have to have agreement of both the team of delegates from the House side and the team of delegates from the Senate side. That is a question I ask of the ranking member of the Budget Committee, to clarify that process?

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Alabama.

Mr. SESSIONS. I thank the Senator. Of course that is correct. I understand the Speaker has indicated there is no guarantee that the increase in the debt ceiling would not be a part of a conference report that came out of conference committee. We have independent Senators in this body who simply said we do not think we should be subjected to having the debt ceiling increase without a full debate and the normal processes of 60 votes in the Senate. That is where the disagreement lies. People can have disagreements about the validity of their concern, but

it is a legitimate concern. If there is no intention to move a debt ceiling increase at 51 votes, why wouldn't my colleagues agree not to do it? That is the disagreement I think that now exists.

Mr. MERKLEY. Madam President, might I ask about a couple of other pieces to this puzzle. Why not, with that concern—I pass this question through the Chair to my colleague—why not, with that concern, simply ask the House delegates to carry that concern, rather than blocking the start of the conference committee?

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Alabama.

Mr. SESSIONS. Madam President, I say to my colleague, through the Chair, it is very simple. Senators have rights. They have a right to assert those privileges on the floor of the Senate. We have Senators who say you should not do this, you should not raise the debt ceiling on the budget and we do not want to go to conference unless you do agree not to sneak that through without a full debate and 60-vote threshold on the floor of the Senate. Attaching it to a bill that is a budget deal that is huge and would have a lot of interest in it would make it even more difficult to separate that question out. Rightly or wrongly, that is their view.

I say I don't see any problem and I am amazed at the intransigence of the majority of not just accepting that. I don't think it is likely, as the Senator indicated, that the House would add that to it, frankly. I am not too worried about it. But some are and that is causing the disagreement right now. I think it would be great to go to conference. I would like to see a conference occur, frankly. I think it is an unusual and positive development that after 4 years of not even bringing a budget to the floor, that we now have the majority here passing a budget so we can try to do something with it in conference—although I have to tell you, all of our colleagues, there is a big difference in the budgets. The budget passed out of the Senate with our majority that every Republican opposed completely busted the Budget Control Act. It is nowhere close to what was agreed to in that Act 2 years ago.

I think we have a huge gap to cover in conference. It is not impossible and it would probably be a healthy thing to start that process. I wish my colleagues would relent and commit not to try to sneak the debt ceiling increase in on the budget.

I thank the Chair. I appreciate my colleague, a member of the Budget Committee, who contributes ably and works hard to try to do the right thing around here.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Oregon.

Mr. MERKLEY. Madam President, the thing that puzzles me, if my colleague would still consider responding, is that there is a process on the floor of giving instructions to a conference committee.

My colleague has left the floor, but the question I would have followed up with is, given that there is a specific process in the Senate for doing budget instructions to a conference committee, why not utilize that specific process, hold a vote on the conference committee instructions, rather than blockading the conference committee from starting?

I guess I will have to rhetorically answer the question, that there is no good explanation for why not go through the normal process and propose a Budget Committee instruction for our conferees.

Then the question becomes, couldn't we resolve this today? Couldn't we resolve this today, have a proposal put forward to instruct the conferees, vote on it on the floor of this Senate, and it either passes or it does not? Isn't the whole budget process designed specifically to be a simple majority process under the Budget Act so we can indeed get the job done and not be paralyzed?

I think—I believe the story—and I would have liked to have had the perspective of my colleague—but I think the story is a determination to not allow a majority determination of the budget instructions, to, instead, allow a minority to do so. I believe also that is an absolutely unprecedented situation, but I wanted to clarify that and understand whether there was in fact precedent for this type of determination that in a simple majority budget process, a minority would blockade a budget conference.

It is very strange that this should become such a central issue. But I want Americans to understand that essentially it boils down to this: For 6 months we have been trying to start a budget conference committee. A small group, a couple of individuals have wanted to instruct that Budget Committee but to do so without going through the normal process on the floor so they could do it as a minority rather than as a discussion and decision of the Senate as a whole. It is that precedent that seems unacceptable. I think if the tables were turned it would be felt strongly on the other side.

I hope to keep exploring these questions, because this 6-month obstruction of being able to get the budget that provides a framework for spending is deeply damaging. This body absolutely has to be able to do its fundamental work in determining the budget, getting a budget conference, getting a budget number, doing the spending bills, all appropriations bills—because otherwise we are careening from crisis to crisis.

I am going to shift gears here. I am going to step back from what is going on immediately with the shutdown and ask where did the seeds of this come from? If we turn back to about April of 2009, shortly after I first came to the Senate, there was a memo put out by an individual named Frank Luntz. Frank Luntz was providing a roadmap on how to block any sort of improve-

ment in our health care system. Frank Luntz said, and he was specifically instructing my colleagues across the aisle—he said it doesn't matter what is in the health care bill. It doesn't matter what good it does. Whatever it is, let's attack it and call it a government takeover.

This was long before anyone even knew what was going to be in the bill. So this strategy of poisonous partisanship rather than problem solving has been with us since at least April of 2009. Therefore, a series of myths were generated. As the process proceeded, those who were behind the myths kind of doubled down on them. For example, we have in the health care reform a process by which small businesses can join together and get the marketing clout of a large group to negotiate lower rates and get a better deal. But under the Frank Luntz "let's demonize and deceive" strategy, instead of honoring the fact that the small businesses will be able to get a better rate, there has been an assertion this would hurt small businesses.

In the health care reform bill we have a process by which individuals who have no market clout can band together and get a much better deal. We are seeing significant drops in rates for individuals across this country under the marketplaces that are just now opening for signup. But indeed, under the Frank Luntz "deceive and demonize" strategy, it became: Let's tell people insurance rates will go up instead of down.

We have a bill before us—not a bill but a health care reform law coming into effect—that ends abuses in the insurance industry. There was a situation where you could not get a policy if you had a preexisting condition; the sort of situation where if you had insurance and you got sick you would be thrown off the policy; the fact that your children were not able to stay on your policy until they were able to get health care insurance of their own.

These bills of rights are reforms that are deeply sought by Americans across this country, urban and rural. But under the Frank Luntz "deceive and demonize" strategy, there was simply an assertion, unfounded, that this would destroy the insurance system.

You have a process whereby, under the marketplaces, insurance companies will have to compete, private insurance companies. Yet under the Frank Luntz strategy adopted by some of my colleagues across the aisle, they decided to say this would hurt competition even though it strengthens competition. It puts before people, apples to apples, companies having to lay out their rates and benefits under these different levels of insurance. We are seeing that competition from private companies proceed to lower rates.

Let's fast forward. We had that phase of the "demonize the plan" even though we have to mischaracterize it and deceive and delude Americans about what is in it.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The time of the Senator has expired.

Mr. MERKLEY. Madam President, I will wrap up with a sentence or two and yield to my colleagues. Thank you for coming to the floor to continue the conversation.

I think it is so important that we proceed to put our government back on track and quit careening from crisis to crisis, doing damage to communities and families across our Nation.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Vermont.

EXTENSION OF MORNING BUSINESS

Mr. LEAHY. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent the period for morning business for debate only be extended until 5 p.m., with Senators permitted to speak therein for up to 10 minutes each, and the majority leader be recognized following morning business; further, that the Republican side have the time from 2 p.m. to 2:45 p.m., and the majority have the time from 2:45 p.m. to 3:30 p.m.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection?

Without objection, it is so ordered.

CONTINUING APPROPRIATIONS

Mr. LEAHY. Madam President, today is day 9 of the government shutdown. House Republicans piously blame everyone except themselves, but there is no mystery about what is happening.

It is very simple: They continue to refuse to permit a vote on a continuing resolution to keep the government operating for one reason—they disagree with one law, the Affordable Care Act.

That law, debated for months, voted on dozens of times, signed into law by the President, and ruled constitutional by the Supreme Court, will finally make it possible for tens of millions of uninsured Americans to obtain affordable health insurance, including those with pre-existing conditions.

House Republicans and a handful of tea party Senators don't like it, and they have used all kinds of scare tactics to try to derail it. Yet, millions of Americans who know better, who want to protect their families, have already shown that they want to sign up.

Unyielding in their opposition, tea party members of Congress, for whom "compromise" is a dirty word, are on a crusade to hold the Federal government hostage until the Affordable Care Act is repealed. It is a form of extortion that has no place in a democracy.

Then, after a couple of days of angry phone calls from outraged constituents, in an attempt to blunt the criticism, the House Republican leadership abruptly changed course and decided to pick and choose which government agencies and programs to fund.

This latest ploy is revealing for what it says about tea party Republicans. It is as if they suddenly learned for the first time that the Federal Government

is comprised of millions of hard-working Americans, in every State, who perform countless tasks the rest of the country depends on.

Did they not realize that many of the people who sent them to Washington depend on the Federal Government for their monthly pay checks? That every American depends on the Federal Government to inspect the safety of the food they eat, the water they drink, and the air they breathe? That America's students and farmers depend on loans from the Federal Government?

That countless needy families depend on Federally funded Head Start programs? That the Department of Health and Human Services pays for the vaccines that protect American children from polio, measles, and other diseases?

It has been interesting to hear the Speaker of the House. He wants the President to, "sit down and have a conversation."

President Obama has shown time and again he is willing to compromise, sometimes more than some would like. He sat down with the Speaker last week. But no President should negotiate the terms of keeping the Federal government operating. And no Member of Congress should recklessly toy with the United States defaulting on its debt payments for the first time in history, and when the world is finally recovering from a devastating global recession.

The Senior Senator from Maryland, the Chairwoman of the Appropriations Committee, has done an excellent job of explaining what is at stake—not only for American families but for the reputation of the United States, the world's oldest democracy. Senators should be aware of the impact of the shutdown on thousands of American companies that depend on financing from the Federal Government to export their products and invest overseas.

During this shutdown, the Export-Import Bank and the Overseas Private Investment Corporation cannot provide new loans or insurance to U.S. companies. This means that every month those companies—U.S. companies—lose \$2 to \$4 billion in revenues, jeopardizing some 30,000 American jobs.

If the shutdown continues, the Department of State, which conducts all kinds of services for Americans and programs overseas, will be severely affected. In fiscal year 2011, when the Federal Government came close to shutting down, the Department estimated that 70 percent of its Washington staff would be furloughed.

Do our Tea Party friends think these Federal workers just sit idly at their desks doing nothing? That they are some kind of luxury we cannot afford? Wait until one of their constituents is falsely arrested and imprisoned overseas, or robbed, or badly injured, and there is no one at the State Department to help them. Almost 800,000 children under the age of 5 die of diarrhea annually, mostly due to unsafe drink-

ing water and poor sanitation. Those deaths are entirely preventable. A prolonged government shutdown would mean curtailing water and sanitation programs for millions of people in the world's poorest countries—programs that have always had strong bipartisan support.

Malaria causes half a billion deaths a year, 90 percent of them children. A continued shutdown would force the U.S. Agency for International Development to stop funding malaria prevention programs, putting tens of thousands of lives at risk.

Speaker BOEHNER is right. Shutting down the Federal Government is "not a damned game." But what the House is doing is playing Russian roulette with the U.S. economy and people's lives. There is no excuse for it, and the Speaker has two choices: stop it, or continue to roll the dice with the U.S. economy and the lives of millions of American families and programs that protect our Nation's security.

At the State Department, the shutdown has already forced the cancellation of International visitors programs that enable future foreign leaders to experience this country first hand. Instead of seeing what a great country this is, they see our political system in disarray. It is embarrassing for our embassies and should be embarrassing to all of us.

Despite the shutdown, the State Department still must ensure the health, safety, and welfare of nearly 10,000 academic exchange participants in the United States and abroad. Either those students and scholars will have to return home, or the organizations and universities that are responsible for implementing the exchanges continue operating without knowing if, or when, their costs will be paid.

We have heard about the impact of the shutdown on the U.S. national security establishment, including the Department of Defense and the intelligence community. But the shutdown may also affect the State Department's anti-terrorism programs that support law enforcement and border controls in countries highly vulnerable to terrorist threats, such as Iraq, Afghanistan, Yemen, Kenya, and Niger.

The shutdown has halted trade talks between the EU and the United States on the Transatlantic Trade and Investment Plan. This deal would harmonize U.S. and EU regulatory standards, and eliminate trade barriers. It would bring real benefits to the U.S. economy. Yet the Tea Party shutdown has prevented U.S. trade officials from traveling to Brussels to negotiate with their EU counterparts. Instead, EU diplomats remain at the ready to talk to nobody.

Because of the shutdown, President Obama had to cancel his trip to Asia this week. We hear quite a bit about the Administration's "pivot to Asia," but it is hard to pivot in another direction if you can't even get one foot out of your own country.

Who made it to the Summit instead? China's President Xi filled President

Obama's seat next to Vladimir Putin. Is this who the tea party wants to lead in the lower income Asian countries? For the sake of our economy and national security, we need our President to have a seat at the table.

The list goes on and on, but these are just a few of the impacts of the shutdown that are only beginning to be felt. As this needless work stoppage drags on and more people are furloughed and programs are cancelled, our diplomats, our international development programs, our leadership in international organizations, and our national security will suffer.

It is as foolhardy as it is wasteful.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Kansas.

Mr. MORAN. Madam President, I am pleased to be here on the Senate floor this afternoon. I am saddened by the circumstances we find ourselves in and look for a solid, responsible, and quick resolution to our differences in regard to continuing resolution.

I ask unanimous consent that the Senator from California Mrs. BOXER follow me upon the conclusion of my remarks.

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

Mr. MORAN. Madam President, again, under the circumstances we find ourselves in, I look forward to a quick and responsible resolution to the differences we have and that we move forward with the funding of our Federal Government.

I would point out that a reason we are at this point is we need a continuing resolution because the Senate failed to do its work in the first place. While, for the first time in 4 years, the Senate passed a budget, it was never reconciled in conference with the House. I am certainly a Republican who would be supportive of that reconciliation of the conference committee to work out the differences between a House-passed budget and the Senate-passed budget.

The reality is that there are 12 appropriations bills—and I am a member of the Senate Appropriations Committee. I take that responsibility very seriously. I was excited to become a member of the Senate Appropriations Committee when I arrived here at the Senate. I saw it as an opportunity for us to establish our priorities and determine what we should be spending money on. Yet not 1 of the 12 bills that are required for us to pass across the Senate floor has been passed this year; therefore, on September 30 we ended up with no funding in place, and it creates this opportunity for us to have this debate and discussion about a continuing resolution at a time in which there is great leverage on that issue.

What I lament and what I wish would have happened is we would have passed 12 appropriations bills and then worked out the differences with the appropriations process in the House.

Today I want to speak about a particular issue related to the shutdown of

the Federal Government—the lack of funding. Prior to that occurring—prior to September 30—both the House and Senate and the President signed legislation called Pay Our Military Act. It was designed to make certain that our military men and women had compensation should there be a shutdown. I appreciate that legislation passing and am pleased it is in place now we are in the circumstance we are in. There were rumors and concerns about how that bill would be implemented by the Department of Defense. The Senator from West Virginia Mr. MANCHIN and I led an effort in which we had 50 Senators in a highly bipartisan way ask the Secretary of Defense to interpret that legislation in a broad way that would make certain our furloughed civilian employees who support our military men and women, as well as our Reserve component—those who serve in the National Guard and Reserve—would be put back to work for the benefit of the Nation's security.

I thank Secretary of Defense Hagel for his decision to implement that legislation in a broad way that did exactly that—returned furloughed civilian workers at DOD, the Department of Defense, back to work, and gave the ability for our National Guard and Reserve members to continue in their responsibilities for defending our country. Again, I thank Secretary Hagel.

I am here today to point out that we have an additional problem, in fact, one that is equally, if not more, serious than that, and that is that we have read and heard that those who die in the active service of our country are not now able to receive the death benefits that come to their families upon their death. I can't imagine that there is a Senator of any political party or persuasion who thinks that is a desirable outcome.

With Senator MANCHIN and others, we worked at bringing this issue to the attention of the Department of Defense, asking Secretary Hagel, in a letter that was led by Senator COONS and Senator BLUNT, to use every opportunity, full authority, wide flexibility—whatever circumstances the Department of Defense could find—to provide the benefits to those who died in service to our country.

There is a special tax-free payment of \$100,000 to eligible survivors of members of the armed forces who are killed in action. Those benefits usually arrive within the first 3 days following the death of a service man or woman. This helps the family—certainly not overcome their loss—to have the necessary funds for funeral services, to travel in this case to Dover Air Force Base to meet their loved one as he or she returns home, and to overcome the lack of a regular paycheck. This death gratuity is such a small price to pay to honor and recognize someone's family who has lost a member of their family in service to our country.

At least the stories are, the reports are that this situation is due to the in-

ability of us to resolve—to work with the President, Republicans and Democrats, House and Senate—the continuing resolution, and so work is being done so that the death benefit will be available. My understanding is that the House of Representatives is poised to pass legislation to make certain that the Department of Defense has the authority to immediately pay those benefits. I hope that is a piece of legislation that is met with unanimity of support here in the Senate.

We have asked Secretary of Defense Hagel if he has the ability to do that within his current legal jurisdiction, within the law—if he has the ability to do that within the law that he does have—and we anxiously await and hope the Secretary can do that. But, if not, I hope this Senate will unanimously confirm that legislation that would allow the Secretary to pay those benefits immediately.

Again, I just can't imagine any of my colleagues ever thinking that under any circumstance, we ought not step forward to resolve this issue. Just because we can't resolve everything—it seems to me there is a method of operation too often here in the Senate that if we can't solve every problem, we are unwilling to solve any problem. On those things on which there is such significant agreement, we ought not let anything stand in the way of coming to the aid and rescue of a family who now so desperately grieves the loss of their loved one.

HONORING OUR ARMED FORCES

SERGEANT PATRICK HAWKINS

We know over the weekend there were five soldiers killed in Afghanistan. There are five families as of today who would be in this circumstance. I would like to pay tribute to one of those five: SGT Patrick Hawkins. He was born October 1, 1988. He graduated from high school and enlisted in the Army in his hometown of Carlisle, PA.

SGT Patrick Hawkins, according to his Italian commander, was described as a brave and incredibly talented Ranger. The description of his death revolved around the fact that he was moving to aid another wounded Ranger when he was killed. His actions, according to, again, his commander, were in keeping with the epitome of the Ranger creed, which is, "I will never leave a fallen comrade."

Sergeant Hawkins dedicated himself to serving us—to serving our families, to serving all Americans—and he ultimately paid for that service with the loss of his life. I pay tribute to this soldier as an example of many who have sacrificed in similar ways over a long period of time, but especially for those five who this weekend lost their lives in Afghanistan.

Sergeant Hawkins was awarded the Bronze Star and the Meritorious Service Medal. He was awarded a Purple Heart. None of that replaces the loss of life. He is survived by his wife, who is

a resident of Lansing, KS, and her parents, who are residents of my hometown of Plainville, KS.

So today, on behalf of my colleagues in the Senate, I pay tribute to a soldier who in serving his country lost his life, who leaves behind grieving family members and friends, and who epitomizes what we all should know in service here in the Senate, which is what I spoke about earlier on the Senate floor this week. That is, if we need a reminder about how this place should work, we should look to our service men and women who, for no partisan reason—no Republican or Democratic reason—volunteered to serve their country. They concluded there were things much more important than life itself, and that being the ability to have a country that we know and enjoy as the United States of America, that has the freedom and liberties guaranteed to us by our Constitution, and creates the opportunity for every American to pursue what we all call the American dream.

Today, I pay tribute to one more hero, one more soldier, one more American who, through service to others, was willing to sacrifice his life for the betterment of his family back home and for the future of a country that we all love and call home, the United States of America.

I yield to the Senator from California.

Mrs. BOXER. Madam President, would it be possible—because Senator CASEY and I were each thinking we would get 10 minutes and we are willing to cut that to 15 minutes between the two of us—could we ask unanimous consent, if the Republicans don't mind, just slipping a little bit, because people took extra time.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection?

Without objection, it is so ordered.

Mrs. BOXER. Thank you. So we will each have about 7½ minutes.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from California is recognized.

Mrs. BOXER. Madam President, we are going to fix the injustice my colleague spoke about—the injustice to the families who lost their loved ones. Let me be clear about one of those five families who were denied the benefit and someone important to me a constituent of mine—Army 1LT Jennifer Moreno from San Diego, who was killed this weekend in Afghanistan by a roadside bomb. Jennifer was 25 years old. Because of this shutdown brought to us by the Republicans, those families have to suffer even more than they are already suffering.

Let's be clear. This never had to happen. This government has been shut down by the Republicans for one reason, and JOHN BOEHNER was honest about it. He said:

The American people don't want to shut down the government, but the American people don't want ObamaCare. They don't want the Affordable Care Act.

Let me say that to close down the government because a person doesn't

like a law that was passed almost 4 years ago, to shut down the government because a presidential election was lost and which was based, in large part, on this—to shut down the government, to keep our people—millions of them—from getting affordable care for the first time, it is a disgrace. It is. There is no other way to say it, except maybe it was said beautifully here. It was said beautifully here by the chaplain: "Enough is enough."

We are going to fix this problem; of course we are, this indignity our military families had to face. But let's be clear: It never would have happened if the government had been open.

We have two things that are in our job description. I know the Presiding Officer knows that quite well. One is to keep the doors of government open officially. We do our best, but we don't always succeed. There are problems here and there. Keep the doors open. Just as a pilot has to fly a plane, just like a teacher has to teach a class, just like a nurse has to give a vaccination, we have a basic responsibility to keep this government open, and we know how to do it. They pass a budget over in the House, we pass it in the Senate, the conference is called, they hammer it out, and we have a budget plan, and none of this would be happening. Let's be clear. The Republicans have objected now 21 times—21 times—to Senator MURRAY, the chairman of our Budget Committee, so she can sit and confer with her counterpart, PAUL RYAN, and hammer out the details of a long-term budget. But, no. The Republicans don't want to do that. They want to hold the country hostage. They want to put our backs up against the wall, or the backs of the American people. Why? They don't like the health care law.

If a person doesn't like a law, that person tries to repeal it. They tried to repeal it 43 times. It went nowhere. If you don't like a law, try to replace the people who support the law. Oh, they tried. They tried and they failed. I served with five Presidents, three of them Republican. I didn't like everything they did; believe me. But after they won and they had an agenda, I did what I could, and so did my colleagues on both sides of the aisle, to carry it out the best I could, to fix it where I could.

Let me just say this: We are in a shutdown because they are throwing a temper tantrum about the health care law, the Affordable Care Act. I wish to share some news with them, because I went home to see how the health care law is working in my State. I want to say what I know. I know it is working. By now we have had more than a million distinct visitors to our site, coveredCA.com. We have tens of thousands of applications. We have completed more than 20,000. Small businesses by the hundreds are coming on to the site.

In the time I have remaining, let me read to my colleagues about one

woman the Republicans want to stop from getting health care by shutting down the government. According to the Associated Press, nothing could dissuade Rachel Mansfield of La Quinta, who sent in an application to Covered California last week. Rachel has been waiting for the exchange to start so she and her husband could get health insurance. Rachel is self-employed. Her parents currently pay a \$530 monthly premium for her coverage. Her husband has been rejected for health coverage because he was diagnosed with post-traumatic stress disorder. Rachel's new premium, instead of it being \$530 for just her, will be \$400 for both of them, with higher quality coverage than she currently has.

That is why the Republicans are having a temper tantrum, to stop my constituent from, for the first time, having peace of mind and having good insurance? Come on. If you don't like the law, work with us. We can make it better.

Then there is Melissa Harris. According to the Fresno Bee, Melissa stopped at a CoveredCA tent on campus. She is paying \$600 a month with help from her family for insurance through her former employer. She has diabetes and hypertension and, under the Affordable Care Act—which prevents insurance companies from denying coverage for preexisting conditions—she can now afford health insurance on her own. And the quote from her, from my constituent is, "It's a Godsend for me—a blessing."

It is a blessing. And that is why the Republicans are shutting down the government, to stop my constituent from getting a blessing of health insurance.

There was another story of a man who waited on the phone for 40 minutes, and he finally got on. He signed up and he said: You know what, I have been waiting for years. Forty minutes was nothing.

So I say to my friends, the law is the law. Open the government, pay our bills, and we will negotiate.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. HEINRICH). The Senator's time is expired.

Mrs. BOXER. Mr. President, I yield the rest of the time to Senator CASEY.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Pennsylvania.

Mr. CASEY. Mr. President, thank you very much. I know our time is limited.

I want to start on an issue that I think all of us are coming together on no matter what party we are in, and that is what has been happening to our military families.

On Sunday, as noted by the Senator from Kansas a few moments ago, SGT Patrick Hawkins from Carlisle, PA, was killed in action in Afghanistan when his unit was hit with an IED, an improvised explosive device. Sergeant Hawkins was moving to the aid of a wounded Ranger when he was killed. Due to the shutdown, Sergeant Hawkins' family cannot receive the death

benefit provided to soldiers to cover the funeral and burial expenses for that family.

Today I am joining an effort with a number of Senators writing to urge Secretary Hagel to use whatever discretion he has to provide the death benefits to the Hawkins family as well as the other families so we can meet the promise we made to those families. I know the President is working on this issue, is working with the Office of Management and Budget and the Defense Department on a solution to this problem.

Mr. President, I will move to the question of where we are now. This is a shutdown brought about by the tea party. We know that if Speaker BOEHNER would simply hold a vote on the bill that is before him, which would fund the government, this crisis would be over.

So we should continue to take steps, No. 1, to open our government; No. 2, to pay our bills and make sure we do not miss a bill and default; and No. 3, to negotiate—or I would argue to continue to negotiate because we already negotiated a budget number which was much lower than our side of the aisle wanted. We agreed to \$70 billion less from the other side. If that is not a compromise and a negotiation, I do not know what is.

We know this sentiment and this position to make sure the government opens is a point of view that is shared by Democrats, Republicans, and Independents across the country. By way of example, nine Members of the Pennsylvania congressional delegation—four Republicans and five Democrats—are supportive of a so-called clean bill that does not have attachments to it, to open the government, to make sure we can have a functioning government, to pay our bills, and then work together on longer term solutions. Just a couple of examples—and I know our time is limited.

As this tea party shutdown moves into its second week, the Women, Infants and Children Program—we know it by the acronym WIC—will no longer be able to be funded in many States across the country. We know this program provides nutritional services to more than 8.9 million participants per month, including 4.7 million children and 2.1 million infants. A quarter of a million of my constituents in Pennsylvania depend upon this program. For now—for now—the State government is using carryover funds to keep the WIC Program running in Pennsylvania. If the government shutdown continues to stretch on, this may put the program in jeopardy.

We know the impact this shutdown is having on older citizens across Pennsylvania and across the country. The Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services is no longer able to provide health care provider oversight. While Medicare claims are still being paid, the shutdown has caused a reduction in the number of initial surveys and re-

certifications for Medicare and Medicaid providers. If providers are unable to be certified, then they cannot serve beneficiaries.

Home- and community-based services are adversely impacted. We know that even though Social Security checks are going out, at the same time those who are hoping to be enrolled in Social Security do not have that opportunity.

Let me read from a letter we got from a constituent in northeastern Pennsylvania talking about this individual's parents.

Besides our personal difficulties due to the Budget Impasse, my elderly parents live with the worry of when and if they will receive their Social Security checks. At 85 and 83, they should not have this uncertainty. These should be their golden years. It breaks my heart to hear my Mother saying she can't sleep and has a stomach ache from the worry about where our country is heading. Middle and low income families cannot afford another economic downturn, we are just barely recovering from the last one.

That entire passage came from one individual in northeastern Pennsylvania writing about her parents, and I think that is the best summation I have read about what this is doing to people. The worry and the anxiety, in addition to the harsh impact, are things we should not accept.

Finally, I will conclude with some comments about national security.

I support—and I know this is widely shared—the passage of the Pay Our Military Act and welcome the Defense Department's decision to bring the majority of furloughed staff back. We mentioned the death benefits for families. We are all together on that. But all the while—all the while—that the Speaker does not put a bill on the floor that will open the government, we see the impacts on our national security. Seventy percent of the intel community's workforce has been furloughed. These are people who work every day to keep us safe from terrorists, and they are not able to work. The Treasury Department's Office of Foreign Asset Control has a skeletal crew, and they are not able to do their work, which is part of our national security.

So if we are doing the right thing, and if the Speaker and his party in the House are doing the right thing, they would vote today to open the government, to ensure that we pay our bills, and to continue to negotiate. It is very simple. What they have in front of them is a 16-page bill. I think they could pass it this afternoon and reopen our government and give that family in northeastern Pennsylvania some measure of peace of mind instead of the worry and the anxiety and the fear that are caused by both the government shutdown and efforts made to even contemplate defaulting on the full faith and credit of the United States of America.

With that, I yield the floor.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The bill clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

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

UNANIMOUS CONSENT REQUEST—H. CON. RES. 58

Mr. McCONNELL. Mr. President, last Saturday the House voted 400 to 1 to express the view that a government shutdown should not interfere with the ability of military chaplains to provide services for our servicemembers. The House took that vote amid reports that chaplains were limited in their ability to minister to those who sought their services even if ministers were doing so on a volunteer basis.

We have heard reports that those who have scheduled baptisms might not be able to have them. Obviously, this is not a tolerable situation. We have a very large military presence in Kentucky. The folks at Fort Campbell and Fort Knox do not need this. We need to remedy the situation immediately and care for the troops who have volunteered to defend us.

The House has already taken a stand, in an overwhelming, bipartisan basis—only one vote against it. It is time for the Senate to do the same. So I would call on the majority to allow a vote to express the Senate's views that servicemembers in my State and every other State or overseas should be able to receive religious services. This is one vote we should have today. Some of my colleagues will talk this afternoon about some of the other votes we should also have. The government may be shut down, but our service men and women should not be caught in the middle of this impasse.

I had indicated to my colleague, the majority leader, that I would ask unanimous consent after my remarks, which I will proceed to do now. I ask unanimous consent that the Senate proceed to the immediate consideration of H. Con. Res. 58, which was received from the House; I further ask unanimous consent that the resolution be agreed to, the preamble be agreed to, and the motion to reconsider be considered made and laid upon the table.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection?

Mr. CASEY. Mr. President, reserving the right to object.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Pennsylvania.

Mr. CASEY. Mr. President, there is no question when we look across the Senate or across the House, people of different political parties, people of different faiths all support any kind of religious service for members of the armed services. There is no question about that. Our budgets indicate that every year. That is a widely held point of view.

Unfortunately, what we are seeing is a continuation of an effort to pick and choose what areas of our government should be funded. We should not have an exercise where we choose between our soldiers and our kids or between

one priority versus the other. We should vote and work together to open the government. It is as simple as that. Open every service that is part of the Federal Government.

Open the government, pay our bills, and continue negotiations which started a long time ago on the current budget. I come from a State which has well more than 1 million veterans. No State in the country has contributed more to the armed services of the United States than Pennsylvania. I will take a backseat to no one when it comes to supporting our troops and supporting their families.

That is why we are all coming together to make sure the death benefit is paid for those who recently lost their lives, including Sergeant Hawkins from Pennsylvania. But this process we are going through today is just another attempt to not deal directly with the question of how we are going to operate the Federal Government.

We should urge our colleagues in the House to have a vote today. It would take a matter of minutes for the House to vote on a bill that will open the government, allow us to make sure we are paying our bills, and do everything we can to continue to work together on a longer term budget agreement.

So I would first offer a modification and ask unanimous consent as follows: that an amendment which is at the desk be agreed to, expressing the sense of the Congress that the House should vote on the Senate amendment to H.J. Res. 59, the continuing resolution passed by the Senate; that the concurrent resolution, as amended, be agreed to; that the motions to reconsider be considered made and laid upon the table with no intervening action or debate.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Will the Republican leader so modify his request?

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, I object.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Objection is heard. Is there objection to the original request?

Mr. CASEY. I object.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Objection is heard.

The Republican whip.

UNANIMOUS CONSENT REQUEST—H.J. RES. 91

Mr. CORNYN. Mr. President, there are obviously differences in this Chamber over the fiscal direction of our country, but we should be united in our efforts to do right by our uniformed military and their families and certainly their survivors. The way they have been treated is simply unacceptable—indeed, it is outrageous. The President's spokesman today said he is looking for a solution. We are here to offer one to him. Washington has not gotten a lot right lately but now is our chance. The legislation I will be offering a unanimous consent request on would right this wrong by ensuring that the families of the fallen receive four essential benefits: the death gratuity benefit, the coverage of funeral

and burial expenses, coverage of travel to both the funeral and the dignified transfer of their loved one's remains and the temporary continuation of their housing allowance.

I ask unanimous consent that when the Senate receives H.J. Res. 91, making continuing appropriations for survivor benefits for survivors of deceased military servicemembers for fiscal year 2014, the measure be read three times and passed, the motion to reconsider be considered made and laid upon the table.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection?

Mr. REID. Reserving the right to object, would my friend agree that we have just learned that the President said he would solve this in the next hour. Would my friend be willing to wait until 4 o'clock today and renew his request at that time if it has not been done?

Mr. CORNYN. Mr. President, responding to the distinguished majority leader, if that will help facilitate this getting done, we would be glad to work with him. Hopefully, we can find another area, as we did for military pay for our uniformed military, where we can begin to mitigate the hardship caused by this shutdown.

Mr. REID. I think on this issue it would be the best way to proceed; that we can do something together, and hopefully the White House will be in on what we are trying to do. So I ask my friend to renew this at 4 o'clock.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Wyoming.

UNANIMOUS CONSENT REQUEST—H.J. RES. 70

Mr. ENZI. Mr. President, if businesses ran their operations the same way the government is running this shutdown, they would be bankrupt. Oh, that is right. That is kind of where we are, isn't it.

Our national parks, particularly the ones that are revenue producers, are shut down. Yellowstone Park is a revenue producer. You pay to go into the park. You pay to travel through the park. The roads connect Montana, Idaho, and Wyoming. It is a thoroughfare. You have to pay to be able to do that. But right now you cannot do that, which means you probably have to travel an extra 300 miles to get to your destination.

The park does not get the revenue, and not only that, there are people in the park who are visiting there and they have been made to leave. They were made to leave in a very ungracious way. One of the tours was from Japan, Australia, Canada, and some people from the United States. They had reservations at Old Faithful. That is one of the historic places in the park, one place that everybody goes because they like to see the geyser go off. It is probably the most famous geyser in the world.

But they were told they had to leave. They had 2 days of reservations. They said: OK. You can stay for the 2 days. But an armed guard was outside of

their room and they could not leave their room to go watch the geyser go off, which they do not have any control over, nor can they harm. It has been written up as Gestapo tactics that met senior citizens in Yellowstone Park.

So we are giving up the revenue and we are creating a bad impression. We should not be doing that. We ought to be taking revenue. The revenue is a little more difficult than that because we have concessionaires in the park, people who run the hotels and the stores and the filling stations and the other services in there. They pay a fee for doing that and a percentage of what they take in. So we are not getting that percentage now either.

They are losing about \$4.9 million a week by not being able to be open. There are a lot of other things I could say about the way the parks are being treated here and around the country, but the ones that are revenue-producing are particularly egregious.

I ask unanimous consent that the Senate proceed to the immediate consideration of Calendar No. 203, H.J. Res. 70, making continuing appropriations for National Park Service operations; I ask further that the measure be read three times and passed and the motion to reconsider be considered made and laid on the table.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection?

Mrs. BOXER. Reserving the right to object.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from California.

Mrs. BOXER. I appreciate the motion of my colleague, as someone who comes from a State where tourism is the No. 3—and we have 38 million people—it is the No. 3 business in our State. We have national parks. But guess what. You fellows over there, you did not take care of all of my recreation land under the Army Corps. You did not take care of all of the BLM land.

This whole notion of funding the government piecemeal is absurd. This is the greatest Nation on Earth. All you can do is come with these little, mini, piecemeal bills. Let's face it. We would not be going through any of this angst, and my friend would not have to have any of that emotion if the Republicans had not shut down the government.

I wish to state the rest of my reservation. We certainly support the notion that our parks should open, but we also support the notion that this government should open. If the Senators don't like certain functions, let's duke it out and find out which ones we have the votes to do away with. I know a lot of you don't like the Clean Water Act, the Safe Drinking Water Act. Fine, let's fight that out.

I see my colleague from Wyoming is here. He and I are constantly debating the issue of what should be a priority, but we don't do it this way. We need the entire Federal Government open. People need to get paid. The communities around the parks, around the

BLM land, around the Corps recreational lands, around our NASA Ames facility, and I could go on and on—they need to be paid because the mom-and-pop shops are suffering. We don't do government by piecemeal, not in the greatest Nation on Earth.

This reminds me of a woman who is drowning and someone goes to rescue her, but he only takes her halfway to the shore and leaves her to drown. This is what this is about. We don't say: I will save this child, but this one I don't have to save. I will save this community because I kind of like it, but this community, sorry. No one party has a right to do it, not the Republican Party, not the Democratic Party. We don't have the right to decide which kids live and which kids die, which families thrive and which sink, and which communities suffer and which communities don't. None should suffer, not in this Nation.

Open the government, pay our bills, and let's negotiate. Let's negotiate on everything.

I have a modification to suggest to the unanimous consent request, if I might.

I ask unanimous consent that the consent be modified as follows: That an amendment, which is at the desk, be agreed to; that the joint resolution, as amended, then be read a third time and passed, and the motions to reconsider be considered made and laid upon the table with no intervening action or debate. This amendment is the text that passed the Senate and is a clean continuing resolution for the entire government and is something that is already over in the House and reportedly has the support of a majority of the Members of the House of Representatives.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Will the Senator from Wyoming so modify his request?

Mr. ENZI. Reserving the right to object, the reason we are in this mess right now is because we didn't do the budgets piecemeal. We are supposed to do them piecemeal. We are supposed to do 12 separate spending bills. We are supposed to do them one at a time. We are supposed to have the right to amend them. This way we can get into the details of what we are spending, instead of an Omnibus bill, which is what is being suggested by this amendment.

Had we gone through each of those, we could have had all of these discussions. This is how we should do it, which is our second most important task. Our most important one, of course, is the defense of our country, but the second most important one is the spending bills, and we are not doing the spending bills. I know the other side will say: Well, we brought out one, it was filibustered, and we didn't get cloture on it. We only did that one time. There should have been every one of these bills brought up with the right to amend and then they wouldn't have been filibustered. Then they could have been passed when the House sent their

companion bill. Since we didn't do the process right, we are stuck with the continuing resolution.

Piecemeal is one way we can get it through. There was a request for a conference between the two sides. That was turned down by the Democrats. It would have been a chance to raise all of these things at once. That was turned down.

I object to the modification.
The PRESIDING OFFICER. Objection is heard.

Is there objection to the original request?

Mrs. BOXER. Reserving the right to object to the original request.

I feel I must respond. Senator MURRAY and I looked at each other and said: It feels as though it is "Alice in Wonderland."

Where were my colleagues 21 times when the chairman of the Budget Committee or her representatives asked to go to conference on the budget resolution, in which the conferees would negotiate how to fund the various parts of government, and that instruction would be sent to the appropriators? I do not understand what is happening here.

All we hear on the other side is negotiate, negotiate. They won't remember—selective memory, perhaps—that they objected 21 times to going to negotiations on the budget.

I have to say, this is the saddest display coming from the Republicans, who serve in the greatest legislative body in the world, to try to fund this government on a piecemeal basis, leaving some of our families winners and some of our families losers. It is pathetic, and they have caused this Republican shutdown. They can end it.

Because I feel my friend's narrow, piecemeal approach to running this country is very wrong for this country, I object.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Objection is heard.

The Senator from Iowa.

Mr. HARKIN. Does the Senator from Wyoming still have the floor?

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Wyoming has the floor.

Mr. HARKIN. Will the Senator from Wyoming yield for a question?

Mr. ENZI. I yield to the Senator.

Mr. HARKIN. My friend from Wyoming mentioned the fact that we should bring up appropriations bills. As someone who has been a member of the Appropriations Committee for quite a long time, I would remind my friend from Wyoming that earlier this year, on the first appropriations bill that we passed out of committee under the leadership of Senator MIKULSKI—it was the Transportation, Housing and Urban Development bill—if I am not mistaken, it had a number of Republican votes in committee. It was brought out onto the floor. An extraneous amendment was offered by the Senator from Kentucky, whereupon I believe Senator MIKULSKI, our leader, filed cloture on the bill so we could vote on the appropriations bill.

I say to my friend from Wyoming that all the Republicans on that side voted against cloture, voted against taking up that one appropriations bill—I am sorry, I am reminded that we had one Republican, the Republican from the State of Maine who did vote to go to cloture on that bill, one Republican out of all those on the other side.

I say to my friend from Wyoming, we tried to bring up the appropriations bill. It was Republicans who objected to even dealing with that appropriations bill. I would ask my friend from Wyoming if he had looked at that history and understood what had happened on the bill that came up at the time.

I thank my friend from Wyoming for yielding.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Wyoming.

Mr. ENZI. I have looked at both of the histories that have been discussed. One of them is the budget. The failure of the budget to not have a conference committee did not stop the Appropriations Committee from going through and doing 12 appropriations bills. I think that is what I count on the calendar that could have been brought up. There was only the one brought up.

The Senator has said, appropriately, that in committee there ought to be some amendments, but on the floor there were none.

What we have spent a lot of time on around the body this year is try to negotiate how few amendments would be brought up. That has taken longer than it would have taken to vote on the whole issue.

I ask unanimous consent to have printed in the RECORD the article from the Eagle Tribune.

There being no objection, the material was ordered to be printed in the RECORD, as follows:

[From the Eagle Tribune, Oct. 8, 2013]
'GESTAPO' TACTICS MEET SENIOR CITIZENS AT
YELLOWSTONE

(By John Macone)

NEWBURYPORT.—Pat Vaillancourt went on a trip last week that was intended to showcase some of America's greatest treasures.

Instead, the Salisbury resident said she and others on her tour bus witnessed an ugly spectacle that made her embarrassed, angry and heartbroken for her country.

Vaillancourt was one of thousands of people who found themselves in a national park as the federal government shutdown went into effect on Oct. 1. For many hours her tour group, which included senior citizen visitors from Japan, Australia, Canada and the United States, were locked in a Yellowstone National Park hotel under armed guard.

The tourists were treated harshly by armed park employees, she said, so much so that some of the foreign tourists with limited English skills thought they were under arrest.

When finally allowed to leave, the bus was not allowed to halt at all along the 2.5-hour trip out of the park, not even to stop at private bathrooms that were open along the route.

"We've become a country of fear, guns and control," said Vaillancourt, who grew up in

Lawrence. "It was like they brought out the armed forces. Nobody was saying, 'we're sorry,' it was all like—" as she clenched her fist and banged it against her forearm.

Vaillancourt took part in a nine-day tour of western parks and sites along with about four dozen senior citizen tourists. One of the highlights of the tour was to be Yellowstone, where they arrived just as the shutdown went into effect.

Rangers systematically sent visitors out of the park, though some groups that had hotel reservations—such as Vaillancourt's—were allowed to stay for two days. Those two days started out on a sour note, she said.

The bus stopped along a road when a large herd of bison passed nearby, and seniors filed out to take photos. Almost immediately, an armed ranger came by and ordered them to get back in, saying they couldn't "recreate." The tour guide, who had paid a \$300 fee the day before to bring the group into the park, argued that the seniors weren't "recreating," just taking photos.

"She responded and said, 'Sir, you are recreating,' and her tone became very aggressive," Vaillancourt said.

The seniors quickly filed back onboard and the bus went to the Old Faithful Inn, the park's premier lodge located adjacent to the park's most famous site, Old Faithful geyser. That was as close as they could get to the famous site—barricades were erected around Old Faithful, and the seniors were locked inside the hotel, where armed rangers stayed at the door.

"They looked like Hulk Hogans, armed. They told us you can't go outside," she said. "Some of the Asians who were on the tour said, 'Oh my God, are we under arrest?' They felt like they were criminals."

By Oct. 3 the park, which sees an average of 4,500 visitors a day, was nearly empty. The remaining hotel visitors were required to leave.

As the bus made its 2.5-hour journey out of Yellowstone, the tour guide made arrangements to stop at a full-service bathroom at an in-park dude ranch he had done business with in the past. Though the bus had its own small bathroom, Vaillancourt said seniors were looking for a more comfortable place to stop. But no stop was made—Vaillancourt said the dude ranch had been warned that its license to operate would be revoked if it allowed the bus to stop. So the bus continued on to Livingston, Mont., a gateway city to the park.

The bus trip made headlines in Livingston, where the local newspaper *Livingston Enterprise* interviewed the tour guide, Gordon Hodgson, who accused the park service of "Gestapo tactics."

"The national parks belong to the people," he told the *Enterprise*. "This isn't right."

Calls to Yellowstone's communications office were not returned, as most of the personnel have been furloughed.

Many of the foreign visitors were shocked and dismayed by what had happened and how they were treated, Vaillancourt said.

"A lot of people who were foreign said they wouldn't come back (to America)," she said.

The National Parks' aggressive actions have spawned significant criticism in western states. Governors in park-rich states such as Arizona have been thwarted in their efforts to fund partial reopenings of parks. The *Washington Times* quoted an unnamed Park Service official who said park law enforcement personnel were instructed to "make life as difficult for people as we can. It's disgusting."

The experience brought up many feelings in Vaillancourt. What struck her most was a widely circulated story about a group of World War II veterans who were on a trip to Washington, D.C., to see the World War II memorial when the shutdown began. The me-

morial was barricaded and guards were posted, but the vets pushed their way in.

That reminded her of her father, a World War II veteran who spent three years in a Japanese prisoner of war camp.

"My father took a lot of crap from the Japanese," she recalled, her eyes welling with tears. "Every day they made him bow to the Japanese flag. But he stood up to them."

"He always said to stand up for what you believe in, and don't let them push you around," she said, adding she was sad to see "fear, guns and control" turned on citizens in her own country.

Mr. ENZI. I object, and I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Iowa.

Mr. GRASSLEY. For the benefit of those on the other side of the aisle, I am not going to end my remarks with the issue of a unanimous consent, but I still have things I wish to say.

No one supports a government shutdown, not my side of the aisle or the other side of the aisle. Could we have avoided this situation? Sure. The government could be open and fully operating today but for the majority. There was an unwillingness to engage in a legitimate debate over proposals to amend ObamaCare or any other issues that have come before us, not even having a debate on those pieces that have come over from the other body. Hiding behind a motion to table is a way of avoiding debate.

As we know, the House passed and the Senate defeated three different continuing resolutions. Each one of those would have kept the government open and prevented a shutdown, but they were rejected by the Senate majority.

We are in this position because the majority refused to give the American people relief from the individual mandate and treat President Obama and his political appointees the same as all other Americans or as we now in Congress will be treated when it comes to health insurance.

We could have considered each of the 12 individual appropriations bills and passed them into law. But the Senate Democratic leadership has been derelict in that responsibility.

The Senate did not get into debate on a single one of those bills prior to the end of the fiscal year. I heard what my colleague from Iowa said, that one was brought up, then amendments were filed, and there wasn't a motion to move ahead. The point is the Senate is a deliberative body. Every Senator has a right to offer an amendment. We were denied that right by the majority or at least weren't assured of that right by the majority, and that is why cloture was not granted.

Of course, what the American people deserve is fair consideration of all the money we appropriate. We don't get that consideration on a continuing resolution, we get it lumped into one piece of legislation. We should, as the Senator from Wyoming said, be considering separate appropriations bills.

I remember not too long ago that a chairman of an Appropriations Com-

mittee on the other side of the aisle, when they were in the majority, was bragging to the Senate that for the first time in a long time the Senate passed every single appropriations bill before the end of the fiscal year. If it could be done then, why can't it be done now? But it isn't going to be done if we aren't willing to debate the bills.

It seems to me the American people, the taxpayers, deserve a thoughtful and good-faith effort to find common ground on our spending matters. It is a duty to pass spending bills.

Passing a continuing resolution has become a new normal around here. That is not right. It is not acceptable. While we wait for the Senate majority and the President of the United States to come to the negotiating table and end their government shutdown, we should be working to fund or reopen areas of government where there is agreement.

This is what we did when we passed the Pay Our Military Act, where we all agreed to pay those both in and out of uniform who defend our freedom. We made a commitment to them because of their commitment to our country. The military people deserve that piece of legislation.

This is what we should be doing to open our national parks and monuments. That is what we should be doing to ensure the critically important work of the National Institutes of Health.

Why hold these widely supported and critically necessary areas hostage? Why is the majority insisting on an all-or-nothing approach? Why can't we agree to fund these things we agree on and negotiate the rest?

At the very least, a little bit of common sense ought to prevail. It was common sense, for instance, when the minority leader made the point about chaplains. It is common sense that chaplains have an obedience not only to the government but to a higher authority, and they ought to be able to exercise that wherever they are.

We have a situation that the parks aren't open. We have a situation where the World War II Memorial was closed down. Open-air memorials have never been closed down when we had shutdowns in the past. A little common sense prevailing would avoid a lot of these situations we are bringing before the Senate for consideration.

Remember, the House of Representatives has passed legislation to keep the government open, and the Senate has refused it.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Indiana.

UNANIMOUS CONSENT REQUEST—H.J. RES. 85

Mr. COATS. There is an interesting debate going on without achieving any results. Let me take a crack at trying to make a more persuasive argument to see if my colleagues across the aisle would agree.

We can disagree on what is an essential function of government, what is a

constitutional function, what we ought to be funding and not funding. That is some of the debate we are in today.

I don't think anyone can disagree that an essential function of government is providing for our national defense, providing for homeland security, protecting Americans from terrorist threats, and responding to natural disasters. There is an organization in the government called the Federal Emergency Management Agency—FEMA is the common name—which is there to provide support to first responders whenever a natural disaster hits, whenever an intended disaster through an act of terrorism threatens this country or threatens Americans. These are functions that have to be immediately responded to, and FEMA has, over the years, improved significantly its ability to play a critical, crucial role in responding to these types of efforts that put Americans at risk.

What I am bringing forward, because we now know that while some functions of FEMA are being supported and funded and manned, many of those who would be essential should a disaster hit, whether it is natural or manmade, have been furloughed and are not available to assist in that first response. So I am simply asking that we consider seriously and gain support for the funding of FEMA to its full extent.

We have recently seen natural disasters in the United States. We had tornadoes roar through southern Indiana. FEMA was there just last year immediately. We are still in hurricane season, though we have been very fortunate this year and have not had a major hurricane land on the continental United States. Karen was in the gulf, but it dissipated. I might remind my colleagues hurricane season runs to November 30, so we are not out of the woods yet.

We have just seen a disaster in the Upper Midwest with an unprecedented amount of snow falling affecting ranchers, affecting communities; and some of our Northern States—South Dakota, Nebraska, Colorado, and others—have seen massive flooding and wildfires throughout the West. All of these are disasters that need to be responded to and FEMA plays a major role in all of that.

Who knows what potential terrorist attacks or threats are out there where we may need to have an immediate response. So what I am asking is that we consider funding FEMA at its current annual funding rate of \$10.2 billion. This bill will extend funding for FEMA until December 15, but funding in the bill could end sooner if Congress, hopefully, reaches a larger budget agreement before that time. Hurricane season doesn't end until November 30, as I said. We can ensure this critical government function is not in any way limited by passing this bill, which was supported by 23 Democrats in the House of Representatives. So it does have bipartisan support.

I, therefore, ask unanimous consent that the Senate proceed to the imme-

diately consideration of Calendar No. 210, H.J. Res. 85, making continuing appropriations for the Federal Emergency Management Agency; and I further ask unanimous consent that the measure be read three times and passed, and the motion to reconsider be considered made and laid upon the table.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection?

The assistant majority leader.

Mr. DURBIN. Reserving the right to object, I wish to commend my colleague from Indiana for noting the important role the Federal Government plays when it comes to natural disasters. There is not a Senator on this floor who hasn't seen this Federal response in his or her own home State because of a natural disaster. The Senator from Indiana is proposing we respond to these natural disasters with the government agencies that have been authorized, that are appropriated—usually appropriated—the funds to do so. He has picked one of them, FEMA, and he has picked it because of the possibility of a hurricane. That is a legitimate observation.

Unfortunately, the Senator from Indiana is not telling the whole story. FEMA plays an important role. Wouldn't the Senator like to have the National Weather Service fully funded so we could see the hurricane coming in advance? Sadly, it is a casualty of the Republican shutdown. Wouldn't the Senator like to have the Coast Guard available to have aerial observation of the oncoming hurricane and to provide that information to save lives? Sadly, it is not included in the unanimous consent request of the Senator from Indiana, and many of their functions are the victims of the Republican government shutdown.

I am sorry too that when it comes to the actual damage done by a disaster, FEMA plays an important role but not an exclusive role. The Senator from Indiana knows this, as I do from Illinois. Listen to the other agencies that are a critical part of responding to natural disasters: The Small Business Administration, they are usually the first on the scene with the Red Cross. Sadly, they are closed down because of the Republican shutdown of the government, and the Senator doesn't include them in his natural disaster request; DOT—Department of Transportation—and the need for emergency highways in the midst of hurricanes and tornadoes is not included in the request of the Senator from Indiana; the Corps of Engineers, the National Guard and Reserve, and the Public Health Service, none of these are included.

But the good news for the Senator from Indiana is we can take care of this together. I am going to suggest a modest modification to his request that covers all of the disaster agencies of the Federal Government that respond and keep us safe and do everything to put families back in their homes and businesses back in business. It is just a basic idea. Let's reopen the Federal Government.

I ask unanimous consent that the request of the Senator from Indiana be modified: that an amendment which is at the desk be agreed to; that the joint resolution, as amended, then be read a third time and passed; and the motions to reconsider be considered made and laid upon the table, with no intervening action or debate.

This amendment is the text that passed the Senate. It is a clean, no-strings-attached continuing resolution for the entire government and every disaster agency of the Federal Government. It is something that is already in the House of Representatives and has, reportedly, the support of a majority of the Members of the House of Representatives.

I hope the Senator from Indiana will stick with me. Let's get the job done and accept this modification.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Will Senator from Indiana so modify his request?

Mr. COATS. Reserving the right to object, I think my colleague, the Senator from Illinois, has made an important point. There are agencies that relate to the role FEMA plays when a natural disaster or our homeland security is threatened. I don't disagree with that. Therefore, I would be willing to modify my amendment to include the Coast Guard, the National Weather Service, and those agencies listed by the Senator from Illinois as a part of this. So directing this toward applying to natural disasters and threats to our homeland security, I think we should include those agencies. I think we could go forward with that request.

But I don't think that is what the Senator has offered. He offered a total CR, which we know is not going to go forward under the current circumstances, even though all of us want to get to that point. But as was discussed earlier by my colleagues, the regular order is usually to take appropriations—pieces of appropriations—and pass them on an individual basis. That simply is what we are doing, given the constraints we have that prevent us from doing that and coming forward.

I would say this: Three times the House has sent over opportunities to take up the full CR that have been rejected by the other side and a fourth opportunity to sit down and negotiate how we would go forward, which has also been rejected. So it works both ways.

If the Senator would be able to acknowledge the addition of what was listed directly related in his statement, then we could give that consideration here.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection to the request, as modified?

Mr. COATS. It is sort of a Ping-Pong game.

Mr. DURBIN. Which request, my request?

Mrs. FEINSTEIN. As modified by the Senator from Indiana.

Mr. DURBIN. Let me see if I can clarify.

Reserving the right to object, I understand the Senator from Indiana acknowledges that just appropriating money for FEMA does not respond to natural disasters in America. I have offered a continuing resolution which includes all of the disaster agencies. I think what he is asking me to do is to rewrite his original unanimous consent request.

I would just like a yes or no when it comes to my request to modify his original request. I am not certain what he has asked of me for further modification. So I would ask for clarification either from the Senator from Indiana or from the Chair.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Would the Senator from Indiana further modify his request?

Mr. COATS. Mr. President, I am not able to modify the request that has been made, as I understand it, by the Senator from Illinois, because he goes beyond what he listed as being needed to just address natural disasters and threats to homeland security. He listed a number of agencies that play into that role.

My understanding—and he can clarify this if I am wrong—is that he wanted to expand my request that he consent to adding the limited portion of what he mentioned relating to the role of FEMA and our national security issues and homeland security issues that we are faced with, but he added to that the request for funding of the entire functions of government, and that I cannot consent to.

Therefore, I object.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Objection is heard.

Is there objection to the original request?

Mr. DURBIN. Reserving the right to object, this is why this approach is so awful. Coming to the floor with 11 requests for 11 agencies, we estimate there are another 79 requests that need to be made for us to fund our government.

Grow up, Senate. You can't do this one agency at a time. We will be here in December doing agency by agency. What we are offering is a continuing resolution to fund the government, including all of the disaster agencies.

I object to the original request.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Objection is heard.

The Senator from North Dakota.

UNANIMOUS CONSENT REQUEST—H.R. 3230

Mr. HOEVEN. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate proceed to the immediate consideration of Calendar No. 206, H.R. 3230, making continuing appropriations during a government shutdown to provide pay and allowances to members of the Reserve components of the Armed Forces; I further ask unanimous consent that the measure be read three times and passed, and the motion to reconsider be considered made and laid upon the table.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection?

The Senator from Washington.

Mrs. MURRAY. Reserving the right to object, we are again seeing a request to fund a small part of our government. This request refers to our National Guard and Reserve. These are amazing members of our American family who have given and sacrificed with great honor and who I find to a one are selfless. Not a one of them would say take care of me but do not take care of any of the other Americans who are home today or whose businesses have been hurt or who don't have the services they need because of this government shutdown. I would think the National Guard and Reserve would stand tall and say: Let's take care of every American. It is what I have sworn my own life to do, and it is what this Federal Government should do.

So instead of just taking a piecemeal approach—again, just asking to take care of the Guard and Reserve—I would say to the Senator that it is easy to do this. We can take up a unanimous consent request that has been offered a number of times on our side to simply open the government for all the functions and not those we pick and choose at the moment or by saying one American is more important than another American or one function is more important than another function. It would be like picking your children. We don't do that in our families and we shouldn't do it in the Senate.

I ask unanimous consent that an amendment which is at the desk be agreed to; that the joint resolution, as amended, then be read a third time and passed; and the motions to reconsider be considered made and laid upon the table with no intervening action or debate.

This amendment is the text that passed the Senate—passed the Senate—and is a clean continuing resolution for the entire government. It is something that is already over in the House and reportedly has the support of a majority of the Members of the House of Representatives. I ask unanimous consent.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Does the Senator from North Dakota so modify his request?

Mr. HOEVEN. Reserving the right to object, the good Senator is talking about a resolution that has already gone from the Senate to the House. That has already been done. Why do we keep going back to things we don't have agreement on, rather than advancing on the things where we can get agreement?

We have instances where our National Guard is not getting paid. We have instances where our Reserve members are not being paid. We have instances where death benefits are not being paid to members of the military who made the ultimate sacrifice.

We passed the Pay Our Military Act. It went through the House, and it went through the Senate. We passed the Pay Our Military Act. All of our military members and the civilians who support

them should be paid. We passed legislation to do that, whether it is Active Forces, Guard, or Reserve. We have done that.

What we are simply asking for here is a measure that would make sure that gets done. That is what we are asking for. Let's make sure they all get paid. We passed the legislation in both Houses. Let's start working on the things we can agree on. That is why I have asked for consent to proceed with the measure, and I object to the request to modify it.

Again, I ask unanimous consent that my original measure, H.R. 3230, Pay Our Guard and Reserve Act, be considered.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Objection is heard. Is there objection to the original request?

Mrs. MURRAY. Mr. President, because this request doesn't resupply the stocks for our Guard and Reserve, it doesn't buy the tools or spare parts, it doesn't provide the energy and support they need to keep their facilities open, their electric bills can't be paid, their base maintenance can't be paid, they can't get their GI education benefits or mental health programs they need to make the transition home, because I believe—and I think all of us here believe—we should open all of those functions, I object.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Objection is heard.

The Senator from Florida.

UNANIMOUS CONSENT REQUEST H.J. RES. 84

Mr. RUBIO. Mr. President, despite all the noise going on, despite the fight we are having, I think one thing we can all agree is the most important thing for our country is to restore and save the American dream.

With all this talk of an economic recovery, it would shock people around this country who are struggling to find a job or perhaps have a job but the job is a dead-end job and it doesn't pay enough that they can't live off of what they are making—there are a lot of reasons that is happening, but one of the reasons that is happening is because in the 21st century, the jobs we need in order to make it to the middle class require a higher level of skill and education than they did in the past. This is particularly chronic and is hurting people who are growing up disadvantaged, especially children growing up in dangerous neighborhoods, with little access to education and broken families. They are struggling to get ahead, and we are seeing the impact of the societal breakdown every day.

We have a program called Head Start. This program helps children 5 years of age and younger. There are about 1 million kids a year who benefit from this program. It helps them get meals, it helps them get access to medical screenings, physical therapy for children with disabilities, and access to quality prekindergarten education for these children. This is not a perfect program. I would like to see reforms. I

would like to see this program become portable so that children and their families can access the best provider possible. But now is not the time for this debate. Now is the time to do everything we can to protect this program in the short term because as we speak there are thousands of children around this country already being impacted. In my State of Florida, almost 400 children have already been cut off from these services.

The reason I think this issue is different from the other ones that have been debated here is because the one thing you can't get back is time. Every day that goes by is one less day of education these children get. You can never give them back the time. You can always go back and pay somebody the money you owe them, but you can't give them back time.

So I would like to make a request that I hope will be accepted. I ask unanimous consent that the Senate proceed to the immediate consideration of H.J. Res. 84, which makes continuing appropriations for the Head Start Program, which was received from the House; I further ask that the measure be read three times and passed and that the motion to reconsider be considered made and laid upon the table.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection?

Mr. HARKIN. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent to be allowed to speak before I object to the unanimous consent request.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection to the request?

Without objection, it is so ordered.

Mr. HARKIN. Mr. President, the Senator from Florida, now wants to fund the Head Start Program. That is all well and good. We all recognize how invaluable the Head Start Program is. But I must say that listening to this request and the previous request and the other requests that have come up reminds me of an analogy.

The Republicans, quite frankly, have torn down the wall of government, and now they want to rebuild it brick by brick, but the way they want to rebuild it is by stacking the bricks. Here is a stack of bricks here, here is another stack of bricks, and here is another stack of bricks. Anyone will tell you that if you build a wall like that, it will be very weak. It won't hold together.

Our government is built from a wall of interconnected bricks. Look at a brick wall sometime. See how the bricks are interconnected. It provides strength. They all rely upon one another. They are interconnected. They provide a bulwark. If you stack those bricks one after the other, you will have a weak wall.

Now what the Republicans are saying is: Well, we have torn down that wall by shutting down the government. Now we want to build it brick by brick, but we will just stack them. We will have a brick here and a brick there.

This is what I am getting at with that analogy. The Senator from Florida wants to fund the Head Start Program—all well and good—but the Head Start Program is not a separate brick in that wall, it is interconnected to so many others.

A variety of other Federal programs are used in the Head Start Program. For example, States use the Child Care and Development Block Grant Program. They use the Temporary Assistance for Needy Families—TANF—Program. They use the social services block grants to provide wraparound services. In this way, for example, they can use some of those funds to extend the Head Start day from half a day to a full day. They can extend it from a full day to later hours for parents who have different working hours and working conditions. Under a shutdown, we don't have these other programs. So you might have the Head Start Program, but these other ones are all shut down.

Head Start providers use funding from the Child and Adult Care Food Program, which is funded under a whole different auspices of the government, but this food program comes in to provide healthy meals and nutritious services. I say to the Senator from Florida, I have visited a lot of Head Start centers, and they have nutritious food for these kids. That doesn't come under the Head Start Program, that comes from the Child and Adult Care Food Program. That is also shut down right now.

So, again, you could fund the Head Start Program, but all these other programs interlock and provide the support necessary for a good Head Start Program.

I might also say that the Head Start Program is a need-based program. So if someone wants to get their child into a Head Start Program, sometimes documentation is used and needed—documentation such as last year's tax returns. What was your income? Well, as long as the IRS is closed right now—out of 94,000 active IRS employees, 87,000 are furloughed—the IRS is not processing those.

The point I make to all and to the Senator from Florida is that it is not enough just to say: I want to reopen the Head Start Program. All of these bricks are interlocked. That is why it is so important to get the government running again.

If the Senator from Florida wants to cut funding for some of these other programs, there is plenty of opportunity to do that through the legislative process and the appropriations process. But just to say we are going to fund the Head Start Program, I say, with all due respect, that is a cruel irony to hold out to all of the families who use the Head Start Program that somehow, yes, we want to fund Head Start, but all the other things that go to support it and make it work, we are taking that away, and like a wall built of stacked bricks, it will fall over be-

cause it won't have the other supports that are needed.

So I respectfully object to the request from the Senator from Florida.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. COONS). Objection is heard.

The Senator from Kentucky.

UNANIMOUS CONSENT REQUEST—H.J. RES. 70

Mr. PAUL. Mr. President, let's be very clear here today. Republicans have come to the floor to reopen the government. We have offered request after request to reopen the government. We have offered to negotiate. From the other side, we hear: We will not negotiate, we will not compromise, and we will not reopen the government.

We have offered 13 different compromises today to reopen the government. We are willing to open the government.

They say: You must agree to everything or we will open nothing. We will not compromise.

We say to them: Why don't we open the parts of government we agree on?

Can we not end this farce of putting security guards in front of the World War II Memorial? My goodness, it is an open park. They spent more money closing it than we spend keeping it open. We spend more money guarding the World War II monument than we do protecting our Ambassador in Libya. It has become a farce.

Eighty-five percent of your government is open. We have offered today to open another 10 percent. Compromise means coming together and voting on some of the things on which you agree.

Every program we have wanted to open today—the national parks, NIH, Veterans Affairs, allowing funerals, for goodness' sakes, for our military heroes who have died in action—they say: We agree to it, but we won't agree to it.

So let's be very clear. Republicans have offered today very specific proposals for opening the government. The Democrats have uniformly rejected every appeal to open the government. So when one of our heroes can't have a funeral, when one of our people cannot be buried in Arlington Cemetery, when a World War II veteran goes to the monument and is barricaded and kept from viewing the monument to celebrate their service, be very clear that Republicans have asked to open the government, and the Democrats have rejected opening it at every point. In fact, they are very explicit with their strategy. We will not negotiate, they say. The President says he will not negotiate under pressure. My question is, When will he negotiate?

We have had one good thing happen for the American taxpayer in the last 5 years. The bad thing is \$7 trillion has been added to your kids' and your grandkids' tab. One good thing happened, and it happened under duress, and it happened with regard to the debt ceiling. The sequester actually cut the rate of growth of spending. It didn't cut spending, but it is cutting the rate of growth of spending. The sequester

happened under duress. The other side loves debt, loves spending, and doesn't care how much your kids or grandkids will have. They don't care. They have rejected every compromise.

What we are saying is that \$7 trillion of debt under President Obama is too much. The country is struggling. Economists say 1 million people are out of work because of the economy and because of the debt and because of the burden. And what do they want to do? Heap more debt on your kids and grandkids. I say enough is enough.

Let's reopen the government. Republicans today have said we will open the government. Let's open the parts we can agree to.

I ask unanimous consent that the Senate proceed to consideration of Calendar No. 207 for H.J. Res. 70 to open the national parks, to make continuing appropriations for the year 2014; that the measure be read three times and passed and the motion to reconsider be considered made and laid upon the table.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection?

Mr. DURBIN. Mr. President, reserving the right to object, it was my understanding that the Senator from Kentucky was going to make a request relative to the Veterans' Administration. The request relative to the national parks has been made earlier today. Is the request for the National Park Service?

Mr. PAUL. Yes. And I can go on. I want it to be very clear that the Senator is objecting to funding the national parks, so when people go to the national parks, they know they can call his office. We want to open the national parks, and we want to make it very clear that the Democratic side is objecting to funding the national parks.

Mr. DURBIN. Reserving the right to object.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Illinois.

Mr. DURBIN. I would like to clarify a few points relative to statements made by the junior Senator from Kentucky.

The first statement: The Democrats will not negotiate. Well, let me remind the Senator from Kentucky—and I am sure he has not forgotten this—the spending level for the continuing resolution is the Republican's spending level which we agreed to in negotiation, \$978 billion on an annual basis.

Mr. PAUL. It is the law.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Illinois has the floor.

Mr. DURBIN. It is the figure Republicans placed as part of the negotiations, which the majority leader agreed to. That was a negotiation which led to that number which Speaker BOEHNER agreed to.

Secondly, this argument by the Senator from Kentucky that the Republicans are here today to open the government—let me at least remind the Senator from Kentucky that it is their

failure to pass the continuing resolution by the Republican majority in the House that has closed the government for 9 straight days. We passed the continuing resolution to keep the government open at Republican spending levels. The House has refused. This is a Republican shutdown.

Point No. 3.

Mr. PAUL. Will the Senator yield for a question?

Mr. DURBIN. Let me finish my statement. I reserved the right to object and I have the floor—I stand corrected. The Senator from Kentucky has the floor, but I can stand and speak reserving the right to object to his unanimous consent request. Is that correct?

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The right is at the sufferance of the Senator who has the floor.

Mr. PAUL. I will suffer longer.

Mr. DURBIN. I thank the Senator from Kentucky because I went through a period of suffering a few moments ago.

The point I would like to make to the Senator from Kentucky about the national parks is one I hope he will understand. We want to open the entire government including the national parks and other lands, recreation facilities that are owned by the Federal Government beyond the national parks. When it comes to the World War II memorial the Senator made reference to, I was just there. We had a group of honored veterans from World War II who came from Illinois last week and I met them. They had access to the World War II Memorial. The reason there was any restriction was because the Republican shutdown took the employees away, which made it impossible for them to man their post.

Here is my offer to the Senator from Kentucky. It is not new, but it tells the story. Do the Republicans want to reopen the Government? Here is your chance.

I ask consent the Senator's request be modified as follows: That the amendment which is at the desk be agreed to, the joint resolution, as amended, be read a third time and passed; the motions to reconsider be considered made and laid on the table, with no intervening action or debate. This amendment is the text that has passed the Senate, it is a clean continuing, no-strings-attached resolution for the entire government including the national parks and many other important things. It is something that is already over in the House. It could be called in a matter of minutes and passed by a bipartisan majority in the House.

Mr. PAUL. Reserving the right to object.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Kentucky.

Mr. PAUL. I am not opposed to a clean CR. If we want to have a clean CR at a level at which we can balance the budget, I am all for it. If the Senator would accept a modification of a top-line number of \$940 billion to re-

place \$988 billion where appropriate throughout the continuing resolution, I can support his unanimous consent for a continuing resolution to go back over to the House.

Mr. DURBIN. Does the Senator object to my modification?

Mr. PAUL. I am offering a new modification to your modification and asking unanimous consent that the Senator accept as a new top-line number, where 988 appears, that \$988 billion appears throughout the continuing resolution, that if your objective is to have a clean CR, let's have a clean CR. I am happy to do it. But we need to do it and restrain the growth of spending in our government because your party has added so much our country is drowning in a sea of debt.

If you will agree to a top-line number of \$940 billion to replace \$988 billion throughout the continuing resolution where appropriate, I would agree to your consent request.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Does the Senator from Illinois so modify his modification?

Mr. DURBIN. Reserving the right to object, holding the floor at the sufferance of the junior Senator from Kentucky, I would like to ask him to respond to a question without yielding the floor.

Mr. PAUL. Sure.

Mr. DURBIN. Will the Senator tell us when was the last time our Federal Government had a surplus in the budget and who was the President at that time?

Mr. PAUL. Could I ask for a germane question?

Mr. DURBIN. Not really.

Mr. PAUL. Part of the answer is it was divided government. The interesting thing about divided government is divided government can work better, and with more conversation, I think we could get beyond this impasse. I think if we would negotiate—and here is the problem. I know now there are some in your party saying you will negotiate but the President said at least, oh, 20, maybe 30, maybe 40 times on national television he will not negotiate until he gets his way and that is still essentially what you guys are saying. You will negotiate after you get your way. The problem is, we think you will not negotiate unless there is a deadline, because the thing is, when you finally did negotiate—and here is my question to the Senator from Illinois through the Presiding Officer—did you vote for the sequester?

The sequester was not a Republican bill, it was voted on by many Members of your party. The numbers are yours.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The time of the Senator from Kentucky has expired. Procedurally—

Mr. DURBIN. I object to the modification to reduce the top-line budget number. This was a number negotiated between Speaker BOEHNER and the majority leader. Speaker BOEHNER said this was a number he could pass. I believe since we took a \$70 billion cut in

the budget resolution that has already passed in the Senate, I will not agree to further cuts in the programs.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. There is objection to the request?

Mr. DURBIN. I object.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection to the original request of the Senator from Kentucky?

Mr. PAUL. Is there objection to the original—the modification of my motion? I object.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Objection is heard.

Mr. DURBIN. I believe what is pending is the original unanimous consent request.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection to the original unanimous consent request?

Mr. DURBIN. For the record, the last time we had a surplus was under a Democratic President, President William Jefferson Clinton, and I object.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Objection is heard.

The Senator from Washington.

Mrs. MURRAY. Mr. President, what is the order?

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Washington is recognized.

Mrs. MURRAY. I yield 1 minute of my time to the Senator from California.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from California.

Mrs. BOXER. While the junior Senator from Kentucky is on the floor, I want to make sure the American people know the answer to the question my friend from Illinois asked him—who was President the last time there was not only a balanced budget but a surplus? The answer is Bill Clinton. And I was here when we had that vote. So, I think, was the Senator from Illinois. We did not get one Republican to join us in that budget that actually worked so well that we had a surplus until the Republicans put a huge tax cut for billionaires on the credit card, and two wars.

Let's be clear here, what this is about. We have to open the government, we have to pay our bills, and then let the good Senator from Washington go negotiate with Congressman RYAN, the chairman of the Budget Committee, and yes, we can see our way to a balanced budget. But let's not play these games of government by piecemeal spending.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Washington.

Mrs. MURRAY. Mr. President, as we now know, the government has been closed for business for more than a week. Across the country, newspapers are now filled with stories about how the shutdown is costing us jobs and slashing paychecks and interfering with everything from Head Start to the VA claims. This shutdown has already cost American workers and families a lot of pain and its impacts are only going to get worse. That is why what we heard this weekend from Speaker BOEHNER was so frustrating.

Speaker BOEHNER said:

The American people expect in Washington when we have a crisis like this, that the leaders will sit down and have a conversation.

Listening to Speaker BOEHNER, you would think a government shutdown fell out of the sky last week and caught everyone by surprise. The truth is it was completely avoidable. Senate Democrats tried to start negotiations to avoid this shutdown 18 times before October 1, and each time an extreme minority of Republicans stood up and said no. Speaker BOEHNER himself even spoke out in favor of delaying negotiations.

This shutdown did not happen by accident. We did not have to have this crisis. This shutdown happened because tea party Republicans and the Republicans who would not stand up to them chose brinkmanship over negotiations for 6 straight months. Now that we have reached this point, Republicans say they are ready to have a conversation—but only if we allow the government shutdown to continue.

Democrats are more than happy to talk about the budget, but Republican insistence on keeping the government closed during these negotiations makes no sense at all. It suggests that they are not thinking about how this shutdown is impacting our families and our businesses, which cannot afford talk at the expense of action.

I would like to talk about some of those impacts today. At a time when we should be focused on creating jobs and growing our economy, this shutdown is hurting workers and businesses and our recovery. From the sandwich shops that rely on Federal employees who come by for lunch every day to construction companies that cannot get contracts because of all the economic uncertainty to major corporations such as Boeing, that are considering furloughs, it is clear the shutdown is putting both public and private sector jobs at risk. Because Federal workers at agencies such as the IRS and Social Security Administration are out of work, thousands of potential home buyers will be unable to get their mortgages approved, which could damage our housing recovery which has boosted our economy.

Our Nation's veterans deserve our gratitude and our respect and all the support we can offer. But this shutdown is creating uncertainty for these men and women who have heroically served our country.

Veterans make up nearly 30 percent of the Federal workforce—30 percent. They are feeling the effects of furloughs. The shutdown has worsened the backlog in disability claims at the Department of Veterans Affairs, and veterans across the country are now watching and waiting for an end to this shutdown because, if it goes long enough, their benefits could be threatened. Nearly 640,000 veterans in my home State of Washington alone are at risk of losing their VA benefits if this

shutdown extends past October. It should not have to be said, but they deserve much better. So do the struggling families who are now wondering how much longer they will be able to put food on their table.

This shutdown will stop funding for the Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants, and Children, known as WIC, which helps more than 8.9 million struggling moms and young children get healthy food. Many of our States are now scrambling to find money to keep those WIC operations going. The USDA now estimates that we will only be able to continue as usual until the end of October, until their funding runs out.

Other struggling parents wonder where they will send their children while they are at work. More than 7,000 children and their families have lost access to Head Start due to this shutdown. And, by the way, that is on top of the 57,000 slots as a result of the sequestration that has impacted so many.

As much as Republicans may not want to acknowledge it, the effects of this shutdown are far-reaching and severe and, should this government stay closed, it will only get harder for agencies to continue providing services that are so crucial to our families and communities. So when Speaker BOEHNER says the American people expect their leaders to sit down and have a conversation—you know what. That is what I have been saying for the last 6 months. But what I will not accept and what I strongly believe the American people will not accept is starting a conversation while we are in this shutdown, which is hurting our economy and some of our most vulnerable children and families, and does even more damage. Now is not the time to talk about avoiding a shutdown, it is the time to actually do it.

Speaker BOEHNER has said there are not votes in the House to pass a clean continuing resolution that will simply keep our government open. If that is the case, I would like him to prove it. Speaker BOEHNER should bring up the Senate's clean continuing resolution and allow Democrats and Republicans to vote on it. Then he should join Democrats in preventing a default, without delay and without strings attached because, I want to be very clear, a default on U.S. debts would be unprecedented and devastating.

I held a hearing a few weeks ago in our Senate Budget Committee to talk about the impact of brinkmanship and uncertainty on our economy. The economists who joined us warned us that for families in my home State of Washington and across the country, default would mean mortgage rates and student loan costs would rise, making it harder to afford home ownership or even afford tuition; that home prices and stock prices would fall and businesses of all sizes would have trouble financing their activities, which would of course lead to layoffs and surging unemployment.

I am not going to let the tea party cause Washington State families that kind of hardship. But after we have reopened the government, prevented this default, and made sure our families and communities are no longer paying the price for tea party brinkmanship, I would be more than happy to begin the negotiations that Democrats have been out here requesting to have for months. It is clearer every day that there is bipartisan support for those responsible steps. Democrats and Republicans may not agree on much, but I think a lot of us on both sides of this aisle have had enough of tea party brinkmanship and seen enough of governing by crisis.

We are ready, together, to resolve our differences in a way that works for the American people and our economy, and I sincerely hope Speaker BOEHNER will not let the tea party stand in our way.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Massachusetts.

Ms. WARREN. Mr. President, the U.S. Treasury says that in exactly 8 days it will not have enough money to pay the government's bills. We are not in this position because the Secretary of the Treasury or the President spent more than they were supposed to. The Constitution allows them to spend only what Congress tells them to spend, and that is exactly what they have done.

We are not in this position because investors refused to buy our bonds. Investors are lining up around the block to buy those. We are in this position for one reason and one reason only: Congress told the government to spend more money than we have. Congress told the Treasury to run up our debt to pay for it, but now Congress is threatening to run out on the bill.

If that strikes you as bizarre, you are not alone. The United States is the only democracy in the world where the legislature debates whether it should pay the bills it has already incurred. The United States is the only democracy that regularly considers whether to run out on its bills; that is, to voluntarily default on its debt.

Congress exercises direct control over the amount the Federal Government spends and the amount the Federal Government brings in through taxes and fees. Our national debt is simply a function of those two things—the money coming in and the money going out—and so Congress exercises direct control over the amount of debt we have. If Congress is unhappy with the size of the debt, it should change how much it spends or how much it brings in. There is no other option. The idea that we can somehow renege on our debts without paying a huge price is a fantasy, a dangerous fantasy.

Consider what happened in 2011, the last time the government came up to the edge of a voluntary default. Even the possibility that the government would not make good on its debts spooked investors and pushed up inter-

est rates. According to the Bipartisan Policy Center, the interest rate increase from the last time the United States even talked about default will cost the government \$19 billion over 10 years. That is \$19 billion that could have brought back funding for Head Start, Meals On Wheels or our military. That is \$19 billion that could have eased the interest rates on student loans or been invested in medical research. That is \$19 billion that could have been used to pay down the debt. Instead, that is \$19 billion that was just flushed down the drain. Does anyone here care about wasteful government? Well, then, that is it.

The last time the government came to the edge of a voluntary default, consumers and businesses got spooked too. The S&P dropped by more than 17 percent, \$800 billion in retirement assets vanished, mortgage rates went up nearly three-quarters of a point, costing every new homeowner real money. The net result was less consumer spending, fewer business investments, lower home ownership rates, and slower job growth.

That is what happened the last time Congress came to the edge of a voluntary default. What happens if Congress actually defaults? If that happens, there is widespread concern among economists of every political persuasion that we would plunge into another recession.

Government debt may seem to be an abstract and complicated thing, but, in fact, it is pretty simple. The government owes money to two main groups of people. It owes payments on U.S. bonds, which are mostly owned by foreign governments, and it owes money to the American people for things such as Social Security payments and Medicare reimbursements for hospitals and physicians. It owes paychecks to the military and retirement checks to veterans.

If the Treasury does not have enough money to make all of its payments, then it will likely try to minimize the damage to America's credit rating, and that means making payments on the bonds held by foreign investors, leaving others to absorb the losses.

Who will not get paid? Will it be seniors who rely on Social Security to live? Will it be hospitals that rely on Medicare to operate? Will it be our servicemembers who rely on paychecks to help their families back home? Will it be Federal contractors, large and small, who support millions of jobs nationwide?

The Treasury makes 80 million payments a month and many of them will be delayed. As more time passes, unpaid bills will pile up. From there, it just gets worse. The Federal Government's inability to pay its bills could set off a chain reaction of defaults, sending the financial system into turmoil. Millions of people who rely on Federal payments might not have the money they need to keep current on their student loans or their mortgages

or their small business loans. That could cause interest rates to spike, leading to a wave of further defaults, while the financial markets would be faced with the very real possibility that the United States would not have enough money to make payments on its bonds.

American Treasury bonds are considered safe investments. They are considered so safe that they are used as collateral in millions of financial transactions around the world. If the United States does not have enough money to pay its bills, parties to these transactions will demand more collateral or different forms of collateral. That has a domino effect throughout the economy. The end result could be the kind of freeze of the credit markets that we saw after the failure of Lehman Brothers collapsed in 2008, the freeze that triggered the financial crisis.

The idea that we can renege on our debts and not pay a huge price is a dangerous fantasy. I have heard some extremists in Congress argue that even if the United States runs out of money to pay all its bills, it will not be so bad because the Treasury will be able to keep current on its bond payments and avoid a technical default.

That is a heck of a best case scenario, making bond payments to foreign governments, mostly China and Japan, while holding up Social Security payments, hospital payments, and military payments here at home. It is a terrible idea. People count on those payments to live.

It is also a terrible idea that would not work. Just ask top Wall Street executives, including the CEO of Goldman Sachs who said publicly and unequivocally that prioritizing bond payments would still create "insurmountable uncertainty for investors," causing a spike in interest rates that would immediately increase monthly payments on student loans, mortgages, other personal debt, and would cripple job growth. Like it or not, the threat of default will cause this country a lot of pain.

I want to make this absolutely clear: If we run out of money to pay our bills, the world will view this as the first default in the history of the United States. Wall Street and the global financial markets will view this as the first default in the history of the United States.

This fight is about financial responsibility. Financially responsible people don't charge thousands of dollars on their credit cards and then tear up the bill when it arrives. Financially responsible Nations don't do that either. When we put our name on the line saying that a debt is backed up by the full faith and credit of the United States, we follow through. We protect our good name. We protect our good credit.

For many things that we do in Congress, we can make a mistake and then back up and fix it. A default on our national debt is not one of those things. If we default and pay late, the damage could be irreversible.

The first time we flirted with default was the first time in history that America's credit rating fell. If we actually default, some economists estimate we will add \$75 billion a year to the debt in additional interest payments. That is three-quarters of \$1 trillion over the next 10 years. There are a lot of good things to do with that money. Flushing it down the drain is not one of them.

If we default on our debt, we could bring on a worldwide recession, a recession that would pummel hard-working middle-class people, people who lost their homes and jobs and retirement savings and who are barely getting back on their feet. Maybe we can escape a recession—maybe—but we are playing with the lives of every American, and it is not what the American people sent us to do. This is no time to act out dangerous fantasies.

We must raise the debt ceiling. We must raise it now. A bedrock financial principle of government is to tell the world that the United States always pays its debts in full and on time. That is who we are.

I thank the Chair, and I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Maryland.

Mr. CARDIN. Mr. President, I join my colleagues in taking the floor to stress the urgency of action. I agree with my colleague from Massachusetts and her comments about the devastating impact the failure to pay our bills would have on our economy, on our Nation's reputation, and on the worldwide economy. That would make absolutely no sense at all and would put our Nation at great risk.

I thank the Senator for taking the time to explain the specific consequences if we were to allow the U.S. Treasury to be put in the position where it could not honor all of the obligations that have already been incurred.

This is not about increasing spending. This is about paying the bills we have already incurred. Whether it is for those who hold our bonds, those who are entitled to a payroll check or those who are entitled to a contractor's check, we have to honor our bills. That is what America's great reputation is all about.

I thank the Senator for bringing that up.

The combination of a government shutdown combined with not paying our bills will have an impact on our economy that will be very hard for us to overcome. We have already been harmed. This government shutdown has already hurt America. It has hurt us internationally.

This past week President Obama was supposed to be at the Asian economic summit. The Presiding Officer—the Senator from Delaware who serves on the Foreign Relations Committee—knows very well the importance of that particular conference.

The headliner of that conference should have been President Obama

pointing out how important the rebalanced Asia is to America's economy and that we are open for business; instead, America was closed for business. The headliner at that economic summit was President Xi of China. That is not what this Nation needed. We were harmed by that government shutdown and the President's inability to travel to Asia. Make no mistake about it, it hurt America.

Our economy has already been hurt by the shutdown. Every day that the government is shut down, it hurts our economy. I can give a lot of specific examples. For instance, there was a report in this morning's paper about the State of Colorado and how it recently experienced one of the worst floods in its history which caused a devastating impact on its economy. They are now telling us that this shutdown is approaching the economic damage to Colorado that nature did to it a couple of weeks ago by the floods. However, there is a major difference: We can't stop what nature does—we can try to mitigate it—but we can stop this government shutdown. This is a government problem that we have imposed on the people of Colorado, the people of Maryland, the people of Delaware, and the people of our entire country.

This shutdown has hurt the taxpayers of this country. I have heard my conservative friends say that we want to make sure we don't spend so much money. We want to help the taxpayers. In this short period of time already the shutdown has cost the taxpayers of this country a reported \$2 billion. That is just wasted taxpayer dollars. We have a responsibility to care for the public funds. The way to do that right now is to open government and stop wasting taxpayer dollars.

I have been on this floor many times to talk about the harm we are doing to the Federal workforce. Yes, we are harming the Federal workforce; there is no question about it. I am particularly sensitive because this region has more Federal workers—of the 800,000 who have been furloughed, over 300,000 come from this region. By the way, 30 percent are veterans. The people who have served our Nation are now being furloughed because of this government shutdown. Maryland's workforce is about 10 percent of Federal workers. So this has had a real impact on the State I have the honor of representing in the Senate. Each one of those 800,000 people whom we represent is real. They are not just numbers. These are real people who have been harmed by the closing of the Federal Government.

Let me speak about a couple of people whom I have heard about or who have called me. Kayla is a 15-year-old who I spoke to on the telephone. She told me about how her parents are worried. Both of her parents are Federal workers, and she, a 15-year-old, sensed the fear in her parents as to whether they will be able to pay their bills. We put that family at risk by failing to keep government open.

Melissa Ayres is a furloughed Federal worker at the Social Security Administration. Her husband was unemployed for 2½ years as a result of our economic downturn. Now his company is recovering, but Melissa was the principal wage earner. She stated:

I have always been the primary earner until Monday. Now I think: What do I do to support my family?

The government shutdown has hurt Melissa Ayres and her family.

I heard from a farmer on the eastern shore of Maryland's Cecil County. He is part of the conservation stewardship program. I know the Presiding Officer, the Senator from Delaware, is well aware of that. But what this person has done is taken some income away from his farming activities by planting buffer crops. Those buffer crops help with reducing the amount of pollutants that run off into the Chester River, in this case, which will flow into the Chesapeake Bay. So he is being a good steward of the environment, and he enrolled in the conservation stewardship program. As part of that, he gets a payment from that fund, because he is giving up some of the income of his farming activities in order to help us preserve the Chesapeake Bay. During this shutdown, that payment is not being made.

He has put himself in a tough position. He did the right thing. He has put his family at risk. He told me he has a young child who is undergoing certain treatment for his eye. He doesn't know whether he has the money for his child to continue in that medical treatment. He needs the check for his participation in this program.

This government shutdown has had a real impact on real people.

Johnny Zuagar who works at the Census Bureau—I should say used to work at the Census Bureau because he has been furloughed. Of the 5,000 employees at the Census Bureau, less than 40 are currently working—forty out of 5,000. The budget he has for his family is based upon his paycheck. If he doesn't get his full paycheck, he can't pay his bills. So his question is which bills should he pay and which not pay.

That is the situation we are putting people in as a result of this government shutdown.

Marcelo Del Canto was here earlier this week. He works with helping in the fight against substance abuse. He has been a Federal worker for 8 years. He is in the unenviable position that he and his wife both work for the Federal Government, and they have both been furloughed. He is a Marylander and just recently bought a home in Maryland. He has a mortgage. If he doesn't get a paycheck, how does he pay his mortgage? The mortgage company is not going to say: Oh, government shutdown. You don't have to pay your mortgage payments.

This shutdown is having a real impact on real families in my State of Maryland and in every State in this Nation.

Then there are agencies that just can't do their work that will hurt our country. The Environmental Protection Agency currently has 93 percent of its workforce on furlough. That means we are at risk with our public health—clean air, clean water. Our environment is at risk. The Chesapeake Bay is at greater risk because the people out there doing the monitoring and doing the enforcement are not there. Scientists are not doing what they need to be doing in order to help us with public health and to deal with our environment.

Let me tell my colleagues that it is also directly hurting our economy. In Baltimore, one of the most important economic development sites, Harbor Point, in downtown Baltimore, which is being developed is a RCRA site, which requires the approval of the Environmental Protection Agency in order to move forward with the economic development plan. The people who would do that approval process are on furlough. That project is now on hold and the economic development that would help Baltimore and our State economy is now on hold.

The shutdown is having a real effect on real people.

The National Institute of Standards and Technology, NIST, which is located in the State of Maryland, does work that is so important for innovation, for science, and technology. They do work to help us have a competitive edge internationally. Ninety-one percent of their workforce is on furlough. How do we expect to be competitive?

This year, the SAMMI Awards were recently given out. The SAMMI Awards are given to Federal workers who excel in public service. These are our frontliners. These are the people who are serving their nation, and we want to honor them. I want to recognize some of the people who were being honored at the SAMMI Awards this year. One is Daniel Madrzykowski. He works at NIST. I mention him because he has been there for 28 years. The work he does is to figure out how he can keep our first responders who fight fires safe. He does the research as to how they can go into a building in a safer way. Well, he is furloughed, and our first responders are at a little bit greater risk today as a result of the government shutdown.

The shutdown is having an effect on real people.

I read with interest how we celebrated the Nobel Prize in medicine going to James Rothman and Randy Schekman for the incredible work they did. I don't know if I can explain what they did, but I will tell my colleagues that it is incredible. They were able to reach that pinnacle in their careers and reach their accomplishments because during their career they were supported by the National Institutes of Health. NIH does basic research which is so important—the building blocks for discovery in America. It provides incentives for young people to go into science and to go into research.

Will we have the next group of Nobel laureates? Today it is less certain than it was a week ago. NIH cannot support those types of research grants today. Their people are on furlough. America is not open for business. Real people are being hurt by what is happening.

It is not just in government employment. I can talk about private sector employment.

It was just reported today that Lockheed will be laying off 400 Maryland workers as a result of the shutdown. I can give many more examples of private companies that are laying off people as a result of this shutdown.

The bottom line is this: We hear from some of our Republican colleagues in the House that we have to negotiate, we have to pick winners and losers; we have to wait for a crisis to occur in a particular agency before they will consider a special bill to open some of those agencies. So let me just conclude by the quote I cited once before on the floor of the Senate from the Baltimore Sunpapers. It says, in regards to negotiations and what we should do:

The gun isn't raised to Mr. Obama's head or to the Senate's. The Democrats have no particular stake in passing a continuing resolution or in raising the debt ceiling other than keeping public order and doing what any reasonable person expects Congress to do. No, the gun is raised at the nation as a whole. That's why descriptions like "ransom" and "hostage" are not mere hyperbole, they are as close as the English language gets to accurately describing the GOP strategy.

It is time for Speaker BOEHNER to put down the gun. It is time for us to open government and to make sure we pay our bills, and then, yes, we want to negotiate. For 6 months, we have been trying to negotiate a budget. Open government, pay our bills, and then let's negotiate a responsible budget for this Nation.

With that, I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Rhode Island.

MR. REED. Mr. President, I rise today to discuss the twin manufactured crises that are facing the country: A hobbled government and the threat of default.

I have seen some describe this as a game, and I have heard others say it is just partisanship posturing. But this situation is neither. This is serious business. In fact, I am deeply troubled about this—not only as a Senator representing the State of Rhode Island, but as an American—about where my country is going.

I am dismayed that some on the other side have decided that for whatever reason—and those reasons seem to keep changing—the only way to achieve their goal—and their goals seem to keep changing—is to shut the government down and suggest that defaulting on our debt will have no consequences.

It would be a nice fiction if we could say: Well, America really didn't have to pay its bills. That we don't have to pay for the trillions we spent in Iraq

and in Afghanistan, or for the significant tax cuts under President Bush that benefited the wealthiest Americans. I didn't support the operations in Iraq, and I didn't support those tax cuts. I think we could have invested the money much more wisely and helped America.

But the reality is all these bills are coming due, and the United States Treasury has to pay them.

Some of my colleagues on the other side are suggesting: Well, we can prioritize payments. No one will be upset. No one will be hurt if we don't pay the bills as they come due. We will just pick the ones we want to pay.

But these are not Democratic bills. They are not Republican bills. These are America's bills. They were approved by the Congress of the United States under Republican Presidents and Democrat Presidents, under Republican Congresses and Democrat Congresses. And as they come due, they must be paid.

But we are here today in this manufactured crisis that essentially locks out and blocks the American people from accessing their government—from accessing basic government services. Women and children receiving food under the WIC program, Head Start—a whole panoply of Americans who are literally being denied benefits they earned, or benefits that are necessary not just for their health, but for the health and vitality of the fabric of America. Then, on top of that, is the added threat of a default on our obligations—already accrued, already authorized, already appropriated obligations—not new borrowing for new expenditures. These bills are coming due.

We have seen this ever-changing theme from the other side about why they have to do these things. At first it was an effort to repeal ObamaCare. Then it was a 1-year delay of health insurance under the Affordable Care Act. Then it was just a delay of part of the law. Then it was repealing a tax that was part of the law. Now, we have heard about Canadian oil pipelines, the Consumer Financial Protection Bureau, and cutting Medicaid. The rationale keeps changing and suggesting that the reasons behind this lockout are not only unclear to the American public, they are unclear to the proponents. In fact, some are suggesting that this is also about cutting Social Security and Medicare and other programs that are central to every family in this country. Indeed, it seems as though they have transitioned from "let's take ObamaCare and repeal it" to "let's take the New Deal and repeal that." In fact, one of our colleagues in the House apparently suggested he didn't know what he wanted; he just knew he wanted something in exchange for an open government that is functioning and a government that pays its bills.

It is hard not to draw the conclusion that many of my colleagues on the other side have simply committed themselves to extracting major policy

concessions, whatever they can get, by threatening to default on our debt and by continuing to lock out the American people from its government. They are sadly using potential economic chaos to get their way.

Now I don't think Republicans are debating seriously—and we have heard this argument from them for years going back—for decades, in fact—to the initial debate on Medicare, that it is evil socialized medicine. Now I am sure during the discussion of the New Deal, there were criticisms of growing central government, but to seriously take away these programs I think would cause the American people to stand up and say no, since most if not every American fundamentally depends on them. Particularly as they get to the point where they are retired or they are approaching retirement.

So now the Republican story has shifted, as they have gotten closer and closer to what seems to be some of their real motivating factors: shrinking government dramatically, not just those parts that are popular. Now they are beginning to hint that this is about something more fundamental. This is about tearing up the basic social contract where people have worked all their lives, paid into Social Security, and will get Social Security benefits. For them, this is about tearing up the social contract that if you have worked, you have paid into the Medicare system, you will get Medicare benefits.

Of course now they have shifted their current story again, and now it is all about negotiation, that we have not negotiated. That is why they have to shut down the government and default on the debt of the United States. The irony, of course, is that Democrats have been, indeed, trying to go into serious and bipartisan negotiations about our budget for many months. Indeed, months ago, in March, as I recall, the Senate, after taking 47 rollcall votes, passed a solid, balanced, and sensible budget plan and asked to negotiate with the other body in a conference. Indeed, at the beginning of the year, the Speaker called for following the budget process, for following regular order.

At one point, the other side even demanded that Senators and Congresswomen and men should not be paid if there was no budget resolution. But, sadly, months later, after we had passed our budget, a handful of colleagues in this body, on the Republican side, have been blocking us from going to conference. They are insisting that as any precondition to a bipartisan conference we could not talk about raising revenue, or take actions that will ensure the government be able to pay its bills. They have essentially stopped regular order.

For his part, the Speaker of the House refused to appoint conferees for months, as well, apparently fearful that Republicans might have to actually vote on some of their proposals that have been incorporated over the

years in various Republican budgets with respect to Medicare, Medicaid, and other programs.

But now as we approach default, my colleagues on the other side of the aisle are saying: Oh, it is time to negotiate on the budget.

It was time months ago when we asked to go to conference. It was time weeks ago. Now it is time to ensure that we pay our bills and we open the government.

We have come to the Senate floor 21 times so far to seek to go to conference to negotiate with the House on the budget. What do we hear? When we ask to go to negotiate, no. But, when we ask them to open the government, to pay our bills, they say no let's negotiate. That is not the way to conduct the business of this government. It is not the way to provide the confidence our economy needs to go forward. It is not the way to provide families the confidence they need to face the rigors of daily life—of educating children, of taking care of their health care, of contributing to their community.

We have had consistent and constant objections, which frustrate our ability to go to conference and negotiate, over many, many, many months. But after all their other rationales—defund ObamaCare, delay ObamaCare, delay the personal mandate—now it has come down to let's negotiate, when indeed, Republicans have rejected that approach 21 times on the floor of the Senate.

It is time for the other Chamber to reopen the government and agree to pay our bills. They can do that by bringing to the floor very quickly—and they can procedurally: a clean CR—a term of art that was Washington speak until a week or two ago, but now everyone knows. It simply sets for a few weeks the amount of money we can spend and allows us to open the government.

Americans are being hurt by the shutdown, and they will be hurt even more grievously if we default on our debt. It is continually amazing to me that the other side persists in shutting down the government and threatening to default on the debt.

But, you have a response by the other side, particularly, that is consistent with what we heard during their primary campaign for the Presidency: Let's shut down some government agencies. Now it is the other side of that coin: Republicans will just open a few government agencies, not the whole government, but the ones—and they change or they increase each day—that they think are important. Each day they seem to have another idea about: Well, we have to open this. It will be a good headline. It will be a good talking point.

For example, they have talked about opening the national parks, the Smithsonian, and other museums. But, let's remember that in the House, Republicans have proposed cutting the allocation for the Department of Interior

Appropriations Bill by \$5.5 billion from last year.

So we have to go forward and we have to resolve this situation. We cannot allow this lockout to continue. We have to do what Leader REID has said quite succinctly: open the government, pay our bills, go to conference on the budget, and then negotiate everything that is within reason to negotiate. Let's do that for the American people. We are ready to do it. I hope our colleagues will agree to do it also.

With that, I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. BROWN). The Senator from Delaware is recognized.

Mr. COONS. Mr. President, I would like to start by reading a letter I received this week. So many of us in the Senate are operating with furloughed staff, and we are doing our best to read and respond to the letters we are getting from home, the calls that are coming into our offices. This one touched me in particular. It began:

My name is MSgt Corey P DiLuzio. I am an Air Reserve Technician at Dover AFB. I have served this great nation for 12 years without question or reservation. Every time I have been called upon, I have answered the call, left my family behind, and served proudly as maintainer for the C-17 aircraft. I know you understand the reach and the mission requirements for such an aircraft. I tell you this not for a thank you or any type of acknowledgement. I tell you this—

Master Sergeant DiLuzio writes—

because I am also a husband to a woman who has stood by my side in support for every deployment. I tell you this because I am the father of a three-year-old boy who doesn't even question the answer Daddy's at work. I understand a man in your position has made . . . sacrifices as well, however, today I had to tell my family I am unable to work. Not because of anything I have control of, but because of decisions made by individuals who will not miss a paycheck; individuals who will always know when the next check is coming. I write this understanding that it will fall on deaf ears, and I am usually one that remains quiet and follows the orders for those appointed above me, however, enough is enough. Please do your part in resolving this issue so I can get back to serving my country and my family.

Sincerely yours, MSgt Corey DiLuzio.

It pains me that the master sergeant thought his letter would fall on deaf ears, that no one here—that neither I nor any of my colleagues—would hear or care about the concerns of a man—his wife, his family—who has served this country and who stands ready to continue serving this country but whose family is being harmed by the mindless, purposeless shutdown of the government that is now in day 9—this first government shutdown in 17 years, and by all indications one that will continue into another week.

I start by saying to Master Sergeant DiLuzio: I am sorry. I am sorry for the needless pain and difficulty this shutdown is imposing on your family and so many other families across this country. Roughly 800,000 Federal employees have been furloughed at different times in the last 9 days, and while some may be returning to Active service, they

will be getting IOUs rather than regular paychecks. All over this country, private contractors, as we have heard from other colleagues today, are also laying off people because they cannot get the permits or work permission or the site access they need to move forward.

This shutdown is continuing to harm our country, our reputation, our economy, our families. It is a needless, manufactured, self-imposed wound.

I wrestle with this because we are facing twin manufactured crises, as Senator REED of Rhode Island just finished saying: hobbled government due to this shutdown on the one hand and the steadily increasing risk of default on the other—these twin manufactured crises seeking some purpose that is unclear from day-to-day. When this government shutdown started, it seemed to be aimed at what, repealing the Affordable Care Act, so-called ObamaCare, and then 1 day later it seemed to be aimed at delaying the Affordable Care Act, and then when that clearly was unsuccessful, it seemed to be aimed at seeking some partial repeal of the Affordable Care Act and now it is an ongoing crisis in search of a purpose. The menu of potential demands is growing, and the impact on our families and our communities is growing as well.

The House has been wasting its time on mini microappropriations bills in an attempt to give reporters and folks back home the sense that they are actually doing something, when it is just misdirection. They think all the activity will keep the American people from noticing that Speaker BOEHNER is not bringing up the one bill that could reopen this government in a matter of minutes—a so-called clean continuing resolution, a simple extension of current spending levels.

I know to all who watch—Master Sergeant DiLuzio and many others—we sometimes speak in language that is opaque, that is difficult to understand. We talk about sequester and continuing resolutions and so forth. So I am going to try and work through these issues in a way that is accessible and direct.

Let's be clear. This government is shut down right now because the House would not pass a 6-week extension—an extension to November 15—of what is required to keep us open. Today that would be just over 4 weeks. We are literally fighting over a 4-week funding bill. How absurd is it that all of this is over a measure that would have only funded the government in the first case for another 4 weeks from now. There is, frankly, nothing about this situation that is not absurd.

Every day the House Republicans show up with a new strategy, a new press conference, a new message, and, as I said, all the while not explaining exactly why the government is shut down. Initially, it was shut down to prevent the implementation of the Affordable Care Act, but that is moving

forward, as it was always going to be because it is an enacted program.

So what is the current message from the House? They say they are the only ones ready to negotiate, that they are alone at the table, sitting there with jackets off, in their bright, starched, white shirts, waiting for Senate Democrats to meet them at the table and negotiate. Another farce, another fantasy.

I am, frankly, tired and frustrated with the games that seem to be played here. I would like to highlight, if I could, a few of our real efforts to work collaboratively, to answer the question, why won't you negotiate, by saying we have been negotiating.

Once the House votes to keep the lights on and to pay our bills, we will continue to negotiate. I have a simple question. Does the House want us to continue to be a closed-door nation, a nation where we have locked out hundreds of thousands of Federal workers? Does the House want to threaten that we will become a deadbeat nation, a nation that fails to meet its obligations built up over many administrations and many Congresses, Republican and Democratic, or are we going to reopen the government, become an open-door nation, and are we going to pay our bills and become a responsible nation, as we have been in the past?

How did we get here? As a member of the Budget Committee, let me first start, if I could, with the budget resolution. That is how our rules work. We are supposed to begin with a budget resolution that sets a framework for what we are going to spend in the next fiscal year.

For the last 3 years I have been serving here as a Senator, over and over on this floor the call was: Why won't the Senate pass a budget? Well, this year this Senate passed a budget resolution with significant Republican input. Between this floor, where we ultimately passed it, and the committee on which I serve, the Senate adopted more than 40 amendments offered by my Republican colleagues.

We compromised. We worked toward a shared goal. Week after week, as I said, Republicans had asked in past years: When is the Senate going to pass a budget? Yet we did, more than 6 months ago—200 days ago, to be precise, we passed a budget in this Senate.

Our chair, Senator MURRAY of Washington, has tried to take our budget to conference with the House to do as the rules provide, to reconcile and to responsibly negotiate over our fiscal differences—18 times. She has tried over and over and over to take us to conference and responsibly open formal talks with the House to resolve our fiscal differences. Every time that motion has been blocked, denied, barred, all by a very small group of tea party Republicans in this Chamber who have refused to let us go ahead and negotiate as the rules say we should.

I also serve on the Appropriations Committee. Once the budget is framed,

once the budget is resolved, we are then supposed to move to appropriations and set our spending levels. As a member of that committee, I have been a part of the process in which we have, in fact, passed 11 spending bills out of committee, 8 of them with bipartisan support.

In order to try to move that process forward, months after the budget was passed, we brought the Transportation, Housing and Urban Development bill to this floor. It passed out of committee by a vote of 22 to 8, with 6 Republican votes, a strong bipartisan bill to be passed out here on the floor.

What happened? It was blocked. Again, a small number of the other party came and objected and blocked the passage of that bill, a bill that would put Americans to work and strengthen our infrastructure and help support the housing recovery, a bill that would have moved us forward.

Despite every attempt to fund this government through what we call regular order, the budget process and the appropriations process, we, even after that, came to the table, ready to compromise on this continuing resolution.

The Senate budget calls for a top-line spending number of \$1.058 trillion, a balanced approach that reduces Federal spending in some areas, raises revenue in others, and makes progress by replacing the sequester. That is the budget we passed in the Senate. It would call for spending \$1.058 trillion. The House budget instead called for \$988 billion. As you have heard our leader Senator HARRY REID say on the floor this week, he compromised. He agreed to a short-term funding bill at \$988 billion, a \$70 billion cut for this fiscal year, a major and painful concession for Democrats, particularly those of us on the Budget Committee who had not voted for a \$988 billion number.

We have already slashed spending. People are already suffering through the sequester, another thing that was enacted due to comparable tactics the last time there was a near default in 2011. The sequester has resulted in across-the-board spending cuts. It has been dangerous and painful and which I have spoken about on this floor repeatedly, reading letters from Delawareans, such as the master sergeant, commenting on how it is not the smart way to make cuts, it is an across-the-board way, an irresponsible way to make cuts.

That same Air Force base, Dover Air Force Base, suffered furloughs for hundreds of airmen and their families because of the sequester cuts. We had worked out a budget that would have replaced it and would have avoided those sequester cuts in a balanced and responsible way. But instead, in order to compromise, our majority leader agreed to a \$70 billion cut for this fiscal year. It was tough for a lot of Democrats to swallow. So, frankly, when I see House Republican leaders go on TV and say Democrats will not negotiate, Democrats will not compromise, I have

to say: That is not the case. That is not the facts I have before me. We have compromised. We have negotiated. In fact, we have tried for months on this floor, more than 6 months, to get the compromise, to get the negotiation to move this forward. Instead, we find when we give an inch, they take a yard.

Today there are some, some in the other party, suggesting that if they are not granted a great big wish list, they will force us to default on our country's sovereign debt. We keep hearing from the other side about the need to compromise and negotiate. I could not agree more. The whole way this body is supposed to work is by following the rules, following the process, going to conference, negotiating and achieving a responsible result.

We have repeatedly solicited Republican input, accepted Republican amendments, and made painful compromises. Now my message is simple: We should be following the rules. We should be following the process of this body. We should turn on the lights. We should pay our bills. I would be happy, honored to continue working with Republican colleagues to find real solutions to our fiscal problems, the way we are supposed to, in a conference negotiating over the budget that was passed here more than 6 months ago.

To the colleagues with whom I share this Chamber but with whom we have some differences over why this government is shut down today, I hope you will listen to Master Sergeant DiLuzio and his family and to the thousands and thousands of other Americans who are writing in and calling our offices. They deserve better. This country deserves better. We need to show we can be the model of democracy that achieves responsible principled compromise.

To my colleagues and my friends in the other party: Stop blocking progress. Let's go to conference on the budget. Let's negotiate. But, first, let's get our folks back to work. Let's get the government open. Let's move forward in a way that honors the best of our traditions and our rules.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Florida.

EXTENSION OF MORNING BUSINESS

Mr. NELSON. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the period for morning business be extended until 7 p.m., and that all provisions of the previous order remain in effect.

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

CONTINUING APPROPRIATIONS

Mr. NELSON. Mr. President, I want to add my remarks now for the third time about this shutdown. I want to say this is not the way we ought to be running our government, and enough ought to be enough.

For example, as you know, the Secretary of Defense has figured out a way he can bring back most of the furloughed civilian employees—there may be a quarter of them who are still on furlough but most of them—by a law that passed here that saw most unintended consequences. But there was a little part of the law where he was able to bring them back for the national security and defense of this country.

But there are still gaping holes. For example, although the active-duty National Guard is not furloughed, a lot of the civilian force and the Reserve force of the Guard is furloughed.

I just talked to an F-22 pilot of the Virginia National Guard. He is a long-time fighter pilot in the U.S. Air Force, flew F-15s, now F-22s. He has transitioned to the National Guard, went to a unit that has the F-22s, which is the Virginia National Guard. All of those Reserve National Guard pilots are still coming in and flying, because we still have to protect the air defense of this country. They are flying, but they are not getting paid. Some of their technicians are there, still supporting the maintenance of the aircraft. Some of them are not getting paid. All of the ancillary support staff is on furlough.

In this example of the protection of the national security, in this particular case providing for our air defense through an Air National Guard unit, is this the way an air guard unit ought to be run?

Instead, it is not being run according to how it should be because of a political tantrum by certain people trying to get their way, instead of allowing the government to be functioning through its appropriations.

There is now a salmonella outbreak, 278 cases in 18 States, including my State of Florida. The Centers for Disease Control, which monitors at one time 30 different diseases operating in this country—now 68 percent of the Centers for Disease Control employees have been furloughed. So because of the salmonella outbreak that has occurred—it may be in the Presiding Officer's State as well. I will look it up afterwards and tell the Presiding Officer. It is in my State. I know it started in California, where most of the cases are.

But had the CDC been there in full force, instead of 68 percent of them being laid off, maybe we would not have had this outbreak, or they may have been able to spot it and stem it quickly before it spread to 17 other States.

I will give you another example: NASA. This little agency is the one that has the most people furloughed as a percentage of the workforce. Now 97 percent of NASA employees are furloughed. Since most of NASA's work is done by contractors, without the NASA supervisors there now, the contractors are being laid off. You take a place such as the Presiding Officer's State of Ohio, the NASA Glenn Research Cen-

ter, look at the impact to the people in that community.

You take a major space center elsewhere, such as the Johnson Space Center in Houston, the Kennedy Space Center in my State, look at what it is doing to the lives of people. But remember that we have a mission that is going to Mars that has a unique, one-time-in-2-years launch window, starting the middle of November into the first part of December. If that narrow 3-week launch window is missed because of the lack of preparation of this spacecraft to launch, there is not another launch window for 2 years. Because of that, we were able to get NASA to recall that team. They are there continuing to prepare the spacecraft. They are not getting paid. But at least we are not going to cause all of the additional delay of 2 years and all of the additional expense of keeping that team of scientists together, along with the staging of the spacecraft for another 2 years.

There are three examples: the National Guard, and the defense of this country; the salmonella outbreak, because of the layoffs of the CDC, the Centers for Disease Control; and NASA.

This should not be. Enough is enough. The political tantrum ought to stop. Let us get back to the business of governing.

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

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The bill clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. JOHNSON of South Dakota. I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

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

The Senator from South Dakota is recognized.

SOUTH DAKOTA BLIZZARD

Mr. JOHNSON of South Dakota. Mr. President, I rise to talk about the devastation that has been inflicted on many in my home State. An early season snowstorm has dumped 1 foot of snow and heavy winds on much of western South Dakota. The thoughts and prayers of Barbara and I are with those affected by this disastrous storm.

Communities and residents are wrestling with the damage caused by downed trees, and utility companies are facing power outages. County, community, and emergency officials have shared with my office numerous stories of volunteers stepping in to help to transport medicines and oxygen to residents stranded in their homes.

Neighbors are helping assist each other with cutting down tree limbs, snow removal, and getting essential food items and medical supplies to the elderly and disabled residents. There are countless reports of people helping to move stuck drivers out of snowdrifts or helping to shovel the roofs and snow from the home of a senior citizen or disabled residents. When people are in need, South Dakotans step up.

One of the most significant impacts of the storm has been on my State's livestock producers. "Tens of thousands of cattle killed in Friday's blizzard . . ." proclaims the Rapid City Journal headline.

Silvia Christen, with the South Dakota Stockgrowers Association, has shared with me gut-wrenching stories of ranchers who have lost their herds. She said a man near Interior found his cows had pushed themselves and their calves over a Badlands wall and killed many of them. He estimates his loss at 50 percent of his total herd.

A young man east of Hermosa estimates he lost 30 percent of his 200 breeding cows. He found them all in one pile in a draw covered in snow. He saw the heads and hooves sticking out from the snow and can't bring himself to go closer or dig them out. He stated:

I'm young, but I always thought I was a good rancher. I thought I'd taken care of them but I guess I should have done more.

He hung up the phone with an apology as his voice broke.

Our cowboys are resilient people, but this blizzard comes on the heels of a devastating drought last year from which ranchers still haven't fully recovered.

I am very proud of our State and local officials who have taken immediate action to assist those in need. The National Guard is conducting life-saving safety operations to ensure folks without power are OK and to open roads. The State is working with a local rendering company to assist with finding, identifying, and dealing with livestock that have been killed. Our ag organizations in the State are providing help and guidance to ranchers who were hit.

The one place where help is lacking is from the Federal Government. Because of the government shutdown, producers can't rely on their FSA offices for assistance.

Since Congress hasn't finished the farm bill, West River ranchers may have to wait for disaster assistance. The 2008 farm bill included several critical disaster assistance programs, including the Livestock Indemnity Program, which provides help to producers affected by natural disasters. Unfortunately, that program expired in 2011, and because Congress hasn't yet completed a comprehensive farm bill, there continues to be no funding available for them.

We passed a good farm bill here in the Senate twice in the past 2 years. I worked to include funding for these livestock disaster programs, which are in both the Senate and House bills. The Senate is ready to negotiate the farm bill, but the House hasn't appointed conferees. The longer they delay, the longer my constituents will suffer without disaster aid.

The House needs to pass a clean continuing resolution, and they need to appoint conferees so that we can finally finish the farm bill.

It will take many months for the Black Hills communities to clean up

from the October blizzard. For ranchers who lost livestock, it may take years to recover. But whatever Mother Nature has to deliver, it cannot dampen the spirit of South Dakotans.

Mr. President, I yield the floor, and I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

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

CONTINUING APPROPRIATIONS

Mrs. FISCHER. Mr. President, I rise today to give voice to frustrated Nebraskans. I rise to testify to the simple truth that a government should not intentionally make life harder for its people. I rise to say: Enough. Enough press conferences. Enough brinkmanship. Enough dividing people of good will against one another.

I am still pretty new here, but I can say that in Nebraska and in so many other States across this Nation we actually work together—and not just on small bills but also on the big issues. I urge my colleagues to remember where we came from.

While I served in the Nebraska Legislature, we dealt with a major budget shortfall. We didn't go on TV or Twitter or fight; we legislated and we fixed the problem. That is the Nebraska way. We roll up our sleeves, we cut through the talking points, and we get to work.

Nebraskans are pragmatic. They are well informed, and they expect results. So when Nebraskans look at the dysfunction we have here in Washington, they are frustrated, and I am too. I am very frustrated. I am frustrated that this Congress can't pass appropriations bills that comply with the law. I am frustrated that this Congress cannot agree on a budget. I am frustrated with crisis management instead of responsible governance. I am frustrated with being told one thing only to learn it is just not true. I am frustrated with the willful ignorance that goes on in Washington when it comes to our debt. And I am frustrated with the lack of solutions.

The American people do not want us to just stand in opposition; they want us to put forth constructive ideas to solve problems. As a result of Congress's failure to agree on a spending plan, the government is shut down. The result? Well, in yesterday's Omaha World Herald there was a report that Nebraska farmers are unable to cash checks when they bring their grain in after harvest. The article noted:

State law requires elevators to include a lender's name on a check when a farmer has a loan against the grain. With no one at Farm Service Agency offices because of the shutdown, checks can't be cashed when the lender is the FSA.

"We've got millions of dollars of grain checks out there that farmers need," said

Dan Poppe, president of the Archer (Neb.) Cooperative Credit Union, with locations in Archer, Dannebrog and Central City.

He said entire rural economies count on the money.

"It impacts not only our farmers, who are relying heavily on the money, but also the local grocery store, hardware store, the feed and seed," Poppe said.

It is not just farmers and ranchers, it is also our manufacturers and our investors. A constituent from Waco, NB, wrote:

I am a Dow employee living in your district. This impasse is beginning to threaten Dow's investment in new U.S. manufacturing. Not only will a continued delay push back Dow's plans to create thousands of new American jobs, it will harm Dow's competitiveness and directly impact me and my family. Greater economic certainty will help Dow, its employees, and our State thrive.

The wife of a Federal law enforcement officer from Gretna wrote:

We are a single income family. We have a 2 and 3 year old and one more on the way. I am due in November. This shutdown will leave us unable to pay our bills.

A 23-year-old Department of Agriculture employee emailed me saying:

My wife works two jobs to help make ends meet, but we still live paycheck to paycheck. If this shutdown is not resolved within the next few days, we will be devastated financially.

A U.S. Air Force veteran wrote to tell me:

I applied for Social Security disability assistance on the 15th of August and my claim had gone for medical review on the 26th of August. I have no money, and I just found out yesterday that because of the shutdown SSA claims are on hold.

A furloughed Federal worker from Omaha called my office to say: We are all tired. We are tired of not getting a budget until the last minute. We are all tired. You guys need to do your job.

I agree. I hear these same messages over and over. Nebraskans are tired of the name calling and the blame games. They want to see government work, and they want to see it work well. They are not fooled by the rhetoric, and they expect us to govern responsibly. I agree. That is why I am talking with my colleagues—not publicly in front of the cameras but privately—to see if we can forge a way forward. But I believe we have to do more than just open the government. That is just the basics. We have to address our \$17 trillion debt. It is smothering this country, it is jeopardizing our national security, and it is a threat to our children's future.

Congress will soon vote on increasing the debt ceiling—the sixth debt limit increase in the past 5 years. Our national debt has almost doubled since 2006, and our debt limit has grown twice as much as our economy in the past 2 years. Shouldn't the opposite be true? Meanwhile, our economy's lethargic recovery continues sluggishly along at a rate of 1 to 2 percent. This is unacceptable.

Instead of growing our economy by reducing spending, cutting regulations, and overhauling an outdated tax code,

Congress has continued to spend money we just don't have.

I didn't run for office to shut down the government. I ran for office to help hard-working Americans get back to work. I ran for this office to stand for middle-class families who aren't asking government for a hand up, they are just asking that the government stop holding them down. Nebraskans want to know they can provide for their families, and I don't think that is asking too much.

Make no mistake. High public debt depresses economic growth, which in turn dampens job creation. Ironically, our country's debt crisis comes as the Congressional Budget Office is predicting that tax revenues will be at an alltime high—\$2.7 trillion in tax revenues. The problem isn't that we have too little revenue, the problem is that we are spending too much.

Part of why Nebraskans are frustrated is that our problems are so clear. We know exactly what they are. There is no mystery here. The American people know you can't keep spending twice what you make. They live within a budget—a budget that must balance—and they expect government to do the same. Our government is a long way from a balanced budget, but we can work at a minimum to try to get there.

Despite these realities, we are not moving forward. For the past several weeks, Members of Congress, the President, and the press have been participants in a circus. After 9 days, there is still no end in sight. Let me repeat that. After 9 days of a government shutdown, there is still no end in sight.

That is not to say there aren't some good ideas out there. Several of my colleagues have offered a number of commonsense proposals that do have broad support. These ideas include repeal of the medical device tax, which was adopted by the Senate as an amendment to its budget resolution by an overwhelming vote of 79 to 20. And this happened in March. Other ideas include a commitment to reducing spending, as required by current law, but we would increase the flexibility for Federal agencies to make smarter cuts. We all agree sequestration is a very clumsy way to cut spending.

That is why we need to provide program managers with the ability to determine which programs are wasteful or less efficient.

It is a matter of setting priorities so we can make wise decisions. That is the Nebraska way, and that is what we need to do in Washington as well.

Senator COLLINS' sequestration proposal would also allow Congress to continue to exercise oversight on all spending and related cuts. That is important. Even the President has put forth ideas to cut spending by \$400 billion over the next 10 years. These offers could give us the framework for a real discussion.

Yet we remain at an impasse, unable to move forward. A nation of movers,

thinkers, innovators, and entrepreneurs should not be caught in neutral. We should move forward—always forward, and always building a better future. We are the single greatest nation the world has ever known. We have stood as a sentinel of liberty and economic prosperity for over 200 years, yet we find ourselves no longer able to perform even the most basic functions of government. That is not acceptable. Our forefathers, our constituents, and our children and our grandchildren deserve better.

I am ready to move forward. I am tired of waiting, and I am willing to work with any of my colleagues to find a reasonable solution. So let's get to work.

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

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. BLUMENTHAL). The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

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

Mr. BROWN. Mr. President, I am privileged to represent the State of Ohio, as I know the Presiding Officer is to represent Connecticut, and the previous speaker is to represent Nebraska.

We are home to several large research facilities—medical research facilities, aeronautics research facilities, military research facilities, some that are overwhelmingly represented to do research in pure science. All of them have a major impact in their communities in terms of employment with usually very good-paying jobs—scientists, engineers, physicians, chemists, and all kinds of people in the natural, medical, or aeronautic sciences and all of the support staff. These research facilities are always good for communities. And they not only provide employment, but they provide great wealth for our country. So much of this research helps people in their daily lives and is commercialized into businesses, and entrepreneurs take much of this research and applied science and create more economic activity, prosperity, and good-paying jobs. And that is where this shutdown is particularly problematic.

There are 800,000 Federal employees that have lost jobs as a result of this ridiculous shutdown. I have spent much of the last several days on the phone talking to people running these institutions, talking to smalltown and big-city bankers, entrepreneurs, businesses, union officials, and people who represent or run many of these organizations. All of them think this shutdown is absolutely unnecessary.

Just a moment ago the Presiding Officer and I had a conversation, and we both shake our heads: Why do radicals in the House of Representatives want to inflict this kind of pain—not just on the 800,000 Federal workers, but on the

contractors near these facilities, the restaurants, hardware stores and businesses, and the school districts that are affected because people aren't bringing home the income and aren't paying as much taxes—all that happens when this willful government shutdown, orchestrated because a group of people want to attach their political platform, ideas, gimmicks, or statements to legislation we need to pass?

It is pretty simple: Pass the continuing resolution. Keep the government open. That is not a Democratic or Republican platform. That is what we need to do. Don't go around attaching political statements in a political platform to a simple "keep the government open" resolution.

The same on the debt ceiling. Nobody is wild about increasing the debt ceiling. Nobody is wild about passing legislation so we don't default. It is not a part of the 2012 Democratic platform to raise the debt ceiling, nor is it a part of the 2012 Republican platform. So when we have a vote, it is not negotiated: Let's add a bunch of 2012 Republican party platform rhetoric to something to raise the debt ceiling so the government of the United States pays its bills. It is not a Democratic or a Republican value to pay the bills this Congress ran up. It is our duty.

We take an oath of office. I took the oath in January 2013. The Presiding Officer took his oath. We know running the government and paying our bills is what you do as an elected official. Those never used to be controversial, until some radicals in the House of Representatives decided that this is a political opportunity. We can accuse the President of not negotiating. We can tell the public the Democrats are willing to shut down the government. The Republican Governor of Nevada to the Democratic majority leader from Nevada this week called it a Republican shutdown. So it is clearly a group of radicals.

Back to what I was saying about these great research facilities. The Presiding Officer has them in Connecticut, I have them in Ohio, and the Senator from Hawaii has them in her State. An administrator of one said it is asymmetrical, killing and building a major scientific endeavor. It is a lot harder and takes a lot longer for a group of engineers, doctors or scientists to construct a very important scientific endeavor than it does to kill one.

Fifty years ago, Speaker of the House Rayburn from Texas at one time said—and I will clean this up: Any mule can kick down a barn. It takes a carpenter to build one.

I will make it more personal. A dozen years ago I was involved in a car accident and broke my back. I was in good health and exercised, but for 3 days I didn't get out of bed. I remember the first day I got out of bed and tried to walk. My leg muscles had atrophied. It takes a lot of time to build up those leg muscles, and it took 3 days for them to

atrophy. I was in my late 40s then and in good shape.

That is also the way science is, in the same sense that it takes a long time and a lot of investment of public dollars and a lot of brain power and really high-quality, talented scientists, engineers, doctors, or medical researchers to do these projects. And then we are going to lay them off for 2 or 3 weeks because somebody has some political idea they want to attach to a continuing resolution. Somebody wants to take their political platform and put it on legislation that the government pay its bills for their political gain.

A leader of one of these major institutions in Ohio told me he had to bring in many of his managers and employees and tell them there were going to be layoffs and furloughs. In some cases, with no end in sight because of this government shutdown, what are they going to do? Their scientific endeavors get interrupted and in some cases may not be repaired or rebuilt. So many of the best scientists and engineers are going to say: I am not coming back and doing this.

So the radical Republicans in the House of Representatives say: OK, we can keep the government open if you repeal part of ObamaCare.

If the President had done that and said: OK, keep the government open, and we will repeal this section of ObamaCare, what would have happened next? Then there would have been another continuing resolution or another end of the fiscal year or another opportunity these politicians would have seized to again threaten to shut the government down and gut something else, some other law they don't like. In other words, if there is a law they don't like, and they are in the position, then they are going to say: I am going to shut the government down if you don't change this law. If the President says yes to that, what happens the next time? Then, I am going to ask the President to get rid of two laws I don't like or I will shut the government down or I am going to block the government from paying its bills because I don't like a law passed back in 1993 or 2007. We can't operate the government like that.

NASA Glenn Research facilities, one of the great NASA facilities in the country; Wright-Patterson Air Force Base, a major research facility near Dayton, OH; Battelle Memorial Institute in Columbus—thousands of employees, engineers, scientists, technicians, highly-skilled people, very educated, run eight of the national energy labs. Case Western Reserve University Medical School and Engineering School, Ohio State University, University of Cincinnati—I could name one after another. These places can't operate if every 6 months or 1 year they are subject to a potential government shutdown unless the President does what some radical Members of Congress want.

So when people say: First, open the government; second, pay our bills; and,

third, let's negotiate—we have already negotiated the dollar figure on the continuing resolution. Every time the continuing resolution expires or the fiscal year ends, every time we have to pay our debts when the debt ceiling limit is reached—if we have to play this game, it is going to mean a potential government shutdown or disruption at Battelle, NASA Glenn, Ohio State's medical school funding and research funding, and Wright-Patterson Air Force Base. If that is the way this crowd believes we should run a government, they don't have much regard for government.

Every time they have had a chance, they tried to privatize Medicare, they tried to privatize Social Security. They don't like EPA, Head Start, or Meals On Wheels. They don't like these government programs. I understand that, but play it right. Don't threaten to close the government unless we change the law which Congress passed, the President signed, and the Supreme Court affirmed. But if it was my political platform in 2012—even though it was defeated in front of tens of millions of voters—and I don't like what you are doing, then I am going to threaten to shut down the government. Our country is too important and too big for that.

On an international scale, the President of the United States didn't go to China for a major economic conference because he had to be here because the government was shut down. Other countries—particularly China—made fun of us. Other countries basically were asking: Is the United States abdicating its leadership role? And the Peoples Republic of China is not slowing down in their investment in scientific research or modernizing their infrastructure.

If we allow this kind of government shutdown and this kind of activity by radicals in the House of Representatives, this is not good for our country.

Mr. President, I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Texas.

Mr. CORNYN. Mr. President, amid all the rhetoric and the blame games and, yes, even theatrics, I want to make sure the American people actually understand what President Obama and the majority leader are asking us to do. Their position is that Congress should raise the debt limit—actually suspend the debt limit through the end of 2014 and increase our national debt by another \$1.1 trillion without doing anything to solve our underlying fiscal problems, including the \$17 trillion in debt we have already run up.

I cannot imagine there is anyone in this Chamber or within the sound of my voice who thinks that is a good idea. At some point, if we keep maxing out our credit card rather than dealing with our debt problem, our spending problem, we come back to the bank, so to speak, and ask for our debt limit to be increased another \$1.1 trillion, where will this end? I can tell you

where I think it will end: It will end in disaster. Ultimately, at some point our creditors will lose confidence in our ability to repay that money. At some point interest rates are going to not be zero or next to zero, they will be up around the historic average, 4 percent or 5 percent, and we will have to pay China and our other creditors more and more of our Federal budget just to pay interest on the national debt.

At some point that becomes unsustainable. It will hurt our national security. It will hurt the safety net programs we all care about, to protect our most vulnerable. Unfortunately, the President and the majority leader remain dug in. Notwithstanding the charts we have seen on this floor that talk about negotiations, there have been no real negotiations. The President called Speaker BOEHNER last night to tell him: In case you missed the message, Mr. Speaker, from when we met at the White House last week, we are still not negotiating.

What is that all about? The President could have sent him a text message with as much information as that conveyed.

I am told the President has invited the Republican Members of Congress to the White House to meet with him tomorrow. I hope that meeting is more productive than the meetings he has already held or the phone conversations he has had with the Speaker. I can only hope the President has reconsidered his unsustainable position, that he is not willing to negotiate.

The Founders of this great country created a Constitution for us with coequal branches of government. Congress is not better or worse than the executive branch. We are coequal. We cannot function without one another. We can pass a law, but it cannot become the law unless the President signs it. The President cannot pass a law without Congress. So we have to learn to work together.

In the context of the recent history I want to recount for everybody, the President's refusal to negotiate is simply unsustainable and quite remarkable. Over the last 30 years, virtually every major domestic policy reform has involved at least some kind of bipartisan compromise.

In 1983, a conservative Republican President worked with a liberal Speaker of the House and Senate leaders from both parties to save and preserve Social Security. That was in 1983. At the time those Social Security amendments were signed into law, Republicans had the same Senate majority the Democrats have today, 54 Republicans then, 46 Democrats. Meanwhile, the Democratic House majority was significantly larger than the Republican House majority today. Yet both sides did what so far we have been unable to do and that is come together, negotiate and reach an outcome. Ronald Reagan, back in 1983, then signed that negotiated outcome into law. In the end, the majority Senate Democrats voted for those Social Security

amendments, as did a majority of Senate Republicans.

Three years later, in 1986, liberal Democrats and conservative Democrats joined together to enact another landmark reform bill. Once again the President's party controlled the Senate but not the House. Once again, there was not a refusal to negotiate; rather, there was a negotiation and a bipartisan outcome—notwithstanding the normal partisan rivalries that will always exist. In June 1986, 97 Members of this Chamber, a massive, overwhelming supermajority, voted in favor of the Tax Reform Act which lowered Federal income tax rates and broadened the base. The final version of that bill was supported by a majority of Senate Democrats and a majority of Senate Republicans as well. That was the kind of historic accomplishment that seems to be slipping through our fingers today by virtue of the refusal to negotiate. That was a historic accomplishment that dramatically simplified the U.S. Tax Code and made it more conducive to economic growth—a lesson we would do well to recall and emulate today.

Fast forward a decade to 1996. A Democratic President, Bill Clinton, joined together with the Republican House and Senate and, despite partisan pressure enough to go around and all sorts of heated rhetoric, Democrats and Republicans joined together and reformed our welfare system, helping millions of disadvantaged people to get off welfare rolls and make the transition from dependency to work, dignity and self-reliance. That was a great accomplishment. In the end, 78 Senators, including most Senate Democrats and every single Senate Republican, voted for that.

One more prominent example. In 2001, a conservative Republican President worked with a prominent liberal Democrat to enact a major overhaul to our education laws. Indeed, the No Child Left Behind Act was a direct result of President Bush's negotiations and collaboration with the late Senator Ted Kennedy. The final legislation 87 Senators voted for, including a majority of Senate Democrats and a majority of Senate Republicans.

I am not necessarily saying every single one of those pieces of legislation was something that was perfect in every way. I think we have learned there are things that still needed to be done, particularly when it came to education reform, but the three Presidents I mentioned, two Republicans and one Democrat, worked together to make substantial compromises in order to pass Social Security reform, tax reform, welfare reform, and education reform. But they also understood that politics is the art of the possible and they did not treat the word negotiate as a dirty four-letter word.

I want to emphasize one more time that Republicans stand ready to work with President Obama in addressing our country's most serious fiscal and

economic challenges. Yet rather than to pursue serious good-faith negotiations over things such as entitlement reform and tax reform, things that would actually be good for our economy and good for our country, President Obama decides to erect and then knock down strawmen.

For example, when Republicans talk about entitlement reform, he says we want to eliminate the safety net. When Republicans talk about tax reform, he says we want to give tax breaks to rich people. That is campaigning, that is not governing.

Here is the reality, though. Republicans do not want to eliminate the safety net, we want to improve the safety net, particularly Medicare and Social Security. We don't want to give special tax breaks just to the wealthy, we want to give all Americans a simpler, flatter, fairer Tax Code that is more conducive to economic growth. We want the type of Tax Code the President's own bipartisan fiscal commission, Simpson-Bowles—the recommendations they made in 2010. Yet the President ignored it, walked away, and has done nothing to contribute to that debate.

We understand, being elected officials ourselves, that all elected politicians have to campaign for office. It goes with the territory. You cannot get here unless you run for office and you win an election. But at some point the campaign has to end. At some point we have to govern. At some point the partisan rhetoric has to give way to actually accomplishing things and solving problems. At some point America's elected leadership needs to demonstrate real leadership and a willingness to govern.

President Obama has now reached a critical point in his Presidency, in his second term. He will be remembered for one thing or another. He will be remembered either as a President who was willing to step up when America needed that kind of leadership, when Congress needed bipartisan cooperation in order to solve our Nation's biggest challenges, or he will leave a legacy, if he does not do that, of a President who refused to do his job in order to try to win the partisan battles.

We need something better and America deserves better. We need a President who will govern and not campaign perpetually.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Hawaii.

Ms. HIRONO. Mr. President, our distinguished Republican whip referred to negotiations that occurred regarding welfare reform, tax reform, education reform, No Child Left Behind. These negotiations occurred, yes, but they certainly occurred not in the context of a threat of a government shutdown or the threat of government defaulting on our obligations. There is a very big difference in the context in which these negotiations occurred. That is not what we have before us today.

This past Saturday I came to the floor to share some thoughts on the impact of this government shutdown on Hawaii's Federal employees. In those remarks, I tried to remind my colleagues that we have to think beyond the most recent news cycle. Shutting down government hurts the confidence of the American people in our institutions. It drives people away from public service and it undermines our national security and our economy. If we are going to live up to the legacy of our Nation as the world's indispensable Nation, we have to rise above zero sum politics. We have to show our allies and our adversaries that our political process can withstand grave disagreements. Our process is intended to allow for vigorous debate but to ultimately find common ground.

Over 6 months ago, the Senate passed a budget. So did the House. A little over 6 days ago the U.S. Government shut down. How did this happen? The reason is that Republicans have blocked now 21 attempts to negotiate a Federal budget agreement in a timely fashion. That is how negotiations are supposed to happen—not with the threat of a government shutdown, not with the threat of defaulting on our obligations and debt.

Instead, after 6 months of failing to come to the table, tea party Republicans are holding the U.S. Government—and, if we default on our debts, the world economy—hostage.

Enough is enough. The Senate is prepared to negotiate on fiscal issues. The President is ready to negotiate on fiscal issues. We can find a way forward so we can all agree on the path. But first Congress needs to do its job. It needs to reopen the government and make sure the United States pays its bills. These are fundamental responsibilities.

Just to be clear, defaulting on our debt would be the most irresponsible action I can imagine. It is the most easily avoidable catastrophe in history. We are not talking about a natural disaster, we are talking about a totally avoidable catastrophe. Yet some Republicans in the House believe a default would not be a big deal. In fact, one Member of the House actually said that a default would "bring stability to world markets."

That is an opinion that no one outside of the tea party bubble agrees with. In fact, economists, small businesses, bankers, big businesses, realtors, and nearly everyone in between have been clear: Default would be a catastrophe for our economy—and not just our economy either. Our currency, our bonds, and the full faith and credit they are backed by are the linchpin of the global economy. How a default from the world's most trusted Nation could possibly bring stability to world markets is incomprehensible.

We have to stop the ideological games and irresponsible rhetoric, and then we can negotiate on fiscal issues and other policies—mindful of the work

we were elected to do and mindful of the people, families, and communities that elected us to serve them.

Today I would like to share some more stories from Hawaii families and businesses about how the government shutdown is impacting one of the key drivers of Hawaii's economy—tourism.

Each year millions of people from all over the world flock to Hawaii. Our State has so much to offer. They come to enjoy our blue oceans and sandy beaches. They come to visit our breathtaking national parks and wildlife refuges. They also come to learn and pay respect at our historical attractions, such as Pearl Harbor.

Last year Hawaii welcomed over 8 million visitors—a record number. Combined, these visitors spent \$42 million per day, of which \$5 million supports State and local government activities that benefit our communities. In 2012 about 20 percent of our State's gross domestic product was generated by tourism. That economic activity supports 175,000 jobs in Hawaii.

Due to our location in the center of the Pacific Ocean, Hawaii's tourism industry relies on critical government services to keep people moving and commerce flowing. These include the work done by our air traffic controllers, our customs and TSA personnel, and agricultural inspectors. Many of these workers are on the job, but they are not getting paid right now. Thanks to them, our transportation systems are operating safely and effectively. As a result, visitors are still flocking to our resorts, our beaches, and other attractions. Even with the tea party shutdown, 2013 is on track to be another strong year for tourism in Hawaii.

Unfortunately, at the same time, there are small businesses around the State that are being impacted by this shutdown. For the last 7 days our national parks, wildlife refuges, and historical sites have been closed to the public. These Federal sites are critical to many small businesses, particularly in our rural communities.

Over the past week I have heard from many people—especially small business owners—whose livelihoods are being impacted by the closure of these Federal sites. One tour operator wrote to me:

Our business is losing money, as do our tour guides who cannot perform the tours to the National Parks. We have to return the money to a lot of our clients because their tours have to be cancelled. Our tour guides are losing income as well, as they will not be able to do the tours.

National parks are some of the main attractions in Hawaii. People travel thousands of miles from all parts of the world, spend a lot of money to come and visit, and then the main things that attract them are closed and they are not able to see them. For a lot of people, these trips are once in a lifetime, and if they don't see them now, they will never be able to see them again.

A restaurant owner from Hawaii Island wrote:

Well, we are in a small town on the Big Island of Hawaii. Our economy is totally tourist driven. We are dependent on people going to the National Park and stopping at our place to eat. Since the shutdown, our revenue has dropped a lot and we have had to cut hours for employees to compensate for the lack of business.

I'm tired of all this Republican childish actions and wish all politicians would drop the partisan nonsense and do what is right for the American People.

Thank you for your concern.

One gentleman from Maui reminded me that private businesses don't get to pause on meeting their commitments when the government is closed. He wrote:

My daughter and son-in-law have a tourist based clientele for their bicycle crater tour business on Maui. When Haleakala National Park was closed down, they lost their income and are still having to pay office expenses, etc., etc., as well as their home expenses, but nothing is coming in, as everything is going out.

They are losing hundreds to thousands of dollars a day, their employees who have families aren't able to work with the business closed, tourists who come to Maui to have a good time, part of which was the bike ride down from Haleakala, are angry and disappointed and some even think this is somehow Maui government's fault!

He goes on to say:

My daughter has six children, mortgage payments. Money is going out, but none is coming in. My family are diligent middle class people who work hard, pay their taxes, vote in every election—responsible citizens who do their part always.

If this ridiculous federal government shutdown continues for any length of time, my family will lose their business and be at poverty level in no time, as will all their employees. Everyone I know, on either side of the political spectrum, thinks the shutdown is ridiculous and unnecessary.

I also heard about the impact of the shutdown on the visitors themselves who go to Hawaii. One person from Hawaii whose family members traveled to Hawaii to visit wrote:

My family has travelled 6,000 miles on a once in a lifetime trip—sorry—no Pearl Harbor (Dad was a lifer Navy man) no Volcanoes National Park—no Puukohola—these sites are essential to our culture and tourism alike—many are without work—it is just ridiculous over a LAW that has been declared Constitutional—their antics change nothing—just hurt our country.

Another local bed-and-breakfast owner on the Big Island shared the perspective of some of her international guests:

Aloha, I have a bed and breakfast in Hilo and I feel sorry for my guests who have saved for a once in a lifetime vacation to Hawaii. They have come from all over the world to see our Beautiful Volcano National Park! These Guests do not understand how the government can CLOSE and deny them access to the Park.

This week I have guests from Montreal, Canada; Singapore, Germany, France and Japan! They may NEVER have the opportunity to visit here again. This is Shameful for our country. Not only is this behavior bad for our Country but bad for the world.

The tea party shutdown is also impacting Hawaiian visitors to our Na-

tion's Capital. Yesterday I met with 81 students from Millilani Middle School on Oahu. They made the long trip from Hawaii to Washington, DC, in hopes of seeing historical sites, visiting museums, and learning about their country and our democracy. The trip was saved for and planned for months in advance. The sites and museums were scheduled. Their tickets and reservations were already paid for. They could not rebook their travel even though the shutdown has closed many of the sites they planned to visit. I took them on a tour of the Capitol myself because it was the only way they could see these halls of government. These students are here to learn about our democracy. Many of them asked me about the shutdown and how we were going to get government back on track. What kind of message will they take home with them about how our government operates?

These are just some of the stories that illustrate the real impact of the tea party shutdown on communities, families, and people in Hawaii. So many of the folks whose letters I have shared work hard to earn an honest living. They go to work each day, striving to show our visitors aloha while building something for themselves and their families to be proud of. They play by the rules, meet their commitments, and do what they can to be good community members. Yet, through no fault of their own, many of these Hawaii small businesses are losing income and their livelihoods are being affected.

It is past time for the House to take the responsible action to pass the Senate bill to keep government running and services going. It is not fair to our veterans, our students, and their families when they can't visit our Nation's historical and national treasures just because a small minority in Congress has chosen recklessness over responsibility. It is not fair that this shutdown and these senseless default threats have gone on for a week. This behavior is harming our economy and undermining our credibility around the world. We need to stop the tea party temper tantrum, we need to open the government, we need to pay our bills, and then we can negotiate on other matters.

I yield the floor and note the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

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

Mr. COBURN. Mr. President, I appreciate the time to be on the floor. I want to continue talking about what I think are the real problems with where we are today.

What we are hearing in the press is that there is no agreement on a continuing resolution, that there is conflict and lack of discussion in Washington, that the debt limit is coming

up, yet Washington is not capable of solving its problems.

I made some points yesterday about the reason we are not capable of solving our problems is that there is an absence of leadership. We are not only bankrupt financially, we are bankrupt when it comes to our leadership.

I want to dispel the rumor that our problems are not insolvable. They are imminently solvable. We have \$126 trillion worth of unfunded liabilities for which Americans are responsible. We have \$17 trillion worth of debt, and we have \$94 trillion of total assets in this country if you add what the Federal Government and everybody else owns. So the difference between \$128 trillion and \$94 trillion is \$34 trillion, and then another \$17 trillion—that is \$51 trillion we are going to have to account for. What is in front of us—and by the way, the Affordable Care Act will add \$6.7 trillion to those outstanding liabilities net of any tax revenues and tax increases it collects.

So what are we to do? What are the American people to think? They see impasse, lack of conversation, lack of compromise, lack of resolution, and no reconciliation. So I wanted to take a few minutes today to kind of give a little history, first of all, and then outline what is possible—I am not saying we must do it—over the next 10 years that we could do that would put us on a pathway to where we would be solving the problems and not leaving our children an inheritance of debt.

I made the point yesterday that the median family income in this country today in terms of real dollars is exactly where it was in 1989. We are going backward. We are going to go backward this year. What that really means is that the standard of living is declining. The American public is getting further and further behind.

One of the quotes I use—and I don't know if it is accurate—has been attributed to Alexander Tytler, a Scottish historian. Let me read it:

A democracy—

In this case a constitutional Republic—

is always temporary in nature; it simply cannot exist as a permanent form of government. It will continue to exist until the time that voters discover that they can vote themselves generous gifts from the public treasury. From that moment on, the majority always votes with the candidates who promise the most benefits from the public treasury, with the result that every democracy will finally collapse due to loose fiscal policy, which is always followed by a dictatorship.

Where are we in that line? Is \$50 trillion in negative net worth not a sign that we are going there? Is declining median family income not a sign that we are going there?

What we have seen in this last so-called recovery is the wealthy have done very well but nobody else has. So what we are seeing is history repeat itself in terms of what has been outlined and observed in the past.

Alexander Tytler was also accredited with this, but nobody can prove it:

The average age of the world's greatest civilizations from the beginning of history has been about 200 years. During these 200 years, these nations always progressed through the following sequence: From bondage to spiritual faith; from spiritual faith to great courage; from courage to liberty; from liberty to abundance; from abundance to complacency; from complacency to apathy; from apathy to dependence; from dependence back into bondage.

I think we are somewhere in here, if history speaks accurately, or at least his observation of history.

So what we ought to be about is making sure we cheat history—all of us, together, liberals, conservatives, Democrats, Republicans, Independents—we ought to be about cheating history. How do we do that? Are the problems we have in front of us so big that we can't solve them? I don't think so. Are positions so hardened that we can't think in a long-term way about solving the problems that are in front of our country?

When we talk about the debt ceiling—I have been accosted a lot in the news media in the last 48 hours because I don't believe the debt ceiling equals default on our obligations in terms of our sovereign debt. It just so happens Moody's, the rating agency, agreed with me today; that, in fact, they are not the same thing and they say there should be no effect. That doesn't mean we should. I am not proposing we should. But the scare tactics of saying the Earth is going to collapse if we somehow fail on time to raise the debt limit is not true. The Earth will collapse for Americans if we don't address the underlying problems facing our country—this \$50 trillion in unfunded liability and negative net worth.

Here is what we know has happened in the last few years, and it proves the point. It is why median family income is going down. It is because our debt is growing twice as fast as our economy.

Here is our GDP increase over the last few years: \$1.199 trillion. Here is our debt: It went up \$2.405 trillion. To say that another way, that is 2.4 billion millions. These numbers are unfathomable, but the graph shows it all. Our GDP has increased. So what is happening is that for every \$1 in debt we go into, we are getting a deepening decrease in return in our economy, and it is continuing to go down. So the more we borrow, the less well off we are in terms of being able to grow our economy. So the problems in front of us and what we see is what I would say as careerists don't want to solve the problem because the thing that comes to the careerist's mind is how does that effect the next election.

I don't care what happens in the next election in this country; what I care about is whether we are going to address the real problems and secure the future for the country. Whether they be Democrats or Republicans, liberals or conservatives, I don't care. We are all in this together. When our living standard goes down, we all go down together.

So how do we solve this problem? The first thing in any addiction—and we have an addiction to spending—is to recognize we have an addiction. We have an addiction to spending. We have an addiction to not living within our means. We just passed \$600 billion in January of increased taxes on the American economy, most of that coming from the people who are doing much better during this tepid recovery. Will that solve our problems? Can we tax our way out of this? Can we have confiscatory tax policies that will not hurt our economy and get us out of this? The answer is no, and everybody recognizes it.

What else does everybody recognize? They recognize that a big portion of the problem is entitlement spending, and no political party wants to be blamed for being the person who “fixed” entitlement spending unless we do it together. So we have a great opportunity to, together, modify our mandatory spending programs and make significant savings. But having spent the last 9 years with my colleague from Delaware who is on the floor oversighting the Federal Government, I can tell my colleagues there are more things we can do other than that.

So I thought I would spend a few minutes to go over a publication I put out a couple of summers ago, and it is called “Back in Black.” It is not perfect. I will be the first to admit it. I know we will not ever pass \$9 trillion worth of savings over 10 years. But here is \$9 trillion worth of options we could look at and take half of them and actually get on the road to health.

What would getting on the road to health look like? It would be rising personal incomes, not declining personal incomes as we are seeing today. It would be rising median family incomes. It would be faster economic growth.

Mr. President, am I out of time?

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator has used his 10 minutes.

Mr. COBURN. My request was for 30 minutes when I came to the floor. Evidently, that wasn't made. Is the order of the day 10 minutes?

The PRESIDING OFFICER. It is.

Mr. COBURN. I would ask for just a short period of additional time if my colleague from Delaware would allow it.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Delaware.

Mr. CARPER. May I ask unanimous consent that the doctor be afforded another 10 minutes.

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

Mr. COBURN. I will spend some time tomorrow then going through what this is. But it is solving our problem in such a way that it doesn't kick the can down the road, which is what we are getting ready to do.

What I would say in conclusion is by increasing the debt limit, we let the politicians off the hook because then

they don't have to make the hard choices required for us to live within our means.

Mr. CARPER. Mr. President, I have a parliamentary inquiry, if I may.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Delaware will state his inquiry.

Mr. CARPER. I have no objection; I can stay 10 minutes, 20 minutes. I would like for the Senator from Oklahoma Dr. COBURN to have a chance to explain what he wanted to say. I don't mean to interrupt.

Mr. COBURN. Mr. President, I would just inquire if there are other speakers after Senator CARPER.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. There is no apparent order of speakers, and if there is no objection, the Senator from Oklahoma can take an additional 20 minutes.

Mr. COBURN. I thank the Chair. I truly thank my colleague. He is a great colleague to work with. People are always telling stories about how people don't work together. I can tell my colleagues that the Senator from Delaware Mr. CARPER and I work together. He is my chairman, and I am the ranking member on the Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs Committee, where most of this information came from, and he helped dig it up.

What I say is we have an opportunity to do that. We have an opportunity for Democrats and Republicans to come together, forge a compromise, make major changes that are necessary and absolutely required if we are going to have a secure future. I think we ought to look at it.

So we put together a plan that has \$3 trillion—that is \$300 billion over 10 years—in discretionary spending; that is nonmandatory. It has \$1 trillion in defense spending, which is about what we already have. Health care entitlements is \$2.7 trillion, and we can go into the details of that. Tax Code simplification, \$1 trillion to come back to the Federal Government. Interest payment savings of \$1.3 trillion, and Social Security reform that says it will be healthy for the next 75 years. That comes to \$9 trillion that our kids aren't going to have to pay back. That is \$9 trillion in money we are not going to borrow. So even if we just took half of that—\$4.5 trillion—and said we are going to get on the path to health, we are going to float that \$3 trillion that is sitting in cash in Americans' bank accounts and give them the confidence back to invest it in our country, it would make a massive difference in our country because what is going on right now is a crisis of confidence.

The American people don't trust Congress. I think we got a pretty low rating this week and deservedly so. The approval rating of President Obama is at his alltime low. So how do we fix that? We don't fix that individually. We don't fix that by pointing out what is wrong with the other person. We fix that by coming together and solving real problems that will give the Amer-

ican people confidence that we have their best interests at heart—not in the short term, as Alexander Tytler was talking about, but in the long term; that, in fact, we want to secure the future for our kids and grandkids.

I think we ought to be about cutting up the credit card. I know I am in the minority in the Senate. I don't believe we should have another debt limit increase. I think the thing to force us to make these hard choices—because there is certainly not the political will to do it—is to put ourselves in the position where we are forced to make the hard choices.

We are going to make them eventually. Everybody agrees with that. We are basically going to make these changes because there will come a time when we will not be able to borrow money no matter what interest rate we pay. So we are not talking about defaulting on our sovereign debt. We are not talking about not paying interest on our sovereign debt. We are talking about forcing ourselves into a position where we have to prioritize what we spend.

What do the GAO reports tell us? In the last 3 years, the GAO has given Congress wonderful information which Congress has not acted on. What have they told us? They have told us we have 91 different health care workforce training programs—91. They have told us we have 679 renewable energy initiatives, none of which have a metric on them. They have told us we have 76 different drug abuse and prevention programs run by the Federal Government. They have told us the Department of Defense has 159 different contracting organizations, none of them being held accountable. They have told us that at Homeland Security, where Senator CARPER and I chair and vice chair the committee, they have six different R&D facilities, three of which are doing exactly the same thing. We have 209 science, technology, engineering, and math programs—209. We have 200 different crime prevention programs. We have 160 homeowners and renters assistance programs. We have 94 private sector green building assistance programs, none with a metric, and the agencies don't even know how much money they are spending on them. They told us we have 82 teacher quality programs run by the Federal Government, half of which are not in the Department of Education. I will not continue, but my colleagues get my point.

What have we done about those things? Nothing. Where is the oversight on them? There is none. So the whole idea for me—I am thinking about the future more than I am a political career—is I think we ought to be working on those things. I think the American public expects us to work on them.

I will finish by saying we have been running the credit card for a long time. Do we, in fact, have the right or the privilege or the ability to ask for an extension and a raising of our debt

when, in fact, we have not acted responsibly with our spending? Nobody else in the country gets their credit raised when they have not acted responsibly. They actually check your credit score. They know what kind of bills you are paying, whether you are getting further behind. So should we, in fact, tear up the credit card? Should we force some good old adult supervision on Congress, where we will actually be forced to make difficult decisions about priorities on how we spend America's money? When I say "America's money," I mean the people out there working hard every day. They may not be the highest tax payers, but it is unconscionable to me that when we spend their money, we are wasting 15 to 20 percent of it all the time.

So I think we ought to tear it up. The way we tear it up is we just tear it up. We tear the credit card up. We shred the credit card, and we say: You are going to live within your means. You are going to start making the hard choices. You are addicted to spending. You are addicted to not being responsible with the dollars you have.

Congress needs to be in a 12-step program, and it should start with us.

Mr. President, I thank my colleague the Senator from Delaware for his patience and his friendship.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Delaware.

Mr. CARPER. Mr. President, Dr. COBURN is a tough act to follow, and I am not going to try to do that. But I am happy to serve with him. We come from different parts of the country, different kinds of training, upbringing, and careers, but we have ended up here together in the Senate for the last 9 years and have had an opportunity to lead, first, the subcommittee on Federal financial management—it is a subcommittee of the Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs Committee—and this year to be the Democratic and Republican leaders of the committee. I enjoy working with him. I find that we have the opportunity to do some really good for our country, and I thank him for letting me be his wingman.

I want to just follow on with what Dr. COBURN has said, by asking us to think of how we spend money and what we spend it for in this government of ours. Then I actually have an op-ed that I read recently in our local paper in Delaware that I would like to read into the RECORD from Dr. Bob Laskowski, who is the CEO and the president of Christiana Care Health System, one of the largest hospital systems not just in our State but one of the largest in our part of the country.

Before I do that, I want to follow on to some of Dr. COBURN's comments by talking about our spending in the Federal Government. I would like to think of it as a pie. It is a big pie. A little more than half of the spending pie goes for something we call entitlements—things we are entitled to by virtue of our age, our station in life, or we might

be entitled to Medicare if we are 65 or older, or Medicare if we are disabled and unable to work, or we may be entitled to early Social Security benefits at age 62, full retirement Medicare benefits 5 or so years after that. We may be entitled to benefits because we served in the military or we are a veteran or somebody with a disability. Those are all programs that are called entitlement programs. A lot of people say they are uncontrollable, we cannot do anything to control them, and they have grown like Topsy.

Today, if you think of the spending pie, over half of it is for entitlement. Roughly, closer to another 5 to 10 percent of spending today is for interest on the debt. If interest rates were not so low, it would be a lot more than 5 or 10 percent. Fortunately, we are blessed to have very low interest rates, but still our interest as a percentage of that pie is somewhere, I think, between 5 and 10 percent.

The whole rest of the Federal government is called discretionary spending, which means we actually have some discretion on how that money is spent. It is not an entitlement program, but we actually have to pass spending bills. We call them, usually, appropriations bills. There are about a dozen of them that cover everything from agriculture to defense, to housing, to the environment, to education, to transportation—you name it. That part of the budget—roughly, close to 40 percent, 35 to 40 percent—is called discretionary spending. More than half of that discretionary spending is for defense—I would say roughly 20 percent of the whole pie, maybe a little more than 20 percent. About 15 percent of the whole pie—a little less than half of the discretionary spending—is for nondefense matters.

So if you think about it, it goes something like this: For the spending pie, over half of it is entitlements. Allegedly, those are things we cannot reduce, control. I do not agree with that. Another 5 or 10 percent is for interest. Then we have roughly 40 percent for discretionary spending, the lion's share of which is for defense, and a little less than half of it is for nondefense spending. Think about that—entitlements, interest, defense spending. You set that aside, and for the whole rest of the government you have about 15 percent. That is domestic or nondefense discretionary spending.

We could actually eliminate domestic discretionary spending in its entirety—get rid of everything, everything we do in government other than entitlement programs, interest, and defense—and we would still have a deficit.

For people who say we can only focus on domestic discretionary spending or squeeze that to reduce the deficit further, the deficit is down from about \$1.4 trillion about 4 years ago to about half that today. So we have made progress. It is still way too big, but we cannot get from here to where we want

to go in terms of a balanced budget by just focusing on domestic discretionary spending.

I would like to say there are three things we need to do. Dr. COBURN has heard me say this more times than he wants to remember. The Presiding Officer has heard me say it a time or two as well.

There are three things we need to do if we are serious about deficit reduction, facing the reality of today.

No. 1, entitlement reform. These are the President's words: entitlement reform that saves money, entitlement reform that saves these programs for our kids and our grandchildren, and entitlement reform—these are my words—entitlement reform that does not savage old people or poor people, but it is sensitive to the least of these in our society.

The second thing we need to do is to focus on revenues. We need some more revenues. If you look at our country last year, when our deficit was about \$700 billion—the year we just finished—as I recall, revenue as a percentage of gross domestic product was somewhere in the area of 17 percent, maybe 18 percent—revenue as a percentage of GDP. Spending as a percentage of GDP was over 20 percent, maybe around 21, 22, 23 percent.

The difference between revenues as a percentage of GDP down here at 17, 18, 19 percent of GDP and spending at 21, 22, or 23 percent, that difference right there is about a \$700 billion deficit from the last year.

At the end of the day we need to make the revenues come closer to, actually, the spending. I suggest that we need to take a page out of the book they did in the second term of President Bill Clinton when we had run chronic deficits since 1968. President Clinton asked Erskine Bowles, who was then his Chief of Staff, to work with a Republican Senate and Republican House—a Republican Congress—to see if we could come up with a budget plan that included revenues, included spending, to actually balance the budget.

As we all know the story, famously it worked. A Democratic President, working with a Republican House and Senate, with the help of Erskine Bowles and Sylvia Mathews—now Sylvia Mathews Burwell, who was Erskine's Deputy Chief of Staff, later Deputy OMB Director—they got the job done. They reached across the aisle and worked it out. The deficit reduction plan was a 50–50 deal—50 percent on the revenue side and 50 percent on the spending side. They grew the heck out of the economy. As a result, we had four balanced budgets in a row—I think 1998, 1999, 2000, and 2001.

Harry Truman used to say: The only thing that is new in the world is the history we forgot and never learned. I think as we try to figure out what to do with today's deficits and how to get on an even more fiscally responsible track, it would be smart to look back about 15 years and see how it worked then.

For folks who might be watching this around the country, we actually have a budget law. I think our budget law was adopted in 1974. There is an expectation in our Nation's budget law for the President to present us in the Congress with a budget—one budget, not a capital budget and an operating budget but one budget. It is different from the States. It is different from my State, where I was Governor of Delaware for 8 years, where we have a capital budget and an operating budget. But we have one budget.

The President usually submits a budget in January, maybe February. This year it was a little late. The expectation here in the Congress, under the law, is that by, say, the end of April—a couple months later—the House and the Senate would have passed something called a budget resolution.

A budget resolution—what is that? It is not a budget. A budget resolution is a framework for a budget. It includes not nitty-gritty line-item spending plans for everything—defense and non-defense—but it says, roughly, we will spend this much in these programs, and generally, we will raise this much money in these ways from these revenue sources. It is not very specific, but it is a framework for the budget. I like to think of it as the skeleton, and later on, when we pass appropriations bills, when we pass revenue measures, we put the meat on the bones. That is where the real specificity comes along.

For a number of years we have not been able to pass in the Senate, in the House, a budget resolution—they are usually different—and then go to conference, create a conference committee to create a compromise. We have found it difficult to actually come up with a compromise budget resolution—a compromise, a spending plan, a framework for the appropriations bills and revenue measures.

This year started more promising because in the Senate here, in April, under the leadership of our Senate Budget Committee chairman PATTY MURRAY of Washington, we actually passed a budget resolution—sadly, without Republican support. We passed one, and it was one of those like the Clinton years, a 50–50 deficit reduction deal. It did not eliminate the deficit, but it kept it going in the right track. Half of the deficit reduction was on the spending side, half on the revenue side.

Over in the House, they passed a different kind of budget resolution. The budget resolution they passed did a little entitlement reform. But that 15 percent of the spending pie I was talking about—the 15 percent that is domestic discretionary spending—was reduced, as I recall, from 15 percent to like 5 percent. Think about that. We would be talking about—aside from entitlement spending, interest on the debt, and defense spending—having about the whole rest of the government be like 5 percent of our spending. That is not my vision of what our government

should be about. That is not my vision. And I do not think that is the vision of a lot of people in this body and in this country.

So the three things we need to do: No. 1, entitlement reform. It saves money, saves the programs. It does not savage old people, poor people. The second thing, we need some additional revenues.

I remember Kent Conrad, when he was our Budget Committee chairman, gave a presentation at a meeting a year or so ago. He talked about revenues. He talked about tax expenditures. As to the tax expenditures that he talked about, he said over the next 10 years we will see about \$12 to \$15 trillion go out of the Treasury because of tax breaks—tax credits, tax deductions, tax loopholes, the tax gap—\$12 to \$15 trillion go out of the Treasury for those tax expenditures. He said more money will come out of the Treasury for those tax expenditures—tax breaks, tax credits, tax deductions, tax loopholes—than all the appropriations bills we are going to pass. Think about that.

He said we have a new way to appropriate money, we just do it through the Tax Code. I would say to our Republican and Democratic friends, this is where I think Senator Conrad was coming from. If we cannot figure out how out of \$12 or \$15 trillion of tax expenditures a year, maybe 5 percent of those that could be reduced or could be eliminated because they serve no useful purpose, something is wrong with us. If we can do 5 percent of, say, just \$12 trillion in those tax expenditures, 5 percent would be about \$600 billion over the next 10 years. Match that with entitlement spending reductions, that is about \$1.2 trillion. That is a pretty good next step to take in narrowing our deficit on top of what we have already done.

The third piece, in addition to entitlement reform that saves money, saves the programs for the long haul, and does not savage old people or poor people, some additional revenue, generally from eliminating or reducing tax expenditures, the third piece—and Dr. COBURN was talking a little bit about this. He was talking about the way we spend money. We have a culture in the Federal Government. We have had it for a long time. Big companies have this culture too, and some States as well as counties and cities. I call it a culture of spend thrifts as opposed to a culture of thrift. What Dr. COBURN and I attempt to do with the folks on our committee is look at everything we do in the Federal Government to the extent that one committee can. We like to work with the Office of Management and Budget, OMB, with the General Accountability Office, GAO, the Office of Personnel Management, with the General Services Administration, all of the inspector generals across the agencies, throughout the Federal Government. We like to work with nonprofit groups such as Citizens Against Government Waste and others.

We do this in order to figure out what we are doing. How are we spending the taxpayers' money? Are there ways we can do those things, realize the goals we are trying to achieve, by spending less money or getting better results for the same amount of money? We need to do that in everything.

One of my colleagues said to me, when I said I was coming over to speak tonight: What are you going to talk about?

I said I think I will talk about regular order. We talk a fair amount about regular order around this place. We do not always follow it. Regular order, for the people watching who are tuned in wondering what is regular order, means following the rules. In this case, we have a Budget Act that says the President submits a budget the early part of the calendar year. Congress adopts a budget resolution. We do that about the beginning of May. Then we do our work on preparing appropriations bills and revenue measures. In order to go to a conference on a budget resolution, we have to get agreement. The majority leader will come or the Budget Committee chair will come to the floor and say: I ask unanimous consent to go to conference with the House and to name conferees and begin working out a compromise between the House and the Senate.

For many years it was perfunctory. The unanimous consent request was made. We would go to conference with the House. We would go to work on a budget resolution between the two bodies. This year, every time that request has been made—and it has been made dozens of times by Democrats and by at least one Republican—dozens of times—there has always been an objection to keep us from going to conference to work out this compromise.

As much as anything, we need to create an environment where we can focus on doing the three things I talked about: entitlement reform, tax reform that raises some revenues through deficit reduction, and try to focus on everything we do and say how do we get a better result, how do we get a better result for less money or the same amount of money.

I would say to my Republican colleagues who continue to object: Stop. Please stop. Let us actually have a chance to gather in a room in this building and see what we can hammer out to address, not a short-term continuing resolution but actually a thoughtful, comprehensive spending plan as we did 15, 16 years ago when the Republicans were in the majority here, House and Senate, and we had a Democratic President. We got the job done and helped to continue the longest running economic expansion in the history of this country.

I mentioned Bob Laskowski, president and CEO of Christiana Care Health System, a large regional health care system. He did a great job. We are very proud of him in our State. They provide care to a lot of people. He is a

doctor and a health system leader. I thought his perspectives on health care reform and the Affordable Care Act were important enough to share on the floor.

This comes from an op-ed that appeared in one of our local statewide papers called the News Journal, a Ganett publication. His op-ed was in the News Journal this past week. I am going to read it. It is not that long. It goes like this:

With some in Washington promising to speak out against implementation of the Affordable Care Act until they "can no longer stand," it might be a useful reality check to visit an emergency room in any town or city across America.

He goes on to say:

There you will find thousands of Americans each day that really cannot stand. It is not just because an injury, illness or disease has put them on their backs.

Too often, it is because an eminently treatable ailment has been allowed to turn into something much worse—for the simple reason that the patient doesn't have health insurance and couldn't afford to see a doctor until things became so bad that the emergency room was their only option.

In the continuing cacophony of criticism around so-called ObamaCare, this crucial fact keeps being lost: Our health care system remains badly broken—and in the absence of reform, it will continue to get a lot worse.

I see this—as a physician and as a health care executive; but more importantly, I experience this as the friend of too many neighbors with no health insurance.

He goes on to say:

I think that might be the reason why 3 in 4 Americans surveyed in a recent Pew Research poll say they oppose efforts to sabotage the law: because they know that the people threatening to derail and defund the Affordable Care Act are not offering a better solution.

Ironically, the part of the Affordable Care Act that we are attempting to implement and stand up across the country right now, the health exchanges or marketplaces, is a Republican idea. It was first offered as an alternative to HillaryCare back in the first term of President Clinton. It is a Republican idea, a business idea.

But I do not care whether it is a Democratic or Republican idea. It is a smart idea to use large purchasing pools, enable people who otherwise would buy health insurance for one person or five people or for a small business—it is a way for them to bring down the cost of their care, use competition to get better options. It is a smart idea.

The idea of another criticism, the individual mandates, people being individually mandated to get health care and if they did not they would maybe face some kind of fine—modest at first, it grows in time—that is not a Democratic idea. Ironically, that is an idea we got out of Massachusetts. The author, the Governor who signed it into law, was the Republican nominee for President last year, Mitt Romney.

So what we have tried to do is take some Republican ideas and some Democratic ideas and, frankly, some good ideas.

And over half of those who “oppose” the law today, say they want it fixed, not scrapped.

I agree with that—fixed, not scrapped.

They know that in the absence of reform, there are still too many people who use the emergency room as their only source of medical care; too many families and businesses who cannot keep up with the ever-rising cost of health care premiums; and too many Americans who find nothing but frustration when navigating our health care system—who still fill out too many forms, are prescribed too many tests that do not help them and get passed from office to office without anyone guiding them overall care.

Beginning [last week], millions of uninsured Americans began to shop for quality, affordable health care through the health insurance marketplaces. These marketplaces are a key element of the Affordable Care Act and represent an important step toward putting quality health care within reach of all Americans.

Just as Medicare has enabled seniors to get the care they need to live longer and healthier lives, increasing access to health insurance is vital to unlocking a healthier country, by ensuring something that millions of Americans do not have today: The opportunity to stay healthy through regular doctor visits rather than seeking help only when they get sick.

In some cases very sick.

It is worth remembering: Health care reform is not about special interests. It is about people like us, our families and our neighbors. It is about fellow parishioners and Little League coaches. It is about a neighbor who cuts himself making dinner and a spouse who finds a worrisome lump.

Everyone we know and everyone we love—will need our health care system at some point. Three years after America debated the need for health care reform, millions of Americans who work hard, pay taxes, and raise families still cannot afford to see a doctor. That is wrong.

And even though the resistance of some states to fully adopt the Affordable Care Act will tragically still leave some families in those states in the lurch, we now at long last have the unprecedented opportunity to create a system that will work better for us all.

We should also remember: Over time, the Affordable Care Act promises to improve the system as much for the shrinking majority of Americans who have health insurance as for those who do not.

Access is just the first step. The act provides a blueprint for a new model of care, one that rewards doctors for more coordinated care. Here at Christiana Care [and throughout Delaware] we have seen what happens when we provide that kind of care through reengineered medical practices, known as “medical homes,” where doctors are enabled to not only efficiently meet patients’ needs but to anticipate them as well.

This coordinated approach makes getting care simpler and makes the lives of those getting care easier. It makes quality better; and, by making care simpler, better, and more accessible, it saves money.

No law as big or ambitious as the ACA can possibly get it all right on the first try. But let us not forget: When Medicare was signed into law, critics warned seniors would languish in long lines, and that we would all long for the good old days before reform took place.

Today, Medicare has helped hundreds of millions of Americans live longer, healthier lives—while reducing the poverty rate among seniors by 75 percent.

Dr. Laskowski goes on to write:

I believe if these historic changes are given a chance, we will collectively create a system that is defined not by volume, but by value. Over the next several years, I know we can make health care in America more “people focused” and less transactional by realizing the best way to provide better outcomes at lower cost is by partnering with patients.

As we in health care listen to our patients, we will learn what our patients truly value. Then we will be able to free up resources to help patients get healthy faster and stay well.

The Affordable Care Act is a map toward that future. History is being made.

I will close by saying: While many of our colleagues argue that the Affordable Care Act will lead to rising insurance costs and lost jobs, the truth is that in Delaware and throughout the rest of the country, millions of Americans are already learning they will be able to find quality health care, insurance plans for a more affordable price.

In Delaware and much of the country, millions of Americans will be able to find quality insurance plans for less than \$100 a month. I have told my constituents and my colleagues since this debate over health care reform began, this law is not written in stone. We want to make the law better wherever we can, just as we have made the Medicare prescription drug program better, which was largely supported by Republicans. But we actually made it better in the Affordable Care Act.

I would urge my Republican colleagues to enable us to reopen our government, to reassure Americans and our creditors in this country and around the world that we will honor our debts. Then let’s get to work right away to improve the Affordable Care Act and these insurance marketplaces and come to a consensus on a bipartisan budget resolution that lays out a spending plan that will get us from where we are to where we need to be.

Last word. I spent some time in the Navy, and the Presiding Officer spent some time in the military. One of the Presiding Officer’s sons may be on Active Duty today. Some of the time we used to fly in and out of Japan in Navy P-3 airplanes.

I learned not long ago that in Japan they spend about 8 percent of GDP for health care. In this country, we spend about 17 or 18 percent. Think about that. They spend 8 percent of GDP for health care. We spend 17 or 18 percent. They get better results. For the most part they have lower rates of infant mortality and higher rates of life expectancy than we do.

The other thing is they cover everybody. Tonight when folks go to bed in this country, this evening some 40 million will go to bed without health care coverage. The Japanese, smart as they are, cannot be that smart. We cannot be that dumb. We cannot be that dumb.

There are ways to get better results for less money, including in the provision of health care. We can work together. If we work together, we can make that a reality.

The last thing I will say is I think the Presiding Officer has heard me tell how I love to ask people who have been married a long time what the secret is for being married 40, 50, 60, 70 years. People give me very funny answers. Some are actually hysterical. But every now and then some of them are serious, almost poignant. And I will close with one of them tonight.

A couple of years ago I met a couple who had been married over 50 years.

I said to them: What is the secret for being married 55 years?

They said: The two Cs.

The two Cs.

I said: What is that?

They said: Communicate and compromise.

Think about that. Communicate and compromise. I said: That is pretty good advice.

I got to thinking about it later, and I thought that is also some pretty good advice and maybe the secret for a vibrant democracy—to communicate and to compromise. We think we were willing to compromise on the short-term spending resolution that is the continuing resolution by agreeing to the numbers set by the Republican House leaders. They do not regard that as a compromise, but I think it was an attempt to compromise.

We need to find compromises in a conference on the budget resolution. That is where we should put our money, that is where we should put our efforts in the weeks to come.

I would add one more C. Communicate and compromise, as important as they are, maybe a third C would be collaborate. That would be a good one to add. So three Cs: Communicate, compromise and collaborate. It is what the American people sent us here to do.

I know the Presiding Officer feels that way, and so do I, as does Dr. COBURN. There are a bunch of us who feel that way. So let’s do that.

Mr. President, I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

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

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

Mr. CASEY. Mr. President, pending before the Senate is a unanimous consent request on H. Con. Res. 58, a bill to urge the Department of Defense to allow military chaplains to perform duties during the shutdown.

Earlier today, I objected to this bill because I misunderstood its purpose, and I would like to withdraw that objection at this time.

The bill will urge the Department of Defense to allow military chaplains, including contract personnel, to perform religious services during the shutdown and permit services to take place on property owned by the Department of Defense.

Today, just as the Department of Defense and the administration solved the

problem with military families and their death benefits upon the loss of one of their loved ones serving our country, I urge, and I know others will as well, the DOD to ensure that all active-duty members are able to exercise their First Amendment rights and participate in religious ceremonies while they are serving. So that is something I hope we can resolve.

I also want to raise some issues that relate to the shutdown. I raised some earlier, but these are additional concerns I have with regard to the shutdown.

The impact of this shutdown is being felt across the board, across the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, and, indeed, across the country. It is felt by small businesses, States and municipalities are feeling it already and anticipating much more of an impact as time goes by, and, of course, families are feeling it very acutely. Yesterday I sent a letter to Speaker BOEHNER emphasizing the detrimental impact the shutdown was having on my constituents in Pennsylvania.

Just by way of a couple of examples that apply to Pennsylvania and to the Nation, domestic violence programs across the country have been impacted directly by the shutdown. The offices that oversee grants under the Violence Against Women Act have had to shut down and are not able to issue grants or provide reimbursements to local programs.

I would say parenthetically that it took many months for the Violence Against Women Act reauthorization to go forward. There were a lot of problems along the way, a lot of objections. Fortunately, we have the program reauthorized, but now, because of the shutdown, we are having problems with women who are victims of violence getting the services they are entitled to.

We are hearing as well from folks in our domestic violence shelters—shelters that rely upon Federal funds and that have already been impacted by the sequester—the across-the-board indiscriminate cuts that have been in effect since March. These shelters may have to further reduce services to vulnerable victims of domestic violence.

In the words of one State advocate: We are hanging on by our fingernails.

Meaning they are hanging on in terms of just being able to provide services, with funding either limited or funding being jeopardized.

Women trying to escape abusive relationships should not be hampered by the failures here in Washington to end this shutdown.

In terms of Social Security, we know Social Security checks are going out, fortunately, but in Pennsylvania, on average, 2,900 new claims are processed each week. That is the typical weekly total for new claims. This means Pennsylvanians who have reached retirement age and have paid into the system their entire careers are now forced to wait for benefits.

You have to ask yourself: Why should a domestic violence center, with people

who work to help domestic violence victims, have to wait for a political dispute where one wing of one party engaged in an ideological exercise allows a government shutdown, and, therefore, that domestic violence center doesn't get the help it needs, and the women, mostly women who are impacted, don't get the help they need.

The same could be said of someone who reaches retirement age and expects, and has a right to expect, their Social Security eligibility will be processed. Why should they have to wait for Washington?

In Pennsylvania alone, when it comes to small businesses, 30 loans, on average, are made each week by the SBA, for a total of \$13 million each and every week. The loss of these loans is hindering entrepreneurs from growing their businesses and from obtaining much-needed capital. Again, why should a business owner—a small businessperson who gets help from the SBA and has an expectation of getting that help—and, remember, we average 30 of those loans every week in Pennsylvania amounting to \$13 million—why should that all be stopped because someone in Washington has an ideological point to make? It makes no sense, and it is an outrage.

The shutdown is also impacting infrastructure in public lands across the country. Until the government is open, the maintenance of our Nation's basic infrastructure is impacted. In Pennsylvania, a lot of that basic infrastructure involves our waterways—the locks and dams. That whole system which is in place for Pennsylvania and many other States, the maintenance of those locks and dams, is deferred. We all know what happens when you defer maintenance on something as fundamental as infrastructure.

I have been informed that repairs that were scheduled to take place on locks along the Lower Monongahela River in western Pennsylvania are suspended. If you have a problem with those, with a lock—and locks and dams generally, but in particular focusing on the Monongahela River—you stop the flow of commerce or you slow it down substantially. When you slow down or stop the flow of commerce, that affects jobs and the economy of southwestern Pennsylvania. If just one of these locks were to fail, it could have a detrimental economic impact on the whole region.

How about national parks? We have heard a lot about that topic this week and last week. The closure of national parks is negatively impacting Pennsylvania's economy. According to the National Park Service, the communities and businesses surrounding Pennsylvania's national parks and memorials are losing up to \$5.7 million in spending by nonlocal visitors for each week the government remains closed. That is just national parks and just in Pennsylvania—almost \$6 million—and that is just the beginning of what could be a much more substantial and detrimental impact to the State's economy.

I would go back to the point I made several times—and all of us have made these arguments in different ways—and that is that we know for sure there is a very simple way out of this predicament for Washington but, more importantly, for the country, and that is for the Speaker to put on the floor a bill which both parties now agree will pass. It is a clean funding bill. All it does is fund the operations of the government, albeit at a much lower level—\$70 billion less—than our side wanted.

We compromised greatly at the beginning of this process, despite what some have said. So we have compromised to make sure we can fund the government. It is about time for the Speaker to put this bill on the floor. They can vote on it very quickly, and it would pass very quickly. It is only 16 pages long. And that is the key to resolving and ending this tea party shutdown.

I urge the Speaker to do that. I have urged him, as we all have in various ways, and we respectfully suggest that could happen tomorrow. Thursday would be a good day to end all of this so we can get people back to work, we can have the functions of government operating to such an extent the economy can grow, and we can have a lot of debate and discussion about how to fund the government long term or what to do about our fiscal challenges—what to do about a whole range of issues. But it is time for the government to open, and it is time for the House to act to do that.

It is also time to make sure we pay our bills.

Thirdly, it is important we continue to negotiate, just as we negotiated a long time ago, many weeks ago, to reach the point where we can have a bill that would fund the operations of the government.

Some people in the House chose to take a different path which led to the shutdown. It is about time we get them back on the right path, which is to open the government, pay our bills, and then have negotiations and discussions and compromises to move the country forward.

Mr. President, I yield the floor.

DEATH GRATUITY PAYMENTS

Mr. CHAMBLISS. Mr. President, today I wish to express my deep disappointment at our failure to adequately provide for our fallen heroes and their families.

Once again, we learn that we have suffered recent casualties. And since the government shut down last week, the Department of Defense has been unable to guarantee full benefits and honors to those servicemen and women who have been killed in the defense of our Nation.

Among those who have given their lives in service of our Nation in recent days are two Army Rangers assigned to the 3rd Battalion, 75th Ranger Regiment, headquartered at Fort Benning in my home state of Georgia.

These elite soldiers were serving on the front lines in Afghanistan, fighting for democracy and our American way of life when they made the ultimate sacrifice.

I have since been informed that the Department of Defense believes it lacks the authority to make automatic Death Gratuity Payments, to transport the next of kin to Dover Air Force Base so they can receive their fallen warrior, and to provide funeral allowances for the appropriate military honors.

This is simply unacceptable, and it is incumbent upon us to fix this.

It has been my great privilege to visit Fort Benning and meet with the members of the 75th Ranger Regiment over the years.

They live by the motto that “Rangers Lead The Way,” and they serve our country regardless of Federal funding, domestic politics, or government shutdowns.

That is exactly what these brave individuals did in Afghanistan, and unfortunately it is our lack of leadership in Washington that has created undue hardship and stress for their loved ones in their toughest time of need.

I understand that our colleagues in the House of Representatives are expediting legislation to provide explicit authorization to the Department of Defense to correct this oversight.

The Senate must act immediately on receipt of that legislation.

We owe this much to these brave men and women, their families, and the thousands of military members who continue to serve in harm’s way.

I regret that the President has not taken this issue seriously enough to take action on his own to resolve this problem.

I remain confident that the Senate will take proper actions, and I look forward to passing this legislation as soon as possible.

MESSAGES FROM THE PRESIDENT

Messages from the President of the United States were communicated to the Senate by Mr. Pate, one of his secretaries.

EXECUTIVE MESSAGES REFERRED

As in executive session the Presiding Officer laid before the Senate messages from the President of the United States submitting sundry nominations which were referred to the appropriate committees.

(The messages received today are printed at the end of the Senate proceedings.)

MESSAGES FROM THE HOUSE

At 10:32 a.m., a message from the House of Representatives, delivered by Mrs. Cole, one of its reading clerks, announced that the House passed the following joint resolutions, in which it requests the concurrence of the Senate:

H.J. Res. 84. Joint resolution making continuing appropriations for Head Start for fiscal year 2014, and for other purposes.

H.J. Res. 89. Joint resolution making appropriations for the salaries and related expenses of certain Federal employees during a lapse in funding authority for fiscal year 2014, to establish a bicameral working group on deficit reduction and economic growth, and for other purposes.

At 5:31 p.m., a message from the House of Representatives, delivered by Mrs. Cole, one of its reading clerks, announced that the House passed the following joint resolutions, in which it requests the concurrence of the Senate:

H.J. Res. 90. Joint resolution making continuing appropriations for the Federal Aviation Administration for fiscal year 2014, and for other purposes.

H.J. Res. 91. Joint resolution making continuing appropriations for death gratuities and related survivor benefits for survivors of deceased military service members of the Department of Defense for fiscal year 2014, and for other purposes.

MEASURES PLACED ON THE CALENDAR

The following bill and joint resolution were read the second time, and placed on the calendar:

S. 1569. A bill to ensure the complete and timely payment of the obligations of the United States Government until December 31, 2014.

H.J. Res. 77. Joint resolution making continuing appropriations for the Food and Drug Administration for fiscal year 2014, and for other purposes.

MEASURES READ THE FIRST TIME

The following joint resolutions were read the first time:

H.J. Res. 84. Joint resolution making continuing appropriations for Head Start for fiscal year 2014, and for other purposes.

H.J. Res. 89. Joint resolution making appropriations for the salaries and related expenses of certain Federal employees during a lapse in funding authority for fiscal year 2014, and for other purposes.

H.J. Res. 90. Joint resolution making continuing appropriations for the Federal Aviation Administration for fiscal year 2014, and for other purposes.

H.J. Res. 91. Joint resolution making continuing appropriations for death gratuities and related survivor benefits for survivors of deceased military service members of the Department of Defense for fiscal year 2014, and for other purposes.

SUBMISSION OF CONCURRENT AND SENATE RESOLUTIONS

The following concurrent resolutions and Senate resolutions were read, and referred (or acted upon), as indicated:

By Ms. KLOBUCHAR (for herself, Mr. FRANKEN, Mr. REID, Mr. McCONNELL, Mr. ALEXANDER, Ms. AYOTTE, Ms. BALDWIN, Mr. BARRASSO, Mr. BAUCUS, Mr. BEGICH, Mr. BENNET, Mr. BLUMENTHAL, Mr. BLUNT, Mr. BOOZMAN, Mrs. BOXER, Mr. BROWN, Mr. BURR, Ms. CANTWELL, Mr. CARDIN, Mr. CARPER, Mr. CASEY, Mr. CHAMBLISS, Mr. CHIESA, Mr. COATS, Mr. COBURN, Mr. COCHRAN, Ms. COLLINS, Mr. COONS, Mr. CORKER, Mr. CORNYN,

Mr. CRAPO, Mr. CRUZ, Mr. DONNELLY, Mr. DURBIN, Mr. ENZI, Mrs. FEINSTEIN, Mrs. FISCHER, Mr. FLAKE, Mrs. GILLIBRAND, Mr. GRAHAM, Mr. GRASSLEY, Mrs. HAGAN, Mr. HARKIN, Mr. HATCH, Mr. HEINRICH, Ms. HEITKAMP, Mr. HELLER, Ms. HIRONO, Mr. HOEVEN, Mr. INHOFE, Mr. ISAKSON, Mr. JOHANNES, Mr. JOHNSON of Wisconsin, Mr. JOHNSON of South Dakota, Mr. KAINE, Mr. KING, Mr. KIRK, Ms. LANDRIEU, Mr. LEAHY, Mr. LEE, Mr. LEVIN, Mr. MANCHIN, Mr. MARKEY, Mr. MCCAIN, Mrs. MCCASKILL, Mr. MENENDEZ, Mr. MERKLEY, Ms. MIKULSKI, Mr. MORAN, Ms. MURKOWSKI, Mr. MURPHY, Mrs. MURRAY, Mr. NELSON, Mr. PAUL, Mr. PORTMAN, Mr. PRYOR, Mr. REED, Mr. RISCH, Mr. ROBERTS, Mr. ROCKEFELLER, Mr. RUBIO, Mr. SANDERS, Mr. SCHATZ, Mr. SCHUMER, Mr. SCOTT, Mr. SESSIONS, Mrs. SHAHEEN, Mr. SHELBY, Ms. STABENOW, Mr. TESTER, Mr. THUNE, Mr. TOOMEY, Mr. UDALL of Colorado, Mr. UDALL of New Mexico, Mr. VITTER, Mr. WARNER, Ms. WARREN, Mr. WHITEHOUSE, Mr. WICKER, and Mr. WYDEN):

S. Res. 267. A resolution relative to the death of Rod Grams, former United States Senator for the State of Minnesota.

ADDITIONAL COSPONSORS

S. 338

At the request of Mr. BAUCUS, the name of the Senator from Massachusetts (Mr. MARKEY) was added as a cosponsor of S. 338, a bill to amend the Land and Water Conservation Fund Act of 1965 to provide consistent and reliable authority for, and for the funding of, the land and water conservation fund to maximize the effectiveness of the fund for future generations, and for other purposes.

S. 398

At the request of Ms. COLLINS, the name of the Senator from Colorado (Mr. BENNET) was added as a cosponsor of S. 398, a bill to establish the Commission to Study the Potential Creation of a National Women’s History Museum, and for other purposes.

S. 411

At the request of Mr. CRAPO, the names of the Senator from Georgia (Mr. ISAKSON) and the Senator from Mississippi (Mr. COCHRAN) were added as cosponsors of S. 411, a bill to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to extend and modify the railroad track maintenance credit.

S. 554

At the request of Mr. ISAKSON, the name of the Senator from Arizona (Mr. MCCAIN) was added as a cosponsor of S. 554, a bill to provide for a biennial budget process and a biennial appropriations process and to enhance oversight and the performance of the Federal Government.

S. 775

At the request of Mrs. GILLIBRAND, the name of the Senator from Louisiana (Ms. LANDRIEU) was added as a cosponsor of S. 775, a bill to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to provide a tax incentive for the installation and maintenance of mechanical insulation property.

S. 1158

At the request of Mr. ENZI, the name of the Senator from Utah (Mr. HATCH) was added as a cosponsor of S. 1158, a bill to require the Secretary of the Treasury to mint coins commemorating the 100th anniversary of the establishment of the National Park Service, and for other purposes.

S. 1183

At the request of Mr. THUNE, the name of the Senator from Wisconsin (Mr. JOHNSON) was added as a cosponsor of S. 1183, a bill to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to repeal the estate and generation-skipping transfer taxes, and for other purposes.

S. 1358

At the request of Ms. KLOBUCHAR, the name of the Senator from Hawaii (Mr. SCHATZ) was added as a cosponsor of S. 1358, a bill to establish an advisory office within the Bureau of Consumer Protection of the Federal Trade Commission to prevent fraud targeting seniors, and for other purposes.

S. 1503

At the request of Mr. DURBIN, the name of the Senator from Wisconsin (Ms. BALDWIN) was added as a cosponsor of S. 1503, a bill to amend the Public Health Service Act to increase the preference given, in awarding certain asthma-related grants, to certain States (those allowing trained school personnel to administer epinephrine and meeting other related requirements).

S.J. RES. 10

At the request of Mr. MENENDEZ, the name of the Senator from Oregon (Mr. WYDEN) was added as a cosponsor of S.J. Res. 10, a joint resolution proposing an amendment to the Constitution of the United States relative to equal rights for men and women.

S.J. RES. 15

At the request of Mr. CARDIN, the name of the Senator from Oregon (Mr. WYDEN) was added as a cosponsor of S.J. Res. 15, a joint resolution removing the deadline for the ratification of the equal rights amendment.

SUBMITTED RESOLUTIONS

SENATE RESOLUTION 267—RELATIVE TO THE DEATH OF ROD GRAMS, FORMER UNITED STATES SENATOR FOR THE STATE OF MINNESOTA

Ms. KLOBUCHAR (for herself, Mr. FRANKEN, Mr. REID of Nevada, Mr. MCCONNELL, Mr. ALEXANDER, Ms. AYOTTE, Ms. BALDWIN, Mr. BARRASSO, Mr. BAUCUS, Mr. BEGICH, Mr. BENNET, Mr. BLUMENTHAL, Mr. BLUNT, Mr. BOOZMAN, Mrs. BOXER, Mr. BROWN, Mr. BURR, Ms. CANTWELL, Mr. CARDIN, Mr. CARPER, Mr. CASEY, Mr. CHAMBLISS, Mr. CHESA, Mr. COATS, Mr. COBURN, Mr. COCHRAN, Ms. COLLINS, Mr. COONS, Mr. CORKER, Mr. CORNYN, Mr. CRAPO, Mr. CRUZ, Mr. DONNELLY, Mr. DURBIN, Mr. ENZI, Mrs. FEINSTEIN, Mrs. FISCH-

ER, Mr. FLAKE, Mrs. GILLIBRAND, Mr. GRAHAM, Mr. GRASSLEY, Mrs. HAGAN, Mr. HARKIN, Mr. HATCH, Mr. HEINRICH, Ms. HEITKAMP, Mr. HELLER, Ms. HIRONO, Mr. HOEVEN, Mr. INHOFE, Mr. ISAKSON, Mr. JOHANNES, Mr. JOHNSON of Wisconsin, Mr. JOHNSON of South Dakota, Mr. KAINE, Mr. KING, Mr. KIRK, Ms. LANDRIEU, Mr. LEAHY, Mr. LEE, Mr. LEVIN, Mr. MANCHIN, Mr. MARKEY, Mr. MCCAIN, Mrs. MCCASKILL, Mr. MENENDEZ, Mr. MERKLEY, Ms. MIKULSKI, Mr. MORAN, Ms. MURKOWSKI, Mr. MURPHY, Mrs. MURRAY, Mr. NELSON, Mr. PAUL, Mr. PORTMAN, Mr. PRYOR, Mr. REED of Rhode Island, Mr. RISCH, Mr. ROBERTS, Mr. ROCKEFELLER, Mr. RUBIO, Mr. SANDERS, Mr. SCHATZ, Mr. SCHUMER, Mr. SCOTT, Mr. SESSIONS, Mrs. SHAHEEN, Mr. SHELBY, Ms. STABENOW, Mr. TESTER, Mr. THUNE, Mr. TOOMEY, Mr. UDALL of Colorado, Mr. UDALL of New Mexico, Mr. VITTER, Mr. WARNER, Ms. WARREN, Mr. WHITEHOUSE, Mr. WICKER, and Mr. WYDEN) submitted the following resolution; which was:

S. RES. 267

Whereas Rod Grams faithfully served the people of Minnesota with distinction in the United States Congress;

Whereas Rod Grams was elected to the United States House of Representatives in 1992 and served one term as a Representative from the State of Minnesota and later served as a chief of staff in the House of Representatives;

Whereas Rod Grams was elected to the United States Senate in 1994 and served one term as a Senator from the State of Minnesota;

Whereas as a Senator, Rod Grams served on the Senate Standing Committees on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs, Energy and Natural Resources, Foreign Relations, and the Budget and on the Joint Economic Committee;

Resolved, That the Senate has heard with profound sorrow and deep regret the announcement of the death of the Honorable Rod Grams, former member of the United States Senate.

Resolved, That the Secretary of the Senate communicate these resolutions to the House of Representatives and transmit an enrolled copy thereof to the family of the deceased.

Resolved, That when the Senate adjourns today, it stand adjourned as a further mark of respect to the memory of the Honorable Rod Grams.

AUTHORITY FOR COMMITTEES TO MEET

COMMITTEE ON BANKING, HOUSING, AND URBAN AFFAIRS

Mr. MARKEY. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs be authorized to meet during the session of the Senate on October 9, 2013, at 10 a.m., to conduct a hearing entitled "Housing Finance Reform: Essential Elements of the Multifamily Housing Finance System."

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

RELATIVE TO THE DEATH OF ROD GRAMS, FORMER UNITED STATES SENATOR FOR THE STATE OF MINNESOTA

Mr. CASEY. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate proceed to consideration of S. Res. 267, which was submitted earlier today.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report the resolution by title.

The legislative clerk read as follows:

A resolution (S. Res. 267) relative to the death of Rod Grams, former United States Senator for the State of Minnesota.

There being no objection, the Senate proceeded to consider the resolution.

Mr. CASEY. I ask unanimous consent the resolution be agreed to, the preamble be agreed to, and the motion to reconsider be laid upon the table, with no intervening action or debate.

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

The resolution (S. Res. 267) was agreed to.

The preamble was agreed to.

(The resolution, with its preamble, is printed in today's RECORD under "Submitted Resolutions.")

MEASURES READ THE FIRST TIME—H.J. RES. 84, H.J. RES. 89, H.J. RES. 90, AND H.J. RES. 91

Mr. CASEY. Mr. President, I understand there are four measures at the desk, and I ask for their first reading en bloc.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, the clerk will read the joint resolutions by title.

The legislative clerk read as follows:

A joint resolution (H.J. Res. 84) making continuing appropriations for Head Start for fiscal year 2014, and for other purposes.

A joint resolution (H.J. Res. 89, making appropriations for the salaries and related expenses of certain Federal employees during a lapse in funding authority for fiscal year 2014, to establish a bicameral working group on deficit reduction and economic growth, and for other purposes.

A joint resolution (H.J. Res. 90) making continuing appropriations for the Federal Aviation Administration for the fiscal year 2014, and for other purposes.

A joint resolution (H.J. Res. 91) making continuing appropriations for death gratuities and related survivor benefits for survivors of deceased military servicemembers of the Department of Defense for fiscal year 2014, and for other purposes.

Mr. CASEY. I now ask for a second reading en bloc, and I object to my own request en bloc.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Objection is heard.

The measures will be read for the second time on the next legislative day.

ORDERS FOR THURSDAY, OCTOBER 10, 2013

Mr. CASEY. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that when the Senate completes its business today, it adjourn until 10:30 a.m. on Thursday, October 10, 2013; that following the prayer

and pledge, the morning hour be deemed expired, the Journal of proceedings be approved to date, and the time for the two leaders be reserved for their use later in the day; that following any leader remarks, the time until 1 p.m. be equally divided and controlled between the two leaders or their designees; and that at 1 p.m. the Senate recess subject to the call of the Chair to allow for a special caucus meeting with the President.

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

ADJOURNMENT UNTIL 10:30 A.M. TOMORROW

Mr. CASEY. Mr. President, if there is no further business to come before the Senate, I ask unanimous consent that it adjourn under the provisions of S. Res. 267, as a further mark of respect for the memory of the late Senator Rod Grams of Minnesota.

There being no objection, the Senate, at 6:48 p.m., adjourned until Thursday, October 10, 2013, at 10:30 a.m.

NOMINATIONS

Executive nominations received by the Senate:

FEDERAL RESERVE SYSTEM

JANET L. YELLEN, OF CALIFORNIA, TO BE CHAIRMAN OF THE BOARD OF GOVERNORS OF THE FEDERAL RESERVE SYSTEM FOR A TERM OF FOUR YEARS, VICE BEN S. BERNANKE, RESIGNED.

IN THE ARMY

THE FOLLOWING NAMED OFFICERS FOR APPOINTMENT TO THE GRADE INDICATED IN THE RESERVE OF THE ARMY UNDER TITLE 10, U.S.C., SECTION 12203:

To be colonel

KENNETH E. BRANDT
DAVID A. HALL
STEVEN C. HERMAN
DONALD R. MALIN
JOEL V. MILLER
DANIEL J. THOMPSON
JAMES A. TILLMAN
WILEY R. WILLIAMS