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Senate

The Senate met at 10 a.m. and was called to order by the Honorable JEANNE SHAHEEN, a Senator from the State of New Hampshire.

PRAYER

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

Let us pray.

O God, our shelter in the time of storm, our strong tower, we praise Your righteous Name. Lord, preserve this Nation by the power of Your might, leading our Senators through this challenging season of our Nation's history. Keep them from the pit of disunity and discord and empower them to build bridges of cooperation. Give them the courage and humility to do what is right, knowing that You are the only constituent they absolutely must please. Help them to discover the joy of trusting You and the peace of doing Your will, receiving the strength You provide to those who love You.

We pray in Your sacred Name. Amen.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The Honorable JEANNE SHAHEEN led the Pledge of Allegiance, as follows:

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

APPOINTMENT OF ACTING PRESIDENT PRO TEMPORE

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

The legislative clerk read the following letter:

U.S. SENATE,
PRESIDENT PRO TEMPORE,
Washington, DC, July 26, 2011.

To the Senate:

Under the provisions of rule I, paragraph 3, of the Standing Rules of the Senate, I hereby appoint the Honorable JEANNE SHAHEEN, a Senator from the State of New Hampshire, to perform the duties of the Chair.

DANIEL K. INOUYE,
President pro tempore.

Mrs. SHAHEEN thereupon assumed the chair as Acting President pro tempore.

RECOGNITION OF THE MAJORITY LEADER

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

SCHEDULE

Mr. REID. Madam President, following any leader remarks, the Senate will be in morning business until 12:15. The majority will control the first 30 minutes, the Republicans will control the second 30 minutes. At 12:15 p.m. the Senate will be in executive session to consider the nomination of Paul Englemayer to be United States District Judge for the Southern District of New York and Ramona Manglona to be District Judge for the Northern Mariana Islands.

There will be 2 minutes of debate prior to a rollcall vote on confirmation of the Englemayer nomination. The Manglona nomination is expected to be confirmed by voice vote. I would ask my friends on the Judiciary Committee—I am not sure we need the 2 minutes of debate today. It was already debated yesterday. I would hope we can go directly to that vote at 12:15.

The Senate will then recess until 2:15 to allow for the weekly caucus meetings. At 2:15 the Senate will resume consideration of S. 1323, the legislative vehicle for the debt limit increase.

DEBT CEILING PLANS

Mr. REID. Madam President, there has been a lot of talk in the last 24 hours about so-called dueling plans to raise the debt limit and avert a dangerous default to this nation's financial obligations. As far as I can tell, the only dueling going on in Washington today is between the Republican Party's multiple personalities—and there are quite a few.

Last night I introduced an amendment that I thought was fail-safe. It would prevent default using only proposals Republicans have already supported. Yet House Republicans had harsh words for the Democrats' plan yesterday—odd, considering every bit of our proposal was taken from the Republican playbook. Let me explain the plan.

It would avert default while cutting $2.7 trillion from the deficit in the next decade. It would cut more money, more quickly, than the competing proposal introduced by Republican leaders yesterday, and it would last for a long time, not just a few months so we would be back in the trenches doing the same thing at Christmastime we are doing now.

The proposal includes no revenues, as House Republicans insisted it must not. It holds harmless even the most wasteful of tax breaks and giveaways to big oil companies and billionaires, which Republicans have vowed to protect even if it costs our economy in the process.

It establishes a joint congressional committee to find additional savings this year and guarantees that the committee's recommendations will be an up-or-down vote on the Senate floor, no amendments, no filibuster, yes or no. We have done this before. It worked well with our base closing legislation a few years ago.

Every single spending cut in the proposal has already been endorsed by Republicans. I repeat: Every single spending cut in the proposal has already been endorsed by Republicans. The cuts have already been voted for by Republicans in both Houses of Congress.

In short, it is everything the Republicans have demanded wrapped up in 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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bow and delivered to their door. But now Republicans say their demands, which have been met in full, are not enough. They insist instead that we pass their plan, a similar plan in many respects, save for several crucial details.

Their plan also raises the debt ceiling but for only a few months. It cuts spending and includes no revenue increases. These are the major differences: It does not cut as much from the deficit as the legislation I introduced last night—in fact, not nearly as much. It is a short-term fix that Republicans know is untenable to Democrats and the White House and Congress. In short, the Republican plan they know will not pass the Senate of the United States.

Not long ago, it was untenable for the Republicans. This is what Speaker BOEHNER said about short-term measures in May. Speaker of the House of Representatives JOHN BOEHNER said this in May:

> I am not really interested in a short-term increase in the debt limit. Our economy won't grow as long as we continue to trip it up with short-term gimmicks from Washington.

House Majority Leader CANTOR echoed the sentiment in June:

> I'm not sure how if we're not willing to make tough decisions now, we'll be willing to make them later. . . . It is my preference that we do this thing one time. . . . Putting off tough decisions is not what people want.

We agree. We agree. Certainly we agree.

This is what the Washington Post said about Republicans' bizarre about-face yesterday: ''It seems that perhaps the only meaningful difference between the two plans is that the Democratic plan gets it done in one fell swoop, while the GOP proposal does a short-term deal followed by another a year later, something that financial analysts say could lead to a downgrade of the U.S. credit rating and that Republicans themselves once opposed.''

In fact, rating agencies have said as late as last night that the plan that I introduced will not cause a downgrading of our credit. The one the Republicans introduced will.

The Republicans are insisting we relive the endless negotiation and partisan wrangling of the last 6 weeks again 6 months from now with no good outcome guaranteed. I have said a short-term solution is no solution at all. It puts us right back in this untenable position a few short months from now. It gives the markets no stability, it gives the American people no certainty, and it gives the credit rating agencies no choice but to downgrade U.S. debt, a move that would cause interest rates to rise and effectively increase taxes for every American—every American.

Market analysts and credit rating agencies have said a short-term fix would risk many of the same effects as a default, and that is a risk our economy cannot afford. If Republicans continue to oppose the reasonable proposal I brought to the floor last night—and which we will vote on here in the Senate soon—it will be for political reasons driven by the ideological tea party. It will be crystal clear that Republicans do not care if we default on the debt. That is sad but true. After all, we have given them a plan that should, by all rights, be guaranteed to pass the House, and with Senate support here, which we should have, it should pass both Houses. Yet they have trashed it right out of the gate.

Yesterday, the Washington Post called this debate over whether to default on the full faith and credit of the United States of America ''surreal'' and ''bizarre.'' Those were their words. This commentary is valid. Reasonable Republicans have been offered absolutely everything they have asked for. Still they refuse to take yes for an answer, all because of a cadre of unreasonable tea-party-driven House Republicans. That is too bad.

RESERVATION OF LEADER TIME

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

MORNING BUSINESS

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Under the previous order, the Senate will be in a period of morning business until 12:15, with Senators permitted to speak therein for up to 10 minutes each, with the time equally divided and controlled between the two leaders or their designees, with the majority controlling the first 30 minutes, and the Republicans controlling the second 30 minutes.

The Senator from California.

Mrs. BOXER. Madam President, I want to thank Leader HARRY REID for stepping into the breach in this situation and offering us a way out of this what I consider to be a Republican-made crisis. Why do I say that? The debt limit has been increased 89 times since 1939, 55 times under Republican Presidents and 34 times under Democratic Presidents.

Never has either party brought us to this brink of default. Never. Never. Never in the history of America. It is a manmade crisis. It is a Republican-made crisis. It has never happened before. The real challenge we face is clearly with our deficit and our debt. The good news is that we had this crisis before, this challenge before, and we stepped up to the plate. We passed a budget when Bill Clinton was President that not only balanced the budget—and we did not need a amendment to the Constitution to do it, we did it by working it out, by cutting out the waste and the fraud and abuse in government, by choosing to invest in important areas such as education, high-tech—biotech at that time, which created jobs, which created so many jobs in this country—23 million jobs. That was the absolute result of this very good budget.

A budget expresses the hopes and dreams of the people, the priorities of the people. That challenge was met before, so we know how to do it. You sit down, you figure out what is a waste of spending, what is important spending, and you pursue policies that create jobs. We did it before, we can do it again. It is a challenge, but we can do it because we did it.

Others will say in order to do it you have to have a balanced budget amendment to the Constitution. Well, the facts do not back that up. In order to get a balanced budget, you simply have to balance the budget. You simply have to do the hard work to get it done.

This manmade crisis, this Republican-made crisis, is totally unnecessary. I never heard one of these folks who says, let's go into default—I never heard them speak out during the George W. Bush years when we raised the debt ceiling seven times, and some of them were around during the Reagan years, and 18 times the debt ceiling was raised. Under George W. Bush, my Republican friends raised the debt ceiling by 90 percent. President Obama is asking for an increase of about 18 percent. So, America, figure it out. All of a sudden, after putting two wars on the credit card, tax cuts to millionaires and billionaires on the credit card as my Republican friends did, a prescription drug policy which was not paid for—none of it was paid for—they put it on the credit card. And now they say: Oh, woe is me. We have a debt.

Well, they should have discovered that before. In 8 years George W. Bush turned a $236 billion surplus into a $1.3 trillion deficit, and that is what President Obama inherited. We have a moment of opportunity here, and I think what Senator REID has done is given us a way out of this mess. We put into place $2.7 trillion of cuts, and we give a sense of certainty to the marketplace for 18 months that this debt ceiling is taken care of.

Let's get back to business around here of taking care of this long-term deficit and debt challenge, and creating jobs for our people and protecting Medicare and Social Security and all of the rest that we have to do.

We have to build infrastructure. I am the chairman of the committee that is in charge of the highway bill. We have good bipartisan cooperation, but we need to get this resolved.

The Boehner plan is so short term it sends a chill through the marketplace. I used to be a stockbroker many years ago. When the President got a cold, the stock market went down. It is very sensitive to these things. The Boehner plan, according to some commentators, will cause a downgrade of our securities.

I don't think we should be in the business of downgrading America. We should be in the business of lifting America, of letting the people know we are taking care of their business.

The Republicans' interest is going after the middle class, the working poor, to protect the millionaires and the billionaires. Here is where we are with that policy: The 400 richest Americans have more wealth than the first 50 percent of the American people. Imagine, the richest 10 percent of all Americans controls two-thirds of America's net worth. The average CEO receives 180 times more in compensation than the average production worker. In 1965, CEOs made 24 times more in compensation. Now it is 185 times.

What we hear when we suggest millionaires and billionaires pay just a little bit more to help America get out of this challenge we face is an almost out-of-control defense from the Republicans about why we should not even consider asking them to pay even 2 cents more. They say: Don't tax the job creators. I said to my staff: Let's take a look at who are the job creators and what they earn.

As everybody knows, the small businesses are the biggest job creators. I wish to make it clear that only 1.4 percent of taxpayers with any business income make over $500,000 per year. What I am saying is, they say don't tax the job creators, and we are looking at taxing people over $500,000 a person. That is only 1.4 percent of the job creators. We are not touching 98 percent of the job creators. So don't get up there and say we want to tax job creators—not true. We do want to ask millionaires and billionaires to pay their fair share.

On July 21, 200 millionaires signed a letter asking congressional Republicans to consider sealing the budget gap with increased revenue—higher taxes on them. They say:

> Despite our willingness to provide additional support to the country financially to assure its continued well-being, despite the overwhelming support of the idea among the American people, despite the reality that millionaires like us are paying lower taxes now than at any other time in the last 60 years, and despite the fact that the Bush tax cuts are the single largest cause of the deficit, you have repeatedly refused to consider reasonable steps to address our country's fiscal challenges.

They say they are reiterating their demand that we look to the millionaires and billionaires. Look, our challenges of deficit and debt can, in fact, be met. We know the road. The road is clear. The road was built by President Bill Clinton and the Democrats at that time and eventually a lot of Republicans came on with us—eventually. In the beginning, they predicted gloom and doom from the Clinton budget.

I have a bunch of quotes from Members who are still here on the Republican side who said the Clinton budget is going to lead to a recession, it is going to lead to unemployment, and it is going to lead to deficits. But we went into a great period of prosperity, with 23 million jobs, a budget in balance, and a debt about to be extinguished down the road. That all got upended by the Republican plan to lower the taxes on the richest Americans and put it on the credit card, to go into two wars and put it on the credit card, pass a prescription drug benefit and protect Big Pharma by saying Medicare cannot negotiate for lower prices. They put that on the credit card.

It is no wonder we face this problem. When President Obama got in, we were bleeding jobs at 800,000 a month—almost 1 million a month. President Obama and all of us knew there was a frozen banking system. We had to make sure that credit system was working. We had to make sure we created some jobs. We passed the stimulus bill. Despite all the talk about how it didn't work, experts say it stopped a depression. So, yes, we had to add those things as well.

Now it is time to pull together as Americans. This isn't about Republicans or Democrats. The people of this country agree that millionaires and billionaires should pay more. Right now, what Senator REID has said is let's set that aside, get on with our work and get out of this mess and, for 18 months, give a sense of certainty to the marketplace and let's address the issues.

JOHN BOEHNER, who spoke to the Nation last night, is presenting a patchwork quilt that expires in a few months, and we will be back to this nightmare. We face downgrades of our creditworthiness. Let's get behind the Reid proposal and work together and get this country back on its feet. Uncertainty is the worst option.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The Senator from Illinois.

Mr. DURBIN. Madam President, this is a historic week in the Senate. She has spelled out what we face. I guess most people around America are looking at Washington and Capitol Hill and asking if there are any grownups left; can't adults sit down there in both political parties and solve our Nation's problems? It is a legitimate question because we are up against the deadline of August 2, the expiration of America's mortgage, the debt ceiling. It means that for the first time in history, if we don't act, we will default on our debt.

That is significant because the United States enjoys a reputation around the world—the highest economic reputation around the world, a AAA bond rating, which is as good as it gets. If a person asks for credit and they have that rating, they are in great shape; they can borrow what they need at a good interest rate. That is what we have today. If we fail to do what we are supposed to do between now and August 2 and default on our debt, it will be the first time it has occurred, it will mean the promise of America to pay its bills has been broken, and it will mean our creditors around the world will have questions about whether we can be trusted. When creditors have questions, they cover the risk by raising interest rates. So if the interest rate on America goes up 1 percent—just 1 percent—it costs us $130 billion a year, added to our debt; projected over 10 years: $1.3 trillion for every 1 point interest. So tempting fate and going to August 2 in that circumstance is not good, not just because America's debt grows but because interest rates around America will then rise with it. So if one is borrowing money for a car, a home or on a credit card, their interest rates will go up. Congress, without passing a tax bill, has just imposed a new tax on us. It will be the tax for defaulting on our debt ceiling.

What we are trying to do this week is to work out some sort of an agreement between Republicans and Democrats, House and Senate, and the President to avoid this crisis. As the Senator from California accurately said, this is not a crisis similar to a natural disaster or even a terrorist attack; this is a manufactured political crisis on Capitol Hill. We don't have to have this. It has never happened before. What we are doing with this kind of a ''High Noon'' scenario, waiting until the last minute to solve our problem, is creating a problem that will cost us dearly. There are ways around it.

Majority leader HARRY REID is going to come forward on the Senate floor on behalf of the Democrats, and we hope with Republican support, with a plan to deal with this deficit and this debt ceiling. What the majority leader will propose is that we will make cuts in spending, which will reduce our deficit $1.2 trillion in cuts over 10 years. I think it is a significant indication that we are serious about our debt.

In addition to that, what we will have is an increase of our debt limit until February of 2013. It is only in Washington, as one of my colleagues said this morning, that 18 months is considered a long-term commitment. What we know is that if we don't make a long-term extension of the debt ceiling, we are going to have to go through this scenario—political scenario—again and again. Each time we do, it calls into question the credit status of the United States. So what we are going to try to do this week with bipartisan support is move forward in dealing with this crisis in a responsible way—reducing spending, extending the debt ceiling; and I can say that everything included in Senator REID's proposal, which he brought to the floor, has been either proposed by or voted in favor of by Republicans. It is a bipartisan approach. I think it is an honest approach. I am hoping we can reach an agreement on it.

I see my colleague from Maryland. I ask him if he is asking for time in morning business and how much time.

Mr. CARDIN. Ten minutes.

Mr. DURBIN. Madam President, how much time remains in morning business on the Democratic side?

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. There is 13 minutes 40 seconds remaining.

Mr. DURBIN. I will be brief and then yield to my friend from Maryland.

I believe we can deal with our debt responsibly. I say that having been

through a year and a half working on this issue. I am still not an expert, but I know a lot more about it than I did from the start. Democrats and Republicans worked together on the President's deficit commission and came up with a plan supported by 11 out of the 18 members, including myself, and a number of Republican Senators and Democratic Senators, including KENT CONRAD, chairman of the Budget Committee. We all supported it. We believe there is a way to reduce the debt by $4 trillion over 10 years and in a sensible, balanced way, bringing into consideration not only spending cuts but also reform of our entitlement programs and revenue.

On the entitlement programs, many Senators and many people get nervous when we talk about Social Security and Medicare. I will say I am committed to these programs. I believe in them. The reason I stayed with this conversation is because I wish to make certain that at least one, maybe more, at the table feel as I do about the importance of Social Security and Medicare. I believe we can make reasonable changes in each of those programs, preserve the basic benefit structure, particularly for working Americans, and make sure they have the promise of the security which these programs bring.

I know people in retirement wonder if the savings are going to last, whether their pension will be around. But they know for sure that Social Security will be there. I wish to make sure that promise is kept, not just for 25 years but for 50 years and beyond. We can do it, and making modest changes now can achieve it.

On Medicare, health insurance for the elderly and disabled people, Medicare is a bigger challenge. In 6 years or so, we start running out of money. Let's do things now that will avoid that crisis. We don't want that. We want to make sure people have the peace of mind of knowing they have health insurance. We can do it in a sensible, responsible way. Let's do it together, not with a determination of ending the program. I will never let that happen on my watch. We need to make sure the program has a long solvent life.

When it comes to revenue, there is a way to do this.

Madam President, $1.2 trillion is lost each year in our Tax Code to deductions and credits and exclusions and special treatment given to some and not to others. We can take a look at that and do it in a way that says we are going to preserve the basics that we need. Yes, we need the mortgage interest deduction. Yes, we need the charitable deduction.

We need to make sure people have health insurance exclusions from their income. We can still do that and lower the amount of tax expenditures and use that money to reduce the deficit. That is a reasonable way of raising revenue in a sensible manner.

Men and women of good faith in both political parties can do this. Let's pass Senator REID's proposal and avert this crisis and tackle the long-term deficit and debt challenge in a balanced way, by putting everything on the table. We did it with the deficit commission. We did it with the Gang of 6. We can do it again with the support of the American people to encourage us beyond our critics—that will always happen—to the kind of conclusion where people will once again feel pride in what goes on in Washington.

Mr. CARDIN. Madam President, let me first thank our assistant Democratic majority leader for his incredible work on the Bowles-Simpson Commission. Senator DURBIN was a real voice of reason and brought together diverse views. We need that this week. And then with the Gang of 6, with our colleagues in the Senate on both sides of the aisle, he was able to bring us together in achieving two goals—and that is what we need to do—one is we need to raise the debt limit and, secondly, we need a credible plan to deal with the deficit. I think Senator DURBIN has added greatly to accomplishing those goals, reaching across party lines, and understanding that it cannot be what the Democrats want or what the Republicans want but we have to work together.

But I must say that at this moment, we are 7 days away from the August 2 date. So we have two goals. Goal No. 1 is to raise the debt limit so that we don't default on America's obligations. Raising the debt limit needs to be our goal No. 1. We have already incurred this debt. This is not about increasing America's spending; this is for spending that has already occurred, and now we have to pay the bills.

The cost of default is unimaginable to the American people. We will pay more as taxpayers because the cost of government borrowing will go up. We know that. That is not speculation; we know that. But the cost to every American will go up because the cost of home mortgages will go up, the cost of credit card interest will go up, and student loan costs will go up. All of the borrowing costs in America will go up. It will also hurt our economy. It will cost us jobs.

It makes no sense whatsoever to be here without raising the debt limit. Senator REID's proposal does that through 2012. It gets the job done. Speaker BOEHNER's proposal does not get it done—another short-term extension.

We should listen to the experts in the market. Christian Cooper, who is a currency expert and trader, said:

> From the markets' point of view, a two-stage plan is a nonstarter . . . There is significant risk of a downgrade with a deal that ties further cuts to another vote only a few months down the road given the significant resistance to do the right thing now.

Speaker BOEHNER's proposal just kicks the can down the road for a couple more months without resolving the problem. And that is Goal No. 1. The Reid plan accomplishes that.

Goal No. 2 is having a credible plan to get our debt under control. The President was right as he explained last night how we got here. He went through how, under the Bush administration, the previous administration, we took a surplus to a deficit by cutting taxes not once but twice, by two wars that were not paid for, by spending programs that weren't paid for, and now we are in a situation where we have a nonsustainable deficit. That is accurate.

It is our responsibility to make sure we have a credible plan to deal with the deficit. Leader REID's proposal gives us that glidepath. I think all of us would like to see a grand deal, a grand bargain. That is not going to be achieved by August 2. Senator REID's proposal gives us the glidepath for a responsible, credible plan to bring our debt under control. Speaker BOEHNER's proposal does not do that. It just basically says we will deal with it at a later time.

Look at the downpayment. Leader REID gives us $2.7 trillion of deficit reduction now that we can enact by August 2, while Speaker BOEHNER gives us $1.2 trillion. It is clear that $2.7 trillion really gets us much closer to the $4 trillion goal we all know we need to achieve, but it also gives us a game plan to be able to achieve the $4 trillion in deficit reductions we all know we need to do.

Madam President, you and I are in agreement on how we can get that done now. We know that. We have a plan. The problem is that we can't get that done by August 2 because we can't get the Republicans in the House to move on a balanced plan. We understand that.

Well, the Reid proposal preserves all options but gives us a way to get to the $4 trillion of deficit reduction that is clearly needed. It allows the use of a joint committee that will use a balanced approach. We have models they can look at. The Bowles-Simpson Commission is a balanced approach to bring in a credible plan to deal with the deficit. The Gang of 6 gives us a balanced approach in order to deal with our deficits. So we have the model before us in order to get it done.

Let me tell you why I think Leader REID's proposal is the best way for us to proceed 7 days before the August 2 deadline. It gives the Republicans basically what they have asked for. We can't do this by Democrats alone. We need Democrats and Republicans working together. The Reid proposal represents the views of the Members of the Senate on both sides of the aisle. Why do I say that? From the beginning, the Republicans have been saying we have to have a dollar-for-dollar reduction in debt for a $1 increase in the debt ceiling. There is no relationship between our current spending and what the debt ceiling represents because, as I said earlier, it represents what we have already spent. But, OK, that has been what the Republicans said we had to

do. Leader REID's proposal does that—a $2.7 trillion reduction in the deficit with a $2.7 trillion increase in the debt ceiling.

The second thing the Republicans have asked for—not all but many—is that we can't consider revenues in the package. Now, I disagree with that. I don't believe you can have a credible plan to deal with the deficit unless you include revenues, getting rid of the loopholes, getting rid of shelters. We could do that without increasing rates. We have said that many times. But the Reid proposal—what we would vote on by August 2 that accomplishes our goals—will do it without additional revenues. It preserves the right of revenues in order to have a credible plan to reach the $4 trillion target, but we get our $2.7 trillion without any revenues—something the majority of Republicans have been asking for.

The third point: The $2.7 trillion in cuts the majority leader put on the table represents cuts that have been negotiated between the Democrats and Republicans. Madam President, $1.2 trillion was included with Vice President BIDEN, the $1 trillion in cuts in regard to our overseas operations was included in the Ryan budget, and the list goes on. So these are cuts that are achievable, that have already been negotiated or agreed to between Democrats and Republicans.

I applaud Senator REID. I think Senator REID understands the seriousness of us moving forward. It allows us to move to increase the debt ceiling and preserve our rights to negotiate and get the grand bargain done and has a fallback mechanism with a joint committee that would have required votes on the floor to make sure we all have a chance to vote up or down. It preserves our options, allows America to move forward, and allows us to concentrate on job growth and security, which should be our focus as we rebound our economy for the future of our Nation. For all those reasons, I hope my colleagues will support the effort of Senator REID to bring us together to avoid the unspeakable default that could occur 1 week from today.

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

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

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The Republican leader.

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

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

EXECUTIVE LEADERSHIP

Mr. MCCONNELL. Last night, the President explained to the Nation the crisis we face right now as he sees it. His hope was to lift the debate out of the gritty legislative particulars, and we all understand that. Unfortunately, the situation the President described last night bears very little resemblance to the realities on the ground right here in Washington.

I know the President would rather give speeches about our problems than resolve them, but he wasn't elected to talk about the United States; he was elected to lead it. In our system of government, that means working with people and a Congress with which you sometimes disagree. This is not a unique situation. Other Presidents have been in a similar situation where they had to work with a Congress composed of people, many of whom disagreed with them.

Last night, the President rejected not just the only proposal that has passed either House of Congress, he rejected the only plan the Democrats have proposed as well, a plan that would increase the debt limit without raising taxes. Just a few days ahead of a potential default, the President announced that he is the only person in Washington still calling for a massive tax hike, even as his party has dropped their own demands for what we know will make the current unemployment situation even worse.

In short, the President is now clinging to two things we all know Congress can't support: a massive tax hike and the biggest debt limit increase in history aimed, in his own words, at getting himself past the next election. As Speaker BOEHNER said last night, that is just not going to happen. There is bipartisan opposition to it in Congress. So it was deeply irresponsible, in my view, for the President of the United States to present the American people with a false choice last night between tax hikes on the one hand and default on the other.

The real choice is this: a bill that can get us past this moment of crisis, that cuts Washington spending, and that actually gets through Congress, or one that can't. Republicans have offered the only proposal that attempts to get at the root of the problem and that actually has a chance of getting to the President's desk. That is why we will continue to press for the legislation Speaker BOEHNER has proposed, and that is why we will fight against anything that pretends to solve the problem but doesn't. The majority leader proposed a plan yesterday that is nothing more than another attempt to pull the wool over the eyes of the American people.

The decisions we make in the next 72 hours will have a real impact on every American. These decisions should be made based on how they will affect the people who are struggling to get a job, not how they affect some politician's chances of getting reelected.

The President can claim to be concerned about this impending crisis, but one question continues to linger above every press conference he has called or every speech he has delivered: Where is his plan to resolve it? Republicans have proposed multiple plans that have support in both parties. It is time for the President to put his electoral interest and preferences aside and do what is needed. Americans are waiting. Americans are waiting for the President to do what they elected him to do—not to lecture but to lead.

Madam President, I suggest the absence of a quorum.

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

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The Senator from Arkansas.

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

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

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

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

CUT, CAP, AND BALANCE

Mr. BOOZMAN. Madam President, throughout the course of this debt ceiling debate, the American people have watched in utter disbelief of what they have seen. They understand we need to get our fiscal house in order; they see what has gotten us into this mess; and they want it stopped before they agree to give us blanket authority to raise the debt limit. What they are saying is we must spend within our means just as they have to do.

We have a way to do that. It is the cut, cap, and balance plan. It has already passed the House. The companion bill, with 39 cosponsors, has the support so it should be considered in this Chamber as well. I am proud to say I am one of those 39 cosponsors of the Senate bill. I signed onto the cut, cap, and balance bill because the American people—and more specifically the people of Arkansas—have demanded that we address this crisis now, not later. They know Washington is not good with remembering to follow through on the things they promise to do later.

Some will say this is too simple an answer. They say the fiscal mess in which we find ourselves is a complex problem. It is not though. Just look at the numbers.

This year alone we will spend $3.7 trillion while collecting only $2.2 trillion. We borrow 40 cents of every dollar we spend.

President Obama and the Democratic majority in this Chamber will say the way to fix this problem is to raise taxes. They may try to use other words and phrases such as revenue enhancers while talking about raising taxes, but make no doubt about it, they want to put the onus back on the American people.

There is a major problem with this approach. Washington does not have a revenue problem; it has a spending problem. Again, the numbers back this up. Traditionally, government spending is about 19 percent of our gross domestic product. Since President Obama has been in office, government spending has been much closer to 25 percent of our gross domestic product. This administration has raised Federal spending to the highest peak since World War II.

How do we solve this spending problem? We do it through cut, cap, and balance. Cut now—the House bill immediately cuts over $100 billion in spending; cap for the future—the spending cap mechanism in this bill caps spending over the next 10 years, bringing it down to less than 20 percent of our gross domestic product within the next 5 years—and the balance is for a balanced budget amendment, something our entire Republican caucus supports in the Senate, as do many in the Democratic majority, at least according to their on-the-record statements.

This bill prohibits the Treasury from borrowing unless a balanced budget amendment is sent to the States for ratification. Let's pass a balanced budget amendment and give the people back home the decision about whether they want to require us to operate under a balanced budget amendment. I think you will find they overwhelmingly do. Unfortunately, the Senate majority, with no plan of their own for reining in the out-of-control spending, will not allow us to have a debate on this bill.

Last Friday they moved to table the Cut, Cap, and Balance Act, effectively ending any consideration of the bill. All this reminds me of the debate over the House-passed budget we had a few months ago. The majority over here had strong words of criticism but no budget proposal of their own. Again, strong words of criticism and no plan of their own. Only this time it is worse.

With our Nation on the brink of default, the majority clearly believes it is better to score political points than have a debate on the merits of our proposal. They control the floor, the agenda, and the amendments that are accepted. If any member of their caucus wants to change the bill, they certainly have that option. But instead of having the debate, we get political theater from the majority.

This is not what our constituents deserve. They deserve a real debate. They sent us here to work together to prevent a catastrophe on par with what has happened in Greece, Ireland, and Portugal. They want to see us get our fiscal house in order. That is what the root cause of this crisis is all about. We are not just having a debate on raising the debt ceiling. If that were all this discussion was about, it would have been over months ago. Nobody wants a default.

The debate that is going on today is about a much bigger problem: the out-of-control spending that has put us in this position time and time again. Cut, cap, and balance is one way to solve the problem. It is a solution that helps us avert an immediate meltdown and brings a sense of fiscal responsibility to Washington where it is so badly needed.

Madam President, I suggest the absence of a quorum.

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

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mrs. HUTCHISON. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

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

THE MILITARY PAY ACT OF 2011

Mrs. HUTCHISON. Madam President, I rise today to speak about the Military Pay Act of 2011. We were on the brink of closing down government earlier this year, this spring, and we came to a responsible conclusion and continued our government. We were also able to continue the tax cuts that have helped spur our economy as best they could in light of the spending and the debt that has been accumulated. Now we are looking at yet another potential government shutdown. It is so important that we make priorities.

We know what is happening right now in Washington. Everyone is focused on whether there is going to be an agreement to lift the debt ceiling because if there is not, then we have the potential for default, depending on the decision of what gets paid first. We do have revenue coming in that can be spent even if the debt ceiling is not lifted. However, the President can choose the priorities. What I am asking we do today is set some of those priorities. What I am asking is we take our military personnel out of any limbo. Let's go back to what we did earlier this year when we were in the continuing resolution debate which also had the potential for shutting down government. When that happened in April, I joined with my colleague on the House side, Representative LOUIE GOHMERT. We both introduced a bill, the Ensuring Pay for Our Military Act, Senate bill 724. We have 80 cosponsors of that legislation. We have 80 out of 100 in the Senate who stepped up to the plate and said: Yes, we need to take care of our military even if government shuts down. That was April. Since then, I have introduced a new bill. The new bill is Senate bill 1365, the Protecting Military Pay Act of 2011. That one sets two priorities. It sets paying our debt, the interest on our debt and our military. Those are the two priorities. Social Security is in a different account, and it will automatically be paid from that account. I actually am cosponsoring another bill that is also cosponsored by many Senators and many House Members that would require the President pay our debt, interest on our debt, our active-duty military and also Social Security recipients even though that would automatically happen. The legislation I introduced in April that would take care of our active-duty military is supported by the Military Officers Association of America; the AMVETS, the American Veterans; and the National Military Family Association. The new bill I have introduced that has the debt to be paid off along with our military sets the priorities, and here is what it does: It says if we have any kind of government shutdown or we have a situation where we do not lift the debt ceiling and, therefore, we have to prioritize our spending according to the revenue that is coming in, there are two things that will be done: We want to pass the law so there can be no discretion that you will pay the debts and you will pay the military. You will pay the active-duty military. That is what the bill does simply and clearly.

Here is the situation: If the debt ceiling is reached, $29 billion would be set aside for August to the payment of our debts, $2.9 billion would be added to that for active-duty military pay. So you are allocating out of the billions that would be coming in in August, you would allocate those as the first two priorities and Social Security would be paid out of the Social Security fund. I am going to ask our majority leader to let these bills come up—at least one of them that says we will pay the debt, we will pay our military, and we know that Social Security will be paid.

It is tremendously damaging for our military to be getting the news in Afghanistan and Iraq of all the upheaval in Washington because they are getting the news, of course. For them to worry: Oh, my gosh, what happens August 2 if my paycheck isn't there for my wife or my husband to be able to use that to pay the mortgage or the basic expenses? I want to put it in perspective. We have people in the military with boots on the ground by the thousands who are making under $20,000 a year. Those are people who are living paycheck to paycheck. They don't have the luxury of having a big savings account with that kind of income, especially if they have children. My goodness, they are making under $18,000 a year, some of these younger junior members of the enlisted corps, so I don't think we ought to make them worry for 10 seconds if they can pay their basic bills for their housing and the food for their families.

In my State of Texas there are 28,000 brave men and women deployed in the support of operations in Iraq and Afghanistan. There are more than 97,000 servicemembers deployed who are married and have children waiting for them at home. There are 145,000 troops deployed in Iraq and Afghanistan who are working long hours every day in the desert heat to protect our freedom, to make sure we are doing everything we can to root out the terrorists who

have attacked America. These men and women all raised their right hand and volunteered to go to defend this Nation. The very least we can do while we are in this kind of budget negotiation, which is making a lot of people nervous—I have faith that we are going to do the right thing in the end, but it is not clear yet and we are a week away. I don't think we ought to make these people think about whether it is going to happen and if there is going to be a delay in a paycheck.

I hope we will be able to bring this bill up. I can guarantee if the majority leader will bring up my bill, it will pass. It has 80 cosponsors. The new bill is the same thing except it makes the debt payment the priority, which you would hope would not have to be done, but nevertheless let's assure that our debtors know we are going to pay the interest on the debt, and our military—who are in harm's way right now—will not worry about their family having the paycheck they need.

We have about a week. All of us had hoped it wouldn't take this long, but we have our different views, there is no question about it. I am one who believes we should raise the debt ceiling only with reforms that will assure the markets not just for the next week or the next 6 months, but for the long term, that not only are we going to pay our debts but we are going to bring down the cost of government so we will not have to raise the debt limit again.

We must take the reform actions we can take right now. We can fix Social Security for 75 years with relatively little cuts in increases with Social Security COLAs and with a trajectory that will put us on an actuarial table for an age that has certainly changed since Social Security passed. Very little change. It wouldn't affect anyone who is in the upper area of going into Social Security. The bill I have introduced wouldn't affect anyone age 58 and above or 55 and above. We can do the big things that will show our debtors and the rest of the world we can live within our means and our democracy can work to do the things that will make us good not for the next week, not for the next 6 months, but for our children and grandchildren. That is what we ought to be doing right now, and I have faith. We are going to have to do something temporary for the next few months while we work out the details, but I know if we get together, we can do this. I don't want our military to have to worry about it for 1 week or 3 months or 6 months because they deserve better.

Thank you, Madam President.

I yield the floor.

Mr. THUNE. Madam President.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from South Dakota.

THE BUDGET

Mr. THUNE. I am happy to cosponsor the legislation of the Senator from Texas. She is absolutely right, there is no more deserving group of people in this country than our military and we need to make sure under no circumstance they are not paid, and her legislation would do that. I hope we can get it to the floor and that it is acted upon very quickly.

We are a week away now from the time in which we would have to request additional borrowing authority in order for our Federal Government to pay its bills. We have known it is coming for some time. We know generally at least when that date is. It strikes me as most Americans observe this debate, the thing they are probably most concerned about is how this is going to impact them and their economic circumstances. Frankly, I think all of us ought to be looking at this with an eye toward how is this going to impact the economy. What is this going to do to get people back to work and to grow the economy? There has been a lot of discussion about that. The President made yet another speech last night in which he tried to claim the high ground in this debate. Frankly, I think the President has relegated himself to the sidelines in this debate simply because many of the things he was proposing to do as a part of this debt limit increase would be very counterproductive when it comes to the economy. I would also add that the President continues to sort of assign blame and blame the previous administration for the circumstances in which we find ourselves and, clearly, he inherited a difficult set of economic circumstances. I think we would all concede that.

What I would argue is the President has made that situation worse. He has made it much worse. If you look at since this President took office, we now have 2.1 million more people unemployed than there were when he took office. We have seen the Federal debt grow by 35 percent since this President took office. The number of people receiving food stamps today has gone up by 40 percent since this President took office. He has added $11,000 to the debt of each individual in this country since he took office. Gas prices are up. They increased almost 100 percent since this President took office. The cost of health care has gone up 19 percent since this President took office despite assertions during the debate on the health care bill last year that it was actually going to reduce health care costs. We have seen all of these economic circumstances worsen on this President's watch.

It strikes me as we look at this debt debate that we ought to be thinking about what can we do to get out of this economic downturn. We are growing at a very sluggish rate, a little under 2 percent. We have unemployment that is over 9 percent, 9.2 percent. As I said, there are 2.1 million more people unemployed than when the President took office. Clearly the focus of our discussions as we lead up to this vote on the debt limit ought to be about the economy, getting people back to work, growing the economy.

Frankly, I think there are a couple of things we have to do to get out of the debt situation. One is we have to cut government spending. Secondly, we have to get the economy growing and expanding again. So, clearly, that ought to be the focus.

When I said the President, in his proposal—at least as it has been reported because we haven't seen any proposal from him, but in the reporting about his discussions with congressional leadership, it has been suggested that the President has consistently advocated for more revenues, more taxes, and, in fact, as recently as last Friday, when there was still ''a big deal'' on the table—we were still looking at a possibility of actually striking an agreement—the President upped the ante even further. He moved the goalpost yet again. He wanted $400 billion more in higher taxes.

It strikes me, and I think most Americans right now, that the worst thing we can do in an economic downturn and when we have 9.2 percent unemployment is raise taxes. There isn't a tax I can think of that will create a single job in this country. It would only make it more difficult and more expensive for our small businesses to create jobs. So that was a nonstarter. I think it became clear over time that it was going to be a nonstarter despite the President's insistence that tax increases be a part of whatever deal gets struck here.

As we find ourselves where we are now, I think it is important to think about where we have come from and to look at the time that has now passed and where we stand today. I think it is important to point out, as we talk about budgets and we talk about spending and we talk about debt, our job is to pass a budget. That is where it all starts. We haven't passed a budget now in 818 days. In fact, the last time the Senate approved a budget was back on April 29, 2009. So it has now been 818 days since the most recent budget was approved by the Senate.

So we are operating without a budget. Imagine how complicated it would be for any State government, any business in this country, if they continued to operate without a budget. That is what we have been doing in Washington now for 818 days.

So January 6 of this year came around and we knew this debt limit vote was coming and was out there. Secretary Geithner wrote to Congress asking that the debt limit be increased. That was back in January. At that time, the Obama administration was also pushing for a clean debt limit increase; in other words, a debt limit increase that did not include any kind of spending reductions or spending reform. He just wanted a $2.4 trillion blank check to raise the debt by that amount.

Well, we came to February of this year—of 2011—when it came time for

the President to submit his budget to Congress. That budget seemed to be in complete denial of the reality we find ourselves in today because that budget would spend $46 trillion and add almost $10 trillion to the publicly held debt over the next decade, as well as increase taxes by somewhere on the order of $1.5 trillion, $1.6 trillion. So it had more spending, more debt, and higher taxes at a time when we are in an economic downturn, when we have high unemployment, and we have year over year deficits that are adding massively to the debt in this country. So the President's budget was met with a thud, as one would expect, when it was presented to the Congress.

As we went on in the year, in March of this year—March 31 to be exact—the Senate Republicans introduced a balanced budget amendment. We recognized that in order for us to get our fiscal house in order, to start living within our means, to quit spending money we don't have, we have to have some kind of a discipline imposed on the Congress, a requirement that we balance our budget every year, as do so many States. There are 49 States in this country that have some form of a balanced budget amendment in their constitution, some sort of requirement that forces them to make their books balance at the end of the year. So we introduced a balanced budget amendment, and we still hope at some point to get a vote on that. That hasn't happened yet, but that is certainly something we want to enter into this debate because we think it is important not only to deal with the spending in the near term, but also to come up with a solution in the long term, and a balanced budget amendment would certainly accomplish that.

On April 11 of this year, Chairman PAUL RYAN of the House Budget Committee introduced his budget in the House of Representatives. Of course, on April 13, right after the submission of that budget, the President then gave a ''revised budget'' speech. It was interesting because Congressional Budget Office Director Elmendorf later stated that the CBO—the Congressional Budget Office—doesn't score speeches, so they really couldn't attach any sort of numbers to the President's speech because they don't score speeches. We have yet to see any kind of an actual submission of a plan from the President prior to his provisional budget submission, which, as I said, came in with higher taxes, higher spending, and higher debt.

On April 15, in accordance with the schedule required under the Budget Act, the House passed their budget. So the Republicans on the Senate Budget Committee asked the President to submit a revised budget based upon his speech. That revised budget was never submitted. We had a House-passed budget. We had the President's sort of on the sidelines, out of the debate, and then in May of this year Republicans on the Senate Budget Committee—and I am on that Senate Budget Committee—were told to expect a budget markup which never materialized. So we still didn't have a budget in the Senate. The budget passed by the House of Representatives was roundly criticized by the Senate and by Democrats in Washington. But it is the only budget proposal—actual proposal—that has been voted on and that we have literally seen in over 818 days now.

We knew this vote on the debt limit was starting to get closer, so discussions picked up in terms of having some meetings to determine how we might proceed and what we might do to put a package in place that would allow us to raise the debt limit, but do it with significant spending reforms and spending reductions. Vice President BIDEN held his very first meeting on May 5 of this year—2011—and those discussions continued on for some time.

We also had on the floor of the Senate on May 25 of this year the President's budget he submitted to Congress back in February. So we actually had a vote on that. That vote was 97 to 0 in opposition to the President's budget. There wasn't a single Republican or a single Democrat in the Senate who said the President's original budget submission was something they wanted to be associated with or wanted to support. So not a single vote in the Senate for the President's original budget submission.

So we continued on into June, and I think there was hope there would be some agreement between the President and congressional leadership on how to proceed with this debt limit vote that comes up ahead of us now sometime next week. Those discussions continued, as I said, as recently as last week and finally started to unravel and fell apart, at which point it became clear we were going to need a solution and an answer.

So, again, the House Republicans put together and passed a proposal called cut, cap, and balance which would have cut spending now, immediately, capped spending in future years, and put in place a balanced budget amendment which would ensure that in later years we would have the kind of discipline that is so important and so lacking in Washington. That was on July 19, 2011, when the House passed that legislation.

So it came over to the Senate. We had a vote on it in the Senate on July 22, last week, and the Senate Democrats voted to table the cut, cap, and balance approach and denounced it as not a serious effort to do anything about the fiscal circumstance in which we find ourselves.

We didn't get a chance to debate it and get to an up-or-down vote. We had a tabling motion and a vote on a tabling motion by the Democratic leader and as a consequence it was defeated. So we don't have anything yet in place that would deal with the debt limit coming up ahead of us next week.

So that is where we are today. As I said, the House Republicans have again taken the leadership and put forward yet another proposal, and I expect they are going to vote on it sometime later this week, perhaps as early as tomorrow. We evidently now have before us something the Senate leadership, Senator REID, has put forward we may end up having a vote on this week. But somehow, some way, we have to get to where we solve this before next Tuesday.

I am not among those who believe it is an option for us to get past next Tuesday and then try and figure out what happens next. I believe we need to act. We need to act in a way that is responsible, but we need to act in a way that addresses the real issue, which is not the debt limit but the debt.

I wish to point out when the President originally requested—and I think he reiterated that request in April—a clean debt limit, there was an assumption that Congress would just give him a $2.4 trillion increase in the debt limit without any kind of attempt to rein in the real problem, which is the debt.

So we have been consistently advocating to try to get spending reductions, spending reforms into this equation. The President has consistently advocated in favor of tax increases. To him, this is defined as a revenue problem, not a spending problem. Most of us see this as a spending problem. When we have spending as a percentage of the entire economy that is literally at the highest level since World War II, we have, fundamentally, a spending problem. It cannot be resolved by raising taxes on small businesses; it needs to be resolved by cutting spending.

When we cut spending, I believe we will also put in place the confidence the economy needs to start picking up and growing again, and we will get the other component, the other element that is so important to getting out of this mess; that is, an expanding, growing, vital economy that is creating jobs and creating greater prosperity for the American people.

So this is where we are. We are in the last week. I think the President is essentially missing in action. His proposal to raise taxes which he talked about again last night in his speech is old news. It is yesterday's news. We know that is not going to pass in the House of Representatives, and it probably wouldn't pass in the Senate. Right now, the simple math is we have to be able to pass something by next Tuesday. We have to put something forward that can secure 217 votes in the House of Representatives and 60 votes in the Senate.

Some of us maybe aren't going to like certain elements of what is going to be put forward. But what I can tell my colleagues is, we have come a long way in terms of steering this debate away from the President's original budget proposal which, as I said, doubled the debt over 10 years, massively increased spending, massively increased taxes, and from the point where the President was asking for a

debt limit increase devoid of any spending cuts or spending reforms—simply a $2.4 trillion blank check that would allow him to raise the debt limit—to a time where we are actually talking about significant reductions in spending both in the near term and in the long term. Whether the proposal that passes the House this week ends up being what we ultimately vote on in the Senate, it is the only viable option out there.

The President doesn't have a plan. He never has had a plan. The Senate Democrats don't have a plan. They haven't had a budget in 818 days and have yet to put forward anything until, as I said, this most recent idea Senator REID came up with. But we are up against the clock. We need to get this done. The American people expect us to get it done. The market expects us to get it done. Not doing so would put at great risk our credit rating and our ability as a great nation to function and to attract the type of credit we need to keep our government going, unfortunately.

I hope in the end what comes out of this is some reforms that will put us on a path where we are starting to take that debt down, where we are not literally borrowing over 40 cents out of every dollar this government spends. That is where we need to end up.

But for now at least we have to get a measure in place by next week that doesn't raise taxes in a way that would hurt the economy; that gets discretionary, nondefense spending, and, for that matter, defense spending under control in the near term and puts in place a process by which we can get a result on reforming entitlement programs and dealing with what we call the mandatory part of our budget.

So that is where we came from. It has been an interesting path to get here, but there is a lot of revisionist history that gets put forward, and I wish to remind my colleagues where we came from because I think it is important and informs the decisions we will make today.

For the President to suggest for a minute that somehow the House Republicans are to blame for where we are today is not consistent—in fact, it is completely contradictory—with the facts. It is the House Republicans who passed a budget on time back in April. It is the House Republicans who passed a plan last week, a cut, cap, and balance plan to deal with this debt limit. It is the House Republicans who tomorrow who will vote on yet another proposal put forward after the President upped the ante last week and made it clear that the only way he would accept a deal would be with significant tax increases on the American people and the American economy at a time when we can ill-afford it.

So I hope as we proceed into this week—and the days are numbered—we will get a piece of legislation on the floor of the Senate that can secure the 60 votes necessary for us to avoid having to meet that trigger next week and to do something that would address the long-term issue of spending and debt, get spending under control, and actually, in my view, put the conditions in place that would enable economic growth and job creation in this country; so we can cut spending and grow the economy, which, in my view, are the two elements we need to put the country back on a better path.

So with that, I ask my colleagues to work with us this week against this deadline to get in place a solution to this problem that deals with the fundamental issue; that is, the issue of Washington's overspending, and start to rein that in.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. BENNET). The Senator from Nebraska.

Mr. JOHANNS. Mr. President, I want to start out today by complimenting the Senator from South Dakota. He has gotten it absolutely exactly right. I wish to associate myself with the comments he has made.

We are 7 days away from literally a crisis in our country. We are down to a point where it is getting even difficult to try to figure out, with the timelines naturally built into the process, how you get from here to there in 7 days, and yet that is what faces us.

Last night, like many Americans, I watched and listened to the President and listened to Speaker BOEHNER. I must admit, when it comes to the comments made by the President, I do not understand where he is coming from. He talks about higher taxes and more revenue when the reality is, at this late date, he is the only one talking about that.

I have been one of those people who has said for a long time we absolutely need to engage in a process of reforming our Tax Code. It is too complicated. It is almost an antigrowth piece of work. I am anxious to work with my colleagues. But with 7 days left to try to suggest there will be a massive amount of new taxes does not make any sense. That is not in the Reid plan. It is not in the Boehner plan. Yet there it is.

Well, here we are. We are literally 7 days away. As I said, as I watched those comments last night, it looked to me like campaign rhetoric. It looked like positioning for the next election. It looked like class warfare. What it did not look like to me was Presidential leadership. Yet our creditors around the world are watching this debt limit debate unfold, and they are as shocked as all of us are by the lack of leadership coming out of the White House.

This weekend, the President was presented a bipartisan approach. I found it reassuring over the weekend to know that our leaders in the Senate here were talking and trying to work their way through this terribly complicated issue, very difficult issue. I thought with that kind of effort, when an approach was presented to the President, he would naturally embrace the approach. With only 1 week left, that made the most sense to me. Yet, surprisingly, the President rejected the approach. The reason? Well, the reason is, as he has said so many times, the President does not want to have to deal with increasing the debt limit next year during his campaign for a second term.

I find that shocking since last night, when he addressed the Nation, he expressed great concern about our debt limit negotiations being in a stalemate. Yet he could have used that opportunity by accepting the bipartisan proposal that had been presented to him a day or so earlier. He had the opportunity to show the type of leadership our country needs and is crying out for, but he decided to reject the plan and retreat to political talking points.

The President also said he would veto Speaker BOEHNER's approach to raising the debt limit for 7 months, claiming it kicks the can down the road—claiming that is what it would be.

Let's look at that. Let's examine what the President is trying to convince this Nation of. Over the last 25 years, Congress has increased the debt limit 31 times. Mr. President, 22 of those 31 times were for less than a year. Yet the President claims he will veto anything not extending into 2013? It defies logic to decry our debt and then veto anything unless it allows more record-setting debt. That is exactly what he is pledging he will do: veto anything less than the largest debt limit increase in the history of the United States of America—the largest.

His last debt limit increase in January was the largest in history at that point—$1.9 trillion—yet instead of hitting the brakes and saying, ''Whoa, time out, this is getting us in trouble,'' the President is doubling down, demanding yet another record-setting budget buster.

Who does the President think is going to pay off all this debt? It will be our children and our grandchildren. Passing multiple trillion-dollar debt limit increases without addressing our addiction to spending does far more to kick the problems down the road. It sends the problems over the cliff, in fact. Yet, despite this reality, the President continues to accelerate, as we get closer and closer to the cliff. The President recently said this:

> The only bottom line I have is that we have to extend the debt ceiling through the next election, into 2013.

While numerous issues accompany this line of thinking, let's hit some high points.

Our national debt is more than $14 trillion, and the President is requesting to increase it to $16 trillion—the largest in our Nation's history. So why is the bottom line only about the length of the extension, not about spending reductions that put our country back on track?

Unfortunately, the President's only fundamental concern is how do we kick this past the next election. Above all else, not good policy, not what is best for our citizens, but the No. 1 goal is how to get past the next election. This is, unfortunately, his bottom line. Simply astounding that the campaign of hope and change has become such business as usual. Simply raising the debt ceiling absent any meaningful spending reforms will not work.

Now we find ourselves in one heck of a mess. With about a week to go, the latest in the debt limit saga is a proposal that was introduced last night by Senator REID. But here is why this latest plan has so many problems. Policywise, it does not hold together. The plan claims $1 trillion in savings from reductions in troop forces. These savings assume the troop surge extends into perpetuity, which never was the plan. So it assumes savings from stopping spending that was never scheduled or even requested. It is like reaching into the air and grabbing savings. Essentially, this plan counts savings that were scheduled to happen.

Second, the plan counts $400 billion in interest savings on that savings relative to the troop money that was not going to be spent, was not asked for. In other words, not only does the plan count nonexistent savings, it then compounds the policy problem by counting nonexistent interest savings on that savings. You simply cannot count savings that were never intended to happen.

We are dealing with a ticking timebomb here. We have rating agencies saying: My goodness, your debt is so out of control that unless we see a plan, we will not be fooled by the gimmicks. Yet this policy approach does not hold together. You see, the rating agencies, justifiably so, want to see real budget savings that actually help to improve our balance sheet.

We are at a critical time in our Nation's history. With 1 week left, the American people are yearning for bold leadership, not another shell game. Heated rhetoric and charged accusations are not going to fix the fiscal situation.

I stand ready to work with my colleagues on a solution, and I urge the President to do the same. Let's quit defending what is indefensible; that is, worrying about getting the can kicked down the road past the next election, and let's try to figure out how best to address this.

There was a plan that came out recently. It was a plan dubbed from the Gang of 6, and the Presiding Officer and I have had some interest in that plan. But we all acknowledge it is going to take time to put that plan in place, to debate that plan, to bring it to the floor, to do the things that are necessary. We have to take action now. I am a part of a group that says: Look, let's take a long hard look at that plan. Let's see if that is the plan we can move down the field to success.

But we have just 7 days left. We need to face the reality that 7 days from now we will be within hours of hitting our debt ceiling. Incidentally, to those who are arguing: No, it is not August 2, well, if it is not August 2, it is close to August 2. We are facing a real problem where there will not be enough money to pay the bills.

Many say: Pay the interest on the debt. Make sure you get that done. I am not opposed to that. I do not want to default on our debt. But that means we have about 50 cents on the dollar in August, according to a cashflow statement done by the Bipartisan Policy Group, and that means that 50 percent of those out there who would otherwise receive some type of payment from the Federal Government will not get it because there simply is not enough money to pay the bills.

So what does Speaker BOEHNER's plan do?

Well, it is a plan that is realistic. It says, look, we have to come to grips with where we are in the next 7 days or we can simply suspend rational thought, believe that the record-breaking debt increases to accommodate record-setting debt are somehow a plausible course. It is not.

I am more apt to believe the President's own words. When the debt limit increase was $781 billion to raise our borrowing authority to $9 trillion, then Senator Obama was in the place where we are in today, deciding on whether he would vote for a debt ceiling increase, and he called the situation then a ''failure of leadership.'' He went on to say ''increasing America's debt weakens us domestically and internationally.''

Well, we were at $9 trillion then, an unforgivable amount of money. Today we are at $14.5 trillion, and the steam engine is firing away, building up more and more debt.

Senator Obama's words were as truthful then as they are today. Yet now he has done a 180. His Presidency has hit the turbo booster when it comes to record debt.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. All time reserved for the Republicans has expired.

Mr. JOHANNS. Mr. President, I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Washington.

RAISING THE DEBT CEILING

Mrs. MURRAY. Mr. President, we are now 1 week away from the unthinkable prospect of the United States of America defaulting on its loans for the first time in our history and not making good on promises we have made to families, veterans, senior citizens across the country.

I am deeply disappointed we have gotten to this point. If we cannot come to an agreement by August 2, the consequences for our Nation and our economic recovery will be dire. A few weeks ago, the Bipartisan Policy Center put out a report that was actually authored by a former Bush Treasury official about what would happen if Congress failed to act and if the administration was forced to make desperate spending decisions in August. The scenarios were very grim.

Potentially at risk were the benefits and health care we owe our veterans, loans for struggling small businesses, food stamps for people who are struggling to buy groceries, Social Security checks for our seniors, unemployment benefits for millions of workers who are desperately looking for jobs today, and even Active-Duty pay for our military.

If the debt ceiling is not raised, we also face the very real and frightening possibility of our economy falling back into another deep recession, interest rates going up for our families and consumers, millions of workers losing their jobs, and small businesses being forced to close their doors. These risks are unacceptable. People are still recovering in this tough economy and they cannot afford to have the rug pulled out from under them.

Many families from my home State of Washington have reached out to my office throughout this debate, trying to figure out what they would do if the support they depend upon to stay in their homes, to put food on their tables is suddenly cut off. They have a pretty simple message: Get it done, compromise, and put American families first.

One letter came from Anne Phillips from Tacoma, WA, who after 18 years of work was laid off during the recession. Anne told me about how she felt she was doing the responsible thing by getting herself up, dusting herself off, going back to college. But now she is worried sick because of the fact that the interest rate she pays on her student loans, which she relies on to pay for school, would shoot up if we default.

In her letter, Anne made clear who the real victims of default would be. She said: ''Ultimately people like me, my husband, my family, and all the people I know who are doing their best every day to make the contribution to society will pay the expense.''

Anne is not alone in her concern. I have heard from veterans such as Kenneth Huff, a retired master sergeant from Olympia, WA. He spent 28 years serving our country. He told me how through a life in the military he learned the value of compromise and how he is tired of the way the peoples' work is not being done.

He wrote:

> I agree. We can cut back on spending. I know we can do a better job. But not on the backs of the very poor, the middle class, veterans and our seniors who are on Social Security and Medicare.

I have also heard from Social Security recipients such as Alisa Terry from Bellingham, WA, who told me how important that monthly check is to her and what it would mean if she did not get it next month. She says:

Social Security is my lifeline. It stands between me and homelessness.

These families and seniors deserve to have the certainty of a Federal Government that stands ready to pay its debt. They do not deserve to turn on the news every day and read about the political games House Republicans are playing with their lives and economic future. Democrats have been at the table. We have been ready and willing to compromise for months and months. We know we need to get this done. We have offered compromise after compromise. We have come to the middle and beyond. We have offered serious and deep cuts in Federal spending—very hard for some of us to do.

We have put it on the table and then we offered even more. But again and again, the House Republicans have said no. They refuse to compromise, and they refuse to come to the middle. Time and time again, they seem to be more interested in satisfying the most extreme elements of their base than on finding real solutions for the people of this country.

The House Republicans even sent us a bill they called cut, cap and balance that was not only widely understood to be a political gimmick but it had no chance of becoming law, and not only would it have been absolutely devastating for families and seniors across this country but it managed to waste precious time in Congress at a point when that resource is getting scarcer and scarcer.

So we are down to the wire. Political games need to end. They need to stop finding ways to say no and start figuring out what they can say yes to. The bill we introduced last night is a compromise. I do not believe it is perfect, but it gets us where we need to get to protect families and small businesses across America from market uncertainty, not just for a month or two. That is not what American families need. They need to know they have that economic certainty and that we will not be back in this ball game in just a few short months, going through the same process, with people worried about their Social Security checks and veterans worried again and with the markets uncertain.

The legislation that was introduced last night does make deep and serious cuts in government spending, savings that have either been discussed and agreed on in previous negotiations with Republicans or that Republicans have actually used in the budgets they recently passed themselves.

It does protect Medicare and Social Security that was promised to our seniors. It does not increase revenue, something many of us have argued time and time again needs to be a part of a balanced approach to a conclusion. But we understand compromise is important. So it does not increase revenue and that appears to be something my Republican colleagues have almost single-mindedly focused on in this process. So we have given in on that.

It puts our country on a more sustainable fiscal track, and it allows us to continue the important work to reduce the debt and deficit without the threat of economic calamity hanging over our heads such as the current House proposal does.

On this side, Democrats have bent over backward to get this done. We compromised. We compromised again and then again. The bill that was introduced last night on our side is the fruit of many compromises. We did this not because we think this is the ideal way to tackle this issue—Democrats do want a larger and a more balanced package that we believe will address our problems in a responsible way for years to come—but we put this forward because we know the American people want results, not rhetoric, and we know the consequences of inaction are far too high.

I call on our Republican colleagues to support this legislation, stop playing politics with the American economy, and work with us to solve this problem for the American people.

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.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Iowa.

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

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

CONCLUSION OF MORNING BUSINESS

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Morning business is closed.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

NOMINATION OF PAUL A. ENGELMAYER TO BE UNITED STATES DISTRICT JUDGE FOR THE SOUTHERN DISTRICT OF NEW YORK

NOMINATION OF RAMONA VILLAGOMEZ MANGLONA TO BE JUDGE FOR THE DISTRICT COURT FOR THE NORTHERN MARIANA ISLANDS

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the Senate will resume executive session to consider the following nominations, which the clerk will report.

The assistant legislative clerk read the nominations of Paul A. Engelmayer, of New York, to be United States District Judge for the Southern District of New York, and Ramona Villagomez Manglona, of the Northern Mariana Islands, to be Judge for the District Court for the Northern Mariana Islands.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. There will be 2 minutes of debate equally divided.

The Senator from Iowa.

Mr. GRASSLEY. Mr. President, I don't intend to use but 1 minute because I spoke yesterday on this nomination, but I would urge my colleagues to support the nomination of Paul A. Engelmayer to be district judge. He is very well qualified, and I would encourage a ''yes'' vote.

I yield back the remainder of my time.

Mr. LEAHY. Mr. President, yesterday I made a statement about the need for the Senate to consider all 27 judicial nominees reviewed by the Senate Judiciary Committee and now awaiting final action by the Senate. I was disappointed that the votes on Paul Engelmayer to fill a judicial emergency vacancy on the Southern District of New York and Ramona Manglona to fill a 10-year term on the District Court for the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands, which had already been stalled for 3½ months, were not considered yesterday. These are the kinds of qualified, consensus judicial nominations that in past years would have been confirmed promptly. I hope and trust that at least they will be considered and confirmed today.

After their confirmations, there will be 25 judicial nominations fully considered by the Judiciary Committee awaiting final action by the Senate. Twenty of them were unanimously reported, without a single negative vote. Regrettably, the Senate has not reduced vacancies as dramatically as we did during the Bush administration. Federal judicial vacancies around the country still number too many, and they have persisted for far too long.

By the August recess in the third year of the Bush administration, the Senate had confirmed 143 Federal circuit and district court judges. As we approach the August recess in the third year of the Obama administration, the comparable number after confirmation of Paul Engelmayer and Ramona Manglona today will be only 91.

We have a long way to go to do as well as we did during President Bush's first term, when we confirmed 205 of his judicial nominations. The Senate confirmed 100 of those judicial nominations during the 17 months I was chairman during President Bush's first 2 years in office. So far, as we near the end of President Obama's 30th month in office, the Senate has only been allowed to consider and confirm only 91 of President Obama's Federal circuit and district court nominees. Despite the needs of the Federal judiciary, the delays in confirmation of President Obama's consensus judicial nominees continue to the detriment of the American people.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Illinois.

Mr. DURBIN. Mr. President, I yield our time on this side.

Mr. GRASSLEY. I ask for the yeas and nays.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there a sufficient second?

There is a sufficient second.

The question is, Will the Senate advise and consent to the nomination of Paul A. Engelmayer, of New York, to be United States District Judge for the Southern District of New York?

The clerk will call the roll.

The assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. DURBIN. I announce that the Senator from West Virginia (Mr. ROCKEFELLER) is necessarily absent.

Mr. KYL. The following Senator is necessarily absent: the Senator from Oklahoma (Mr. INHOFE).

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. COONS). Are there any other Senators in the Chamber desiring to vote?

The result was announced—yeas 98, nays 0, as follows:

[Rollcall Vote No. 117 Ex.]

YEAS—98

Akaka	Franken	Mikulski
Alexander	Gillibrand	Moran
Ayotte	Graham	Murkowski
Barrasso	Grassley	Murray
Baucus	Hagan	Nelson (NE)
Begich	Harkin	Nelson (FL)
Bennet	Hatch	Paul
Bingaman	Heller	Portman
Blumenthal	Hoeven	Pryor
Blunt	Hutchison	Reed
Boozman	Inouye	Reid
Boxer	Isakson	Risch
Brown (MA)	Johanns	Roberts
Brown (OH)	Johnson (SD)	Rubio
Burr	Johnson (WI)	Sanders
Cantwell	Kerry	Schumer
Cardin	Kirk	Sessions
Carper	Klobuchar	Shaheen
Casey	Kohl	Shelby
Chambliss	Kyl	Snowe
Coats	Landrieu	Stabenow
Coburn	Lautenberg	Tester
Cochran	Leahy	Thune
Collins	Lee	Toomey
Conrad	Levin	Udall (CO)
Coons	Lieberman	Udall (NM)
Corker	Lugar	Vitter
Cornyn	Manchin	Warner
Crapo	McCain	Webb
DeMint	McCaskill	Whitehouse
Durbin	McConnell	Wicker
Enzi	Menendez	Wyden
Feinstein	Merkley	

NOT VOTING—2

Inhofe	Rockefeller

The nomination was confirmed.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The question now is, Will the Senate advise and consent to the nomination of Ramona Villagomez Manglona, of the Northern Mariana Islands, to be Judge for the District Court for the Northern Mariana Islands?

The nomination was confirmed.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the motions to reconsider are considered made and laid on the table, and the President shall be immediately notified of the Senate's actions.

LEGISLATIVE SESSION

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the Senate will resume legislative session.

RECESS

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the Senate stands in recess until 2:15 p.m. today.

Thereupon, the Senate, at 12:46 p.m., recessed until 2:15 p.m., and reassembled when called to order by the Presiding Officer (Mr. WEBB).

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The majority leader is recognized.

Mr. REID. Mr. President, 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. 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.

EXTENSION OF MORNING BUSINESS

Mr. DURBIN. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that morning business be extended, with Senators permitted to speak for up to 10 minutes each.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection?

Without objection, it is so ordered.

The junior Senator from Illinois.

NUCLEAR POWERPLANTS

Mr. KIRK. Mr. President, this past Sunday a New York Times editorial entitled ''In the Wake of Fukushima'' noted:

> If nuclear power is to have a future in this country, Americans have to have confidence that regulators and the industry are learning the lessons of Fukushima and are taking all steps necessary to ensure safety.

Following the events at the Fukushima Daiichi nuclear plant in March, it is clear that maintaining America's confidence in the safety of our nuclear reactors is paramount. The disaster at Fukushima should not lead to a freeze of the nuclear industry; instead, it should be an opportunity to upgrade the safety of our nuclear fleet. Both industry and the U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission assure us that currently there is no immediate threat to the operation of our nuclear plants.

Nuclear power is especially important to my home State of Illinois, where nearly half of all electricity in the State is nuclear. With 11 of 104 operating nuclear power plants and stations in our State, we have more reactors than any other State in the Union.

In the near term, it is my hope that nuclear regulators and the industry will take actions necessary to increase safety measures and integrate emergency operating procedures. Furthermore, nuclear plants should swiftly implement sensible measures to increase flood protections, enhance containment-venting capabilities, install remote monitoring controls of spent fuel pool conditions, and upgrade the ability to cope and maintain operations by a single station sustained for initially 8 hours and eventually up to 72 hours utilizing preplanned and prestaged resources.

Moving forward, one of our top priorities should be enhancing flood protection at reactors. Obviously reactors, for their cooling, need to be near large bodies of water, subject to flood. Fukushima highlighted the need to take additional protections to guarantee that current backup pumps and generators are also protected against flood or other seismic events. A recent flooding on the Missouri River is a demonstration of the need for such enhancements. Although flood barriers and procedures have so far protected the Fort Calhoun nuclear powerplant in Nebraska, this is not the time to look away from making further efforts on protecting reactors from floods.

One of the ringing lessons of the Fukushima disaster is the need for enhanced capabilities for nuclear operators to cope with prolonged power outages. Every U.S. nuclear powerplant should be able to cope with a prolonged loss of power for at least 8 hours for an initial period and eventually 72 hours using only the resources onsite so that powerplant operators can utilize preplanned and prestaged equipment and muster other resources if necessary. We should be prepared for simultaneous events for multiple reactors onsite and should be able to maintain key power functions in the face of varying circumstances, including debilitated infrastructure, lack of communication, and especially the loss of onsite power.

It is clear that operators' ability to cope with the prolonged loss of power was critical at Fukushima. We know that the tsunami hit the Fukushima Daiichi powerplant and wiped out all alternating power and backup power necessary to provide resources to the cooling pumps. This eventually caused overheating in both reactor vessels and cooling ponds. The ability to perform these critical functions and to monitor them—providing power to fans and pumps and to remotely open and close vents and valves—the inability of the Japanese to perform these functions caused them to lose control of key areas or to maintain cooling to critical spent fuel ponds and reactor vessels.

The Japanese also were unable to remotely monitor conditions, especially in their spent fuel pools, and struggled continuously to pump enough water into the reactors. Operators need to have proper instrumentation at far, remote locations so they can continue to understand what is happening in reactors and cooling ponds if an event occurs.

Furthermore, we need to install proper venting upgrades on all reactors with the Mark II containment design. This is an important step in preventing any kind of overpressurization and in reducing the risk of operations that we saw so clearly at Fukushima.

In the United States, there are 23 reactors with the Mark I containment design. We have known since 1989 that there are flaws with the pressure containment system of the Mark I boiler reactor. As a precaution, industry upgraded the Mark I containments with the hardened vent to deal with the excessive pressure in the containment.

According to the NRC task force's 90-day report, which examined the safety of U.S. nuclear powerplants, the hardened vents are not universally installed on the Mark II containments in the United States. The task force noted further that because the Mark II containments are only 25 percent larger than the volume of the Mark I, it is conceivable that the Mark II containments, under a similar situation, would suffer the same consequences as Nos. 1 through 4 at Fukushima. We should install hardened vents on all Mark II containment reactors and not allow any more time to pass before making deliberate improvements to address these safety concerns.

As we press forward with nuclear power generation, I believe the NRC should also update our emergency planning zones. This is the evacuation zone that is preplanned around every nuclear powerplant. It seems prudent now, in the light of the experience of Fukushima, that we should expand the emergency planning zone to the Japanese radius of 20 kilometers or 12.5 miles around each nuclear reactor. These EPZs should be updated with the latest 2010 census data of the number of Americans residing around these reactors, and the NRC should require enough radiation dose medication to handle at least two full EPZ evacuations if necessary.

We also know that the spent fuel pools posed a serious threat to the safety of the site. Throughout the crises, Fukushima crews struggled to maintain water levels at the spent fuel pools to prevent an escape of uncontained radiation into the environment. For those of us who know a little bit about reactors, this was a surprise because normally we are totally focused on what is happening inside the reactor, but at Fukushima, as much attention had to be paid on overheating in the spent fuel ponds.

This warning should serve as the beginning of an effort for us to relook at the issue of spent fuel in the United States, especially spent fuel which is stored near our drinking water sources. We all know 96 percent of all the fresh water in the United States is in the Great Lakes, and I am concerned that we store approximately 1,000 tons of highly radioactive spent nuclear fuel just 200 yards from the Lake Michigan shoreline at the now defunct Zion nuclear reactor. Any proposal to stop the permanent disposal of nuclear waste in Nevada is a proposal to continue storing highly radioactive nuclear fuel right next to America's source of 96 percent of its fresh water.

I believe we should now continue to reinvigorate the process of building the Yucca Mountain facility. Any proposal to not build Yucca is a proposal to pose a clear-and-present, long-term danger to the environmental future of the Great Lakes.

The bottom line is we should not let the lessons learned from the Fukushima disaster become a forgotten story, and that the NRC task force and its 90-day report issued after the Fukushima disaster is a serious document that now should lead not just to further studies and consultant reports but comprehensive action, such as hardened vents, such as making sure we have remote monitoring of spent fuel ponds, and that all reactors be able to operate first 8 and then 72 hours without outside power, and that we take the other measures to upgrade our measure, such as expanding the EPZs.

Tomorrow I will be testifying before the Nuclear Regulatory Commission, and as the junior Senator of the State of Illinois, the most nuclear State in America, I will carry a strong message: Nuclear power has a strong future in the United States but one that should be going forward in light of the lessons of Fukushima.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Utah.

DEBT LIMIT AND TAX INCREASES

Mr. HATCH. Mr. President, last night we heard from President Obama in a prime-time address from the East Room of the White House. The topic was raising the Federal debt limit. According to Treasury Secretary Geithner, the Federal Government may breach the statutory debt limit as early as August 2, 2011. That is 1 week from today.

Remarkably, the President, in yet another prime-time address, again hectored the American people about the need for politically charged tax hikes as a cure-all for our deficit and debt problems.

We have to hand it to the President; he is a true believer. For the President, there seems to be no problem in Washington that can't be fixed with tax increases. Even his own party has moved beyond him on this. To be certain, Democrats have not become the party of tax relief. For example, the plan offered by the majority leader does not address the 10-year tax increase of $3.5 trillion that is said to kick in on January 1, 2013. But last night on CNN, one reporter got it about right. This is how she put it: ''Nobody is talking about tax increases except Barack Obama.''

For weeks the President and his surrogates on and off Capitol Hill have been talking about tax increases as the solution to our debt crisis, but the President was on his own last night. It was a speech very much divorced from the reality of our situation.

Republicans are insistent that the solution to a spending crisis is not giving government more money to spend, and here is the dirty secret: Many members of the President's own party are not keen on tax increases either. They know the President's politically driven tax increases, in the context of trillions in deficits and debt, will do little to restore the Nation's fiscal footing. They know more significant tax increases will hit the middle class and small business job creators very hard. But even as his troops have left him, President Obama soldiers on, leading the fight for higher taxes and spreading the wealth around.

The President talked last night about the need for a balanced approach. Here is what he means by that: To balance the budget his way, we will have to raise taxes by roughly $2 trillion. So what does he think of the plan of the Senate's distinguished majority leader? After all, the majority leader has put forth a plan that does not contain tax increases—or at least that is the claim. Presumably, the President would, therefore, oppose the majority leader's plan as unbalanced. But that would assume the President is not playing politics with this debate. That would assume he is more concerned with solving our Nation's debt crisis than appealing to his base, getting his approval ratings up, and positioning himself for reelection.

Somehow, in spite of his absolute insistence on the need for tax increases and a balanced solution to the debt limit debate, the President supports the majority leader's proposal.

The President likes to present himself as the only reasonable man in Washington. But as he proved again with his latest politically driven inconsistency, he is as partisan as they come. To the disappointment of his campaign advisers, it is clear the American people are demanding a leader who will be straight with them rather than focus on election year positioning.

If the President and his party came clean with the American people, this is what they would acknowledge: Nondefense discretionary spending is at historic highs. The Nation's biggest spending programs are completely out of control and set for bankruptcy. Over the next 10 years, the President's budget would drive this country into debt by an additional $13 trillion. Most importantly, they would acknowledge that the Nation's problem is principally too much spending, not too little taxes.

I don't envy my friends on the other side of the aisle. They are in a tough place. On the one hand, the liberal base refuses any structural reforms to the spending programs that are driving the country's debt to the brink. On the other hand, absent these structural reforms the middle class and job creators will have to be hit with historic tax increases. Obviously, they cannot be open about this second point or they risk the ire of American voters.

Those who represent San Francisco and the upper west side might be able to go home and sell these tax increases,

but for Democrats responsible to entire States, not just small liberal enclaves, such tax increases are a much tougher pitch.

So what is a Democrat to do? Democrats can't propose meaningful spending reductions, but they can't support job-killing tax increases. So this is what they will do. They choose to ignore the real problem. They offer no plan. They refuse to present a budget—they actually refused to present a budget for more than 800 days. They dodge and weave. One minute the President is for real reforms to Medicare. The next minute he is accusing Republicans of trying to destroy Medicare for recommending reforms, and they hope their friends in the media ignore the failure to offer a real solution.

As we can see from this chart, the problem is spending, and we need a solution commensurate with that problem. As we can see, spending is the red line; taxes happen to be the blue line. Spending as a percentage of GDP is much higher than the historical average. The average level of spending has been around 18 percent since World War II. Since President Obama took office in 2008, spending has surged to over—actually 25 percent at one point of our economy—way above the 18 to 20 percent norm. Tax receipts have dipped, but they are expected to come back. CBO estimates, however, that spending is currently set to stay at around 24 percent.

As we can see, spending is the red line that goes off the charts during 2009, 2010, and on into 2020. Taxes have always been right where they are. They went pretty high, came down, and now they are back up. As we can see from the chart, President Obama's 2012 budget does not help one bit in reducing this level of spending. The President's budget is not balanced by any means.

Again, the problem for the President is this: Even while he was explaining to Joe the Plumber the moral and civic imperative of spreading the wealth around, he was promising not to raise taxes on individuals making less than $200,000 or families making less than $250,000. But if he is going to balance the budget by attempting to pay for current levels of discretionary spending that Lyndon Johnson only dreamed of and spending programs that are permanently in the red, he is going to have to hit the middle class hard. He is going to have to break his promise—not exactly a political win.

Even as he talked about moving the Democratic Party to the left and abandoning the comparative moderation of the Clinton administration, he remembers well the fate of Walter Mondale. When accepting his party's nomination for President in San Francisco in 1984, Walter Mondale promised Americans that he was going to raise their taxes. President Reagan went on to win in a 49-State landslide. President Obama is not going to suffer the same fate as Walter Mondale, so he avoids discussion of the tax increases on the middle class that he really believes in. Instead, in this debate he is focused on a number of politically opportunistic red herrings that will have minimal impact on the Nation's debt crisis.

The purpose of these red herrings is to distract Americans from the real driver of our deficits and debt and the real choices Democrats have to, but are refusing to, make. Let's just look at a few of these examples.

The President has been talking incessantly about the need to tax corporate jets. Well, if we were to raise the appreciable rate on corporate jets from 5 years to 7 years as the Democrats propose, it would yield, at least according to the economists, $3.1 billion—that is with a ''b''—over 10 years.

Just to be clear, as we are discussing these paltry numbers—numbers which the President would have us believe are key to restoring the markets' confidence in the American economy and our ability to manage our debt—the United States will run a budget deficit this year of $1.5 trillion. Our national debt is $14.3 trillion. The President's budget assumes an additional $13 trillion in debt on top of that, and the President is talking about the tax treatment of corporate jets which, if he got his way, would raise $3.1 billion over 10 years.

This is about as effective as one of my fellow Utahans standing in his driveway in Little Cottonwood Canyon during a blizzard and flicking a snowflake off his shoulder and claiming he was finished shoveling for the day.

To hear the President talk, one would think this proposal is absolutely critical to balancing our budget. To put it in perspective, over the next 10 years of debt this Nation is set to take on it would equate to roughly 20 hours and 23 minutes of debt reduction.

Let's not forget about the essential matter of cutting back the mortgage interest deduction for yachts used as second homes. Again, the President acts as if this is one of a handful of policies that will restore America's prosperity. But if Congress enacted this change, we would cover the 10 years of debt from the Obama budget for all of 15 hours and 47 minutes.

Of course, the Democratic talking points would not be complete without an attack on the oil companies. The President has talked about making American oil companies pay their fair share by reducing or eliminating domestic energy incentives. This proposal would raise $21 billion in revenue. That would cover a whopping 5 days, 18 hours, and 47 minutes of debt that the President is prepared to take on over the next 10 years.

Then there are the rich. Tax the rich. Make them pay their fair share. This class warfare might be appropriate in Europe and countries with a feudal history, but in the United States, a nation conceived in liberty and the proposition that all men are created equal, families and entrepreneurs just don't buy it—and for good reason. Taxing the rich hits job creators and undermines economic growth. But as deficit reduction policy, it falls short as well.

In the name of bipartisanship, I am going to use data from the Tax Policy Center, or TPC, to demonstrate my point. According to TPC models and estimates for 2011, American households earning more than $1 million account for 12 percent of the Nation's pretax income and pay 19 percent of Federal taxes and carry an average tax rate of 29 percent. Even more critical from my perspective, these taxpayers also account for 38 percent of all flow-through income. Flow-through income is predominantly earnings from ownership of small businesses.

So raising rates on the rich will hit squarely on those who create and expand the small businesses that need to be the engine for our economic recovery. But let's be clear about something. Higher taxes on these wealthy individuals will not only have adverse economic consequences, it will not even provide the deficit and debt reduction suggested by the left.

Even if all of the income of those earning more than $1 million a year were confiscated with a 100-percent rate—with the unlikely assumption of no taxpayer behavioral response—for the year of confiscation, these higher taxes would yield about $893 billion. My gosh, our deficit this year is $1.5 trillion—just in 1 year. The most we would get is $893 billion, and that is if we are lucky.

This is a one-shot opportunity. If we confiscated this wealth, those individuals would no longer work, save, create more wealth, and generate more tax revenue. And confiscating all the income from those earning over $1 million does not even fix 1 year—not even 1 year—of the 10 years of projected Obama debt. It would cover 244 days, 16 hours, and 34 minutes.

All the demagoguery on jets and yachts and oil companies yields about 1 week of deficit reduction from the President's 10-year debt.

Even throwing in a one-time confiscation of all the income for taxpayers above $1 million, we can only add 244 days. Add it all up, and what the President is proposing amounts to less than one-tenth of deficit reduction from the debt President Obama will add over the next 10 years.

Last night, the President tossed some more class warfare into the mix. He mentioned taxing hedge fund managers. Here is how he put it:

> How can we ask a student to pay more for college before we ask hedge fund managers to stop paying taxes at a lower rate than their secretaries?

The proposal he is talking about would tax carried interest as ordinary income. The Joint Tax Committee has provided an estimate on this, and over 10 years this change in the Tax Code would generate another $21.4 billion. That is about as much as the oil company tax Obama is proposing of $21.1

billion. This would cover approximately 5 days and 21 hours of the President's 10-year debt.

This morning, someone on television was bemoaning the fact that Democrats are not going to the mat for tax increases the way the President has. He suggested the congressional Democrats do not have the courage to support tax increases.

With all due respect, the person lacking in courage is the current occupant of the Oval Office. The President had an opportunity this summer. Was he going to lead on the debt crisis or would it be more of the same—red herrings piled on top of straw men in an effort to distract the American people from his own complicity in this debt crisis.

Yet the President chose not to own up to the American people. The quarterback punted. He offered no solutions. Concerns about reelection were of greater priority than the imminent downgrading of the Nation's credit rating—a downgrade that will work as a tax increase on homeowners, students, and the Treasury itself, which is responsible for servicing the $14.3 trillion in existing debt.

Unable to propose tax increases on the middle class and unable to reform entitlements due to liberal deadenders, he chose to offer platitudes and class warfare that might play well with some constituencies but do nothing to address the fundamental problem this Nation faces.

This country cannot avoid the choices that are coming. We have to get our spending under control. That is why I supported cut, cap, and balance. That is why I think S.J. Res. 10—the balanced budget amendment I introduced along with my colleague and friend from Utah, Senator LEE, and all 47 Senate Republicans—is absolutely essential. It would fix this problem once and for all.

But the President opposes it. He talks a lot about empowering people. Well, the Founders of this country empowered the American people to make changes to the Constitution. The Constitution provides for that. Why not give them the opportunity to pass this amendment? Remember, if the Democrats do not like it, all they have to do is get 13 States to disagree. We have to get 38 States to ratify. Why not let the people decide this? Why are they so afraid to let the people decide this?

Let me offer an answer. Because Democrats are terrified the American people would ratify it and their big spending practices would go the way of dinosaurs. The American people are sick and tired of spending. Mothers and fathers understand that the Federal Government is going to bankrupt their children and leave them an America that is less free and less prosperous.

The American people are frustrated. They might not have the data at their fingertips, but they understand what I just laid out quite well. We are not going to solve our problems by raising taxes. Increasingly, the President is an island in his call for more tax increases. Republicans do not support him. Independents do not support him. Now even Democrats do not support him.

It is time to move on. We need to rein in our debt, and we need to act boldly in doing so. So far, the President has failed to lead on this issue, choosing instead politically convenient talking points. But I would remind my dear friend in the White House, it is never too late to mend this problem.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

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

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. LEAHY. 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. LEAHY. Mr. President, what is the parliamentary situation?

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senate is in a period of morning business in which Senators may speak for 10 minutes.

THE DEBT CRISIS

Mr. LEAHY. Mr. President, I will be brief. I have been asked by a number of people how I feel about the efforts made to get the United States out of the quandary in which it now finds itself over the debt limit. Let me be very clear. I applaud President Obama and Majority Leader REID for real leadership and persistence over many months in trying to find a bipartisan solution to the debt crisis.

Senator REID has put forward a solution that would end the current crisis and reduce our unsustainable national debt. This is a solution that has the potential to draw support from lawmakers from both parties who are willing to put common sense and the national interests above partisanship and ideology, those who would say rather than party first let's go country first now we have a framework for a solution.

By repeatedly walking away from the table and insisting on their way or no way, those who are holding the American people and our economy hostage are playing ideological games with serious consequences for everyone else. Through their tactics they threaten great risk to the well-being of ordinary Americans. The longer this goes on, the greater the danger of lasting damage below the waterline of our democracy. Right now Leader REID's $2.7 trillion debt reduction package is the best chance—really is the best chance this country has—to avoid a default and a credit rating downgrade that would damage our fragile economy. It would also impose a credit tax hike on every American family. If we downgrade our credit rating, we are going to be sending hundreds of billions of dollars in interest to other countries, money they can spend on medical research, on schools, on transportation, and alternative energy. They can spend it in their country—we will be paying the bills—and all because the Congress did not come together on a solution on this issue.

Most people looking at this wonder why have we not moved. Senator REID has a plan that can move. It says we will spend this money—the money we have—not shipping it overseas to other countries but spend it on the needs of our own country. The plan consolidates terms agreed to in the ongoing negotiations. It proposes a solution that ends the current crisis. It accomplishes wide-ranging savings, and has enough bipartisan support to pass.

It would end the roller coaster of unpredictability that shackles our economy by instead offering financial stability through 2012. Social Security, Medicare, and Medicaid beneficiaries will be spared a loss of benefits. The American people will begin to recognize these savings from withdrawing from Iraq and Afghanistan. Essential education, job creation, housing, and environmental investments for America's economic recovery and for a strong economic future would be protected from the slashing cuts proposed by House Republicans.

The irony is Republican leaders previously had backed all of the spending reductions called for in Leader REID's plan. I do not agree—I suspect all of us do not agree—with all aspects of this proposed solution. But we are not going to have 100 solutions on this floor, we are going to have 1 we can vote on. I wish this would have included new revenue, especially by ending such costly and outdated tax benefits as those still enjoyed by the biggest oil companies to help us pay off our debt even more quickly.

I want to help pay for the debt incurred by the inexcusable earlier decisions to enter two wars without paying for them. I continue to believe that a surcharge for the wealthiest would mean they would pay more of their fair share after so many years of tax cuts that tilted far more toward the wealthiest of Americans rather than to the middle class.

I find it interesting when I hear lectures from those who voted for an unnecessary war in Iraq—Iraq, a country that had nothing whatsoever to do with 9/11, a country that before we invaded it had no al-Qaida but has plenty now—say we will vote for this war, and for the first time in our history we will not pay for it, we will borrow the money. We will cut taxes. And to pay for it we will borrow the money. Look where we are now. We will eventually owe $3.5 trillion for that war.

You know, it is far easier—and I say this to everybody like myself—they may see every single thing they want here—it is far easier to walk away from the negotiating table than to make the hard choices needed on behalf of the American people. We need serious

statesmanship on both sides for this to work, both sides to get a solution, and both sides to do it before it is too late.

The economic health of our country, the jobs of thousands of hard-working Americans, should not be mired in politics. It is well past the time—and I realize there is a House faction that is driving much of the decisions there. It is well past time for that faction in the House of Representatives to put politics aside and accept a long-term deficit reduction plan that does not force America's most vulnerable to shoulder the burden.

Just as many Vermont families are forced to make difficult financial decisions, Congress has to be open to considering all available options. We do this in my State of Vermont without gimmicks. We do not have any constitutional amendment on balanced budgets or anything such as that. We just balance the budget.

In that regard, I recall a Member who said: Let's have a constitutional amendment to balance the budget, knowing it would be years from now. But we actually had a balanced budget during the Clinton-Gore administration. Not a single Republican voted for it. Democrats voted for it, and we balanced the budget. We created a surplus. We started paying down the national debt, and created 24 million new jobs. Let's go back to those days. Forget the sloganeering. Forget the bumper sticker solutions. If things were that easy, it would have been done long before now. Start going back to doing what we are elected to do, what we are paid to do, and also what we are expected to do. Seek a solution, not a gimmick; not a deal, a solution that benefits all Americans.

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

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

BUDGET COMPROMISE

Mr. BLUMENTHAL. Mr. President, I don't need to tell anybody in this Chamber that our Nation is at a crossroads. We are at a crossroads. We have said for many months that we would be at this point, and now we are here. For months, we have said we will need to make tough choices and difficult decisions, and now we are at that very point when we need to make those tough choices and difficult decisions to rein in the debt and the deficit, and to put our fiscal house in order, even as we raise the debt ceiling.

This decision is difficult, tough, and excruciating for us. But it is hardly different than what American families are doing all around this country, and in Connecticut, because I have seen them and I have heard from them. So have you in this Chamber—families who are struggling to make ends meet, to stay in their homes, to keep their families together, to make those cuts in their spending, which we are now required to do in this Chamber for the Nation.

It is a historic responsibility. We cannot keep kicking the can down the road. That is the analogy that has been drawn countless times in this Chamber, around the country, and by the President of the United States himself. The point is that the time for action is now—not delay or indecision, but real action that achieves a credible solution, which will demand compromise.

Compromise is the essence of the American Republic. It is the way our Nation was founded—through compromise, people coming together, bringing differences to the table and resolving them. Families in Connecticut and all across the country are making these kinds of choices every day when they buy a car, a house, decide to go to school, and even marriage requires compromise. Compromise is the essence of the American Republic and the way we do business in this Chamber, in this city, in State capitals around the country, and in places of business and all places where momentous decisions are made.

The American people expect nothing less of us than they do of themselves. There is no avoiding these tough choices and compromises now that will help us get our debt and deficit under control in a meaningful way.

The markets and the Nation need a real plan, not a short-term or stopgap effort. We must demonstrate that we are committed to finding a real solution. A short-term plan would not provide the kind of certainty and reliability the markets are desperately seeking at this point. A short-term or stopgap solution risks many of the same dire economic consequences that would be triggered by a default itself.

A financial Armageddon now, a catastrophic failure to raise the debt ceiling now, is exactly the same risk 6 months from now if we attempt to address our present issues through a short-term, stopgap measure. That financial Armageddon will affect every American family, every American small business, every American worker, and every job seeker. It is about jobs and economic recovery, because a failure to raise the debt ceiling will increase the cost of borrowing for every homeowner, every car buyer, every small business, and every person who has a credit card or otherwise seeks capital or credit in the market. By raising the cost of borrowing, it will simply crush our fragile economic recovery. It will be a job killer for this Nation. It is time now for compromise that will avoid those dire consequences for the American people.

The Reid proposal is a compromise in the best sense of the term. It is a solution that meets all the criteria our Republican friends have been insisting on for weeks. It does not include revenue increases. It includes enough spending cuts to meet the amount of debt ceiling increase, dollar for dollar. It includes spending cuts that have been approved by many Republicans. Many of those spending cuts have been voted for.

Most important, from my standpoint, and from the standpoint of many colleagues on this side of the aisle, it does not make spending cuts on the backs of our seniors and our most vulnerable citizens. It avoids spending cuts to Medicare and Social Security that would imperil or diminish the benefits of those programs.

Let me tell you about this compromise, the Reid proposal. It is not transformational. It is not a grand bargain. It is incremental. It achieves progress step by step by step—the way progress has been made in this great Nation from its founding—step by step by step. It represents, as perhaps one of the columnists might have described it—in fact, this morning in the New York Times, David Brooks said there has been an outbreak of sanity. This proposal represents an outbreak of sanity in roiled waters of emotionalism, personality conflicts, political acrimony.

I hope my Republican colleagues will join us in seeking and ensuring stability for the markets and our fragile economic recovery, focusing on what concerns the American people now, and should, which is job growth. It is about jobs. We should get on with that historic path of creating jobs and enabling small businesses to borrow at rates they can afford, without hiking those interest rates as a result of a financial crisis that is truly avoidable. Failure would be the result of our own doing and our own failure in this Chamber.

We need to keep our economy moving in the right direction. I am hopeful, even confident, that we can come together with good will on both sides to overcome our differences and achieve that compromise that the Reid proposal represents.

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.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Kansas.

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

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, so ordered.

The Senator from Kansas.

BUDGET CRISIS

Mr. ROBERTS. I thank the President. In making these remarks, I wish to emphasize that I am not trying to be presumptuous or disrespectful in any way to the Office of the Presidency or to the President personally. I wish to make that very clear. It is just that I am trying to think of an allegory to try to get my point across, and it

seemed to me this might be the way to do it.

We have our national unemployment rate at its highest level all year. We have the debt ceiling rapidly approaching the crisis everybody is talking about, and one would think we could do everything we could to support those industries very critical for job creation and economic development. There is one industry I am referring to in particular; that is, general aviation, and I was trying to think, how could I get my point across.

Since we had Speaker BOEHNER, Leader MCCONNELL, and the distinguished majority leader Senator REID conducting the very best they can to get a solution, perhaps the President, although his time is very valuable, could talk to somebody such as me, a ranking member of a committee, very worried about what is happening with our country, very worried about what we can do to get this debt ceiling fixed and we can get a long-term solution with regard to our entitlement programs. Perhaps he could actually invite me down maybe later—a lot later, certainly no cameras—in regard to a little basketball game of horse because everybody knows the President is a very good basketball player, as a matter of fact an extremely good basketball player. I am not going to make that claim, but there was a day on blind-side picks and a few other things I could do.

But I would emphasize to the President, bouncing the ball to him just on a bounce pass, and say: Your ball, Mr. President. The ball is in your court. I would like to emphasize, while we are playing, that basically he shouldn't be more concerned with increasing the debt ceiling past the 2012 elections than working on a long-term solution for solving the crisis. That would just be a suggestion. He would probably go to the left corner and sink a three about that time. I would want to emphasize to the President that he is singling out and he seems to be fixated on one specific industry that affects me and other specific industries as well, and I don't know how we pick and choose who should pay more taxes, who should pay more in terms of sacrifice, in terms of picking and choosing industries.

But at any rate, I would tell the President when I had the ball—I would probably be dribbling a lot or trying to, if he wasn't playing tough defense—and I would say: Mr. President, since negotiations started last month on raising the debt limit, you have, on multiple occasions over and over again, singled out the general aviation industry as an example of big business that serves only the wealthy and should contribute more to lowering the deficit. The only problem with this claim is it is not real, it is not factual, it is not correct. Consequently, I don't know whether it is in his head or maybe the writers who write that valuable information for him that general aviation only serves millionaires and billionaires. Then, after I shot and missed it, I would say: Your ball again, Mr. President. I would say as he was trying to drive around me, rather successfully: The truth is, these aircraft actually serve as an essential business tool for a multitude of businesses of all shapes, all sizes, farmers, ranchers, manufacturers, business men and women, to access multiple offices and facilities that are spread across this great Nation. These folks are not fat cats. I would like the President to understand that managers and sales teams and technical experts, those are the people we are talking about who are in that corporate aircraft to be sure, but it is general aviation that serves the general public's welfare. They are often required to visit numerous offices in a short amount of time in regions of the United States that aren't served by large airports.

By that time, the President has scored a couple layups and two more jump shots and I have yet to hit a shot. But I will persevere. I would say to him as we were playing there on the court: Mr. President, in fact, 90 percent of our country's airports aren't even accessible by commercial aircraft—certainly, the Presiding Officer knows that—and I think they represent just those plain folks you have been talking about, just the folks who are in the middle, just the folks who are having a tough time, just the folks who have been laid off.

Then we have a paradox of enormous irony where, in the stimulus bill, there was a tax incentive for general aviation that helped some of those folks get those jobs back and it is that which you are attacking, which is your own suggestion or at least that of the majority in the Senate.

General aviation employs 1.2 million workers and annually contributes $150 billion to the U.S. economy. That is a mouthful. By that time, the President has probably stolen the ball and scored another layup. Playing horse, we have five. I would probably ask him to play 10 or spot me 10.

Just last year, I would point out to the President, general aviation delivered 1,334 aircraft valued at over $7.9 billion, over half attributed to exports, and that is what the President wants to achieve in his trade policy. I would tell him: Sir, your goal is doubling U.S. exports over the next 5 years. You don't do it by calling general aviation fat cats and singling out that industry for political blame.

Let's talk about tough times and tough going. Similar to every other business sector, general aviation has struggled during the recession. At that particular time, I would claim the President fouled me with a sharp elbow and I would take a free shot and I would say: Wait a minute. Unfortunately, this has resulted in layoffs among many high-skilled, high-paying jobs in this industry, and that is a two-shot foul, by the way, so I have a little time. I would say: To help offset these job losses and incentivize the purchase of these aircraft, Democratic Members included a provision in the infamous stimulus bill to accelerate the depreciation schedules for a wide range of capital investments.

In Kansas, for Cessna Aircraft, accelerated depreciation was a key factor for Cessna and its suppliers being able to retain 1,000 jobs. Jobs held by folks whom I would tell the President are not fat cats. Again, they are just folks. They are doing the job to produce a product in the United States that we are very proud of, and we certainly don't want them to go to Mexico or to go to Canada. Some have already left.

So it came as a pretty big shock that you, Mr. President—and I am still on my second shot on the free shot. He is now asking me to quit talking and start shooting. But I would say: It comes as a pretty big shock to those workers that yourself and the Democratic Members in both Chambers would direct an attack on this industry.

This is true. I don't know how many Members of the Senate—not too many but, my word, I don't know how many Members of the House have heard that—corporate jet. Corporate jet. It has a ring to it, I guess. But at any rate, why would you repeal a tax provision that has contributed to job creation at a time of severe economic downturn; in fact, the one you actually suggested.

But there is more. There is more, Mr. President. Your ball. On top of this, budget negotiators are considering implementing user fees on general aviation as a way to generate revenue. We have been down that road. Let me be very clear. If user fees on general aviation are implemented, we could very well see the beginning of the end of this very critical industry.

With all that is going on—and I hate to remind you of this. By the way, I just scored a hook shot, Mr. President. It wasn't very pretty, but it rolled in. So it is about eight to one, something like that. At any rate, I am coming back.

When you mention corporate jets six times in two paragraphs in one speech and that is repeated on the various pundit shows on TV over and over again as a fat cat industry, that is most unfortunate.

I think we need to get serious about spending. I have thought so for some time, and I think every Member here does as well. We have our different ideas on how to do it. But I also believe it makes sense to consider those provisions that would actually have a measurable impact on reducing our more than $14 trillion national debt.

I would ask as I bounce the ball back to the President and he heads for that left-hand shot in the corner again and I am hustling to try to keep up, I would ask: Do you have any idea, if you just taxed all general aviation, what that would amount to? Just changing

these schedules, these depreciation schedules for corporate jets; i.e., general aviation only contributes $3 billion over 10 years. We borrow around $40 billion every 10 days. Repealing this tax provision would close our national budget deficit for 1 hour—1 hour—1 hour in terms of a measurable effect. Yet we still pick on general aviation, calling them all fat cats.

Sadly, this isn't the first time we have seen this happen; that the Congress of the United States, a different President has singled out general aviation. In the 1990 budget deal, the majority created a new luxury excise tax that applied to boats and aircraft. The tax was repealed in 1993. Because, as the Democratic-controlled Senate Finance Committee report explained, during the recent recession the boat and aircraft industries have suffered job losses, increased unemployment. I guess those are plain folks, they qualify, not fat cats. It said:

> The committee believes it is appropriate to eliminate the burden these taxes impose in the interests of fostering economic recovery in those and related industries.

That is a lot of words, especially when you are out playing horse in weather that is pretty hot. Today—maybe it is better today so maybe it would be a better deal. I couldn't agree more with that. We have been down this road before. I think it is unfortunate.

Last, before I watch him make his last shot and I go down to the T, at least on the court I hope I would have made my argument to the President that singling out general aviation as ''fat cats'' is simply not accurate, it is class warfare. That is a little tough. Maybe I wouldn't say that on the court, maybe sort of nudge him a little bit when I got underneath the bucket.

At any rate, it is going to take courage to put this country's fiscal house back in order. There is no question about that. But it is absolutely essential for us to do it in a responsible manner and not by scapegoating, not by singling out important sectors of industry that have long played a vital role in the economic development of both my home State of Kansas and our country as a whole. I would simply say: Your ball, your game, Mr. President, but let's not single out general aviation anymore.

It might have been the case if he were on a corporate jet with Kobe Bryant or somebody, maybe a Hollywood actor, maybe going to a fundraiser, maybe he got it in his head everybody who has a corporate jet, i.e., general aviation, as opposed to going from Kansas to North Dakota to check on some farm ground, that that is the case. I hope that is not the case anymore.

That is the end of the ball game but it is not the end of the debate. I hope we have a debate without singling out an industry. That is unfair and not accurate.

I yield the floor.

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. KERRY. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

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

Mr. KERRY. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent I be permitted to proceed as in morning business for about 15 minutes.

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

ECONOMIC STEWARDSHIP

Mr. KERRY. Madam President, this is a dangerous time for our country. What amazes me, for the time I have been here and privileged to serve the citizens of Massachusetts for 27 years now, is that never have I seen a moment where the consequences of inaction can have as potentially damaging an effect on our country as the consequences may if we are downgraded in our debt—just downgraded, not even defaulting—yet some of our colleagues in the Congress, particularly on the other side of the aisle in the House, are, despite all the evidence, all of the judgments made by knowledgeable people—by economists, by business people, by outside observers, about the danger and inadequacy of what they are proposing—despite that, they are insisting, not as a matter of common sense or as a matter of logical economic policy but insisting as a matter of politics and ideology on holding the entire economy of our country hostage and be damned with the risks.

Notwithstanding what that may mean—for 401(k)s, for families, what that may mean for investments that are on the brink because of the fragility of the economy, notwithstanding any of the advice of people who deal with money on a daily basis in terms of investments, these people, many of them who have never served in public life in their lives, never been part of a compromise but have come here with one ideological purpose—these people are putting the entire Nation at risk.

There are a lot of people here, particularly here in the Senate on the other side of the aisle, who know this is dangerous and who know the risks we are taking and who know there are better alternatives. But because of the politics of the situation they are being locked in, not allowed to stand up and exercise—or at least unwilling at this point to stand up and exercise their judgment and, frankly, their responsibility as sworn to uphold the Constitution of the United States of America, to come here and do the business of our country.

The deadline for default may be just a week away but no one should have any illusion that what is happening right now today is already hurting the economy of our country. It is already hurting our country. This is embarrassing for the Nation. It is embarrassing for the United States of America to be having such a dysfunctional display for everybody in the world to see that we who run around the world promoting democracy are unable to make our own democracy work right here at home. The fact is, all you have to do is read today's article in the Boston Globe with the headline ''Uncertainty Has Massachusetts Firms Wary Of Hiring.''

That is what is happening right now. This is already having a negative impact. Maybe that is what some of the people on the other side of the aisle in the House want. Maybe they want the economy to come down so they can win politically and point to the President and say: Oh, it is his fault we don't have the jobs, even though they are weakening the economy with their obstinacy and with their ideological rigidity.

Today's article says:

> Still cautious from the last recession, many business owners worry that government leaders will be unable to reach an agreement, while others are concerned about exactly the opposite: that any agreement will invariably include spending cuts and weaken an already lackluster recovery.

This is no way to provide economic stewardship. Most important, it is no way to run a government. There are countless institutions that rely on the United States, for us to go out and help other nations to be able to recover economically. I met yesterday with the Finance Minister and Deputy Prime Minister of Greece. Greece is taking enormous steps right now to try to bring its debt down and all of the euro zone has joined in that effort, and Italy and Spain are likewise at risk in their economies. But the IMF is a critical component of that recovery and the United States is a critical component of the IMF efforts and we have a significant amount of our capital at risk in the IMF. What happens there is important to what happens here, but this place is not behaving as though there is that interconnectedness. Let me tell you what I hear from a lot of smart people—smarter than I am—about the economics. I can listen to them, and I can tell they are deadly serious when they say we are playing with fire with respect to the Greek recovery and with respect to Italy and Spain and the rest of Europe. If they start to go down, then we have a cascade, and it begins to have a greater impact on the United States of America. That is what is at risk in this dangerous game of political chicken that is being played by people of such ideological rigidity that they are unwilling to even compromise.

I heard an interview yesterday with one Senator and a television commentator of one of the cable shows who asked him repeatedly: What are you willing to compromise on? In the end, it became clear he was not willing to

compromise on the fundamental notions of how we arrive at an agreement. We need to reach out across the aisle—both of us, Democrat, Republican—and come together on a deal, on a solution to a critical problem that challenges all of us where there is a solution staring us in the face. We need to do that before, as a result of the inability of people to make that compromise, before those who take that position of ideological rigidity do greater harm to our economy and to our country's reputation. We need to put an end to the time clocks that are running out how long it is before a default which sends an enormous message of uncertainty and incompetence, of dysfunctional politics on a daily basis. Every tick of that clock drums into people the inadequacy of what is happening here right now.

Back in 1983, President Ronald Reagan, whom many of the people who are taking this position of complete obstinacy revere—they ought to listen to what he said because President Reagan wrote:

> The denigration of the full faith and credit of the United States would have substantial effects on the domestic financial markets and on the value of the dollar on the exchange markets. The Nation can ill afford to allow such a result.

Now almost 30 years later some House Republicans have turned their back on the legacy of Ronald Reagan. Instead, they continue to play this cynical game of chicken with the President, with the Congress, with the American people, with our economy, with our reputation, with our future, by refusing to negotiate a clearly achievable, clearly definable compromise agreement that would extend the debt limit, something that happened 17 times under Ronald Reagan. What is their negotiating strategy? Don't negotiate. Do what we say no matter what the danger or how ill thought-out the consequences may be.

David Stockman, the former Office and Management Director under President Reagan, said the following about the House Republican budget:

> I think the biggest problem is revenues. It is simply unrealistic to say that raising revenue isn't part of the solution. It is a measure of how far off the deep end Republicans have gone with this religious catechism about taxes.

In taking this extreme approach, the House Republicans have also made a dirty word out of a basic tenet of American democracy—compromise. Do they know nothing about history? Have they forgotten about the Missouri Compromise? Have they forgotten about countless great compromises that brought people together to pass some of the great efforts of our Nation with respect to the social structure of our country? The House Republican Party has taken this approach, even though they know and agree with what Ronald Reagan said 30 years ago, and they know it is true today.

Experts are telling us that even a short-term crisis could lead to a permanent downgrading or stain, if you will, on the Treasurys of our country. It could prove particularly damaging to the willingness of foreign investors to buy Treasury. If foreign investors start to shy away from Treasurys, then they will become much less liquid. As Lou Crandall, who is the chief economist at Wrightson ICAP, said:

> You could never get that liquidity premium back if you create a precedent. That's the thing that would be irreparable. The end result of such a scenario: higher interest rates in the United States.

I just met a few moments ago with a businessman who is engaged in major investments in this country and elsewhere, on an international basis, who reinforced to me the danger of what we are facing right now in just the downgrade. What he said to me is that nobody can tell us what the real impact of that downgrade is going to be. What happens to valuations all the way down the economic food chain? What happens to credit? What happens to the judgments about interest? What happens to the judgments about the auctions and the next market and so forth? Nobody knows. He can't tell me, and he does this for a living and has very successfully for a lifetime. That is what they are worried about.

There is a moment—nobody knows when exactly it is—there is a moment when as we get close enough and the dysfunctionality becomes the overwhelming, dominating feature of this effort, where someone is going to cut and say: OK, time to downgrade. Then what happens? What kind of downward spiral flows out of that? I don't know, but I know we should not be pushing it to the limit and taking that risk.

Why are people taking that risk? Why are people, despite all the commentary that says we ought to be reaching across the aisle, we ought to sit down the way we used to around here, why are they doing this? I will tell you why. They want only one way of approaching this solution—their way. They want to so dramatically cut Federal spending and cut entitlements without increasing revenues at all. No matter how successful people have been at the upper end of our economy, no matter how much money people have made, they say we can't even ask a billionaire for $100. We can't even ask a billionaire for $500. Nothing, nada, no. That is it. That is the reason they are willing to take the country to the brink. They know they do not have enough votes to even pass the budget they are screaming about still, but they are not running around trying to find the alternative. They are going to push it anyway, have a vote on it anyway, send a dramatic, stupid message of incompetence to the world and drag the United States of America down with it.

It is stunning what a group of extremists can do who are trying to get their unrealistic and impossible budget passed, which even a lot of Republicans know they are not going to vote for. The Boehner plan would require Draconian entitlement policy changes. To meet the $1.8 trillion in cuts over the decade without any increase in revenues, policymakers would be forced to cut Social Security and Medicare benefits, and that is not a scare tactic. That is an absolute reality of what would have to happen if we proceed to do those cuts the way they are structuring them, and we would eviscerate the safety net for low-income children, for parents, for senior citizens, and for people with disabilities.

One of the worst and most disturbing components of this plan, the Boehner plan—it is incomprehensible to me—they want to do this whole thing all over again in 6 months. There is no economic reason we have to do it again in 6 months because they purposely left out the money that could come from reducing our engagement in the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan, which is going to come. They purposely left that money out so it wouldn't show the amount of savings that could get us through next November. The reason they purposely left it out is so they can come back and do this same exercise again next February and make all the discussion in America about debt and deficit, when we are perfectly prepared to have a serious discussion not about raising the debt on it but about solving it, about doing it. We don't need a constitutional amendment to do our duty. We don't need a constitutional amendment to balance the budget. I know what I am talking about on that because I was here when we balanced the budget in the 1990s without a constitutional amendment. We balanced the budget five times since World War II, and we have done it each time without a constitutional amendment.

Let's not have this phony structured setup that is pure politics. I am sure they are raising a lot of money from their base on it every single day, but that is not what this ought to be about. This ought to be about solving the economic problems of our country. A short-term plan is not necessary and it is, most importantly, not wise. If we go through this exercise again in 6 months in the same way we have gone through it in the last few months, we are going to drive this economy right down and down.

Maybe that is what they want so they can then blame President Obama and turn around and blame the Democrats who are responsible in the Senate. There is no other rationale for wanting to come back and do this in 6 months, when we could do this with the joint committees that are in both the Boehner plan and in Senator REID's plan. We have the ability to set up a structure, similar to the BRAC closing commissions, where we have to vote, where we are forced to do this on an accelerated basis, where we tie ourselves into a process that requires the Senate to do its duty and the Congress to do its duty. We can lock that in right now. We are not kicking anything

down the road if we do that and require us not to have a balanced budget amendment that goes out all across the country for States to have to ratify but, rather, do the job we were sent to do and do it in the next few months. That is what we could be doing. If we don't do that, then the downgrade that may take place somewhere in the next days could drive up interest rates, and that will have a negative drag on the economy to boot. A student with a student loan will feel that impact. Somebody with a car loan is going to feel that impact. Anybody with a credit card is going to feel that impact. People with mortgages will feel that impact. That will mean more money out of pocket to make up for the dereliction of duty of the Congress.

These are completely dangerous and uncharted waters we are sailing into. I think at a time when the global economy is facing enormous problems, any downgrade of our Nation's credit rating could have disastrous effects for our financial system in terms of those other countries which I have talked about, and I think it is an unacceptable risk. It should require us to find the compromise and find it now. I might add that the Boehner plan is not even supported on Wall Street.

Let me quote Christian Cooper, who is the head of the U.S. dollar derivatives trading in New York at Jefferies & Company. He said:

> From the markets' point of view, a two-stage plan is a nonstarter because we know it is amateur hour on Capitol Hill and we don't want to be painted into this corner again.

He went on to say:

> There is significant risk of a downgrade with a deal that ties further cuts to another vote only a few months down the road given the significant resistance to do the right thing now.

Frankly, I think that is logical. Every American can understand that. If a person has some money to invest and they are sitting there watching what is happening right now, and then they learn our way of dealing with it is going to be to have another vote in 6 months for the same reason—to lift the debt ceiling—when everybody knows we don't have to do that, would that person say, oh, that is a really good, clear climate for investment; let's go put our money into whatever it is out there because we know Congress is going to do the right thing? No. No way, I say to my colleagues. Everybody knows that.

The fact is, the President has said he is going to veto the Speaker's plan. Senators know he is going to veto it. We know it is a bad plan. We ought to stop discussing proposals that are going to go nowhere and get the job done on something that can bring everybody together.

In an effort to forge a bipartisan compromise, Senator REID has reached way beyond what many Members of our caucus really wanted to do or think is the appropriate balance. But we are acting responsibly in order to try to get the job done. So we are willing to extend the debt ceiling through 2012 without revenues at this time, with the understanding that we will have the ability to come back to the floor with the process of a joint committee providing it is tied to a very clear schedule, with very clear requirements about no filibusters, with very clear requirements about amendments and voting.

Madam President, the spending cuts in Senator REID's proposal are only those to which Republicans have previously agreed. So no revenues, cuts of $2-some trillion, we go through the year to give certainty to the marketplace, and we have cuts in there that the Republicans have already agreed to, and, again, a fixed period of time. I think that proposal gives our economy the certainty it needs in order to create jobs now, not 6 months from now and not maybe sometime next year.

Everybody understands how anemic America's job creation is now. The last the job market needs is this kind of brinkmanship, gamesmanship, and cynical effort to hold the entire economy of our country hostage when better proposals are actually on the table and in front of us which everybody can understand.

The majority leader's proposal includes the capacity for that joint committee to include recommendations and legislative language on tax reform. We all know we need tax reform. I believe the Senate and the House ought to do their jobs, both of us. Senator REID's plan actually calls on the Senate to live up to its ultimate responsibility. The Speaker's plan has no such language—nothing that requires that kind of participation.

The deficit commission was chaired by former Republican Senator Alan Simpson. All of that work is being ignored right now. The so-called Gang of 6 did an outstanding job, in my judgment, of helping to put together a bipartisan plan which actually included revenue and I think 20-some Republican Senators were prepared to support a thoughtful, balanced plan that had both revenues as well as cuts. So we can find common ground. We need to find that common ground.

Over the last year, we have seen a number of bipartisan plans put forward on the debt limit. I think the effort of the Gang of 6 exemplified the best tradition of the Senate, where a group of Members reached across the aisle and worked with each other to tackle the tough issues. That is how we got a budget deal in 1990. That is how we got a budget deal in 1997. We have done this before, and we did it growing our economy—creating 23 million new jobs and creating a surplus of $5.6 trillion. Had we stayed on that course, we would next year be paying down the debt of our Nation completely for the first time since Andrew Jackson was President of the United States. Everybody here knows why we went off track. I don't mean to go through that again now, but I think we will not be able to resolve this current impasse until colleagues on both sides of the aisle—and especially in the House where there seems to be the greatest ideological resistance to common sense right now—decide to put aside their ideology and decide what is best for the United States of America.

We can't be responsible if we don't get serious first. Far too much is at stake for the Senate to do anything less than the Senate was intended to do at moments such as this. We are called the world's greatest deliberative body. There aren't many Americans who would look at us right now and give us that appropriate moniker. We have to earn it. I think in the next hours we can do that.

I thank the Chair, and I thank my colleagues for their forbearance.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The Senator from Tennessee.

Mr. CORKER. Madam President, may I inquire as to how much time I have allotted?

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The Senate is in morning business with Senators permitted to speak for up to 10 minutes each.

Mr. CORKER. I thank the Chair. I doubt I will do this, but if I get up to 8 minutes, if the Chair would let me know so I will have 2 minutes to wrap up.

The last time I was on the floor was July 14, and I was very concerned—maybe upset—about the fact that it appeared where we were on this debt ceiling discussion was looking for a political way for everybody to raise the debt ceiling without anybody taking ownership. Obviously, that wasn't what I came to the Senate to do. I came down and had choice words for both sides of the aisle in that regard.

I actually come here today with a glimmer of hope. The reason I say that is, to my knowledge, in this debt ceiling debate we may be—I think this is the first time legislation has actually been offered from both sides of the aisle to look at spending reductions over the course of this next year. To me, that is progress. I think we ought to focus on the fact that, finally, here in this body, we are on the right subject. We sort of wandered around in the wilderness for several weeks as this debt ceiling was coming up and focused on many things that were not going to solve the problem. Then, a couple of weeks ago, we focused on trying to figure out a way for us to all usurp—get rid of—our responsibilities in dealing with this.

I am kind of uplifted because, as was mentioned, a Democratic Senator has a proposal, a Republican House Member has a proposal, and now, finally, we are on the topic that matters; that is, we have proposals before us that are beginning to look at what we might do to look at spending reductions.

The fact is, the reason this debt ceiling debate is what it is is because all of

us are concerned about future deficits. All of us are concerned about where our country is going. All of us are concerned about the fact that if we don't deal with this issue responsibly, we are going to end up with a downgrade in our debt regardless, even if we make it. If we had a clean debt ceiling vote, which, obviously, is not going to occur now—if we had a clean debt ceiling vote, we would be right back at the table trying to figure out a way to keep from having a downgrade. So for what it is worth, I am choosing today to come to the floor and to be slightly optimistic because both sides of the aisle are beginning to look at ways of reducing that issue.

As to the rating agencies, actually we don't put a lot of faith in them, I know, but smart people who actually buy Treasurys have said the order of magnitude that we need to deal with as it relates to deficit spending over the next short period of time is a minimum of $4 trillion, and that $4 trillion has to be real, and that $4 trillion needs to be accompanied by entitlement reforms.

What I would say is, right now, I don't think there is any proposal that is being discussed that is strong enough, and I don't say that to knock any of the authors. There is nothing out there that I am aware of that is being discussed by the media or being discussed in either Chamber that really deals with this issue. Most of us have taken the position that we want to use the debt ceiling vote to force dramatic reductions in deficits, dramatic reductions in spending and, fortunately, we have gotten to that place, finally. We have just gotten there in the last 24 hours.

So this is my hope: We know none of the proposals out there now are strong enough. None of the proposals out there—I am talking about in legislative language. There are a lot of people working in other ways to try to come up with a solution, but there is no legislative language out there yet that actually forces us to do the things we need to do to achieve not being downgraded, if you will, after this debt ceiling vote occurs.

So it appears we are going to be voting on a proposal the majority leader has offered. It is very apparent to me it is not going to pass. I know there are some activities that may be taking place in the House over the next 24 hours, but at least we have both sides of the aisle talking about the right topic, finally. It has taken us a while to get here.

I urge us to sit down and figure out a way to make the proposals that are being discussed real—make sure they don't have gimmicks—and that they force us to do those things we need to do to make sure we don't just kick the can down the road and pass something that looks like we have actually taken action, but to pass something instead that actually will address the issues we have before us.

So, again, I have a glimmer of hope. Both sides of the aisle have offered proposals. No doubt in both cases they are not nearly strong enough, but both sides have offered proposals that look at reducing the deficits over the next year or so. So I urge people to sit down—as Members have done recently on other proposals, let's sit down and figure out a way to make some proposal strong enough so we know that not only have we moved past this debt ceiling vote, but we have also put in place those actions that will cause us to make it through this entire next year, in a way that we know we are not going to be downgraded by the credit rating agencies and have other issues.

There is not a proposal before us today that does it, but both sides of the aisle are talking about proposals. That, to me, is a sign for a degree of optimism. If we need to extend the debt ceiling issue for a week while we work out the details or whatever, let's do it. But let's don't let this opportunity where we finally have both sides of the aisle talking about the right subject, let's don't let this opportunity go by. Let's solve this problem while the focus is on it.

I thank the Chair for allowing me to take to the floor.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. BENNET). The majority leader.

EXTENSION OF MORNING BUSINESS

Mr. REID. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that morning business be extended until 5 o'clock and that I be recognized at 5 o'clock and that Senator SESSIONS be recognized for 10 minutes at this time.

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

The Senator from Alabama.

THE DEBT CRISIS

Mr. SESSIONS. I thank the majority leader, and I appreciate his courtesy, as always, in so many issues that come before the Senate.

I wish to say a couple of things. One is fundamental, and that is that the crisis we face—and I think my Senate colleague from Tennessee would agree—is not the debt limit, it is the debt. It is the surging debt. The debt limit is Congress's power, and it says to the administration: You can't borrow any more money. We only authorize so much money to be borrowed. Like a 102-degree mark in our thermometer, it is not the thermometer that is the problem. It is the underlying fever that the thermometer indicates. So reaching the debt limit so soon after we raised it is an indication we have something unhealthy in our system that needs to be dealt with.

Senator REID has very difficult challenges before him. It is not easy. But as I like to remind him, he asked for the job and, hopefully, he can make progress at this point in time.

But to raise the debt ceiling, the majority leader knows a couple of things must be done. He knows, one, the Republican Congress and the American people want to see changes in our spending. It is on a reckless path. We cannot continue on this path. So the idea is, shouldn't we change what we are doing that has put us in a situation in which 40 cents of every $1 we spend today is borrowed?

This year we will pay $240 billion in interest on our national debt. Under the budget the President submitted to us—which was voted down, I will acknowledge, 97 to 0 in the Senate; but it indicates the debt path we are on—it would cause in the tenth year interest to be paid in 1 year of $940 billion—a stunning figure. The Federal road program is about $40 billion. Federal aid to education is about $100 billion. We would be surging from $240 billion to $940 billion in interest on this rising debt, according to the Congressional Budget Office, our experts.

I would note also that President Bush's last year was an extraordinary deficit of $450 billion—but President Obama's deficits have been $1,200 billion, $1,300 billion, and it is expected this year to be $1.5 trillion—$1,500 billion—in 1 year. These are the 3 years.

In the first 2 years of President Obama's administration, his nondefense discretionary spending surged 24 percent. This does not count the stimulus of almost $900 billion that we sent out the door that was supposed to stimulate the economy.

Speaker BOEHNER, and I think with the support of the American people, has said: Well, we can do a long time. We can do a fairly large increase in our debt ceiling to allow the country to continue to borrow or we can do a short one, but we in the House, in the Republican House, believe we have to confront our problems. So I would propose, and he has stated, that the House would vote to raise the debt ceiling but only to the extent to which spending has been reduced an equal amount.

If you reduce spending enough over 10 years, you get an immediate increase in the debt ceiling of an equal amount now. If you reduce spending over 10 years a larger amount, you could increase the debt limit a larger amount. It has become a vehicle, an opportunity for the American people to understand how we are spiraling out of control, and how it is Congress that needs to figure out a way to rein this in. It is unsustainable, the path we are on. So this $1 increase in the debt ceiling for $1 reduction in spending kind of caught on. People seem to be going along with that. It seems to be fairly reasonable.

Senator REID claims he has a plan that would reduce spending $2.7 trillion over 10 years and this would allow him to raise the debt ceiling about that amount, and this would allow us to, in effect, raise it enough that we would not have to talk about this again for almost 2 years—about 22 months.

Well, OK. That sort of seemed to meet what Speaker BOEHNER had suggested. But I am the ranking member

of the Budget Committee. I have been a real critic of what has been going on. I have been predicting we were going to end up at the last minute and a bill was going to be thrown on the floor, and I was concerned it was going to be filled with gimmicks. It was not going to be honest, and we were going to be told if we do not pass it, the Republic is going to fall, and no matter what is in it, we have to pass it. And do not worry about it, trust us on these numbers.

Unfortunately, that is where we are getting. Senator REID, in his $2.7 trillion in claimed deficit reduction—about $1.2 trillion of that is savings from the war in Iraq and Afghanistan. Well, that has not ever been projected to stay at the current level of $158 billion a year for 10 years.

Speaker BOEHNER, when he proposes to reduce spending for a shorter term, does not count savings from the declining war expenditure because that is not a baseline expenditure and we have never extended and planned to do that. We never planned to spend $158 billion a year in the next 10 years. This is inevitably going to drop. Some say it could go to zero, some say to $50 billion, saving $100 billion or a little more a year for the next decade. So the Budget Committee Republican staff calculates this is over $1 trillion in inaccurate estimations of spending reductions. It just is. It should not be counted. Speaker BOEHNER does not count it in his numbers.

Senator REID also claims $1.2 trillion in deficit reduction from spending caps by capping discretionary spending. Well, those caps are counted from a baseline that ignores the savings that were enacted in the full year CR that we did the year we are in.

What happened was, we had a higher level of spending. There was an election last fall. A new Republican House was elected—huge numbers of people who were elected who said: We have to do something about spending. So we had a fuss over what our spending levels should be this year because we were operating not under authorization of appropriations bills but a continuing resolution, and that number was reduced. So the spending level for this year now is not the same as it was when the year began. The current level of spending is the number we ought to be talking about when we say we are going to save money. Correct? It should not be the number that was higher but has been abandoned and been reduced. That reduces the amount of legitimate claims in discretionary savings to less than $800 billion. Then he claims $100 billion in mandatory savings. But it is likely—from our staff looking at them—it would amount to no more than $60 billion.

The bottom line is, we have looked at this a lot of different ways. I believe the numbers I am going to repeat to you today will be sustained in any competitive argument about it. I believe these are honest and true numbers. The bottom line is that the total real savings that are proposed by the Reid plan are not $2.7 trillion but $1 trillion. If you do $1 trillion in savings, and you raise the debt limit by $1 trillion, then that would extend to 6 or 8 months or so into early next year, which is, I suggest, where we ought to be. Because this amount of savings—$1 trillion—is nowhere near what we need to do to get off the debt course we are on.

As Senator CORKER indicated, most of the financial experts tell us we need at least $4 trillion in savings, not $1 trillion. So if we are just going to get $1 trillion so we can vote in this crisis period to raise the debt limit before August 2 so the checks can go out and everybody can be paid and the government can operate—and I hope we can do that; we need to do that—but if all we are going to get is $1 trillion, this is just an interim step. This is not a real fix at all, but it is an interim step. If so, we need to be right back on this issue soon. That gives us an opportunity to do so early next year or late this year because we have not solved the problem.

Mr. President, $1 trillion is not enough. Madam President, $4 trillion is not enough. Depending on how you calculate the debt that has been projected to accrue over the next 10 years, it is somewhere between $9 and $13 trillion. So $1 trillion is not going to do anything to change the disastrous debt course we are on.

By the way, the President—I want to say this because he was pretty tough last night blaming Republicans for all kinds of problems. Let me say, the Republican House passed—and I voted for in the Senate—a budget for 10 years that changes the debt course of this Republic. It puts us on a sound financial path. It reduced spending by as much as $6 trillion over 10 years. It even reduced taxes to create more economic growth and make us more competitive in the world marketplace. It was a thoughtful, long-term, serious budget that would do real, positive things for America.

The Senate has not passed a budget, not had one marked up in the Budget Committee. The leadership here in the Senate refused to allow it to happen. Senator REID said it would be foolish to pass a budget. We have gone now over 2 years without a budget. It is unthinkable in the debt course we are on—how disastrous it is, how unsustainable it is, how unlike anything that has ever happened in our history—to have this kind of debt path and we do not have a budget.

The President said a few weeks ago: Well, I have a plan that cuts $3 trillion. Is it like Senator REID's $2.7 trillion plan? It was never made public. It was never spelled out. If he has a $3 trillion plan to cut spending, well, let's see it. Maybe we could extend the debt limit more, if he is going to cut $3 trillion in honest numbers. If he has those numbers, as he says he has—in between attacking Republicans for causing all the problems—let's see them. Maybe that would be a basis for something.

But I suspect it is no more accurate than this plan because when the President proposed his budget, as the law required him to do, early in the year, he said: My budget calls on us as Americans to live within our means and to not increase the debt, when according to the Congressional Budget Office, the lowest single budget deficit that would occur under his 10-year budget would be $750 billion—nowhere close to a balanced budget—and in the out years that deficit would be going up. So I will challenge the President, if he has a $3 trillion plan, let's see it.

Some people say we need to raise the debt limit for a longer period of time and we cannot afford to have a short term increase. They say this is somehow a wrong thing to do, and so forth. I would point out to my colleagues, it is not unusual at all. A $2.7 trillion increase in the debt—if that were to occur—would be very high. It would be a 19-percent increase in the current debt limit, putting the debt limit 50-percent higher than when President Obama took office. It would be the largest debt increase in history, the fourth debt limit increase during President Obama's tenure in office, the fourth time it has been raised. So this is not unusual.

I warned from the beginning that if we skirted the legislative process in favor of closed-door White House meetings and so forth, we would find ourselves in the eleventh hour with gimmick-filled legislation being rushed through a panic-driven Senate. This is not responsible governance from our leadership here in the Senate.

As I feared and as I have just described, the majority leader's bill has not achieved close to the promised savings he says it would. From the $2.7 trillion in cuts claimed, the troop-spending cuts in the proposal are closer to $1 trillion over 10 years—less than a third of what was advertised—while he is asking for a nearly $3 trillion increase in the debt limit. Spending cuts next year would be only $3 billion less than the enacted amount for 2011. This falls short of the idea that a dollar in cuts should accompany a dollar in debt limit increase. Senator REID's proposal is structured in a way that is clearly designed to further degrade and undermine the budgetary process of the Senate, and it allows the majority not to have to come forward and produce a budget plan.

Given the late hour, rather than rush through legislation to the President—the largest debt ceiling increase in history—we should pursue a more responsible approach, a short-term extension with real cuts through the immediate time period the extension covers, not 10 years down the road. Then, using the extra time we have, Congress should pursue a binding framework, such as the cut, cap, and balance plan, to bring these gimmicks to an end and to alter

our debt course. We should try the one thing we refused to do from the beginning: open hearings, regular order, and a real legislative process and public participation.

I yield the floor.

IRAN'S NUCLEAR PROGRAM

Mr. KYL. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent to have printed in the RECORD an editorial from the July 21 edition of the Washington Post. I completely agree with this editorial.

The metric is not how many long overdue individual sanctions are made. We must instead be focused on our goal: preventing the acquisition of a nuclear weapons capability by the Islamic Republic of Iran.

I fear we are spiraling at an accelerating speed to the point when we have but one option left to stop the Islamic Republic of Iran's illegal nuclear weapons ambitions. If that happens, history will judge that we were put into this position by our own failure to avail ourselves of other options while we still had them.

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

[From the Washington Post, July 21, 2011]

SANCTIONS AREN'T SLOWING IRAN'S NUCLEAR PROGRESS

According to a recent story in The Post, the Obama administration is ''quietly toasting'' the success of international sanctions against Iran. The Islamic republic is having increasing difficulty arranging imports, including food, and the central bank is reportedly short of hard currency. Billions of dollars in foreign investment projects have been canceled, and few banks, insurance companies or shipping firms are willing to do business with Tehran.

There are also signs of political stress. President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad is bitterly at odds with conservative clergy and a majority of parliament and appears to have lost the support of Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei. Iran's closest ally, the Syrian regime of Bashar al-Assad, is slowly but steadily losing ground to a popular uprising, raising the prospect that Iran's once-firm foothold in the Arab Middle East will be reduced to an isolated Hezbollah militia in Lebanon.

We don't begrudge the White House a toast or two over these developments; the administration has worked hard and relatively effectively to make the sanctions work. But it's important to note a stubborn reality: There has been no change in Iran's drive for nuclear weapons or in its aggressive efforts to drive the United States out of the Middle East.

If anything, Tehran has recently grown bolder. Last month it announced plans to triple its capacity to produce uranium enriched to the level of 20 percent—a far higher degree of processing than is needed to produce nuclear energy. Western diplomats and experts say that Iran is preparing, and may have already begun, to install a new generation of powerful centrifuges in a plant built into a mountain near the city of Qom. As British Foreign Secretary William Hague wrote in an op-ed published by the Guardian last week, it would take only two to three months to convert uranium enriched at Qom into weapons-grade material. That means that Iran could have a ''breakout'' capacity allowing it to quickly produce a weapon when it chose to do so.

Mr. Hague told the British Parliament last month that Iran also has been secretly testing medium-range missiles capable of carrying a nuclear warhead. Britain believes there have been three such tests since October. Meanwhile, Iranian-backed militias have launched a new offensive against U.S. forces in Iraq. According to Defense Secretary Leon Panetta and other senior officials, Tehran has supplied sophisticated rockets and roadside bombs for attacks on U.S. troops, 15 of whom were killed during June.

Iran's ability to sustain its nuclear program and its meddling in Iraq reflect the fact that these initiatives are controlled by the Revolutionary Guard, which has not been affected by the political feuding in Tehran and has first claim on the oil revenue that Iran continues to reap. Economic and political hardship also has had no apparent impact on Mr. Khamenei, who has maintained the regime's refusal even to negotiate with the U.N. Security Council, much less obey its resolutions.

The bottom line is that the threat from Iran is not diminishing but growing. Where is the policy to reverse that alarming trend?

DEFENSE CUTS

Mr. KYL. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent to have printed in the RECORD a piece from Politico by my colleagues in the House, Chairman FORBES, Chairman TURNER, Congressman BISHOP, and Congressman CONAWAY.

I fundamentally disagree with the President when he said in a recent interview with NPR:

> A lot of the spending cuts that we're making should be around areas like defense spending as opposed to food stamps.

I wish the President would listen to the advice of Secretary Gates, who said in his AEI speech this May:

> I revisit this history because it leads to an important point for the future: when it comes to our military modernization accounts, the proverbial ''low hanging fruit''—those weapons and other programs considered most questionable—have not only been plucked, they have been stomped on and crushed. What remains are much-needed capabilities—relating to air superiority and mobility, long-range strike, nuclear deterrence, maritime access, space and cyber warfare, ground forces, intelligence, surveillance and reconnaissance—that our nation's civilian and military leadership deem absolutely critical.

My colleagues in the House are absolutely right when they wrote:

> The time to draw a line in the sand, and go on the offense to support national security must be now.

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

[From Politico, July 25, 2011]

ON THE OFFENSE OVER DEFENSE CUTS

(By Representatives J. Randy Forbes, Michael Turner, Rob Bishop, and Mike Conaway)

America's all-volunteer military is the most well-trained, well-equipped fighting force the world has ever seen. But the strength of our armed forces should not be taken for granted.

Without sustained investments in our troops and their equipment, the military power our nation now wields in defense of our security—including our economic security—will slowly be hollowed out. The result is likely to be an America that can go fewer places and do fewer things in defense of its global interests.

While that may sound good to those who remain uncomfortable with America's leadership role in the world, starving the military will not make us any safer, given the global demands on our security interests.

The U.S. military confronts readiness shortfalls and a growing array of risks and security challenges. That is why I am deeply concerned about the avalanche of military spending cuts being discussed—from President Barack Obama's $400 billion proposal to the Senate's Gang of Six proposal that could cut up to $886 billion.

The time to draw a line in the sand, and go on the offense to support national security must be now.

Let's be clear: Defense spending is not what put us in this position, and gutting the defense budget to pay the bills is unlikely to get us out of it. As a percentage of our gross domestic product, the defense budget remains just 3.6 percent. This figure is low by all historical standards.

Even if we start slashing major portions of the budget—say $50 billion each year over the next decade—that figure would still only add up to a fraction of the nation's debt. Yet the additional risk to the nation could be substantial.

Today's military is worn out from a decade of operations that have pushed already aging platforms to the edge. More than half the Navy's deployed aircraft are not fully combat ready, as we recently discovered at a House Armed Services Readiness Subcommittee hearing, and approximately one in five of our Navy ships are deemed unsatisfactory or mission degraded.

With known shortfalls in the Navy maintenance accounts, the Defense Department would be severely challenged to meet the expected service life of its equipment. Even more concerning are the assessments from our Combatant Commanders in the unclassified portion of the Quarterly Readiness Report to Congress. This paints a distressing picture of a military stretched thin by nearly 10 years of war and a sustained lack of resources.

Even as our forces have been aged rapidly by the high tempo of operations in the past decade, the president has cancelled a generation of weapons programs in just the last two years. While much of the nation has smart phones and iPads, the Army is still operating on an Atari-like system.

With readiness shortfalls and pressure to modernize aging platforms, how can we pretend we can defend the country with even more defense cuts? Our national defense planning must be based on an open and objective review of the threats we face and the resources required to meet them. Unfortunately, we now have that process in reverse.

In many ways, it's like a family who is about to purchase a new home. The correct course would be to have an inspector look at the house and tell the family what the problems are and what they will cost to fix. What if, instead, that family told the inspector that they only had $1,000, and they wanted the inspector to go through and identify only $1,000 worth of problems to fix?

This is analogous to the way the Defense Department and the Obama administration expect Congress to approach national defense. They dictate how much we will spend on defense without fully and objectively detailing the risks we face, or the choices we must make.

This wouldn't be a sensible course for the new homeowners. So why does it pass as acceptable for managing our national security?

In the past two years, the administration has executed two rounds of defense cuts, with the masthead of another likely on the way as part of an agreement to lift the debt ceiling. With growing readiness problems and a generation of military modernization either cut or on the chopping-block, we are now facing a $400–$900 billion defense cut looming over the horizon.

While our armed forces are charged with defending our national security, it is the Congress' responsibility to provide them with the resources to accomplish the tasks we set for them. Our men and woman in uniform diligently execute these tasks.

It is time for the Congress to do its job and provide adequately for the common defense.

AMERICANS WITH DISABILITIES ACT

Mr. HARKIN. Mr. President, July 26, 1990, 21 years ago today, was a great day in our Nation's history. When President George Herbert Walker Bush signed the Americans with Disabilities Act, we could see the future before us, full of possibility and opportunity for people with disabilities. It was one of the proudest days of my legislative career.

The Americans with Disabilities Act is one of the landmark civil rights laws of the 20th century—a long-overdue emancipation proclamation for Americans with disabilities. The ADA has played a huge role in making our country more accessible, in raising the expectations of people with disabilities about what they can hope to achieve at work and in life, and in inspiring the world to view disability issues through the lens of equality and opportunity.

In these times of often bitter political partisanship, it is valuable to remember that passage of the original Americans with Disabilities Act was a robustly bipartisan effort. As chief sponsor of the ADA in the Senate, I worked very closely with Senator Bob Dole and others on both sides of the aisle. We received invaluable support from President George Herbert Walker Bush and key members of his administration, including White House counsel Boyden Gray, Attorney General Richard Thornburgh, and Transportation Secretary Sam Skinner. Other Members of Congress also played critical roles in passing the ADA—first and foremost, Senator Ted Kennedy; but also Senator ORRIN HATCH, and Representatives Tony Coelho, STENY HOYER, Major Owens, and Steve Bartlett.

Before the ADA, life was very different for folks with disabilities in Iowa and across the country. Being an American with a disability meant not being able to ride a bus because there was no lift, not being able to attend a concert or ballgame because there was no accessible seating, and not being able to cross the street in a wheelchair because there were no curb cuts. In short, it meant not being able to work or participate in community life. Discrimination was both commonplace and accepted.

Since then, we have seen amazing progress. The ADA literally transformed the American landscape by requiring that architectural and communications barriers be removed and replaced with accessible features such as ramps, lifts, curb cuts, widening doorways, and closed captioning. More importantly, the ADA gave millions of Americans the opportunity to participate in their communities. We have made substantial progress in advancing the four goals of the ADA—equality of opportunity, full participation, independent living, and economic self-sufficiency.

But despite this progress, we still have more work to do. One of the critical challenges we still need to address is the persistently low employment rates among Americans with disabilities. According to the Bureau of Labor Statistics, less than a third of working-age people with disabilities—around 4 million individuals—are currently employed.

This is shameful, and we need to do better. In April, at a disability employment summit, I challenged the employer representatives in the room to work to increase the size of the disability labor force by 1 million individuals by 2015. Tom Donohue, president of the U.S. Chamber of Commerce, endorsed this goal and encouraged his colleagues to meet or exceed the 1 million number because ''it's a good thing to do, and it's good for business.''

But if we are going to get serious about growing the size of the disability work force, we need to start by recognizing that people with disabilities have been disproportionately impacted by the bad economy. Compared to the general workforce, in the last 2 years, adults with disabilities have left the labor force at a rate six times the rate of adults without disabilities.

I am committed to doing everything within my power to turn these trends around, and to increase employment opportunities for all individuals with disabilities.

If all of us—Members of Congress, business leaders, employers, and people with disabilities—work together, I believe that we can meet the goal of 1 million new workers with disabilities—and ensure that all individuals with disabilities have real opportunities for employment that meet their goals, interests, and high expectations.

I would like to take a brief moment on this ADA anniversary to remember a leader in the disability community who recently passed away—Max Starkloff.

Max, who acquired his disability at age 21, was a well-known advocate for disability rights, both in his hometown of St. Louis, MO, and nationally.

In the 1970s, while still living in a nursing home, Max founded Paraquad, which became one of the first Centers for Independent Living in this country. Max began his lifetime of advocacy for the rights and independence of people with disabilities long before the ADA, and continued it all the way up until his recent passing.

The examples of his advocacy are too numerous to catalogue, but here are a few examples:

In 1972, he convinced St. Louis officials to install curb cuts in sidewalks.

In 1977, Max's advocacy led to the use of lift-equipped buses in the St. Louis metro area.

In 1979, Max helped to integrate accessible design in an apartment complex that he and Paraquad opened in St. Louis, including counters that could be moved up and down to accommodate wheelchairs, wide doorways, and stoves that could be used by individuals with limited mobility.

Max, and his wife Colleen, worked tirelessly for the passage of the ADA in 1990.

In 1997, Max's advocacy over a two year period resulted in the St. Louis Zoo making their facilities accessible for all.

Most recently, Max devoted himself to an issue that is near and dear to my heart—improving employment opportunities for individuals with disabilities.

Although Max Starkloff is no longer with us, his accomplishments and good work live on, and improve the lives of Missourians with disabilities on a daily basis.

So as we celebrate the anniversary of this great civil rights law, we take time to remember the remarkable progress that we have made in the past 21 years.

On July 26, 1990, when he signed ADA into law, President George Herbert Walker Bush spoke with great eloquence. And I will never forget his final words before taking up his pen. He said, ''Let the shameful wall of exclusion finally come tumbling down.''

Mr. President, today, that wall is indeed falling. And we must join together, on a bipartisan basis, to continue this progress.

REMEMBERING OFFICER CHESTNUT AND DETECTIVE GIBSON

Mr. WICKER. Mr. President, I want to take this opportunity to pay tribute to two law enforcement officers who lost their lives in the line of duty at the U.S. Capitol on July 24, 1998.

Thirteen years ago today, Officer Jacob Chestnut and Detective John Michael Gibson each of whom had spent 18 years on the Capitol Police force, lost their lives while safeguarding the Capitol against an armed, emotionally disturbed individual. As a Member of the U.S. House of Representatives at this time, I interacted with these officers on a regular basis. Their tragic, violent deaths profoundly affected us all.

We want these officers' family members and friends to know that these two fine police officers did not die in vain; if not for their courageous and immediate response, many more innocent people could have been injured or killed on that day in 1998.

On this date, we take a moment to remember the sacrifice made by these

law enforcement officers on our behalf. We keep them, their families, friends, and former colleagues in our thoughts and prayers.

I also want to take this opportunity to thank all law enforcement officers serving at the local, State, and Federal level who put their lives on the line for the American public every day. Our Nation is fortunate to have so many fine men and women serving as law enforcement officers in Mississippi and across the Nation.

HEALTH CARE

Mr. KOHL. Mr. President, in an era when Congress is actively debating health care programs that are of enormous consequence to our economy and our collective future, it is important to acknowledge that today, Medicare and Medicaid play an essential role in ensuring access to health and long-term care services for nearly 100 million Americans. In fact, these programs are embedded in the daily lives of nearly one of every three Americans.

Medicaid is the program that currently pays for about half of all long-term care services in our country. Jointly financed and administered by states and the Federal Government, it is a program that all of us—taxpayers and beneficiaries and health care providers alike—have a major stake in seeing continue and succeed.

As chairman of the Senate Special Committee on Aging, I know that for millions of older and disabled Americans who are confronting the need for long-term care services, anxieties are often high. The costs associated with long-term care can be catastrophic, and many families turn to Medicaid for assistance.

In many parts of the country, Medicaid offers only limited choices of where and how to receive services. However, I am pleased and proud that a few States, Wisconsin among them, have developed Medicaid programs that are designed to offer beneficiaries real choices in where they will receive long-term care. The choices usually include nursing homes, assisted living residences, adult daycare, and personal care services delivered at home. Wisconsin and some other states are also increasingly offering beneficiaries the option to self-direct their care through programs that allow them to directly hire an aide—perhaps a family member or a friend—who can provide personal care within the confines of an approved individual budget.

Wisconsin's Medicaid managed care program that covers long-term services and supports is known as Family Care, and it is one that the state has worked to develop for many years under several administrations, starting with former Governor Tommy Thompson. Family Care is well ahead of where many States are in terms of offering older adults and those with disabilities a real choice of how and where they can receive long-term care services.

Today, one in five Wisconsin seniors and individuals with disabilities are enrolled in Medicaid. A similar proportion in six other States—California, Mississippi, Vermont, Louisiana, New York and Maine, as well as the District of Columbia, rely on the program. In every State, the number of older adults and individuals with disabilities who are enrolled in the program numbers is in the tens of thousands, hundreds of thousands, or millions. Last year, 321,700 seniors and individuals with disabilities in Wisconsin received coverage through Medicaid.

During the last several weeks, I have heard a great deal from constituents—beneficiaries, aging and disability organizations, and officials—who have expressed concern about recent developments in Family Care. It is my understanding that the state budget that was recently signed into law includes a provision to cap, or freeze, the number of individuals in the program, and thereby remove the ability of those who become eligible in the future to choose whether they wish to receive services in a nursing home, at home, or in a community-based setting such as an assisted living residence.

The State anticipates that the cap could save $265 million in the 2011–2013 budget. Yet predictions also abound that waiting lists for home and community-based services for newly eligible beneficiaries will begin to rapidly grow again, after a period of years in which the Family Care Program worked to eliminate delays in receiving services. Such delays could prove costly, because when appropriate and cost-effective interventions cannot be accessed by frail elders and individuals with disabilities, more medically intensive services are likely to be required later. Moreover, individuals who wish to receive lower cost in-home services—but who may find that institutionally based care is their only option—are predicted to wind up costing some counties significantly more.

This year, with the first cohort of boomers turning 65, we are launching our Nation's ''age wave.'' It is an exciting era for older adults, and it will be accompanied by new possibilities and challenges for our country. Wisconsin, which is aging more rapidly than many States, has a clear responsibility to continue to provide the best possible long-term care services to each and every one of its older and disabled citizens. In the coming weeks and months, I urge State and local officials to work closely and cooperatively with the Federal Government to keep Family Care strong. Over the last 12 years, Family Care has proven itself to be a valuable, popular, and cost-effective program—one that can be improved, yes, but one that also has a proven track record. It is my hope, and the hope of tens of thousands of beneficiaries of the program, that it will be preserved and carefully protected.

ADDITIONAL STATEMENTS

CAMBRIDGE INTERNATIONAL

• Mr. CARDIN. Mr. President, today I wish to congratulate Cambridge International, Inc., the world's largest manufacturer of metal belting and wire cloth, on the occasion of its 100th anniversary. Cambridge International is a thriving, dynamic manufacturing company that is a testament to the resiliency of American manufacturing. The company is located in Cambridge on Maryland's Eastern Shore and is a world leader in engineering and manufacturing metal mesh, conveyor belts, wire cloth, filter leaves, and other industrial materials. The company exports its products worldwide, requiring sales facilities in the U.S., Mexico, and Brazil.

Since the company was founded on September 17, 1911, Cambridge International has grown to more than 400 employees and has three divisions: Industrial Belting, Architectural Mesh and, most recently, Environmental Technologies, CET. CET is developing new products to meet the needs of older existing manufacturers. Starting with the firm's own headquarters, CET has completed a $4.8 million renovation that included installing energy efficient heating, ventilation, and cooling, HVAC, and lighting systems and bathroom and equipment upgrades. Installation of a wood waste gasification system will ultimately allow Cambridge to power new production equipment in its manufacturing facilities. CET product offerings include an electrostatic precipitator, ESP, that functions at an efficiency level above the Environmental Protection Agency's pollution control standards for components for major waste-to-energy projects. Cambridge International is hiring 36 new employees to support its new green manufacturing division and CET is creating a green job market that will continue to grow and offer expanding employment opportunities.

Cambridge International is a valued business and employer in Maryland. As Cambridge International celebrates its first 100 years of manufacturing, I ask my colleagues to join me in looking forward to Cambridge's next century of manufacturing innovation.•

MESSAGES FROM THE PRESIDENT

Messages from the President of the United States were communicated to the Senate by Mr. Pate, one of his secretaries.

EXECUTIVE MESSAGES REFERRED

As in executive session the Presiding Officer laid before the Senate messages from the President of the United States submitting sundry nominations which were referred to the Committee on Armed Services.

(The nominations received today are printed at the end of the Senate proceedings.)

MESSAGES FROM THE HOUSE

At 10:04 a.m., a message from the House of Representatives, delivered by Mrs. Cole, one of its reading clerks, announced that the House has passed the following bill, without amendment:

S. 1103. An act to extend the term of the incumbent Director of the Federal Bureau of Investigation.

ENROLLED BILL SIGNED

At 2:18 p.m., a message from the House of Representatives, delivered by Mr. Novotny, one of its reading clerks, announced that the Speaker has signed the following enrolled bill:

S. 1103. An act to extend the term of the incumbent Director of the Federal Bureau of Investigation.

The enrolled bill was subsequently signed by the President pro tempore (Mr. INOUYE).

At 3:07 p.m., a message from the House of Representatives, delivered by Mrs. Cole, one of its reading clerks, announced that the House has agreed to the amendments of the Senate to the bill (H.R. 1383) to temporarily preserve higher rates of tuition and fees for programs of education at non-public institutions of higher learning pursued by individuals in the Post-9/11 Educational Assistance Program of the Department of Veterans Affairs before the enactment of the Post-9/11 Veterans Educational Assistance Improvements Act of 2010, and for other purposes.

MEASURES DISCHARGED

The following bill was discharged from the Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs, and returned to the House of Representatives by unanimous consent:

H.R. 1309. An act to extend the authorization of the national flood insurance program, to achieve reforms to improve the financial integrity and stability of the program, and to increase the role of private markets in the management of flood insurance risk, and for other purposes.

MEASURES READ THE FIRST TIME

The following bill was read the first time:

S. 1420. A bill to require that the United States Government prioritize all obligations on the debt held by the public, Social Security benefits, and military pay in the event that the debt limit is reached, and for other purposes.

ENROLLED BILL PRESENTED

The Secretary of the Senate reported that on today, July 26, 2011, she had presented to the President of the United States the following enrolled bill:

S. 1103. An act to extend the term of teh incumbent Director of the Federal Bureau of Investigation.

EXECUTIVE AND OTHER COMMUNICATIONS

The following communications were laid before the Senate, together with accompanying papers, reports, and documents, and were referred as indicated:

EC–2636. A communication from the Director of the Regulatory Management Division, Office of Policy, Environmental Protection Agency, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Chlorantraniliprole; Pesticide Tolerances'' (FRL No. 8875–5) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on July 25, 2011; to the Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry.

EC–2637. A communication from the Congressional Review Coordinator, Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service, Department of Agriculture, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Movement of Hass Avocados from Areas Where Mediterranean Fruit Fly or South American Fruit Fly Exist'' ((RIN0579–AD34) (Docket No. APHIS–2010–0127)) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on July 25, 2011; to the Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry.

EC–2638. A communication from the Administrator, Livestock and Seed Programs, Department of Agriculture, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Beef Promotion and Research; Reapportionment'' (AMS–LS–10–0086) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on July 25, 2011; to the Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry.

EC–2639. A communication from the Administrator of the Fruit and Vegetable Programs, Agricultural Marketing Service, Department of Agriculture, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Grapes Grown in a Designated Area of Southeastern California; Section 610 Review'' (Doc. No. AMS–FV–06–0185; FV06–925–610 Review) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on July 25, 2011; to the Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry.

EC–2640. A communication from the Administrator of the Fruit and Vegetable Programs, Agricultural Marketing Service, Department of Agriculture, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Olives Grown in California; Decreased Assessment Rate'' (Doc. No. AMS–FV–10–0115; FV11–932–1 FIR) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on July 25, 2011; to the Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry.

EC–2641. A communication from the Administrator of the Fruit and Vegetable Programs, Agricultural Marketing Service, Department of Agriculture, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Marketing Order Regulating the Handling of Spearmint Oil Produced in the Far West; Revision of the Salable Quantity and Allotment Percentage for Class 3 (Native) Spearmint Oil for the 2010–2011 Marketing Year'' (Doc. No. AMS–FV–09–0082; FV10–985–1A FIR) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on July 25, 2011; to the Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry.

EC–2642. A communication from the Administrator of the Fruit and Vegetable Programs, Agricultural Marketing Service, Department of Agriculture, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Mango Promotion, Research, and Information Order; Reapportionment'' (Doc. No. AMS–FV–10–0092) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on July 25, 2011; to the Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry.

EC–2643. A communication from the Administrator of the Fruit and Vegetable Programs, Agricultural Marketing Service, Department of Agriculture, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Vidalia Onions Grown in Georgia; Change in Late Payment and Interest Requirements on Past Due Assessments'' (Doc. No. AMS–FV–11–0016; FV11–955–1 FR) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on July 25, 2011; to the Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry.

EC–2644. A communication from the Administrator of the Fruit and Vegetable Programs, Agricultural Marketing Service, Department of Agriculture, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Raisins Produced from Grapes Grown in California; Increase in Desirable Carryout Used to Compute Trade Demand'' (Doc. No. AMS–FV–11–0013; FV11–989–1 FR) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on July 25, 2011; to the Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry.

EC–2645. A communication from the Administrator of the Fruit and Vegetable Programs, Agricultural Marketing Service, Department of Agriculture, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Irish Potatoes Grown in Washington; Decreased Assessment Rate'' (Doc. No. AMS–FV–11–0012; FV11–946–2 FIR) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on July 25, 2011; to the Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry.

EC–2646. A communication from the Administrator of the Fruit and Vegetable Programs, Agricultural Marketing Service, Department of Agriculture, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Watermelon Research and Promotion Plan; Redistricting and Importer Representation'' (Doc. No. AMS–FV–10–0093) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on July 25, 2011; to the Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry.

EC–2647. A communication from the Administrator of the Fruit and Vegetable Programs, Agricultural Marketing Service, Department of Agriculture, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Nectarines and Peaches Grown in California; Suspension of Handling Requirements'' (Doc. No. AMS–FV–11–0019; FV11–916/917–5 FIR) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on July 25, 2011; to the Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry.

EC–2648. A communication from the Under Secretary of Defense (Comptroller), transmitting, pursuant to law, a report relative to a violation of the Antideficiency Act that occurred within the Operation and Maintenance Army accounts and was assigned Army case number 08–07; to the Committee on Appropriations.

EC–2649. A communication from the Under Secretary of Defense (Comptroller), transmitting, pursuant to law, a report relative to a violation of the Antideficiency Act that occurred within the Department of the Air Force and was assigned Air Force case number 10–05; to the Committee on Appropriations.

EC–2650. A communication from the Secretary of Defense, transmitting a report on the approved retirement of Vice Admiral Derwood C. Curtis, United States Navy, and his advancement to the grade of vice admiral on the retired list; to the Committee on Armed Services.

EC–2651. A communication from the Under Secretary of Defense (Personnel and Readiness), transmitting a report on the approved retirement of Vice Admiral Bernard J. McCullough III, United States Navy, and his advancement to the grade of vice admiral on the retired list; to the Committee on Armed Services.

EC–2652. A communication from the Secretary of the Treasury, transmitting, pursuant to law, a six-month periodic report on the national emergency that was declared in Executive Order 12947 with respect to terrorists who threaten to disrupt the Middle East

peace process; to the Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs.

EC–2653. A communication from the Under Secretary of the Treasury, transmitting, pursuant to law, a report relative to the Dodd-Frank Wall Street Reform Act and the Department's applicable regulations with references to or requirements of reliance on credit ratings; to the Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs.

EC–2654. A communication from the Chief of Staff, Media Bureau, Federal Communications Commission, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''In the Matter of Amendment of Parts 73 and 74 of the Commission's Rules to Establish Rules for Digital Low Power Television, Television Translator, and Television Booster Stations and to Amend Rules for Digital Class A Television Stations, Second Report and Order'' (MB Docket No. 03–185, FCC 11–110) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on July 22, 2011; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

EC–2655. A communication from the Chief of Staff, Media Bureau, Federal Communications Commission, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Television Broadcasting Services; El Paso, Texas'' (MB Docket No. 11–74) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on July 22, 2011; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

EC–2656. A communication from the Chief of the Policy Division, International Bureau, Federal Communications Commission, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''In the Matter of Reporting Requirements for U.S. Providers of International Telecommunications Services Amendment of Part 43 of the Commission's Rules'' (IB Docket No. 04–112) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on July 22, 2011; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

EC–2657. A communication from the Director of the Regulatory Management Division, Office of Policy, Environmental Protection Agency, transmitting, the Uniform Resource Locator (URL) for a report entitled ''Non-Binding Determination: Superfund Deficient PRP Deliverables Memo'' received in the Office of the President of the Senate on July 25, 2011; to the Committee on Environment and Public Works.

EC–2658. A communication from the Director of the Regulatory Management Division, Office of Policy, Environmental Protection Agency, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Revisions to the California State Implementation Plan, Northern Sierra Air Quality Management District, Sacramento Metropolitan Air Quality Management District, and South Coast Air Quality Management District'' (FRL No. 9279–3) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on July 25, 2011; to the Committee on Environment and Public Works.

EC–2659. A communication from the Director of the Regulatory Management Division, Office of Policy, Environmental Protection Agency, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Revisions to the California State Implementation Plan, Placer County Air Pollution Control District and Feather River Air Quality Management District'' (FRL No. 9439–1) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on July 25, 2011; to the Committee on Environment and Public Works.

EC–2660. A communication from the Director of the Regulatory Management Division, Office of Policy, Environmental Protection Agency, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Approval and Promulgation of Air Quality Implementation Plans; Pennsylvania; Determinations of Attainment of the 1997 Fine Particle Standard for the Harrisburg-Lebanon-Carlisle, Johnstown, Lancaster, York, and Reading Nonattainment Areas'' (FRL No. 9445–1) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on July 25, 2011; to the Committee on Environment and Public Works.

EC–2661. A communication from the Director of the Regulatory Management Division, Office of Policy, Environmental Protection Agency, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Interim Final Determination to Defer Sanctions, San Joaquin Valley Unified Air Pollution Control District, California'' (FRL No. 9444–7) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on July 25, 2011; to the Committee on Environment and Public Works.

EC–2662. A communication from the Chief of the Publications and Regulations Branch, Internal Revenue Service, Department of the Treasury, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Highway Use Tax; Filing and Payment for Taxable Period Beginning July 1, 2011'' (RIN1545–BK36) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on July 22, 2011; to the Committee on Finance.

EC–2663. A communication from the Chief of the Publications and Regulations Branch, Internal Revenue Service, Department of the Treasury, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Modifications of Certain Derivative Contracts'' (RIN1545–K14) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on July 22, 2011; to the Committee on Finance.

EC–2664. A communication from the Director, Office of Regulations, Social Security Administration, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Revisions to Direct Fee Payment Rules'' (RIN0960–H21) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on July 25, 2011; to the Committee on Finance.

EC–2665. A communication from the Regulations Officer, Social Security Administration, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Electronic Substitutions for Form SSA–538'' (RIN0960–AH02) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on July 22, 2011; to the Committee on Finance.

EC–2666. A communication from the Acting Assistant Secretary, Bureau of Legislative Affairs, Department of State, transmitting, pursuant to law, a report relative to a proposed amendment to parts 120, 122, 123, and 129 of the International Traffic in Arms Regulations (ITAR); to the Committee on Foreign Relations.

EC–2667. A communication from the Acting Assistant Secretary, Bureau of Legislative Affairs, Department of State, transmitting, pursuant to the Arms Export Control Act, the certification of a proposed technical assistance agreement for the export of defense articles, including, technical data, and defense services to Sweden for the design, development, operation, . . . and sale of the Auxiliary Power and Engine Start System (APESS) for use in the JAS 39 Gripen aircraft and Next Generation Gripen aircraft in the amount of $50,000,000 or more; to the Committee on Foreign Relations.

EC–2668. A communication from the Acting Assistant Secretary, Bureau of Legislative Affairs, Department of State, transmitting, pursuant to the Arms Export Control Act, the certification of a proposed technical assistance agreement for the export of defense articles, including, technical data, and defense services to the Rolling Airframe Missile (RAM) Guided Missile Weapon System (GMWS) to the Armed Forces of the United Arab Emirates in the amount of $50,000,000 or more; to the Committee on Foreign Relations.

EC–2669. A communication from the Acting Assistant Secretary, Bureau of Legislative Affairs, Department of State, transmitting, pursuant to the Arms Export Control Act, the certification of a proposed technical assistance agreement for the export of defense articles, including, technical data, and defense services to support the Proton launch of the Turksat 4A Commercial Communication Satellites from the Baikonur Cosmodrome in Kazakhstan in the amount of $50,000,000 or more; to the Committee on Foreign Relations.

EC–2670. A communication from the Acting Assistant Secretary, Bureau of Legislative Affairs, Department of State, transmitting, pursuant to the Arms Export Control Act, the certification of a proposed technical assistance agreement for the export of defense articles, including, technical data, and defense services to support the Proton launch of the SES–6 Commercial Communication Satellite from the Baikonur Cosmodrome in Kazakhstan in the amount of $50,000,000 or more; to the Committee on Foreign Relations.

EC–2671. A communication from the Manager of the BioPreferred Program, Office of Procurement and Property Management, Department of Agriculture, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Designation of Biobased Items for Federal Procurement'' (RIN0503–AA36) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on July 25, 2011; to the Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry.

EC–2672. A communication from the Senior Counsel for Regulatory Affairs, Consumer Financial Protection Bureau, Department of the Treasury, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Identification of Enforceable Rules and Orders'' (12 CFR Chapter X) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on July 25, 2011; to the Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs.

EC–2673. A communication from the Attorney, Consumer Financial Protection Bureau, Department of the Treasury, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Alternative Mortgage Transaction Parity (Regulation D)'' (RIN3170–AA04) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on July 22, 2011; to the Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs.

EC–2674. A communication from the Secretary of the Commission, Bureau of Consumer Protection, Federal Trade Commission, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Premerger Notification; Reporting and Waiting Period Requirements'' (RIN3084–AA91) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on July 25, 2011; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

EC–2675. A communication from the Assistant Administrator for Fisheries, National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, Department of Commerce, transmitting, pursuant to law, a report entitled, ''2010 Status of U.S. Fisheries''; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

PETITIONS AND MEMORIALS

The following petition or memorial was laid before the Senate and was referred or ordered to lie on the table as indicated:

POM–60. A resolution adopted by the House of Representatives of the State of Michigan memorializing Congress and the United States Drug Enforcement Agency to make it illegal to possess, use, or sell the drugs MDPV and Mephedrone; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

HOUSE RESOLUTION NO. 53

Whereas, MDPV (methylenedioxypyrovalerone) and mephedrone are the

main ingredients of underground drug products being marketed as ''bath salts'' or ''plant food,'' and which are being sold online, at convenience stores, and in smoke shops under names like Tranquility, Zoom, Ivory Wave, Red Dove, and Vanilla Sky. According to numerous reports, the chemicals found in these bath salts and plant foods cause effects similar to those caused by cocaine and methamphetamines, including hallucinations, paranoia, and suicidal thoughts. In one case a user was reported to have resorted to self-mutilation after abusing the substance. In several cases, users have died after overdosing or because of violent behavior; and

Whereas, law enforcement personnel need the authority to get MDPV and mephedrone off the streets and prosecute people who are trying to profit from selling these dangerous drugs. State and local law enforcement officials in dozens of states have encountered MDPV or mephedrone in the last two years. Absent restrictions on their possession, use, or sale, law enforcement can only watch as MDPV and mephedrone abuse becomes more widespread; and

Whereas, MDPV and mephedrone should be placed in schedule I of the federal controlled substances list. Schedule I is reserved for the most dangerous drugs, such as heroin and LSD, which have no recognized medical use and a high potential for abuse. MDPV and mephedrone meet the statutory requirements for placement into schedule I and belong in this group; now, therefore, be it

Resolved by the House of Representatives, That we memorialize Congress and the United States Drug Enforcement Agency to make it illegal to possess, use, or sell the drugs MDPV and mephedrone; and be it further

Resolved, That copies of this resolution be transmitted to the President of the United States Senate, the Speaker of the United States House of Representatives, the members of the Michigan congressional delegation, and the administrator of the United States Drug Enforcement Agency.

EXECUTIVE REPORTS OF COMMITTEE

The following executive reports of nominations were submitted:

By Mr. KERRY for the Committee on Foreign Relations.

*Derek J. Mitchell, of Connecticut, to be Special Representative and Policy Coordinator for Burma, with the rank of Ambassador.

*Jeffrey DeLaurentis, of New York, a Career Member of the Senior Foreign Service, Class of Counselor, to be Alternate Representative of the United States of America for Special Political Affairs in the United Nations, with the rank of Ambassador.

*Jeffrey DeLaurentis, of New York, a Career Member of the Senior Foreign Service, Class of Counselor, to be an Alternate Representative of the United States of America to the Sessions of the General Assembly of the United Nations, during his tenure of service as Alternate Representative of the United States of America for Special Political Affairs in the United Nations.

*David S. Adams, of the District of Columbia, to be an Assistant Secretary of State (Legislative Affairs).

*Thomas M. Countryman, of Washington, a Career Member of the Senior Foreign Service, Class of Minister-Counselor, to be an Assistant Secretary of State (International Security and Non-Proliferation).

*Frankie Annette Reed, of Maryland, a Career Member of the Senior Foreign Service, Class of Counselor, to be Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the United States of America to the Republic of the Fiji Islands, and to serve concurrently and without additional compensation as Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the United States of America to the Republic of Nauru, the Kingdom of Tonga, Tuvalu, and the Republic of Kiribati.

Nominee: Frankie Annette Reed.

Post: U.S. Embassy Suva.

(The following is a list of all members of my immediate family and their spouses. I have asked each of these persons to inform me of the pertinent contributions made by them. To the best of my knowledge, the information contained in this report is complete and accurate.)

Contributions, amount, date, and donee:

1. Self: $1,000, 10/13/2008, Obama Victory Fund.
2. Spouse: Jean Nyame: None.
3. Children and Spouses: Brett Calhoun: None.
4. Parents: Frank Reed—deceased; Anne Reed: None.
5. Grandparents: Sam and Rosa Fulwood—deceased; James and Beatrice Reed—deceased.
6. Brothers and Spouses: No siblings.
7. Sisters and Spouses: No siblings.

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*Paul D. Wohlers, of Washington, a Career Member of the Senior Foreign Service, Class of Counselor, to be Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the United States of America to the Republic of Macedonia.

Nominee: Paul D. Wohlers.

POST: Skopje, Macedonia.

(The following is a list of all members of my immediate family and their spouses. I have asked each of these persons to inform me of the pertinent contributions made by them. To the best knowledge, the information contained in this report is complete and accurate.)

Contributions, amount, date, and donee:

1. Self: none.
2. Spouse: Mary Wohlers: none.
3. Children and Spouses: Rachel Ostrye (Wohlers), none; Ryan Ostrye (spouse), none; Julia Wohlers, $25.00, 7/08, John McCain; Jessica Wohlers, none.
4. Parents: Barbara Wohlers, none; Lester Wohlers—deceased.
5. Grandparents: Dietrich Wohlers—deceased; Camilla Wohlers—deceased; Miller Dashner—deceased; Ethel Dashner—deceased.
6. Brothers and Spouses: Laurence Wohlers, none; Ann Wohlers (spouse), none; Douglas Wohlers, none; Kazuko Wohlers (spouse), none.
7. Sisters and Spouses: n/a.

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*William H. Moser, of North Carolina, a Career Member of the Senior Foreign Service, Class of Minister-Counselor, to be Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the United States of America to the Republic of Moldova.

Nominee: William H. Moser

Post: Moldova

(The following is a list of all members of my immediate family and their spouses. I have asked each of these persons to inform me of the pertinent contributions made by them. To the best of my knowledge, the information contained in this report is complete and accurate.)

Contributions, Amount, Date, and Donee:

1. Self: $100, 2008, DNC; $100, 2010, DNC.
2. Spouse: Marie C. Moser: $100, 2008, DNC.
3. Children: Daniel G. Moser, none; Stephen A. Moser, none; Rebecca E. Moser, none.
4. Parents: Grady V. Moser—deceased; Leon S. Moser—deceased.
5. Grandparents: Maternal: William Vernon Sigman—deceased; Mertie S. Sigman—deceased; Paternal: Thurston Henry Moser—deceased; Sarah Hamlin Moser—deceased.
6. Brother and Spouse: Leon S. Moser, none; Carolyn H. Moser, none.
7. Sisters and Spouses: None.

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*Earl Anthony Wayne, of Maryland, a Career Member of the Senior Foreign Service, Personal Rank of Career Ambassador, to be Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the United States of America to Mexico.

Nominee: Earl Anthony Wayne.

Post: Mexico.

(The following is a list of all members of my immediate family and their spouses. I have asked each of these persons to inform me of the pertinent contributions made by them. To the best of my knowledge, the information contained in this report is complete and accurate.)

Contributions, amount, date, and donee:

1. Self: 0, —, —.
2. Spouse: Pamela: $600.00, June, Oct. '08, Obama for America; $200.00, Oct. '08, Democracy for America; $100.00, Jan. '09, Hillary Clinton Committee.
3. Children and Spouses: Justin A. Wayne, $130.00, Feb., Mar., April '08, Obama for America. Kristen A. Wayne, $75.00, September '08, Obama for America.
4. Parents: Deceased.
5. Grandparents: Deceased.
6. Brothers and Spouses: N/A.
7. Sisters and Spouses: N/A.

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*Arnold A. Chacon, of Virginia, a Career Member of the Senior Foreign Service, Class of Minister-Counselor, to be Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the United States of America to the Republic of Guatemala.

Nominee: Arnold A. Chacon.

Post: Guatemala.

(The following is a list of all members of my immediate family and their spouses. I have asked each of these persons to inform me of the pertinent contributions made by them. To the best of my knowledge, the information contained in this report is complete and accurate.)

Contributions, amount, date, and donee:

1. Self: None.
2. Spouse: None.
3. Children and Spouses: None.
4. Parents: None.
5. Grandparents: None.
6. Brothers and Spouses: John Chacon: $50, 2010, Gary Brown for Detroit City Council. George Chacon: $25/yr., 2008–2010, Colorado Democratic Party. George Chacon: $10, 2008, Hillary for President.
7. Sisters and Spouses: None.

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*Sung Y. Kim, of California, a Career Member of the Senior Foreign Service, Class of Counselor, to be Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the United States of America to the Republic of Korea.

Nominee: Sung Y. Kim.

Post: Republic of Korea.

(The following is a list of all members of my immediate family and their spouses. I have asked each of these persons to inform me of the pertinent contributions made by them. To the best of my knowledge, the information contained in this report is complete and accurate.)

Contributions, amount, date, and donee:

1. Self: None.
2. Spouse: Jae-eun Chung, None.
3. Children and Spouses: Erica Kim, Erin Kim, None.
4. Parents: Hyunja Kim, Kiwan Kim, None.
5. Grandparents: Deceased, None.
6. Brothers and Spouses: Joon Y. Kim, None.

7. Sisters and Spouses: Sunyoung Nosaka, None; Masaki Nosaka, None; Heakyung Park, None; Youngjin Park, None; Induk Song, None; Alan Song, None.

Mr. KERRY. Mr. President, for the Committee on Foreign Relations I report favorably the following nomination lists which were printed in the RECORD on the dates indicated, and ask unanimous consent, to save the expense of reprinting on the Executive Calendar that these nominations lie at the Secretary's desk for the information of Senators.

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

*Foreign Service nominations beginning with Ross Ellis Hagan and ending with Willem H. Brakel, which nominations were received by the Senate and appeared in the Congressional Record on April 8, 2011.

*Foreign Service nominations beginning with Timothy C. Cannon and ending with Mark Jeffrey Hipp, which nominations were received by the Senate and appeared in the Congressional Record on July 11, 2011.

*Nomination was reported with recommendation that it be confirmed subject to the nominee's commitment to respond to requests to appear and testify before any duly constituted committee of the Senate.

INTRODUCTION OF BILLS AND JOINT RESOLUTIONS

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

By Mr. SANDERS (for himself, Mrs. GILLIBRAND, Mr. LEAHY, and Mr. TESTER):

S. 1414. A bill to amend the Food, Conservation, and Energy Act of 2008 to establish a community-supported agriculture promotion program; to the Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry.

By Mr. LAUTENBERG (for himself, Mr. MENENDEZ, Mr. WYDEN, Mr. FRANKEN, Mr. WHITEHOUSE, Mrs. FEINSTEIN, Mr. BROWN of Ohio, Mr. SANDERS, Mr. BLUMENTHAL, Mrs. MURRAY, Mrs. GILLIBRAND, Mr. AKAKA, and Mrs. BOXER):

S. 1415. A bill to establish certain duties for pharmacies to ensure provision of Food and Drug Administration-approved contraception, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions.

By Mr. KERRY (for himself and Mr. FRANKEN):

S. 1416. A bill to amend title XVIII of the Social Security Act to increase the minimum loss ratio required of Medigap policies; to the Committee on Finance.

By Mr. SCHUMER:

S. 1417. A bill to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to modify the credit for qualified fuel cell motor vehicles and to allow the credit for certain off-highway vehicles, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Finance.

By Mr. PRYOR (for himself and Ms. LANDRIEU):

S. 1418. A bill to authorize appropriations for grants to the States participating in the Emergency Management Assistance Compact, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs.

By Ms. KLOBUCHAR (for herself, Mr. UDALL of New Mexico, and Mrs. SHAHEEN):

S. 1419. A bill to prevent the use of stored value cards and other electronic fund access means as methods for currency smuggling or money laundering; to the Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs.

By Mr. TOOMEY (for himself, Mr. VITTER, Mr. PAUL, Mr. RUBIO, Mr. LEE, Mr. RISCH, Mr. DEMINT, Mr. HOEVEN, Mr. COATS, Mr. BARRASSO, Mr. BOOZMAN, Mr. CHAMBLISS, Mr. COBURN, Mr. CORNYN, Mr. CRAPO, Mr. ENZI, Mr. GRAHAM, Mr. GRASSLEY, Mr. HATCH, Mr. HELLER, Mrs. HUTCHISON, Mr. INHOFE, Mr. JOHANNS, Mr. JOHNSON of Wisconsin, Mr. KIRK, Mr. LUGAR, Mr. MORAN, Mr. ROBERTS, Mr. WICKER, Ms. AYOTTE, Mr. ISAKSON, Mr. BLUNT, and Mr. CORKER):

S. 1420. A bill to require that the United States Government prioritize all obligations on the debt held by the public, Social Security benefits, and military pay in the event that the debt limit is reached, and for other purposes; read the first time.

By Mr. PORTMAN (for himself and Mr. UDALL of Colorado):

S. 1421. A bill to authorize the Peace Corps Commemorative Foundation to establish a commemorative work in the District of Columbia and its environs, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Energy and Natural Resources.

SUBMISSION OF CONCURRENT AND SENATE RESOLUTIONS

The following concurrent resolutions and Senate resolutions were read, and referred (or acted upon), as indicated:

By Mr. MENENDEZ:

S. Res. 238. A resolution designating the third week in January 2012 as ''Teen Cancer Awareness Week''; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

By Mr. AKAKA (for himself and Mr. INOUYE):

S. Res. 239. A resolution acknowledging the contributions and sacrifices of the young men who served as colonists on behalf of the United States in the Federal occupation of the islands of Howland, Baker, Jarvis, Canton, and Enderbury from 1935 through 1942, facilitating the United States claim of jurisdiction over such islands; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

ADDITIONAL COSPONSORS

S. 260

At the request of Mr. THUNE, his name was added as a cosponsor of S. 260, a bill to amend title 10, United States Code, to repeal the requirement for reduction of survivor annuities under the Survivor Benefit Plan by veterans' dependency and indemnity compensation.

S. 510

At the request of Mr. UDALL of New Mexico, the name of the Senator from New Jersey (Mr. LAUTENBERG) was added as a cosponsor of S. 510, a bill to prevent drunk driving injuries and fatalities, and for other purposes.

S. 539

At the request of Mr. WHITEHOUSE, the name of the Senator from Pennsylvania (Mr. CASEY) was added as a cosponsor of S. 539, a bill to amend the Public Health Services Act and the Social Security Act to extend health information technology assistance eligibility to behavioral health, mental health, and substance abuse professionals and facilities, and for other purposes.

S. 866

At the request of Mr. THUNE, his name was added as a cosponsor of S. 866, a bill to amend title 10, United States Code, to modify the per-fiscal year calculation of days of certain active duty or active service used to reduce the minimum age at which a member of a reserve component of the uniformed services may retire for nonregular service.

S. 951

At the request of Mrs. MURRAY, the name of the Senator from New York (Mrs. GILLIBRAND) was added as a cosponsor of S. 951, a bill to improve the provision of Federal transition, rehabilitation, vocational, and unemployment benefits to members of the Armed Forces and veterans, and for other purposes.

S. 968

At the request of Mr. LEAHY, the name of the Senator from Arizona (Mr. MCCAIN) was added as a cosponsor of S. 968, a bill to prevent online threats to economic creativity and theft of intellectual property, and for other purposes.

S. 1025

At the request of Mr. LEAHY, the name of the Senator from Missouri (Mr. BLUNT) was added as a cosponsor of S. 1025, a bill to amend title 10, United States Code, to enhance the national defense through empowerment of the National Guard, enhancement of the functions of the National Guard Bureau, and improvement of Federal-State military coordination in domestic emergency response, and for other purposes.

S. 1034

At the request of Mr. SCHUMER, the name of the Senator from California (Mrs. BOXER) was added as a cosponsor of S. 1034, a bill to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to equalize the exclusion from gross income of parking and transportation fringe benefits and to provide for a common cost-of-living adjustment, and for other purposes.

S. 1048

At the request of Mr. MENENDEZ, the name of the Senator from Mississippi (Mr. COCHRAN) was added as a cosponsor of S. 1048, a bill to expand sanctions imposed with respect to the Islamic Republic of Iran, North Korea, and Syria, and for other purposes.

S. 1131

At the request of Mrs. HAGAN, the name of the Senator from California (Mrs. FEINSTEIN) was added as a cosponsor of S. 1131, a bill to authorize the Secretary of Health and Human Services, acting through the Director of the Centers for Disease Control and

Prevention, to establish and implement a birth defects prevention, risk reduction, and public awareness program.

S. 1167

At the request of Mr. JOHNSON of South Dakota, the name of the Senator from Hawaii (Mr. INOUYE) was added as a cosponsor of S. 1167, a bill to amend the Public Health Service Act to improve the diagnosis and treatment of hereditary hemorrhagic telangiectasia, and for other purposes.

S. 1280

At the request of Mr. ISAKSON, the names of the Senator from Ohio (Mr. BROWN), the Senator from Pennsylvania (Mr. CASEY), the Senator from New York (Mrs. GILLIBRAND), the Senator from Missouri (Mrs. MCCASKILL) and the Senator from Oregon (Mr. MERKLEY) were added as cosponsors of S. 1280, a bill to amend the Peace Corps Act to require sexual assault risk-reduction and response training, and the development of sexual assault protocol and guidelines, the establishment of victims advocates, the establishment of a Sexual Assault Advisory Council, and for other purposes.

S. 1350

At the request of Mr. COONS, the name of the Senator from Minnesota (Mr. FRANKEN) was added as a cosponsor of S. 1350, a bill to expand the research, prevention, and awareness activities of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and the National Institutes of Health with respect to pulmonary fibrosis, and for other purposes.

S. 1359

At the request of Mr. TESTER, the name of the Senator from Hawaii (Mr. INOUYE) was added as a cosponsor of S. 1359, a bill to make the National Parks and Federal Recreation Lands Pass available at a discount to members of the Armed Forces and veterans.

S. 1385

At the request of Mr. VITTER, the name of the Senator from Alaska (Mr. BEGICH) was added as a cosponsor of S. 1385, a bill to terminate the $1 presidential coin program.

S. 1395

At the request of Mr. BARRASSO, the name of the Senator from Georgia (Mr. CHAMBLISS) was added as a cosponsor of S. 1395, a bill to ensure that all Americans have access to waivers from the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act.

S. RES. 175

At the request of Mrs. SHAHEEN, the name of the Senator from Delaware (Mr. COONS) was added as a cosponsor of S. Res. 175, a resolution expressing the sense of the Senate with respect to ongoing violations of the territorial integrity and sovereignty of Georgia and the importance of a peaceful and just resolution to the conflict within Georgia's internationally recognized borders.

S. RES. 185

At the request of Mr. ROCKEFELLER, his name was added as a cosponsor of S. Res. 185, a resolution reaffirming the commitment of the United States to a negotiated settlement of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict through direct Israeli-Palestinian negotiations, reaffirming opposition to the inclusion of Hamas in a unity government unless it is willing to accept peace with Israel and renounce violence, and declaring that Palestinian efforts to gain recognition of a state outside direct negotiations demonstrates absence of a good faith commitment to peace negotiations, and will have implications for continued United States aid.

S. RES. 216

At the request of Mrs. BOXER, the names of the Senator from Maryland (Mr. CARDIN), the Senator from Louisiana (Ms. LANDRIEU) and the Senator from Delaware (Mr. COONS) were added as cosponsors of S. Res. 216, a resolution encouraging women's political participation in Saudi Arabia.

STATEMENTS ON INTRODUCED BILLS AND JOINT RESOLUTIONS

By Mr. KERRY (for himself and Mr. FRANKEN):

S. 1416. A bill to amend title XVIII of the Social Security Act to increase the minimum loss ratio required of Medigap policies; to the Committee on Finance.

Mr. KERRY. Mr. President, the Affordable Care Act helped to ensure that insurance companies spend a substantial portion of premium dollars on medical care and health care quality improvement, rather than on administrative costs and profits. However, due to remaining discrepancies not all Medicare beneficiaries are afforded the same protection under the law.

Medical loss ratios make the insurance marketplace more transparent and make it easier for consumers to purchase plans that provide better value for their money. Beginning this year, the medical loss ratio provision in the Affordable Care Act requires insurance policies sold in the individual and small group markets to spend 80 percent of premium dollars on medical care. Policies sold in the large group market are required to spend 85 percent of premium dollars on medical care. Insurance companies that fail to meet this standard are required to provide a rebate to their customers beginning in 2012.

The Affordable Care Act also required Medicare Advantage plans to spend 85 percent of premium dollars on medical care starting in 2014 or they would be required to refund the difference to the Federal Government.

Compared to most other insurance products, Medigap policies now have lower statutory minimums for the percentage of premium dollars that must be spent on medical care. Under current law, Medigap policies must meet a minimum medical loss ratio of 65 percent in the individual market and 75 percent in the group market.

In 1990, Congress first passed legislation standardizing Medigap policies and instituting minimum MLR standards in reaction to evidence of widespread sale of duplicative policies with high overhead. Today, more than 9 million Medicare beneficiaries purchase private supplemental Medigap policies to help cover cost sharing and deductibles in traditional Medicare.

The Medigap Medical Loss Ratio Improvement Act updates the MLR standards for Medigap insurers, increasing the percentages to levels put forth in health reform for other products. Specifically, it will raise the MLR from 65 percent to 80 percent in the individual market and from 75 percent to 85 percent in the group marketplace. To give insurers time to prepare for this change, it would not become effective until 2014.

This legislation is endorsed by organizations representing millions of senior citizens and consumers of all ages, including: AARP, AFSCME, Alliance of Retired Americans, Center for Medicare Advocacy, Community Catalyst, Families USA, Health Care for America Now, Medicare Rights Center, National Council on Aging, and the National Senior Citizens Law Center.

In endorsing the bill, AARP highlights that, ''AARP supports this change because it will provide greater transparency and accountability for expenditures made by health insurance issuers, and encourage them to become more efficient in their operations to help ensure that consumers receive fair value for their premium dollars.''

The reforms in this bill would ensure that Medigap enrollees receive the same value for their premium dollars that is afforded to every other American family. I look forward to working with my colleagues in the Senate to pass this legislation.

SUBMITTED RESOLUTIONS

SENATE RESOLUTION 238—DESIGNATING THE THIRD WEEK IN JANUARY 2012 AS ''TEEN CANCER AWARENESS WEEK''

Mr. MENENDEZ submitted the following resolution; which was referred to the Committee on the Judiciary:

S. RES. 238

Whereas cancer among adolescents is rare, but is still the leading cause of death from disease in teenagers between 15 and 19 years of age;

Whereas teen cancer patients receive treatment at a number of different medical establishments, including pediatric hospitals, pediatric oncology centers, and adult cancer facilities;

Whereas teen cancer patients may feel out of place in any of these settings if their clinical and psychosocial needs are not met;

Whereas 40 percent of cancer patients aged 14 and younger are enrolled in clinical trials, compared with only 9 percent of cancer patients between the ages of 15 and 24;

Whereas teens with cancer have unique concerns about their education, social lives, body image, and infertility, among other concerns, and their needs may be misunderstood or unacknowledged;

Whereas many adolescent cancer survivors have difficulty readjusting to school and social settings, and experience anxiety, and in some cases face increased learning difficulties; and

Whereas there exists an undeniable need not only to understand the biological and clinical needs of teens with cancer, and to seek the prevention of cancer in teens, but also to increase awareness in the larger community about the unique challenges facing teens with cancer: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the Senate designates the third week in January 2012 as ''Teen Cancer Awareness Week'' in order to promote awareness about teen cancers and the unique medical and social needs of teens with cancer.

SENATE RESOLUTION 239—ACKNOWLEDGING THE CONTRIBUTIONS AND SACRIFICES OF THE YOUNG MEN WHO SERVED AS COLONISTS ON BEHALF OF THE UNITED STATES IN THE FEDERAL OCCUPATION OF THE ISLANDS OF HOWLAND, BAKER, JARVIS, CANTON, AND ENDERBURY FROM 1935 THROUGH 1942, FACILITATING THE UNITED STATES CLAIM OF JURISDICTION OVER SUCH ISLANDS

Mr. AKAKA (for himself and Mr. INOUYE) submitted the following resolution; which was referred to the Committee on the Judiciary:

S. RES. 239

Whereas in the mid-19th century, the Guano Islands Act (48 U.S.C. 1411 et seq.) enabled companies from the United States to mine guano from a number of islands in the Equatorial Pacific;

Whereas after several decades, when the guano was depleted, such companies abandoned mining activities, leaving the islands open to British exploitation;

Whereas in the 1930s, military and commercial interest in Central Pacific air routes between Australia and California led to a desire by the United States to claim the islands of Howland, Baker, and Jarvis, although the ownership of such islands was unclear;

Whereas in 1935, a secret Department of Commerce colonization plan was instituted, aimed at placing citizens of the United States as colonists on the remote islands of Howland, Baker, and Jarvis;

Whereas to avoid conflicts with international law, which prevented colonization by active military personnel, the United States sought the participation of furloughed military personnel and Native Hawaiian civilians in the colonization project;

Whereas William T. Miller, Superintendent of Airways at the Department of Commerce, was appointed to lead the colonization project, traveled to Hawaii in February 1935, met with Albert F. Judd, Trustee of Kamehameha Schools and the Bishop Museum, and agreed that recent graduates and students of the Kamehameha School for Boys would make ideal colonists for the project;

Whereas the ideal Hawaiian candidates were candidates who could ''fish in the native manner, swim excellently, handle a boat, be disciplined, friendly, and unattached'';

Whereas on March 30, 1935, the United States Coast Guard Cutter Itasca departed from Honolulu Harbor in great secrecy with 6 young Hawaiians aboard, all recent graduates of Kamehameha Schools, and 12 furloughed army personnel, whose purpose was to occupy the barren islands of Howland, Baker, and Jarvis in teams of 5 for 3 months;

Whereas in June 1935, after a successful first tour, the furloughed army personnel were ordered off the islands and replaced with additional Kamehameha Schools alumni, thus leaving the islands under the exclusive occupation of the 4 Native Hawaiians on each island;

Whereas the duties of the colonists while on the island were to record weather conditions, cultivate plants, maintain a daily log, record the types of fish that were caught, observe bird life, and collect specimens for the Bishop Museum;

Whereas the successful year-long occupation by the colonists directly enabled President Franklin D. Roosevelt to issue Executive Order 7368 on May 13, 1936, which proclaimed that the islands of Howland, Baker, and Jarvis were under the jurisdiction of the United States;

Whereas multiple Federal agencies vied for the right to administer the colonization project, including the Department of Commerce, the Department of the Interior, and the Navy Department, but jurisdiction was ultimately granted to the Department of the Interior;

Whereas under the Department of the Interior, the colonization project emphasized weather data and radio communication, which brought about the recruitment of a number of Asian radiomen and aerologists;

Whereas under the Department of the Interior, the colonization project also expanded beyond the Kamehameha Schools to include Hawaiians and non-Hawaiians from other schools in Hawaii;

Whereas in 1937, in preparation for Amelia Earhart's arrival on Howland island, the colonists constructed a landing field, readied a shower and bedroom for her, and prepared a performance for her, but she never arrived, having disappearing en route to the island on July 2, 1937;

Whereas in March of 1938 the United States also claimed and colonized the islands of Canton and Enderbury, maintaining that such colonization was in furtherance of commercial aviation and not for military purposes;

Whereas the risk of living on such remote islands meant that emergency medical care was not less than 5 days away, and such distance proved fatal for Carl Kahalewai, who died on October 8, 1938 en route to Honolulu after his appendix ruptured on Jarvis island;

Whereas other life-threatening injuries occurred, in 1939, when Manuel Pires had appendicitis, and in 1941, when an explosion severely burned Henry Knell and Dominic Zagara;

Whereas in 1940, when the issue of discontinuing the colonization project was raised, the Navy acknowledged that the islands were ''probably worthless to commercial aviation'' but advocated for ''continued occupation'' because the islands could serve as ''bases from a military standpoint'';

Whereas although military interests justified continued occupation of the islands, the colonists were never informed of the true nature of the project, nor were the colonists provided with weapons or any other means of self-defense;

Whereas in June of 1941, when much of Europe was engaged in World War II and Imperial Japan was establishing itself in the Pacific, the Commandant of the 14th Naval District recognized the ''tension in the Western Pacific'' and recommended the evacuation of the colonists, but his request was denied;

Whereas on December 8, 1941, Howland Island was attacked by a fleet of Japanese twin-engine bombers, and such attack killed Hawaiian colonists Joseph Keliihananui and Richard Whaley;

Whereas in the ensuing weeks, Japanese submarine and military aircraft continued to target the islands of Howland, Baker, and Jarvis, jeopardizing the lives of the remaining colonists;

Whereas the United States Government was unaware of the attacks on such islands, and was distracted by the entry of the United States into World War II, which delayed the retrieval of the colonists;

Whereas the 4 colonists from Baker and the 2 remaining colonists from Howland were rescued on January 31, 1942, and the 8 colonists from Jarvis and Enderbury were rescued on February 9, 1942, 2 months after the initial attacks on Howland Island;

Whereas on March 20, 1942, Harold L. Ickes, Secretary of the Interior, sent letters of condolence to the Keliihananui and Whaley families stating that ''[i]n your bereavement it must be considerable satisfaction to know that your brother died in the service of his country,'' and subsequently urged the families to submit claims for compensation;

Whereas in April 1942, the claim of the Keliihananui family was denied because there were no ''qualified dependents'' to submit claims;

Whereas during the 7 years of colonization, more than 130 young men participated in the project, the majority of whom were Hawaiian, and all of whom made numerous sacrifices, endured hardships, and risked their lives to secure and maintain the islands of Howland, Baker, Jarvis, Canton, and Enderbury on behalf of the United States, and 3 young Hawaiian men made the ultimate sacrifice;

Whereas none of the islands, except for Canton, were ever used for commercial aviation, but the islands were used for military purposes;

Whereas in July 1943, a military base was established on Baker Island, and its forces, which numbered over 2,000 members, participated in the Tarawa-Makin operation;

Whereas in 1956, participants of the colonization project established an organization called ''Hui Panala'au'', which was established to preserve the group's fellowship, to provide scholarship assistance, and ''to honor and esteem those who died as colonists of the Equatorial Islands'';

Whereas in 1979, Canton and Enderbury became part of the republic of Kiribati, but the islands of Jarvis, Howland, and Baker still remain possessions of the United States, having been designated as National Wildlife Refuges in 1974;

Whereas three quarters of a century later, the Equatorial Islands colonization project has been nearly forgotten;

Whereas May 13, 2011, marks the 75th anniversary of President Franklin D. Roosevelt's Executive Order proclaiming United States jurisdiction over the islands of Howland, Baker, and Jarvis, islands that remain possessions of the United States; and

Whereas the Federal Government has never fully recognized the accomplishments, contributions, and sacrifices of the colonists, less than 6 of whom are still alive today, and most of whom are in their 90s: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the Senate—

(1) acknowledges the accomplishments and sacrifices of the Hui Panala'au colonists and extends appreciation on behalf of the people of the United States;

(2) acknowledges the local, national, and international significance of the 7-year colonization project, which resulted in the United States extending sovereignty into the Equatorial Pacific;

(3) recognizes and commends the accomplishments, sacrifices, and contributions of the more than 130 young men, the majority

of whom were Native Hawaiian, who participated in the Equatorial Pacific colonization project; and

(4) extends condolences on behalf of the United States to the families of Carl Kahalewai, Joseph Keliihananui, and Richard Whaley for the loss of their loved ones in the service of the United States and apologizes for the lack of compensation afforded to these families.

NOTICE OF HEARING

COMMITTEE ON HEALTH, EDUCATION, LABOR, AND PENSIONS

Mr. HARKIN. Mr. President, I wish to announce that the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions will meet in open session on Tuesday, August 2, 2011, at 10 a.m. in SD–430 to conduct a hearing entitled ''Health Reform and Health Insurance Premiums: Empowering States to Serve Consumers.''

For further information regarding this meeting, please contact Nick Bath of the committee staff on (202) 224–7675.

AUTHORITY FOR COMMITTEES TO MEET

COMMITTEE ON ARMED SERVICES

Mrs. MURRAY. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Committee on Armed Services be authorized to meet during the session of the Senate on July 26, 2011, at 9:30 a.m.

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

COMMITTEE ON BANKING, HOUSING, AND URBAN AFFAIRS

Mrs. Murray. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs be authorized to meet during the session of the Senate on July 26, 2011, at 10 a.m.

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

COMMITTEE ON FINANCE

Mrs. MURRAY. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Committee on Finance be authorized to meet during the session of the Senate on July 26, 2011, at 10 a.m., in room SD–215 of the Dirksen Senate Office Building, to conduct a hearing entitled ''Perspectives on Deficit Reduction: A Review of Key Issues.''

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

COMMITTEE ON FOREIGN RELATIONS

Mrs. MURRAY. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Committee on Foreign Relations be authorized to meet, during the session of the Senate on July 26, 2011, at 2:30 p.m.

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

COMMITTEE ON HEALTH, EDUCATION, LABOR, AND PENSIONS

Mrs. MURRAY. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions be authorized to meet during the session of the Senate, to conduct a hearing entitled ''Building the Ladder of Opportunity: What's Working to Make the American Dream a Reality for Middle Class Families'' on July 26, 2011, at 10 a.m., in room SD–430 of the Dirksen Senate Office Building.

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

AD HOC SUBCOMMITTEE ON CONTRACTION OVERSIGHT

Mrs. MURRAY. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Ad Hoc Subcommittee on Contracting Oversight of the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs be authorized to meet during the session of the Senate on July 26, 2011, at 10 a.m. to conduct a hearing entitled, ''Small Business Contracts: How Oversight Failures and Regulatory Loopholes Allow Large Businesses to Get and Keep Small Business Contracts.''

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

SELECT COMMITTEE ON INTELLIGENCE

Mrs. MURRAY. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Select Committee on Intelligence be authorized to meet during the session of the Senate on July 26, 2011, at 10 a.m.

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

SELECT COMMITTEE ON INTELLIGENCE

Mrs. MURRAY. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Select Committee on Intelligence be authorized to meet during the session of the Senate on July 26, 2011, at 2:30 p.m.

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

SUBCOMMITTEE ON IMMIGRATION, REFUGEES, AND BORDER SECURITY

Mrs. MURRAY. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Committee on the Judiciary, Subcommittee on Immigration, Refugees, and Border Security, be authorized to meet during the session of the Senate, on July 26, 2011, at 10 a.m., in room SD–226 of the Dirksen Senate Office Building, to conduct a hearing entitled ''The Economic Imperative for Enacting Immigration Reform.''

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

SUBCOMMITTEE ON OVERSIGHT OF GOVERNMENT MANAGEMENT, THE FEDERAL WORKFORCE, AND THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA

Mrs. MURRAY. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs' Subcommittee on Oversight of Government Management, the Federal Workforce, and the District of Columbia be authorized to meet during the session of the Senate on July 26, 2011, at 2 p.m. to conduct a hearing entitled ''Examining the Federal Workers' Compensation Program for Injured Employees.''

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

PRIVILEGES OF THE FLOOR

Mr. REID. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that three interns in Senator BINGAMAN's office, Nick Crismali, Rosy Ortega, and Emma Ruben, be granted floor privileges during today's business.

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

CHRISTOPHER S. BOND UNITED STATES COURTHOUSE

Mr. REID. I ask unanimous consent that the Senate proceed to Calendar No. 111, S. 846.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. CASEY). The clerk will report the bill by title.

The legislative clerk read as follows:

A bill (S. 846) to designate the United States Courthouse located at 80 Lafayette Street in Jefferson City, Missouri, as the Christopher S. Bond United States Courthouse.

There being no objection, the Senate proceeded to consider the bill.

Mr. REID. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the bill be read a third time and passed, the motion to reconsider be laid upon the table, and that any statements be printed in the RECORD.

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

The bill (S. 846) was ordered to a third reading, was read the third time, and passed, as follows:

S. 846

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,

SECTION 1. CHRISTOPHER S. BOND UNITED STATES COURTHOUSE.

(a) DESIGNATION.—The United States courthouse located at 80 Lafayette Street in Jefferson City, Missouri, shall be known and designated as the ''Christopher S. Bond United States Courthouse''.

(b) REFERENCES.—Any reference in a law, map, regulation, document, paper, or other record of the United States to the United States courthouse referred to in subsection (a) shall be deemed to be a reference to the ''Christopher S. Bond United States Courthouse''.

Mr. REID. Mr. President, I note that this courthouse is going to be named for our long-term colleague Kit Bond. That is very nice. He is a fine man. He served his State in many different ways. He was a Governor, a very popular Governor. He served as the ranking member of the Intelligence Committee and served admirably.

One thing he and I talked about on a number of occasions, when he was Governor of the State of Missouri, he rescinded an order that had been given by his predecessor, a man by the name of Governor Boggs, as I recall, which was an extermination order against all the Mormons who were in Missouri—extermination meaning to kill them all—and some of them were killed. But they worked their way out of Missouri. But that extermination order remained in effect until Kit Bond came along. Of course, they were not trying to exterminate the Mormons, but as a matter of principle he thought that was the wrong thing to do.

So for that and other reasons, I have fond memories of our friend Kit Bond.

MYRON DONOVAN CROCKER UNITED STATES COURTHOUSE

Mr. REID. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Environment and Public Works Committee be discharged from further consideration of S. 1406 and the Senate proceed to its consideration.

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

The clerk will report the bill by title.

The legislative clerk read as follows:

A bill (S. 1406) to designate the United States Courthouse under construction at 510 19th Street, Bakersfield, California, as the Myron Donovan Crocker United States Courthouse.

There being no objection, the Senate proceeded to consider the bill.

Mr. REID. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the bill be read three times and passed, the motion to reconsider be laid upon the table, with no intervening action or debate, and that any statements be printed in the RECORD.

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

The bill (S. 1406) was ordered to a third reading, was read the third time, and passed, as follows:

S. 1406

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,

SECTION 1. MYRON DONOVAN CROCKER UNITED STATES COURTHOUSE.

(a) DESIGNATION.—The United States courthouse under construction, as of the date of enactment of this Act, at 510 19th Street, Bakersfield, California, shall be known and designated as the ''Myron Donovan Crocker United States Courthouse''.

(b) REFERENCES.—Any reference in a law, map, regulation, document, paper, or other record of the United States to the United States courthouse referred to in subsection (a) shall be deemed to be a reference to the ''Myron Donovan Crocker United States Courthouse''.

MEASURE DISCHARGED AND RETURNED—H.R. 1309

Mr. REID. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that H.R. 1309 be discharged from the Committee on Banking and that it be returned to the House of Representatives pursuant to their message of July 25, 2011, requesting its return.

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

MEASURE READ THE FIRST TIME—S. 1420

Mr. REID. Mr. President, I am told there is a bill at the desk due for its first reading.

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

The legislative clerk read as follows:

A bill (S. 1420) to require that the United States Government prioritize all obligations on the debt held by the public, Social Security benefits, and military pay in the event that the debt limit is reached, and for other purposes.

Mr. REID. Mr. President, I ask for its second reading and, in order to place the bill on the calendar under the provisions of rule XIV, I object to my own request.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Objection is heard. The bill will be read for the second time on the next legislative day.

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

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

ORDERS FOR WEDNESDAY, JULY 27, 2011

Mr. REID. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that when the Senate completes its business today, it adjourn until tomorrow morning at 9:30, July 27; that following the prayer and the pledge, the Journal of proceedings be approved to date, the morning hour be deemed to have expired, the time for the two leaders be reserved for their use later in the day; that following any leader remarks, the Senate be in a period of morning business for an hour, with Senators permitted to speak therein for up to 10 minutes each, with time divided and controlled between the two leaders or their designees, with the Republicans controlling the first half and the majority controlling the final half.

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

ADJOURNMENT UNTIL 9:30 A.M. TOMORROW

Mr. REID. Mr. President, if there is no further business to come before the Senate, I ask unanimous consent that it adjourn under the previous order.

There being no objection, the Senate, at 6:48 p.m., adjourned until Wednesday, July 27, 2011, at 9:30 a.m.

NOMINATIONS

Executive nominations received by the Senate:

DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE

ROBERT S. MUELLER, III, OF CALIFORNIA, TO BE DIRECTOR OF THE FEDERAL BUREAU OF INVESTIGATION FOR A TERM EXPIRING SEPTEMBER 4, 2013. (REAPPOINTMENT)

IN THE AIR FORCE

THE FOLLOWING NAMED OFFICER FOR APPOINTMENT IN THE UNITED STATES AIR FORCE TO THE GRADE INDICATED WHILE ASSIGNED TO A POSITION OF IMPORTANCE AND RESPONSIBILITY UNDER TITLE 10, U.S.C., SECTION 601:

To be lieutenant general

MAJ. GEN. ROBIN RAND

THE FOLLOWING NAMED OFFICER FOR APPOINTMENT IN THE UNITED STATES AIR FORCE TO THE GRADE INDICATED UNDER TITLE 10, U.S.C., SECTION 624:

To be major general

BRIG. GEN. EVERETT H. THOMAS

IN THE ARMY

THE FOLLOWING NAMED OFFICER FOR APPOINTMENT IN THE UNITED STATES ARMY TO THE GRADE INDICATED UNDER TITLE 10, U.S.C., SECTION 624:

To be major general

BRIG. GEN. LYNN A. COLLYAR

THE FOLLOWING ARMY NATIONAL GUARD OF THE UNITED STATES OFFICER FOR APPOINTMENT IN THE RESERVE OF THE ARMY TO THE GRADE INDICATED UNDER TITLE 10, U.S.C., SECTIONS 12203 AND 12211:

To be brigadier general

COL. ROBERT F. THOMAS

THE FOLLOWING ARMY NATIONAL GUARD OF THE UNITED STATES OFFICER FOR APPOINTMENT IN THE RESERVE OF THE ARMY TO THE GRADE INDICATED UNDER TITLE 10, U.S.C., SECTIONS 12203 AND 12211:

To be brigadier general

COL. FRED W. ALLEN

THE FOLLOWING NAMED OFFICERS FOR APPOINTMENT IN THE UNITED STATES ARMY TO THE GRADE INDICATED UNDER TITLE 10, U.S.C., SECTION 624:

To be major general

BRIGADIER GENERAL RALPH O. BAKER
BRIGADIER GENERAL ALLEN W. BATSCHELET
BRIGADIER GENERAL HEIDI V. BROWN
BRIGADIER GENERAL JOHN A. DAVIS
BRIGADIER GENERAL PATRICK J. DONAHUE II
BRIGADIER GENERAL ROBERT S. FERRELL
BRIGADIER GENERAL STEPHEN G. FOGARTY
BRIGADIER GENERAL CHARLES W. HOOPER
BRIGADIER GENERAL PAUL J. LACAMERA
BRIGADIER GENERAL SEAN B. MACFARLAND
BRIGADIER GENERAL KEVIN W. MANGUM
BRIGADIER GENERAL ROGER F. MATHEWS
BRIGADIER GENERAL AUSTIN S. MILLER
BRIGADIER GENERAL CAMILLE M. NICHOLS
BRIGADIER GENERAL JOHN R. O'CONNOR
BRIGADIER GENERAL GUSTAVE F. PERNA
BRIGADIER GENERAL WARREN E. PHIPPS, JR.
BRIGADIER GENERAL GREGG C. POTTER
BRIGADIER GENERAL NANCY LEE S. PRICE
BRIGADIER GENERAL EDWARD M. REEDER, JR.
BRIGADIER GENERAL JEFFOREY A. SMITH
BRIGADIER GENERAL JEFFREY J. SNOW
BRIGADIER GENERAL KENNETH E. TOVO
BRIGADIER GENERAL STEPHEN J. TOWNSEND
BRIGADIER GENERAL THOMAS S. VANDAL
BRIGADIER GENERAL MARK W. YENTER

CONFIRMATIONS

Executive nominations confirmed by the Senate July 26, 2011:

THE JUDICIARY

PAUL A. ENGELMAYER, OF NEW YORK, TO BE UNITED STATES DISTRICT JUDGE FOR THE SOUTHERN DISTRICT OF NEW YORK.

RAMONA VILLAGOMEZ MANGLONA, OF THE NORTHERN MARIANA ISLANDS, TO BE JUDGE FOR THE DISTRICT COURT FOR THE NORTHERN MARIANA ISLANDS FOR A TERM OF TEN YEARS.