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Senate

The Senate met at 10:30 a.m. and was called to order by the Honorable BRIAN SCHATZ, a Senator from the State of Hawaii.

PRAYER

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

Let us pray.

Immortal and wise God, may the memory of Your past mercies sustain us during these challenging times. As we have reached the 10th day of this Federal shutdown, strengthen our Senators with Your might, preserving them with Your grace, and instructing them with Your wisdom. Inspire them to take a step back from partisanship and to take a step forward toward patriotism, striving to strengthen and not weaken this land we love. Lord, make them alive and alert to the spiritual values which underlie all the struggle of this challenging season. Direct their going out and coming in as You energize them with Your presence.

We pray in Your strong 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 10, 2013.

To the Senate:

Under the provisions of rule I, paragraph 3, of the Standing Rules of the Senate, I hereby

appoint the Honorable BRIAN SCHATZ, a Senator from the State of Hawaii, to perform the duties of the Chair.

PATRICK J. LEAHY,
President pro tempore.

Mr. SCHATZ thereupon assumed the Chair as Acting President pro tempore.

RECOGNITION OF THE MAJORITY LEADER

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

DEFAULT PREVENTION ACT OF 2013—MOTION TO PROCEED

Mr. REID. I move to proceed to Calendar No. 211, S. 1569, the debt limit bill.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The clerk will report the motion.

The legislative clerk read as follows:

Motion to proceed to Calendar No. 211, S. 1569, a bill to ensure the complete and timely payment of the obligations of the United States Government until December 31, 2014.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The majority leader.

SCHEDULE

Mr. REID. Following leader remarks the time until 1 p.m. will be equally divided and controlled between the two leaders and their designees.

At 1 p.m. the Senate will recess subject to the call of the Chair for a special caucus meeting with the President.

MEASURES PLACED ON THE CALENDAR—H.J. RES. 84, H.J. RES. 89, H.J. RES. 90, H.J. RES. 91

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

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

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 ex-

penses 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 fiscal year 2014, and for other purposes.

A joint resolution (H.J. Res. 91) making continuing appropriations for the 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. REID. Mr. President, I would object to any further proceedings with respect to these measures en bloc.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Objection is heard.

The measures will be placed on the calendar.

Mr. REID. The President issued a warning to Congress:

The full consequences of a default by the United States—or even the prospect of a default by the United States—are impossible to predict and awesome to contemplate. Denigration of the full faith and credit of the United States would have substantial effects on the domestic financial markets and the value of the dollar in exchange markets.

The President went on to warn of “risks, the costs, the disruptions, and the incalculable damage” of failing to avert such a default.

This is not Barack Obama; this was Ronald Reagan in 1983.

Four years later in 1987, Reagan again warned Congress about the impacts of a default on the economy. He said:

This brinkmanship threatens the holders of government bonds and those who rely on Social Security and veterans benefits. Interest rates would skyrocket, instability would occur in the financial markets, and the Federal deficit would soar.

Yet three decades later, an alarming number of Republicans have denied or downplayed the seriousness of a first-ever default on the full faith and credit of the United States.

To these default deniers, east is west, north is south, black is white, and right is wrong.

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



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Let's talk about what raising the debt actually means. It simply means we are going to pay our bills. It is not a vote to spend more money to authorize new programs or to buy new things. It is a vote to pay the bills.

The Federal Government has already incurred these bills, bills for roads and bridges—we have already built them—the warships we have already commissioned, wars that have been waged and tax breaks that have been charged on a national credit card.

A vote to avert default is a vote to pay the bills for all these and more.

Many Republicans are in the press today, and have been for the past week or 10 days, arguing, Why worry about it? It will all work out.

These same Republicans who argue that we should default on the Nation's bills voted time and time again to spend borrowed money, and a lot of it, without any regard for the long-term effect it would have. These Republicans voted to sell government bonds to China, Saudi Arabia, and Japan to pay for the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan.

Republican Senators have come to this floor and lamented raising the debt. We have to raise this debt because of two unpaid wars costing trillions of dollars; tax breaks for the wealthy costing trillions of dollars, all given to the rich with borrowed money; wars fought with borrowed money.

During the Bush administration, these same Republicans were happy to run up America's credit cards to the tune of trillions of dollars. Their theory was lower the taxes; it will be great for the economy. They are now howling about the debts they created, the debts they voted for. Never mind that with little help from Republicans in Congress, President Barack Obama has reduced the ratio of deficit to gross domestic product from 9 percent to 4 percent. This is very good, in spite of the debt he has been trying to get charge of; it wasn't his.

Now that the bill for the Republicans' excesses has come due, the bills for wars they supported and the tax cuts they have received, they are not willing to pay them. They want to walk out on that check.

Many of these same Republicans also say we can avoid default by prioritizing whom to pay and when we pay them. They say we should pay foreign debt-holders first. They all agree with that. China would be first, then Saudi Arabia, and maybe Japan.

We shouldn't and couldn't pay Social Security recipients under that scenario, veterans or Medicare. No matter how much we would want to, we couldn't do it. There would be no money to do it. In addition to having shockingly skewed priorities, Republicans are also using very flawed logic.

Here is a real-world example. Let us say the Presiding Officer has a mortgage, car payment, and a cell phone bill. The Presiding Officer has to decide: Which one should I pay? I can't pay them all. Which one should I pay?

It doesn't matter if the Presiding Officer picks one of them because he has defaulted anyway. He can't pay his bills. He likely would never be able to buy another car, cell phone, certainly not a house. His credit would be ruined for the foreseeable future.

The same thing would happen to our country. One week from today—and that is not a definite time, it could be a couple days before or a couple of days after, but we are there; let's say a week from now and use that as a point of reference—the United States has no money. It can't borrow any money. The Federal Government paid China but failed to pay Social Security recipients, unemployment benefits or the salaries of our brave men and women fighting in uniform.

The damage not only to our credit rating, world credit rating, but also to our global reputation would be profound and irreversible. The risks, the costs, the disruptions and the damage would be incalculable. This is what President Ronald Reagan said.

Why don't they listen to this man they say is such a great leader—and was. I agree. He was a tremendous President. I didn't agree with him all the time, but he was a real leader. He, more than anyone else, is responsible for ending the Cold War. There are many who say he couldn't fit in the Republican Party of today.

Robert Dole, who was the majority leader of the Senate from the State of Kansas, a patriotic American, said himself he doesn't fit in the Republican Party today.

The stakes couldn't be higher. A global economic recession, and possibly even depression, face this great country. This is why President Obama reached out to House Republicans, inviting them to the White House yesterday afternoon for a serious discussion. Guess what they said. We are too busy. We will send a few of us, but we are too busy. Remember, the House is led by this same man who said he wanted to have a conversation, but they are unwilling to have one with him.

I was disappointed to hear that the same intractable Republican leaders who caused the current government shutdown were unwilling to even allow their Members to meet with the President for a constructive conversation. Again, they will send—I think they picked 17 out of the 232 they have. This great conversation is one they don't want.

They want to talk, but their actions tell another story. They have caused enough economic turmoil with the reckless shutdown of the Federal Government. If that is not enough, now we have the debt ceiling coming in about 1 week. If Republicans force default on the Nation's debt, it would be magnitudes worse than the damage they have already caused our great country with this senselessly created government shutdown.

Yesterday, Fidelity, the Nation's largest mutual fund manager, with \$500

billion in assets, announced it would sell all of its short-term government bonds because of the threat of default. Today there will be more.

Yesterday, government bonds were considered the safest investment in the world. Will they be so tomorrow? Time will only tell. If the United States fails to pay its bills, that safe haven will disappear very quickly.

We are going to vote Saturday on the ability to proceed to a clean debt ceiling. We will find out how Senate Republicans wish to proceed. Economists say the consequences of not paying our bills, not extending the debt ceiling, would be immediate and catastrophic. This isn't a bunch of Harvard left-wingers.

Even Republican economist Douglas Holtz-Eakin said debt deniers are dead wrong. He said a failure to raise the debt ceiling leads to very bad economic outcomes and chaos in financial markets.

Fidelity's move is only the first sign of economic chaos and will continue to spread the closer America comes to defaulting on its bills. With every day that passes, it is more and more important for Republicans to stop denying the reality of default and start working with us to find common ground.

All we have said is open the government. Let us pay our bills. We will negotiate with them on anything. We will have a conversation with them about anything. Open the government. Let us pay our bills. Then we will negotiate.

RECOGNITION OF MINORITY LEADER

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

THE DEBT CEILING

Mr. McCONNELL. Mr. President, I would like to start this morning by quoting something my good friend the majority leader said back in 2007—back when Congress was weighing whether to raise the debt ceiling. Here is what the majority leader said back then:

Until we change the policies that led down this path, we will be back year after year, digging the hole ever deeper.

And, of course, that is essentially what so many Americans are saying today: If we are going to address the debt ceiling, then let's also address the root causes of the debt. It just makes good sense.

One would think our friend the majority leader would continue to agree with this logic as well, but that is not what he has been saying lately. He is basically saying that it would be irresponsible for Congress to address the most pressing problem we face in the country, that it would be reckless to raise the debt ceiling if that also meant doing something about the debt. In other words, he now seems to think the best thing to do about our crushing Federal debt is to do nothing at all. That is why my friend the majority leader introduced legislation this week to now allow another \$1 trillion to be added to the debt with no strings attached at all, none, just a \$1 trillion

debt ceiling increase: Just keep raising the credit card limit and letting someone else deal with it later on.

We now have a debt close to \$17 trillion—nearly double what it was in 2007. We are borrowing nearly \$2 billion a day—\$2 billion a day—and apparently our friends on the other side are fine with that. They want us to give Washington a free pass to borrow and spend \$1 trillion more. He is so comfortable with all of this, my friend the majority leader rejected the President's own proposal this week to do a short-term increase followed by a negotiation on reforms.

Well, in my view, we were sent here to solve problems, not to defer them. We were sent here to confront the challenges of the moment, not ignore them. That is why the majority leader's proposal just won't fly, because it is completely at odds with the wishes of most Americans. And that is something the President and a lot of other Senate Democrats agreed with when a Republican President was asking for a debt limit increase. Of course, the problem is a lot more serious now than it was back then.

Here is something else. Neither side wants to default on our debts. Neither side will allow it. That is certainly the case, and people should know that. It is irresponsible to do nothing about the debt, and it is irresponsible to be stirring up anxiety about default, but that doesn't mean the American people are wrong to ask that a debt limit increase include reforms aimed at actually tackling the problems that got us in this position in the first place, especially since what our country has routinely done in the past is just that.

Going back to the Eisenhower administration, requests to raise the debt ceiling have often been tied to important fiscal reforms—nearly two dozen times going back to the Eisenhower administration. That is how we got the Gramm-Rudman-Hollings reforms in the 1980s. That is how we achieved balanced budgets in the 1990s. That is how we secured significant spending reductions in President Obama's first term—spending reductions on which he later campaigned.

Now President Obama seems to think Congress should just increase the borrowing limit on his already maxed-out credit card without a single negotiation. He seems to think the representatives of the American people should just do what he says when he says it and because he says it, no questions asked—no questions asked. You know, that is not just irresponsible, it is not the way Presidents of both parties have dealt with this problem in the past. Reagan negotiated, Clinton negotiated, and if President Obama wants America to increase the credit limit, he will negotiate too.

I would also like to address one of the President's favorite talking points these days. He says he won't negotiate over "the bills Congress has already racked up." Look, if the President ac-

tually believed his own talking point, he wouldn't threaten to veto virtually every Republican attempt to get spending under control. We have tried endlessly. The only times we can even get him to discuss sensible budget reforms is when he is absolutely forced to—when Washington has to deal with things like the debt ceiling. So let's drop the tired talking points and just get about negotiating.

I know the President doesn't like the fact that Americans elected a divided government, but they did. We have a divided government, and no matter how much he tries to divide us, at the end of the day he is going to have to deal with a Congress he doesn't entirely control.

The American people can be persuaded to raise the debt ceiling, but they are not in any mood to simply hand over a blank check. They are looking for sensible reforms. So if the President wants to increase his credit limit, let's get to the table and negotiate. He has been inviting Members of Congress to the White House this week. In fact, we were told earlier today that Senate Republicans have been invited to meet with the President tomorrow morning. That is a good start but only if it means he has decided to drop his refusal to negotiate on solutions. But if this is just a meeting where he simply reiterates that he won't negotiate, then it certainly won't be very productive.

I yield the floor.

RESERVATION OF LEADER TIME

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

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Under the previous order, the time until 1 p.m. will be equally divided and controlled between the two leaders or their designees.

The assistant majority leader.

Mr. DURBIN. Mr. President, I received an email this morning from an old friend. He is the father of a disabled veteran. This veteran is a quadriplegic—a victim of a roadside bomb in Iraq. He has gone through multiple surgeries. At some point most people would have given up on him. In fact, they even talked about, at the age of 24, his being sent to a nursing home for the rest of his life. His father said: No, we are not going to let that happen to our son. He brought him to Chicago, where he received extraordinary treatment at the Rehabilitation Institute, and he started his slow, steady climb back to life. He is home now. He is a father, married, has two small children, and his mom and dad live with him to help out. The people in the community he lives in—it is not in Illinois, it is in North Carolina—have been so generous, building the perfect home for him and his wheelchair and giving him as many opportunities as he could possibly enjoy in his life.

This is a great story of a great family and a great American hero. But his father wrote me an email today and said:

We are worried. We are worried about the November disability check. Senator, we need it. We need that check.

I wrote back to him and I said: I will move Heaven and Earth and do everything I can to make sure that payment is made.

And I believe it will be made. Somehow, it will be made. But I had to tell him that we are facing an unnecessary crisis in America created by politicians on Capitol Hill.

Shutting down the government of the United States of America? What does that say about our Nation? What does it say about us in the Senate and the House that we have reached this point, that we are deciding today on the four or five bills that just passed the House? The House has decided what little agency of government, what little spending program they will approve each day—each day. It is estimated it will take them almost 2½ months to fully fund the government at this pace—2½ months of uncertainty as they decide day by day what little program, what little agency they will reopen. Well, that is just plain wrong, and every time they have offered that, we have said to them: Open the government. It is essential.

There was a story 2 or 3 days ago about five American families who were notified that they had lost their sons and daughters, who were killed in Afghanistan. Traditionally, the U.S. Government comes through quickly after that tragic information is shared with the family and gives them a financial helping hand to arrange for them to come to Dover, DE, for the arrival and return of their fallen hero. But because of the government shutdown brought on by the Republicans, there was a question as to whether we could even make that payment.

Luckily, a charity stepped forward—Fisher House. This is an extraordinary charity that does so many great things for veterans who are disabled and need help. They said: We are going to step in and help these families until the government gets its act together, until the politicians reopen the government.

Secretary of Defense Chuck Hagel announced yesterday this new development. Well, God bless the Fisher House charity, but it shouldn't have been necessary. If we had done our job, it wouldn't be necessary; the government would be open; this family whom I love, with this disabled veteran, wouldn't be worried about that next check if we simply did the responsible thing and opened the government.

Then there is a second issue which, although hard to believe, is even larger in scope. The Republicans refuse to give us a chance to extend the debt ceiling of America. What is the debt ceiling? This morning I listened as the minority leader said it is raising the credit card limit. No, it isn't. That is not an accurate statement. It is raising the authority of our government to borrow money to pay for what we have already spent. Many of the same politicians who voted for the spending bills

now don't want to pay for them. They do not want to extend this debt ceiling—the credit of the United States. That is totally irresponsible. It is like ordering the biggest meal on the menu and then refusing to pay when the bill comes. That is where they stand. That is what they are arguing.

But it gets even worse. It will be the first time in the history of the United States of America that we will have defaulted on our national debt—the first time we have called into question the full faith and credit of the United States of America. How serious is that? Let me tell you how serious it is. Pick up the morning paper. “World leaders fear a default by U.S.” in the Washington Post. I read it, and it says:

That default scenario is bringing increasingly urgent pleas from foreign leaders, some who describe their grave concern, others who chide the United States about the risks of political brinkmanship, beg its leaders to act responsibly and wonder whether the world's superpower is showing some cracks.

Now, are you ready for this? Do you know who was preaching to us yesterday about responsibility in governing the United States of America? Are you ready for this? This is a quote from Russian President Vladimir Putin:

This is highly important for all of us. I am hopeful that all the political forces in the United States will be able to resolve this crisis as quickly as possible.

So now we are being preached to by President Putin about how to run a country. Well, that is embarrassing, and it is totally unnecessary. The failure to extend the debt limit of the United States is irresponsible and reckless.

It isn't only the Russians who are calling us to task but our closest ally, the United Kingdom. This is what an analyst in London's financial district had to say:

The outlook for the British economy is decent but still fairly fragile. Anything like a U.S. debt default with significant global repercussions would be bad news for the U.K.

That is a quote from Howard Archer, chief UK economist at IHS Global Insight in London.

The Japanese, now emerging from a terrible economic circumstance, one of our greatest creditors, are worried about their debtor, the United States, paying its debts. Is anyone else embarrassed by this? We all should be. This is the creation of politicians in Washington.

The Republican shutdown, the Republican refusal to extend the debt ceiling is irresponsible and reckless. It will not only hurt these foreign nations, it will not only hurt the reputation of the United States as an economic leader in the world, it is going to hurt families and businesses all over the United States. But don't take the word of this Democratic Senator; go to the Business Roundtable, one of the strongest supporters of the Republicans in Congress. They sent us a letter last week and called the default on America's debt catastrophic, begging

Republicans and Democrats not to do anything this senseless.

What impact will it have on families? Hold on tight. Watch what happens as we get up to this cliff or go over it when it comes to the debt ceiling. You can follow it every day. If you have a mutual fund, if you own a stock, if you have a savings account, or if you have a retirement account, you can watch it melt away as the politicians give their speeches on Capitol Hill.

It is totally irresponsible and reckless.

We need to open this government. We need to pay our bills. We can sit down and negotiate everything and anything—that is the offer that has been made—only after we have met our responsibilities.

Let me also add that Speaker BOEHNER said last week and some of us were relieved to hear it: There will never be a default on America's debt. He followed that up within 24 hours with a list of nonnegotiable conditions before he would agree to that. That is not responsible. It is reckless. It is reckless political conduct. How can we do this to the families, to businesses, to the farmers, and to our allies around the world?

It is time to say, as the Chaplain of the Senate did yesterday, enough is enough. It is time for grownups to stand up on the other side of the aisle and join grownups on this side of the aisle to do the right thing: Open the government, pay our bills, sit down, and honestly negotiate through these issues. We don't have much time. October 17 is the deadline. Today is October 10. We have 1 week before the bottom falls out of our economy and the economies around the world.

I listened to economists on the other side, the so-called really conservative economists, say: It really doesn't matter. We can default. We really don't need to extend our debt ceiling. These flat-earth economists are the same folks who are in denial when it comes to other scientific evidence in so many other areas, whether it is climate change or evolution—you pick it. They are entitled to their views, as fringe as they may be, as extreme as they may be. But to think that Members of Congress, Members of the Senate are buying this line of baloney is hard to understand and impossible to justify to the American people.

I yield the floor.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The Senator from Maryland.

Ms. MIKULSKI. Mr. President, I think one of the things we ought to be observing, here at least, is courteous rules among ourselves. This is meant to be the greatest deliberative body in the world. If we follow the rules, follow the regular order, follow the committee process, and follow the ways through the committee processes for resolving disagreements and disputes, I think we can get through this.

I believe on both sides of the aisle there are pragmatic people devoted to

this country who want to solve the two major problems we have facing us right this minute; that is, to reopen government, because we are now in the 10th day of a shutdown; and, No. 2, to meet the debt obligations of the United States of America as mandated in the 14th Amendment of the Constitution.

I call upon my colleagues on both sides of the aisle and on both sides of the dome: Let's reopen government. Let's pay our bills. And let's get through the regular committee processes to solve our problems.

There are those on the other side of the dome in the House of Representatives that are proposing a new supercommittee. We have been there, and we have done that. After the 2011 crisis, when we faced our debt limit, there was a process put in place called a supercommittee. It went nowhere. This new idea will go nowhere as well. It is a new process that will only result in more delay.

I think we have two supercommittees. I call them supercommittees because they are great committees. They are wonderful committees. That is the Budget Committee chaired by Senator PATTY MURRAY and her ranking member Senator JEFF SESSIONS, himself a distinguished judge from Alabama, so he knows about conflict resolution. There is the Appropriations Committee that deals with discretionary spending, chaired by me and my vice chairman Senator RICHARD SHELBY, again a seasoned fiscal conservative who knows how to concentrate on the bottom line so we can be a more frugal government but also be an effective government. Let that committee do its job.

There is also the Finance Committee chaired by Senator MAX BAUCUS. I know the ranking member Senator GRASSLEY from Iowa is on the floor. He has an incredible history of being a compassionate conservative and he knows the Tax Code and knows the values of Iowa—which is, let's put country above party.

Instead of inventing new committees and new processes, free us up to do our job. Free us up to be able to do what the committee process is meant to be able to do.

For me and the Appropriations Committee, we moved all of our appropriations bills. We are ready to come to the floor. We are ready to go to conference if called up, if we have a method for being able to move. We are ready to do it.

Senator MURRAY on the Budget Committee is ready to go to conference with the House. But 21 times she was blocked by 6 naysayers primarily representing a tea party, small faction within the Republican Party.

The Republican Party, the Grand Old Party, has traditionally understood that you maintain the values of the country, that you are fiscally conservative, but you follow the rules that were established. The rules of the Budget Committee passed by the Senate in the Budget Control Act say they

were supposed to have their job done on April 15. Well, we moved the budget on March 23, over 200 days ago, and over 20 requests to go to conference with me, with Congressman PAUL RYAN, and with his House counterparts to work out what our discretionary spending should be. What should our revenues be? What should we evaluate in terms of our mandatory spending where we can take a look at it but not shrink those earned benefits like Social Security and VA benefits that people count on and work their whole life for and even put their life on the line? We have to be able to do our job.

I will tell you what has been the latest situation that has so shocked me. We are on the verge of being a deadbeat nation. We are on the verge of being a global deadbeat nation. What is a deadbeat? A deadbeat is someone who does not meet their financial obligations.

Over the last 3 days, we have heard about how the families of the men and women who died in the line of duty serving their country and are entitled to a death benefit were not going to get it because of the government shutdown.

The Fisher family—well known for serving military families, well known and so deeply cherished—offered to step forward to pay that. The philanthropy of the United States, instead of the public responsibility of the United States.

I want to thank the Fisher family for stepping forward. But, my gosh, what humiliation. We are the United States of America, with the strongest and best military in the world, and to honor its obligation to its own, the United States has to borrow money for a death benefit. That is deadbeat. I think it is humiliating. I think it is despicable. It shows just how low we have sunk.

We can get it back. It is in our power because this isn't being inflicted on us. This is what is being inflicted on us by other Americans sworn to uphold the Constitution of the United States of America. When they took that obligation, they didn't take that obligation to just uphold the Amendments they like—like the second one—but they took that obligation to uphold all of the Amendments.

Let's start with the 14th, which says that the debt of the United States of America should not be called into question. That is clearly in the Constitution. No matter what, America will pay its bills. The reliability of the United States of America to meet its debt obligations is the financial glue that helps to hold the global economy together.

I am not going to go into doomsday or Armageddon or whatever. But if you actually read what the ambassadors of China and Japan—one a great ally and the other a formidable competitor—say: We are holding your debt. Pay your bills, or a fiscal crisis will begin to unravel in your country and around the world.

We cannot be a deadbeat nation. If we are a superpower, we must first of

all show our power by meeting our financial obligations. How we get our public house in order by reducing our public debt is the subject again of the Appropriations Committee, the Budget Committee, and the Finance Committee. We have the capability to do it. I am really calling upon my friends on the other side of the aisle—and there are many. And it is not that we are pals. It is because we have come together out of mutual respect to solve mutual problems, being of help to each other mutually, that we have been able to keep the government functioning and doing it in a way that is smart and affordable.

So I say, please, let's reopen government. I am calling upon the House to pass the Senate continuing fiscal funding resolution that would reopen government on November 15 and that process to lay the groundwork for resolving our appropriations bills and canceling sequester.

I call upon those six that are blocking us—meaning the Senate—from going to the Budget Committee to do this. Those are two simple acts within our power to do. I hope that we can do it.

I intended today to speak about how the shutdown is affecting Maryland. We are really being hard hit. Maryland and Virginia have the largest concentration of Federal agencies, both civilian and military, in America. And, gee, we are proud of that. We are so proud of the fact that we have the National Institutes of Health, the Food and Drug Administration, the National Institute of Standards and Technology, which works with our private sector that enables us to sell products around the world.

We are so proud of the fact that we have the Nuclear Regulatory Commission, the Consumer Product Safety Commission, to make sure that we are looking out for large and small, whether it is to make sure that our mattresses are not flammable or that our cribs and swimming pools are safe for our children. I am proud of those agencies.

I am sorry that my Federal employees are not working. It is having a terrible impact on the Maryland economy. Both our comptroller and our Governor are talking about the significant amount of lost revenue that we are having because people aren't working and they aren't buying. If you talk to small businesses where these agencies are located, it is just terrible.

I just want to tell one story. The Social Security Administration is headquartered in Maryland in a community called Woodlawn, a wonderful community with a vibrant, civic engagement. It is just great. Across the street from the Social Security Administration is a small business called the Salsa Grill. It is usually crowded with lunch hour people, early morning coffee, those little baby showers that we women like to have or a birthday party the guys are throwing for one of their

pals at lunchtime. The Salsa Grill last Friday, instead of 30 customers, had 3. The owner was quoted as saying if the shutdown goes on much longer, he won't be able to hang on any longer. This is what makes our economy great.

I talked to one of the largest automobile dealers in Maryland. The showrooms were empty in the Baltimore-Washington corridor last weekend, even though they had wonderful cars, new cars. They were ready to do deals for the old 2013 models they wanted to move out—empty; empty. This ripples through our economy. This is not just, "Oh, we are going to contain government." We are hurting ourselves.

The fight about ObamaCare is over. Let's say goodbye to that fight. Let's get on to the fiscal issues of the United States of America. I say here, as the chair of the Appropriations Committee, I am ready to negotiate. I am ready to meet, to compromise, to see how we can have our domestic and defense discretionary spending done in a way that begins to reduce our public debt but will also have a progrowth way of public investments, making sure our country is safe, that we are building roads, building the superinformation highway, educating our young people, and doing research and development.

I know my time is up, but I believe very strongly that we have to solve our problems. I am ready to say to the other side of the aisle that I am ready to work together. That is because I have done it in the past. We actually like doing it, for us pragmatists to get into a room, solve problems, give and take, and actually learn from each other. I could give many examples of that.

Right now we need to set the example for the world that we are the greatest deliberative body. We have to get back to deliberating instead of delaying.

Please, for the House, pass the continuing funding resolution. For the Senate, limit your objection to the Budget Committee going into conference. Let's reopen the government, let's pay our bills, and sit down and negotiate in a way worthy of a great country, and let's honor the Constitution of the United States.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The Senator from Wyoming.

Mr. BARRASSO. Mr. President, I appreciate the comments by the distinguished chair of the Appropriations Committee. As she said, she is ready to meet, ready to negotiate, ready to compromise, ready to work together.

I come today to say tomorrow Republican Senators are finally going to get a chance to talk with President Obama about reopening the government and dealing with the debt this Nation has, dealing with the debt limit.

Until very recently, President Obama has been far more interested in speaking with the press than in actually speaking with Republicans. Then we have this invitation to the White House. This morning in the Washington Post, what the administration

says—it is a front-page article and it continues over to page 4—it says the White House “emphasized that Obama will not be negotiating.”

We have the chair of the Appropriations Committee saying she is ready to meet, negotiate, and compromise, and the White House says President Obama will not be negotiating.

The question is, why are we going over to the White House in the first place if the President is not interested in negotiating? Is it just to give him a photo op? I went to meetings like that during the health care debate more than 3 years ago. The President at the time would invite Republicans to a meeting and then he would reject every idea we would offer. If he had been more willing to accept Republican ideas, negotiate then, we would have had a bipartisan health reform bill that was accepted by the American people instead of a law that continues to have more people opposed than in favor of it.

That is going to be my message to the President tomorrow morning when we meet. This needs to be a real discussion, a real negotiation, when we agree on how we can reopen the Government, reduce our debt and help our economy grow. This is the sixth time in 5 years that President Obama has requested an increase in the debt ceiling. How much is he asking for? According to the majority leader, I understand it is \$1 trillion to extend between now until after the 2014 election.

That is an incredible amount of money. Just trying to figure out how much money that is, it is over \$1 million a minute. It is \$1 million every minute between now and 14 months from now. The President needs to realize that is unsustainable. We have a \$17 trillion debt. It is a debt on the back of our children and our grandchildren. We have families all across the country who have aspirations, anxieties, and anger about even the idea that their children and grandchildren will not be able to get careers, get jobs.

If we as a nation are going to incur more debt, we also have to find real savings. We cannot continue to increase our credit card debt, another new credit card after the President has maxed out the last one, and send this bill to the American people. It is time to set priorities. We want to get moving on real solutions, not just to our short-term problems but the long-term issues that face us as a nation as we try to work together in governing this Nation.

The House of Representatives has passed 12 individual continuing resolutions. These bills would open many different parts of the government right now, parts that we all agree should be kept operating. The House voted to pay for FEMA, Head Start, the National Institutes of Health, to open our national parks. Those bills have been sent to the Senate. They have been sitting here without action at all.

Here in the Senate I know a lot of Democrats are saying they support

these functions. We see this picture on the front page of the Washington Post this morning with the mayor, Mayor Vincent Gray, the mayor of Washington, DC, on the steps of the Capitol, talking to the majority leader saying, “Sir, we are not a department of the government. We are simply trying to be able to spend our own money.” Yet the majority leader, who is blocking these votes to allow the District of Columbia to do what they are requesting and what the House has said yes, they should be able to do, the majority leader is saying, “Don’t screw it up, OK? Don’t screw it up.”

The majority leader continues to object to votes on these bills. History supports bipartisan action of the House and not the stonewalling of the President and the Democratic leadership in the Senate.

In the middle of the last government shutdown, Congress passed and President Clinton signed laws to allow a wide variety of specific programs to function. It is a precedent we should be following today.

The President also keeps saying he will not negotiate on the debt limit. He tries to make people believe that never before has Congress included “issues that have nothing to do with the budget and nothing to do with the debt”—this is the President’s quote—in its negotiation over the debt limit.

The facts are not on the President’s side. Even the Fact Checker in the Washington Post gave the President four Pinocchios on that claim, essentially saying it was completely not true. Negotiations have actually occurred many times on the debt limit.

From 1978 until 2013, the debt limit has been raised 53 times. Of those votes, the debt ceiling increase was linked to something else more than half the time. So more than half of the debt limit increase votes since 1978 carried other provisions. They were not, as the President claims, clean increases.

The President wants to ignore that history. The President wants to pretend that raising the debt limit is something that has to be done without any deliberations, negotiations, dissent, and on his terms alone. He says he will not negotiate at all.

It is strange to be coming from his mouth because that is very different from the position that came out of his mouth when he was Senator Obama. That was not that many years ago. In 2006, Senator Obama voted against a debt limit increase because he said it was a sign that Washington cannot pay its bills. Senator Obama complained that the Federal debt had increased by \$5 trillion in 5 years. Under President Obama, Washington’s debt has grown by more than \$6 trillion in 4 years.

Senator Obama said, “The more we depend on foreign nations to lend us money, the more our economic security is tied to the whims of foreign leaders whose interests might not be aligned with ours.”

Under President Obama, foreign holdings of Federal debt have increased by 82 percent.

Senator Obama said that, “Washington is shifting the burden of bad choices today onto the backs of our children and grandchildren.” He said at the time, “America has a debt problem, and a failure of leadership.”

A debt problem and a failure of leadership.

President Obama is now asking for his sixth increase in debt in less than 5 years. Why is this, then, not a debt problem and a failure of leadership?

Senator Obama was right to say at the time we have a debt problem. President Obama should remember what made him say that in 2006, and do something about it now. He should join Republicans willing to talk about real entitlement reform as part of negotiations over raising the debt ceiling. He should be willing and anxious to talk about his health care law and how it is going to become a major factor driving Washington’s debt even higher in the future if we do not replace it with responsible reforms today.

The President should embrace bipartisan continuing resolutions passed by the House as a way of reopening as much of the government as possible while we have responsible and reasonable discussions, deliberations, and negotiations. President Obama should stop posturing, stop playing games, and stop punishing the American people as he has been doing under this current government shutdown.

Mr. President, I yield the floor. I 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. CORNYN. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

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

Mr. CORNYN. Mr. President, yesterday we learned that for the remainder of the government shutdown one of America’s great charitable organizations, the Fisher House Foundation, will provide survivor benefits to military families who have lost a loved one on the field of battle. Fisher House is really just almost too good to believe, a wonderful charity that has helped military families all across our country, including folks in seven different facilities in Texas, from the VA North Texas Health Care System to the William Beaumont Army Medical Center in El Paso, the Carl R. Darnall Medical Center, the Michael E. DeBakey VA Medical Center, to the Brooke Army Medical Center in San Antonio, the Wilford Hall Ambulatory Surgical Center, and the South Texas Veterans Health Care System. I personally extend my thanks and express my gratitude to Fisher House for making such a tremendous commitment to our military heroes and making such a generous offer for the families of the fallen.

Secretary Hagel was quoted when he announced that Fisher House was going to fill the gap left by the cutoff of Federal funds, saying he was “offended, outraged, and embarrassed that the government shutdown had prevented the Department of Defense from fulfilling this most sacred responsibility in a timely manner.”

I agree with his outrage and sense of offense and embarrassment. But I want to recall how we got here. If our friends across the aisle had simply agreed to delay the individual mandate and to eliminate the special congressional carveout under ObamaCare, this never would have happened.

We have now reached day 10 of the shutdown. Over the last week and a half, administration officials have done as much as they possibly can to make this shutdown as painful as possible. They made the decision to barricade the World War II memorials and monuments along the National Mall, hoping to keep out our veterans, many near the end of their lives, for whom these monuments were built as a way of honoring their sacrifice. They kept these barricades in their way to impede or perhaps prevent them from visiting things such as the World War II Memorial.

The Obama administration we know has temporarily closed or interfered with privately run parks and historic sites, such as the Claude Moore Colonial Farm in Northern Virginia.

Why would the administration, in order to turn up the heat or increase the pain of the shutdown, impose itself to shut down a privately run park? Well, there is a reason for that, and it is because this is a cynical game—not one designed to get to a solution but one to gain political advantage. It should be offensive, embarrassing, and outrageous—to use the words of Secretary Hagel—for a political party to try to use a shutdown for such craven political gain.

Meanwhile, our Democratic friends have refused to support legislation that would reopen our memorials and national parks and fund the National Institutes of Health. I heard the distinguished assistant majority leader come to the floor a few days ago and decry the fact that cancer research for children was being temporarily stopped because of the shutdown. We have come to the floor and offered a bill that would reopen it, along with clinical trials, and it has been refused by our Democratic colleagues. We have come to the floor—and the House has passed these bills—and said: Let's fund the Veterans' Administration to make sure the backlog of disability claims gets taken care of and so our veterans who have given so much and sacrificed so much don't have to wait on getting their disability claims processed. That was objected to by the majority leader. They also objected to funding our military Reserves. As I said, they seem intent on maximizing the pain in hopes of gaining political advantage. That is

outrageous, that is embarrassing, and it should be embarrassing.

Before I conclude, I want to say to all the military families out there who have lost a son, a daughter, a husband, a wife, a father, or a mother on the field of battle—I want to leave you with the words of a great American President who said:

I pray that our Heavenly Father may assuage the anguish of your bereavement, and leave you only the cherished memory of the loved and lost, and the solemn pride that must be yours to have laid so costly a sacrifice upon the altar of freedom.

Those noble and inspiring words in that prayer are the type of tribute we should be giving to those families who have lost loved ones on the field of battle, not the sort of shortsighted political treatment that has been given by the efforts across the aisle to shut down every reasonable opportunity to alleviate some of this hardship and to mitigate some of the pain.

We have done it together successfully when it comes to paying our uniformed Active-Duty military. We got a unanimous consent agreement between the parties to make sure our Active-Duty troops are getting paid. Why is it we can't do the same thing with the survivors of those who lost their lives on the field of battle?

When I asked unanimous consent yesterday for the majority leader to agree to that piece of legislation, he asked to delay consideration of that request until the Defense Department could announce its proposal with the Fisher House. Again, I commend the Fisher House for stepping up and trying to fill the void, but why should we not do our job? Why should Congress not act? We should act and I hope very soon. We can do our job and honor these fallen and their families in an appropriate way by coming together as Republicans and Democrats and making sure these survivor benefits to the families who have lost loved ones on the field of battle are paid on a timely basis without being caught up in the political games occurring inside the Halls of Congress.

I yield the floor.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The Senator from Rhode Island.

Mr. WHITEHOUSE. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent to speak in morning business for up to 15 minutes.

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

CLIMATE CHANGE

Mr. WHITEHOUSE. Mr. President, a colleague recently described on this floor his experience flying in a private aircraft when a fire broke out in the cockpit of the plane. He observed that putting out the fire distracted the pilots from flying the aircraft and that they precipitously lost altitude. This tea party shutdown and the tea party's threat to our country's credit, like that fire in the cockpit, are distracting us from flying the plane.

I dispute the notion that those who caused the shutdown have good stand-

ing to come to this floor and criticize the way the Obama administration is implementing a shutdown that we don't want on our side of the aisle and that the Obama administration does not want. The tea party and Speaker BOEHNER, for their insistence on lighting that fire in the cockpit, are answerable to history and their consciences.

In the spirit of getting back to flying the plane, I will talk about, as I usually do, a real and looming crisis—not the manmade fire the tea party has lit in the cockpit of our government. That tea party shutdown could end tomorrow if the Speaker of the House would simply call up the measure the Senate passed. He refuses to do so, and it is his continued indulgence that keeps this shutdown going.

Climate change is for real. It is not manmade, nor is it something the Speaker can turn off with a vote. It is coming at us, and it is time to wake up to what carbon pollution is doing to our atmosphere and ocean.

Regrettably, one of the reasons Congress is still asleep is that the worst culprits—the big corporations that do the worst carbon polluting—are pretending it is not that bad, it is not that serious, and they should keep doing what they are doing; the status quo is fine. It causes me to wonder why it is that corporations seem never to admit they are wrong. Why is “oops” a word they can't seem to use?

When it turned out that people would be a lot safer with seatbelts, did the car industry say: Oops. We should have put those in and put seatbelts in the cars. No. They fought and they had to be defeated, and then we got seatbelts.

When cigarette makers found out their product made people really addicted and really sick, did they say: Oops. We better figure out a way to not kill so many people. No. They fought and they lied for decades.

When it turned out that lead paint damaged children's brains, did the lead paint companies say: Oops. We better warn folks about that and clean it up. No. They fought against protections and had to be defeated. Indeed, they are still fighting.

When it turned out that aerosol refrigerants and propellants were eating away at the Earth's ozone layer, did the manufacturers say: Oops. That is dangerous, and we better come up with a safer product. No. They fought the change, but they lost, and now they are making money making new safer products.

When acid rain was killing off the fish in the northeastern lakes, did the big utilities say: Oops. We better clean up our emissions. No. They fought the changes until they were forced to clean up.

When the flame-retardant industry found out its product was dangerous and ineffective, did they say: Oops. This flame-retardant stuff is hurting people and doing creepy things in nature, so we better knock it off. Nope. It is still fighting while whales turn into swimming toxic waste.

Now that carbon pollution has blown through 400 parts per million of CO₂ in the atmosphere—a first in human history—and launched the most rapid acidification ever seen in the oceans—and by that I mean going back to geologic time—are the polluters saying: Oops. We better take our billions of dollars in profit and trillions of dollars in capital and invest seriously in new fuels and power sources. Fat chance.

Corporations that are harming people never say “oops,” and for two big reasons. One reason is there is a lot of money at stake. They would not be in the business if they were not making money, and they don’t want to stop. The other reason is that corporations don’t have consciences, they have reputations. A reputation is something you can manage. Huge chunks of Madison Avenue and K Street are dedicated to managing corporate reputations. So with no conscience and only a reputation, you manage the problem that you are harming people.

By now, the strategy for managing a corporate reputation while hurting people is well developed. It is a common one across cigarettes, acid rain, lead paint, flame-retardants, refrigerants, and now carbon pollution. There is a playbook, and guess what. The big carbon polluters are following the playbook: one, pretend to care—that is important; two, attack the science, and if you can’t attack the science, attack the scientists themselves; three, claim it will cost consumers a fortune; and four, make your goal not victory but doubt.

Pretend to care.

I don’t know if you remember those phony-baloney Exxon ads that were all over the place a while ago with guys in lab coats, and they had these Lucite molecules floating around. They wanted you to believe they were out there looking for tomorrow’s clean fuels. Well, you got had.

Since 2005 ExxonMobil has been making tens of billions of dollars in profit every year. It is hard to pick through their numbers, but sources report that over that same time it only spent tens of millions per year on clean energy—about what it spent on advertising. They spent as much advertising their clean energy, it appears, as they did investing in it, and it was a tiny fraction of their profits, let alone their revenues.

Remember BP and their green Sun baloney? BP pulled completely out of solar and completely out of U.S. wind investments once it had laid down a fat barrage of advertising about being beyond petroleum. Pretend to care.

Attack the science and even the scientists themselves.

The polluters have to do this through proxies. Nobody will really believe it if Exxon’s fingerprints are all over the attack on the science, so others do the dirty work.

One example is Virginia’s tea party attorney general Ken Cuccinelli, who attacked the top climate scientist at

the University of Virginia. He used his powers of office—the special powers of office that are entrusted to attorneys general. Having been an attorney general, I know something about how precious and special those powers are. He used those powers to harass and subpoena a college professor. UVA’s lawyers stuck up for the professor, and the Virginia Supreme Court threw that nonsense out. But for the polluters behind it, it was right out of the playbook.

You may remember the polluters whipping up a phony scandal called climategate, pretending that a group of climate scientists were doing dishonest work. The scientists had to endure audit after audit, every single one of which gave them a totally clean bill of health. It turned out it was the cooked-up, phony scandal that was dishonest, but the polluters had a field day in the meantime. It was right out of the playbook.

Claim it will cost consumers a fortune.

This is a playbook classic. The big polluters are always talking about how it will cost you to clean up their act. Implicit is that they are going to put all the costs on to you and that they are not going to eat any of it and that their shareholders are not going to bear any of it.

Let’s get past that. What they conveniently overlook is that, for instance, under the Clean Air Act—yes, complying with the Clean Air Act did cost utilities a lot of money, but for every \$1 that was spent cleaning up to comply with the Clean Air Act, Americans have saved about \$40. They spend \$1, you save \$40, and they want you to believe that is a big problem?

The Office of Management and Budget does a little calculation called the social cost of carbon. The latest cost is \$36 per ton of CO₂ emitted. For every ton of carbon pollution the polluters don’t sell, we save \$36. But they will never tell us that side of the story, nor that there are more jobs now in green energy than in the entire oil and gas industry, nor that we are in an international race for tomorrow’s clean energy technology innovations. It is a race these big international corporations are perfectly happy to have America lose. It is no skin off their nose.

Last, their goal is not victory, it is doubt. They don’t want to convince anyone that climate change isn’t happening. They don’t need to do that. Of course, they couldn’t do that in any kind of a fair debate. All they need to do, the playbook strategy says, is to convince us, as we are driving down the road listening to the radio, that nobody is sure yet; that there is some doubt, but we don’t need to do anything just yet; that people can move on to their next worry; this one is still up for grabs. They will keep trying to push action on carbon pollution over that horizon of doubt, never having to prove their case.

The American people are being played for chumps in this game. It is a racket, and we are the mark.

Even so, even with all of that, the facts around us—what is happening to our woods and shores and farms and weather—are becoming so clear that even with the playbook they are losing, just like they ultimately lost on cigarettes and seatbelts, on lead paint and acid rain and the ozone hole.

Here is what Americans are saying: 61 percent of Americans say the effects of climate change are already affecting them personally or they see it happening in their lifetime.

Fifty-eight percent said the country should do more to address climate change, including 51 percent of Independents, while just 14 percent—14 percent—said we are doing enough already.

Sixty-five percent of voters support “the President taking significant steps to address climate change now”—65 percent. That number jumps up to 70 percent when looking at voters under 40 years old.

Sixty-six percent of young voters—two out of every three—say climate change is a problem to address, while just 27 percent say climate change is a natural event that humans can’t affect, and only 3 percent don’t believe climate change is happening.

Fifty-three percent of people say they would be less likely to vote for a politician who did not understand that climate change is a real problem.

Even in the red State of Texas, 70 percent believe global warming is happening, and more than half say more should be done about global warming at all levels of government.

Today is day 10 of the tea party shutdown. As we have pointed out over and over, it is a manufactured crisis. It goes away the instant Speaker BOEHNER stands in the House and calls the measure the Senate has passed, without amendments and without gimmicks, to the floor. It will pass. The crisis will be over.

This crisis is different. This is not a crisis of a fire in the cockpit that is being kept burning by Speaker BOEHNER who could stop it at any time; this is for real. This is Mother Nature—400 parts per million for the first time in 800,000 years is serious.

The tea party Republicans are wildly out of step with the American people on both issues, and it is time for them to wake up.

Mr. President, I have a unanimous consent request, if I may ask the distinguished Senator from Georgia to yield for one moment.

I ask unanimous consent that Senators on the majority side be limited to 10 minutes each until 1 p.m.

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

Mr. WHITEHOUSE. I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Georgia.

Mr. ISAKSON. Mr. President, I ask to be recognized for up to 8 minutes.

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

QRM RULE

Mr. ISAKSON. Mr. President, on August 28 of this year, the six Federal regulators of the banking industry reported out on their charge to promulgate a rule required by Dodd-Frank known as the QRM rule or the qualified residential mortgage.

The qualified residential mortgage rule was a rule that Senator LANDRIEU, Senator HAGAN, and I put into the Dodd-Frank legislation to provide for a parameter for residential mortgage loans to be exempted from the risk retention requirements of Dodd-Frank if they met a certain standard. These regulators were charged with establishing that standard. That law passed over 5 years ago and we are just now getting the promulgation of the rule, but I am happy to say I rise on the floor of the Senate to memorialize my support for a job well done. The qualified residential mortgage rule, which is being circulated now until October 28, is the right answer for the requirement of Dodd-Frank and for the American housing industry.

For the education of the Senate and the public at large, the Dodd-Frank law, in its desire to make sure loans that were underwritten were better underwritten and loans that were made were better made loans so there would be less default and less problems in the housing industry, required the banking industry to make only qualified residential mortgages as defined.

The original discussions within the banking industry were that part of that definition would be a required 20-percent downpayment, which I and many people in America strenuously objected to, because a 20-percent requirement to exempt from risk retention would be far too great a downpayment for most American families to meet, would have probably meant a decline in the housing market, even greater than we experienced in 2008, 2009, 2010, and 2011, and would have had a negative impact on America's economy, unemployment, and America's health and well-being.

So the banking regulators did a great job in their rule which does the following: First of all, it equates QRM, or the qualified residential mortgage rule, with the QM rule, or the qualified mortgage rule, which Richard Cordray, the Director of the Consumer Finance Protection Bureau, promulgated 1 year ago. Mr. Cordray did an outstanding job of seeking input from people in the industry and the trades affected by the housing industry and wrote a rule that made sense. That rule required the following: It required good, solid underwriting. It required a maximum ratio of total debts to total gross income of 43 percent so we would not have somebody borrowing more than half of their take-home pay or their gross pay in order to service debts. That would mean people would have the money to pay their mortgage.

It required people to verify their income, credit, employment, the value of the property that is being purchased with the loan. All of those things are the standards that served America well for years until the subprime lending took place from 1999 until 2006.

So I commend Richard Cordray and the Consumer Finance Protection Bureau for defining a qualified mortgage as one that is well underwritten. A required downpayment is not necessary to have a qualified mortgage because underwriting is what led us into the difficulties of the past 5 years in the housing industry.

We went through a recession that was not a downpayment recession but an underwriting recession, and Congress itself was partially to blame when it mandated that Freddie Mac and Fannie Mae hold a certain percentage of their portfolios in what is known as qualified residential mortgages for the purposes of meeting the needs of underserved people in our society. Those underserved people in society ended up being credit risks or higher credit risks. They became known as subprime lenders. They got guaranteed by the government. They were sold in securities. When they defaulted, the securities went down, the American housing industry went down and the American Federal Reserve had to bail out people such as AIG and we went through the worst housing crisis in the history of the United States.

So the proposal of the six banking regulators to merge QRM and QM, they are recognizing that underwriting is the key to sound loans. By requiring good underwriting to exempt from the 5-percent risk retention required in Dodd-Frank, we are ensuring a robust housing market, robust and available capital through Freddie Mac, Fannie Mae, and private institutions, to ensure housing in America can return to the heights it has known in the past.

Quite frankly, we are never going to get below 7 percent unemployment, we are never going to get higher than 2 percent growth in America in our economy until we return to a robust housing market. We are not going to return to a robust housing market until we get liquidity in the credit markets for residential mortgages of a conventional nature. That is only going to happen when Freddie Mac and Fannie Mae can secure well underwritten loans and guarantee them so they can be sold in the marketplace.

The banking regulators who are now circulating the QRM rule for public comment did precisely the right thing by recognizing that underwriting was the problem and not downpayments.

Lastly, one of the things the regulators did put in their proposal for circulation for input was what if they did require a downpayment of 30 percent, would that be an exemption for the risk retention under QRM. I would implore the regulators not to consider doing that because a 30-percent downpayment would be even worse than a

20-percent downpayment. It would restrict even more Americans from becoming homeowners, and it would not address the problem. The problem was underwriting. The problem was not downpayment. Credit enhancements such as private mortgage insurance and things of that nature can supplant a downpayment requirement, but nothing can supplant quality underwriting.

Richard Cordray wrote a good rule, the Consumer Financial Protection Bureau is enforcing that rule, and I commend the bank regulators for merging the QRM rule with the QM definition to ensure that we return to a robust economy with a strong housing market, don't revisit the problems of the past with shoddy underwriting, and instead look forward to a brighter future for the American housing market.

I yield the remainder of my time.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Ms. BALDWIN). The Senator from Colorado.

Mr. UDALL of Colorado. Madam President, for nearly 2 weeks I have watched the debate on the Senate floor as well as on the House floor, and I have become more and more frustrated. My frustration is, in part—I would say in large part—driven by the contrast to what I see going on in my home State of Colorado.

During the past several weeks, Coloradans have come together in the wake of Biblical rains and beyond devastating flooding to begin the long process of rebuilding our State better and stronger. We in the West—and I think I can say we as Americans—are rugged cooperators. Sure, we are each strong individuals—and that is a strong point of view in the West; it is the core of who we are, that we are strong as individuals—but we know we are best when we band together, despite any political or philosophical differences, to face our shared challenges. I am doing my level best to bring that spirit to Washington, DC, especially now in this time of shutdowns and ultimatums and ideology that doesn't make sense to the people I represent in Colorado. I invite all of my colleagues to come to Colorado to see the collaborations occurring in these flood-ravaged communities such as Jamestown, Lyons and Estes Park and Fort Morgan. There are no games. There is no posturing. There is no politics. There is just a doggedness to make their communities better. I surely hope the strength and the focus of Coloradans could be an inspiration to all of us as we tackle what are very pressing policy issues.

On that note, I wish to speak about one of my constituents, someone I work for—Jeff. He is a Federal employee. He demonstrates the resilience, to me, of the people of Colorado. But his situation also typifies the worst of what this shutdown and this brinkmanship is doing to the real people, the good people of my State of Colorado.

Jeff is a Federal employee. He was trapped for 3 days in last month's flood. That flood cost him almost everything. He has very few possessions

left. Once he was free, he went immediately back to his day job. He was working for an agency that is integral to the flood disaster response. What happened? The government closed. So now he rents out an apartment. His home is inaccessible, literally, due to the flooding. He doesn't have a paycheck and he is being told he is not essential and he shouldn't come in to work.

There are a lot of reactions I have to that. There are a lot of reactions anybody who is paying attention would have to that. One is that now there is one less pair of boots on the ground helping with the flood response efforts in Colorado.

To a certain extent, politics is about finding the right strategy to advocate for what a person believes is right. But what is going on right now is shameful. What is happening to Jeff is flatout shameful.

What we are seeing is one faction of one party, in one Chamber, in one branch of government, holding this Nation's health, economy, and security hostage and, in the process, causing the Federal Government to shut down and threatening a government default on our obligations. By doing so, these individuals are holding our flood recovery hostage. It makes no sense.

I guess you have to ask yourself why. Why would a small group, a faction, be doing this? It strikes me that in part they are doing it because they are obsessed with undermining a law that is providing affordable health care to Americans, some for the first time in their lives, a law that is saving seniors hundreds of dollars a year on prescription drugs and is leveling the playing field when it comes to providing health care and putting consumers back in charge of their own health care.

I want to make this clear: After having legally passed both Houses of Congress, being affirmed by the Supreme Court, and then serving as a referendum in the just concluded campaign that overwhelmingly reelected President Obama, the Affordable Care Act is settled law. Let me say that again. The Affordable Care Act is settled law.

But describing it as settled law alone I know is not enough to resolve this latest crisis. So I would like to take viewers and my colleagues back a decade when the Presiding Officer was a Member of House at that time, when President George W. Bush pushed us to pass what was an unpaid-for Medicaid prescription drug benefit.

Members of my caucus over in the House felt that this massive unpaid law was thrust upon us without due consideration and at a time when we should not be racking up further debt. Many of us on my side of the aisle were literally reeling with anger after it passed. It also passed in ways with which we disagreed, in the middle of the night, literally. The desk in the House was kept open—I think the Presiding Officer knows—for close to 4 hours to find those last votes.

I was angry. I voted against that Medicare prescription drug benefit. I am sure I was as angry as some of my colleagues were when the Affordable Care Act passed over 3 years ago.

So what did I do? I took a lot of deep breaths. I listened to the counsel of people I respect, I listened to my own counsel, and I not only decided it was settled law, but I decided to start holding townhalls and listening sessions so I could help my constituents sign up for it. I knew it was the settled law of the land, just like ObamaCare is today, and I wanted my constituents to be best served by its implementation.

So I went out and spread the word about the benefits, figured out what questions my constituents would have. I wanted them to sign up. I wanted to make it a success. I wanted them to have those benefits.

So let's fast forward to today. Far from helping people, our friends and colleagues on the other side of the aisle have relentlessly spread uncertainty about ObamaCare, attacking its implementation at every turn, and now to close down the Federal Government over their concerns about it.

We are in the 10th day of a government shutdown. Our national security has suffered. Seventy percent of the intelligence community is furloughed. We do not have enough food inspectors on the job. Our veterans are not getting the services not only that they need but that they have earned. Our national parks are closed, hurting economies like ours in Colorado. I mentioned Estes Park. Estes Park is the gateway to Rocky Mountain National Park. If Estes Park is going to recover from these devastating floods, Rocky Mountain National Park has to be open for business.

This is not how the greatest Nation in the world can go on doing business. I have said from the very beginning—I think the Presiding Officer agrees with me—the Affordable Care Act is far from perfect. No mandate law is. As with every law, it will undoubtedly need some improvements and some constructive changes during its implementation. I am committed to doing that, just like we did after President Bush moved his prescription drug law to the finish line.

In the past few days we have seen statements indicating that some Republicans are starting to understand that this partisan focus on ObamaCare is futile. So as their next step they have seized on yet another destructive tactic, manufacturing a new crisis, an even more serious, potentially devastating crisis than shutting down the government. What have they done? They are threatening the full faith and credit of the Federal Government to push their budget demands. They have threatened to force us past the deadline, which is October 17—that is a week from today—when the United States will no longer be able to meet its financial obligations.

Grandstanding on funding the government is bad enough. If we do not

agree on a way forward to reopen the government, but we also do not agree on a way to ensure that the Treasury Department does not default on our Nation's debt obligations, we will seriously damage global confidence in the United States, make no mistake. There are some voices in this building who think that will not happen. They are wrong.

If we damage the global confidence in the United States, we are going to hamper our economic recovery, we will slow job creation, and we will make borrowing costs more expensive for government and families alike. This is no way to win the global economic race in which we find ourselves. Coloradans are telling me in every way they can that they expect a lot better than this.

Ronald Reagan used to joke in only the way he could that he was not worried about the debt; it is big enough to take care of itself. But every American should worry if Congress refuses to meet the obligations we have already made.

I know many Americans are worried about our debt and our capacity to pay the bills we have incurred. I have been worried about this for a long time. I think if you would ask anybody around here, they would tell you I would vote in a minute for a sensible grand bargain. It is true. I have worked across the aisle and built a record of efforts to reduce wasteful spending and set our budget on a more sustainable footing. It should be one of our top priorities. It has to be one of our top priorities.

I have been a longtime supporter of the line-item veto. I supported the initial structure around which the Simpson-Bowles deficit reduction commission worked. I called for an end to earmarks. I worked with Senator COBURN from Oklahoma on ending some wasteful public subsidies, including those for the political party conventions every 4 years. It is why I was the first Democrat to champion a balanced budget amendment to the U.S. Constitution in many a year. I am not the only Member, as well, of my party who has been fighting for commonsense reforms.

This is critically important work. I would love nothing more than to bring a serious deficit reduction plan to the floor and pass it along with raising our debt limit to avoid an American default.

But let me be crystal clear: To default on our debt because a grand bargain eludes us would make our debt and deficits even worse and thrust us into an economic tailspin. It is irresponsible to even suggest forcing America into default as a legitimate negotiating position.

Let's sit down and have a grownup discussion about these important issues, but not like this. Let's fund the government, let's pay our bills, and then let's sit down and negotiate again. Negotiation is good. Compromise is good. But we cannot have this important set of discussions with one party constantly threatening to shut down

the government or throw our country into default, each of which makes our deficits and debt even worse.

We have, literally, centuries of examples of a Congress collaborating, working together. We have done that for over 200 years. We can debate, we can have contentious back-and-forth, but in the end we need to compromise and agree. We need a comprehensive and balanced deficit reduction plan that can pass both Chambers and be signed into law.

No party gets to threaten the American economy and shut down the government when they do not get their way. No party gets to jeopardize middle-class families' 401(k)s or senior citizens' retirement savings or set our economic recovery back just because their positions are not strong enough to prevail on their own.

That just is not the way to address our Nation's shared problems. And trust me, our debt and deficits are a shared problem. We can do better.

I want to begin to conclude by again referring to the Coloradans I am so fortunate to represent, just like the Presiding Officer, I know, is honored to represent the good people of Wisconsin. Coloradans have shown the true strength of our State in the wake of this tragic flooding that literally has wiped communities off the map and destroyed thousands of homes. If we could have done anything to prevent that natural disaster, we would have.

We now face a potential manmade disaster. We have to protect Americans from a looming manmade disaster that is emerging right here. We have to bridge the partisan divide. We have to end this government shutdown. We have to stave off an American default. We have to pay our bills. We could do this today if Speaker BOEHNER would just allow the House to vote on a clean funding resolution that we have already sent to the House, with the House numbers in it, by the way. So let's just see a vote in the House. The continuing resolution would pass in the House today with Republican and Democratic votes.

So let's just vote. Let's hold the vote. The Presiding Officer and I served in the House. When we were eager to go to work we would shout: Vote, vote, vote; work, work, work. It is time for the House to go to work. Let's vote to end this debt ceiling crisis and make sure our Nation pays the debts it has already incurred.

These are the basic functions of Congress. If we fail to act, history will never forgive us—any of us.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Idaho.

Mr. CRAPO. Madam President, I rise today to discuss the multiple issues that have now presented themselves to us in the Senate and to the U.S. Congress and, frankly, the American people.

I have been in several hearings this morning. The first was with Secretary

of the Treasury Jack Lew, where the Finance Committee discussed with him the pending expiration of our debt ceiling and what his understanding is of how that will impact the country. He raised a lot of serious concerns—very legitimate serious concerns—that others are raising.

We then followed that up with a hearing in the Banking Committee where we had representatives from a number of the various industries in the United States also discussing what is going to happen in the United States if the country does not increase the debt ceiling. And there are serious consequences that will happen if we do not do this.

But what I tried to do in both of those hearings—and I will refer to my conversation with Secretary Lew—was to focus us back on the broader, bigger threat. Secretary Lew basically said that we have a manufactured crisis in the United States because of our unwillingness at this point to face the debt ceiling and simply extend the debt ceiling without any kinds of conditions or negotiations.

I reminded him that the crisis we face—the big crisis we face—is the debt crisis, and it is very real. I guess in a sense it has been manufactured over the last 20 or 30 years by Congresses and Presidents who have refused to control spending and have put us into tremendous debt.

Our debt ceiling we are negotiating about right now—or I think wishing we could negotiate about right now—is \$16.7 trillion. It has grown by trillions of dollars over the last 5 or 6 years.

What the President has asked us to do is to once again increase the debt ceiling by another \$1 trillion or more with no reforms, no fiscal changes in our policies to deal with the mounting spending crisis we face. The President's position is: You give me this \$1 trillion or more of new debt authority, and I will then talk to you about reforming our fiscal policy. The problem is we have been trying to negotiate over fiscal policy now and trying to get reforms put into place for years and we have not been able to get there.

When I asked Secretary Lew about this, he basically said: We have made progress on our overall debt crisis in the past few years, and I think we can continue to work on those kinds of steps if you will simply pass this clean debt ceiling extension and do so in a way that involves no negotiations from the President in any way.

I reminded him that a major part of the progress we have made in the last couple of years was made when we met the debt ceiling 2 years ago in 2011. It was the Budget Control Act that put into statute over \$2 trillion of reductions in our spending path. That was attached to the debt ceiling as we moved forward. It was literally the debt ceiling negotiation that generated the only significant spending controls this Congress, this country, has seen for years and years. Yet the President

refuses to take another step now that we have met the debt ceiling again and negotiate for further reforms.

By the way, there is another reason we have made some progress in the past few years. That is that we have implemented massive new taxes on the American people. The ObamaCare legislation itself contains nearly \$1 trillion of new taxes, and although they were delayed for a few years, they are now beginning to fully hit the American people. Last January, the President was able to win his argument and succeed in getting the top income tax brackets raised, an impact on our Tax Code that I think was harmful rather than helpful and clearly was damaging to the creation of jobs and to businesses across the United States. But, nevertheless, another \$500 billion to \$600 billion of tax revenue was put into the mix there.

So what have we done? We have made a plan to control discretionary spending over the next 10 years and reduce it by about \$2 trillion. If we stick to that, we will get \$2 trillion worth of spending reductions. We have raised taxes by at least \$1.6 trillion over the next 10 years, all of which, I believe, has been harmful to our economy, but has generated revenue to try to help reduce the debt cycle. But we have not addressed the two critical parts of reform that we must address in this country if we are ever going to get control of our spending excesses and stop the out-of-control spiral toward insolvency that we see; that is, reforming our entitlement system and reforming our broken Tax Code.

What have we seen there? Virtually minimal, if any at all, reforms of entitlements. They seem to be off the table. Yet they are the part of our spending problem that is the biggest and the most out of control. On tax reform, we have seen no reform of the Tax Code. We have a Tax Code that is the most unfair, the most complicated, the most expensive to comply with, and the most anticompetitive code we probably could have created if we did it on purpose. Yet we have no reforms of the code. Instead what we have done is add to the code another \$1.6 trillion of new taxes on the American people.

What we are asking is whether we can move forward in trying to deal with our fiscal problems in this country by negotiating over entitlement reform and tax reform. I frankly believe we ought to be at the negotiating table talking about that. But what we have been told is: No, as soon as you raise the debt ceiling by—the amount we are hearing is somewhere in the neighborhood of \$1 trillion—as soon as you raise the debt ceiling, then we can talk further about other negotiations, then we can get engaged in trying to deal with our debt crisis.

I pointed out, as I said to Secretary Lew, that the last major progress we made on spending reform happened in negotiations relating to our debt ceiling. Why cannot we negotiate now and

make significant fiscal reform in addition to dealing with our debt ceiling? It is that debt crisis that is the biggest problem.

I was on the Bowles-Simpson Commission, the President's own commission, that he put together some years back, 2 or 3 years now. We spent a full year studying the impacts on our economy of America's fiscal excess and what we needed to do. The Bowles-Simpson Commission came up with a plan. It was a proposal. We concluded that—this was 2 or 3 years back—we needed to reduce our spending path, our debt path in the United States by at least \$4 trillion. We concluded we had to deal with that by reforming our entitlement system and we had to deal with it by controlling discretionary spending. We agreed to having some of that tax revenue the President was demanding. We also agreed that in the overall mix we would have about a 3-to-1 ratio of spending cuts to revenue.

The President did not accept that recommendation. Many of us tried for months and months and months afterward to get that recommendation to the floor for a vote. But it has not made it to the floor for a vote.

My point is, negotiations have been under way for years and years. Significant plans have been developed that would help us move forward. We know what to do. We need to have the will to do it. So far, the only reforms we have been able to get in the last few years as a result of the debt crisis that we face have come when we have met these pressure points dealing with our debt ceiling.

We are not asking to shut down the government for the purpose of simply making a point. We are trying to get to negotiations. We want to see the government reopened. We are not seeking to have the debt ceiling expire. We want to have negotiations to be able to put together the kinds of fiscal reforms that should always accompany extensions of the debt ceiling.

I believe the reason Congress put a statutory debt ceiling in place in the first place was because it wanted to give America a gut check every so often about the spending problems we have. We have put almost half of the entire spending system of the government on auto pilot. We do not even have the opportunity to vote on it here in Congress.

Ultimately, we have to deal with the debt ceiling. Ultimately, we have to deal with the funding to keep our government operational. Let's not just move forward and accomplish those objectives, leaving in place the unrestrained fiscal crisis we are dealing with in this country. Let's use this opportunity to put together the kinds of fiscal reforms that should accompany decisions to allow our country to increase its debt.

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.

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

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

The Republican whip.

Mr. CORNYN. Yesterday I came to the floor with the distinguished majority leader to raise the issue of survivor benefits to those who died in the line of duty. Reportedly, 26 servicemembers have died since the government shut down on October 1, including 5 in combat. Their families have been denied the basic survivor benefits, which include a death gratuity, \$100,000 of life insurance, a housing allowance paid for a year, paid in a lump sum, as well as burial and other related expenses.

Yesterday I asked unanimous consent that we take up and pass the House bill. The majority leader and I entered into a conversation, and there was a question as to the intervening action by the Department of Defense to try to work around the lapse of the funding. Fisher House, which is a wonderful charitable organization, helps to operate and fund seven different facilities in my State alone. I know they are extraordinarily generous and do very good work. They offered to enter into a contractual agreement with the Department of Defense to fill the gap during the interim. But what I would like to do is ask unanimous consent that we take up and pass the House legislation, which would alleviate the need for Fisher House and the Department of Defense trying to figure a workaround. We would actually pass legislation that would reopen that stream of funding so that these families could get the benefits they deserve.

UNANIMOUS CONSENT AGREEMENT—H.J. RES. 91

Mr. CORNYN. I ask unanimous consent that the Senate proceed to consideration of Calendar No. 216, 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; that the measure be read a third time and passed and the motion to reconsider be considered made and laid upon the table.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection?

The majority leader.

Mr. REID. Reserving the right to object, the senior Senator from Texas has always been very courteous to me. Yesterday was no exception in withholding his unanimous consent request when we discussed this issue. It was about 2 o'clock in the afternoon, as he indicated.

I indicated that I thought that if we waited until 3:30 we would have this matter resolved, as that is what I had been told. In fact, it was a little after 3 o'clock yesterday afternoon that Secretary Hagel issued a statement announcing that the Department of Defense had entered into an agreement,

as my friend said, with the organization my friend mentioned, and that would provide the family of fallen servicemembers—over the weekend, the Senator from Texas is correct, we had five soldiers killed, one of whom was a woman, four men and one woman. The agreement Senator Hagel came up with would give everyone—provide to family members of the military the full set of benefits they have been promised, including the \$100,000 death benefit gratuity. So the death benefit issue has been resolved. The Department of Defense stepped forward and took care of everything, so this issue is largely moot. It is clear the action on this legislation is now just for show here.

We all agree it is bad that the government shutdown led to this added grief for the families who had suffered such a terrible loss. Now we need to do what we can to prevent any further bad results—and there have been plenty of them in other areas. The right thing to do is to prevent more of these in other areas, and the House should just vote to open the government. This issue has been taken care of, and it is terrible that we even got to this point.

We should not forget that as long as the government remains closed and the Republicans refuse to open the government, the military is unable to, for example, buy armor and equipment needed to prevent future deaths in the military. For the families of FBI agents killed in the line of duty, it is the same problem—they can't receive their death benefits. Veterans' benefits are delayed and disrupted.

As for this bill, the Secretary has now acted. We all agree the issue is taken care of. If my friend from Texas feels more comfort as a result of doing this, which I think is unnecessary, I don't object.

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

The joint resolution (H.J. Res. 91) was ordered to be engrossed for a third reading, was read the third time, and passed.

Mr. CORNYN. Madam President, if I could respond briefly, I appreciate the majority leader not objecting to the consideration of this legislation. He believes this issue has been resolved by this contractual arrangement between Fisher House and the Department of Defense, but ultimately the Department of Defense would have to reimburse Fisher House under what I understand is the purported arrangement to be made. This obviates the need for any of that kind of workaround, together with any legal questions that might arise as to whether this is actually something the Department has the authority to do. I am not suggesting they don't; I am just saying this alleviates all those considerations.

So I am pleased we were able to come together in a bipartisan way, as we were on the military pay for uniformed military, and pass this narrow piece of legislation. I think maybe now that we have passed the pay for Active-Duty

military and we have passed the provision that provides for survivor benefits for the families of the fallen, perhaps that paves the way to be open for some other narrow bills until we can come together on a larger bill.

We have offered, for example, funding for the National Institutes of Health, NIH. A few days ago the distinguished assistant leader from the Democratic side gave a very eloquent speech about children's cancer research. Under the bill that was passed by the House on a bipartisan basis that we have called up here, that funding would be restored, as would funding for the Veterans' Administration so they can process disability benefits, which they are not able to do now because of the cutoff in funding.

There are a number of areas where I think we can work together constructively if we will do so. I am pleased we were able to take care of this one.

Mr. DURBIN. Would the Senator yield for a question?

Mr. CORNYN. I yield for a question.

Mr. DURBIN. I would ask a question through the Chair.

I say through the Chair, I think what we did here was the right thing to do, and I am sorry, I am painfully sorry that this government shutdown is hurting so many innocent people. It could come to an end with one decision by the Speaker to call one bill on the floor of the House. He refuses to do so. So we are trying to put out these little fires and spare the American people the pain and injustice that is coming about as a result of this shutdown. But I would say to the Senator from Texas that even the Veterans' Administration bill passed by the House fails to fund some critical areas for veterans. It does not fund the appeals process for veterans disability claims. Those have stopped. Secondly, it doesn't fund the cemetery rights of veterans who are seeking to be buried in national cemeteries. While we pay for funerals, the people who prepare the grave sites and such are not being paid. It doesn't have the Department of Labor program to hire unemployed veterans coming home. That is not funded. The HUD program for homeless veterans is not being funded. The notion that we are somehow taking care of veterans with the House action is far from true.

The last point I wish to make is that over 500,000 Federal employees are actually veterans. Many of them are furloughed today. One-fourth of all employee veterans are disabled. Many of them are furloughed today.

If we really care about veterans, opening the government to make sure all of these agencies are serving our veterans seems to me to be a reasonable approach. I ask if the Senator agrees.

Mr. CORNYN. Madam President, responding to the question of the distinguished assistant majority leader, I would say that we would all like to try to find some way to get back to business as usual when it comes to funding

the government through the regular appropriations process. We haven't done that for a long time, and so we have been operating not on individual bills—I think there are 13 separate bills as part of the appropriations process. So now we have unfortunately already degenerated to this continuing resolution process, which has its own problems.

I would say to my friend that for every one of the hardships we can mitigate through passing narrow legislation absent a global agreement on the continuing resolution, it seems to me we ought to be doing that. If there are other suggestions the Democratic side has about how we can do that, I think that would be a good thing to do.

The problem is that I know the majority leader—I will give the majority leader the benefit of the doubt. I hope he didn't really mean he thought this was a show process, trying to restore these survivor benefits through this unanimous consent request, and I will give him the benefit of the doubt.

I do think there are a lot of questions raised in the minds of the American people whether what is happening here is being done purely for political purposes. We have veterans of World War II and Korea who come to the World War II Memorial only to be met with barricades. I have met a number of the Honor Flights of the "greatest generation" at a number of these memorials, and they have basically decided to go around the barricades, as I believe is their right under the Constitution.

It seems as if there is an effort made to maximize the pain associated with the shutdown. We know 83 percent of the government is being funded. Why can't we try to chip away at some of these narrow provisions and mitigate some of the hardship that we can rather than getting in our corners, squaring off, and creating more and more problems? I think this is important. We ought to be doing this. We should have done this a long time ago.

I would say to my colleagues, there were reports that Secretary Hagel notified the administration of this lapse in survivor benefits before the shutdown even occurred. It took the President 9 days before he finally ordered the Department of Defense to come up with a workaround, thankfully with the help of the Fisher House.

I think there is an impression that a lot of gamesmanship is going on. I don't think it becomes the Senate. I think Congress's approval rating is in the toilet, and we ought to be doing everything we can to address the problems where we can.

Mr. DURBIN. Would Senator yield for a question?

Mr. CORNYN. I yield the floor to the Senator.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The assistant majority leader.

Mr. DURBIN. I would make several points.

First, I was with an Honor Flight group at the World War II Memorial

last week, a great bunch of World War II veterans who came in from Illinois, and it didn't surprise me one bit—there was no barricade stopping these veterans. They were on their way to their memorial, and they went.

The reason why there was any question about this memorial and access was because of the decision by the Republicans to shut down the government.

I was going to remind the Senator of Texas, who is a learned attorney and a former Texas Supreme Court justice, of the story we were told in law school. It was an anecdotal story, an apocryphal story of someone who killed both his parents, went to the courtroom, and then threw himself on the mercy of the court because he was an orphan. In this situation we have our Republican friends lamenting the impact of a government shutdown on World War II veterans coming to Washington, and on these tragic stories of families who have lost someone they love in combat. But all of this is unnecessary. All of it could have been avoided if the Republican Speaker of the House would call one bill for a vote which he knows will pass. It would open the government. That is the simple and honest answer.

This notion we are going to have a series of small appropriations to fund our government—all of the appropriations bills that have been called so far and passed the House amount to about 18 percent of the discretionary domestic budget. At this pace, the House only has to pass 79 more bills to open our government. We think at this pace it will only take them about 2½ months to do it. Is that any way to run a great Nation? It isn't.

We need to open our government, serve our people, spare them the injustice and pain which comes from this Republican shutdown.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The majority leader.

Mr. REID. Madam President, my friend, the distinguished senior Senator from Illinois, gave an analogy that applies to a lot of what my friend from Texas said. First of all, we haven't done appropriations bills. We haven't done appropriations bills because the Republicans won't let us. We can't even get cloture on a way to proceed to one of them.

But I want to be sure the record is clear that my friend from Texas doesn't have to give me the benefit of the doubt on what I said. If there were ever an example of this whole process being for show, it is this: We have a lot of things we should be working on. The country is within 1 week of defaulting on its debt for the first time in the history of this country. We should be focusing on that. The government should be open.

We had the unfortunate incident where we had five of our troops killed over the weekend in Afghanistan, and it brought to our attention they were not going to get their benefits because the part of the government that gives them that money is closed.

Now, we didn't close it. But Secretary Hagel, a former Republican Member of this body, worked it out so they are all taken care of. They are all taken care of. So this unanimous consent I agreed to is for show. It doesn't mean anything. They are being taken care of anyway.

So I appreciate the Senator giving me the benefit of the doubt, but he doesn't need to give me the benefit of the doubt. This whole thing is for show. This whole government shutdown is for show. It is a show that I don't quite understand the ending of, but that is where we are.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Florida.

Mr. RUBIO. Madam President, may I inquire, under the previous order, how much time remains for the minority?

The PRESIDING OFFICER. There is 8½ minutes remaining for the Republicans.

Mr. RUBIO. I ask unanimous consent that 5 minutes be added to that total, for a total of 13 minutes.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection?

Without objection, it is so ordered.

Mr. RUBIO. Madam President, with all this focus on the fighting going on in Washington these days, I think we are losing focus on the biggest issue facing this country, and that is the pervasive and growing sense we are losing control of our country; that we are losing the American dream.

Why do people feel this way? Because millions of them have been out of a job for months, and maybe even years, and because millions more find themselves stuck with jobs that don't pay enough for them to live on or certainly for them to live as they used to.

When people hear news that the economy is recovering, that unemployment is down by .1 percent this week or this month, that the stock market is up and that the recession is over, it makes people angry. And rightfully so. Because the recession might be over on Wall Street, but it is not over for millions of people who are out of work or stuck with jobs that do not pay enough to live on.

What makes all this worse is that while their paychecks aren't growing, their bills are growing. Ask the young couples out there, the single parents, how much it is costing them every month or week to provide childcare for their kids. Ask the young Americans who are saddled with thousands of dollars in student loan debt.

How are people making it through these times? Well, I am reminded of a few years after we got married, when my wife and I hit a rough patch in our finances. What we did was we got rid of one of the cars and we moved in with her mom for 6 months. That is what many of us have had to do at some stage in our life, but it was usually temporary. Now people are doing that with the feeling it might not be temporary; that this might be the way it is for a while. And they ask themselves:

Is this the new normal? Is this the way it is going to be from now on?

This is what millions of people across this country are feeling these days; that maybe the American dream—if you work hard, you can improve your life—isn't what it used to be; that maybe the American dream is actually even slipping away.

But why is this happening? Whose fault is this, is the normal reaction some people have. Well, there are a few reasons why this is happening. One is the economy has changed. The nature of our economy has changed. Globalization, for example, has sent thousands of middle-class jobs overseas. Information technology and advances have replaced many of our middle-class jobs with machines. Another reason why is that we simply have too many people who never get the education or the skills they need for the better paying jobs this new economy is creating. And we can't ignore, for example, the breakdown of our culture and our families and what that is doing. It is trapping people in a cycle of poverty and of dependence. These are all contributors to what we face today.

But one of the major reasons why this is happening, why so many people are trapped in dead-end jobs, why so many people have been unemployed for so long, is because our economy is not creating enough jobs to live off of. One of the reasons why that is happening is because our country is headed for a debt crisis. The real debt crisis is not the looming debt limit. The real debt crisis is that every year our government is spending more money than it takes in. And, by the way, one day we are not going to have to worry about raising the debt limit because no one will want to lend us money anyway.

Too often around here we talk about the national debt as if it is simply an accounting problem. The national debt is a lot more than that. How does the economy create good jobs? It creates good jobs in two ways: No. 1 is through innovation—when people invent a new product or service. The other is through investment—when people risk the money they have to start a new business or when a business reinvests its profits into the business to grow. The fact we are headed for a debt crisis and that we have no serious long-term plan in place to address it is discouraging innovation and that is discouraging investment.

Who wants to innovate in an economy that is headed for a debt crisis? Who wants to risk their money to start a new business in an economy that is headed for a catastrophic disruption? And who wants to reinvest their profits to grow their business in a country where the government is going bankrupt?

Having people trapped in low-wage jobs, having people unemployed for months or years at a time, having people unable to afford to get married or start a family doesn't have to be the

new normal. It doesn't have to be this way forever. We can turn this around. But to do so we have to stop chasing all these temporary gimmicks that promise us some sort of momentary boost to our economy. We have to stop ignoring the problems headed full speed at us. We have to return to the basics—to the basics that made us such a prosperous nation.

Our national debt today stands at close to \$17 trillion. In the last 5½ years alone it has grown by over \$6 trillion. So when you hear the President or the Democrats here in the Senate say they want us to pass what they call a clean debt limit increase, here is what they are really asking for: They are asking us to borrow another \$1 trillion but not do anything meaningful to slow the growth of that debt.

Why would we continue to do this? When are we finally going to get serious around here about putting in place a serious long-term plan to bring this debt under control? In order to do that, the first thing we have to understand is what is causing this debt.

Look, we have a broken Tax Code. It is full of all sorts of special-interest loopholes. But the reason why we have this massive debt isn't because rich people aren't paying enough in taxes. Even if we taxed every millionaire every penny they made this year, it wouldn't make even a small dent in the debt. Yes there is some serious waste going on throughout our government. For example, we have to reverse the changes the Obama administration has made to these welfare programs that basically gut the work requirement and leave people dependent on government. We need to reform the way we give foreign aid. We must and should do all of these and even more. But even if we did all that, it is still not enough.

What is driving our debt is the way we spend money on two very important programs: Medicare and Social Security. They are spending more money than they take in, and that gap is growing rapidly every single year.

I warn you, anytime anyone talks about making changes to these programs, you get accused of trying to hurt the elderly. So speaking for myself personally, let me set the record straight. I come from a State with millions of people—millions of retirees—who depend on these programs, and one of them is my own mother. She worked hard for her entire life and paid into these programs so they would be there for her when she retired. I would never support any changes to these programs that would hurt my mother. But these programs are going bankrupt, and anyone who is in favor of doing nothing about them is in favor of bankrupting them.

The good news is this: The good news is we still have some time to save Medicare and Social Security, and we still have time to do these changes without making any changes to the benefits of seniors such as my mom. But to do so is going to require younger workers, like myself, to accept that

when we retire, our Medicare and our Social Security is going to be different than our parents.

So instead of spending all of our time around here trying to figure out how to raise the debt limit, we need to spend more of our time trying to figure out what we can do to put in place a serious long-term plan to bring this debt under control so that our economy can start creating more of those good-paying, middle-class jobs, so that people can start building for themselves the better future they always dreamed of.

The American dream is under assault. That is the real crisis. When are we going to get serious about solving it? This dream of earning a better life is the universal hope of people everywhere. But we are reminded that for much of human history most people found themselves trapped by the circumstances of their birth. That meant no matter how hard they worked, no matter how talented they were, they were only going to go as far as their family went. They could only do whatever it was their parents did. One of the things that made America so special is that here that has been different. Here, through hard work and sacrifice, people from all walks of life, from every corner of the world, have had the real opportunity to earn for themselves a better life.

This is what we call the American dream. As Americans, that is our identity. It is what holds us together as a nation. It is what holds us together as a people, and it is what has made us exceptional.

I know people are discouraged about how tough times are. I know some people are very disappointed about how the last election turned out. I know many people are angry and, quite frankly, disgusted by the way this process is working or failing to work these days. But no matter how bad things may seem, we cannot give up on America and we cannot give up on the American dream. We have to do everything we can to make sure this country remains a place where anyone from anywhere can accomplish anything.

So despite how ugly Washington looks right now, I actually remain confident that, in the end, that is exactly what we are going to do. I have no doubt that, in the end, our children will grow up to be the most prosperous generation that ever lived. Despite all the challenges we face right now, when all is said and done, I believe with all my heart we will still go down in history as the generation that saved the American dream and left our children what our parents left for us—the single greatest Nation in the history of the world.

Madam President, I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Florida.

Mr. NELSON. Madam President, mindful of the hour and that the Senate is about to recess, I want to say to my colleague from Florida, who is my friend, that I have optimism and I have faith in our country as well.

I think it is interesting that the stock market, the Dow Jones, has surged 243 points—I just checked it a couple of minutes ago—on just the rumors that the debt ceiling will be lifted and we will not go through this crisis. But I am told at the other end of the Capitol, the House of Representatives is going to have difficulty in getting any agreement to stop the shutdown of the government and pass a continuing appropriations bill. So here we are, back in the soup again.

If we do just a short-term debt extension, lifting the debt ceiling, then for however long it is—5, 6 weeks—come Thanksgiving we are going to be back in the soup again.

There has got to be a change in attitude, and the attitude has got to be I respect the other fellow's point of view, I respect his difference of opinion, now let's work it out together. And it is only then we are going to solve this problem.

Madam President, I yield the floor.

RECESS SUBJECT TO THE CALL OF THE CHAIR

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the Senate stands in recess subject to the call of the Chair.

Thereupon, the Senate, at 1 p.m., recessed subject to the call of the Chair until 4:04 p.m. and reassembled when called to order by the Presiding Officer (Mr. COONS).

DEFAULT PREVENTION ACT OF 2013—MOTION TO PROCEED—Continued

Mr. REID. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the time until 6 p.m. be equally divided and controlled between the two leaders or their designees, and that the Democrats be limited to 10 minutes each. Basically, the reason is we have lots of speakers on this side. I need not say more.

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

The Senator from Michigan.

Ms. STABENOW. Mr. President, we are hearing a lot of discussion right now about the role of government and the role of the public sector.

We know there is a minority in the House of Representatives who ran on shutting the government down and think they have achieved something as we see the economy teetering now, as we see people who have been put out of work, who have mortgages, car payments, and concerns about their children and so on, and all the services that are in jeopardy, from food safety to law enforcement to what happens in the case of an oil spill and all of the things in between.

I found it interesting with our colleagues who have embraced the idea that in the greatest country in the world and in the greatest democracy in the world there is no need for the public sector. No one else is having this de-

bate around the world. They are embracing every tool of the public sector to embrace their private sector to try to beat us by outeducating and outinnovating us in a global economy, as the distinguished Presiding Officer understands. So we are in a global race where everybody understands it is all in. We use all the tools that we have.

We have the greatest private sector, the most robust private sector entrepreneurs that can beat anybody in the world. But we also have a public sector that creates the framework and support for that by having a rule of law, by having basic protections in place for the public.

As I had the opportunity to listen to our colleagues on the other side of the aisle, particularly in the House, it seems every time there is a story—a salmonella outbreak—gosh, we had better bring some folks back. We have veterans hurting so we had better bring something back. We have women and children not getting baby formula through the WIC Program so we should do something about that. We have concerns about national safety so we should do something about that. It is almost as if we are educating these Members about the role of government in this process as they go. I didn't realize we did that. So maybe that function ought to be working. It is a chaotic way for the greatest democracy to operate, but that seems to be what is happening right now.

I remember in my times traveling to China, the last time I was there, where they said to me: Oh, you are here in Beijing on a great day; you can see across the street.

We are lucky. We can see across the street almost every day because we collectively have decided that one of the things we need to do to be able to breathe the air is to have certain rules, certain protections and standards in place so we can breathe the air. That is important to do through the public sector. We can't say: I will do the air in front of this desk, and you do the air in front of this desk, and somebody else will protect the air over here. It doesn't work that way. We do it together. So we don't have to worry about saying: I am in D.C. on the 2 days a year we can breathe the air and look across the street. We have the confidence of knowing that we have a quality of life, including the ability to see across the street and breathe the air, because in a civilized society, the greatest democracy in the world, we have made sure that those standards are there for our citizens.

I remember on a trip to Russia a few years ago they were talking about wanting to get more private sector investment into Moscow in Russia. I came home talking to our businesses and they said: The problem is they don't have a rule of law. We don't trust how we can invest there because we are not confident in their government, their rule of law. We don't have that problem here. We have the epitome of a

system with checks and balances, a rule of law. Up until all of this had begun, we have had the confidence available in the private sector on how to invest and know that there is a system in place.

I had the opportunity, with my agriculture hat on a few months ago, to be in Haiti where we see a great desire, meeting with the Haitian president, to bring in more business and investment from the United States. The problem is, you bring a shipload of cargo into the harbor, and you can't get it off the ship without paying bribes. They have no law enforcement system, judicial system, rule of law.

That is not true in our country. We do it through something collectively that we call government, that creates a way for us to make sure we can drink the water, breathe the air, see across the street, drive on the roads, have the opportunity for education for all of our children, and know that we can walk into a restaurant and have some level of confidence that the food is safe or go into the grocery store and know that.

We have research institutions that suddenly, after our colleagues in the House have been saying—and for years I have had personal debates with folks who said: We don't need a National Institutes of Health. Let the private sector do it. Yet we know collectively we are willing to share a risk of basic research to try to find cancer cures, to go over and over again on research until they get that one that may be able to move forward and be successful, in which case the private sector comes in and takes it from there. But we have done it together and shared the risk because we know it is in all of our interests to save lives—in our own, our family Members, and others—whether it is Alzheimer's, Parkinson's, juvenile diabetes, cancer. All of those things are done collectively through this thing that we call government. That is why we have the best standard of living in the world. We are the wealthiest country in the world. We are the envy of the world. People want to come here and invest. They want to be a part of the opportunities in this country. And now we are debating whether or not, literally, there should be a public sector. Should we fund the police and the firefighters and the judicial system? There are those on the other side of the aisle who would say: We don't mean that. Every time we bring up something: We didn't mean that. I am not sure what they mean then in a civilized society.

We know we have challenges around issues of finance and debt. As chair of the Agriculture Committee, I am proud of the fact—and I have said so many times on the floor—that we are the only committee on a bipartisan basis that has actually brought a deficit reduction bill to the floor that has passed in the Senate. So I take a backseat to no one when we are looking at ways to cut duplication, to cut things that aren't important, to strengthen those things that are, and to save money.

But we do not do it by destroying our economy, by shutting down the services we all count on to protect us as consumers, to make sure our children have opportunities, to make sure we are safe and secure in this country. Obviously, that makes no sense. It is totally irresponsible.

What we are not talking about enough is that we have begun to see things happening in terms of the debt and deficit. We can continue to do that. In fact, the yearly deficit has been cut in half. I don't hear people talking about that, but the numbers say that.

A few years ago we set a goal of \$4 trillion in debt reduction over 10 years. We are more than halfway there—not all the way there, but we have put in place a mechanism through cuts, through new revenue, through interest savings yielding \$2.5 trillion in debt reduction out of the \$4 trillion.

What is happening by shutting down the Government and threatening a default? That debt is going to go back up. We are going to undermine the work we have already done by adding increased costs through interest payments and delays that will actually increase the debt. We saw that in the last go-around in 2011. Even though there was not actually a default on the full faith and credit of the United States of America, we saw it because of exactly what is happening now. We had a lot of talk—in my judgment some very irresponsible talk—and posturing back-and-forth instead of working together in a reasonable way. We saw the markets affected, a drop of 2,000 points in the market, \$800 billion in retirement savings of folks who worked hard all their lives and maybe are still working and cannot figure out why in the world we cannot work together in a reasonable, rational way to solve problems. There was \$800 billion retirement savings gone. During that time in 2011, that summer, July and August, anyone who was signing up for a new mortgage is paying on average \$100 more a month in payments because the interest rates were higher.

Instead of building on what we have already done together or even acknowledging it—it may not make good politics to acknowledge folks on the other side of the aisle. Unfortunately, it seems they certainly do not want to give credit to the President or give credit for anything we have actually been doing together. But the reality is the deficit has been cut in half and we are more than halfway to the goal that was set for savings over 10 years.

There is nothing that has been happening in the last few days—shutting down the government, threatening possible default on the full faith and credit of the United States—that is helping us reach that goal. It is actually going in the opposite direction. As interest rates go up, billions of dollars will be added to the debt.

We have tried to figure out over the last number of months how to continue bringing down the debt and tackling

long-term challenges while, by the way, creating jobs. The best way to get us out of debt is to create jobs so people can go back to work and be part of the economy. That is the best thing, and we are sure not hearing enough talk about that.

I am very proud to come from a State that makes things and grows things. It is manufacturing that is bringing us back, that is driving the economy, and it is agriculture where we have the biggest exports, in terms of export surpluses, in the country. We need to make things and grow things, focus on that. That will bring down the debt as we create more opportunities and more jobs.

In the last 6 months we have tried to go to a conference committee, a negotiating team, a formal negotiating process between the House and Senate on a 10-year budget that will bring down the debt, create jobs, do things in a fair and balanced way that puts middle class families first. We have tried to do that, as of today, 21 times. In fact, the chair of the Budget Committee has come to the floor and moved that we get to that process 21 times, joined by distinguished Members of the Republican caucus in the Senate who have come to say the same thing, let us go to a budget negotiation, a formal budget negotiation. Over 21 times the same folks who shut down the Government, the same folks who say it doesn't hurt anything if we default as a country, even though every economist, every business leader is begging and pleading and providing facts and information as to why it would be a complete disaster—the same people who are saying defaults don't matter, government doesn't work, except when they are reading something in the paper and somebody is saying there is a problem—they, those same people have, 21 times been able to block the Senate from going to a formal negotiation with the House on the budget.

We are in this crazy place where, on the one hand, when we step back we are actually seeing the economy slowly moving forward—of course until now, when it is beginning to be stymied by all of this. But the economy has been moving forward. The yearly deficit is coming down. We have been tackling the long-term debt. We are coming out of this. Then we have a group of folks who have decided in the big picture that there is no value in a democracy, in the greatest country in the world, in government. They don't seem to care about what it takes to provide an economy and so on.

Now they are saying they are willing to jeopardize the faith and credit of the United States of America, have America default on our bills and potentially send us not only and probably into a great recession similar to the one we just came out of, but economists tell us it could send us back even further, into the thirties or forties. They just do not know.

We are in a global marketplace right now where we don't know what happens when we default on our bills, when we lose the confidence of the world to invest in America or to even purchase our debt. We don't know what happens when small businesses see all their capital dry up and people are not able to get mortgage loans again or they cost much more than they did before and all the other ramifications of our not paying our bills.

There are colleagues who say the Secretary of the Treasury—who, by the way, came down and did an excellent job in the Finance Committee today. It was very serious. It was very sobering, but I thought he was clear and he was factual and I very much appreciate his coming to the Senate Finance Committee. But there are those who say he says October 17 is the last time extraordinary measures can be used to stop us from falling off the cliff and going into default and losing the full faith and credit of the United States—except, no, it could be the next day, it could be the day after.

Coming from a car State it reminds me of someone who is driving in their car and they look and it is on empty. You may have a little bit more. Sometimes they say you have 5 miles more, you have 10 miles more, maybe you have 30 miles more, but you are on empty and you are going to stop—the car is going to stop. The question is how often do you want to risk that and play that game when you know the car is going to stop.

That is, in my judgment, the kind of absurd and irresponsible debate going on right now—about whether the car stops immediately or in 2 miles or 3 miles or 30 miles. Why in the world would you want to put yourself in that position? Lord knows, defaulting on the full faith and credit of the United States of America is much more serious than running out of gas in your car.

There is no reason for this—none, zero. This is a manufactured crisis. Do we need to continue to work together to tackle the long-term debt of this country? Absolutely. Count me in. Do we need to focus on what is happening to middle-class families who are getting squeezed on all sides and have a hard time just holding on? Do we need to focus on jobs in this country, making things and growing things and outeducating and outinnovating the world? Absolutely. Count me in. Count me in at the head of the line on that.

We in Michigan right now, in terms of our hard work and ingenuity, take a backseat to nobody. But to find ourselves in this craziness is beyond my understanding. I know people at home are going: What in the world is going on here? Can't you guys just come together and figure this out and quit making up crises and quit creating artificial deadlines and get things done?

I think it is important at this point in our history that we remember President Ronald Reagan said: "Never be-

fore in our history has the Federal Government failed to honor its financial obligations."

We are the greatest country in the world. Others look to us. They want to be like us. They want a vibrant middle class like America has had. We need to fight hard to keep ours and keep it growing. We need to make sure we do not fail to honor the financial obligations of this great country.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Ohio.

Mr. PORTMAN. Mr. President, I just listened to my colleague from Michigan talking about the need to reopen the government and the need to deal with the debt. Of course, I agree with that, as do my colleagues on this side of the aisle. We also heard discussion about the fact that we should not be manufacturing crises. Unfortunately, we have a crisis on our hands; that is, the crisis of debt at record levels, so I wish to talk about that a little today and talk about why this discussion is so important, particularly on extending the debt limit because that would be the place naturally for us to deal with the problem that faces this generation and certainly future generations reaching this historic level of debt.

In a matter of days, we are told, our Nation is going to be reaching this debt limit which is \$16.7 trillion. Think about that. That is sixteen thousand billion dollars. It is impossible to comprehend that number, but let's try: \$16.7 trillion would produce a stack of \$1 bills 1 million miles high. That is enough, by the way, to go to the Moon and back. It is now bigger, by the way, than our entire economy. Only once in our history have we had debt as a percent of our economy so large and that was after World War II. We were able quickly to address that. We didn't have the long-term liabilities we have now, and we had very high defense spending from World War II we were able to reduce. But other than that, we have never been here before. I would say we are in uncharted territory.

By the way, it is not just that we have this huge level of debt and deficit and the overhang on the economy, but it is the fact that the economy is also weak. I think they are related. I think this huge level of debt and deficit is akin to a wet blanket over the economy.

Here is an interesting chart. It shows the debt limit rising twice as fast as the economy has grown in the last 2 years so the debt increase has gone up by about \$2.4 trillion and unfortunately our GDP increase has been less than half of that. That is the problem we are trying to face. It is a lot of back-and-forth.

I know for some people it looks as if this is politics. It is not. It is about a fundamental issue. There are fundamental disagreements, and I respect those disagreements, but we have to address this problem and we have to do

it in the context of the debt limit. If we do not, we will simply be kicking the can down the road again and letting down the people we represent. If you divide that debt among the American people, each of us—every man, woman, and child in America—owes around \$50,000. By the way, of course, that is far more than the annual per capita income for that man, woman, and child in America. If you think about that, it is about \$140,000 to \$150,000 per household on average. That is where we are today.

I don't think it is constructive to be pointing fingers of blame because, frankly, for decades Republicans and Democrats alike have spent more money than the government takes in. There have been more promises made than can be kept, and we have gone through a process of mortgaging the future of our kids and grandkids as a result. Here we are. In some respects, the greatest single act of bipartisanship here in the Congress has been the overspending. The question is not how we got here but what we are going to do about it. Where are we going?

Yesterday the President said that raising the Nation's credit limit by another \$1 trillion really pays for last year's deficit spending, not next year's spending. I guess we could have that debate. I would say it is about the future because we are borrowing more money to pay the bills of the country going forward, and that is what many of us want to talk about—how, going forward, we can reduce those bills.

The truth is that whether you say you are paying for the past or paying for the future, it really doesn't matter to the American people and it doesn't matter to our children and grandchildren who end up paying the bill. Long after we are gone, this huge level of debt and deficit is going to be something they are going to have to deal with.

We all know the consequences if we don't raise the debt limit. Without a debt limit increase, the Federal Government will be unable to borrow to meet its expenses. We are borrowing 20 cents of every dollar the Federal Government spends, so the government would be unable to meet all of its obligations.

There has been discussion about meeting the interest on the debt, and that is only about 8 percent of revenue coming in. I assume that could be met, but it is true that there are other obligations that can't be met if the government can't borrow because the government is spending more than it takes in and needs to borrow to make up the difference.

The deficit, some have said—including some of my colleagues on the other side of the aisle today—is lower now, and somehow that is an indication that we are OK in terms of the deficit. I would remind folks that the deficit this year is the fifth largest deficit in the history of our country—in our entire history. It is over \$640 billion. More

significantly, the Congressional Budget Office, which is the nonpartisan group around here that analyzes this stuff, says it is temporarily lower than \$1 trillion. In other words, they say that within a decade it will get back up to \$1 trillion. Whether it is \$640 billion or \$1 trillion, it is way too high.

Entitlement spending, by the way, will then push these annual deficits up to the equivalent of \$3.4 trillion a year—five times what they are today—within a few decades. That is based on the Congressional Budget Office. At that point, the national debt would be 2½ times as large as the entire economy. Today it is about the size of the economy; it is a little bigger. It would be 2½ times as large as our whole economy. I saw one CBO report recently that simply stops calculating the interest cost at that point because they cannot foresee our economy functioning under those kinds of conditions. Think about your own family budget or think about your business. You could not function either. The bank would not be able to lend you any money.

Both of these outcomes—default today and bankruptcy in the future—have been unacceptable. That is why it is time for us to work together to try to do something about them. As the debt ceiling is raised, it is time to address the underlying problem. That is what we are saying.

By the way, the American people are saying that too. Based on the polling I have seen this week, the American people by better than a 2-to-1 margin are saying: Don't raise the debt limit without doing something about the spending. They get it because for them it is like the credit card—when you reach the limit, you realize you have to do something about the underlying problem, which is how much you are spending.

The President says: "Pass the debt limit increase now and we will address the spending later." I wish it were that simple, but I think he knows, as well as everybody in this Chamber and every person who is watching at home today, that Congress simply doesn't reduce spending unless it is forced to do so. If you don't think that is true, let me remind you of what the history is here. In the past three decades—I have gone back and looked at all of these deficit reduction plans that did get through Congress, and there were not many, but there were some. In every single instance where there was any significant deficit reduction, it came as a result of what? A discussion about the debt limit because that is the time in which there is some pressure here in Congress to actually do something about it. I found one in 2005, which was a relatively small reduction in spending, but otherwise every single one of them—the Gramm-Rudman rescissions in the 1980s; the 1990 Andrews Air Force Base agreement that the first President Bush conducted with Democrats; the 1993 balanced budget talks; the 1997 balanced budget agreement Bill Clin-

ton negotiated with Newt Gingrich—a Democratic President and a Republican Speaker; and, of course, the pay-go rules that many Democrats are fond of, those pay-go rules came out of a debt limit discussion; and finally, we only have to look back a couple of years ago to the Budget Control Act. As my colleague has said on his side of the aisle, there have been some successes in reducing spending on the discretionary side of spending—which is about one-third of the budget that is appropriated every year—that came out of the Budget Control Act, which is a result of what? The debt limit. In other words, Members listening to the folks back home.

I am listening to my constituents back home in Ohio right now, and they are saying: Don't max out the credit card again and go over the limit unless you do something about the problem. It is little wonder that the American people, by this margin of 2 to 1 that I talked about, are saying: Don't do it without the spending reductions. They know that is the only way the spending cuts are likely to happen.

Why is it that any increase in the debt limit should also include progrowth provisions? Well, because one way to get at the debt and deficit is spending restraint. We talked about the discretionary spending being about 35 percent of the budget, and we made progress there. The other 65 percent of the budget is the mandatory spending side, and we have not made progress there. The other part would be revenue, and on the first of this year taxes were raised by \$620 billion. What we have not done is deal with the mandatory side.

Finally, of course, economic growth helps. As we are extending the debt limit, we should also look at how we can help give the economy a shot in the arm. Tax reform is the way to do that, and I think there is a consensus in this body that we need to do it. That would seem to make sense as well.

We have already made progress on one of the three legs of the stool, which is dealing with the discretionary spending. It has been pretty much flat for the last couple of years. By the way, for the first time since the 1950s there has actually been a reduction in spending for 2 years in a row, but that is only 35 percent of the budget. The fastest growing—again, 65 percent of the budget—we have not dealt with. That 65 percent grows to 76 percent of the budget in the next 10 years based on the Congressional Budget Office.

On the tax side, the same Congressional Budget Office tells us that starting in 2014—that is next year, around the corner—taxes as a percentage of our economy will be above the historic level. In other words, there will be more taxes coming in from the tax increases that, in part, we passed earlier this year, but the part we have not dealt with is mandatory spending. It is the biggest and the fastest growing part of our spending. Let's face it. It is

politically difficult to deal with, but that is what we were hired to do, and that is what the President was hired to do in terms of providing leadership.

With ObamaCare, of course, we added a new health entitlement program to this part of the budget—the 65 percent. These health entitlements were already growing more quickly than the rest of the budget, even the rest of mandatory spending. In fact, the Congressional Budget Office tells us that in the next 10 years the health entitlement programs grow by over 100 percent. These are vital programs—Medicare and Medicaid—but they have to be reformed so they are sustainable in the future and are there for our kids and grandkids. With 10,000 baby boomers retiring every day and health care costs continuing to rise, we have a real problem, and we have to address it. All of us know that—Democrats and Republicans alike, as well as the President and the Congress. Again, history tells us the best way is to link this with the debt limit because that is the opportunity and has traditionally been the opportunity to make progress.

By the way, over the long term, overall revenue is projected to increase and discretionary spending is projected to be flat. The entire increase in our deficit—these huge debts and deficits going forward that I have been talking about—is due to the mandatory spending. Again, that is the Congressional Budget Office, not me.

A good place to start, of course, would be some of the mandatory spending reforms the President has proposed. That would seem to be less controversial. If they are in the President's budget, that means he supports them. The President sent up a budget this year, and he included over \$700 billion of spending reforms on the mandatory side of the budget. That is why what I have been advocating is, let's start there. Let's look at the President's own proposals. These are not the proposals that all Republicans support, but after all we should have a negotiation.

This notion that the President says he refuses to negotiate has never been true. Every President has negotiated. I think the American people are confused by this. How could the President of the United States say in the context of this debt limit discussion that he refuses to even talk to the other side? That makes no sense. The first President Bush rolled up his sleeves; we talked about the 1990 agreements. President Clinton rolled up his sleeves; we talked about the 1997 balanced budget agreement he negotiated with then-Speaker of the House Newt Gingrich. That is what Presidents do. We need them to lead, particularly on these tough issues.

As we talked about earlier, these are politically tough issues. The President says he doesn't want to be held hostage over the debt limit. He is not. He has been given the opportunity to lead using his own proposals—at least that is my suggestion.

We can also take a very simple step as we are going through this to be sure that this newest health care entitlement, which is the Affordable Care Act, which is a new entitlement program, doesn't become even more of a deficit driver than many of us on this side fear it will already be. The Affordable Care Act includes a provision that requires that when you get your subsidies under the exchanges, you have to verify your income. That makes sense. You have to verify your income between 100 percent of poverty and 400 percent of poverty. Below that it would be Medicaid, and above that it would be the subsidies under the exchanges.

Under a final regulation the administration put out, they said: We know you should verify your income, and that is what the law says, but we are going to give all of the exchanges another year to do it—not until 2015. Well, obviously the concern there is that will be an invitation for fraud, waste, and for big new expenses.

As a result, the Federal Government body in charge of this, the CMS, came out and said: No, for Federal exchanges, we will require people to file their income, but not for State exchanges. There are about 17 States and the District of Columbia that have State exchanges. They said to them: You guys can wait—in fact, not just until 2015, but there is no date certain.

That is something we in the Congress should deal with. The Democrats here in the Chamber who voted for the Affordable Care Act certainly should support that because the intent of the bill when they signed up for it and when the President supported it was, of course, that you would verify your income. That is an example of a simple step we could take to prevent the distribution of subsidies until we have a system to verify those subsidies are going to the right people.

Finally, let's give the economy a shot in the arm. As part of this process, let's take a step forward and say: Let's reform the Tax Code. We are going to differ about the details, but let's get started on it.

So my proposal would be, as we have a vote on extending the debt limit, let's do these important reforms we talked about on the monetary side, but let's also commit to tax reform. Let's force the process. Let's facilitate it. Let's expedite it.

The American people are not looking for us to just get the spending under control; they want to see this economy grow. Again, they are not happy with this, where the debt is increasing at twice the rate of the economy. They want to see opportunities for their kids to get a job. They want to see the opportunity to have the dignity and self-respect that comes with a job.

We know that tax reform, done properly, will promote growth, it will create jobs. Again, we are going to differ on some of the details, and that is OK. Let's get started on it.

Perhaps the President doesn't think that spending and the deficits are a

real problem. If he thinks that, he should say it. He says just the opposite. He has said he does think it is necessary for us to address these problems. In fact, in his own budget, he sent proposals forward. So what we need to do is get together and negotiate and talk and deal with this underlying problem. A debt that is nearly \$17 trillion is unacceptable to everybody, I hope, and I would think we would welcome the sign that Republicans are giving now that we want to negotiate, we want to talk.

Negotiations, by the way, I don't think are a sign of weakness. I don't think coming to the table is a signal of a failure of leadership. I think just the opposite; I think it shows strength and shows leadership. Again, I can promise my colleagues Republicans don't support all of the President's suggested savings in his budget, and a purely Republican agenda would look very different from whatever might emerge from bipartisan negotiations. But, again, the American people sent us here to get this done.

Using President Obama's own proposals, let's take that first step toward entitlement and progrowth tax reform and onto some common ground to break the gridlock in DC and finally do something positive about that underlying problem we all acknowledge.

Yes, we face serious problems, real challenges, but we also have an opportunity to do something positive, to deal with the problem we all acknowledge—something that will not only prevent a debt limit crisis today but a debt crisis tomorrow.

I hope to move forward on this important project. I think we owe it to the people we represent.

I yield the remainder of my time.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from North Dakota.

Ms. HEITKAMP. Mr. President, October 1 was a significant day. Two things happened to the constituents in my State. The first we talk a lot about here, and that is basically the shutdown of the government, the failure to pass a continuing resolution that would keep the doors of government open for the thousands and thousands of Americans, and North Dakotans, who depend on government services. This horrible impasse continues to have a horrible impact and continues to have consequences that people didn't foresee.

The second thing that happened, which hasn't gotten a lot of attention, is the expiration of a long-term farm bill. After negotiating in this body, and with a large bipartisan vote, we were able to accommodate concerns. We came together after negotiating, and we came up with a package that included real reforms, eliminated direct payments, included real reform in SNAP, streamlined conservation programs, and basically offered \$25 billion of debt relief to the country. It was a great package.

We sent it over to the House and waited for the House to pass their farm

bill. They initially couldn't pass a farm bill. Then they decided to divide the farm bill, pass part of the farm bill, pass the other part of the farm bill with nutrition, now have a vote to bring them back together, and we are patiently awaiting the appointment of a conference committee.

The passage of the farm bill has never been a partisan issue. In fact, it is a regional issue. Things that are good for North Dakota may not be good for the Presiding Officer's State of Delaware, but we all work together, we all compromise, and we all come together.

This past weekend South Dakota and southwestern North Dakota were hit with a terrible snowstorm. Over 2 days that region was blanketed with anywhere from 2 feet to 7 feet of snow and contained winds over 70 miles an hour. Because of the early storm, tens of thousands of cattle died because they were suffocated, mired and drowned in stock dams or dropped in exhaustion. The pictures and the stories are devastating.

This image is one that is all too common after the recent blizzard in the Dakotas. These cattle that died over the weekend near Hettinger, ND, were owned by the Christman family. As is the case with many North Dakota ranchers, this hard-working family lost many cows and calves during this surprise fall storm.

What people may not understand about the cattle industry is they might think one cow is like the next cow; people can just replace them. These herds are the product of years and years of selective breeding, years and years of working to improve the quality of their herd and to meet different specifications in the market. They are more than cows. They contain an intellectual property component that is not easily replaced.

This is where the crisis of the dysfunction that is Washington, DC, meets natural disaster. When livestock die from a natural disaster, farmers report the number of cattle that died to the Farm Service Agency—the FSA. However, because the doors are closed on the Federal Government, North Dakota ranchers, South Dakota ranchers, anyone who is experiencing livestock losses, have no place to report those losses. And even worse, they have no one at USDA to consult with about the information they need to collect to eventually report their claims. This is critical information. If farmers aren't collecting the information they need to make disaster claims in the future, the safety nets put in place to provide some support to these hard-working ranchers may be denied simply because of a paperwork error.

Unfortunately, this is an avoidable problem. As has been the case with so many in recent years, it is the product of congressional dysfunction. Because we haven't passed a new farm bill, the livestock program that helps ranchers withstand losses to livestock herds due

to extreme weather events—the Livestock Indemnity Program—has expired, and the emergency assistance for livestock and honeybee producers program, which is in the stalled farm bill and which helps producers stay in business after they experience significant losses because of natural disaster, isn't available to the ranchers and the beekeepers who were hit the hardest by the storm. Until Congress passes a farm bill, livestock producers are in danger of losing their business, and they will not be eligible for support.

These ranchers and the farm bill are more collateral damage of the government shutdown. Because we are debating whether to fund the Federal Government, Congress isn't able to work on a farm bill. We have been waiting and waiting and waiting for the appointment of conferees. The chairwoman, I think, intends to make a floor speech about the farm bill yet today. She has been working very hard to encourage the collection of information and to encourage the appointment of conferees to the conference committee and get focused on this issue. Unfortunately, it is not happening until next week, if it even happens then.

In addition, the lack of assistance for ranchers in the aftermath of this devastating storm as a result of the shutdown is hurting farmers and agricultural industries, which is a key piece of North Dakota's economy.

Here are some additional examples of where the shutdown is hurting our farmers. Frequently, because farmers who use FSA loans have a joint obligation with FSA, when they receive their checks after they sell their products, the checks are frequently made out to both the Farm Service Agency and the farmer. Consequently, the farmer cannot cash the check unless he can get an endorsement from the Farm Service Agency. Guess what. They go, knock on the door, and no one is there to cosign their check. So that money in their hand that they need to make the investments for next year, that they need to pay the person who maybe supplies the feed, that they need to pay the fuel bill—that money is not available to them, even though they have earned it and they have sold their products. So the government shutdown prevents FSA from cashing these checks and from signing these checks. This is money the farmers have earned and they deserve, and denying them their income is outrageous.

What is worse, farmers and ranchers enrolled in the loan programs are new and beginning farmers, farmers who are just starting. It is a great thing that is happening in the Dakotas and all across farm country as we look at the increasing commodity prices and we look at a farm program that for the last 5 years has been stable and provided risk management. As a result, our farmers are getting younger and younger. The people who are going to feed the world and continue to develop

our rural areas are younger and younger. They cannot withstand cashflow problems. They cannot withstand this loss.

Another impact of the shutdown: Agricultural reports from the National Agriculture Statistics Service aren't available to farmers. These reports are crucial resources that farmers need to make decisions such as how to price crops, which commodities to grow, and when to sell those commodities, and the reports enable farmers to track cattle auction prices. Not only has NASS stopped putting out new reports about demand and supply, exports, and prices, but all Web sites with past information have been taken down because of the government shutdown.

Farmers aren't receiving assistance from farm programs. The Department of Agriculture's local farm services offices have been shut down because of the shutdown and, as a result, farmers can't apply for new loans, sign up acreages for farm programs, or receive government checks for the programs they are already enrolled in. Devastating to so many of our people living on fixed incomes in North Dakota, who have engaged in and basically put their land into the conservation reserve program, is conservation reserve checks are not being issued. That has a huge impact, particularly on those ranchers and those landowners who use CRP payments to supplement their Social Security.

The list goes on and on. As time continues, this list will only get longer and longer.

I understand the strategy, perhaps, in the House is to—whatever is the headline of the day, whatever becomes the issue of the day, we will simply write a little mini CR to take care of that, and say, see, we are dealing with that issue. But we know it is only a slice. It doesn't take care of those small businesses that have applied for small business loans and maybe got this close to being able to realize their dream and now have it delayed. It doesn't deal with the critical functions of government in its entirety. Instead, it picks and chooses the winners and losers. Let me tell my colleagues, these ranchers who have experienced this loss are the losers under this system.

It is time for this Congress to begin to do the responsible thing, which is open government, fund all of government, and start telling the American people that their interests are paramount. Start telling farmers and ranchers in the Dakotas who have experienced this tremendous loss that we care about their loss, that these programs have to work for them, and we have to do everything we can to make sure America is working again.

I wish to close with one thought. In the great recession, one place where we have experienced a tremendous amount of opportunity and support has been in agriculture. Those States that had a good agricultural base had some of the lowest unemployment numbers in the

country. Sixteen million jobs depend on agriculture in this country, and all they ask for in return is a little bit of help, a little bit of a safety net for guaranteeing a food supply in this country. But we can't seem to even deliver that obligation. We can't seem to deliver that promise. We have to tell the American people that their interests are ahead of any petty or partisan interest in this body and in this Congress. We have to get the Congress back working for the American people, particularly for the hard-hit ranchers and farmers of southeastern North Dakota and West River, SD.

Thank you, Mr. President. I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. MARKEY). The Senator from New Jersey.

Mr. MENENDEZ. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent to speak for up to 15 minutes.

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

Mr. MENENDEZ. Here we are again at the same crossroads. We know the landmarks. We know the signs. We have been here before. We negotiated in good faith to avert the last shutdown, the last default threat. We opposed the sequester, but that wasn't enough. So here we are, once again, and here we will be again in a week, a month, 6 months, a year, being asked for more concessions to a minority of extreme Republicans who seem to have forgotten that we operate under the rule of law. They simply have chosen to ignore it.

The fact is we passed the Affordable Care Act. It went through the legislative process, was signed by the President, tested in the Supreme Court, but so what, they say. It does not count. Similar to the schoolyard bully, they want a do-over or they will take over your lunch money.

The rightwing Republican minority claims to love the Constitution, adheres to the strictest interpretation of its tenets but apparently is not interested in living by it or by the rule of law that this Nation stands for and lives by.

They say Democrats have failed to negotiate in good faith and voted against trying to reach a compromise. The fact is for 6 months Senate Republicans have stood in the way of budget negotiations—what they want, negotiations—by blocking requests for Budget Committee members to conference with the House of Representatives. They have objected over 20 times to those budget negotiations.

The Senate followed regular order and passed a budget resolution for fiscal year 2014 on March 23 of this year. Our budget resolution provides just over \$1 trillion by replacing the irresponsible sequestration cuts while following the spending limit imposed by the Budget Control Act. The House wants to keep sequestration cuts by funding the government at \$976 billion or about \$80 billion less than the Senate. The fact is we have already compromised with the House by agreeing

to a continuing resolution at a level of \$986 billion—much closer to their numbers than to ours. If you ask me, that is more than \$70 billion in compromising. But they simply will not take yes for an answer.

What the past weeks have shown us is that this is not even about budget numbers. They just want to make a political point, and they are holding the country hostage in order to make it. They simply do not want either the Affordable Care Act or, for that fact, this President to succeed. But that train has left the station. The President is already turning the economy around from the massive deficits he inherited when he took office, and the Affordable Care Act is the law of the land.

Make no mistake, it is not a coincidence that we are here again doing the same thing much like “Groundhog Day.” Mark my words, we will be here again tomorrow and in the future if the Republican shutdown strategy continues.

We are being asked to capitulate yet again at the threat that Republicans will keep the government shut down, that they will force America to default on its obligations and risk a global consequence and America’s leadership role in the world.

It is a deliberate, if fatally flawed, Republican strategy. One might go so far as to call it a conspiracy—adopted to achieve through bullying what they cannot achieve at the ballot box.

We know it is a deliberate effort hatched many months ago. In fact, it goes back to 2010 when the House Republicans threatened to push the Nation into defaulting on its obligations and shut down the government unless we agreed to aggressive and deep structural cuts that met their political objectives in the midst of one of the deepest recessions in our history, a recession President Obama inherited when he took office.

Then, in November of 2010, the antitax, antigovernment, antispending, antiprogress side of the Republican Party exercised their newfound power and hamstrung their leadership into rejecting any kind of compromise, forcing the House Speaker and majority leader to reject any grand bargain proposed by the Democrats. They did it gleefully. It was part of their strategy to block any successful effort to actually govern. They chose instead to fuel the rightwing flames, burn down the house, and bring government to a halt until they achieved their objectives.

From December 2 to December 21, 2010, we enacted four separate continuing resolutions to keep the government open—four of them—to keep the government functioning until March 4. Let’s not forget that these appropriations actually cut the Congressional Budget Office’s projection of discretionary spending from 2013 through 2022 by \$400 billion. But that was not enough. They wanted more.

On March 2, 2011, as the new deadline approached, we passed another short-

term CR, taking us to March 18—just 16 days—that cut spending by yet another \$4 billion. Still not enough.

On March 16, the deadline approaching once again, we passed another continuing resolution, taking us to April 8, with another \$6 billion in spending cuts. Was it enough? Of course not.

On April 4, House Republicans applauded the Speaker’s announcement to begin preparations, for what, yes, a shutdown of the government. Clearly, nothing is enough.

On April 14, just before midnight, the Speaker agreed to the seventh short-term extension with more cuts that analysts said would amount to an additional \$350 million in that year alone.

All in all, we agreed to \$40 billion in total cuts, and we have cut even more since then, including the current Senate-passed clean funding bill that would reopen the government today if the House would just pass it.

They say we have not taken votes. We have taken a bunch of votes on what they have sent us. They have not taken one vote on the one resolution we have sent them.

It is a clear pattern, a clear strategy. They will not stop. They will not take yes for an answer, and they clearly will not govern until they achieve their political and ideological goal to end government as we know it. That has been their plan all along.

In fact, last Sunday the New York Times reported that after the President was sworn in to his second term, a coalition of top conservative activists, including former Attorney General Ed Meese, along with the Koch brothers, devised a take-no-prisoners legislative strategy to derail health care by shutting down the Federal Government. Now we are being blackmailed again. As further proof of this take-no-prisoners strategy, Jonathan Chait of New York magazine recently reported on something called the Williamsburg Accord. Mr. Chait wrote:

In January, [this year], demoralized House Republicans retreated to Williamsburg, Virginia, to plot out their legislative strategy for President Obama’s second term. . . .

They called it the Williamsburg Accord. He said:

If you want to grasp why Republicans are careening toward a potential federal government shutdown, and possibly toward provoking a sovereign debt crisis after that, you need to understand that this is the inevitable product of a conscious party strategy. . . .

His article goes on to say:

The way to make sense of it is that Republicans have planned since January to force Obama to accede to large chunks of the Republican agenda, without Republicans having to offer any policy concessions of their own.

That is not negotiation. We saw the implementation of that strategy beginning early in the spring when we did exactly what Republicans wanted. We passed a budget in the Senate, and the House passed a budget, and we attempted to go to conference to work

out the difference between the two. Actually, we have attempted to do that more than 20 times now, and every single time Republicans have blocked action.

For 6 months they have refused to talk, they have refused to negotiate, they have refused to have a conversation. As we now know, this all was planned out from the beginning, going back to their January Williamsburg Accord.

They have intentionally driven us to the edge of the cliff to serve their own political interests at the expense of the Nation’s economy, the jobs of working families, and the retirement savings of our seniors.

Now the GOP’s solution to get us out of this Republican shutdown is the equivalent of Whac-A-Mole. It is their form of governing. Whatever issue pops up that they see a problem with as a result of their shutdown, they draft a bill to address a single issue. Last week it was national parks. This week it was death benefits for soldiers. What will it be next? Anyone who has ever been on the boardwalk and has played that arcade game of Whac-A-Mole knows you can never quite get ahead of those pesky moles that keep popping up. How long do they plan to govern in this way?

Bill Moyers recently wrote in an essay:

Despite what they say, Obamacare is only one of their targets. Before they will allow the government to reopen, they demand employers be enabled to deny birth control coverage to female employees; they demand Obama cave on the Keystone pipeline . . . they demand the watchdogs over corporate pollution be muzzled and the big bad regulators of Wall Street sent home. Their ransom list goes on and on. The debt ceiling is next. . . .

At least let’s name this for what it is: sabotage of the democratic process.

Kevin Drum of Mother Jones wrote:

How do you get across how insurrectionary this is? Raising the debt ceiling isn’t a concession from Republicans that deserves a corresponding concession from Democrats. It’s the financial equivalent of a new nuclear bomb.

Warren Buffett used equally stark terms when he said in Fortune magazine:

It ought to be banned—

Referring to defaulting on the Nation’s obligations—

It ought to be banned as a weapon. . . . It should be like nuclear bombs, basically too horrible to use.

Clearly, in the name of some misguided allegiance to an extreme ideology, a handful of ultraconservative extremists in the Republican Party are putting at risk the rule of law. They are putting at risk the full faith and credit of the United States, America’s influence—as well as our obligations—around the world, and our national security, embassy security, intelligence collection apparatus, and American diplomats, Foreign Service officers, and contractors serving in posts around the world.

This is not a game. Real people are already being hurt by these tactics. I find it pathetic that some Republicans are willing to risk the full faith and credit of this Nation and inflict unnecessary harm on hard-working families and put the very principles of this democracy on the line all just to show how ideologically pure they are.

It is one thing to come to Washington wanting to destroy your government. It is quite another to destroy our economy in the process.

If you want to negotiate, let's negotiate. Let's do it constructively, in good faith, and without threats. Let's try, as we have tried over 20 times, to get to that moment. Let's reopen the government, let's pay our bills, and then we will negotiate.

It is time to reject the schoolyard bully political strategy that Republicans hatched months ago, ratchet down the rhetoric, and do the hard work of solving problems together.

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

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. GRASSLEY. Mr. President, 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 Iowa is recognized.

Mr. GRASSLEY. Mr. President, I heard the previous speaker plead for a solution. I think we are all pleading for that. We are now in our 10th day of a government shutdown—quite frankly, one that did not have to happen.

To some extent, it seems that this administration—meaning President Obama's administration—is going to great efforts to inflict as much pain through this shutdown as possible.

Mr. President, the administration went to great lengths to try to keep World War II veterans from viewing the memorial dedicated to their service, the World War II Memorial. It is an open-air memorial. It likely took more effort and personnel to close and barricade the memorial than it does to keep it open. It is one of those memorials where 24/7/365 you can go there. There is no reason it could not have been the same way during this recent period.

The government could be open and fully operating today but for the majority and its unwillingness to engage in legitimate debate over proposals to amend ObamaCare or any other legitimate issue of dispute. With regard to ObamaCare, not to defund or delay it is something that is not right in a body that is a deliberative body. You ought to consider all issues.

Instead of wasting a lot of time being in quorum calls or days of not voting, there could be legitimate discussions of pieces of legislation, and in the process maybe reach some sort of conclusion through what we call "regular order."

The House has passed and the Senate has defeated three different continuing

resolutions. Each one of those would have kept the government open and prevented a shutdown. That looks like that is something that was debated here and decided here. But it was decided in a manner that was not debatable, a motion to table the House amendments. These three offers from the House of Representatives were rejected by the Senate majority. We are in this position because the Senate 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 when it comes to Federal employees and officials being covered by health insurance.

In addition to negotiating an end to the government shutdown, Congress now needs to deal with the approaching debt limit. This will be the sixth debt limit increase in President Obama's 5 years in office. During President Obama's term in office thus far, the United States has added \$6 trillion to our national debt.

We had 4 consecutive years with annual deficits above \$1 trillion. Federal debt held by the public is now 73 percent of our gross domestic product. The historical average has been about 40 percent of GDP. This unsustainable debt path is threatening our economic growth and our stability.

This administration is quick to point out that the deficits have fallen faster than at any point since World War II. They fail to mention, however, that the deficit remains over \$600 billion this very year from highs near \$1.4 trillion. Remember to compare the \$600 billion for this year with the largest annual deficit under President Bush of \$458 billion.

Much of the recently improved deficit picture is also due to the spending cuts imposed by the Budget Control Act of August 2, 2011, that was enacted as part of the last debt ceiling increase. There is no better time to negotiate policies to address our fiscal problems than when debating debt ceilings.

But the President and the Secretary of the Treasury maintain that they will not negotiate on the debt limit. There happen to be families all over this country which, because of the slow economy and unemployment, are being forced to make tough decisions to make ends meet.

A lot of those families are looking at their budgets, looking right now trying to determine which expenses can be cut. Maybe they will try to reduce their cell phone bill or perhaps they will cancel a newspaper or a magazine subscription or perhaps eat at home instead of eating at restaurants.

The point is, when families face tight budgets and increasing debt, they look for ways to cut spending and get their fiscal house in order. That is the prudent thing to do. When bills come due, families make tough decisions on where to trim the budget. That is a family example of the Federal Government's legitimacy for looking at our spending.

At the very same time we are trying to increase the debt limit, we need to consider possibilities and make compromises to get our budget deficit down. Why can't the Federal Government then do the same? Why can't we use this opportunity to put our Nation on a sound fiscal course? Why can't we work right now to enact policies that will hopefully then negate the need to take on more debt.

This seems to be a reasonable proposition, to do this when you are talking about increasing the federal debt. Treasury Secretary Lew and his boss, President Obama, have repeated the talking points that negotiating deficit reduction policies on a debt ceiling increase is unprecedented. They claim that now is not the time to negotiate our budget and fiscal problems.

The President stated last month:

You have never seen in the history of the United States the debt ceiling or the threat of not raising the debt being used to extort a President or a governing party and trying to force issues that have nothing to do with the budget and nothing to do with the debt.

The President just does not understand history or even recent history when he makes such a statement. President Obama and Secretary Lew can make this claim as much as they want, but it does not make sense. It is not true. The Washington Post fact checker gave this exact quote from President Obama four Pinocchio's, which rates the statement as a "whopper."

The Post indicated that since 1953, Congress at times has used the debt limit as a way to force concessions by the executive branch on spending. It also states that the Congress has used the debt limit on many occasions to force changes in unrelated laws.

At least four major pieces of deficit reduction policies were enacted as part of a debt limit increase: Gramm-Rudman, 1985; the Budget Enforcement Act, 1990; the Balanced Budget Act, 1997; the Budget Control Act, 2011. So the facts are very clear. The debt limit has been used in the past as a means to enact different deficit reduction policies and other reforms. Surely the President knew these facts when he made that statement that the Washington Post fact checker rated as a "whopper" with 4 Pinocchio's.

According to the Congressional Research Service, since 1978, Congress has voted to raise the debt ceiling 53 times: 27 of those times or 51 percent of the time the debt limit increase was tied to reforms. I questioned Secretary Lew on this point this morning during our Finance Committee hearing. Unfortunately, I got the same tired talking points that have been proven time and again to be wrong.

It is difficult to understand how an administration can expect us to take them seriously on the offer of future negotiations when they misrepresent such simple facts. The President and Congress must come to the table and negotiate policies to get our fiscal

house in order. Does that put everything on the shoulders of the President of the United States? Absolutely not. It is just a fact that in this town, with our form of government, for over 225 years Presidential leadership is a very important part of the legislative process.

We have taken steps to address discretionary spending. We did that in 2011 with the Budget Control Act. Now it is time to tackle entitlements. Without reform, entitlement spending will continue to consume our budget. They will begin to squeeze out spending on discretionary spending, such as defense, education, and infrastructure. According to the CBO, spending on entitlements will double as a percentage of GDP from the historic average of 6.9 percent to 14.2 percent by 2038.

What does this mean for our economy? It means we will need to borrow more and more to fulfill our obligations. That will crowd out money that would otherwise be loaned in the private sector. This will lead to slower growth, less prosperity. It means that future generations may be less well-off than previous generations. The longer we kick the entitlement can down the road, the bigger the fiscal problems become and the harder the solutions will be.

It is time to make tough decisions and once and for all strengthen and secure these programs for future generations. These reforms will not take place without presidential leadership. The President must now demonstrate courage and the political will to put our Nation on a sound fiscal course.

That is not just the President's responsibility. That is a shared legislative responsibility between that end of Pennsylvania Avenue and this end. But it requires leadership that will bring people together. It requires compromise. It requires concession. Most of all, we need to get back to basics. We have to be sitting at a table across from each other negotiating. We will not be able to address those looming fiscal problems if President Obama is refusing even to sit across the table from Members of Congress, both Republicans and Democrats.

So I hope he will reconsider his "no negotiation" strategy so that we can reopen the government, deal with the debt ceiling and begin to address our unsustainable long-term fiscal challenges.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Delaware.

Mr. COONS. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the time until 7 p.m. be equally divided between the two leaders or their designees, with Senators on the majority side limited to 10 minutes each.

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

Mr. COONS. Mr. President, I have heard a number of speeches from my colleagues on the floor today, both while presiding and in the last few mo-

ments, that call on President Obama for Presidential leadership to help us reopen the government, address our serious long-term fiscal issues, and move us forward.

I want to note for the folks who might be watching that the President is at this very moment sitting with the leadership of the Republican caucus in the House of Representatives. Tomorrow morning, I believe, he has invited the Republican Members of this body to the White House for conversation.

I think we agree. One of the core challenges we face as this Federal shutdown goes into, I believe, its 10th day is discerning exactly why the Federal Government is still shut down. When initially taken over the cliff into the shutdown, it was to prevent the implementation of the Affordable Care Act. That is what a number of Senators said on this floor was their purpose. Now, many days and many unintended and unexpected harmful consequences later, we are told what this was really all about was to force the President to negotiate.

I serve on the Budget Committee. We passed, more than 200 days ago, more than 6 months ago, a budget on this floor, and we have tried to go to conference on that budget now 21 times.

Yet each time it was blocked, objected to by a small number of Senators from the other party.

Frankly, my expectation, my hope is that we will return to a rational rule-following process here, reopen the government, not default on our national debt, and begin those serious negotiations, those Budget Committee negotiations that are long overdue to deal with the very real challenges that are facing our country.

I wanted to speak today about one of the consequences of shutting down our Federal Government. We see new ones every day, and we hear about them on the Senate floor. As the days drag on, we hear more and more about the impacts of the shutdown, sometimes with surprise, sometimes with regret, sometimes with outrage.

There is a lot on the line, and we have heard a lot about what the shutdown means for the various functions of the executive branch and of the legislative branch. I have heard colleagues come and speak about the Nuclear Regulatory Commission, about the FDA, about its impact on higher education, its impact on families, and its impact on small businesses. I have heard many folks come to this floor and comment on how the executive branch and its functions that affect communities and families all over this country are affected by the shutdown.

We have heard from our constituents who are trying to reach Senators and are trying to seek our help with a variety of Federal services. They are frustrated that the legislative branch is largely shut down, but there is another branch to our three-branch coordinate government. Absent from this debate and discussion is how the shutdown is

affecting the judicial branch of our government.

When the Federal Government shut down 10 years ago, the Federal court system was initially seemingly largely unaffected because they had enough funds in reserve to remain open for 10 business days—a period that will come to an end early next week.

On Tuesday the Federal judiciary of the United States will run out of the reserve funds it has been using to stay open. The big question is, What happens then?

The chief judge of the bankruptcy court for the District of Delaware, my home State, told me:

We are really in an uncertain situation, particularly when it comes to employees. I am fearful for them and how they are going to be able to pay for rent and mortgages, and provide food and day-care for their families.

This is uncharted territory for our Federal judiciary. When the money runs out, Federal, circuit, and district courts will each be on their own, much like each Senator who has to choose which of his employees or her employees are essential, deemed vital, and need to stay, and which should be furloughed and stay home, uncertain whether they will be paid. Each district court and circuit court will figure out on its own how to keep the lights and which employees will keep working without a salary.

As the chair of the Senate Judiciary Subcommittee on Bankruptcy and the Courts, I have heard from a number of Federal judges this week who are frustrated by the amount of time they are spending trying to figure out what the shutdown means for their courts and their employees rather than doing the job for which they were confirmed, which is to judge cases.

This is an enormous distraction, a profound waste of time. This is not advancing our core objective, which should be growing our economy, strengthening our country, confronting the fiscal challenges in front of us, and working together to achieve some principled compromises in the Congress of the United States. In my view, Federal judges should be deciding cases, not deciding how to keep their courthouses running during this Federal Government shutdown. This needs to end. It could end literally today in a matter of minutes if Speaker BOEHNER would bring to the floor and allow a vote on a bill sent over from this Senate more than 10 days ago that would allow the Federal Government to reopen.

The judicial branch is not another Federal agency. It is not a program that can be suspended or a benefit that can be delayed. It is a branch. The Federal court system was created in our Constitution as the third pillar of our democracy. It is an independent branch of government whose fundamental mission is being undermined by folks, some of whom claim to love and to rigidly interpret the Constitution. Yet the consequences for our constitutional order of this senseless shutdown, I am

afraid, will soon become clear in the days ahead.

The subcommittee has heard from a number of Federal judges and clerks this week. I must warn you there are a lot of unanswered questions there. The path forward is murky. The central question in the courts—as it was here in Congress and in the executive branch—is who is considered “essential.” Is it the people directly involved in the resolution of cases or are the staff who support that process also expected to work without pay?

Here is the type of question our judiciary was dealing with today instead of resolving disputes or working on long-term cost-saving measures. Evidence in our Federal courts these days is typically presented electronically to jurors rather than handing out photocopies, which is great as long as the technology is working in the courtroom. Case files are processed electronically these days as well. But what if there is a problem? What if the technology doesn't work and a trial is disrupted? At what point does a technological glitch become a legitimate due process issue? If the courtroom technology can't get an upgrade to fix a bug, will it result in a costly mistrial? The Constitution and the Sixth Amendment guarantee criminal defendants a right to a speedy trial. What happens when our courts can't live up to that Sixth Amendment guarantee because of this ongoing Federal shutdown?

The problem is equally severe in civil and bankruptcy matters. With the DOJ's Office of the U.S. Trustee in shutdown status, the number of trustee attorneys in Delaware has been cut from seven to two. This can dramatically slow the bankruptcy process and leave real jobs and real lives hanging in the balance as cases are unresolved and as resolutions don't move forward.

This raises another fundamental question. At what point in this ongoing senseless shutdown does our civil justice system fail to live up to America's promise as a free market economy grounded in the rule of law?

When an investor anywhere in the world looks to make a bet on a new company, a new idea, that investor will obtain certain rights in exchange. Those rights may include a share of equity or a priority right in the event of liquidation. What gives those rights meaning is ultimately a highly functioning, impartial, and reliable court system. That historically has been one of our great advantages competitively in the world economy. Our courts, even while plagued by persistent vacancies, lack of new authorized judgeships, and the sequester, continue to perform this vital function. Without these courts, these rights mean nothing. Without the reliable enforcement of these rights, there is no more new investment, no more new job creation, and no more new ideas successfully brought to market. We are not the only country in the world competing for investment capital and for ideas. When we under-

mine our civil courts, we are being hostile to those very investors who could help get our economy back on track.

The Federal shutdown is already slowing the resolution of civil cases involving the Federal Government. Clerks at district courts around the country have confirmed to my subcommittee that the Department of Justice is requesting continuances broadly and across-the-board and trying to juggle the demands of their caseloads with the constraints of this reckless shutdown. Think about it. Social Security appeals, civil forfeiture cases, business disputes, consumer protection cases, Medicare fraud cases, incidents of employment discrimination—they are all being pushed to the background. This shutdown is bringing new meaning to Dr. King's famous words: “Justice too long delayed is justice denied.”

Only this morning I heard from the head of Delaware's district court, chief judge Gregory Sleet. He said, in essence—no insult intended, but his observation was that Congress is letting our country down. The subcommittee also spoke with a district court clerk yesterday who said—and I thought this was particularly striking—he was glad he was nearing retirement so he could escape the dysfunction of the Federal Government and our ongoing, seemingly routine manufactured crises.

This shutdown is exacerbating what is a more profound problem—a disregard for the upkeep of our Federal judiciary. More than 90 Federal judgeships are vacant. There are 39 vacancies that are deemed “judicial emergencies.” We need to do more to support and sustain the staffing, quality, and future investment that is required to make our Federal courts work as well as they possibly can.

I wish to make a point or two in conclusion. First, one of the essential questions every district court and circuit court will face is which of its employees are essential. After all of the cuts of the sequester and all of the burdens and challenges facing our Federal Government, aren't all the employees of our Federal judicial system, this separate branch, essential? The chief judge for the Third Judicial Circuit of the United States believes so, and I agree with him. This morning he announced that nearly “all functions, with few limited exceptions, are essential” I join the chief judge of the Third Judicial Circuit and urge other circuits to follow suit and to recognize that this independent third branch of our constitutional order is essential.

Last, this shutdown has dragged morale in our courts and our court system to a new low. We in Congress are blessed with a record number of attorneys who serve in Congress. It is my hope that this body recognizes the unique value of our Federal court system. Our democracy cannot afford to furlough justice. We cannot shut the doors to our courthouses. It is my hope that Speaker BOEHNER, following the conversation unfolding at the White

House, will come back and put to the vote an action that will allow the courts and this country to get back to work.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Oklahoma.

Mr. COBURN. I understand that the order of the day is that time is divided equally until 7 o'clock, with the majority setting a limitation of 10 minutes but no limitation on the minority?

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator is correct.

Mr. COBURN. I rise to speak about the issue in front of us. I want to spend a few minutes putting things in context. I won't repeat things I have said routinely on the floor, but I think it is important for the American people to understand where we are in our country.

Using generally accepted accounting principles—these aren't my numbers—we have almost \$126 trillion in unfunded liabilities and we have \$17 trillion worth of debt. We have a lot of obligations in front of us. If we add up every asset in the United States—all the bank accounts, all the lands, all the possessions, everything we own, plus what we own outside of the United States—it comes to \$94 trillion. In essence, we are almost \$50 trillion in the hole. That is called a negative net worth.

I appreciate the comments of my colleague from Delaware. I have the greatest admiration for him. I am not one of those who think we should be in shutdown. I also am not one of those who think we should just, without any solution to our problem, raise the debt limit.

I would also note that we don't have to have a budget right now in the Senate because we agreed to the Budget Control Act, which sets the discretionary spending levels for the next 10 years in this country. They are set by law. What is important is that appropriations bills come through the committees—the House first and the Senate second—so that we can address the issues. We didn't do that in the Senate. They did about half of them in the House. We wouldn't have a continuing resolution—which, by the way, I think all of us agree is very difficult for our Federal employees to operate under.

But I wanted to make a couple of points. One is that in July of 2011, after 7 years of oversight, I put out \$9 trillion of what I think are commonsense eliminations and changes we could make that today would put us at a \$200 billion surplus instead of a \$750 billion deficit. Those savings were \$3 trillion total in discretionary spending, \$1 trillion in defense spending, \$2.7 trillion in terms of modernization of our health entitlement programs, and \$1 trillion from the Tax Code. We actually have earmarks in the Tax Code for those who are well-heeled and well-connected—a benefit—and the average American gets nothing. There are interest payment savings of \$1.3 trillion

and a 75-year solvency for the Social Security. That was put out 2½ years ago. Very little of it has been used. As a matter of fact, most people haven't read it. It was put out in a binder. We didn't print many binders because I am so tight, I don't want to print that many binders, but this is what it looks like. It is online. People may read it and see if it makes common sense. Most people won't.

I am going to spend some time outlining some of the things that came from that and some of the excesses of the Federal Government.

Most Americans know we are not efficient. They understand that we are not doing a good job spending their money, but they have no idea how bad it really is. I have actually spent the last 9 years in oversight of almost every segment of the Federal Government. None of us can be proud of the way we spend the money. Most of it is very well intentioned, honorably intentioned, with minimal oversight, minimal control, with over \$150 billion of fraud every year, and I am talking pure fraud, and with \$250 billion of real duplication—programs that do exactly the same thing, run by different agencies, with no consideration to streamline those. None of those things have been considered.

We won't even do tax reform to get rid of unemployment for millionaires. What people don't realize is we paid \$60 million out over the last 2 years to people who were making \$1 million a year. We are paying them unemployment. They hardly need the unemployment check. Yet we won't even regulate those kinds of things.

I think we have failed to do our job, and that is a Republican and Democratic thing. That is us. That is not a partisan statement.

The last time the President signed an individual spending bill into law—an individual appropriations bill—was 4 years ago. Four years ago was the last time he signed an independent appropriations bill into law. That tells you Congress hasn't done its job. We haven't passed them.

According to studies, if you poll the American people in terms of the sequester, less than one in four felt any impact at all from the sequester. And I think the sequester is a terrible way to determine spending. I voted against the Budget Control Act for that very reason, because we are not responsible enough to do the management and the oversight. But most Americans see no impact from it, and that is because in what we do there is so much waste and mismanagement. There is so much duplication, there is so much error that we could easily take that out and most people wouldn't notice it. They haven't noticed it.

Some of our Federal employees have noticed it, but the average American, 76 percent of them have never felt any impact from it whatsoever. They do not even know it happened. There has been no impact on their daily life. In-

creasing the debt limit and passing another CR isn't going to do a thing to eliminate government waste, fraud, or duplication.

It is time we kind of reassess where we are. One of the reasons I am against a debt limit increase is because it takes the pressure off Members of Congress to make the hard choices. If we raise the debt limit, that means we don't have to make the hard choices and we will run a deficit again and again. Toward the end of this decade, just 7 years from now, the deficits start climbing well above \$1 trillion again—\$1 trillion a year. Our deficit is growing twice as fast as our economy is—our debt is. It is growing twice as fast as our economy is. So we are going down in a hole.

We ought to be about—Democrats and Republicans—holding hands and saying let's stop this nonsense. Let's put some brakes on ourselves. Let's put in some limitations so we don't continue to fall prey to ducking the very difficult decisions facing this country. Households do that, businesses do it all the time. They assess where they are, they assess how deep the hole is, because nobody gives them the ability to say: You don't have to make those hard choices, we will give you more borrowing power. What they do is make those hard choices. We refuse to do so.

Another example. We just finished year end and there is this syndrome in Washington called "use it or lose it."

Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent to have printed in the RECORD an article from the Washington Post with the lead-in "As Congress fights over the budget, agencies go on their 'use it or lose it' shopping sprees."

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

[From the Washington Post, Sept. 28, 2013]
AS CONGRESS FIGHTS OVER THE BUDGET, AGENCIES GO ON THEIR "USE IT OR LOSE IT" SHOPPING SPREES

(By David A. Fahrendthold)

This past week, the Department of Veterans Affairs bought \$562,000 worth of artwork.

In a single day, the Agriculture Department spent \$144,000 on toner cartridges.

And, in a single purchase, the Coast Guard spent \$178,000 on "Cubicle Furniture Rehab."

This string of big-ticket purchases was an unmistakable sign: It was "use it or lose it" season again in Washington.

All week, while Congress fought over next year's budget, federal workers were immersed in a separate frantic drama. They were trying to spend the rest of this year's budget before it is too late.

The reason for their haste is a system set up by Congress that, in many cases, requires agencies to spend all their allotted funds by Sept. 30.

If they don't, the money becomes worthless to them on Oct. 1. And—even worse—if they fail to spend the money now, Congress could dock their funding in future years. The incentive, as always, is to spend.

So they spent. It was the return of one of Washington's oldest bad habits: a blitz of expensive decisions, made by agencies with little incentive to save.

Private contractors—worried that sequestration would result in a smaller spending

rush this year—brought in food to keep salespeople at their desks. Federal workers quizzed harried colleagues in the hallways, asking if they had spent it all yet.

"The way we budget [money] sets it up," said Sen. Tom Coburn (R-Okla.). "Because instead of being praised for not spending all your money, you get cut for not spending all your money. And so we've got a perverse incentive in there." But, Coburn said, "nobody's talking about it but me and you."

Coburn said he had meant to mention it in his floor speech Wednesday. Then, when he got to the podium, he forgot.

"Use it or lose it" season is not marked on any official government calendars. But in Washington, it is as real as Christmas. And as lucrative.

And—it appears—about as permanent. "We cannot expect our employees to believe that cost reduction efforts are serious if they see evidence of opportunistic spending in the last days of the Fiscal Year," President Lyndon B. Johnson wrote to underlings in May 1965. Even then, Johnson said an end-of-year binge was "an ancient practice—but that does not justify it or excuse it."

Today, government spending on contracts still spikes at the end of the fiscal year on Sept. 30.

In 2012, for instance, the government spent \$45 billion on contracts in the last week of September, according to calculations by the fiscal-conservative group Public Notice. That was more than any other week—9 percent of the year's contract spending money, spent in 2 percent of the year.

Much of it is spent smartly, on projects that had already gone through an extensive review.

But not all of it.

In 2010, for instance, the Internal Revenue Service had millions left over in an account to hire new personnel. The money would expire at year's end. Its solution was not a smart one.

The IRS spent the money on a lavish conference. Which included a "Star Trek" parody video starring IRS managers. Which was filmed on a "Star Trek" set that the IRS paid to build. (Sample dialogue: "We've received a distress call from the planet NoTax.")

"That is a major problem," acting IRS commissioner Daniel I. Werfel told Congress in June, explaining the role of "use it or lose it" in that debacle.

Other end-of-year mistakes are less spectacular—but they still cause problems. One recent study, for instance, found that information technology contracts signed at year's end often produced noticeably worse results than those signed in calmer times.

And late-September waste also weighs on its witnesses, federal workers. After President Obama set up an online suggestion box for federal workers, many asked to get rid of the "use it or lose it" system. They suggested "rolling over" money for use in the next year. And they listed dumb things they had seen bought: three years' worth of staples. Portable generators that never got used. One said the National Guard bought so much ammunition that firing it all became a chore.

"When you get BORED from shooting MACHINE GUNS, there is a problem," an anonymous employee wrote.

"People want to do the right thing," said Dean Sinclair, a former State Department employee who is crusading to change the system. "It's not that the federal workforce is filled with bad people. The system sort of forces them to make bad decisions."

He suggests giving bonuses to managers who return leftover money to the Treasury at year's end. "It takes time and effort to waste money," Sinclair said. "Remember that."

Obama, like presidents before him, has exhorted agencies to plan better and avoid rushed decisions at year's end. But the White House says Congress is making that job harder.

"Twenty-five percent of my business, right, will happen in this month. Twenty-five percent of my year," said Art Richer, the president of ImmixGroup, a contractor in Tysons Corner that helps software and computing companies seeking government business.

September in Washington used to be a time for selling face to face. Contractors visited the Pentagon. Small-town mayors queued up in the hallways at the Commerce Department, waiting to make a late-night pitch for grants.

But those buildings are off-limits now. So you sell from your desk. You sell with your voice. You sell with empathy, for the poor harried bureaucrat on the other end of the line. "Answer the phone smiling," Richer tells his people.

Of course, the feds were stressed.

"We see them in the hallway, and you go, 'How much money are we going to lose?'" one Army officer said this past week. That officer was involved in setting budgets for future years, and the meaning was clear: How much money are you not going to spend? Whatever that number was, it would be taken out of budgets for fiscal 2015, too.

This is not normal math. But this was not a normal time in Washington: You didn't save money to spend it later. You spent now, to spend later. "They know they're under the gun," the officer said, who spoke anonymously to talk about internal budgeting discussions.

On Monday, Immix began bringing its sales team three catered meals a day. If workers walked to Subway, they might lose a sale. On that day, Immix handled \$16 million in business. A normal Monday is about \$2 million.

Across the government, agencies were making big-ticket purchases—buying things with this year's money that could be used next year.

On Monday, VA paid \$27,000 for an order of photographs showing sunsets, mountain peaks and country roads. They would go into a new center serving homeless veterans in Los Angeles; a spokeswoman described the art as "motivational and calming, professionally designed to enhance clinical operations."

On Tuesday, the USDA bought \$127,000 worth of toner cartridges ("end of year," the order explained). VA spent another \$220,000 on artwork for its hospitals.

On Wednesday, the Coast Guard paid \$178,000 for cubicle furniture, replacing high-walled cubes with low-walled ones to improve the air flow in a large office area.

"Other higher-priority projects were not able to be executed, so they moved [money] to this lower-priority project" before the year's end, said Coast Guard spokesman Carlos Diaz. "The money was going to be spent anyway."

On Thursday, VA was buying art again. It spent \$216,000 on artwork for a facility in Florida. In all, preliminary data showed that the agency made at least 18 percent of all its art purchases for the year in this one week. One-sixth of the buying in one 52nd of the year.

On Friday, the end was in sight.

"I feel good. Four days, right?" said Corey Forshee, a contracting officer at Joint Base Andrews in Maryland. Forshee was part of a team at Andrews that had done its best to beat the September rush.

The commander, trying to avoid a last-week rush, set his own deadline of Sept. 20. The pizza came early. The chaplain's office

visited early ("use it or lose it" season is traditionally stressful enough to get the chaplain involved). The buying was nearly done.

Now, they had to wait for the last act of the last act: the "fall-out money."

This was cash that other parts of the Air Force had not been able to spend. It would be redistributed to this office at the last minute.

"We're waiting for money for that," Forshee said, going down a list of unfunded projects. A roof for the workout area. A bathroom renovation. "Just waiting for money," he repeated.

Across Washington, everybody had to wait.

"It's going to come down to Monday," said Richer, at ImmixGroup. On Friday, he said his sales had been about equal to last year's, despite worries about sequestration.

On Monday, Richer's people will sell until midnight. Then they will keep selling. "Money rolls across the continent," the feds say. Cash not spent in Washington might be spent by federal offices in California in the three hours before it is midnight there.

When it is midnight in California—3 a.m. in Washington—they will keep on. There are federal offices in Hawaii, after all. And it will still be three hours until midnight there.

Mr. COBURN. Let me give the American people a little taste of what we spent in the last week.

In the last week, the State Department spent \$5 million on new glassware for all our embassies. Was that something we needed to do? No. Was it an absolute requirement that we couldn't operate our embassies without another \$5 million worth of glassware? No. The State Department had \$5 million, and if they didn't spend it, they would be accused of not needing all their money. So they spent \$5 million on something that was not absolutely necessary.

In the last week, VA spent more than \$560,000 on artwork. As a matter of fact, in the last 2 days. I mean, we are bankrupt. We are running three-quarters of a trillion dollar deficit and we are going to buy a half million dollars worth of artwork because if we don't spend it on something we won't get it next year? Where does that fit in with any common sense? Where does that fit with the integrity or the honor that will preserve the future of our country? It doesn't. We have to change that.

We have not done things that incentivize Federal employees not to spend it and we will give you part of it next year for your budget and the rest of it against the debt our kids will have.

The Coast Guard, in the last day, spent \$178,000 on cubicle furniture rehab. They signed a contract on the last day and sent the check out the door. It may be it needed to be rehabbed, but they made sure they got it in this year to consume the money.

The Agriculture Department, in 1 day, spent \$144,000 on toner cartridges. Think about it—\$144,000. These are all small amounts relative to Washington numbers, but the principle is exactly the same.

On the night before the government closed, the last day of the fiscal year, the Pentagon awarded 94 contracts

right before midnight. I can't get the information on what they were yet, but I will. I will find out if they were necessary, if it is something that we needed to have in light of our debt and our dysfunction.

They also spent \$5 billion on everything from robot submarines, Finnish hand grenades only hours before the closing of the fiscal year. So they spent the money, not saying it was a priority, other than it was a priority to spend all the money we have because we are afraid we might not get enough money next year.

The Defense Logistics Agency spent \$65 million for military helmets on the last day, \$24 million for traveling wave tubes to amplify radio signals.

How do we think the hundreds of thousands of people who are furloughed right now feel about us spending money that way when that could be paying them and they could be working?

We are sick. We need a wakeup call.

Let me cite a couple others from the Department of Defense just to show you how parochialism plays into this. Twelve brandnew—brandnew—airplanes, C-27J Spartans, were delivered right before the end of the year. Guess where they are. They are in mothballs in Arizona in the desert because we don't need them. But we spent \$567 million for something we didn't need. So what do we do? We store them in the desert because the humidity is so low. So we take them right off the manufacturing line and fly them right to storage. They are not needed.

We have the same problem on the C-27As in Afghanistan. We spent \$596 million for those. We finally canceled the contracts because the supplier couldn't supply the spare parts. And you know what the military is getting ready to do, rather than bringing them home or giving them to somebody else? They are getting ready to cut them into pieces in Afghanistan—½ billion worth of airplanes.

Where is common sense in this country? Why wouldn't we think about maybe selling them to somebody else and getting some of our value back? But we are thinking about cutting them up.

Then there is the M1A1 Abrams tank. We had testimony from Secretary of the Army John McHugh saying this is the most modern piece of equipment the military has. Its average age is less than 2½ years old. We don't need any more M1A1 Abrams tanks, but they are still being produced this year to the tune of \$3 billion so we can keep people employed in a factory making something we don't need.

Isn't that wonderful? Isn't that a great way to steal the future of your kids? But I am sure the politicians where they are made are very happy we are continuing to buy something we don't need because it helps the economy in their area.

Despite the sequester, the National Science Foundation is still funding

hundreds of products and studies that do not fit with common sense or a priority. Even if they fit with common sense, they do not fit the priority of where we find ourselves financially.

The Department of Agriculture grants that were announced in the last week before we shut down, before we went to the next fiscal year and don't have a continuing CR—let me read this and see if you think this is how we should be spending our money: 35 wine-tasting projects, wine trail smart phone apps. We are going to supply the money for these. The Federal Government is going to supply the money for these so you can have a good time when you go to whatever vineyard it is. We are going to take Federal taxpayer money.

Those are private businesses. Yet we are spending our grandchildren's money on that?

Four Christmas tree initiatives: Virginia Christmas trees, Michigan Christmas trees; training seminars on how you sell Christmas trees.

You know, Christmas trees are in pretty good demand around Christmas. I am not sure you are going to markedly increase the demand for Christmas trees by learning how to sell them better.

The USA pear road show to China; social media for apples, radio advertisements—paid for by the Federal Government—for blueberries from New Jersey, strawberries, organizing a maple weekend in the state of our Presiding Officer—Massachusetts.

We are spending our grandkids' money, money we are borrowing, to do things that are not a priority. They may be a priority to those folks who get the money, but in terms of our national priorities, they are not anywhere close.

Other examples of ongoing government waste and duplication not eliminated but instead funded by the CR: \$30 billion for 47 job training programs that aren't working. They are not working. The GAO says they are not working, we know they are not working, and all of them duplicate one another except for three. But we are continuing to spend \$30 billion a year on them.

The House has passed a skills act which consolidated all of them. We won't even take it up over here. We won't even look at it. It would save us about \$7 billion or \$8 billion a year. They read the GAO report, they acted on it, but we won't.

We have 20 Federal programs across 12 different Federal agencies and offices for the study of invasive species. I think we ought to study invasive species, but I don't think we need 12 different Federal agencies involved in it. And I don't think we need 20 programs on it.

I mentioned the unemployment for millionaires. That is in the CR. We didn't do anything to fix that.

There is \$30 million for 15 different financial literacy programs at 15 dif-

ferent agencies. We just created a new one at the Consumer Financial Protection Bureau. Rather than eliminate the ones that are not working, we are creating more of them.

There is \$947,000 in the NASA budget to talk about foods that can be eaten on Mars. We are 30 years away from going to Mars. Yet we are going to spend \$1 million of taxpayer money we don't have to think about foods we might eat 30 years from now on Mars? I don't think that is a priority for us right now.

There is \$3 billion on 209 science, technology, engineering, and math programs at 13 different agencies. Think about that. We all know we need to get it together when it comes to education in our technical and scientific areas. But why would we have this many—209—programs, with 209 different sets of administrators and 209 sets of reporting?

There is billions of dollars in bonuses and Federal payments to contractors who fail to pay their own taxes. We have tried to pass in here multiple times that if you are a contractor with the Federal Government and you are not paying your taxes, you are either going to lose your contract or that tax debt is going to be reduced from what we pay you. But we can't get that through. So people who aren't carrying their fair share are still reaping the benefits of contracting with the Federal Government even though they are tax cheats.

Here is one small one, but this one really gets me. It is bigger than you would think. We have an agency that spends \$66 million a year. It is the NTIS. I asked GAO to study them. They studied them. In their report this year, GAO explained there is an office in the Department of Commerce, which is this office, that sells reports to other agencies.

When we had GAO study this, we found 74 percent of the reports they sell to other agencies you can get from this one Web site for free. Their budget hasn't gone down, it has expanded. But the need for the agency is going away. So why are we continuing to spend \$66 million—which is what we directly spend and doesn't count what they collect from all the other agencies—for only 26 percent of the information that is not available other than at Google? It makes no sense. It is called the National Technical Information Service, and it was established in 1950, tasked with collecting and distributing certain reports.

GAO noticed this 10 years ago; they noticed it again now. Congress has done nothing. What GAO estimates is 621,917 of the 841,000 reports this agency puts out are available for free on the Internet. Go to Google and every American can find it for free. All the agencies that are paying can find it for free. But we haven't eliminated this agency.

I will stop with that, and I will make a couple points.

It is wonderful that we have a difference of opinion in the Congress, but we can't have a difference of opinion about where this country is headed. We are bankrupt. People don't like to say that word. This is America; we couldn't be bankrupt. But from a balance sheet standpoint and from an income sheet standpoint, we are bankrupt.

So what are the American people to do about this? Are we to continue to spend money every year to the tune of \$500 billion to \$1 trillion and not make the tough choices or should we do something about it? Should there be a resolution to this addition of spending money we don't have on things we don't need?

As a physician, for every person I have ever encountered who had an addiction, the first step in confronting that addiction is to recognize the reality of the addiction. Quite frankly, Members of Congress haven't done that. The American people have. They are figuring it out.

The reason I know we haven't recognized the addiction and we are not worried—we can say our debt can be such a percentage of GDP. We don't have to live within our means. We can handle it as long as we don't get above a certain percentage. That is the rationalization of an enabler in a family who allows somebody to continue to be addicted.

Every addiction needs a 12-step program, and the first step is recognizing that we are addicted. And we are. So one of the things the American people are starting to ask about us, given that we can't even pass a CR—and we are going to pass a debt limit increase and not make any of the hard choices. They won't be made this year. They won't be made next year. The only time we are going to make the hard choices is when the international financial community forces us to make those.

But what Americans are asking now, the confidence is so low, is who decides? Do we really represent their thoughts about spending, about priorities, about waste?

If we recognize that all this is there—these trillions and trillions of dollars over 10 years that could be changed without any marked impact on America, and we don't do anything about it—what they are asking is who is deciding? Who decides? Do I represent my constituents if I won't try to change these things?

The confidence level in us, as reflected in the polls, and when you talk to anybody, is they don't have any confidence in us because we won't admit to our addiction, come together, get on the wagon and solve the addiction.

A long time ago in this body I said there was a rumble out in America. It wasn't long after that the tea party came along. I know they are thought about with some disdain. They are not crazy. What they have done is lost confidence and they want something changed. But it is not just the tea party anymore. It doesn't matter your

political persuasion. They think we don't get it, that we are not willing to make the sacrifices of our own political careers to solve the problems. What we need to be doing, in my opinion—and my prescription for us is, American people, don't let us get out of the box by letting us raise again the shackles that are going to be increased by increasing the debt in this country. Because if we do—and we will—what will happen is we won't perform. We won't make the tough decisions. We won't make the sacrifices. There will be no sacrificial leadership on the part of Members of Congress. Their sacrifice will be, How do I get reelected, rather than I don't care if I lose; our country needs to be fixed, and we need to be about addressing that even if it costs me a political position.

When it is all said and done and America has blown through and we see the real results of our profligate spending and the hyperinflation and the marked decrease in the standard of living in this country, what they are going to remember about us is there was a challenge and we didn't rise to it. We didn't rise to the occasion. We saw short term and we forgot and ignored the long-term consequences of our actions.

My hope is that will change on both sides of the aisle; that we would truly embrace a long-term picture and recognize the tremendous difficulty. We have heard all this talk about how we have to raise the debt limit; otherwise, we are going to default. We are not going to default on our bonds, ever. It requires less than 7 percent of our total cashflow that comes into this country. We use that as a scare tactic.

I am not saying we should necessarily not increase the debt ceiling, but we sure shouldn't increase it until we have made a commitment that we are going to solve the problem, because we will be back here in 1½ years doing exactly the same thing with exactly the same excuses that say why we can't.

What America is wanting to hear from us is why we can. They are not wanting to hear about division. They are wanting to hear about unity. They are wanting to hear about what pulls our country together rather than tear it down. The best way to show them is that we are serious about solving this problem. I hope that is so.

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

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. FRANKEN). Without objection, it is so ordered.

Mr. BOOZMAN. 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. BOOZMAN. Mr. President, this past weekend I was with a group of heroes from the "greatest generation." These men and women faced some of the biggest challenges our Nation has seen. They put aside their own needs to

make the country and the world a better place.

These World War II veterans from Arkansas were flown in on an Honor Flight to see their memorial. They didn't have much to say to me personally about the shutdown. We talked about it, but talked more about the branch of the service they were in, what they did during the war, and the various things that happened to them during that period—and, of course, about Razorback football. We didn't have to spend and take time to visit a great deal about the shutdown for me to know their thoughts. Their presence alone was enough of a reminder that we need to solve this issue.

As the shutdown drags on, it spills into the debt ceiling discussion. These are two major issues with very serious impacts if left unresolved.

To everyone outside of the Beltway, it seems both sides are digging their heels in deeper, both sides are ratcheting up the rhetoric, and nothing is getting done. The American people are tired of this. Dismissing the other side's offers without consideration and trading barbs do not help out one bit. No one is being asked to abandon their principles. What needs to happen, however, is both sides must respect the will of the American people.

We must find a way to do what the public demands—reopen the government and get our spending under control. The President and the Senate majority want to say that their health care law is an entirely separate issue from this debate. That is simply untrue. It is not the way Americans see it. One major reason the American people are rejecting it is because of its budget-busting pricetag. We have a budget that can't be strained any further. Our debt stands at almost \$17 trillion, and \$6 trillion of that has been added on President Obama's watch. You can't take on that much debt and pretend it is not a problem. Americans do not have the luxury of telling their credit card company to stop calling because they do not want to pay the debt that they racked up.

This mess could be avoided if we simply followed regular order here in Washington, but we have not done that in 10 years. What I mean by that is during my time in the Senate we have passed one individual appropriations bill prior to the end of the previous fiscal year. We didn't consider a single appropriations bill on the Senate floor last year. Let's return to regular order by passing an annual budget and the accompanying spending bills, not one large bill.

The good news is that many Members on both sides believe we simply need to get that done. But that doesn't get us out of our current mess. We have to get the government operating again, and we have to avoid a default.

Impassioned debates on major decisions like raising the debt ceiling in the past have resulted in positive policy changes. In fact, half of the 53

times Congress has agreed to raise the debt ceiling since 1978, they have attached conditions to it. The Gramm-Rudman act is a perfect example. We talked a lot about the need to cap spending in Washington. Gramm-Rudman actually did that, and it led to a balanced budget. Even the situation we are currently in with the Budget Control Act was born out of this type of constraint. Some in the Chamber still are not happy with that, but the Budget Control Act is the first time in a long time that we have managed to curb the growth in Washington spending.

Anyone who has ever bought a house or a car can tell you that it takes some time to reach a mutually beneficial agreement. There is lots of haggling involved. The owner says here is what it costs. The consumer makes an offer in return. This brings a counteroffer and so on. This continues until both parties reach an agreement where everyone is satisfied.

But the key to this process is that both parties have to engage in the discussion. Everybody needs to come to the table. It is simply not enough to say this is where I stand and I will not take any other options into consideration. I am fairly certain you will never buy a house with that approach.

The good news is it seems we are heading in a positive direction. I believe there is movement toward a consensus. At the very least, both sides seem to be coming out of their respective corners and discussing their options. We need everyone to come to the table, to develop a way forward that puts us on the path to fiscal responsibility. These discussions serve as a starting point for how to rein in reckless spending so we can eliminate the blank check, the philosophy that has become so pervasive in this town.

If we need inspiration to solve this problem, the men and the women I visited with at the World War II Memorial this past weekend are a perfect place to look. They have accurately been named the "greatest generation" in part for their willingness to take on enormous challenges because it was the right thing to do.

We have an enormous challenge in front of us now. Let's follow the inspiration of the "greatest generation." Let's put our country before ourselves and solve this problem.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The assistant bill clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

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

CLOTURE MOTION

Mr. REID. Mr. President, with the Presiding Officer's permission, I ask the clerk to report the cloture motion I have filed.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The cloture motion having been presented

under rule XXII, the Chair directs the clerk to read the motion.

The legislative clerk read as follows:

CLOTURE MOTION

We, the undersigned Senators, in accordance with the provisions of rule XXII of the Standing Rules of the Senate, hereby move to bring to a close debate on the motion to proceed to S. 1569, a bill to ensure the complete and timely payment of the obligations of the United States Government until December 31, 2014.

Harry Reid, Max Baucus, Patty Murray, Charles E. Schumer, Richard J. Durbin, Barbara A. Mikulski, Sheldon Whitehouse, Mark Udall, Bill Nelson, Barbara Boxer, Jon Tester, Brian Schatz, Benjamin L. Cardin, Kirsten E. Gillibrand, Maria Cantwell, Tim Kaine, Elizabeth Warren.

Mr. REID. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the mandatory quorum required under rule XXII be waived.

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

MORNING BUSINESS

Mr. REID. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that we proceed to a period of morning business with Senators permitted to speak for up to 10 minutes each.

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

NAVY CELEBRATIONS

Mr. CARDIN. Mr. President, on October 13, 1775, Congress enacted legislation providing for the outfitting of America's first two warships, manned by crews of 80, to be sent out on a 3-month cruise. Their mission was to intercept transports carrying munitions and supplies to the British army in America. Navy missions have evolved significantly over the last 238 years; however, the essential role America's maritime forces play in defending our Nation and allowing prosperity to flourish is unchanged. The United States Navy has the finest men and women in uniform on, above, and below the high seas safeguarding America's interests at home and around the globe.

This Sunday we celebrate the U.S. Navy's 238th birthday. We remember the great sacrifices made by sailors who came before, we mourn those we lost along the way, we celebrate their successes and we applaud the new generation of sailors serving our great Nation today. The United States Navy is comprised of over 323,000 active duty sailors, over 109,000 on ready reserve, and a civilian force around 201,000. The United States Navy cannot exist without the commitment of its active duty, reserve and civilian forces, in addition to the support of Navy families. The sacrifices made by over 630,000 proud men and women serving the Navy provide the freedoms all Americans enjoy daily; freedoms paid for by those in uniform, many who are aboard the 102 ships deployed around the world as I

speak right now, serving on the front lines in defense of freedom.

There are no finer men and women in uniform anywhere in the world than those who serve the United States Navy. Today, the value of having a strong naval power cannot be underestimated; 70 percent of the Earth's surface is covered by water and 90 percent of international trade travels by the sea, which means our sailors need to be 100 percent on watch. No other branch of the military conducts missions on all fronts like the Navy does. The seas are America's lifeline; our Navy protects vital shipping lanes ensuring prosperity and free trade for our Nation and our friends abroad. The Navy is essential in protecting our Nation's cyber security at a time when, according to former Chief of Naval Operations Admiral Gary Roughead, 95 percent of digital information is traveling on cables at the bottom of the seas. Our national security is ever-dependent on our Nation's sea power. For each of these reasons and more, the United States Navy deserves our thanks and admiration.

I must also pay tribute as today marks the 168th anniversary of the United States Naval Academy. When Secretary of the Navy George Bancroft founded the Academy in Annapolis, MD, I think he could only dream that it would continue to inspire and help create the high caliber graduates it does today. I truly must commend those graduates and their brothers and sisters serving in arms. The incredible flexibility and can-do attitude of the Navy were instrumental to the withdrawal of military forces in Iraq and the drawdown of military forces in Afghanistan. From the Seabees to the Navy Seals, the entirety of the Department of the Navy is integral to securing our national defense around the world.

Artfully inscribed above the chapel doors at the Naval Academy are the Latin words "non sibi sed patriae." Though the Navy has no official motto, these words, translated as "not for self but country," encapsulate the sacrifice and dedication of our amazing Navy Men and Women serving across the globe today so that our society may be free. The real strength of our Navy is not the ships or weapons or technology at our disposal, but the highly trained, motivated, and professional sailors who make our Navy the envy of the world. For 238 years, the U.S. Navy has witnessed many changes in missions, in geopolitics, and in technology. But in all that time, the one thing that has not changed is the importance of quality people, for it is the sailors who make it all happen, and who make the real difference in a Navy's effectiveness. To all who serve: thank you for your continued vigilance. Let us remember our Navy sailors and Naval Academy midshipmen for their historic achievements in defense of our Nation and in defense of freedom, and wish them a happy birthday.

ADDITIONAL STATEMENTS

TRIBUTE TO MAJOR CHARLES H. CANNON

• Mr. CHAMBLISS. Mr. President, I wish to pay tribute to my constituent MAJ Charles H. Cannon for his exemplary dedication to duty and his service to the U.S. Army and to the United States of America. Major Cannon will depart from Active military duty in 2013 but will continue to serve in the National Guard in our great State of Georgia. He has served for the last 2 years as a congressional budget liaison for the Secretary of the Army.

A native of Moultrie, GA, Major Cannon left his family's 2,000-acre farm to become a cadet at the U.S. Military Academy at West Point in 1997. While there, Chas played for the Army football team and earned a bachelor's degree in systems engineering. He was commissioned as a field artillery officer in June of 2001, just 3 months before the horrific attacks on September 11 that would shape the rest of his active duty career.

Major Cannon's assignments have been diverse. While a lieutenant, he served in C Battery, 1-10 Field Artillery Battalion as a fire direction officer, platoon leader, and executive officer. His first deployment was with them during the ground invasion of Operation Iraqi Freedom. After promotion to captain, he served in 2-69 Armor Battalion as a staff officer during his second deployment to Diyala, Iraq. Eleven months later, as part of the surge, Chas returned to East Baghdad, Iraq for a 15-month deployment as the commander of A Battery, 1-10 Field Artillery Battalion.

After returning from his third deployment, Major Cannon earned a master of professional studies in legislative affairs from The George Washington University. He was then assigned as a congressional fellow in my office with a subsequent assignment as a legislative strategist in the office of the Chief of Legislative liaison and then as a budget liaison officer in the office of the Assistant Secretary of the Army for Financial Management and Comptroller, where he was tasked with managing the Army's wheeled and tracked vehicle portfolio.

Major Cannon's leadership throughout his career has positively impacted his soldiers, peers, and superiors. As a budget liaison officer he worked directly with the Senate and House Appropriations Committees to educate and inform Senators, Representatives, and staff about many diverse and important procurement initiatives of the U.S. Army.

On behalf of a grateful nation, I join my colleagues today in recognizing and commending MAJ Chas Cannon for over a decade of active service to his country. We wish Chas, his wife Beth, and their two little girls, Allie and Catherine, all the best as they continue their journey of service in the Georgia National Guard.●

MESSAGE FROM THE HOUSE

At 6:26 p.m., a message from the House of Representatives, delivered by Mr. Novotny, one of its reading clerks, announced that the Speaker of the House of Representatives has signed the following enrolled bill:

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.

The enrolled joint resolution was signed subsequently by the President pro tempore (Mr. LEAHY).

MEASURES PLACED ON THE CALENDAR

The following joint resolutions were read the second time, and placed on the calendar:

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.

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.

REPORTS OF COMMITTEES

The following reports of committees were submitted:

By Mr. MENENDEZ, from the Committee on Foreign Relations, with an amendment in the nature of a substitute:

S. 120. A bill to expand the number of scholarships available to Pakistani women under the Merit and Needs-Based Scholarship Program.

INTRODUCTION OF BILLS AND JOINT RESOLUTIONS

The following bills and joint resolutions were introduced, read the first and second times by unanimous consent, and referred as indicated:

By Ms. MURKOWSKI (for herself, Mr. BEGICH, Mr. UDALL of New Mexico, and Mr. SCHATZ):

S. 1570. A bill to amend the Indian Health Care Improvement Act to authorize advance appropriations for the Indian Health Service by providing 2-fiscal-year budget authority, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Indian Affairs.

By Ms. CANTWELL (for herself and Mr. BEGICH):

S.J. Res. 24. A joint resolution to amend the Department of Defense Survivor Benefits Continuing Appropriations Resolution, 2014 to make continuing appropriations for death gratuities and related survivor benefits for survivors of deceased members of the Coast Guard; to the Committee on Appropriations.

ADDITIONAL COSPONSORS

S. 116

At the request of Mr. REED, the names of the Senator from Indiana (Mr. DONNELLY) and the Senator from Hawaii (Mr. SCHATZ) were added as cosponsors of S. 116, a bill to revise and extend provisions under the Garrett Lee Smith Memorial Act.

S. 232

At the request of Mr. HATCH, the name of the Senator from New Hampshire (Mrs. SHAHEEN) was added as a cosponsor of S. 232, a bill to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to repeal the excise tax on medical devices.

S. 583

At the request of Mr. PAUL, the name of the Senator from Kansas (Mr. ROBERTS) was added as a cosponsor of S. 583, a bill to implement equal protection under the 14th article of amendment to the Constitution for the right to life of each born and preborn human person.

S. 669

At the request of Mr. ISAKSON, the name of the Senator from Mississippi (Mr. COCHRAN) was added as a cosponsor of S. 669, a bill to make permanent the Internal Revenue Service Free File program.

S. 932

At the request of Mr. BEGICH, the name of the Senator from Alaska (Ms. MURKOWSKI) was added as a cosponsor of S. 932, a bill to amend title 38, United States Code, to provide for advance appropriations for certain discretionary accounts of the Department of Veterans Affairs.

S. 1011

At the request of Mr. JOHANNES, the names of the Senator from New Hampshire (Ms. AYOTTE) and the Senator from Arkansas (Mr. BOOZMAN) were added as cosponsors of S. 1011, a bill to require the Secretary of the Treasury to mint coins in commemoration of the centennial of Boys Town, and for other purposes.

S. 1564

At the request of Ms. COLLINS, her name was added as a cosponsor of S. 1564, a bill making continuing appropriations for veterans benefits and services in the event of a Government shutdown.

AMENDMENTS SUBMITTED AND PROPOSED

SA 2000. Mr. HELLER submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by him to the bill S. 1569, to ensure the complete and timely payment of the obligations of the United States Government until December 31, 2014; which was ordered to lie on the table.

SA 2001. Mr. REID (for Mr. CARPER (for himself and Mr. COBURN)) proposed an amendment to the bill S. 1276, to increase oversight of the Revolving Fund of the Office of Personnel Management.

SA 2002. Mr. REID (for Mr. LEVIN) proposed an amendment to the concurrent resolution H. Con. Res. 58, expressing the sense of Congress regarding the need for the continued

availability of religious services to members of the Armed Forces and their families during a lapse in appropriations.

SA 2003. Mr. REID (for Mr. LEVIN) proposed an amendment to the concurrent resolution H. Con. Res. 58, supra.

TEXT OF AMENDMENTS

SA 2000. Mr. HELLER submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by him to the bill S. 1569, to ensure the complete and timely payment of the obligations of the United States Government until December 31, 2014; which was ordered to lie on the table; as follows:

At the appropriate place, insert the following:

SEC. _____. NO BUDGET, NO PAY.

(a) SHORT TITLE.—This section may be cited as the “No Budget, No Pay Act”.

(b) DEFINITION.—In this section, the term “Member of Congress” —

(1) has the meaning given under section 2106 of title 5, United States Code; and

(2) does not include the Vice President.

(c) TIMELY APPROVAL OF CONCURRENT RESOLUTION ON THE BUDGET AND THE APPROPRIATIONS BILLS.—If both Houses of Congress have not approved a concurrent resolution on the budget as described under section 301 of the Congressional Budget and Impoundment Control Act of 1974 (2 U.S.C. 632) for a fiscal year before October 1 of that fiscal year and have not passed all the regular appropriations bills for the next fiscal year before October 1 of that fiscal year, the pay of each Member of Congress may not be paid for each day following that October 1 until the date on which both Houses of Congress approve a concurrent resolution on the budget for that fiscal year and all the regular appropriations bills.

(d) NO PAY WITHOUT CONCURRENT RESOLUTION ON THE BUDGET AND THE APPROPRIATIONS BILLS.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—Notwithstanding any other provision of law, no funds may be appropriated or otherwise be made available from the Treasury of the United States for the pay of any Member of Congress during any period determined by the Chairmen of the Committee on the Budget and the Committee on Appropriations of the Senate or the Chairmen of the Committee on the Budget and the Committee on Appropriations of the House of Representatives under subsection (e).

(2) NO RETROACTIVE PAY.—A Member of Congress may not receive pay for any period determined by the Chairmen of the Committee on the Budget and the Committee on Appropriations of the Senate or the Chairmen of the Committee on the Budget and the Committee on Appropriations of the House of Representatives under subsection (e), at any time after the end of that period.

(e) DETERMINATIONS.—

(1) SENATE.—

(A) REQUEST FOR CERTIFICATIONS.—On October 1 of each year, the Secretary of the Senate shall submit a request to the Chairmen of the Committee on the Budget and the Committee on Appropriations of the Senate for certification of determinations made under subparagraph (B) (i) and (ii).

(B) DETERMINATIONS.—The Chairmen of the Committee on the Budget and the Committee on Appropriations of the Senate shall—

(i) on October 1 of each year, make a determination of whether Congress is in compliance with subsection (c) and whether Senators may not be paid under that subsection;

(ii) determine the period of days following each October 1 that Senators may not be paid under subsection (c); and

(iii) provide timely certification of the determinations under clauses (i) and (ii) upon the request of the Secretary of the Senate.

(2) HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES.—

(A) REQUEST FOR CERTIFICATIONS.—On October 1 of each year, the Chief Administrative Officer of the House of Representatives shall submit a request to the Chairmen of the Committee on the Budget and the Committee on Appropriations of the House of Representatives for certification of determinations made under subparagraph (B) (i) and (ii).

(B) DETERMINATIONS.—The Chairmen of the Committee on the Budget and the Committee on Appropriations of the House of Representatives shall—

(i) on October 1 of each year, make a determination of whether Congress is in compliance with subsection (c) and whether Members of the House of Representatives may not be paid under that subsection;

(ii) determine the period of days following each October 1 that Members of the House of Representatives may not be paid under subsection (c); and

(iii) provide timely certification of the determinations under clauses (i) and (ii) upon the request of the Chief Administrative Officer of the House of Representatives.

(f) EFFECTIVE DATE.—This section shall take effect on February 1, 2015.

SA 2001. Mr. REID (for Mr. CARPER (for himself and Mr. COBURN)) proposed an amendment to the bill S. 1276, to increase oversight of the Revolving Fund of the Office of Personnel Management; as follows:

Amend the title so as to read: “A bill to increase oversight of the Revolving Fund of the Office of Personnel Management.”.

SA 2002. Mr. REID (for Mr. LEVIN) proposed an amendment to the concurrent resolution H. Con. Res. 58, expressing the sense of Congress regarding the need for the continued availability of religious services to members of the Armed Forces and their families during a lapse in appropriations; as follows:

On page 2, strike line 3 and all that follows through page 3, line 2, and insert the following:

(1) finds that the provision and availability of religious services and clergy is important to the morale and wellbeing of many members of the Armed Forces and their families; and

(2) hopes the Secretary of Defense is able to determine that contractor clergy provide necessary support to military personnel, and would therefore be covered under the appropriations made available under the Pay Our Military Act (Public Law 113-39).

SA 2003. Mr. REID (for Mr. LEVIN) proposed an amendment to the concurrent resolution H. Con. Res. 58, expressing the sense of Congress regarding the need for the continued availability of religious services to members of the Armed Forces and their families during a lapse in appropriations; as follows:

Strike the preamble and insert the following:

Whereas the Department of Defense determined that some contractor clergy, like other Department of Defense contractors, were unable to perform their contractual duties during the current lapse in appropriations;

Whereas this determination may have impacted the ability of members of the Armed Forces and their families to worship and participate in religious activities;

Whereas military chaplains on active duty, like all military personnel on active duty, continue to perform their duties during the current lapse in appropriations;

Whereas the Department continues to analyze its authorities under the Pay Our Military Act (Public Law 113-39) with respect to contractors; and

Whereas the Pay Our Military Act appropriates such sums as are necessary to pay contractors of the Department whom the Secretary of Defense determines are providing support to members of the Armed Forces: Now, therefore, be it

AUTHORITY FOR COMMITTEES TO MEET

COMMITTEE ON ARMED SERVICES

Mr. UDALL of Colorado. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Committee on Armed Services be authorized to meet during the session of the Senate on October 10, 2013, at 9:30 a.m.

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

COMMITTEE ON BANKING, HOUSING, AND URBAN AFFAIRS

Mr. UDALL of Colorado. 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 10, 2013, at 10 a.m., to conduct a hearing entitled “Impact of a Default on Financial Stability and Economic Growth.”

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

COMMITTEE ON FINANCE

Mr. UDALL of Colorado. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Committee on Finance be authorized to meet during the session of the Senate on October 10, 2013, at 8 a.m., in room SH-216 of the Hart Senate Office Building, to conduct a hearing entitled “The Debt Limit.”

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

SELECT COMMITTEE ON INTELLIGENCE

Mr. UDALL of Colorado. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Select Committee on Intelligence be authorized to meet during the session of the Senate on October 10, 2013, at 2:30 p.m.

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

SECURITY CLEARANCE OVERSIGHT AND REFORM ENHANCEMENT ACT

Mr. REID. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate proceed to Calendar No. 199, S. 1276.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report the bill by title.

The legislative clerk read as follows:

A bill (S. 1276) to increase oversight of the Revolving Fund of the Office of Personnel Management, strengthen the authority to terminate or debar employees and contractors involved in misconduct affecting the in-

tegrity of security clearance background investigations, enhance transparency regarding the criteria utilized by Federal departments and agencies to determine when a security clearance is required, and so forth and for other purposes.

There being no objection, the Senate proceeded to consider the bill, which had been reported from the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs, with an amendment to strike all after the enacting clause and insert in lieu thereof the following:

SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.

This Act may be cited as the “Security Clearance Oversight and Reform Enhancement Act”.

SEC. 2. OVERSIGHT OF THE REVOLVING FUND OF THE OFFICE OF PERSONNEL MANAGEMENT.

Section 1304(e) of title 5, United States Code, is amended—

(1) in paragraph (1), in the first sentence, by inserting before the period the following: “, and for the cost of audits, investigations, and oversight activities relating to the fund and the functions financed by the fund, conducted by the Inspector General of the Office”; and

(2) in paragraph (5), by adding at the end the following: “Each budget submitted under this paragraph shall include an estimate from the Inspector General of the Office of the amount required to pay the reasonable expenses to adequately audit, investigate, and perform other oversight activities relating to the fund and the functions financed by the fund for the applicable fiscal year, which shall not exceed 0.33 percent of the total budgetary authority requested in the budget estimates submitted to Congress by the Office for that fiscal year.”.

Mr. REID. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the committee-reported substitute amendment be agreed to, the bill, as amended, be read a third time and passed, the Carper title amendment, which is at the desk, be agreed to, and the motions to reconsider be laid upon the table with no intervening action or debate.

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

The committee amendment in the nature of a substitute was agreed to.

The bill (S. 1276), as amended, was ordered to be engrossed for a third reading, was read the third time, and passed.

The amendment (No. 2001) was agreed to, as follows:

(Purpose: To amend the title)

Amend the title so as to read: “A bill to increase oversight of the Revolving Fund of the Office of Personnel Management.”.

CONTINUING RELIGIOUS SERVICES TO MEMBERS AND FAMILIES OF THE ARMED FORCES

Mr. REID. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate proceed to H. Con. Res. 58.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report the concurrent resolution by title.

The legislative clerk read as follows:

A concurrent resolution (H. Con. Res. 58) expressing the sense of Congress regarding the need for the continued availability of religious services to members of the Armed Forces and their families during a lapse in appropriations.

There being no objection, the Senate proceeded to consider the concurrent resolution.

Mr. REID. I ask unanimous consent that the Levin amendment to the concurrent resolution, which is at the desk, be agreed to; the concurrent resolution, as amended, be agreed to; that a Levin amendment to the preamble, which is at the desk, be agreed to; the preamble, as amended, be agreed to; and the motions to reconsider be laid upon the table.

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

The amendment (No. 2002) was agreed to, as follows:

(Purpose: To amend the resolution)

On page 2, strike line 3 and all that follows through page 3, line 2, and insert the following:

(1) finds that the provision and availability of religious services and clergy is important to the morale and wellbeing of many members of the Armed Forces and their families; and

(2) hopes the Secretary of Defense is able to determine that contractor clergy provide necessary support to military personnel, and would therefore be covered under the appropriations made available under the Pay Our Military Act (Public Law 113–39).

The concurrent resolution (H. Con. Res. 58), as amended, was agreed to.

The amendment (No. 2003) was agreed to, as follows:

(Purpose: To amend the preamble)

Strike the preamble and insert the following:

Whereas the Department of Defense determined that some contractor clergy, like other Department of Defense contractors, were unable to perform their contractual duties during the current lapse in appropriations;

Whereas this determination may have impacted the ability of members of the Armed Forces and their families to worship and participate in religious activities;

Whereas military chaplains on active duty, like all military personnel on active duty,

continue to perform their duties during the current lapse in appropriations;

Whereas the Department continues to analyze its authorities under the Pay Our Military Act (Public Law 113–39) with respect to contractors; and

Whereas the Pay Our Military Act appropriates such sums as are necessary to pay contractors of the Department whom the Secretary of Defense determines are providing support to members of the Armed Forces: Now, therefore, be it

The preamble, as amended, was agreed to.

The concurrent resolution, as amended, with its preamble, as amended, reads as follows:

H. CON. RES. 58

Resolved, That the resolution from the House of Representatives (H. Con. Res. 58) entitled “Concurrent resolution expressing the sense of Congress regarding the need for the continued availability of religious services to members of the Armed Forces and their families during a lapse in appropriations.”, do pass with the following amendments:

(1) Strike the preamble and insert the following:

Whereas the Department of Defense determined that some contractor clergy, like other Department of Defense contractors, were unable to perform their contractual duties during the current lapse in appropriations;

Whereas this determination may have impacted the ability of members of the Armed Forces and their families to worship and participate in religious activities;

Whereas military chaplains on active duty, like all military personnel on active duty, continue to perform their duties during the current lapse in appropriations;

Whereas the Department continues to analyze its authorities under the Pay Our Military Act (Public Law 113–39) with respect to contractors; and

Whereas the Pay Our Military Act appropriates such sums as are necessary to pay contractors of the Department whom the Secretary of Defense determines are providing support to members of the Armed Forces: Now, therefore, be it

(2) On page 2, strike line 3 and all that follows through page 3, line 2, and insert the following:

(1) finds that the provision and availability of religious services and clergy is important to the morale and wellbeing of many members of the Armed Forces and their families; and

(2) hopes the Secretary of Defense is able to determine that contractor clergy provide necessary support to military personnel, and would therefore be covered under the appropriations made available under the Pay Our Military Act (Public Law 113–39).

ORDERS FOR FRIDAY, OCTOBER 11, 2013

Mr. REID. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that when the Senate completes its business today, it adjourn until 10:30 a.m. on Friday, October 11, 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 Senate recess subject to the call of the Chair to allow for a Republican special caucus with the President of the United States.

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

ADJOURNMENT UNTIL 10:30 A.M. TOMORROW

Mr. REID. Mr. President, if there is no further business to come before the Senate, I ask unanimous consent that it stand adjourned under the previous order.

There being no objection, the Senate, at 6:45 p.m., adjourned until Friday, October 11, 2013, at 10:30 a.m.