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Senate

The Senate met at 12 noon and was called to order by the President pro tempore (Mr. LEAHY).

PRAYER

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

Let us pray.

Eternal God, we are grateful that You are gracious and merciful, slow to anger, abounding in steadfast love.

Lord, we see a faint light at the end of a long dark tunnel. Thank You for lawmakers who understand that when everyone loses, America loses. We are grateful also for Senators who know that before they are Democrat, Republican or Independent, they are Americans. As they remember their accountability to You and to history, empower them to keep our Nation strong, staying true to their oath to defend our Constitution against external and internal foes. Lord, keep them from making any decision that will seem reckless in the sober light of hindsight.

We pray in Your mighty Name. Amen

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The President pro tempore 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.

RECOGNITION OF THE MAJORITY LEADER

The PRESIDENT pro tempore. The majority leader is recognized.

DEFAULT PREVENTION ACT OF 2013—MOTION TO PROCEED

Mr. REID. Mr. President, I now move to proceed to Calendar No. 211.

The 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.

SCHEDULE

Mr. REID. Following the remarks of the Republican leader and me the Senate will be in a period of morning business where Senators will be allowed to speak for up to 10 minutes each—or at least be in a situation where people can speak up to 10 minutes each.

Mr. President, I am going to wait until Senator MCCONNELL gets to the floor, so I will not give any long remarks here. In fact, I won't give any long remarks at any time, but I do have a few things to say.

RECOGNITION OF THE SENATE CHAPLAIN

While we are waiting for Senator MCCONNELL, I want to take this opportunity to say this. Admiral Black has, for me, during this long period of crisis we have had in the country, been a voice of stability and a voice of inspiration. I am being very selfish in saying me, because it has been so for the entire Senate and for the country. His heartfelt prayers are so timely and so sensitive to the needs of our country and the need we all have to call upon our spirituality to get us through periods of difficulty.

I can speak for the entire Senate when I say how much we admire and respect this good man, who is a counselor and as much a leader in the Senate as anyone who serves in this body.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

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

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Ms. BALDWIN). Without objection, it is so ordered.

Mr. REID. Madam President, the eyes of the world have been on Washington all this week—and that is a gross understatement—and while they witnessed a great deal of political discord, today they will also see Congress reach a historic bipartisan agreement and avoid a default on the Nation's bills.

The compromise we reached will provide our economy with the stability it desperately needs. It is never easy for two sides to reach consensus. Sometimes it is harder than others. This time it was really hard. After weeks spent facing off across a partisan divide that often seemed too wide to cross, our country came to the brink of disaster. But in the end, political adversaries set aside their differences and disagreements to prevent that disaster.

I thank the Republican leader for his diligent efforts to reach this important agreement. The Republican leader's cooperation was essential to reach an accord to pass both Chambers of Congress and also be signed by President Obama.

As part of our agreement, in order to ensure Congress continues the work of setting this country on a path of fiscal sustainability, this legislation instructs leaders to name conferees to a budget conference committee that will set our country on a long-term path to fiscal sustainability. I know some say that is going to be hard. What we do is hard here, and this is really hard, but I think we can get it done. The committee members selected must have open minds, be willing to exert every option no matter how painful to their own political ideas and even their own political parties. This conference committee, led by Chairman MURRAY and Chairman RYAN—which will produce its negotiated budget resolution in December—is the appropriate place to discuss our different views and the best way to chart a course for economic growth.

This legislation also funds the government through January 15 and averts default through February 7, during which time we can work toward a long-term budget agreement that prevents these frequent crises. Perhaps most importantly, this legislation ends a

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

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standoff that ground the work of Washington to a halt this fall.

This is not a time for pointing fingers or blame. This is a time of reconciliation. I look forward to working with my colleagues on both sides of this great Capitol to pass this remarkable agreement which will protect the long-term health of our economy, avert a default on our Nation's debt, and allow us to set a foundation for economic expansion.

What we have done is sent a message to Americans from every one of our 50 States, but in addition to that, the citizens of every country and the world, that the United States lives up to its obligations. Now Congress must return to its most important job—fostering economic growth and protecting middle-class families.

I appreciate through all of this the steady hand of President Obama to help guide us to this conclusion. I am optimistic that the spirit of compromise which has taken root in the Senate over the last 2 days will endure.

I do know this: Senator MCCONNELL and I have sat in very serious discussions the last few days, and we are going to do everything we can to change the atmosphere in the Senate and accomplish what needs to be done for our country.

RECOGNITION OF THE MINORITY LEADER

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Republican leader is recognized.

SHUTDOWN RESOLUTION

Mr. MCCONNELL. Madam President, this has been a long, challenging few weeks for Congress and for the country. It is my hope that today we can put some of those most urgent issues behind us.

After yesterday's events the majority leader and I began a series of conversations about a way to get the government reopened and to prevent default. I am confident we will be able to do both of those things later today.

Crucially, I am also confident we will be able to announce that we are protecting the government's spending reductions that both parties agreed to under the Budget Control Act and that the President signed into law. That has been a top priority for me and for my colleagues on the Republican side of the aisle throughout this debate, and it has been worth the effort. Some have suggested that we break that promise as part of this agreement. Some have said that Washington needs to spend more, that we need to raise taxes, that we need to just tax our way to prosperity and balance. But what the BCA showed is that Washington actually can cut spending, and because of this law, that is just what we have done. For the first time since the Korean war—for the first time in 50 years—government spending has declined for 2 years in a row. And we are not going back on this agreement.

There is a lot more we need to do to get our Nation's fiscal house in order. Hopefully, once we have gotten past the drama of the moment, we can get to work on it. But for now, let's not understate the importance of the Budget Control Act or the importance of the fight to preserve it. This legislation is the largest spending reduction bill of the last quarter century and the largest deficit reduction bill since 1981 that didn't include a tax hike. Preserving this law is critically important to the future of our country.

Throughout this debate, the public has rightly focused on ObamaCare—for good reason. This law is ravaging our economy, killing jobs, driving up premiums, and driving people off the health care plans they have and like in droves. Its disastrous rollout is a sign of even worse things to come. The refusal to delay it reflects the kind of stubborn, ideological obsession that will do untold damage to our country, and Republicans remain determined to repeal this terrible law. But for today, the relief we hope for is to reopen the government, avoid default, and protect the historic cuts we achieved under the Budget Control Act. This is far less than many of us had hoped for, frankly, but it is far better than what some had sought. Now it is time for Republicans to unite behind other crucial goals.

Madam President, I yield the floor.

RESERVATION OF LEADER TIME

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

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, Senators are permitted to speak for up to 10 minutes each.

The Senator from Arkansas.

Mr. PRYOR. Madam President, I had not intended to speak right now. I know the leaders are working on trying to get the process clear so we can move this legislation forward. But I would like to mention a few of my colleagues who really helped in this process.

We had a number of Democrats and Republicans who met together and talked to try to come to a resolution on a package we wanted to present to the leaders. In fact, the structure of what the two leaders have agreed on is very similar to what we had proposed to them.

I see some of my colleagues here today who were instrumental. I see the Senator from Alaska, Ms. MURKOWSKI, and I know Senator AYOTTE is here, as well as Senator FLAKE, who happens to be in the Chamber right now, and Senator KIRK, Senator JOHANNS, Senator MCCAIN, and, of course, Senator COLLINS. Senator COLLINS really led and spearheaded the effort, and she deserves a lot of credit for getting us together and helping to move the ball down the field.

I hadn't planned on controlling the floor right now or even talking about this very much, but since we have the opportunity—I know on our side of the aisle Senators MANCHIN, KLOBUCHAR, KING, DONNELLY, HEITKAMP, and SHAHEEN all played a critical role. Again, this had not been planned by anyone; it just looks as though we have a little bit of time.

If it is agreeable, I would like to yield to one of my colleagues to say a word about the agreement we reached or that we were working on to try to present to the leaders and just really say thank you to Senator COLLINS and thank you for all 14 of us. It turns out we had seven Republicans, six Democrats, and one Independent. Basically what we tried to do is come up with a sensible framework the leaders could use to get us to where we are today. Again, they didn't accept every single thing we wanted, but the framework was good, and certainly it was great to see everyone work together.

Before I turn it over to the Senator from Arizona, I wish to thank him because he was great and very instrumental in moving this ball down the court.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Arizona.

Mr. MCCAIN. Madam President, I think it is obvious we are seeing the end of this agonizing odyssey this body has been put through but, far more importantly, the American people have been put through. It is one of the more shameful chapters I have seen in the years I have spent here in the Senate.

But I wish to say that if there is a good outcome, it is the fact that 14 of us were able to join together—Republican and Democrat. Leadership, I must fully admit, was provided primarily by women in the Senate. I won't comment further on that.

Seriously, 14 of us got together and came up with a plan after very spirited discussion. I think that plan was probably better than the one we are going to act on today. But the fact is that this group of 14 people is committed to staying together to address other issues of importance and to tell the American people that there are at least 14 of us—and there are many others who wanted to join that group and who are welcomed to join that group—we are not going to let this kind of partisanship cripple this body and injure the American people.

I am proud to have worked with Members from both sides of the aisle. This isn't the last crisis we are going to go through, but I think we have the framework for the kind of bipartisanship the American people need and want. So I thank them. I look forward to working with them in the future. I also enjoyed the spirited discussions we had.

I wish to thank especially my friend from Maine, who enriched me with a small side wager we made during the course of this discussion.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Minnesota.

Ms. KLOBUCHAR. Madam President, I thank the Senator from Arizona—he brought a very experienced voice to our group—and especially I thank Senator COLLINS for bringing this group together. I think it shows what courage

is going to be in the next year in this Chamber and in the Congress. It is not going to be just standing here by yourself making a speech with no one there. Courage is going to be whether you are willing to stand next to someone you do not always agree with for the betterment of this country.

This was very close to another default—to seeing what we saw in 2011 with the Dow down 2000 points, household wealth down over $2 trillion. That cannot happen again. Thanks to our leader Senator REID, thanks to his work with Senator MCCONNELL, we averted it this time. I think you will find a strong bipartisan vote in the Senate for this compromise, for this idea of paying our bills, opening the government again, and making sure we have a reasonable time period to work out a solution long term. That is our challenge.

Yes, we have averted this crisis, but we need to stop having these crises. We need to actually come up with a long-term solution in a balanced way that brings down our debt while at the same time doing it in a way that will not start another financial crisis.

I thank my colleagues for their amazing work, for their good humor during a very difficult time, and for the fact that we are finally moving forward and ending the brinkmanship.

I see my friend the Senator from Alaska is here.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Alaska.

Ms. MURKOWSKI. Madam President, I join my colleague Senator PRYOR. I don't think any of us had planned to do anything coordinated at this point in time. I came to the floor and was anticipating the announcement from both leaders. But I see so many of our colleagues who have been working on this proposal with Senator COLLINS from Maine. She has truly been remarkable in her persistence and insistence that we continue this effort to work collegially, to work collaboratively on these very difficult issues that we have been facing these past several weeks.

I thank Senator COLLINS for her leadership most particularly, but we all know, if you are trying to move the ball, just one person, you don't get anywhere. We do a lot of sports analogies around here. Honestly, I am tired of the sports analogies. But what I do appreciate is that as a Senate we cannot work together as individuals and expect to accomplish the work that is needed, not only for my constituents in Alaska but around the country. Regardless of who is in the majority or who is in the minority, in order to make it work for the country we have to be working together.

As difficult as all this has been in the past several weeks, what I found encouraging is there has been a nucleus of folks who would come together as the need arose, or perhaps just for a little moral support, and continued the effort to try to find common ground. We went from a small group to a group of six on each side to a group of seven on each side. I think with every passing day we had more colleagues who were interested in helping and participating to try to find that common ground. As we noted, the agreement that has been reached by our respective leaderships, while it is not what our working group came up with, there are certain elements of it that we had helped to shepherd.

But this should not be about who claims authorship, who puts their name behind it. What this should be about is whether we can get the government open again, we can get focused on dealing with our fiscal issues, dealing with the fact that we are up against the debt ceiling perhaps tomorrow. Our reality is in front of us right now.

Getting caught up with whether it is the Senate that should make this happen or the House that makes this happen, whether it is Leader REID or Minority Leader MCCONNELL, that is not what the public cares about. The news that is coming out today is that there is a deal. There is a deal. That deal should give America hope.

But it does not get us out of the mess we are in. I think we are at pretty low approval ratings. It is going to take a while for us to rebuild any credibility. But I think the effort to rebuild credibility begins when we honestly and earnestly roll up our sleeves, tackle the big problems, recognize we have to do it together rather than to retreat into our respective corners and just hope that we can get it right without talking to one another.

I again thank Senator COLLINS for her leadership on this issue. I thank all my colleagues on the Democratic side of the aisle and the Republican side of the aisle for coming to this point. I am most hopeful we will see it quickly resolved today so the country can breathe easily and sleep a little better tonight.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Indiana.

Mr. DONNELLY. Madam President, I thank Senator COLLINS, who helped lead our group, Senator PRYOR, Senator MANCHIN, and so many others who helped lead our group as well. This was not Democrats and Republicans, this was Americans who were sent here to serve our country.

I am blessed to come from the State of Indiana. They gave me this great honor to serve. I know precisely why they sent me here, which is to do the work of the Nation, to protect our Nation, to not worry about Republican or Democrat, but to do what is right.

I take that charge very seriously. That is why I am working with my colleagues to see is there a way we can help bring an agreement closer, bring an agreement together that protects our credit ratings, that protects our financial situation, and that protects our country. I was very lucky to be part of such an extraordinary group of partners in this effort. I thank all of them.

As the Senator from Alaska was saying, we have a lot of work to do, as all Senators know. We stand ready, on whatever front our Nation needs us, to do that kind of work. That is not Democrat work, that is not Republican work, but that is American work, to move our Nation and our country forward.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Maine.

Ms. COLLINS. Madam President, later today the Senate is likely to consider legislation that would reopen government, avert the default, and put us on a long-term path to come up with a plan to deal with our unsustainable $17 trillion national debt by reopening the long overdue budget negotiations. I hope my colleagues on both sides of the aisle will support the plan that has been put forth by our two leaders, Senator REID and Senator MCCONNELL.

I am pleased that elements of the compromise that the two leaders have worked out have been taken from a plan that was developed by 14 Senators who have worked very hard, on both sides of the aisle, 7 Democrats—actually 6 Democrats and 1 Independent, the Senator from Maine—and 7 Republicans, who have come together in good faith and have worked very hard over the last 2 weeks to put together a compromise plan, a compromise plan that I have to say I actually prefer to that which we will vote on later today.

But elements of our plan have been incorporated into the plan the two leaders have presented for our consideration. This was truly a collaborative effort. I want to make sure that all of my colleagues who worked so hard on it receive the kudos they deserve for being willing to do what this body does too rarely, and that is for both sides to get together, come out of our partisan corners, stop fighting, and start legislating.

This great country deserves a Congress that can govern, and that was the unifying theme of our group. On October 5, a Saturday, when we were in session and the shutdown was in its early days, I was sitting in my Senate office, watching the floor debate. I was disheartened by what I heard because what I heard were partisan speeches from both sides of the aisle and no one offering a path forward. I decided then and there to chart out, to outline a possible plan to end this impasse, and I marched over to the Senate floor and gave a speech in which I urged my colleagues to work together.

Virtually immediately I heard from colleagues on both sides of the aisle who wanted to be part of that effort and who have worked night and day to try to come up with a plan, a plan that I believe helped lay the foundation for the ultimate compromise reached by our two leaders.

Senator MURKOWSKI and Senator AYOTTE were the first two Members to call me. I know my colleagues are tired

of hearing about the women in the Senate, but the fact is they were the first two to contact me. Senator JOE MANCHIN was the first person on the Democratic side to call and say: Count me in. I want to work on this as well. Senator PRYOR and Senator KING were also very early on, and Senator MCCAIN endorsed the proposal of our working together and the outlines of this plan. Senator JOHANNS was such a thoughtful addition to our group. AMY KLOBUCHAR was there for every meeting. Senator KIRK, Senator HEIDI HEITKAMP, Senator JEFF FLAKE, Senator JOE DONNELLY, Senator JEANNE SHAHEEN—it was a wonderful group of people, united by our determination to demonstrate that we could compromise, we could govern, we could bring an end to this impasse and do it in a way that was worthy of this great country and our constituents.

We worked together over and over. There were a lot of tough decisions to be made, a lot of lengthy negotiations. We came up with a plan which we presented to our two leaders, Senator REID and Senator MCCONNELL. Not all elements of our plan were incorporated by the leaders, but I think they would say they built on our work and did, indeed, take some of our provisions verbatim. I continue to believe our plan was a great path forward, but I am pleased that it paved the way to what I hope will be a solution to the impasse we have been facing, that has been so unfair to the American people and has hurt so many people.

I think it is important for us to remember that the damage goes beyond the hundreds of thousands of furloughed Federal workers, furloughed through no fault of their own. It goes beyond the damage to the private sector employees who lost business because of the closure of our parks.

It goes beyond the damage to our disabled veterans who have had to wait for their claims to be handled. It goes beyond the anxiety of many who are dependent on very important Federal programs, the most vulnerable in our society. It goes beyond the impact on our national defense, although we were able to mitigate that to some extent. It goes to something far more fundamental, and that is whether the people of this country can have confidence in our ability to put aside partisan politics and act as patriots committed to doing what is right for our Nation.

I thank the 13 Senators who joined me and worked so hard and did just that—they left their partisanship at the door and negotiated as real patriots who care about America. I thank them all. It has been a great pleasure to work with each and every one of them. All of them contributed so much to the bipartisan plan we presented, and I am glad it has helped to bring us to what I hope is an end to a very unfortunate chapter in America's history.

I thank the Presiding Officer.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from West Virginia.

Mr. MANCHIN. Madam President, I am very proud to be a part of a group who truly put their country first. I have been here probably a shorter period of time than most of my colleagues—not quite 3 years. I think people know I have been a little bit frustrated at times, if not quite frustrated. I heard stories about how the Senate used to work and that when the going got tough, the Senators really got going. I have not seen much of that in the last 3 years.

We had a dichotomy of Senators—ANGUS KING, my dear friend, who is an Independent from Maine, seven Republicans led by Senator COLLINS, and our Democratic colleagues—come together and play off each other's strengths. They did not play off of their egos at all.

Two weeks ago I could not believe the self-inflicted pain this Congress put upon the people of America by shutting down the government—also coming on the brink of a financial calamity, if you will, and not being able to pay our bills. I have watched businesses and individuals get into financial problems before. Financial problems can come in many different ways, but basically you have early warnings and can step in front of that so you can restructure your spending, restructure your habits, and get yourself whole again—it takes a while—or you can wait until it hits you, and then you have to foreclose or go bankrupt, and it is almost impossible to get yourself out of it.

This was really congressional-made. There may be times when we have pressures put upon us as a country where we will have to do extraordinary work to keep ourselves afloat, but this is not one, and it should not be made because of political dysfunction.

I saw our colleagues playing off of the strengths each person brought to the group, and it got stronger and stronger each day. We faced the shutdown that we thought was absolutely ridiculous and unnecessary and should never have happened, and then we were looking at facing a financial meltdown, if you will, the insolvency of our country, and that could not be tolerated.

As each person played off the other to try to help make this come together—I think Senator COLLINS explained it so well—we were able to have a piece of agreed-upon legislation that had a tremendous framework and good template that was presented to leadership here in the Senate. I applaud both of our leaders, Senator REID and Senator MCCONNELL, for taking that constructively and working with it. They worked together to try to make the best possible piece of legislation, and we encourage our colleagues in the House to accept that legislation.

I am hopeful for a large vote in the Senate. I am very much hopeful for that. I am hopeful that our colleagues in the House will accept that in the spirit of a bipartisan agreement we worked on. When we were doing this, we considered the House and what would be acceptable and palatable, but, more importantly, we took into consideration the American people and what they wanted us to do and why they sent us here.

In the spirit of the Senate, I am proud to see the Senate rise to the occasion and work the way I heard it used to work. I was able to experience that in the last 2 weeks, and I am proud to have been a part of that.

I thank all of my colleagues on the Republican side in both the Senate and the House. This is truly a time when America rose to show its best. Now we have to make sure we complete this.

During the negotiation we found out why we could not get to a budget conference. This bill will have a mandatory budget conference that has to report back and go back to some regular order. That was important for all of us to agree on. Everybody said there will be some criticism because of the short time period. We have a better framework than we have ever had in order to fix and repair the damage that has been done and address the uncertainty that will be lurking if we don't do something.

I am very pleased and proud. I thank Senator COLLINS, Senator MURKOWSKI, Senator KLOBUCHAR, Senator PRYOR, Senator KING, and Senator HEITKAMP, and everybody who has worked so hard to make this happen. Again, I am proud to be a part of an extraordinary group of people who put the country before themselves.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from North Dakota.

Ms. HEITKAMP. Madam President, 5 days ago I wondered why I came to the Senate. I had the same belief the American people had: This is a place which is no longer functioning, stuck in gridlock and not able to get anything done.

Then an amazing thing happened. Under the leadership of some strong and senior Members, a group came together to have a broader discussion. We called the discussion plan B. This discussion presented ideas that would, in fact, find their way toward compromise. Under the strong leadership of Senator COLLINS, as well as the great Senator from Alaska LISA MURKOWSKI, we were able to bring people together and begin those discussions. They started the dialog that I really think had an opportunity to present a template for a resolution.

Today we are doing something the American people have waited for us to do for the last 16 days. We are doing what is responsible and opening the government, extending the debt limit, and doing regular order. No more special committees, no more supercommittees or pinning our hopes on a Bowles-Simpson or Rivlin commission—we are going to make this body function again.

I think we have a lot of great hope that our chairman PATTY MURRAY and ranking member, Senator SESSIONS from Alabama, will meet with their House counterparts in principled negotiations and discussions that will once

again tell the American people we are serious about doing their bidding and their business.

The proof now is in the pudding. We have taken what little confidence the American public had in this institution and the institution of the U.S. Congress and once again shook it. It is time that we bring that confidence back. There is no better time than fulfilling the promise and commitment of this agreement today and getting back to regular order.

I thank all of my colleagues—Senator MANCHIN, Senator ANGUS KING from Maine, MARK PRYOR from Arkansas, who was instrumental in getting me to run for the Senate. I occasionally remind him of that. MARK and I were attorneys general together. There have been so many great opportunities to have conversations across the aisle that I think bore fruit today and will continue to flourish, thrive, and provide opportunity for more bipartisan compromise.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Maine.

Mr. KING. Madam President, Winston Churchill once famously observed that Americans will always do the right thing only after they have tried everything else. I think the last 2 weeks demonstrates the wisdom of that observation.

I join my colleagues in congratulating, first, the leaders for putting aside their substantial differences and partisan divide to meet together over the last 2 or 3 days and hammer out an agreement that is not going to be acceptable or exciting to anyone but will put America back together in terms of our government functioning, avoiding the threat of default, and allowing us to move forward with the Nation's problems.

My first congratulation is to Senator HARRY REID and Senator MITCH MCCONNELL for coming together as they have in the last 24 hours.

I also have to acknowledge the leadership of my senior colleague from Maine, SUSAN COLLINS. I happened to be presiding when she made her speech last Saturday, and it was really her initiative to stand, take a risk, and say: Let's try to work something out. She outlined the beginning of a framework which was then fleshed out over the last 10 days in discussions among the group we have been talking about.

I was interviewed recently on the radio and somebody asked: Don't you think Senator COLLINS may be subject to some criticism from some corner or another about her role in all of this? I paused for a minute, and I said: That is what leadership is. It is the willingness to bear criticism and stick your neck out. As my dad used to say, it is like the turtle crossing the road—the only way the turtle can cross the road is to stick his neck out. And that is what we are trying to do on behalf of the American people.

Senator PATTY MURRAY is not on the floor right now, but I am so glad we are entering into a process where she and her colleagues on the Budget Committee will be able to work with Congressman RYAN and try to really solve some of these issues that have been plaguing us so severely. We are doing it, as we should, in the proper process. I am delighted that Senator MURRAY is now going to step into this role, which is one of the most important we have had in recent years, and we will be able to work toward a resolution.

This is an important and perhaps historic compromise where Congress was really looking into the abyss. Congress was really proving that it could not function and that our system could not function in the divided politics of America today. It now appears that our leaders have pulled us back from that abyss and given us an opportunity—not a guarantee but an opportunity to continue the discussions that started with this terrible shutdown. It will give us the opportunity to try to bring our country together and resolve the problems we face.

It is a shame we have spent so much time doing what I think is the obvious—run the government and pay our bills. Now that we seem to have passed through this moment, we can move forward into the long-term challenges of our budget, the challenges facing our people, and our ability to solve problems so we can prove once again that this wonderful Constitution that has been bequeathed to us can still function, produce results, and govern this country.

Abraham Lincoln said we can't escape history. This morning the Chaplain's prayer talked about being accountable to history, and that, indeed, is what we are doing in this body. I hope that history will judge today as a moment—and the beginning—of a new era of cooperation and civility and problem-solving. This is not about the loss of our differences or the papering over of legitimate arguments of principle but the ability to try to work together, to talk to each other, respect one another, and listen to one another. Those are the essential qualities of leadership that I believe we are seeing demonstrated here today, and I hope it is a beginning.

I congratulate and thank all of my colleagues but especially the two leaders for getting us to this moment.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Arkansas.

Mr. PRYOR. Madam President, I would like to say a few more words.

When the Democratic leader pointed at me to say something a few moments ago, we were not really prepared for that. We talked about coming to the floor later. I am so glad Senator COLLINS is on the floor now. She really deserves a lion's share of the credit for pulling this together. I am sorry we had no notice on that.

Some have kind of joked about the process and the women of the Senate. The truth is that women in the Senate is a good thing, and we see leadership. We are all glad they allowed us to tag along so we could see how it is done. Isn't that right?

It was a great experience for us to work together. I know it will be a Reid-McConnell product at the end of the day, and that is great. That is really what we wanted it to be. We talked about, in one of our first meetings, how we understood that we would be the plan B. The problem was there wasn't really a plan A. We would be the plan B, so that if we could help move things along, that would be beneficial and constructive. And I think it was. I think the fact that the leaders knew we were working and trying to do some problem solving helped to move the process along. I know it wasn't always a pretty process, but we tried.

I think what this is all about today is a victory for bipartisanship. When we look at all the talk shows and listen to all the talking heads and do all that stuff, they never mention this. But the truth is the only way to get work done is by doing it in a bipartisan way. It doesn't really matter if we are in the Senate or on the local school board. If we want to get something done, we have to work with the other people in the room. We may not always agree with them. Maybe that is not who a particular individual would have elected, but that is who was elected.

I think that is really one of the lessons today; that is, if we work together, we can solve these problems. That starts by putting the rhetoric aside, putting the party labels aside, sitting down, and listening to the other side. We had to do a lot of listening because sometimes people have different views. They come at issues from different angles. They have different backgrounds to bring to the table. Nonetheless, we have to do a lot of listening.

I hope today is a big loss for blame game politics. From my standpoint, when I turn on the television and I see people here on this floor or on the floor down the hall or having press conferences and it is just blame, blame, blame, to me that is dead end politics. That is one of those situations where some people put on a red jersey and some people put on a blue jersey. We shouldn't do that. To me that is how we have ended up where we have, with shutting down the government and with running the risk of breaching the debt ceiling.

We should never allow that to happen. That is what is wrong with Washington. We need to work together to get things done.

We have always said—I think all 14 of us who were in this group, the Collins group, who worked together—we said we can do this if cooler heads prevail, and that is what happened. We were so delighted and pleased to be a part of it. I wish to thank the two leaders for their leadership and for encouraging us to, behind the scenes, move forward and get this done, and we definitely appreciate that.

The truth is we have a lot more work to do. We have a lot of work to do. There is a lot of work in this city that has been left undone, and Congress is largely responsible. If we can work together and if we can do what we did today, if we can drop the rhetoric, if we can roll up our sleeves, just as they do in Maine and in Arkansas and in other places around the country—people in this country know that governing is hard work, but that is why they sent us here. That is why we run for these jobs. We run for these jobs so that we can make the hard decisions, so that we can make the big decisions. That is what the American people are starving for. They want us to work together. I know it is the last day before we have some terrible consequences to the economy, but that is what people want. They wish we would have done it a lot sooner than we did, but nonetheless that is what they want.

I hope and pray that, in this body, we will continue to work together and we will be problem solvers and that we will get work done. The legislative process is not always pretty, and we understand that. But work will get done at the end of the day, and we will reach those bipartisan agreements that will make this country proud.

With that, I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from California.

Mrs. FEINSTEIN. Thank you very much, Madam President.

I am not part of this group of 14, I believe it is, but I wish to thank them. I know a little bit about how hard it is to try to pull something together in an emerging situation, and they have done it. I see SUSAN and AMY and LISA here on the floor, three Senators who played a major role in this effort. I wish to thank them for taking the time, having the courage, and putting forward the ideas they did. I also wish to thank the leaders, Senator REID and Senator MCCONNELL, because I think their coming together essentially averted what I saw as a potential catastrophe.

Although there is many a slip between the cup and the lip, I think we are in the home stretch. I think what we see is both a continuing resolution and the debt limit being extended, albeit not for long. Coming over here somebody stopped me and said: Well, we will be right back here in 3 or 4 months. Our challenge is to make that not so.

I also wish to thank Senator CRUZ, with whom I have had occasions to tangle, but he has said that he will not stand in the way of the vote. To me that is very important, because nobody knows what really will happen if we do not pass the debt ceiling in a timely way. In a way it is a big lesson in itself: Let us not go there again, and let us use this 3- to 4-month period in a wise and willing way to sit down, as the group of 14 did, and work out issues before we are right back from where we came.

I think another part of the agreement that is very good is that it allows the Budget Committee to go ahead and conference. Senator MURRAY sits next to me. After her 20 attempts to move this body to conference, all of which failed, it looks as though now it will happen. Here is what that means. That means we will have a budget for next year, from which the appropriations allocations will be drawn very quickly, and then our bills can be brought into conformance. I happen to chair one of the appropriations subcommittees, and that is the committee that includes the modernization of our warheads, the Department of Energy, as well as the Army Corp of Engineers. Beginning tomorrow, seven big labs were going to begin to shut down: Los Alamos, Sandia, Lawrence Livermore, Lawrence Berkeley; as well as our nuclear program reactors were being shut down and put in safe conditions. Thirty thousand contract employees were going to lose their work, and the contract says they cannot be reimbursed for any day that is not worked. So that presented a particular special situation.

In the time I have been here, the Senate has become a very different body, and maybe now is not a bad time to say that. We used to be able to do much more along the lines of what the group of 14 has done. But I think scar tissue has built up in this house. I think it has built up in this house for one reason, and that is the prodigious use of cloture—a significant change because a majority body has been turned into a supermajority body. What do I mean by that? What I mean by that is everything, albeit but the simplest thing, has to have 60 votes. We had a clean debt resolution and cloture, and we did not have 60 votes even to debate the issue on the floor.

That has never been what the history of this body has shown. It has never been one of the reasons why I wanted to join this body. I have always felt that this body was sort of the prime of political officeholders—not the bottom but the top—and has always shown a willingness as to how this democratic process can work, by people sitting down together, understanding that our two-party system demands compromise to be able to make any progress at all. What I have found is that is less and less available to those of us who want to problem solve, who want to sit down and work out issues.

So I look forward to more efforts such as this effort that just took place, and I would very much like to join this esteemed new group of Senators for the future, because we cannot be here again in 4 months.

I was surprised—and I don't quite know what to do about it—but what I find is that people in the House too, who have come here with a very small number of votes, believe they so know what is best for this Nation, above anybody else, they are willing to do whatever they need to do to get their way. That is just not the way these bodies have traditionally worked. Now, that hasn't worked so far.

I think what is before us, which is a very simple 3-, 4-month advance of a continuing resolution, of the debt limit, verification of income, and the ability of the Budget Committee to go back to work, really signals that this next 3 to 4 months are so important to do what we need to do to restore comity to this body and the other body. Just think if we can find points of agreement in 3 to 4 months and then go ahead and regularly extend the debt limit for its full length of time, do away with the continuing resolution. It has been 3 or 4 years with no budget, and it has to stop.

So I am hopeful, with the leadership that now appears to have come together between Senator HARRY REID and Senator MITCH MCCONNELL, that these months can really be dedicated to a bringing together of both sides around problem solving. All I can do is pledge myself to do my utmost to help us get there. So this is just one step on the road.

Again, there is many a slip between the cup and the lip. So I hope this is going to pass this body today, pass the House, and that we go out with a resoluteness to come back another day and work together to solve what are some very major problems before us.

So thank you very much. I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from New Hampshire.

Mrs. SHAHEEN. Thank you, Madam President.

I am very happy to be able to come to the floor this afternoon to join those who have already spoken to commend the fact that we have finally come to an agreement, it appears, that will end this government shutdown, that will allow the country to pay its bills, and that will, hopefully, address some of the uncertainty and harm that has come to families, to businesses, and to this economy over the last several weeks.

I wish to thank and applaud the leadership of Majority Leader REID and Republican Leader MCCONNELL for being able to come together to reach this agreement. I also wish to commend the many people who have come to the floor this afternoon, led by Senator COLLINS, who have been working over the last week to try to come up with some ideas to provide a framework for an agreement. I was especially appreciative to be part of that group of 14 of us, along with Senator COLLINS—and I think her leadership was very important—along with Senator KLOBUCHAR, Senator PRYOR, and the many people who have come to the floor, in providing some impetus for people to work together and to move forward on an agreement that could finally end this shutdown. I certainly appreciated the comments of Senator PRYOR when he talked about the need for us to work together, to listen to each other, and to put aside the blame game and address the many challenges facing this country. That is clearly where we need

to go next, and I certainly hope we will all in this Chamber recommit ourselves to doing that.

We need to pass this compromise quickly so we can end the shutdown's negative effects on our economy. We need to move forward and think about how we can get some agreement long term in the future, and I think the bipartisan efforts that have been shown over the last week will be very important to doing that.

The fact is, while the agreement is good news, we know the agreement is only short term and that we are going to have to figure out a way to address keeping the government open, address paying the Nation's bills, address coming up with a long-term budget agreement, and we do not have a whole lot of time to do that.

I hope people will understand the very real impacts I have been hearing in my office, I know Senator COLLINS has been hearing that as well, and people throughout this body have been hearing from people across the country about what the impact has been.

Yesterday I participated in a Small Business Committee hearing to hear the impacts of the shutdown on small businesses across the country, and I appreciate the leadership of Senator LANDRIEU in organizing that hearing. It gave a voice to many of the small businesses, to many of the people across this country who have been suffering as a result of the shutdown. I thought it would be helpful to share a few of those stories as a reminder that as happy as I am that we have reached agreement, we have a lot of work to do in the future to make sure this does not happen again.

One of the people we heard from yesterday was New Hampshire community banker Chuck Withee. He is the president of Provident Bank. They have four locations in New Hampshire. He told me that small businesses, as we know, ''are the backbone'' of what they do at his community bank. He said the ''shutdown has had a material and profound effect on many small businesses in the Southern New Hampshire region'' because of the shutdown of the SBA loan programs.

We all know how critical access to capital is to making sure businesses can operate. Chuck testified that Provident Bank has 12 loans that are stalled right now. They are just waiting for the SBA to open. They have a total of $2.7 million in small business loans—that is at just one small bank—that are currently on hold because of this crisis.

Sadly, according to Chuck, the consequences of this holdup may be permanent for some of those businesses:

> There are purchase and sale agreements hanging in the balance, that may lapse and have to be renegotiated. . . . The small business owner may also lose credibility and the ability to negotiate similar contracts in the future.

He went on to say the numbers do not really include the dozens of applications for loans that would have come through the door but did not because of the shutdown.

He also talked about a new program that Provident was just about to launch before the shutdown, a program that would focus on microloans for very small businesses—those businesses that usually have borrowing needs of between $10,000 and $100,000 that would have been able to get loans as part of this program. Because of the shutdown, the bank had not continued that program. He indicated they hope to roll it out as soon as the government is operating again. But clearly there are businesses that have been hurt in the interim.

We heard from people across the country at that hearing yesterday, from another SBA lender, Sally Robertson, who pointed out that one of the borrowers she is working with has posted a $149,000 deposit on a new project—that if they cannot close in a timely fashion, they are going to lose that deposit.

We heard from some small businesses with Federal contracts. They have their contracts on hold, so they have had to dip into their cash reserves or furlough workers.

We also heard from a representative from the tourism industry who pointed out that travel and tourism in this country is losing $152 million a day during this government shutdown.

I know everybody here has heard stories such as that from their home States. I am sure the Presiding Officer has heard those kinds of stories from the State of Wisconsin.

Hopefully, we will reopen the government, we will pass this agreement today, we will be able to get those small businesses up and running again, we will be able to provide some certainty for those Federal contracts, we will be able to bring back to work those furloughed workers and make sure they get backpay. But the challenge is that we cannot let this happen again.

I am hopeful—because we have a budget conference committee going forward—there will be a process by which we can put in place a longer term budget agreement so we are not facing another shutdown in January, right after the holiday season. We do not want people to think they cannot spend money during this holiday season because there is going to be another government shutdown or because the country might think about again defaulting on its debts in early February.

As Chuck Withee from Provident Bank said yesterday: Small businesses will remain uncertain. They could face higher borrowing costs if Congress comes close to the brink yet again. It is an admonition I am certainly going to take to heart, and I hope all of us will.

Again, I thank everybody who has helped in reaching an agreement today. Hopefully, this will be approved by both Houses of Congress, we will get the government open, we will pay the country's bills, and we will not let it happen again.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Vermont.

Mr. SANDERS. Madam President, this country has gone through over 2 weeks of very difficult times. It is extremely distressful that approximately 1 million Federal employees have not received a paycheck. These Federal employees have gone 3 years without a raise, they have been furloughed because of sequestration, and now they have been sent home, in many cases without any pay. Similar to every other working American, these are people who are worried as to how they are going to pay their mortgages, how they are going to pay their car loans, how they are going to pay their college loans, and they are extremely anxious.

But it is not only the 1 million or so Federal employees who are hurting. Obviously, it is the tens of millions of Americans who are in enormous anxiety about whether they are going to get the Federal benefits they are entitled to and the Federal services they need.

I am talking now, as chairman of the Senate Committee on Veterans' Affairs, about Vietnam veterans who have written to me from Vermont and elsewhere who are worried that they may not get their veterans' disability benefits. Think about that. People who have put their lives on the line for this country, were wounded in action, and they are sitting at home wondering whether they are going to get a check, which they desperately need in order to keep their family going.

I am talking now about people on Social Security who are wondering that if this government actually defaults for the first time in our history—does not pay our bills—that they may not get a Social Security check. Millions and millions of seniors depend on that Social Security check in order to pay their bills and to maintain a very minimal standard of living.

I am talking about moms who today are walking their kids into the Head Start Program and then going off to work, and they are worried about what happens if their Head Start Program is shut down. What does that mean to their child? What does it mean to them? How do they get to work? Who is going to take care of their kid? Are they going to lose their job?

So what has happened in the last few weeks has brought a whole lot of anxiety and pain to tens and tens of millions of Americans. Why? Because over in the House we had a handful of right-wing extremists who decided they were going to hold hostage the American Government unless they were able to defund ObamaCare. That was last week. Then more recently, they were going to hold the government hostage unless we made major cuts in Social Security, Medicare, and Medicaid. That was a few days ago.

So I think what has happened has been incredibly unfortunate for our country. The damage done in terms of our position in the international community will take many years to overcome. What do you think the international community—people in Latin America, people in Europe, people in Asia—believes when they see the United States, the largest economy on Earth, presumably the leader of the free world, government is shut down and this country is debating whether we pay our bills? How does the President of the United States go to the United Nations, go to the world community, and say: Listen. There is an international crisis. You need to follow our lead. And we are the country that cannot even pay its bills or is threatening not to pay its bills for the last couple weeks and has shut down the entire U.S. Government.

So the damage already done by right-wing extremism is irreparable. I think people's confidence in the U.S. Government has been shattered. I am thinking about kids in Wisconsin or kids in Vermont who are now looking at the U.S. Government as some kind of joke, where maybe at some point they were thinking of running for office, getting involved in the political process, and now they say: It is not something I want to do. That is very sad.

I intend to vote for the agreement hammered out by the majority leader and the minority leader. But I wish to make something very clear. If anybody thinks this sequestration budget is a good thing for America, they are very mistaken.

As I understand it, sequestration will be extended until January 15, and we do not know what happens after that. Presumably that is going to be based on negotiations. But according to the CBO, the Congressional Budget Office, if, in fact—and I will do everything in my power to see that does not happen—but if the $988 billion sequestration budget were to go throughout this year, it would cost us some 900,000 jobs.

I have heard many of my Republican friends—and perhaps some Democrats—making the point, and an important point, that we have to do something about the budget deficit and we have to do something about our national debt. I agree with that. I am proud that along with other Members, we have cut the deficit in half from $1.4 trillion to $700 billion. Anyone who does not think that is progress is very wrong. Cutting the budget deficit in half is significant progress.

But let me make a point that is not made terribly often on this floor. Yes, the deficit is a serious problem. Yes, we have to work on it. But every poll I have seen—and in my discussions with people in Vermont—they say: Yes, the deficit is a serious problem. Do something about it. But let me tell you, Senator SANDERS, what is a more serious problem; that is, that the middle class of this country is disappearing. Median family income is lower today than it was 24 years ago. Real unemployment is close to 14 percent. Youth unemployment is somewhere around 20 percent. African-American youth unemployment is somewhere around 40 percent.

The people of America are saying do something about the economy. Make sure that when my kid graduates high school, there will be a job available for him or her. Do something about the high cost of college education because I do not want my son or daughter to be leaving school $25,000 or 50,000 in debt. Make sure, they tell me, that you do not cut Social Security because Social Security is one of the few bedrocks remaining to protect some of the most vulnerable people in this country. Make sure you do not voucherize Medicare, as the Ryan budget in the House proposed, ending Medicare as we know it and giving senior citizens an $8,000 check, and when they get diagnosed with cancer, good luck to them, because that $8,000 will last 2 or 3 days. Make sure you do not slash Medicaid.

The important point that has to be made is deficit reduction is an issue, but the more important issue the American people want us to resolve is to create the millions and millions of jobs this country desperately needs. The sequester budget we are voting on today moves us in exactly the wrong direction.

If that budget were to go on for a year—right now it is scheduled to end January 15. But if that would go on for a year, it would cost us 900,000 jobs rather than growing the many millions of jobs we currently need.

Let me again raise an issue many of my colleagues do not talk about, but I think the American people understand. At a time when we have more income and wealth inequality in this country than since the 1920s, what morality demands, and, in fact, what good economics demands, is you do not balance the budget on the backs of the elderly, the children, working families, the poor. But I do not hear much of that discussion here.

If you have a situation in America where the top 1 percent owns 38 percent of the wealth, and the bottom 60 percent owns 2.3 percent of the wealth, who should have to experience austerity? Should we go to working families who in many cases have seen a decline in their income and say: Guess what. We are going to have to balance the budget on your backs. We are going to have to cut Medicare, cut Medicaid, cut nutrition programs, cut the ability of our kids to go to college, because we need to balance the budget. Guess what. The rich and the powerful have too many lobbyists here, so we are going to have to cut programs that impact you.

I know many people in the Senate want to move in that direction. I do not. Not only do we have an obscene, unfair distribution of wealth, it is as bad when we talk about income inequality.

The Presiding Officer has seen the same studies I have seen which talk about how in the last few years 95 percent of all new income generated in this country went to the top 1 percent—95 percent of all new income went to the top 1 percent, while tens of millions of other Americans saw a decline in their income.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator has used 10 minutes.

Mr. SANDERS. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent for 2 additional minutes.

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

Mr. SANDERS. I think if the Presiding Officer had a discussion at some diner in Wisconsin or I did the same in Vermont, and talked to people and said: Look, the wealthiest people are becoming much richer; the middle class is declining; poverty is at an all-time high, how do you think we should deal with deficit reduction? Do you think we should be cutting programs for the elderly, working families, the children, the sick, or the poor, or maybe do we ask the wealthiest people in this country to start paying their fair share of taxes?

Maybe—I know this is a terribly radical idea. Today one out of four major corporations pays zero in Federal income tax, because a lot of these multinational corporations are stashing their money in the Cayman Islands and in Bermuda and in other tax havens. I know it is a very radical idea. I guess I am an extremist to think maybe it is more important for corporate America, which is enjoying record-breaking profits—one out of four major corporations pays nothing in Federal incomes taxes—maybe we might want to ask them to pay something in taxes so we do not cut Social Security, Medicare, Medicaid, education and nutrition programs.

I think what goes on around here is our sense of reality is distorted because surrounding this building are not working families—they are too busy back home trying to maintain their family. Not children. We have the highest rate of childhood poverty in the industrialized world. They are not here. But all of the lobbyists from the billionaire organizations and for corporate America are here, telling us what we should be doing.

Well, I think maybe the time is long overdue that we stood for the working families of this country, for the children, and for the elderly, and not move for deficit reduction on the backs of the most vulnerable people.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from New Hampshire.

Ms. AYOTTE. Madam President, I have come to the floor a number of times during this government shutdown to say how absurd this has been for the American people, that we have found ourselves where we are, to have the government shut down, and those who brought forward a strategy to

defund ObamaCare—the exchanges have opened anyway. That is why I never supported this strategy, because I did not think it was smart for the country, or achievable.

We have been coming up against the debt ceiling issue, so I come to the floor today, after having come to the floor on several occasions, expressing my concerns and frustration.

I thank our leader MITCH MCCONNELL and the majority leader HARRY REID for coming together around an agreement ending the shutdown, to address the debt ceiling, even if on a short-term basis, so we can get out of the hole we are in, and start to deal with the big-picture problems facing the Nation.

Around this, I was very heartened that a bipartisan group of Senators came together to solve this problem, led by Senator COLLINS from Maine, and seven Republicans and seven Democrats. Let me say among the 7 Democrats was my colleague from New Hampshire Senator SHAHEEN, who I see in the Chamber. If the Chair would recognize Senator SHAHEEN, I want to thank her, because what we have been able to do in New Hampshire is that she and I, even though we come from opposite sides of the aisle, have been able to find ways to work together on behalf of our State and on behalf of the country.

She was in this group of seven Senators as a Democrat, I was there as a Republican, both representing the State of New Hampshire, ready with an agreement to solve this crisis. So I want to recognize my colleague and thank her for being part of a group that wanted to solve these problems for the Nation.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from New Hampshire.

Mrs. SHAHEEN. Madam President, I very much appreciate my fellow Senator from New Hampshire Ms. AYOTTE for her remarks. I would echo those. She and I have both been to the floor over the past few weeks to talk about the devastating impacts of this government shutdown. It has been an unnecessary hardship—a very real hardship—placed on so many New Hampshire families, so many New Hampshire businesses, and the challenges it meant for the economy of our State and for the Nation.

I ask my colleague if it would be important, as we think about going forward and trying to deal longer term with the need to come up with a budget for this country, the need to address paying our bills in the long term, if this kind of bipartisanship we tried to exhibit for New Hampshire would be important for all of us to think about as we try to solve those challenges long term and also for us to try to reassure the people of New Hampshire that I believe we are going to be working together to try and do that, and hopefully everyone else here will do the same?

Ms. AYOTTE. Let me say to my colleague from New Hampshire, the senior Senator from New Hampshire, I agree with that. We cannot go through this again. It is incumbent on all of us to work together even though we come from different parties so that we do not go from crisis to crisis in managing this Nation.

I do hope with this agreement we are able to come to a longer term budget for the Nation, a longer term fiscal agreement for the Nation to address our $17 trillion debt, to address the challenges facing our economy, to work together to show people we can solve problems on behalf of this country, and that we can make sure we are not continuing to go from crisis to crisis as we represent New Hampshire and this Nation.

I know both of us joined that group because we had had it with what was happening here and we were ready to solve the problems together.

Mrs. SHAHEEN. I thank my friend and colleague from New Hampshire.

Ms. AYOTTE. Madam President, I want to continue to thank the Senators on both sides of the aisle. We were working together with our leadership. I mentioned this was an effort led by Senator COLLINS, Senator MURKOWSKI from Alaska, Senator MCCAIN, Senator JOHANNS, Senator KIRK, Senator FLAKE, on the Republican side of the aisle, and on the Democratic side of the aisle, Senator MANCHIN, Senator BEGICH, Senator PRYOR, Senator SHAHEEN, Senator KLOBUCHAR, Senator DONNELLY, Senator HEITKAMP, and we were even tripartisan because we had Senator KING with us as well in these efforts.

I think what we demonstrated is we can come together as a core group. When things break down here, there are many of us who desire to solve the problems facing the Nation. We know we cannot do it with one party alone. It took two parties to get us $17 trillion in debt; it is going to take two to get us out of this hole. Just like this fiscal crisis, it takes two parties to get us out and solve the Nation's problems. I think that is what we learned from this experience. I want to thank those who have worked so hard on it.

Let me say: I am blessed to be a mother. My children just turned 6 and 9 years old during this whole crisis situation. It has been hard to get home during this time. My family is still in New Hampshire. I still live in New Hampshire. My daughter Kate asked me: Mom, why can't you just get the government open? What is wrong? Well, why can't you get this solved?

It is a such a commonsense question that I got from her and from our son Jacob. Think about the lessons we try to teach our children. Are we not always trying to teach them that when they get into a conflict, you have to work it out? That, yes, you do not get to get everything your way, that it is not always your way.

Well, those are the lessons I think all of us, regardless if we are Republicans, Democrats, Independents, try to teach our children. So I found myself in a hard position here where she is asking me the tough question. I had to say to her: You are right, Kate, we have to work together; otherwise, we are not going to get this solved.

Even though I feel very strongly about my principles, I know my Democratic colleagues do also. What kind of lesson am I showing if I cannot help get this resolved? That is why I was proud to be part of a bipartisan agreement.

Let me bring us back to why we got into this government shutdown for a moment, because the other thing, being a mother of two children, when something goes wrong, I always ask my children when they make a mistake: What did you learn from this? What was the lesson you learned from the mistake?

I did not believe the defunding ObamaCare strategy was going to succeed from the beginning, not because I am not a strong opponent of ObamaCare. I absolutely am. But the fact of the matter was that the government shut down and the exchanges opened anyway. Yet the government was shut down, and we put all of those people who were worried about whether they were going to get their paychecks, veterans worried about what is going to happen—we can go on and on. I have heard the impact in my State.

By the way, all the flaws those of us believe that do exist in ObamaCare were all overshadowed by the fact that the government was shut down.

I do want to fix this law. I want to repeal it. I want to replace it with commonsense reform. But this was not a strategy to make that happen.

I guess I would ask the question that I ask to my children: What did we learn from all of this? What we learned is this was not a successful strategy from the beginning. That, yes, you can be against ObamaCare, as I am. I am for repealing it and replacing it. But shutting down the government was not a smart strategy and not the right direction. I hope we never do this again. I hope we learned our lessons. I ask my children to do that, I am going to ask myself to do it, and I am going to ask others to do it.

Let's move forward. Let's work together. Let's find ways—as we get to January when the funding for the government expires again, and February, let's take on the big challenges facing this Nation, the $17 trillion in debt.

Let's get a budget for the Nation. Let's move forward from here, learn our lessons, work together, and get it done for the American people.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Florida.

Mr. NELSON. I wish to speak about the issue at hand.

Thank the good Lord we are finally having, as the Good Book says, people who will come let us reason together.

I am so grateful, for the hundreds of thousands of people who have been directly hurt by this shutdown. I am very

grateful we will avoid a default that would not only hurt the people of this country but would irreparably damage the financial foundation of this Nation. This should have never happened in the first place.

We have heard the two previous Senators, one a Democrat and one a Republican, say the same—it shouldn't have happened in the first place. One doesn't hold the country hostage and disrupt people's lives to get their particular agenda done, particularly when they are dealing with an existing law that has been upheld as constitutional by the Supreme Court. But that is exactly what has happened.

We are in a situation in the politics of this country where narrow, certain special interests claim their position is the only position and have it reflected in Congress so that the political ideology of a narrow, small group of extremists can direct the affairs of the Congress. This group, especially in the House, can cause the trauma and the turmoil we have been through.

We apparently have an agreement. I assume we are going to vote on it in the Senate, and it should pass overwhelmingly sometime today. Then the question is will it be put in front of the entire House so Republicans and Democrats alike can vote for this and get us over this immediate potential crisis.

December, January, and February are the deadlines set in the agreement we will pass today. The first challenge will be for the Budget Committee—a conference committee from the Senate meeting with a conference committee from the House—to hammer out the differences between the two budgets, as there are substantial differences. We will have our first test shortly when the conference committee is named and goes to work. We will see whether they can start bridging some of those differences.

Simultaneously, there are going to be many Senators meeting to talk about what has been referred to as the grand bargain, which could be under the umbrella of what the budget conference committee does. Since the Budget Committee is talking about top-line numbers of appropriations and the details are left to the individual committees, there need to be many good-will negotiations with respect to each other in order to build consensus. We have not seen a great deal of that around here, but we are starting to see glimmers of it today.

The great test is going to come in the next couple of months by the deadline of December 13 and then, of course, January 15. I don't think anybody with common sense would want to approach this by not getting an agreement before January 15. That is when this next tranche of severe budget cuts, spending cuts across the board, including half of those spending cuts in defense, expires. We have heard defense official after defense official tell us that this is not good for the security of this country.

Hopefully the Budget Committee can achieve an agreement in conference committee that will avoid that sequester. If all of that is done and the wheels are set in motion about the fleshing out of a Budget Committee agreement—for example, tax reform done in the Finance Committee in the Senate and done in the Ways and Means Committee in the House, tax reform such as getting rid of a lot of the loopholes, producing revenue, utilizing, for example, some of the revenue to lower tax rates, some of the revenue to pay down and lower the deficit, and some of that revenue to replace the sequester that is going to have such negative effects on the common security of this country. If all of that is done by January 15, then we won't have a problem February 7, which is the time the artificial, statutorily imposed debt ceiling expires, because that crisis of potential default will have been absolved by virtue of agreements prior to that.

That is a lot of good will that is going to have to take place in the next few months. That is a lot of mutual consideration and respect that is going to have to reign, instead of much of what we have seen here the past few weeks.

I am grateful we have this agreement and that in the next 2 days it can be wrapped up and default can be avoided. I am hopeful, albeit cautious, that we can avoid this again, with good public policy.

I close by saying that a public office is a public trust. We, as public officials, ought to recognize that our responsibility is to represent all of the people, not only some of the narrow interests represented in this country. If we will approach these next 2 days and then the next several months representing and recognizing that a public office is a public trust, then we can get it done. That is my hope, my prayer, and why I am very grateful we have come to this point.

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

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The bill clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

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

Mr. CARDIN. Mr. President, we are obviously pleased that our Senate leaders, Senators MCCONNELL and REID, have negotiated a bipartisan way to end this crisis. This agreement will open government, will allow us to honor our bills, and it sets up a mechanism, using the regular order of the Senate, to resolve the budget impasse and to hopefully negotiate a budget for this country.

The good news is that in passing this compromise agreement we will end this self-inflicted harm on our country that has been caused by the government shutdown and the threatened failure for us to honor the obligations of this country. Make no mistake about it. We have harmed our country. The shutdown, which started on October 1, has hurt America's economy. The threatened default on our obligations has hurt America's creditworthiness reputation. Consumer confidence has been damaged.

Consumer confidence is important. That is where people are willing to go out and buy or travel or go to restaurants. As a result of the uncertainty caused by this self-inflicted crisis, consumer confidence has fallen dramatically. That has an impact on so many businesses in our communities—so many businesses. Many small businesses have been hurt very badly.

This morning I joined Senator BOXER in bringing some small business owners here to demonstrate the harm that was done. We heard from the operator of Blackwater Paddle and Pedal Adventures, located on the eastern shore of Maryland near the Blackwater National Wildlife Refuge. That refuge, as you know, is closed. This company has two locations, one in the very historic part of our State where Harriet Tubman conducted her Underground Railroad, which is right next to the Blackwater Wildlife Refuge. So this is a place people want to go, but they also want to go into the refuge for many reasons. Some get permits to hunt, some fish, some bird watch, some ride bikes, some like to look at the eagles, of which we have an incredible display there. But the fact Blackwater was closed meant this small business owner lost a lot of revenue. She related exactly how much money it was. She said: On Saturdays, I was doing about $1,500, and that went down to about $150.

That is life and death for this small business owner. That is what this shutdown has meant. We can multiply that by hundreds of thousands of small businesses across this country that have been harmed dramatically as a result of the shutdown. All that added together means our economy has been dragged down.

We had a hearing yesterday of the Small Business Committee on which I serve. Senator LANDRIEU conducted the hearing. We had a roundtable with about 8 or 10 people. Some were small business owners, giving very similar stories as to what we heard about Blackwater Paddle and Pedal Adventures. Some represented financial groups that did SBA loans, and they gave specific examples of how the SBA loans could not be processed.

What does that mean? They gave an example of a company located right near me in Owings Mills, MD. They had a loan that was ready to be closed but was not closed. That person is in the process of buying equipment that might have to be foreclosed if they do not get the SBA loan, and they will lose their deposit. The one near my house was opening a new motel-hotel. That could be delayed or jeopardized as a result of this.

We had all types of examples given, putting real faces on those who have been harmed as a result of this shutdown.

Our economy has suffered dramatically. The private contractors who rely upon Federal payments in order to pay their workers laid off thousands of private contract employees in my State and throughout our country. Businesses had to lay off additional people, major damage to our economy.

I take this floor many times to talk about our Federal workforce. I am honored to represent a large number of Federal employees, consisting of about 10 percent of the workforce in the State of Maryland. Over 100,000 of these workers were put on furlough. They had to go through the anxiety of not knowing whether they could pay their bills. We hurt American families and we hurt our economy.

So what do we need to do? How do we move forward? First and foremost, we have to get this agreement to the President and signed as quickly as possible. Every day hurts our economy. I hope we can figure out a way to get it done today and to the President today and signed today and get our economy back on track.

Next we have to deal with the economic problems we have. This agreement gives us a little breathing space. It sets up a way we pay our bills, we keep government open, and we negotiate. But we are going to have to negotiate an agreement. What this country needs more than anything is predictability. We can't keep leapfrogging from crisis to crisis. That is not governing. We have to govern. The American people expect us to govern. They expect us to work out our problems. They do not want to hear the House is under one party and the Senate is under another party and it is tough for us to work these things out. They expect us to get the job done. They expect us to govern, and governing means we need to negotiate a budget that covers more than just a couple of months, but that takes us through the end of the next fiscal year. That is what we need to do. That will put us on a glidepath for economic growth.

Shutting down the Federal Government and teetering on the edge of default killed middle-class jobs, cost our Nation billions of dollars, harmed our economic competitiveness, and severely damaged consumer confidence. We can't go through that again. It worries me that in 1990 we said we wouldn't go through this again—and we did. So we need to establish the right legacy, and that means starting now, with Democrats and Republicans working together on a budget that makes sense for our country. We need to seize this opportunity to bring long-term stability and predictability to our economy.

The world needs to know America is open for business. One of the most damaging editorials I saw during this shutdown appeared in the state newspaper in China on October 13. It read:

> It is perhaps a good time for the befuddled world to start considering building a deAmericanized world.

We need to let the world know that America is open for business and that we have got our house in order and we are not going to continue to govern from crisis to crisis. We need to get that done.

What we need to do is negotiate a budget that makes sense for this country. Get this agreement done, get government open, pay our bills, but then negotiate a budget that allows for economic growth.

The very first thing we need to negotiate? Getting rid of sequestration. Sequestration is mindless across-the-board cuts. It says every priority in government is equally important. That is not true. If you have a problem with your family budget, you don't cut every spending item exactly the same percentage. You will make sure you have shelter for your family, make sure you have food on the table, maybe you will postpone a vacation or something, but everything is not the same priority. Sequestration says everything is the same priority. We need to get rid of sequestration and we need to do that in the context of this budget negotiation.

Yes, we want to make sure we have long-term financial stability and that we pay our bills. I was proud to be part of a Congress that actually balanced the budget when President Clinton was President. I know there are tough decisions. But we know how to do it.

We need to make sure we invest in job growth. We need more jobs in America. So, yes, we need to invest in transportation and roads and transit systems. We need water infrastructure to modernize our water systems in this country to allow for economic growth. We need to invest in education. We need to invest in research——

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator has 1 minute remaining.

Mr. CARDIN. I ask unanimous consent to speak for an additional 3 minutes.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection?

Without objection, it is so ordered.

Mr. CARDIN. I thank my colleague from Virginia for that extra time.

We need to end sequestration, we need to invest in job growth, and we need to have a balance between revenue and spending so we have a way in which America can continue to grow.

We need to deal with our Federal workforce. Shutting down the Federal Government was a punch in the gut to Federal workers and contractors. Make no mistake about it. This agreement intends to hold our Federal workers harmless as far as pay, and more particularly it brings them back to work to do the essential work of these agencies.

I have talked before about the important work done by many of these Federal agencies—the Environmental Protection Agency, protecting our public health, protecting our environment; the Small Business Administration, processing loans for small businesses; the National Institutes of Health, doing ground-breaking research to make the next great discovery for America; NIST, working to give us technology so that we are competitive; the FDA's food safety programs; and the list goes on and on and on.

The bottom line is we need to work together. We not only need to open the government and pay our bills, but we need an agreement for a responsible budget that will give us predictability, job growth, and economic competitiveness to meet the world's global economy. I hope we will take advantage of the time this agreement gives us to put our country first and do what is right with America's future.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Virginia.

Mr. WARNER. Mr. President, I thank my colleague for his voice throughout this debate. He and I and a number of other colleagues realized early on this self-inflicted crisis of putting our workforce in jeopardy was bad policy, bad politics, and bad for our country. I am very glad that the resolution it looks like we are approaching is going to make sure our Federal workforce gets back to work and to the job of helping America, and they are going to get compensated for it. But I would add that it is not going to make everybody whole.

Mr. CARDIN. Mr. President, may I ask my colleague to yield?

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Maryland.

Mr. CARDIN. I thank my friend from Virginia for yielding.

Through the Chair, I thank Senator WARNER for his help in making sure we do what is right for our Federal workforce. They suffered through furloughs because of sequestration, furloughs because of a government shutdown, freezes in their pay, attacks on their retirement, attacks on their health benefits, and they are asked to do more with fewer people because of freezes in hiring. Yes, we will try to hold them harmless as far as this furlough is concerned, but we have to make sure we attract the very best in public service because of the critical work they do. I thank the Senator very much for his help.

Mr. WARNER. I agree with the Senator from Maryland.

I was in the private sector longer than the public sector, and I have run companies. I have never seen a management style which would say to the workforce, ''We are going to ask you to do more with less money'' and then treat them as poorly as they have been treated repeatedly by some of the attacks the Senator from Maryland has laid out.

I wish to take a moment, as a number of my colleagues have, to state that it looks as if this self-inflicted political crisis may be finally coming to an end.

To paraphrase Charles Dickens, in a way, it may be the best of times and the worst of times.

In a certain sense, it may be the best of times because over the last couple of days we have seen the leaders of the Senate, Leader REID and Leader MCCONNELL, basically say: Let's put away some of the disputes and end this crisis. So I compliment their work and all the bipartisan efforts that have been going on to put this to an end. So in a certain sense perhaps it is the best of times. Yes, we are about to finally do our job. We are about to actually reopen the government and put our workforce back to work, and by a whisker we are avoiding default and the financial calamity which would ensue if we continued down that path.

But it is also the worst of times in that once again we took this conversation to the eleventh hour. We have inflicted damage on our economy and our reputation. And due not to a Republican or Democratic skirmish but really due to a small group of ''our way or the highway'' crowd, we have violated the first principle of governing or medicine, which says: First, do no harm.

Unfortunately, the actions of this self-inflicted crisis have done harm even if we reopen the government and avoid default. Economist Mark Zandi has estimated that the cost to our economy is at least $20 billion. Reopening the government and avoiding default isn't going to erase the $20 billion hit to an economy that has been struggling.

I wish those who advocated for this shutdown, who advocated for this brinkmanship would be willing to come down and explain to folks in my State or, for that matter, in their States—if you happen to be a government contractor and if some of your workforce was deemed essential, they may actually get paid, but for the portion of your workforce deemed nonessential, chances are they won't be paid. One company in Virginia with 5,500 people—30 percent of its workforce was deemed nonessential. The company has tried to pay those people through this period. Some will be paid, some will not. Those individuals, those families will not recover. I would like to have somebody come down and explain what all this was for in terms of the hurt in their personal lives.

I would like for some of the folks who advocated these tactics to come and explain to a restaurant owner in Hampton, VA—where the workforce at NASA Langley, which was 3,500 strong, was reduced through this furlough to 7 people—with the lost receipts for the restaurant over the last 2 weeks, how their tactics somehow improved the fortunes of that private sector business.

I would like for those who advocated that it was smart politics to shut down the government and take us to the verge of default to explain to the motel owner on Skyline Drive in Virginia who lost a couple of weekends of the peak fall foliage season and won't see any of those dollars come back, how it was in their best interest to shut down.

It is not just in Virginia. It is Yosemite in California and national parks in Texas. I would be anxious for some of those who advocated these tactics to explain to those private sector business owners who won't see those dollars come back. They are not going to get recouped.

I would like those who come to this floor and talk about trying to get rid of our debt and deficit and the burdens on the taxpayer to explain how these tactics of shutting down the government and bringing our Nation to the verge of default helps the American taxpayer. The American taxpayer comes out a giant loser from these tactics.

The Federal Government workforce rightfully is going to be repaid, so there is no savings there. As a matter of fact, the cost of starting and stopping any enterprise is enormous. Anyone who has run any kind of business understands that.

So I hope those who have advocated these tactics will come down and explain to the American taxpayers how this created a bigger deficit and explain why this made sense.

I would like for those who advocated these tactics to come down and not just talk to the American people but talk to the world and say how this helped America's national reputation.

America has been ranked by the credit agencies as the most secure credit in the world. That is why, when there are crises around the world, investors buy dollars. It gets into sophisticated finance, but it means everything we do in America is a little bit cheaper because we are viewed—to paraphrase a company term—like the rock.

We have gone through two of these self-inflicted crises. The last two or three of these crises brought us close to the fiscal cliff or close to default, and the last time cost us a downgrade from one of the rating agencies. We saw yesterday the second rating agency, Fitch, put us on negative outlook. As a former Governor of the State of Virginia, where we kept our triple-A bond rating, you don't get back your reputation overnight by saying: Oops. Never mind.

We will be paying the price for these kinds of tactics for months or maybe years to come.

I would like those who advocated these tactics to come down and answer the kinds of headlines we saw in the Financial Times and Wall Street Journal where countries that may or may not be that friendly to us—China and Russia and others around the world—were saying: We need to move away from an American-centered economy around the world, a dollar-centered economy around the world—how this hit to our reputation was somehow in the best interest of our country.

I am glad Leader REID and Leader MCCONNELL worked out what appears to be at least a short-term solution. I am glad many of my colleagues on both sides of the aisle tried to find common ground. It appears we will reopen the government. It appears we will avoid defaulting and going into uncharted territory where we, candidly, don't really know how bad it could have been.

But before we celebrate too much, let's recognize that the reports are true as far as what the avoidance of this catastrophe will mean. It means we have 90 days before the government runs out of money again. We have 113 days until the debt ceiling might have to be raised again.

So my first hope as we move forward is that those who practiced the tactics of shutdown and threatening default will say: Never again will we put the full faith and credit of the United States of America at risk. Never again will we shut down our government, hurt our Federal workforce, hurt taxpayers, and hurt private businesses simply because we didn't get what we wanted in a political dispute.

I hope as well in the coming weeks we will recognize that the people who work for the United States of America, our Federal workers, deserve better; that when we come on the floor of this Senate or the other body and have our policy debates, we don't criticize the workforce the way it was repeatedly criticized; that we recognize that when we want to take a pound of flesh out of some program, we don't start with the Federal workforce because in the tight budget times we will face for the foreseeable future, we are going to have to ask that workforce to do more with less resources. Again, as somebody who has been in business longer than I have been in government, management 101 says that if you want your workforce to do better and do more with less, you start by acknowledging their challenges and rewarding them, not simply bashing them, not simply leaving this overhang of future furloughs or the kind of uncertainty that still seems to be around this place.

The second thing I hope we will go forward on is recognizing that sequestration was set up to be so stupid that no rational group of people would ever let it happen. Well, we have let it happen now for about 8 months so far. As challenging as it has been over the last 8 months, in this next fiscal year, which started on October 1, it is going to get exponentially worse.

I understand the concerns of my colleagues on the other side and my concern as well that we have to find a way to cut back on some of our spending. But there are smarter ways to do it than sequestration. So in this ensuing period, I hope we are able to work through that.

I do believe we need to take these next 90 days—or an even shorter period if we need a report back from the Budget Committee by mid-December—and recognize that this constant—every 3 months, every 6 months—manufactured budget crisis does our country no good.

If both sides will enter this next phase of negotiations with a little more sobriety, a little less willingness to call out each other by name, and actually recognize that we do have to get our balance sheet in order—if we want to avoid a repeat in January and February of these last couple of weeks—we have seen the damage we have done to our country—we are going to have to roll up our sleeves and recognize that we are going to have to deal with our entitlements. That means folks on my side of the aisle are going to have to think about how we preserve Medicare, Social Security, and Medicaid in a way that is affordable over the long haul. My friends on the other side of the aisle will have to realize what kind of government we want and what kind of government we are going to be willing to pay for.

As somebody who has spent the last 4 years combing through these numbers repeatedly, I don't think we can pay for the level of government the American people have expected with our existing Tax Code, so we are going to have to find ways to close down some of these loopholes, make our Tax Code more progrowth, but at the same time generate more revenue than we currently have.

It is never over until it is over, as I have found in the Senate, but my hope and prayer is that we will not do any more damage; that we will put a halt to this hemorrhaging of the $20 billion we have already inflicted on our economy; that we will say to that motel owner that we are not going to be willing to shut down a national park again come January; that we will say to that restaurant worker outside the Federal facility: You are going to be able to predict that the Federal Government isn't going to be laid off willy-nilly; that we will say to our Federal workforce we are going to ask you to do more with less, but we are going to support you in a way we have not done to date; that we will say to the American taxpayer we are not going to deepen the deficit by taking irrational actions by shutting down government; and we will say to the world that once again you can count on the United States of America to pay its bills in an orderly and regular fashion, and never again will we put the full faith and credit of America in jeopardy.

I hope and pray we will use this period to actually put a fix in place. The incremental amount of additional revenues needed to be changed or the incremental amount of changes that need to be made to our entitlement programs are relatively small and can be phased in over a period of a decade or more. I agree with the Senator from Maryland that we also have to invest. But I cannot help but think the best jobs program we can have for an economy that is anxious and ready to recover is to make sure that we in Washington do not create and manufacture another political crisis that puts that recovery in jeopardy.

It is the best of times and the worst of times. I hope we celebrate that we have done our job and avoided this calamity, but let's make sure we never do this again. Let's make sure we take the 90 days before the next CR expires and the 113 days before the debt ceiling comes and really get our fiscal House in order and make sure we give the American public the confidence they need to move forward.

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. KAINE. 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. KAINE. Mr. President, I rise to say a few words to applaud the Senate bipartisan leadership for the ongoing negotiation to do what the American public wants us to do, to reopen our government, affirm the fiscal soundness of the United States, and finally begin a true dialog of a budget conference to find a path forward for 2014.

This is what America wants us to do. They want us to work together in the Senate—Democrats and Republicans. They want the Senate and the House to work together. They want us to stop the foolish shutdown that has needlessly hurt individuals, our communities, our economy, and our prestige. Now is the time to do that and then begin the repair work that is ahead.

The deal that has been worked on by Senator REID, Senator MCCONNELL, and others is a bipartisan deal. As the Presiding Officer knows, that is necessary. The American public has provided a divided Congress—one House with a Democratic majority and one House with a Republican majority. If we are to get over this short-term hump—and indeed, if we are to get over the next hump through a budget negotiation—it is not going to be just one side dictating the terms. Those who thought they would shut down the government and dictate terms were wrong. Those who thought they could threaten default on the debt and dictate terms were wrong. When the American public has put one party in control of each House, the only way to find an agreement and come forward is for people to listen to each other and find compromise.

Again, we are not there yet. We hope we will be voting later in the day, but I think it is appropriate to say we appreciate the leadership of Senator REID and Senator MCCONNELL and finding—in a very challenging time—a path forward to do what is right for the country. We encourage those efforts and look forward to being on the floor later today to have a vote and send the appropriate signal, that the U.S. Government is open and the full faith and credit of this wonderful Nation stands unblemished.

If we do that today, the real work, in some ways, now begins. This whole exercise in brinkmanship could have been avoided if Congress had, in March, done what we in the Senate have been asking them to do and started a budget conference.

I have spoken about this many times on the floor—probably with a little bit of extra passion because I serve on the Budget Committee. Being on the Budget Committee has been an education for this naive freshman Senator. After working with others to pass a budget at 5 a.m. in the morning on March 23, I sort of believed that somehow government 101 would next say we would then take the Senate budget and the House budget—that indeed were very different documents—and put them immediately into a conference where we could find a compromise and move forward. That is what was contemplated by the 1974 Budget Act under which Congress operates.

What was odd is that after we did all of that work to pass the budget again and again and again, an effort to begin a budget conference was blocked. That was surprising. We would not be in a shutdown if we had done it in March. Nevertheless, we are at a place where we are going to fix the brinkmanship and then engage in the kind of dialog between the House and Senate so we can move forward.

Again, if there is to be a deal—and budget deals have proven to be elusive in this body in recent years—make no mistake. It is going to have to be a bipartisan deal. I feel very strongly about some issues, but the deal will certainly not be to my liking in all particulars. The House may feel strongly about some issues. They can't expect a deal that will be—in all particulars—to their liking. A divided government means we have to listen to each other, negotiate, find common ground, and that is what the American public has sent us to do.

In conclusion, I am proud of the Senate budget. What a budget conference will be is essentially an opportunity for each House to put their best document on the table and say: This is a budget that will be good for America. Having worked with my colleagues on the Senate Budget Committee in January, February, and March, I am proud of the budget we have passed.

I have done a lot of budgets. I did many budgets as a city councilman and a mayor in Richmond. I worked on budgets as the Governor of Virginia. We won some awards in our State for our fiscal acumen, and I think I know something about budgets.

What I know about the Senate budget and believe very strongly is this: If that Senate budget were to be put in place today, without changing one comma, without changing one apostrophe, it would be good for the Nation. The Senate budget we passed—fully aware there would be a conference, fully aware there would be negotiation and compromise—nevertheless, the Senate budget we passed does a lot of good. It is a budget that is focused primarily on economic growth—growing

our economy, adding jobs. The best anti-deficit strategy is a growing economy. In putting our budget together, we focused on issues such as infrastructure and educational investments that would help grow the economy.

We focused on the protection of key services, recognizing we have to deal with expense items. There are key services Americans depend on, so we reject the across-the-board, slash-and-burn of the sequester and instead find targeted ways where we can find savings that would nevertheless protect key services. The budget expresses a willingness to reform—to reform the way we spend, to reform programs such as Medicare, where cost growth has been so significant, to reform Defense spending in smart ways that will keep our Nation safe, as well as, yes, to reform tax policy, the tax expenditures, which is the polite way of saying loopholes, deductions, credits, exemptions—all of those tax expenditures that turn our revenue collection system into a kind of swiss cheese. We need to do tax reforms as well. If we are going to reform on the spending side, we need to reform tax expenditures as well.

Finally, the Senate budget offers us a path forward to credibly reduce the deficit and to replace the foolish, nonstrategic, across-the-board sequester cuts that have harmed Virginia and have harmed the Nation. That is not to say there will not be cuts. But if we are going to have cuts, they should be done with a strategic sense. Any CEO, any Governor would say that cuts should be strategic rather than across the board.

So I am very proud of our Senate budget, and I look forward to having an intense dialogue between Senate and House Members where we put the two budgets on the table, where finally a conference can begin, where the American public can see the different choices the House and Senate make, and thereby be educated about the choices. I think that if we sit in a conference and we have the two budgets on the table, folks will see the many virtues of the Senate approach. But all Senators involved in those discussions—and we don't know yet who they will be—as proud as they are, as proud as I am about the Senate budget—we will have to go into this with the full knowledge that we will not find the kind of deal going forward without being willing to listen, dialogue, and compromise.

I will conclude by saying it seems as though compromise is sort of a dirty word these days. Yet we have to reflect back that our very form of government depends upon it. The three branches, the checks and balances between the branches, assume a degree of dialogue and compromise. The legislative branch itself, with two Houses—it would have been easier with one—but with two Houses, on matters such as these, the need to get bills and legislation and budgets through both Houses requires compromise.

So I am glad we are finally entering that stage of a true budget conference—an opportunity to dialogue and compromise, which we should have done last spring. We can enter into it with pride that the Senate budget is a strong document that will help the economy, but also enter into it fully realizing that this short-term deal is not going to be solved by a House or a Senate plan that just had the support of one party. It had to get solved with a bipartisan deal that originated, thankfully, in the Senate. We will have to be willing, in order to find a long-term budget solution, to bring that same spirit to the table.

With that, Mr. President, I note the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. COONS). The clerk will call the roll.

The assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

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

Ms. MIKULSKI. I ask unanimous consent to speak for such time as I consume.

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

Ms. MIKULSKI. I come to the floor today with both a great deal of energy and a sense of relief—relief that it appears we have reached a bipartisan agreement to reopen the government, pay America's bills, and give us a path forward to deal with the ability to negotiate on some of our long-term fiscal challenges.

I come with a sense of energy because I think it shows that when there is a will, we find a way. This needs to be a sensible approach. I have a sense of optimism that this spirit of compromise that produced this new agreement will continue in the Senate as we work together.

I am so relieved we are going to extend the debt limit, at least to February 7, 2014. During this entire debate over the last several days, I was so apprehensive that America would become a deadbeat nation.

I was appalled, like so many Americans, that the families of four of our soldiers who had fallen in the line of duty were not going to get their death benefit. The wonderful Fisher family, who has been so kind and so generous to our veterans, paid that. This is the United States of America. We have a duty to our military. We have a duty to our military families. We were not going to be able to do that. That is just one example.

I was concerned about our T-bills, our famous Treasury bills, that have been not only part of the fiscal underpinning of the global economy, but also have given confidence to modest and conservative investors: Well, I will invest in T-bills because nothing will ever happen to our government.

I was concerned that our T-bills would go the way of junk bonds. So now, because we have extended the debt limit, we have agreed to pay the bills on debt we have already incurred. This is an excellent way of moving forward.

I also am pleased we are going to have, as part of this agreement, the reopening of the entire government. This means our government will be on a continuing funding resolution until January 15, 2014. This will enable us to set the framework for what our funding will be for the rest of the fiscal year.

Why are we in a shutdown of our Federal Government? The Presiding Officer is a member of the Appropriations Committee. I chair that committee. That is the committee that actually puts money in the Federal checkbook for the entire fiscal year. However, we are not wild spenders. We have a cap placed on us. That comes from the Budget Committee.

The Budget Committee sets the budget for the entire Federal Government. It sets what the cap should be on discretionary spending, which is the Appropriations Committee, on mandatory spending, which are programs that must be funded, whether it is Social Security, Medicare, veterans' benefits, and others that no matter what, they are to be funded. Then they also set what revenue we should have and where we should get it. The Budget Committee is absolutely crucial for us to do our work.

I am pleased there has been a commitment from the leaders to appoint conferees on the budget resolution so the Budget Committee can do its work and give back to we appropriators no later than December 16 what our cap is for spending for the entire fiscal year. If we can do that, we appropriators can do our job. I will say more about what appropriations are.

This is going to be a very tight schedule. The Budget Committee has been unable to meet because six Senators used their parliamentary tools to block the Budget Committee meeting, even though the Senate passed a budget with over 70 votes on March 23. We have wasted 6 months and we don't want to waste the next 6 weeks.

I am pleased there appears to be the ability for the Budget Committee to meet in conference with the House of Representatives. That means the chair of the Senate Budget Committee, Senator PATTY MURRAY, and the ranking member or vice chairman, Senator JEFF SESSIONS of Alabama, will meet with PAUL RYAN, the Republican chairman in the House Budget Committee, and CHRIS VAN HOLLEN, another Marylander and a very able ranking member.

I wish them well because we need to know how much discretionary spending we are going to have, we need to be able to look at mandatory spending, and we need to look at revenues. If we can pass this agreement reached by our leadership on both sides of the aisle, Democratic leader Senator REID, and Republican leader Senator MCCONNELL,

we can, within hours, reopen our government and pay our bills.

These are our constitutional responsibilities. The American people deserve a government that works as hard as they do. We need to put our Federal Government and our Federal employees back to work. This agreement does that. It says to the American taxpayer and to the entire world, America is not a deadbeat nation. We can work together to enact bipartisan, fiscally responsible legislation to keep our government going. There is no doubt that we have significant fiscal challenges ahead of us.

As we prepare to vote, I would encourage all of us to take stock of what has happened in the Senate the past several days. It is time we take stock of where we are and what it means. The crisis we have just lived through might be very good for TV ratings, but it is lousy for credit ratings. It is good for TV ratings because the Nation was gripped by what they saw. They couldn't believe it. I was in the Senate working, and I couldn't believe it either; that we could not in a straightforward way come to grips with the fact that we needed to reopen government, but we were being held back by those who wanted to defund ObamaCare.

This crisis of the U.S. Government and the fear that the U.S. Government might not pay its bills has created a crisis of confidence. As we work on implementing the deal we are promoting, we also have to work to ensure that we rebuild the confidence of the American people and those who depend on and look to the U.S. Government, those that are treasured allies and emerging nations to whom we would say be a democracy and be like us. We have to use our time not only to get our fiscal act together, but we have to restore the confidence in our ability to govern.

America is a middle-of-the-road nation. We need an environment where the middle speaks, where the middle class now speaks and says: Please represent me, meet our national security needs, make public investments in physical infrastructure and in human infrastructure such as education and access to higher education. Please make public investments in research and development that will create new ideas for the new jobs in the new economy of the 21st century. This is what they want us to be able to do.

For those of us in this great institution called the Senate and the other side of the Capitol, the House of Representatives, we have to be middle-of-the-roaders. It is the middle, maybe a little to the center left or to the center right, but we have to be in the middle. Middle-of-the-roaders are the ones who helped bring us to this deal.

I wish to thank those who put forth some other ideas during this debate, Senator COLLINS, Senator KLOBUCHAR, and the so-called group of 12. They had some very interesting ideas. As we go forward on implementing the deal, we ought to consider some of them. They helped create a climate and a tone where people showed they wanted to be pragmatic and also wanted to be patriotic, which is to make sure that the esteem of the U.S. Government continues to take hold both among our own people and around the world.

I wish to be sure we all work together. I fear the middle-of-the-road legislator could be an endangered species. I hope not. I hope the middle-of-the-roaders don't become roadkill. We can show now it is not only the deal that has been made, but we must vote on the bill, pass the bill, and then we need to implement it.

America and its government cannot go from one crisis to another. We cannot govern by crisis. We cannot govern by one party or the other extorting it from the other—my way or I will shut it down. We have to show that we are a deliberative body. We have to show we are a nation of laws and rules, not of people, personalities, and pundits. We need to demonstrate that.

I compliment those who have been voices of moderation and voices for creating the climate to bring us to this point.

I also wish to thank our leadership for being willing to step to the plate and be leaders. I would also like to thank Senator REID and Senator MCCONNELL for the leadership and statesmanship they possess.

We are on the brink of brinkmanship. We had enough of gamesmanship, and they stepped forward to show us what statesmanship is. I wish to thank them for what they did.

I chair the Appropriations Committee. I am not a solo act. I have 12 wonderful subcommittee chairmen who are eager and itching to go to work. I have an outstanding Republican conservative as my vice chairman, Senator SHELBY of Alabama. We want to work. We want to work together and we want to work with civility, mutual respect, and get the job done.

I say to my friends on the other side of the dome, we want to govern. We want to govern wisely. We want to govern efficiently, and we want to govern respectfully.

I say to my colleagues on my side who have elected me the chair of this committee, they may count on me to do my best.

I say to those on the other side of the aisle, they may count on me to continue to run an inclusive committee of discussion, open debate, amendments, so we can move our process forward. Everybody feels included. Everybody has their say. Everybody has their day. At the end of the day though, we will vote.

To my colleagues on the other side of the dome, let us work together. We have shown in the past we know how to talk to each other, we know how to listen to each other, and we can get the job done. I believe America wants us to get on with the job. Americans want to be able to have a government they can count on. Americans want to be able to have a government that works as hard as they do. They want to have a Congress that acts in the interests of the Nation, of the next generation, and not of the next election.

I am ready to vote for the agreement reached by our leadership, go to work, and do everything I can to make sure we follow the middle of the road—that sensible center—and to make sure the American middle class has their day and their say.

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

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

Mr. CASEY. Mr. President, I rise today on a day when we are ever hopeful that we will be able to complete legislation tonight that will remove the threat of a default as well as to open the government and to allow us to go forward now with negotiations on short-term budget issues for the next year and even beyond. I am confident that will happen, that we will be able to complete most or all of the work tonight.

In a larger sense, the reason it is vitally important we get this agreement effectuated is because there are an awful lot of people out there hurting, and hurting for several reasons. We have had a recovering economy, but job growth hasn't moved fast enough. We still have, by way of example in Pennsylvania, over ½ million people out of work—at last count, 501,000 Pennsylvanians out of work. The percentage number really doesn't tell you much. It has been hovering around 7½ percent or a little higher for a long while, but more than ½ million people out of work is devastating.

As the Presiding Officer knows, his State of Ohio and Pennsylvania have a lot of similarities in terms of our workforce. When I go across Pennsylvania, we have sometimes the biggest urban areas, such as Philadelphia, still having high unemployment numbers, and sometimes very small counties having an equally high percentage of people out of work. My home area of northeastern Pennsylvania has still far too many people out of work.

So when you add a tough economy still for a lot of people, plus the impact of the indiscriminate, across-the-board cuts by way of sequestration—which I believe is bad public policy, and we will talk more about that later, and it will be the subject of greater debate than it has been—and, thirdly, you add the impact of the shutdown, and, finally, you add this time of coming perilously close to a default, it has been, for all those reasons, a difficult period for the country and a very difficult period for

those who are trying to make ends meet every day.

We have a chance in the next couple of hours to vote in a manner that will lift some of that anxiety, some of that worry. I was here this past weekend on the floor talking about a letter I had received from a woman in northeastern Pennsylvania. She talked about her circumstance and her husband's circumstance as a result of the government shutdown, but then she talked about her parents, ages 85 and 83. Here is what she said about her parents:

> . . . they should not have this uncertainty. These should be their golden years. It breaks my heart to hear my mother saying she can't sleep and has a stomachache from the worry about where our country is headed. Middle and low income families cannot afford another economic downturn. We are just barely recovering from the last one.

That letter that came from northeastern Pennsylvania I think spoke for people across our State and across our country as to what people have been living through, trying to recover from the recession of several years ago and then being hit with a government shutdown and then our coming to the brink of default.

For all those reasons, we hope the work that is done today with the compromise agreement Majority Leader REID and Republican Leader MCCONNELL have entered into becomes the consensus not only here in the Senate but in the House as well. No legislation can remove all of the anxiety and the worry people have, but certainly it will provide some measure of relief for families.

We had another story that came to us yesterday of a family in Pennsylvania, led by the mother of the family. Kelly Brown is her name. She has four children, and the children's ages are 17, 14, and she has two 9-year-old twins. This story was in the Pottstown Mercury, Tuesday, October 15. Kelly's story is emblematic of the impact of the shutdown—just the shutdown itself—and what that did to her.

Kelly is in an apartment in southeastern Pennsylvania with her four children. She was moving along the path to getting a mortgage and being able to move into a house kind of one county over, not too far from where she was living. In the first couple paragraphs of the story, it says:

> Then the government shutdown froze her mortgage. And over the weekend, the home's seller notified Brown that she couldn't wait any longer.

Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent to have printed in the RECORD this story dated October 15 of this year entitled ''Gov't shutdown could leave single mom, kids, homeless.''

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

[From the Mercury, Oct. 15, 2013]

GOV'T SHUTDOWN COULD LEAVE SINGLE MOM, KIDS, HOMELESS

(By Frank Otto)

BOYERTOWN.—Kelly Brown was all set. With a pre-approved mortgage through the U.S. Department of Agriculture, she had an agreement on a house in Boyertown where she could move with the four children for whom she has full custody.

Currently in an apartment, it would be the first house Brown, 44, would have since she lost her home in a divorce settlement seven years ago.

Then the government shutdown froze her mortgage. And over the weekend, the home's seller notified Brown she couldn't wait any longer.

''Three weeks ago we were celebrating getting my first house,'' Brown said. ''And now we're here.''

With the agreement in place before the shutdown, Brown and her own real estate agent, Jack Dolan, of Keller Williams, began putting money into the home through appraisals, deposits and improvements such as the removal of asbestos.

''We thought, of course the government won't shut down,'' Brown said.

As September ended, the shutdown did indeed occur, which put the pre-approved mortgage through the Department of Agriculture on hold.

Brown continued forward hoping the shutdown wouldn't affect her move out of her apartment in Upper Frederick, where she'd given notice prior to the shutdown.

She'll have to be out of the apartment she shared with her sons, Oliver, 17, Noah, 14, and 9-year-old twins Duncan and Isabella, by Nov. 2.

The settlement on the home in Boyertown was scheduled for Oct. 25.

''We were moving ahead 'thinking the shutdown is going to end. The shutdown is going to end,' '' Brown said.

Then, with the mortgage still frozen and no clear resolution to the shutdown in sight, the seller notified Brown through Zuber Realty, their Realtor, that they couldn't wait any longer and were going to move ahead with attempting to sell the house to someone else.

''Over the weekend, they said they would no longer give us any time,'' Brown said. ''They said they'd sell the house to somebody else, knowing all the money we had already paid and it was through no fault of my own.''

Richard A. Zuber, owner of Zuber Realty, said the seller couldn't hold the house out any longer without getting a return on the property.

Zuber said the decision rested with the seller, who intends to stay open to selling to Brown if no buyer is found once the shutdown ends.

''We definitely have sympathy because it's not their fault,'' Zuber said. ''This all hangs on the federal government.''

Brown said Dolan suggested attempting to rent the house until the shutdown was over but the seller was not in favor of that.

At this point, Brown is concerned that she might not have a place to live with her family come Nov. 2. She has no relatives in the area and now has to brainstorm.

''I work for the (Montgomery County) Office of Children and Youth as a caseworker,'' Brown said. ''It's kind of ironic because this is what I do. I help families that have neglect or abuse of children and help them with services to find housing.''

An additional concern is that her son, Oliver, is applying to colleges now and expecting acceptance letters.

''What's going to happen with that?'' she said. ''Where are we going to have a mailbox?''

Serving as a classroom aide in the Pottstown School District while she got her master's degree to become a social worker, Brown said she's ''devastated'' after all the work she put in.

''We were finally at that point where we could do it,'' Brown said.

Mr. CASEY. My office is working with Kelly now to see if we can't be helpful. But the point is she should never have had to go through that anxiety and worry, and risk not being able to move into that house that she had a chance to move into.

That is what real life is. Real life is trying to complete a mortgage application and moving along to go from an apartment to a home with your four children and being stopped because of a shutdown here. And in the case of the earlier letter I referred to, it is a daughter talking about her parents and the worry they have, and the literally sleepless nights and pain and anxiety because of what is happening or not happening here in Washington.

We hope and pray on days such as this that the actions taken will lift some of that anxiety and provide a measure—and maybe it will only be a very small measure—of comfort and what we hope will be some degree of stability.

I think once we get past this period, we can get back to the work the American people expect us to focus on, which is—if I could put this in a sound bite, what I hear from people in Pennsylvania saying they hope I will do as one of their representatives—that we will work together to create jobs or work together to help the middle class, work together to move the economy forward, or some variation of that, and that is what we hope to get to.

As important as it is to begin the process of talking about and negotiating on a budget for the next year and on the longer term fiscal question, it is very important for both parties to get back to the focus of building a stronger middle class and building a stronger economy.

You don't have to go very far or read the paper for many days to find evidence that the middle class has never been more under siege, never been more undermined or weakened over time than the middle class is today. On September 19 of this year, in The New York Times, there was a graph—I won't put the graph in the record but I will summarize it very briefly—of all kinds of data that indicated what has happened to the middle class in the last generation. The headline over the description of the graphs was ''standing still,'' with a big question mark. The point it makes is that the middle class is virtually where it was many years ago, if not further behind.

I am quoting from some of that summary where it says:

> The costs of maintaining a middle-class life-style have increased.

Then in the middle of the page there is a graph that talks about the middle 20 percent of the country—basically what most would describe as the middle class. And in that 20 percent you can tell, just from a little more than a generation—this graph goes from 1967 to 2012—that the share of total income

of that middle 20 percent of the country has gone from 17.1 percent to 14.8. That is a substantial erosion of income for the middle class. That is a problem and a challenge we should work on in the days ahead, in addition to working on our budget.

I will make one final point about what we should do on the other side of this important work we are going to do today to complete this agreement and to lift the threat of default and to make sure we open the government and move to negotiations.

On July 20 of this year there was a long piece in The New York Times about not just the middle class but also about other measures of how we are doing as a country. Two data points jumped out at me and, frankly, would outrage anyone reading it. They listed the top 20 countries that are our peers. This category was the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development, so-called OECD countries—in other words, the 20 countries in the world that are most similar to the United States by way of economies and, to a certain extent, by population. So we are compared to our peers. That is the measurement. If you look at the top 20, under two categories—infant mortality and child poverty—the United States of America ranks 17th in both out of 20. And 17th, obviously, is right near the bottom. Instead of being in the top 3 or top 5 or even the top 10, the United States, when it comes to child poverty and infant mortality, is ranked No. 17 in the world out of 20.

So as we move to focusing on the middle class and focusing on job creation strategies, and even focusing on budgets and whatever else people want to debate and negotiate about around here, I hope we will all feel challenged by the admonition that we cannot lose sight of what is happening to our children. This is the most powerful country in the world. Our economy may not be demonstrating it right now, but we are and we will be, and we can never say we are doing the job we must do if we are not focused on the needs and the challenges faced by our families, especially the most vulnerable member of any family—a child. Infant mortality and child poverty are two indicators where this country is far, far behind, and we all need to do more on those issues.

We are happy we are moving to a resolution of this long nightmare the country has lived through and these families have lived through, but even on the other side we have some major challenges that should be a summons to our conscience to do something about them, and I hope our actions and our work can be commensurate with the challenges faced by families and especially the challenges faced by our children.

With that, Mr. President, I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Rhode Island is recognized.

Mr. WHITEHOUSE. Mr. President, I join my colleague from Pennsylvania in expressing relief and optimism that, finally, it looks as though we are rid of the wasteful and useless government shutdown we have been put through for the past 2 weeks; that it looks as though we are rid of the dangerous threat of American default that we have faced for the last few days; and let's hope that together we are also rid of the malicious spirit that led us down this evil path in the first place.

A colleague the other day on the Senate floor used the analogy of a fire in an airplane's cockpit distracting the pilots from flying the aircraft where it needed to go as they had to put out the fire.

That is kind of what we have been through these past 2 weeks. I hope we will have no more of our own countrymen lighting fires in the cockpit just to try to get their way. We need as a nation to get our heads up, fly the plane, and ready ourselves for the weather ahead.

The last 2 weeks have been wasted in this useless artificial crisis and has distracted us from real crises, real problems, undeniable problems—things which the Speaker of the House can't make go away by finally allowing a vote but which will require us to work together to solve them. None is more significant to our children than what our carbon pollution is doing to the Earth's atmosphere and oceans. It is not enough just to put out the fire in the cockpit. We have to wake up to the real problems ahead and around us.

I know the Presiding Officer from Ohio is a keen enthusiast and student of history. I recently saw part of ''The Dust Bowl,'' Ken Burns' documentary series. The Dust Bowl calamity was an economic disaster and a human disaster, but it was also described in the show as having been an economic disaster and a human disaster because it was first and foremost an environmental disaster—indeed, one of the two or three most devastating environmental disasters in the United States.

The Dust Bowl happened, creating such disaster for so many good, hard-working families, because, simply put, we messed with Mother Nature. To plant wheat, we tore up the deep-rooted buffalo grass which had protected the prairies for generations. We ignored the cycles of drought which were the Great Plains' history. The result was tragedy and destruction.

There are obvious parallels from the Dust Bowl experience to where we are now on carbon pollution. Most obviously, lesson No. 1, you mess with Mother Nature at your peril. And are we ever messing with Mother Nature. We just broke through 400 parts per million of CO_2 in the atmosphere after at least 800,000 years—which is longer than homo sapiens have been a species—in the range between 170 and 300. Our whole species has come to the success we have seen on this planet in a safe window of 170 to 300 parts per million of CO_2 in the atmosphere, and we have now broken out of it. And it is not just 400, it is 400 and climbing.

Let's move from our atmosphere to our oceans. Our oceans are acidifying at the fastest rate ever recorded. We have to go millions of years back into the geologic record to find anything comparable. When we go there, what else do we find when we look back to those points in the ancient geologic record? It isn't pretty. In fact, it is downright ominous.

The second lesson is that the cause of such a calamity can be a perfectly normal activity, just at the wrong scale. Look at the Dust Bowl. There is nothing wrong with plowing. Plowing the Earth is probably the single most valuable action humankind has ever learned to do. Plowing is essential to farming. Yet it was that ordinary activity—plowing—which brought on the Dust Bowl and the vast human tragedy that ensued because it was at the wrong scale.

Similarly, there is nothing inherently wrong with burning fossil fuels. We do it when we drive to the market, and we call it up when we flip on the light switch. Yet burning fossil fuels at too great a scale is leading us to the brink of a new disaster.

What changes and makes it no longer perfectly normal and OK is when we know the consequences of the scale of our activity. Once we know the consequences we are causing, that activity is no longer so benign and responsibility cannot be so easily shrugged off. If only the farmers at their plows had listened to the warnings of the cattlemen and Native Americans and not put every corner of every farm to the plow.

There is a third parallel, which is that there is a lot of lying done when there is money to be made. In the Dust Bowl, land dealers and speculators told farm families that plowing the prairies would make more rain fall. Rain follows the plow, they were told. They had nothing to worry about. And the land speculators sold, and they sold a pack of lies. The race to plow created more speculators and more hucksters and more lies.

Today we have the deniers—a sophisticated, well-honed apparatus of institutions and strategies designed to spread lies, designed to sow doubt, designed to delay action. Today it is done on a scale that makes the Dust Bowl hucksters look like piddling amateurs. It is funded by giant corporations such as ExxonMobil and Koch Industries. It uses the slickest Madison Avenue strategies. It maintains a stable of pet scientists willing to be trotted out and to recite from the polluters' playbook. It operates through a network of false front organizations designed to look more independent and credible than their funders are and designed to hide the money flow.

When history looks back and this story is fully told, I believe this apparatus of lies will take its place beside great American scandals such as Teapot Dome and Watergate. But for now it churns merrily on its way, cranking out the propaganda.

Regrettably, this apparatus has captured large segments of the Republican Party and silenced others. The polluters have maneuvered the question of carbon pollution right into the middle of the Republican Party's culture wars. The fossil fuel industry must be really chortling at having pulled off that fete. But it does not bode well for the Republican Party. Lies are ultimately revealed. The choice to make bedfellows of the polluters will soon enough be very damaging to the Republican Party. For the polluters, they have played the Republican Party for suckers, and they will grin all the way to the bank. They won't care.

The last parallel is the lesson that when you are messing big-time with Mother Nature, things can go precipitously wrong. Mother Nature can turn on you very suddenly. Wheat farming on the plains was a bonanza, with bumper crops year after year. Families who had never owned land, who had never before had a place to call their own, saw golden futures as far as the eye could see as the wheat ripened. And within just a few years the devastation was complete and families' dreams were shattered. The Dust Bowl came on fast.

There is a phrase—''a fool's paradise.'' It is called a fool's paradise because it looks like paradise for a while if you don't look ahead and take the precautions to protect paradise and fend off calamity. Not looking ahead is what gets you to the ''fool'' part.

Young people are looking ahead. Voters under 35, by a ratio of 66 to 27—more than 2 to 1—say that climate change is a problem we need to address. And when asked about climate deniers, 74 percent of Independent young voters said they would describe climate deniers as ignorant, out of touch, or crazy. For self-identified Republican young voters under 35, 53 percent identify climate deniers as ignorant, out of touch, or crazy.

I ask unanimous consent to conclude in 1 minute.

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

Mr. WHITEHOUSE. So I ask my Republican friends, how is climate denial a winning strategy when 53 percent of your own young voters think it is ignorant, out of touch, or crazy? How is that looking ahead? We in Congress get elected to look ahead. We don't get elected to put our heads in the sand. We certainly don't get elected to parrot the lies of the special interests.

Well, we are not looking ahead. We are sound asleep here in Congress. We are having a snooze while nature's alarms are ringing all around us. It is time for Congress to wake up. We have a duty. We need to wake up to our duty.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Florida.

Mr. RUBIO. Mr. President, it now appears that at some point this evening we will reach the end of the latest Washington-manufactured crisis of the month. But, unfortunately, the real crisis facing the country remains, and that real crisis is the growing sense among our people that we are losing the American dream.

Why do people feel this way? Because more than 4 million Americans have been out of work for 6 months or more, because millions more find themselves stuck in jobs that do not pay enough for them to live the way they are used to, and while their paychecks aren't growing, their bills are. Ask the young couples and single parents how much they are spending every month to provide childcare for their children. Ask the students, young Americans who are stuck with thousands of dollars in student loans they are now struggling to pay.

This is the real crisis facing America; that our status as a land of opportunity seems to be eroding and that so many of our political leaders seem oblivious to it. And now, as we emerge from this latest standoff, we have done nothing to address it.

There were two issues at play in this showdown. The press coverage mixes them together, but there are two distinct and separate issues, and they should be examined that way.

It started with ObamaCare—a law that was sold to people as something that would help them get affordable health insurance. But that is not what it is going to be. We have all heard the news of what a fiasco the rollout of the exchanges has been. But as bad as the rollout of the exchanges and the Web site has been, we need to realize that was supposed to be the easy part. The most difficult and disruptive parts of that law are yet to come.

In the months to come, a new insurance fee—a new tax on hard-working Americans—will be added to insurance policies. People will be required to give up existing coverage they are happy with if it doesn't meet the standards created by ObamaCare. And if they don't buy the insurance, they eventually will have to pay a tax that goes up to $695 a year or 2.5 percent of their income. Employers with more than 50 full-time employees will be required to offer a certain type of coverage to their employees. So many of them are moving people to part-time work. And full time, by the way, is no longer defined as 40 hours; it is now 30 hours. So many employers are moving employees to under 30 hours a week.

Today, for many Americans, ObamaCare is just a Web site that doesn't work, but in the months to come this law is going to hurt millions of people. It is going to cost them hours at work and maybe even their job. It is going to cost them the insurance they have now and are happy with. It is going to force them to leave their existing doctor. It is going to raise rates for people who buy insurance for themselves.

What do we tell these people who are being hurt by this law? To deal with it because it is the law of the land? Is it not our job to fight for them? Is it not our job to be their voice and to protect them from the harmful effects of this law? That is why I continue to believe we should not waste a single penny more of taxpayer money on this damaging law.

One of the most important powers and responsibilities that we have as Members of Congress is the power of the purse. It is under our Constitution, which gives the Congress the power to decide what to spend money on and what not to spend taxpayer money on.

I know of no one in my party who supported shutting down the government. On the contrary, we argued that we should fund the entire government except for one thing, ObamaCare. In fact, the House of Representatives passed a law that did just that.

But the Democrats took the position that either we fund ObamaCare or we fund nothing at all. They took the position that funding ObamaCare was more important than funding the government. They were willing to put our country through this government shutdown just to save their pet project. Within days of the showdown, by the way, a second issue was added, the Federal debt limit. The press portrays the debt limit as simply a law that allows us to pay our bills, and therefore they fall for the argument that failing to raise the debt limit equals a default on our debt. But the debt limit is a lot more than simply permission to pay our bills.

Every year, our government is spending more money than it takes in, a lot more money than it takes in. As the years go by, that annual deficit adds up to what we call the national debt. It is growing at an alarming rate. The debt limit is a law that limits the amount of money the government can have as debt at any single time. But we depend on borrowed money to pay our bills. So if we do not raise it again, eventually we will not have enough money to pay all of our bills. That should scare us.

Reaching the debt limit is like this. When the bank calls on you to collect the monthly mortgage payment, if you don't pay them, your home is going to be taken away, your credit is going to be ruined, and your ability to borrow money in the future is going to be hurt. But what if, because you don't make enough money, the only way to pay your mortgage is by using your credit card? You can't do that forever, but you also can figure out what other expenses to cut so you don't have to keep using your credit card to keep paying the mortgage. That is what real people in the real world do.

But that is not what we are asked to do here. They are asking us to just pay the bill and keep using the credit card and let tomorrow worry about tomorrow. We cannot do that forever because at some point even the credit card is going to stop working.

Yet that is what has happened here again. So the debt will keep growing.

With each passing year, we will get closer to the day that we face a real debt crisis—not one caused because the Congress cannot pass a bill, but one caused because no one will lend us money anymore.

That is how we arrived at the point we find ourselves today. We have a President and a majority in the Senate that would rather face a default before seriously dealing with the debt. We have a President and a majority in this Senate that would rather shut down the government before they would shut down ObamaCare or even make any meaningful changes to it.

Tonight the government will be reopened and the debt limit will be lifted, but our real problems are still here. In the months and years to come they are only going to get bigger and harder to solve. For those of us who realize this, who clearly understand that the direction in which we are headed threatens the American dream and all of the things that make our country special, this is the time to reflect on the way forward. Because if we do not figure out how to change course around here, if we do not figure out the way to change the course our Nation is on, we will forever be known as the generation that ushered in America's decline.

History is not going to distinguish between Republicans and Democrats. It will judge us all harshly for our failure to act. To avoid this fate we must once and for all begin to address the national debt, not with accounting gimmicks but with real and measurable steps. It does not have to be solved in one sweeping measure, but we must begin the work of moving toward a sustainable level of spending. This will take time because we are still saddled by too many leaders unwilling to address the issue in a meaningful way.

Let's do what we can while they are still here, and at the same time let's work to replace these irresponsible leaders on the left with leaders who will finally step up and save our Nation from the real debt crisis that awaits us.

As for ObamaCare, it too will be harshly judged by history. That is why I am personally so disappointed that we were not able to achieve any meaningful changes to it. But this fight is not over. It has only just begun. In the months to come, millions of Americans will begin to confront the costs and the consequences of this law. It will be the reason why they are now working part-time. It will be the reason why they lost the insurance they used to have. It will be the reason why they cannot see the doctor they have been seeing for all these years. It will be the reason why their insurance premiums have gone through the roof.

We have been warning people about this for years, and we have done everything we could to keep this harm from reaching our people. But now ObamaCare is going to start hurting real people in real ways, and when it does this there is going to be a mad scramble in this town to fix it or get rid of it.

This has happened before. In June of 1988, Congress passed a bill called the Medicare Catastrophic Coverage Act. It promised new medical benefits for the elderly, a cap on hospital and doctor bills, and it provided prescription medicine. Then the true cost of the program began to reach the American people and, as seniors began to learn the true cost of this new program, it fueled a revolt.

At first, the politicians minimized it. They minimized the protests, and they refused to make any changes to it at all. But before long, the onslaught of calls and mail to congressional offices became so much it was impossible to ignore. Before long, Congress was in full retreat, and by 1989 it was fully replaced.

For ObamaCare the day of reckoning is also coming. In the last few days I have been startled by the number of people who have told me they are ready to give up. They are ready to give up on the idea that we can make a difference. They are ready to give up on the idea that things will ever get better. But we cannot give up on America, and we cannot give up on the American dream. We cannot give up, because where are we going to go? If this country declines, if we lose what makes it special, what is going to replace it? So no matter how long it takes, no matter how many disappointments lie ahead, we must never give up, and we must never accept that this life today is the new normal.

For those around the world who look at the events of the last few days and weeks as evidence that America's best days are behind her, you don't understand our people. Our politics does not define our country. We are a unique people, a collection of men and women with sharply different views, with different backgrounds and beliefs. We share a free society, and everyone has a right to express their views, to argue and battle and debate.

Sometimes our differences bring us to points of great conflict, when the Nation appears on the verge of being ripped apart at the seams. Yet for over 200 years we have been held together because, while we are divided by many things, we are united by a powerful and timeless idea.

Before I describe that idea I ask unanimous consent for 1 additional minute to conclude.

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

Mr. RUBIO. For over 200 years we have been held together because, while we are divided by many things, we are united by a powerful and timeless idea, the idea that every single person has the God-given right to determine the course of their own life, the God-given right to go as far as our talent and our work will take us. So we argue about the best way to achieve that, and we have a tendency to put off difficult decisions before we absolutely have to make them.

But we have faced greater tests before. We have not always rushed to meet the challenge, but in the end we have never failed to do so. And let there be no doubt that we will do so again. The day is coming when our people will realize that the time has arrived once again to confront the challenges before us. The day is coming when our people will do what must be done to keep the American dream alive. I know it is hard to see right now, but we are one day closer to the moment when Americans will do what we have always done. We will confront and solve the challenges of our time, and we will make any sacrifice and undertake any task to make sure that we leave for our children what Americans of yesterday left for us: The single greatest nation in the history of the world.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The senior Senator from Mississippi is recognized.

Mr. COCHRAN. Mr. President, I am optimistic that soon we will be able to enact legislation to reopen our government and affirm the world's longstanding confidence in our financial stability and system of democracy. The current situation is an unfortunate byproduct of our sometimes discordant form of government which at this time happens to be divided between our two parties.

Despite the challenges of recent weeks, I hope this experience demonstrates to the Senate, to the other body, and to the administration, that the Nation is best served when we work together. If we allow our current hardships to pass, only to immediately entrench and get ready for the next crisis, we will be wasting an opportunity to extract a positive outcome from these last, difficult weeks.

Under the rules of the Senate, individual Senators are provided with significant power to shape the activity of this body. That is the way the Senate was designed to operate, and it has served this body and the country well. Recognizing that the rights entrusted to each of us can be powerful, we must be judicious in their application. We must always remember that each of us was elected by the people. If we work in cooperation, and even opposition, with a sense of realism and respect for ourselves and our institution, I believe this body can function effectively.

In getting past our current fiscal stalemates, I hope that we can next achieve a long-term agreement that will reduce our debt through structural changes to government spending. As a part of that process, we must talk seriously about the President's health care law, its serious flaws and its impact on families and businesses. I have consistently opposed this law, and one of my goals is seeing that it is repealed, delayed or made voluntary. Achieving that goal may take longer than we

would prefer because we are in the minority, but the law's declining popularity should give Senators from both parties reason to reevaluate it.

As part of a sustainable budget plan, I hope we can reach a long-term agreement on a farm bill to provide producers and consumers with certainty and to preserve the security Americans enjoy by our ability to generate, independently, food and fiber for ourselves and for the world.

The farm bill this body adopted earlier this year would help accomplish those goals and save $23 billion over the next 5 years.

If we can achieve a responsible budget agreement for fiscal year 2014 and beyond, I am confident the Appropriations Committee can produce bipartisan bills to fund the government in a responsible manner. I hope all Members have begun to recognize that our inability to act on individual appropriations bills has reduced each Senator's opportunity to help shape Federal programs and has eliminated a principal means of overseeing the executive branch.

The Appropriations Committee has long been able to produce bills that reflect input from all Members, reflecting their different needs and their different priorities. The committee has continued to do so since passage of the Budget Control Act, which will have the effect of cutting—reducing spending by more than $2 trillion from discretionary accounts over the next 10 years. It is the only significant deficit reduction legislation enacted in recent memory. I supported that act, as did a majority of Senators on both sides of the aisle.

Now we have given ourselves another opportunity to make broader budget reforms. It will be of benefit to the legislative branch and the people who elected us if we can establish a budget framework that will enable us to deal in a more transparent manner with all legislation, including appropriations bills and reform measures to simplify our Tax Code.

I am pleased that we seem close to resolving the current impasse, and I hope that over the coming weeks we can devote ourselves to thoughtful and productive deliberations on the budget.

It is important that we act to restore the confidence of the American people in the Senate. We must take real steps to strengthen our Nation's fiscal foundation so our economy can grow, and American families and businesses can prosper.

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

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The bill clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. DURBIN. 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. DURBIN. Mr. President, there has been a lot of debate on the floor of the Senate about ObamaCare, which is also called the Affordable Care Act. It passed about 3½ years ago. Why did we do this? Why did we enact this law? It wasn't easy and it took months to achieve. The goal was quite simple: We wanted to make sure 40 to 50 million uninsured Americans would have a chance to have health insurance.

That is a worthy goal because even uninsured people get sick. If you don't have health insurance and get sick and show up at the hospital, they will take care of you, but then when you can't pay the bill, they transfer that obligation to everyone else. It is estimated we spend about $1,000 a year in health insurance premiums to cover the care of uninsured people. Not only do these people without insurance live without the peace of mind of having protection when they get sick, the rest of us with health insurance pay for it. That is not right. In a society such as ours, we should accept responsibility to not only have health insurance but to make it available for everyone.

When we took a look at the health insurance market, here is what we found. There were parts of health insurance that were just plain wrong.

Imagine someone in your family has a preexisting condition. It is not uncommon. Think of the possibilities. There are only a few that come to mind: asthma, diabetes, cancer survivor, women. It turned out that if you had issues such as those in your background, you could be discriminated against and people would not sell you health insurance. ObamaCare eliminated discrimination based on preexisting conditions. When the Republicans come to the floor and say they want to repeal ObamaCare, they are repealing that protection for families who have a child or a member of the family with a preexisting condition. That is what they are saying.

ObamaCare also said that if you have a limit on your policy of how much it will pay in any given year, that is stricken. Why would we do that? Because you never know what could happen. Tomorrow morning a doctor's diagnosis or an accident could result in hundreds of thousands of dollars of medical bills that you could pay because there was a limit on your protection. That limitation was stricken by ObamaCare. Those who want to eliminate ObamaCare would allow the insurance companies to put those restrictions in again.

What about parents who have children fresh out of college and looking for a job? Some of them will be lucky and will get a job with health care benefits. Some won't be so lucky. They may get a job without any benefits or they may not get a job. With ObamaCare, we kept those kids—your sons and daughters—on your family health insurance plan up to age 26. Those who want to eliminate ObamaCare want to eliminate that opportunity for American families to give their kids health care protection while they are looking for a job.

We also basically said that senior citizens under Medicare should not pay out of pocket over $1,000 a year for their prescription drugs. We closed the so-called doughnut hole. Eventually they will not be paying out-of-pocket. We are reducing the financial obligation of seniors to reach into savings accounts for the medicine they need to stay strong, healthy, and independent.

Those who want to abolish ObamaCare—and we heard it a minute or two ago from the Senator from Florida on the Republican side of the aisle, as well as the junior Senator from Texas—are basically saying to seniors: Pay more out of pocket for prescription drugs.

I don't think that is right.

What we are offering with insurance exchanges across America now in 50 States is the same opportunity for uninsured people that Members of Congress have today. Members of Congress are under the Federal Employees Health Benefits Program, which covers 8 million Federal employees and their families. That means we have an open enrollment period every year, and we can choose—my wife and I—from nine different policies in the State of Illinois. We take the one we want, and we have good coverage. It is not the most expensive or the best, but it is good coverage. We get to shop. It is hard for many Members of Congress to remember or believe that most Americans never have that luxury. They can't shop for health insurance. Some of them are denied any health insurance. Some work for an employer who says ''take it or leave it,'' and some just can't afford to buy anything. The insurance exchanges offer the opportunity for the 40 to 50 million uninsured and those buying in the private insurance market to go shopping for the best policy for themselves and their families.

Competition and shopping in a marketplace is what Americans are looking for, and that is what the Republicans want to close down. They want to close that down. Some would say: Obviously, there is a Republican plan for health insurance. The Republican plan for health insurance—this blank piece of paper. They have no plan. They have no ideas. They are just opposed to ObamaCare, and that is why they initially shut down this government. They wanted to defund ObamaCare.

Two interesting things happened after they made that announcement:

The marketplaces came online and ran into serious problems. They are currently restructuring them because they were not prepared for the overwhelming response to these insurance marketplaces. I am sorry they weren't. I don't know who is responsible for it, but we need to know. In the meantime, we have the insurance marketplaces up and running.

The second thing that happened as the marketplaces went online—after the Republicans announced they wanted to defund ObamaCare and therefore

shut down the government—was the popularity of ObamaCare increased. People across America said: Finally. This is a good idea. Those of us who have access to the marketplace can finally go shopping for health insurance.

Exactly the opposite of what the Republicans thought would happen happened. The American people are open and more receptive to the idea of going to these marketplaces if they don't have health insurance or if they have health insurance they can't afford. The health insurance marketplace is open for business, and people across the Nation have started shopping for it. Many people have waited for years, even decades.

I came to the floor when the junior Senator from Texas was holding the floor for 21 hours and asked him to consider the case of a young—I call her young—lady I met in Illinois named Judy. She is a housekeeper in a motel that I stay in in southern Illinois. She is in her early sixties, worked every day of her life, never had health insurance not even for one day of her life, and she now has diabetes and she is worried. We got some local doctors to see her and give her some recommendations and try to help her, but she has never had health insurance.

I asked Senator CRUZ from Texas: What are we going to do with Judy? If she doesn't have this marketplace where she can go for health insurance for the first time in her life, what is going to happen to her?

He said to me: She needs to get a better job.

Well, it is easy for us to say that, but this poor woman has worked hard all of her life. There is not a lazy bone in her body. She is doing the very best she can. Senators ought to realize that some people—even working as hard as they can—cannot get health insurance unless ObamaCare goes through.

Sixteen States and the District of Columbia have created their own exchanges. Those State-operated exchanges have opened fairly smoothly.

California had 7,700 applications for health insurance on the first day.

Kentucky is a great success story for ObamaCare. More than 5,000 people or families enrolled for health care and there were 10,000 completed applications on the first day. I understand that the number of people who have now enrolled for health care is closer to 10,000. Think about that. There are 10,000 families in the State of Kentucky who now have a chance to get health care. Those who want to defund it and close it down are closing down their opportunity to have protection for their families.

New Mexico is partnering with the Federal Government for individual and family coverage, but it is operating the shop exchange, which allows small businesses to find group coverage for their employees. In the first couple of days, 428 different employers in New Mexico signed up for coverage. They got a better deal in the competitive marketplace than they could find in the private sector beforehand. Republicans want to shut down that opportunity for these businesses. It doesn't make sense.

The Federal Government is managing the marketplace in 34 States, including my home State of Illinois. By Friday of last week there had been 8.6 million unique visitors to the Federal exchange Web sites.

What we are finding across America is that people have been waiting for this chance. I met a lawyer who contacted the insurance exchanges and found that for his business—a small business—it cut the premiums they are going to pay annually by one-third. Six out of every ten people who sign up for health insurance under the ObamaCare insurance exchanges will pay less than $100 a month in premiums. For less than what many of them are paying for cable TV, they will have health insurance coverage they can afford.

When the other side starts talking about closing down ObamaCare and can't come up with any replacement whatsoever, I think we ought to stop and ask whether that is in the best interest of a better America. If you or someone in your family has ever lived with a serious illness and no health insurance, you will never, ever forget it. I have been there. You will never, ever forget it. We ought to offer every American family a chance to get affordable, quality health insurance for the first time in their lives.

The second issue, which relates to this and which I find hard to believe, after trying to defund ObamaCare by closing down the government, they started on a new approach. Senator VITTER of Louisiana had an amendment that would restrict—at least in terms of costs—the availability of health insurance for some Federal employees who work here on Capitol Hill and Members of Congress. I think that is totally unfair, and it troubles me that the Republicans have gone from defunding ObamaCare to defunding the health insurance of their own staff employees. These are hard-working people in my office, and I bet they are hard-working in every Senate and House office. They stay late, answer the phones, and try to help people who are struggling with redtape. When a family is facing difficulties and can't afford a lawyer, our people try to help them out with government agencies as best they can. They answer the mail, they answer the phones, and they answer emails. The notion that we are going to limit or restrict their health insurance is absolutely unacceptable and unfair. These people deserve good health insurance just as every American does.

When Senator VITTER comes to the floor with his amendment which would dramatically increase the cost of their health insurance, it is fundamentally unfair. It is mean. It is small. It is beneath our dignity. We ought to stand behind our employees whom we hire to represent us across the United States of America. If we do, we will defeat this Vitter amendment if it ever comes back for consideration.

ObamaCare has started—and there have been some bumps in the road, that is for sure—and now that we have these marketplaces open, people are going to see what opportunities are available to them. As most people know, Members of Congress and many of their staff members are going to be covered with the same insurance, as everyone is buying in the insurance marketplace. Not all congressional staff members are involved, but many will be. Members of Congress will all be directed to the insurance exchange if that is what they choose to buy for their families. I am prepared to do just that. I think it will be quality health insurance, which is what every American deserves.

Mr. President, I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. BLUMENTHAL). The Senator from Ohio.

Mr. BROWN. Mr. President, I wish to thank Senator DURBIN, the assistant majority leader, for his speech. One of the privileges of this job, as the Senator from Connecticut knows, is the learning experience, if you will, of sitting in the Presiding Officer's chair and listening to Senators speak. We hear a whole range of talks, a whole range of discussions, from a whole range of talents in this body. Sometimes we hear Senators with great charisma delivering very impressive political speeches and appealing to patriotism, and other times we hear Senators who just focus on the substance and the importance of an issue, bringing us down to Earth about what really matters. The speech of Senator DURBIN was exactly that regarding what this health care law means.

We can talk about repealing ObamaCare, and that sounds good to some crowds back home. But think of the tens of millions of Americans who will now have health insurance in Connecticut and in Ohio and Illinois and all over this country, through Medicaid, through joining the exchanges—so many of them have full-time jobs and have never had insurance.

I spoke to a woman in Youngstown who was speaking at a townhall meeting. She said, I am 63 years old, I work two jobs, I have never had insurance. This was before we passed ObamaCare. She said, I just want to stay alive for the next year and a half so I can be on Medicare and have insurance. Imagine that a person's goal in life is to stay alive so they can have health insurance.

This new law, as it is beginning to take effect, as people started signing up 3 weeks ago, means people such as the woman in Youngstown will have insurance—maybe Medicaid or maybe exchanges or some financial assistance. It may mean the $7,000 tax that Senator DURBIN talked about, the $7,000 that all of us pay as a result of those who go to a hospital and can't afford to

pay, get treatment, get care, and somebody has to pay for it and it is spread around to those with insurance.

It means in my State about 100,000 people who are in their late teens and twenties are now able to sign on to their parents' health plan. It means close to a million seniors in Ohio have already gotten preventive care such as osteoporosis testing, diabetes, whatever preventive treatment, with no costs, no copays, no deductibles. It means all of that. It means more of our premium dollars will go to health care, not to executive salaries, not to marketing, not to insurance company profits. All of that is good news.

While it may not sound as exciting as speaking to a Lincoln Day dinner or people at a political rally holding Confederate flags, we do know what it is going to mean to millions of Americans who may not be going to those rallies but who have worked hard all of their lives and are rewarded for it.

I wish to make a couple of comments about how important the news is today that we can finally reopen the government. America is going to honor its debts and pay its bills as we have every day, every week, every month, every year for more than two centuries. We are finally going to do the right thing, and that is good news to people from Gallipolis to Chillicothe to Toledo and all over my State.

It means that after this vote is done this evening in the Senate, and I hope later in the House of Representatives, the President will sign this law to pay our bills and reopen the government.

It means we need to focus on what matters in this country. What matters in this country is jobs, and that means investing in infrastructure, whether that infrastructure is Sinclair Community College in Dayton or Owens Community College in Toledo, or whether that infrastructure is a water and sewer system in Napoleon or Bowling Green, or whether that infrastructure is a health care clinic in Zanesville, or a whole host of things that matter long term to the future of this country.

I was speaking to Senator COONS from Delaware earlier today about the importance of manufacturing. We are working with a number of our colleagues on bipartisan legislation which focuses on manufacturing and infrastructure. Twenty years ago, thirty years ago in this country—these numbers are not precise but estimated—about 25 percent of our GDP was manufacturing. Manufacturing was about 25 percent of our GDP. Financial services was less than 15 percent of our GDP. That has reversed in this country.

We know what it means to cities such as Springfield and Mansfield and Lima in my State where manufacturing jobs have shut down far too often and those jobs have gone overseas. We still give tax breaks in this country, believe it or not, to companies that outsource, that shut down and move overseas. So a company that shuts down in Ravenna or shuts down in Portsmouth and moves to China gets tax incentives to do that. That has to stop. We have to work on that.

We can support a whole host of legislation I have been working on with Senators BLUNT and COLLINS and GRAHAM and SESSIONS and BURR to deal with the issue of the Chinese gaming the currency system. That will mean literally hundreds of thousands of jobs in this country that can return or that will not be lost because they are gaming the currency system.

On job training, the so-called SECTORS Act will match up skills locally determined by workforce investment boards and community colleges and local businesses and local labor unions with the needs of those businesses—match up the job skills with the needs of those businesses.

Last, with Senator BLUNT, I am working on a national network manufacturing proposal that will help companies and universities and technology come together in a way that can spur industries regionally in this country. We know that, for instance, glass in Toledo—the fact that Toledo has been, for decades, a major glass manufacturing center—not just providing a lot of jobs in a variety of different kinds of glass, including everything from plate glass to windshields to drinking glasses, but it also evolved into the job-creating industry of solar panels. We know how that can work. This will be a partnership between Senator BLUNT and myself and others, as well as with the administration, on how, in fact, we can help with manufacturing and continue to lead the world the way we have for the lifetime of myself as well as the lifetime of the Presiding Officer.

We know what we have to do today to pay our bills and reopen the government. We know what we need to do in the weeks and months ahead. I look forward to working on those issues with my colleagues.

I note the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

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

Mrs. BOXER. Mr. President, since the government shut down about 16 days ago, I have been coming to the floor of the Senate to express my chagrin at this manufactured crisis. Then, of course, the second manufactured crisis, the crisis of perhaps doing the unthinkable: a default, where we would become a nation that did not pay our bills for the first time in our history. I think history is going to analyze this period of time in our Nation's governance and will not look fondly upon what has happened here.

Just this morning, I held a press conference, as I am chairman of the Environment and Public Works Committee, to talk about what is happening across the country in this shutdown—superfund sites, more than 500 not being cleaned up. We had businesspeople there, small businesspeople who have their businesses near wildlife refuges. This is the season where people go hunting and fishing and spend their dollars to help support the tourist industry in our great Nation. In many States tourism is No. 1, 2, or 3. In my State, California, it is the No. 3 industry. So when a park closes down or the Army Corps recreation land closes down or the refuges close down, this is not just sad because that is not the right thing to do for the environment, it is sad because many people rely on those beautiful areas being open to the public.

We need to keep the doors of the government open to the people. This is a government of, by, and for the people. Our government should never be closed. That does not mean we are going to agree on every law or every regulation or every single thing that happens in government. We are always going to have disagreements.

I have said here quite often, I have served with five Presidents—three Republican Presidents, two Democratic Presidents. I am a Democrat, and there were many times I did not agree with my President, whether he was a Republican or a Democrat. But I knew there were ways to win the day. You have to stick to your principles and fight the battles and do everything you can to win the moment, to change the law, to change the way a law is enforced, to write a new law, to repeal an old law, but you do it within the framework of governance, not within the framework of chaos. There is never a reason—never a reason—to threaten to close the government. There is never a reason to threaten to default on our debt.

Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that an article that just hit now from Business Insider be printed in the RECORD.

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

[From Business Insider, Oct. 16, 2013]

S&P: THE SHUTDOWN TOOK $24 BILLION OUT OF THE US ECONOMY

(By Steven Perlberg)

The S&P has cut the annualized U.S. growth view closer to 2% from 3%, Bloomberg is reporting. The ratings agency—which recognizes the Senate deal will be approved—says that the shutdown has taken $24 billion out of the economy and cut 0.6% off of yearly fourth quarter GDP growth.

''If people are afraid that the government policy brinkmanship will resurface again, and with it the risk of another shutdown or worse, they'll remain afraid to open up their checkbooks. That points to another Humbug holiday season,'' S&P wrote in a release.

They also said the impact of the debt ceiling is getting worse by the day for the U.S. economy.

Here's the full release:

NEW YORK (STANDARD & POOR'S) OCT. 16, 2013.—The U.S. government has been shut down for more than two weeks. Earlier today, Senate leadership crafted an agreement to end the shutdown and avert a debt

default. However, the deal needs to be voted on by both chambers of Congress.

We believe that to date, the shutdown has shaved at least 0.6% off of annualized fourth-quarter 2013 GDP growth, or taken $24 billion out of the economy. However, the closer we get to breaching the debt ceiling, the higher we expect the economic impact to be.

In the summer of 2011, as we approached the last debt ceiling standoff, consumer confidence plummeted and hit a 31-year low in August when the debt ceiling issue came to a head. Given that this round of debt-ceiling negotiations is occurring after two-plus weeks of a government shutdown, the total impact on the economy will likely be even more severe.

While we believe the Senate deal will be passed and the debt ceiling will be raised, the impact of a default by the U.S. government on its debts would be devastating for markets and the economy and worse than the collapse of Lehman Brothers in 2008.

Should a default occur, the resulting sudden, unplanned contraction of current spending could see government spending cut by about 4% of annualized GDP. That would put the economy in a recession and wipeout much of the economic progress made by the recovery from the Great Recession.

As we've said, we expect the Senate deal to be approved. However, the current chatter coming out of Washington suggests that any continuing resolution will be a temporary one, with an early 2014 timeframe for the next set of Washington deadlines. The short turnaround for politicians to negotiate some sort of lasting deal will likely weigh on consumer confidence, especially among government workers that were furloughed. If people are afraid that the government policy brinkmanship will resurface again, and with it the risk of another shutdown or worse, they'll remain afraid to open up their checkbooks. That points to another Humbug holiday season.

The bottom line is the government shutdown has hurt the U.S. economy. In September, we expected 3% annualized growth in the fourth quarter because we thought politicians would have learned from 2011 and taken steps to avoid things like a government shutdown and the possibility of a sovereign default. Since our forecast didn't hold, we now have to lower our fourth-quarter growth estimate to closer to 2%.

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Mrs. BOXER. Here is what has happened because of this 16-day shutdown. Here is what has happened because that shutdown was paired with a flirtation with a default.

The S&P has cut the annualized U.S. growth view closer to 2% from 3%. . . .

That is a percentage point off growth. This is what Bloomberg is reporting.

The ratings agency—which recognizes the Senate deal will be approved—

So this is after they recognize the deal will be approved. And thank God it looks as though it will be.

says that the shutdown has taken—

Mr. President, hear this:

$24 billion out of the economy and cut 0.6% off of yearly fourth quarter GDP growth.

This is what is so important, and I hope everyone within the sound of my voice hears this:

''If people are afraid that the government policy brinksmanship will resurface again, and with it the risk of another shutdown or worse, they'll—

The people will—

remain afraid to open up their checkbooks. That points to another Humbug holiday season,'' S&P wrote in a release.

They also said the impact of the debt ceiling is getting worse by the day for the U.S. economy.

There is a full release, and I have put that in the RECORD.

To speak in layman's terms, what the economists are saying is this shutdown and this flirtation with a default has taken a huge bite out of our economy—a huge bite. Why did we face it? Because some folks do not like the health care reform act.

It is their total right not to like it. It is their total right not to love it. It is their total right to try and change it. That is all their total right. But you cannot shut down the government and stamp your feet and say: Because I don't like this and I don't like who is President, I am shutting down the government.

Now here is the good news—and it is good news: Bipartisanship here in the Senate is leading America out of this painful, partisan, self-inflicted crisis. As someone from the largest State in the Union, I can tell you, relief does not even begin to describe how I feel. I am also grateful—grateful—to the two leaders who came together, the Democratic leader and the Republican leader of the Senate, both who have had many disagreements and will continue to in the future about the proper road ahead, but when history called them, they were there. They were able to set aside their differences and reach an agreement to open up this government, to pay our bills, and to set out a path to negotiation on all those differences that we know we have between the two parties—very legitimate differences.

I think what we learned, as we read the S&P comments here, is that this has to end, this brinkmanship has to end. We have to say as Americans: You do not have to shut the government down. You do not have to threaten to default. That is not the way we should proceed. It is too painful for this Nation. It is too costly. Mr. President, $24 billion—that is what S&P puts on it. That is what is taken out of the economy. That does not even include what it costs us as a Federal Government to shut down, to reopen, to start again. But bipartisanship here in the Senate is leading the way forward.

We always are told: If you do not know history, you are doomed to repeat it. That is the reason why I have tried—and many others have on, frankly, both sides—to come down here and talk about the mess we have been in.

I would like to say if you are walking down the street and it is a pretty nice day, and you feel good, and the Sun is a little bit behind the clouds but looks as if it is going to come out, you have a few problems at work you have to work on, you have a couple of kids you are worried about, you are thinking about how you are going to go on that next vacation, but you feel pretty good and optimistic—you have problems but everything is manageable—why would you hit yourself in the head with a brick at that very moment? That is really what this self-inflicted wound on our Nation has been about.

Yes, we have our problems. Yes, we are coming out of the worst recession since the Great Depression. Yes, we have to deal with deficits, debts, with education, with the environment, with climate change. We can go on and on. Yes, America has its issues. Of course, we have. But we do not need self-inflicted wounds. We have enough issues that are critical, including world peace and Iran's nuclear ambitions and Syria's chemical weapons. I serve on the Foreign Relations Committee. Everything has taken a back seat to this situation.

Now I am very happy. I learned that the House is planning—assuming this all goes well tonight and everybody votes to open up this government and pay our bills—that the House is going to take up the Water Resources Development Act next week. That is a bill that passed here by more than 80 votes. It is critical. It addresses flood control. It addresses dredging of our ports. It has a recreation piece. It has a lot of important policy in it to help move our Nation forward. Most important, 500,000 jobs depend on our passing WRDA.

So from what I have read, that WRDA bill is going to come forward, and I am very pleased. Then we will take our bills to conference. That is the way we do things here.

We resolve our differences in a conference. I feel Chairman SHUSTER and I can do that with our colleagues. We will have a vote on something that creates jobs and moves us forward. In the meantime, we have been mired for 2 weeks in a government shutdown and a frightening inching up to the default date. It has taken the wind out of our sails, the winds out of America's sails. It has taken our energy. All of us are very, shall I say, we are still even a little anxious until this is done.

It has been a couple of weeks of anxiety, of great difficulty. Here we are. What about the people out there who have suffered, who have worked without a paycheck—worked without a paycheck—policemen, firemen, all of our workers still working without paychecks.

We are on the verge of correcting that in moments. I can only say I am very thankful to our two leaders. I am very thankful to the bipartisan team. I do not want to start naming names because I am fearful I will forget some.

But I know Senator MCCAIN was part of it, Senator COLLINS, Senator DONNELLY, Senator KLOBUCHAR, Senator HEITKAMP. I know I am leaving people out which I did not want to do. I think Senator JOHANNS was part of the team, Senator FLAKE, Senator MANCHIN, Senator SHAHEEN, Senator KIRK. I am ever so grateful. I just thought of Senators AYOTTE and MURKOWSKI. I think that may cover it—Senator KING—doing this by memory. They got together when things looked grim. They said the Senate is going to lead. I am so grateful to them because even as things faltered, they were still at it, still working.

Senator PRYOR was part of that group. They did not give up. To me, that is so important. We need to talk to each other. We need to work together. How did we get 80-some votes for a WRDA bill? It was bipartisan. How did we get all of those votes we had last time for the highway bill? It was bipartisan. We worked hard. As chairman of that EPW Committee, the things we get done are all bipartisan.

When we get into our corners it is not good. When we try to use as leverage the very government itself or the debt ceiling itself, it does not work. In closing, I am going to say again what this article says from S&P:

> If people are afraid that the government policy brinkmanship will resurface again, and with it the risk of another shut down or worse, they'll remain afraid to open up their checkbooks. That points to another Humbug holiday season.

Meaning the Christmas season, which is so critical to our economy. We need to learn from this sad history of the last few weeks; that, yes, we will have our disagreements. That is the greatness of our Nation; that we do have the freedom of thought, we do have different political parties, we do have different ways of looking at issues. It is fine, but do not ever shut down the government, do not ever play games with the full faith and credit of America. Let's get to the negotiating table and we will be just fine. We will work out those differences.

The last thought is elections have consequences. This is where we battle it out. In the next one we are going to battle this out. That is important. We never said it would be smooth sailing, but we have to keep the government open and we have to pay our bills. I hope that is what we learned.

I am looking forward to the next hour and a half or so. Maybe we will be voting a little sooner. I thank the Presiding Officer for his leadership in all of this darkness of time.

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

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

Mr. MURPHY. Sometimes in the Senate we deal with numbers that are a little too big for constituents and even for us to fathom. One number we throw around in Connecticut is the number $50 billion. That is the amount of money we need over the next 20 years to make the necessary improvements along our rail line in order to keep it in a good state of repair, never mind to do the expansions we so badly need to get our economy back and running in Connecticut. It is only basically to do all of the repair work that we need to keep trains running safely from Boston to Washington, DC. We need $50 billion to get that done.

I give you that number because what we have learned today is that S&P estimates that the cost of this 2-week shutdown to the U.S. Government is $24 billion, half of what the northeastern States need to maintain in state of good repair the most important rail line to the Nation for the next decade.

In 2 weeks we lost $24 billion to this economy. This is the same amount of money that it took to do the Big Dig in Boston and half the money that we need to do important improvements along the longest, biggest, most important stretch of rail line in this country—for nothing, for absolutely nothing.

We are hopefully going to consent on a path forward shortly that will allow us to vote on a bill that essentially represents the same offer that has been on the table to both Republicans and Democrats for 2 weeks. This is to reopen the government and to operate until January of next year and to extend the debt ceiling until February of next year.

Of course, the cost is not only in the short-term, not only about all of that money we lost, but $2 billion of that was lost money to the Treasury of the United States. It is also what we lose every single day that we continue forward on this theory that it is somehow best to run this country by manufactured crisis to manufactured crisis.

As the chairman of the European Affairs Subcommittee of the Committee on Foreign Relations, I have been able to hear on a daily and weekly basis European impressions of this country from the outside. They look at this Nation with envy because they see the demographic trends which allow this country to stay relatively young compared to the rest of the world. They see relative economic growth compared to countries in Europe and throughout the industrialized world. They see us on a pathway to energy independence, whereby we are not going to be reliant on oil from the Middle East. We will be able to produce, whether it will be gas or renewables, at home.

They look at our country with wonder because they see all of these trend lines running in favor of the United States, essentially leapfrogging, catapulting the rest of the world with respect to the global recovery. The only thing stopping us from that inevitability, that global economic rebirth for the United States, is government by crisis.

Mark Zandi came to the Joint Economic Committee. He is a bipartisan economist. He has advised Senator MCCAIN and criticized both parties. He says the same thing. He says the only thing stopping a robust recovery in this Nation is the fact that we essentially write budgets and extend debt ceilings for 2, 3, 4 months at a time.

I come to the floor because my only hope, my only vision of a paper-thin silver lining to this fiasco over the past 2 weeks is that the American public has just said definitively that they don't want this to be the way the government runs any longer. If there is one message to this handful of conservatives, mostly in the House of Representatives but a few in the Senate that have caused this shutdown, the message is very simple. They are not going to be able to advance their ideological aims—in this case trying to end, repeal or delay the health care bill—by shutting down the government and threatening default on American debt.

President Obama and our majority leader had to draw a line. They had to draw a line because that is what the American public was demanding, that we put an end to this governance by crisis. If there is a silver lining, it is hopefully—even though we are only extending the continuing resolution and the debt ceiling for a matter of months—that we won't go through this catastrophe again because the American public has said enough is enough.

They know what we should know in the Senate. There is enormous room for compromise moving forward.

Today a group of Senators held a meeting on delivery system reform. There were 18 Senators who came to this meeting to hear a presentation by the Bipartisan Policy Center on a bipartisan proposal to save over $500 billion to the U.S. Treasury simply by reordering the rules of how we run Medicare, not by trimming benefits, not by requiring more in taxes, simply by reordering the way we pay for health care. It was a proposal backed by everyone from Bill Frist to Tom Daschle, and it suggests there is so much room for agreement between Republicans and Democrats if we just decide to set policy for years rather than for months.

I know we walk away from this with a sense of both outrage and hopefulness that we can maybe figure out a way to come together. Although this is my first year in the Senate, I have been in this place for 6 years, between the House and this body—but this feels like ''Groundhog Day'' in the sense that every time we find our way through one of these crises, we all say to each other: This is the last time. We all lock arms and say: Isn't it great that we found bipartisan agreement, and now we can use this momentum moving forward to avoid this kind of crisis in the

future. I have seen this play before. It seems within days or weeks we just fall back to our old habits of digging trenches and fighting each other more than we talk to each other and again governing by crisis.

I think this time is different, just because the depth of the dysfunction was different than ever before, the cries of the American public were greater than ever before. But we should remember, as this report from the Bipartisan Policy Center on delivery system reform tells us, there is still enormous room for the two parties to set out goals we agree on. If we push aside the most strident extremist voices that largely come from the tea party caucus of the House of Representatives, there is so much we can do.

As my European friends remind me on an almost daily basis, the only factor stopping the American economy from powering forward and becoming once again a giant of manufacturing, of global financial services, and of innovation—the only thing stopping us from that leapfrog forward—is figuring out that governance by crisis holds us back.

We made the promise to each other before that when we get through one of these crises it will be our last. I commend our leaders—I commend Leader REID and Senator MURRAY—for setting up a process for the rest of this year where we can come to some resolution on a budget that sets policy for years rather than for months. This time, though, the promise we have made to each other has to stick. It is the only way forward for this place, and it is the only way forward for an economy that is just waiting to be unshackled and to conquer the world again.

I yield the floor, and I 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. LEE. 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. LEE. Mr. President, here we are again: Another unnecessary crisis; a proposal that maintains the status quo; very little time to read and evaluate the bill. In fact, we still don't have a final version of the text. No time to explain it to our constituents.

This is Washington at its worst. It is exactly the kind of thing the American people are fed up with and exactly why several colleagues and I began this effort to delay and defund ObamaCare back in July.

It appears this particular fight will end much the same way ObamaCare began: in a last-minute deal, negotiated in back rooms, then forced on Congress and on the American people.

The Washington establishment can't bring itself to believe this is why Congress's approval rating is so low—because Washington doesn't listen to the American people. It ignores them. And when the American people can no longer be ignored, the administration shuts down national parks, blocks veterans from going to their own memorials, uses the IRS to target certain groups, and holds hostage critical funding for cancer research, low-income women and children, veterans' health benefits, border security, and our National Guard. It is shameful how Washington treats the American people, and the people are right to be upset about it.

The media keeps asking, was it worth it? My answer is it is always worth it to do the right thing. Fighting against an abusive government in defense of protecting the individual rights and freedoms of the American people is always the right thing.

Some say we shouldn't have fought because we couldn't win. But this country wasn't built by fighting only when victory was absolutely certain. In fact, some of the most important victories in our history were the result of fighting battles against significant odds. And even if victory seemed difficult or impossible, that wouldn't excuse me or anyone else from doing the right thing. Avoiding difficult battles, after all, is how we ended up in this kind of mess—a government with $17 trillion in debt which we add to at a rate close to $1 trillion a year, out-of-control spending, a broken entitlement system, a Tax Code no one understands—all because Washington is willing to act only when there is guaranteed political gain. When the avoidance of political risk becomes our dominant motivation, only the Washington establishment wins the American people lose.

Furthermore, in Washington, victories are rarely immediate and very few end up being permanent. ObamaCare wasn't enacted overnight and it won't be repealed overnight. We must remind the American people of the harmful effects of this law at every opportunity if we are ever going to see it repealed. We have repeatedly warned the American people will be shocked when they realize the way the President has misled the American people about ObamaCare.

The embarrassing rollout of the exchanges doesn't even begin to scratch the surface. Every day brings a new story of a family whose deductible has doubled or a married couple who can't keep the plan they have or a business that can no longer provide health insurance for its employees or workers who are seeing their hours cut or losing their jobs altogether.

The realization that the administration has either been dishonest or incompetent—or perhaps a combination of both—is just starting to dawn on the American people. Even the President's friends in the media are watching this slow-rolling train wreck and are demanding the President do something to stop it. The Chicago Tribune, the President's own hometown newspaper, puts it this way:

> Last spring, President Barack Obama said, ''there will still be, you know, glitches and bumps'' in the rollout of the new system. But what we're seeing now is no glitch or bump. There is a growing mountain of evidence that Obamacare has fundamental problems in design and implementation.

The Tribune goes on to say:

> We encouraged a one-year delay in the law. We recognize that's not going to happen. Obamacare is here. It's time, though, for the Obama administration to level with Americans about what's happening here. It's time to stop blaming Republicans and start talking about what needs to change.

So it is interesting to see that the Chicago Tribune, the President's own hometown paper, is calling to a significant degree for exactly what I have been calling for since July—for a 1-year halt, a 1-year delay, a 1-year timeout to protect the American people from the harmful effects of this law, a law the President himself has acknowledged isn't ready for prime time, a law the President himself has indicated he is not willing to follow as was written. Incidentally, this again was exactly what we were arguing for all the way back in July and it now appears that the President's hometown paper was with us.

Almost everyone but the President seems to recognize this law is going to be terrible for the American people. It is costing jobs. It is hurting families. It is making people's health care situation worse, and it won't solve the problems in our broken health care system. And let me be clear. There will be very real consequences for people in both parties as a result of the implementation of this law.

Today Washington has the upper hand, but the American people will always have the last word. This is not over. We have an obligation to fight for the American people, and I do not intend to let the American people down.

Mr. JOHNSON of South Dakota. Mr. President, today I wish to describe the damaging impacts that the Federal Government shutdown is having on the nine treaty tribes in my home State of South Dakota and across Indian Country. It is my hope that today we can come to solution to this crisis, but I think it is important for my colleagues to understand the impact the shutdown has had so that we can avoid making the same mistakes in the future.

Across the Nation, the Federal Government shutdown is imposing numerous hardships for our citizens, tribal nations, and low-income individuals. Some of the poorest counties in the United States are located within South Dakota reservation borders. Federal assistance payments to the poorest of the poor have been halted for these tribal members needing aid to feed their families and heat their homes.

Any negative changes to Native American program funding will have widespread effects. As the House Republicans continue to prevent the Federal Government from opening, doors will continue to be shut for those needing the most help.

Last week, I met with President Bryan Brewer of the Oglala Sioux Tribe, located on the Pine Ridge Indian Reservation. Federal and tribal employees living on the Pine Ridge Indian Reservation, where the general unemployment rate is already at 80 percent, are being furloughed or have had their work hours cut in half. This funding lapse almost forced the tribe's Department of Corrections to close, allowing prisoners to be freed. The tribe was given approval to use alternate funding sources; however, they do not know if those funding sources will be replenished when the shutdown ends.

Yesterday, the Pine Ridge Indian Reservation was also forced to close the Emergency Youth Shelter Program that provides a temporary home for 30 tribal youth due to the lapse of Federal funding. The tribe is actively looking for alternate bed space.

I recently heard of a story of a single parent on the Lake Traverse Reservation. The mother recently lost her 3-month-old child and was in need of aid to provide a proper funeral for her child. The Bureau of Indian Affairs provides burial assistance to eligible tribal members; however, due to the shutdown, the Bureau had to turn away the young grieving mother.

Last week, I took to the floor to speak on the significant impact a snow storm had on South Dakota communities. The snowstorm has also served a blow to tribal communities. Chad Morgan, a young Cheyenne River Sioux Tribal rancher, lost 90 percent of his cattle herd and is not able to report the his loss to the Farm Service Agency. Tribes also have spent significant funding to clear roadways of snow for tribal members needing dialysis treatment.

The Rosebud Sioux Tribe also reported to me that the Low Income Heat and Energy Assistance Program has been put on hold. Nearly 75 percent of Rosebud Sioux tribal families rely on this vital funding to heat their homes, especially now that winter snows have started.

Our tribes are facing major setbacks and are forced to find ways to fund programs that have already seen drawbacks due to the budget sequestration cuts.

Tribal communities cannot afford to have the Federal Government shutdown continue. Asking tribes to rob Peter to pay Paul is not a healthy way to run a government. Tribes across Indian Country are continuing to make strides in economic development and self-sufficiency. The United States, however, has a treaty and trust responsibility to our tribes and tribal members. Congress needs to act quickly today in order for the Federal Government to meet these responsibilities and to meet the needs of tribal nations across Indian Country.

Mr. ROCKEFELLER. Mr. President, now, more than 2 weeks into the government shutdown and at the brink of default, we are acutely aware of what happens when politicians turn their backs on public policy and, instead, advance partisanship over service to the American people.

Let's be clear about this government shutdown. It is a self-imposed crisis manufactured by a small group of hardline conservatives in the House of Representatives over their opposition to the Affordable Care Act. A dedicated group of public servants, Democrat and Republican, here in the Senate have worked frantically over the past 2½ weeks to find agreement in spite of the obstruction of an extreme minority who put their own ideology above the good of their constituents and the Nation.

Last week, I held a hearing in the Senate Commerce Committee about the impacts of the government shutdown to the public and the U.S. economy. We heard firsthand stories about the damage and disruption caused by the shutdown on our families, our businesses, our government, and our standing in the world.

The message we heard—loud and clear—was that the longer this shutdown continues, the worse things will get. It has never been more apparent just how important the countless services, provided by the Federal Government, are to the economic security of millions of families and the Nation.

In West Virginia, we are keenly aware that the Mine Safety and Health Administration personnel are not able to conduct regular reviews of mine safety. Four miners have died across this country during the shutdown. I am not saying that these accidents would not have happened if the government's doors had been open over the past 3 weeks, but I do believe that we owe it to the hard-working men and women who work in our Nation's mines to make sure that as long as they are on the clock, the government's safety experts are as well.

The shutdown is causing problems above ground too. Federal investments in research and development, for example, have long helped spur innovation in the United States. Just because House Republicans have shuttered the research arm of our government does not mean that overseas competitors such as China are pausing their research as well. Unfortunately, these vital government services are in the spotlight because they are currently not in existence, quite frankly.

To further demonstrate the real-life consequences of the shutdown, I released a report during the hearing that provided a snapshot of the impacts of the government shutdown on the public and the U.S. economy.

Because of the shutdown, experts from the Department of Transportation and the National Transportation Safety Board cannot monitor our highways, railroads, and pipeline networks and study how to make them safer. Scientists and technical experts at NASA, the National Science Foundation, and Department of Defense aren't performing basic research and engineering that private aerospace and technology companies need for commercial success.

Consumer Product Safety Commission officials cannot monitor our ports and stop hazardous products from entering our stores. I am particularly concerned about keeping dangerous imported products off of store shelves and out of the hands of our children, especially with the holiday season approaching.

The fights we continue to have over paying our bills and funding vital government services are a distraction. Congress is no longer doing big things that support families and our communities. It is no longer acting as one body, for the people, but instead as factions pitted bitterly against each other.

I fear that people have lost confidence in their government and confidence in their future. I fear they are asking whether government can even make a difference in their lives anymore.

Last week's hearing in the Commerce Committee proved beyond a shadow of a doubt this shutdown is doing great harm to our country. Sadly, it was totally avoidable. As we move towards an apparent bipartisan agreement that will reopen the government and avoid default, I hope those who so recklessly drove us toward financial catastrophe have learned their lesson.

In a matter of months, we will again have to address questions related to funding the government and the debt limit. The conservative fringe in the House and the so-called leadership there that was held hostage by their threats can force us to repeat these last 3 weeks or they can learn from this great mistake and shift their focus to the larger issues facing our Nation. We may disagree on the best prescription for these ills, but I look forward to participating in a fair and honest debate.

Mr. REID. 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. CHAMBLISS. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded and that I be allowed to speak as if in morning business

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

DETAINING TERRORISTS

Mr. CHAMBLISS. Madam President, in the words of Yogi Berra, ''It's déjà vu all over again.'' It seems as though every several months this administration manages to repeat the same disturbing pattern of treating captured foreign terrorists first and foremost as ordinary criminals.

Over the past 10 days we have watched this pattern play out with the capture and all-too-brief interrogation of Abu Anas al-Libi, one of the alleged

coconspirators behind the 1998 bombings of the U.S. Embassies in Kenya and Tanzania that killed hundreds of innocent people, including 12 Americans.

Instead of sitting in a cell at Guantanamo Bay where he could be fully interrogated for all the intelligence he likely has from his decades-long association with Al Qaeda terrorists, including a long association with Osama bin Laden, al-Libi is now enjoying the protections of our criminal justice system. Yesterday in the Southern District of New York, he had his initial appearance in Federal court, where he entered a plea of not guilty to the pending indictment. He now has a court-appointed lawyer at his disposal.

From all indications, any interrogation of al-Libi has ended, at least for the time being. If past terrorist cases are any guide, it will take weeks or months of plea negotiations and bargaining with this terrorist before we can even think about once again conducting an intelligence interrogation, and we may never have that opportunity again with this now criminal defendant.

We all remember the case of Umar Farouk Abdulmutallab, the 2009 Christmas Day Underwear Bomber, who tried to detonate a suicide bomb in an airplane over the skies of Detroit. Shortly after being taken into custody, Abdulmutallab was read his Miranda warnings, and it took 5 long weeks of plea negotiations before we would again have the opportunity to interrogate him.

Why does this matter? Why do so many of my colleagues and I continually come to this Senate floor to raise this issue? The answer is simple: We have been down this road before of treating terrorists as if they were criminals, sacrificing intelligence for the sake of criminal charges and Miranda rights.

The results on September 11, 2001, were predictable and disastrous. We lost numerous chances to gather intelligence that could have been used to neutralize future threats. We were in a reactive mode, reacting to but not preventing the 1993 World Trade Center bombing, the 2000 attack on the USS Cole, and the 1998 embassy bombings, the same attack involving al-Libi.

It took the reality of the 9/11 attacks to get this trend reversed. Prevention became the norm as criminal and intelligence investigators came together to use all lawful means, including criminal prosecution, to counter the threat of international terrorism.

No one is saying criminal prosecution should not be one tool, but it seems as though now we either just kill terrorists by using drones or give them Miranda warnings. Dead terrorists don't talk and terrorists with lawyers always want something in return if they are going talk. We cannot defeat Al Qaeda, and its growing affiliates, if we don't first have good intelligence on their leadership, intent, networks, and capabilities.

As we have seen in Benghazi, and more recently in Kenya, Al Qaeda and its affiliates continue to carry out terrorist attacks against the United States and its interests. Suspected terrorists were captured in London over the weekend, and we face growing threats in Syria, Libya, and across the globe. Al-Libi, as a long-time member of Al Qaeda and close confident of bin Laden, undoubtedly has valuable intelligence that could be used to foil future plots.

To defeat these terrorists and keep this country and our allies safe demands clear leadership and sound policies from the President. Unfortunately, in this area, we have neither. In the 5 years since this administration summarily dismantled the CIA's detention and interrogation program and ordered the closure of Guantanamo Bay, we still cannot get vital intelligence interrogations prioritized over criminal prosecutions.

Since 2009, we have been asking basic questions of senior administration officials, such as, if we captured Al Qaeda leader Ayman al-Zawahiri, where would he go? The only firm answer that has been given is that Guantanamo Bay is off the table.

In the capture of al-Libi, it appears as though this administration has finally settled on its own detention policy. In 2011, al-Shabaab leader Ahmed Abdulkadir Warsame was captured while returning to Somalia from Yemen where he was acting as an intermediary between al-Shabaab and Al Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula. Because of this administration's perennial resistance to placing more detainees at Guantanamo Bay, Warsame was instead held on a U.S. Navy vessel for 2 months and interrogated by the High Value Detainee Interrogation Group, or the HIG. Predictably, he was then Mirandized and brought to Federal court.

Those who thought the shipboard detention of Warsame was an anomaly, a one-time necessity, have now been proven wrong. Rather than hold detainees at the first-rate facility at Guantanamo Bay that is run by dedicated military personnel who treat the detainees there very humanely, this administration has, with the detention of al-Libi, made it clear that it prefers to use our naval warships as floating prisons. I can't imagine that this is what those who so strongly advocated for the closure of Guantanamo had in mind as a replacement facility.

Over the past week or so some people have raised the point that the restrictions on the fiscal year 2013 National Defense Authorization Act on the administration's ability to transfer detainees from Guantanamo Bay to the United States for trial justified the administration's unwillingness to place any new terrorists there. That argument simply does not withstand scrutiny in the case of al-Libi.

First, those restrictions applied most recently only to fiscal year 2013 and so are no longer in place. Second, as with Warsame, Abdulmutallab, and other terrorists, we cannot even reach the question of where al-Libi may be tried, whether in a Federal court or in a military commission at Guantanamo Bay, because this administration will not even consider designating him as an enemy combatant for interrogation purposes.

If the administration would be willing—in just one case—to allow a full intelligence interrogation at Guantanamo Bay of a high-valued target without Miranda and without rushing to criminal charges, I would welcome the opportunity to work with this administration to ensure that there are no statutory obstacles to the appropriate future prosecution of a terrorist. If this administration also wants to suggest a better—nonfloating—option to Guantanamo Bay outside the United States, I am happy to listen.

But so far they have been unwilling to do that despite their public claims that all options are on the table when it comes to handling terrorists such as al-Libi. They have been unwilling to make it clear that intelligence collection is the first priority; that long-term detention for intelligence purposes is appropriate and necessary; and that all intelligence value of any suspected terrorist will be exhausted before any discussion of potential charges.

Instead, the short-lived, onship interrogation of Abu Anas al-Libi demonstrates that this administration has once again chosen to gamble with our national security for the sake of safeguarding a criminal prosecution. They are taking the gamble that plea negotiations will be quick and effective and that any intelligence could have been gained in the meantime will not be lost. This is a risk none of us should be willing to take.

It is time that we stop needlessly giving this advantage to terrorists. Our intelligence professionals need real-time, actionable intelligence about Al Qaeda and its activities, and the best place to get that is often from captured terrorists without Miranda warnings, defense attorneys or initial appearances in court.

Getting a conviction and lengthy sentence of an avowed terrorist can be a worthy goal, but ultimately that conviction will mean nothing if Americans are harmed because we threw away the opportunity to get intelligence when we needed it most. It is time to end this dangerous pattern and put all lawful options for handling Al Qaeda terrorists back on the table.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. HEINRICH). The Senator from Texas.

Mr. CRUZ. Mr. President, I rise in opposition to the deal that the Senate is getting ready to vote on. This is a terrible deal. This deal embodies everything about the Washington establishment that frustrates the American people. This deal kicks the can down the

road. It allows yet more debt, more deficits, more spending, and it does absolutely nothing to provide relief for the millions of Americans who are hurting because of ObamaCare.

To all the young people who are coming out of school right now and can't find a job because of ObamaCare, this deal does nothing for them. To all of the single moms who are struggling and being forced into part-time work, trying to feed their kids on 29 hours a week because of ObamaCare, this deal does nothing for them. To all of the hard-working families who are getting massive premium increases from their health insurance companies right now and trying to figure out how they are going to make ends meet with health insurance costs going up 200 to 300 percent because of ObamaCare, this deal does nothing for them. To all of the seniors and all the people with disabilities who are getting notifications in the mail right now telling them they are losing their health insurance because of ObamaCare, this deal does nothing for them.

This fight was always about the American people who are hurting because of ObamaCare, and unfortunately today the Senate is saying: You don't have a voice in Washington.

This is a terrible deal. I urge my colleagues to oppose it.

None of us should be surprised that when the Senate votes, this deal is going to pass, and it is going to pass by a big margin. None of us should be surprised, but the outcome could have been different.

I ask the Presiding Officer to imagine a different world. We saw in the last 2 months millions of Americans rise up, sign a national petition, light up the phones to the Capitol, and speak up against the enormous harms ObamaCare is visiting upon them. We saw the House of Representatives stand with courage and listen to the American people.

I ask the Presiding Officer to imagine a world in which Senate Republicans united to support House Republicans. Imagine that one piece being different from what we saw. Imagine, after the House Republicans stood together with the American people, if all 46 Senate Republicans had stood together and said: We are united against the train wreck that is ObamaCare. We are united with the American people that if President Obama is going to give an exemption for big business and for Members of Congress, the American people deserve that very same exemption.

I want you to imagine if Senate Republicans stood together and simply supported House Republicans and the American people. I want the Presiding Officer to imagine what would have happened if all 46 Senate Republicans had united and gone together and said: The House of Representatives has passed a bill funding the VA. We should fund the VA.

The majority leader of the Senate refused to allow the Senate to even vote to fund the VA. I want you to imagine all 46 Senate Republicans, if we had stood together and simply supported the House Republicans in saying the House of Representatives has voted to reopen our national parks, to reopen our war memorials, and the majority leader of the Senate refused to allow the Senate to even vote.

I want my colleagues to imagine simply that Senate Republicans stood together and said: We support the House Republicans in standing with the American people. If that had happened, I believe this result would have been very different.

It is heartbreaking to the American people that Senate Republicans divided as they did and decided to direct their criticism, direct their attention, direct their cannon fire at House Republicans and at those standing with the American people. Yet, at the same time, to the millions of Americans who rose up in the last couple of months, I want to give a word of encouragement—a word of encouragement about the path forward.

A couple of months ago the Washington establishment scoffed at the notion that the American people might rise up. That was viewed as silly, parochial, couldn't happen. A couple of months ago the Washington establishment scoffed at the notion that the House of Representatives would stand strong saying: We should fund every bit of the Federal Government, but we shouldn't fund ObamaCare. Yet what we have seen in the last 2 months has been extraordinary. Millions of Americans are speaking in overwhelming numbers saying ObamaCare isn't working. The unions are jumping ship. Democratic Members of the Senate and the House went to the President and said: We want to be exempted from ObamaCare. This law isn't working. And it is worth reflecting on how extraordinary it is to see the American people rise up in such incredible numbers and to see the House of Representatives engage in what I consider to be a profile in courage, standing with the American people.

Now, a path forward—the way we are going to stop ObamaCare, the way we are going to stop the suffering, the harms being visited on millions of Americans—is the path we have seen these past couple of months—the American people rising up. The answers are not going to come from Washington. Washington is broken. But the answers are going to come from the American people.

So today I am encouraged. I am encouraged by the millions of Americans who want to get back to our free market principles, get back to the Constitution, and stop this train wreck of a law that is the biggest job killer in this country, that is hurting people all across the country. It is sad that today the Senate is telling people all across this country who are struggling, who are trying to provide for their kids, and who are getting notifications in the mail that their health care has been dropped—maybe a person has an elderly parent and that health care policy is providing for the family. Maybe people have children facing debilitating diseases. Yet they are getting a notification in the mail that their health insurance has been dropped because of ObamaCare. It is sad that the Senate says we will do nothing to answer their plight. We created their plight, but we will do nothing. It is sad that when we have James Hoffa, the president of the Teamsters, saying ObamaCare is destroying the health care of millions of working men and women in this country and the families who depend upon them, that the Senate says: We are closed for business. The Washington establishment has exempted itself, so the problems, the suffering of working America is not the concern of the Washington establishment. That is sad.

But at the same time, I am optimistic. I am inspired by the millions of Americans who have risen. And if the American people continue to rise up, I am confident that in time the Senate will follow the lead of the House of Representatives and listen to the American people. That is our job. That is our responsibility.

This is a terrible deal today. It is a terrible deal for the American people. At the same time, the path forward—if the American people continue to rise up, we are going to turn this around. We are going to restore jobs. We are going to restore economic growth. We are going to restore the ability of people who are struggling to climb the economic ladder and to achieve the American dream, and we are going to stop the No. 1 job killer in this country; that is, ObamaCare.

I rise in opposition to this deal that doesn't serve the best interests of the men and women each of us represent.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from New York.

Mr. SCHUMER. I know the hour is getting late. The passage of this bill is nigh, and so I will be brief, but I wish to make a few points.

First, this is hardly a day of exultation and happiness. The sad truth is that we have ended just where we started. When we began several weeks ago, our goal was simple: Open the government, pay our bills, and then let's negotiate. The proposal that will be before us shortly does just that and no more. We open the government. We pay our bills. Then we can sit down and negotiate. But along the way, many people have been hurt. Millions of people didn't get paychecks. The economy has been dented, and the civility in Washington—whatever was left of it—evaporated. So to say this is a good day because one party might be doing better than another—no. It is a day that is, in a certain sense, grim. We have finally achieved our goal—the same place where we started—but at a cost. It never should have been this way.

Second, I wish to salute two of our leaders. I salute our Democratic leader

and my dear friend HARRY REID. From the beginning he was stalwart. He led with his strength. He said that we cannot govern in a way where any faction says: Unless we get our way, we will hurt the American people by closing down the government, by letting us default. He said: We cannot stand for that any longer. We have had enough of that in Washington, and we are not going to bend to that type of awful politics.

He stood firm. He stood strong. He didn't waiver. Tonight we are passing the bill that he sought and we sought 3 weeks ago.

I would also like to salute the Republican leader Senator MCCONNELL. We all know he has a difficult political situation. We all know it would have been easier for him to duck. We all know that when it became clear the House of Representatives was so tied in a knot that it couldn't function, it couldn't pass any bill, Leader MCCONNELL stepped up for the good of the Nation and showed courage. He deserves our thanks as well.

Finally, I will make one more point. If there is a silver lining that can come out of this gray cloud, it is that perhaps, moving forward, the politics of brinkmanship, of confrontation has reached its peak in this body and in this country.

We have seen that a small faction in either House, when it says ''my way or no way,'' when it says ''I am going to do such hurt to innocent people that you will have to succumb to me''—we saw they failed, hopefully with large bipartisan votes, certainly in this Chamber and perhaps in the other. And we have seen that many on both sides of the aisle have come together and said: We are not going to go along with this type of politics, from wherever it comes.

Perhaps when January 15 and February 7 come about, we will not see a repeat of what we have seen these last few weeks because it has been repudiated by the vast majority in this body and in the other body and certainly by the American people, a very small percentage of whom supported the politics of brinkmanship—the reckless, irresponsible politics of brinkmanship that some have exercised over the last few weeks.

So that would be the silver lining in this cloud, that we can go back to the old way of legislating where we sit down, we talk over our differences, we negotiate, and we come to a conclusion for the good of America, the way the Founding Fathers envisioned it. They did not envision what happened here in the last 3 weeks, and it was not America's finest moment. But out of this great darkness can come some light—the desire on both sides of the aisle, of the majority of both parties to say: Enough brinkmanship. Let's sit down, let's negotiate, and let's move forward so this great country will be led by its government instead of pulled down by its government. That is my fervent wish.

After these last 3 weeks we are ending where we started, unfortunately, and people have been hurt as that happened. But perhaps the lessons of the last 3 weeks will sink in amongst us all and we will not see a repeat of what has happened.

Mr. President, I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Maine.

Ms. COLLINS. I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

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

UNANIMOUS CONSENT AGREEMENT—H. CON. RES. 25

Mrs. MURRAY. Mr. President, I am pleased we have reached an agreement that will reopen the government and allow us to pay our bills and provide a path forward now for bipartisan budget negotiations. As part of this bipartisan deal, I will once again tonight ask unanimous consent to begin a bipartisan budget conference.

The budgets that passed the Senate and the House 6 months ago are very different. Nobody thinks it is going to be easy to get to a deal. But I know I would not have fought so hard for so long to begin bipartisan negotiations if I did not think we could find some common ground and work something out.

I do not think there is anyone in Congress who wants to put the country through the last few weeks again, and I am hopeful we can now work together in a budget conference to end these constant crises and work now toward a balanced and bipartisan deal that the American people expect and deserve.

So I tonight ask unanimous consent that if the Senate passes H.R. 2775, as amended, the Senate then proceed to the consideration of Calendar No. 33, H. Con. Res. 25; that the amendment at the desk, which is the text of S. Con. Res. 8, the budget resolution agreed to by the Senate, be agreed to and the motion to reconsider be considered made and laid upon the table; that H. Con. Res. 25, as amended, be agreed to, the motion to reconsider be considered made and laid upon the table; that the motion for the Senate to insist on its amendment be agreed to; that the Senate request a conference with the House on the disagreeing votes of the two Houses and authorize the Chair to appoint conferees on the part of the Senate, with a ratio of 12 Democrats and 10 Republicans; that the conferees be instructed to report back a conference report by December 13, 2013; that if the Senate receives from the House a request to go to conference on S. Con. Res. 8, the agreement be modified so that the Senate agree to the request to go to conference on S. Con. Res. 8, with the remaining provisions related to the conference remaining in effect; further, that it not be in order for the Senate to consider a conference report with respect to H. Con. Res. 25 or S. Con. Res. 8 if it includes reconciliation instructions to raise the debt limit; and that all of the above occur with no intervening action or debate; finally, that H. Con. Res. 25, as amended, and agreed to, be held at the desk until a message is received from the House relative to H.R. 2775, and if the House fails to concur in the Senate amendment to H.R. 2775, this agreement be vitiated.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection?

Without objection, it is so ordered.

Mrs. MURRAY. Thank you, Mr. President.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The majority leader.

UNANIMOUS CONSENT AGREEMENT—H.R. 2775

Mr. REID. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate proceed to the consideration of Calendar No. 193, H.R. 2775; that the substitute amendment which is at the desk be agreed to; that a cloture motion on the bill, as amended, which is at the desk then be read; that the mandatory quorum required under rule XXII be waived; that no other amendments, points of order or motions be in order to the bill; that the Senate then proceed to vote on the motion to invoke cloture on the bill, as amended; that if cloture is invoked, all postcloture time be yielded back, and the bill, as amended, be read a third time and the Senate proceed to vote on passage of the bill, as amended; that if the bill, as amended, is passed, a title amendment which is at the desk be agreed to; finally, that if cloture is not invoked, the action above with respect to the amendment to the bill be vitiated and the bill be returned to the calendar.

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

NO SUBSIDIES WITHOUT VERIFICATION ACT

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the Senate will proceed to the consideration of H.R. 2775, which the clerk will report by title.

The legislative clerk read as follows:

A bill (H.R. 2775) to condition the provision of premium and cost-sharing subsidies under the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act upon a certification that a program to verify household income and other qualifications for such subsidies is operational, and for other purposes.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, Amendment No. 2004 is agreed to.

(The amendment is printed in today's RECORD under ''Text of Amendments.'')

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the cloture motion having been presented under rule XXII, the Chair directs the clerk to read the motion.