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Senate

The Senate met at 10 a.m. and was called to order by the Honorable TOM UDALL, a Senator from the State of New Mexico.

PRAYER

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

Let us pray.

Holy God who inhabits the praises of Your people, look with favor upon us today. Lord, You have been our God from the beginning, so stay close to us and save us from ourselves. In times of tension and strain, keep our lawmakers calm in spirit, clear in mind, and pure in heart. Empower them to perform faithfully and well the duties of their calling. Inspire them with love for You as You give them the wisdom to do justly, to love mercy, and to walk humbly with You.

We pray in Your wonderful Name. Amen.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The Honorable TOM UDALL 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 28, 2011.

To the Senate:

Under the provisions of rule I, paragraph 3, of the Standing Rules of the Senate, I hereby appoint the Honorable TOM UDALL, a Senator from the State of New Mexico, to perform the duties of the chair.

DANIEL K. INOUYE,
President pro tempore.

Mr. UDALL of New Mexico 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. Mr. President, following any leader remarks, the Senate will be in a period of morning business for 1 hour, with the majority controlling the first half and the Republicans controlling the final half.

Following morning business, I will be recognized.

MEASURE PLACED ON THE CALENDAR—H.R. 1938

Mr. REID. Mr. President, H.R. 1938 is due for a second reading, I am told.

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

The legislative clerk read as follows:

A bill (H.R. 1938) to direct the President to expedite the consideration and approval of the construction and operation of the Keystone XL Oil pipeline, and for other purposes.

Mr. REID. Mr. President, I would object to any further proceedings at this time.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Objection having been heard, the bill will be placed on the calendar.

Mr. REID. Mr. President, I suggest the absence of a quorum.

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

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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 President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

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

DEBT CEILING

Mr. REID. Mr. President, we have 5 days remaining until a few extremist Republicans—and note I say ''a few''—drive our economy off a cliff because they are too radical and inexperienced to compromise. Financial experts are begging Congress to come to an agreement that averts a first-ever default on this Nation's financial obligations.

This is what one financial analyst said yesterday about the need to avert a default crisis which would spark a global economic depression.

The market is saying we need a deal. Default is starting to seep into the marketplace.

It will not be long, they say, before our financial markets severely react to continued stubbornness by the tea party Republicans, tanking our economy. Wall Street had a very bad day yesterday—its worst in months—largely based on the news that Congress still has not found a path forward.

That does not only affect big investment banks or wealthy investors; all around the country, ordinary Americans with 401(k)s and college savings accounts lost money yesterday. Their life savings took a hit because a small group of radical Republicans who do not represent mainstream Americans have refused to move even 1 inch toward compromise.

Yesterday's bad economic news should be a sign to those Republicans who deny reality. Default will rock our financial system to its core. Many reasonable Republicans realize time is running out. They have urged their colleagues to compromise.

Yesterday on the Senate floor, JOHN MCCAIN, the Republican senior Senator from Arizona and President Obama's opponent in the last Presidential election, asked his own party to return to reality. It ''is not fair to the American people to hold out and say we won't agree to raising the debt limit. . . . ''

He called the radical Republican approach—saying up is down and denying

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

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the sky is blue—''unfair'' and ''bizarro.'' Those are quotes from JOHN MCCAIN. He further said:

It's time we listened to the markets. It's time we listened to the American people and sit down and seriously negotiate.

He was talking to his fellow Republicans and, in particular, to a tea party that does not seem to realize Republicans control only one-half of one branch of government. That faction of the Republican Party is holding our economy hostage. That is an understatement.

My counterpart, Senator MCCONNELL, also urged a return to reason.

We cannot get a perfect solution, from my point of view, controlling only the House of Representatives. So I'm prepared to accept something less than perfect because perfect is not achievable.

That is from Senator MITCH MCCONNELL. Both sides know neither side will get everything it wants. That does not mean we should not come together to find a compromise that gives each side something it needs. Republicans have drawn the line at ending wasteful tax breaks for corporate jet owners and oil companies making record profits. They have vowed to protect corporate welfare at taxpayer expense. Democrats have vowed to protect senior citizens who rely on Social Security and Medicare benefits. We will not allow them to suffer while Republicans protect tax breaks for billionaires.

The compromise plan we are considering in the Senate protects both of these priorities—both parties' priorities. Whether one agrees with the priorities, the legislation I have on the floor in the form of an amendment protects those priorities—Democratic priorities and Republican priorities.

Unfortunately, in a concession to Republicans, we did not ask millionaires and billionaires to contribute their fair share. We would have loved to have done it. But the line has been drawn by the Republicans and we followed that. But it does protect seniors who Republicans insist should feel the pain.

It would also avert a default crisis while cutting $2.5 trillion from the deficit. That is twice as much as the Boehner plan. Yet House Republicans refuse to support the Senate compromise. I am happy to talk to any of my Republican colleagues—I have talked to several of them, I am happy to continue that—to listen to reasonable suggestions to make the Senate compromise legislation even better. That would require tea party Republicans to admit ''compromise'' is not a bad word.

Legislation is the art of compromise, and they need to learn that. A significant number of House Republicans said their party would rather see this Nation default on its financial obligations than cooperate with Democrats. That says it all. It is hard to comprehend that, but there has been a spate of these Members of the House of Representatives who have said they would rather see the Nation default on its financial obligations than cooperate.

This kind of thinking has been roundly rejected by the American people. Nearly three-quarters of Americans want Congress to compromise, even if neither side gets everything it wants. The American people know we cannot get everything we want.

This thinking has also been rejected by reasonable Republicans. I had the good fortune of serving with the very famous American, Fred Thompson from Tennessee. He was famous before he got here. He is a movie actor. He served in the Senate admirably and went back to do his acting. Former Senator Fred Thompson—by the way, he is a Republican—urged members of his own party in an open letter to the House GOP to recognize a good deal when they see it. That is what he said. ''I respectfully suggest that you rake in your chips, stuff them in your pockets, and go home.''

The proposal on the table would cut the deficit by $2.5 trillion. If their goal is to rein in spending, they already won. That is what Fred Thompson said: ''If their goal is to rein in spending, they've already won.'' Declare victory and leave. Republicans should know—this is Fred Thompson—''when to take their chips and walk away.''

American writer Elbert Hubbard said, ''It is easy to get everything you want, provided you first learn to do without the things you cannot get.'' That is what this is all about. ''It is easy to get everything you want, provided you first learn to do without the things you cannot get.''

There are things that either side cannot get. Accept that and move on. Republicans cannot get the short-term Band-Aid they will vote on in the House today. It will not get one Democratic vote in the Senate. All 53 members of the Senate Democratic caucus wrote to the Speaker last night—the letter was hand-delivered to him—to tell him why we will not vote for it.

The economy needs more certainty than the Speaker's proposal would provide. We must not be back in 6 weeks doing the same thing I have been involved in for 7 or 8 months. We do not need to do that. Washington has been locked down with this debt crisis debate. The White House is not doing all they need to do. We are not doing the things we need to do. We cannot come back to this in just a few short weeks. That is what would happen.

We must not be back here in 6 weeks or 6 months debating whether to allow our Nation to default on its financial obligations for the Republican right-wing that seems to be controlling so much of what they are doing in the House.

It would be easy for Republicans to get nearly everything they want if only they embraced the Senate's true compromise plan and stop, as Senator MCCAIN put it, deceiving the American people—his words not mine.

The question remains, will my Republican colleagues be wise enough to end this stalemate?

SMALL BUSINESS PROGRAM EXTENSION AND REFORM ACT OF 2011

Mr. REID. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate proceed to the consideration of H.R. 2608.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The clerk will report the bill by title.

The legislative clerk read as follows:

A bill (H.R. 2608) to provide for an additional temporary extension of programs under the Small Business Act and the Small Business Investment Act of 1958, and for other purposes.

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

Mr. REID. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that a Landrieu substitute amendment which is at the desk be agreed to, the bill, as amended, be read a third time and passed, and the motion to reconsider be laid upon the table, with no intervening action or debate, and any statements be printed in the RECORD.

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

The amendment (No. 588) was agreed to, as follows:

(Purpose: In the nature of a substitute)

Strike all after the enacting clause and insert the following:

SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.

This Act may be cited as the ''Small Business Program Extension and Reform Act of 2011''.

SEC. 2. ADDITIONAL TEMPORARY EXTENSION OF AUTHORIZATION OF PROGRAMS UNDER THE SMALL BUSINESS ACT AND THE SMALL BUSINESS INVESTMENT ACT OF 1958.

(a) IN GENERAL.—Section 1 of the Act entitled ''An Act to extend temporarily certain authorities of the Small Business Administration'', approved October 10, 2006 (Public Law 109–316; 120 Stat. 1742), as most recently amended by section 2 of the Small Business Additional Temporary Extension Act of 2011 (Public Law 112–17; 125 Stat. 221), is amended by striking ''July 31, 2011'' each place it appears and inserting ''July 31, 2012''.

(b) EFFECTIVE DATE.—The amendments made by subsection (a) shall take effect on July 30, 2011.

SEC. 3. REPEALS AND OTHER TERMINATIONS.

(a) GENERAL PROVISIONS.—

(1) EFFECTIVE DATE.—A repeal or other termination of a provision of law made by this section shall take effect on October 1, 2011.

(2) RULE.—Nothing in this section shall affect any grant or assistance provided, contract or cooperative agreement entered into, or loan made or guaranteed before October 1, 2011 under a provision of law repealed or otherwise terminated by this section and any such grant, assistance, contract, cooperative agreement, or loan shall be subject to the applicable repealed or otherwise terminated provision, as in effect on September 30, 2011.

(3) APPLICABILITY OF TEMPORARY EXTENSIONS.—A repeal or other termination of a provision of law made by this section shall have effect notwithstanding any temporary extension of programs, authority, or provisions under the Act entitled ''An Act to extend temporarily certain authorities of the Small Business Administration'', approved October 10, 2006 (Public Law 109–316; 120 Stat. 1742).

(4) DEFICIT REDUCTION.—Any savings resulting from this Act and the amendments

made by this Act shall be returned to the Treasury for deficit reduction.

(b) POLLUTION CONTROL LOANS.—Paragraph (12) of section 7(a) of the Small Business Act (15 U.S.C. 636(a)) is amended—

(1) by striking ''(A) The Administration'' and inserting ''The Administration''; and

(2) by striking ''research and development'' and all that follows and inserting ''research and development.''.

(c) SMALL BUSINESS INSTITUTE.—Subparagraph (E) of section 8(b)(1) of the Small Business Act (15 U.S.C. 637(b)(1)) is repealed.

(d) DRUG-FREE WORKPLACE GRANTS.—Paragraph (3) of section 21(c) of the Small Business Act (15 U.S.C. 648(c)) is amended—

(1) in subparagraph (R) by adding ''and'' at the end;

(2) in subparagraph (S) by striking ''; and'' and inserting a period; and

(3) by striking subparagraph (T).

(e) CENTRAL EUROPEAN SMALL BUSINESS ENTERPRISE DEVELOPMENT COMMISSION.—Section 25 of the Small Business Act (15 U.S.C. 652) is repealed.

(f) PAUL D. COVERDELL DRUG-FREE WORKPLACE PROGRAM.—Section 27 of the Small Business Act (15 U.S.C. 654) is repealed.

(g) PILOT TECHNOLOGY ACCESS PROGRAM.—Section 28 of the Small Business Act (15 U.S.C. 655) is repealed.

(h) NATIONAL VETERANS BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—Section 33 of the Small Business Act (15 U.S.C. 657c) is repealed.

(2) CORPORATION.—Beginning on the date of enactment of this Act, the National Veterans Business Development Corporation and any successor thereto may not represent that the corporation is federally chartered or in any other manner authorized by the Federal Government.

(i) LEASE GUARANTEES AND POLLUTION CONTROL.—Part A of title IV of the Small Business Investment Act of 1958 (15 U.S.C. 692 et seq.) is repealed.

(j) ALTERNATIVE LOSS RESERVE.—Paragraph (7) of section 508(c) of the Small Business Investment Act of 1958 (15 U.S.C. 697e(c)) is repealed.

(k) SMALL BUSINESS TELECOMMUTING PILOT PROGRAM.—Subsection (d) of section 1203 of the Energy Independence and Security Act of 2007 (15 U.S.C. 657h) is repealed.

(l) TECHNICAL AND CONFORMING AMENDMENTS.—

(1) SMALL BUSINESS INVESTMENT ACT OF 1958.—Section 411(i) of the Small Business Investment Act of 1958 (15 U.S.C. 694b(i)) is amended to read as follows:

''(i) Without limiting the authority conferred upon the Administrator and the Administration by section 201 of this Act, the Administrator and the Administration shall have, in the performance of and with respect to the functions, powers, and duties conferred by this part, all the authority and be subject to the same conditions prescribed in section 5(b) of the Small Business Act with respect to loans, including the authority to execute subleases, assignments of lease and new leases with any person, firm, organization, or other entity, in order to aid in the liquidation of obligations of the Administration hereunder.''.

(2) TITLE 10.—Section 1142(b)(13) of title 10, United States Code, is amended by striking ''and the National Veterans Business Development Corporation''.

(3) TITLE 38.—Subsection (h) of section 3452 of title 38, United States Code, is amended by striking ''any of the'' and all that follows and inserting ''any small business development center described in section 21 of the Small Business Act (15 U.S.C. 648), insofar as such center offers, sponsors, or cosponsors an entrepreneurship course, as that term is defined in section 3675(c)(2).''.

(4) VETERANS ENTREPRENEURSHIP AND SMALL BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT ACT OF 1999.—Section 203(c)(5) of the Veterans Entrepreneurship and Small Business Development Act of 1999 (15 U.S.C. 657b note) is amended by striking ''In cooperation with the National Veterans Business Development Corporation, develop'' and inserting ''Develop''.

SEC. 4. TERMINATION OF EMERGING LEADERS PROGRAM.

Notwithstanding any other provision of law, effective October 1, 2011, the Administrator of the Small Business Administration may not carry out or otherwise support the program referred to as ''Emerging Leaders'' in the document of the Small Business Administration titled ''FY 2012 Congressional Budget Justification and FY 2010 Annual Performance Report'' (or any predecessor or successor document).

The amendment was ordered to be engrossed and the bill to be read a third time.

The bill (H.R. 2608), as amended, was read the third time and passed.

ORDER OF PROCEDURE

Mr. REID. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the period of morning business be extended until 5 p.m., with Senators permitted to speak for up to 10 minutes each; further, that at 5 p.m. I be recognized.

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

RECOGNITION OF THE MINORITY LEADER

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

DEBT CEILING

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, the clock is ticking. In just a few days, the U.S. Government will no longer have the ability to borrow money to pay its bills—a situation the President and his advisers said would trigger an economic Armageddon.

I was shocked last night when 53 Senate Democrats issued a letter saying they intend to vote against the only piece of legislation that has any chance of preventing all this from happening. Even more shocking is the fact that Democratic leaders and the President himself have endorsed every feature of this legislation except one, and that is the fact that it doesn't allow the President to avoid another national debate about spending and debt until after the next Presidential election. Every other feature of the House bill was essentially agreed to earlier except for one—the President wants to avoid having another discussion about deficit and debt before the election. This assurance is the only thing the President and Senate Democrats are holding out for right now.

The Democrats can try to justify their opposition to the House bill any way they want. They can claim they are worried about a stalemate 6 months from now. They can ignore the fact that of the 31 times Congress and the President have raised the debt limit over the past 25 years, 22 of those debt limit increases lasted less than a year. President Reagan, in 1984, signed three bills in the course of his election year that raised the debt ceiling. It was not unusual. In fact, what is unusual is to ask for $2.7 trillion in debt limit increase. That is unusual. That is unprecedented.

So what is worse, a default now or a potential default 6 months down the road? Because if those 53 Senate Democrats follow through on their threat to filibuster the House bill, that is what they will be doing—ensuring default now rather than working with us to prevent it later. Why would you want to do that? The answer is, to make the President's reelection campaign a little bit easier.

It is inconceivable to me that the President would actually follow through on this threat. After all, the President's first responsibility is to do what is best for the country, not his reelection campaign. The same goes for our friends on the other side of the aisle. It is inconceivable to me that they would actually block the only bill that would get through the House of Representatives and prevent a default right now. Inconceivable. It is inconceivable to me that they would do this for no other reason than to help the President avoid having another debate before the election about the need for Washington to get its fiscal house in order. But that is precisely what we may be headed for this weekend—guaranteed default or a bill that takes the specter of a default off the table, while giving us another opportunity to address the very deficits and debts that caused this crisis in the first place.

Senate Democrats are playing with fire, and it is hard to conclude they are doing it for any other reason than politics. So I urge our friends on the other side of the aisle this morning to rethink their position and join Republicans in preventing default.

RESERVATION OF LEADER TIME

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

MORNING BUSINESS

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Under the previous order, the Senate will be in a period of morning business for 1 hour, 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 half and the Republicans controlling the final half.

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, I suggest the absence of a quorum.

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

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

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

DEBT CEILING

Mr. HOEVEN. Mr. President, I rise this morning to speak to the need to come to an agreement. We need to come to an agreement on how we handle the debt ceiling. We need to come to agreement on addressing our Nation's deficit and debt.

Let us review where we are right now. If you look at our fiscal situation, right now the Federal Government takes in revenues on an annual basis of $2.2 trillion—$2.2 trillion—a year, but at the same time we are spending $3.7 trillion. That is a shortfall, or a deficit, of more than $1.5 trillion a year.

I look at these young people here in this Chamber—these great pages from all over the country—and I think about what that means not only for us today—for our economy, for our standing in the world, for the security of our country—but I think about what it means for future generations. What is it we leave them? Do we leave them a country that was founded on the concept of freedom and liberty, that people could pursue life on their own terms, raise their families the way they wanted to raise their families, live the way they wanted to live, do the work they wanted to do, have an opportunity to start a business, to build a life, and be successful and pass something of value on to their children?

I think that is what we all want. That is the Nation we have—the Nation we have had for over 200 years. That is the Nation we want to pass on to these great young people.

So we have had tremendous debate for an extended period of time—for a long time. Many good ideas have been brought forth by both sides of the aisle, by Republicans and by Democrats, on how we should address this debt ceiling agreement, how we should address the deficit and the debt. Nobody has the corner on good ideas. There have been many good ideas brought forward, but now is the time we have to realize we have to come to agreement. The American people want us to come to an agreement.

Today the House is considering the Budget Control Act of 2011, referred to as the Boehner proposal, and they are over there working on it right now. As with any agreement, somebody can certainly find something to criticize. That is always true. No agreement is perfect. But it does represent many of the ideas that both sides have brought forward as a way to come to agreement on this debt ceiling and, more importantly, as a way to start to get our fiscal house back in order. Let's talk about it for just a minute.

Under the proposal, first there would be a reduction in spending, a savings of more than $900 billion, and that would also provide for a $900 billion increase in the debt ceiling to get us past this immediate issue. Then, at the same time, it appoints a committee—not a commission but a committee—of Senators and Representatives, 12 members—6 Senators, 3 Republican, 3 Democrat; 6 House Members, 3 Republican, 3 Democrat—who are required to find at least another $1.8 trillion in savings. Those savings have to be found before there is another increase in the debt ceiling.

That is the right way to do things. That is getting the horse in front of the cart, not the reverse. So they have to find those savings in a bipartisan way, and they have to bring those concepts back to the House and to the Senate, and the House and the Senate will have a straight up-or-down vote—the elected representatives of the people doing their job for the people in an open and transparent way.

Think about this committee for a minute. Again, there are 12 members: 6 Republicans, 6 Democrats; 6 Senators, 6 Members of the House. They can bring forward all of these great ideas that have been debated in recent months. They can bring forward ideas from the Simpson-Bowles Commission that have gained support. They can bring forward ideas from the Gang of 6 that people believe are meritorious. They can bring forward ideas for savings. They can bring ideas forward for reform. They can bring ideas forward for tax reform that don't raise taxes but actually eliminate loopholes, reduce rates, create a progrowth environment, and the revenues come from a growing economy, not from higher taxes. They can come forward with all of these ideas and more.

But the important point is they must come forward by November with $1.8 trillion in savings to help get us back on the right path, the right path to good fiscal management. The debt ceiling is not increased in that second step until they do. That is making sure we fulfill our responsibility and do things in the right order.

Then this bill also provides that we have a vote on a balanced budget amendment, and that vote on the balanced budget amendment must be sometime between October 1 and the end of the year. Myself and others have cosponsored a balanced budget amendment, and I strongly believe that is what we need.

I understand there are differences of opinion, but when we look at the situation we recognize we need that fiscal discipline in Washington, DC. If we just think about it for a minute, a balanced budget amendment, how does it work? Well, it works in a way that gets everybody involved, not just in Washington, DC, but throughout this great Nation—because what are we doing? By passing a balanced budget amendment in the Congress, which we have to do with two-thirds of the Senate and two-thirds of the House, what we are doing is starting that balanced budget amendment on its way traveling throughout this country and saying to the people of this good country: What do you want to do?

Why not ask the people? That is how our democracy works. Why not ask them: Do you want to make sure we have a balanced budget that requires Congress to see that, year in and year out, we are living within our means?

Forty-nine States have either a constitutional or statutory requirement to balance their budget to live within their means. Cities do, counties, families, businesses. Since three-fourths of the States would have to ratify that balanced budget amendment as well, we say to them: Look, we think we need a balanced budget, and we are going to make sure you have an opportunity to say what you think. I believe that is exactly what we should do.

I bring experience as a Governor. I served as a Governor for 10 years, and we were required to balance our budget every single year. We went to the people and we talked to them.

We said: Here is the plan. We don't have the dollars right now to fund all the things you want. This was back in 2000–2002 when we actually had to reduce our budget, make reductions across the board. We said: But do you know what we are going to do? We are going to make sure we live within our means and we create a progrowth environment, legal taxes and regulatory certainty that will enable business expansion, business growth, entrepreneurship, private investment, and get this economy growing, get jobs, get economic growth. Then with that growth we will make sure each year we fund our priorities; that we set some aside, some reserve aside for a rainy day, and that we do our best to continue to reduce the tax burden on our hard-working citizens. It doesn't happen in a week, it doesn't happen in a month, a year, or 2 years. It takes time to build to the position that you want. But we can do it. We have done it before.

If we look at the late 1980s, coming out of the stagflation of the 1970s and the early 1980s, in the late 1980s we had stagflation—meaning high inflation, meaning high unemployment, an economy that was moribund, people weren't working, a growing deficit. But by creating a progrowth environment and good fiscal management from the late 1980s over into the decade of the 1990s, we not only put people back to work, we eliminated that deficit and we built a surplus. We can do it again. It is all about the right approach.

So here we are today. Today we need to take that first step, and I come back to where I started. It may not be the plan exactly the way everybody wants it, but it is a plan that we can approve, and it brings together concepts that people on both sides of the aisle have brought forward. So now we need to come together and do our work for the American people. We need to come together and pass this agreement.

Mr. 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.

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

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

Mrs. HUTCHISON. Mr. President, I rise today to speak about the looming August 2 deadline. This is when the Department of the Treasury estimates the Federal Government will officially hit the $14.2 trillion debt ceiling. We all know we are at the point where we are because we have a fundamental difference in principle on how our government should be run. At the same time, most agree that our country cannot go into default, so we are in a very tough situation with a very short time period.

That is why I am concerned about the delay on this issue. Delay means harm—harm to Americans and harm to our economic recovery, especially as we grapple with a 9.2-percent unemployment rate, which is the elephant in the room. We must address jobs if we are going to have an economy that is thriving and in a recovery period. A jobless recovery is not a recovery.

The administration's reluctance to resolve this crisis has brought the very real potential of a downgrade in our country's triple A bond rating. As we get closer to next Tuesday, Standard & Poor's and Moody's and other rating agencies await the details of the final debt agreement. Then they will determine if our Nation's triple A credit rating will be downgraded. The implications of the rating could affect consumers at a very bad time. It could include a rise in interest rates on home loans, on small business loans, on student loans, and credit cards.

Yesterday the stock market fell nearly 200 points, a 1.6-percent drop. That was the third straight day of stock market decline. It leaves the Dow Jones Industrial Average down 3.3 percent and nearly on track for its worst week since August of 2010.

The threat of a downgrade is also hurting our dollar. The dollar's value fell and hit a new 2011 low against the Japanese yen and a record low against the Swiss franc.

Two things are clear. First, uncertainty and anxiety are prevalent, domestically and in the global markets. Second, this anxiety underscores the need to address our debt ceiling and deficit reduction simultaneously. While the fundamental principles on which we base our solutions to this crisis are vastly different, I do believe that both sides of the aisle in Congress and both Houses of Congress share the same goal.

The Senate majority leader and the House Speaker have put forward plans. I believe we must find a common ground between the House and the Senate with the proposals that have been put out by the Group of 6, by the majority leader, by the minority leader on our side as well as the Speaker on the House side. There have been a lot of proposals and there have been good parts in several of these proposals where we need to come together and find the best parts that we can agree on, knowing we are a divided Congress and a divided government, and move forward to a conclusion.

We can get meaningful immediate spending cuts as well as caps on future spending. That would be a very important achievement. It would be a major step forward because that is not where we were when we started. Spending cuts and caps on future spending would be a major step in the right direction. We can allow the debt limit to increase in proportion to the cuts, the real cuts. We can do this without tax hikes, because the fact is, the idea that we can tax our way out of debt has been completely repudiated. So we can cut spending, we can cap future spending, we can raise the debt limit in accordance with those caps, and without any new taxes.

That is a significant achievement as well because certainly the President was talking about increasing taxes, increasing taxes, increasing taxes when this whole negotiation began. We on our side have stood firm against new taxes, knowing this is a very fragile economic time in our country. If we want people to be hired, if we want the unemployment rate to come down, we cannot saddle our small businesses with new taxes.

We can send a clear message to the markets and to our debtors that we can stop spending too much so we will not need to tax any more, and we certainly do not want to borrow as much and have the drag we see on our economy. Americans know that in Washington we are spending too much, we are taxing plenty, and we are borrowing too much.

There is more we can do. We will not get to a balanced budget without looking at entitlements because the discretionary spending is such a small part of our total budget. Our entitlement programs are the major part of the need for reform. Our entitlement programs are nearly bankrupt. If left unchanged, our promises to current and future beneficiaries will be broken.

Mandatory spending is the long-term driver of our debt problems. The Federal Government spends approximately $2.1 trillion a year on entitlement programs, about two-thirds of our total Federal budget. I have introduced a bill, the Defend and Save Social Security Act, that would put that very important program on a fiscally sound path without cutting core benefits or raising taxes. My proposal will cover the 75-year shortfall, and anyone who is currently 58 years old and above will have no effect whatsoever with the gradual increase in retirement age. The beginning of the increase in retirement age would start with people who are under 58, and then it would be only 3 months a year. So if you are 57 you would only retire 3 months later. If you are 56 it would be 6 months later to start on Social Security.

The Senate majority leader and the House Speaker have offered proposals that call for a bipartisan, bicameral congressional committee to fix the fiscal imbalance in our Nation's finances. It is imperative that this joint committee—if it is passed by both Houses of Congress—confront entitlement reform. Entitlement reform is at the core of any long-term solution to our Nation's financial problems. If we act now, we can make progress in a very gradual way, and if we wait, it is going to be much more stark and much more problematic for people who depend on Social Security or Medicare. The opportunity to raise our debt ceiling is a defining moment in the future of our government. Let us confront the problem today and not delay the inevitable.

The more we delay, the harder it is going to be, and we have seen how hard it is already. We know this has not been an easy process because the talks between the White House and Members of Congress have fallen apart. The talks between Members of Congress on both sides of the Rotunda have fallen apart. We know this has been hard, so let's try to act now to stop it from being harder in the future, which it will be if we don't address our entitlement reforms.

I support a two-step approach. Let's take the first major step—a downpayment of almost $1 trillion. That is the first step for all of us—to cut spending by nearly $1 trillion. The second step is long-term deficit reduction that will cut more spending over a 10-year period and address entitlement reform. This can be done in a gradual way but without touching the core benefits, but we have to act now. If we don't, it will not be able to be done.

The financial viability of our country is at stake. The time is here—it is past here—to take the necessary steps to get our fiscal house in order, and I implore my colleagues to take those steps now.

Thank you, Mr. President.

I yield the floor.

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

Mrs. FEINSTEIN. Mr. President, I have served in this body for 19 years, and I will say I have never been more dismayed, more concerned, or more frustrated than I have been these past few days. Every day it gets a little bit worse because day by day our country grows closer to defaulting on our sovereign debt. That is something which has never, ever happened in the history of this country.

The repercussions of this protracted and public debate on whether our government will honor its financial obligations are already evident. This is what

we know for sure: The stock market has seen several days of decline as investors sell off securities. The United States is at high risk of a credit downgrade. Gold prices are climbing as people try to protect themselves from a rating downgrade and a drop in the value of the dollar. In short, default may well have catastrophic economic consequences domestically and internationally.

What is the message we are communicating to the world? Secretary Clinton told me in an evening conversation I had with her—she had just returned from visiting five countries. She said everybody was asking her: What is wrong in your country? What are you going to do?

This is now a worldwide crisis and one we must address. What we are seeing here is, in a sense, a broken government that can't take care of the affairs of its people in a prudent and practical way.

It is absolutely amazing to me that 20 to 70 Members of the House of Representatives believe they can run the government of the United States despite the fact that the Presidency and the majority in the U.S. Senate are controlled by another party. Essentially, they appear willing to allow this great Nation to default rather than compromise and reach a practical solution.

What are the consequences of default for American families? For sure, default would raise interest rates, driving up costs for everyone. For sure, the cost of owning a home, buying a car, buying food, filling a gas tank, and sending children to college will become even more expensive. It will squeeze already tight family budgets and damage this fragile economy. Many people predict a second dip recession. In essence, default causes an immediate tax increase in the form of these rising interest rates on families.

The talk of default is disrupting financial markets and will trigger a sharp fall in the stock market, causing huge losses in retirement accounts and wiping out the gains of 2 years. This morning, I saw a TV story about a man who was selling his mutual funds because he has no confidence in our ability to resolve this crisis—not a good thing to do.

Higher interest rates will also drive up costs for both the Federal and State governments because every 1 percent increase in interest payments for the Federal Government means an additional $100 billion cost to the government. A default will be devastating for State governments that would see their borrowing costs dramatically increase because their ability to borrow is tied to the interest rates paid by the Federal Government.

The cost of borrowing for States, for municipalities, and for local water districts will all rise. Let me give you an example. My own State of California recently took out a $5.4 billion loan from five major investment banks ahead of a possible default to ensure itself against rising interest rates. Here is the sixth largest economy on Earth worried that their interest rates are going to jump, so they take out a $5 billion loan from investment banks to be able to meet any increased interest on obligations owed.

For the broader economy, default would mean hundreds of thousands of jobs lost every year, according to the Federal Reserve. Chairman Bernanke said:

> The economy may be thrown into reverse and employers would start cutting jobs if Congress fails to raise the Nation's legal borrowing authority.

I have heard some say that on August 3, the Treasury will still have enough money to meet our obligations and avoid default. That is simply false. According to the Bipartisan Policy Center, the U.S. Government has $306.7 billion in payments due in August and will take in an estimated $172.4 billion in revenue for the month. That is a $134 billion shortfall for the month of August, so the Treasury will not be able to pay its bills. In other words, 44 percent of U.S. Government bills will go unpaid if the Federal Government fails to raise the debt ceiling by the August 2 deadline.

Treasury would be forced to spend all income inflows covering just six major items: interest, Medicare, Medicaid, Social Security, unemployment insurance, and defense vendors. That would mean entire Federal Departments would have no funds, including Justice, Labor, and Commerce. It would mean no funds for veterans' benefits, Active-Duty military pay, IRS refunds, special education, Pell grants, and more. There is simply no way to escape it.

Let me give you an example. On the next day, which is August 3, the Treasury will take in $12 billion in revenues, but it will still owe $32 billion in revenues. Let me tell you what that includes. It includes $23 billion in Social Security payments. I understand 45 million checks are ready to go out during those days. It is $2.2 billion for Medicare, $1.8 billion for education, and $1.4 billion for defense.

If the debt ceiling is not raised by August 2 or if we only reach an agreement for a short-term extension, the already-spooked credit rating agencies could react unfavorably. And here is the problem: Do you want to go back to this same situation in 6 months and go through this all over again? It makes no sense. If the marketplace wants stability and constancy, they are clearly not going to get it knowing this is going to be coming up in 6 months again.

Moody's has said it is possible our credit rating would go down with a short-term increase and warned that an agreement should get us through the year 2012. All right, don't pay attention to it, but that warning is out there. It is going to take getting through the year 2012, according to at least one of the rating houses.

Fitch has said a deficit deal must be credible and sustainable or U.S. ratings could still be downgraded. Does anybody believe it is credible and sustainable to do this for 6 months and be right back where we are today? I don't think so.

Standard & Poor's has said it may lower the country's long-term credit rating if it concludes that future adjustments to the debt ceiling are likely to be the subject of political maneuvering—not my words, their words. Do you want to go through this in 6 months again with the same results and creating all of the uncertainty for the 6 months between now and then? I don't think so.

In other words, these rating agencies have very real questions about the willingness and ability of this Congress and the administration to timely honor scheduled debt obligations.

Now, I have to say this—and I have been here for 19 years—I have never seen a time when Republicans just do not want to come to an agreement with this President. The President, I think by any standard, has bent over backward, and still Republicans walk away from the negotiating table. Well, let me tell you, I have done a lot of negotiations in my time with big labor strikes and work stoppages——

I would ask unanimous consent for 5 more minutes.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection?

Mr. CORKER. I was given an 11:10 time and saw that we were alternating. I have a conference call. I am glad for the Senator to finish, but if she could make it even shorter than that, it would be appreciated.

Mrs. FEINSTEIN. How about 3 minutes?

Mr. CORKER. OK.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection to the unanimous consent request for 3 minutes? Without objection, it is so ordered.

Mrs. FEINSTEIN. Mr. President, there were 2 months of negotiations with the Vice President, and Majority Leader CANTOR walked out. There were negotiations with the President and Speaker BOEHNER, and the Speaker walked out. House Republicans do not like Simpson-Bowles, nor do they like the Gang of 6 plan. These are the two big plans which offer a solution for the future. Instead, they want massive cuts to Medicare, Medicaid, Social Security, and discretionary spending and absolutely nothing from those Americans who are doing very well in this economy—actually, the top 1 percent.

Well, I represent 37 million people. California is bigger than 21 States and the District of Columbia put together. Fifteen million to twenty million people in my State depend on programs the Republicans want to take a meat axe to—not a scalpel, but a meat axe—SSI, Social Security, Medicaid, and Medicare. We have gotten these numbers. We have looked at them for overlapping, and I can truthfully say the

number is 15 million to 20 million. Well, look, I want to know how a cut is going to affect these programs.

We could do this if we agree to take 6 months, draft in bill language from the Gang of 6, mandate the hearings, and fast track a bill to the floor of the Senate. Every Member of this body knows it is bill language that spells out what we need to look out for. I need to look out for what happens to the Medicare provider tax because so many hospitals in my State depend on it. If it lasts until 2014, it is OK, but I don't know.

I very strongly believe there is a solution and that reasonable people can work it out, and I hope the leadership of this body will talk with the leadership of the other body.

I thank the Chair, I thank Senator CORKER for his courtesy, and I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Tennessee.

Mr. CORKER. Mr. President, it is interesting. I have some of the same concerns, maybe with different outcomes, as the Senator from California, but I agree we have not done our work.

Over the course of a little over a year, I have been traveling around the State of Tennessee making citizens aware of the unsustainable deficits our country has. I am sure people on the other side of the aisle have been doing the same. After townhall meetings all across our State in almost every forum my colleagues can imagine—I am sure the Presiding Officer has done the same—people are very aware in my State, as they are across the country, of the fact that we are on an unsustainable course. We are now beginning to have investor publications—the Wall Street Journal this morning wrote an editorial about the fact that no matter what we do regarding the actual proposals before us today, it is likely our country is going to be downgraded. So, here we are, faced with a situation where the types of legislation we are looking at—in both Chambers, I might add, in both Chambers—probably will take us to a place where our country's debt is downgraded.

I wish to first applaud both leaders—Senator REID for bringing forth a proposal today or over the last few days, and Speaker BOEHNER, the leader of the House, for doing the same on the House side. What I wish to say about that is while to me they don't meet the goals or don't meet the test our country needs to have met at this time, at least we are finally talking about proposals that will reduce spending in this country and put us back on a sustainable path. So I appreciate the leadership of both bodies. Finally, after many months, we are on the right topic.

What I have said all along is that as we approach the debt ceiling, we need to dramatically change the character of spending in this country. My concern is that our work is not quite done. The fact is there is no question of the deadline coming up. Everybody agrees it is, at least the minimum, August 2. I don't think there is any dispute that we have until August 2 to deal with this issue. I also don't think we have yet come up with a solution we need to come up with to dramatically change the character of spending in this country.

What I would say is, look, our work is not quite done. The House has a bill that basically reduces spending over the next decade by $1 trillion. Candidly, I think we all know that is not a solution that is going to prevent a downgrade in this country. It does have the goal of kicking this to a select committee of some kind that is going to try to incorporate another $1.8 trillion in cuts. Candidly, that is a big step back from where I think we were a weekend ago, where at least on the cut side—even on the cut side—even the President had agreed to at least $3 trillion in cuts. That is our understanding. So what we have coming out of the House right now is a bill that doesn't cut as much as the President had agreed to last weekend. We have on this side a bill that cuts about $1 trillion after it has been scored. Again, I applaud the leader of the Senate for putting forth a bill that at least begins moving us in the right direction, but, again, it is $2 trillion short of where the President had been with leaders a week ago, or at least that is our understanding, and I am pretty sure that understanding is correct.

We also know the general mantra adopted by Wall Street and by people who are looking at our country around the world is that we need to do something that is at least a $4 trillion solution.

I would say to the Senator from California who just spoke, I couldn't agree more. We have not addressed this situation the way we should. I don't think there is anything anybody—well, there may be a few—the vast majority of this body does not want to see our country default on its obligations. I don't know of anybody who wants to do that. I want to see dramatic changes in the character of spending for our country, and many people have sought that. Our work is not yet done.

What I would say is, let's have a short-term extension. There is no question that we do not want the sovereign debt of this country to be downgraded because we default. Nobody wants to see that happen. We are at least finally on the right topic. We are talking about spending reductions. We certainly haven't done the work necessary to achieve the goal we need to achieve in this body. But I couldn't agree more. Let's have a short-term extension. Let's extend it another week or 2 weeks or 3 weeks. A lot of people say, Well, the fact is that will roil the markets. I don't think it will roil the markets. I think they are used to us waiting until an hour before the deadline to work out a solution. I think that has become customary, if you will, in the Senate and in the House of Representatives.

So what I would say is if we don't do the work now—we have a historic opportunity right now. Right now, the whole world, all of our country, all of our citizens are all frustrated. The Members of the House and the Senate are all focused on one thing and that is what kind of a package can we put forth to actually cause our country to be more solvent at this time.

We are finally on the right topic, yet we haven't even, in these aspirational bills that are laid out—we know that with all the actuarial assumptions that exist, with Medicare and Social Security and Medicaid, that if we don't touch trying to make them solvent for the longer haul, we haven't even done our work. The bills before us don't even have as an aspirational goal—for instance, the House bill that is coming over with a select committee that I know Senator REID and Senator MCCONNELL have been involved in—and I thank them for their work—doesn't even lay out that one of the things we are looking at is ensuring Social Security is actuarially sound. The future of these young pages who potentially down the road—not potentially, hopefully—will benefit from Social Security, I think they would like to know that during this historic time we are actually looking at the real issue.

What I am afraid of is we are missing the opportunity for this to be the seminal moment we all thought it was going to be because we don't yet have a product that solves the problem. The product we are looking at in both bodies—and I thank the leaders of both bodies for bringing them forth—does not meet the test. It doesn't dramatically change the character of spending in Washington. It doesn't even stave off a downgrade in U.S. sovereign debt.

We are on the brink of actually doing something great for our country. And because we now have our country's focus and everybody in both bodies is focused on this problem, let's have a short-term extension. I agree. Let's don't default. Let's move back a week or 2 weeks or 3 weeks. But let's don't miss this historic opportunity to do something great for our country, which is exactly what we are doing now.

It is hard for me to believe, seriously, that what we have before us is a $1 trillion downpayment. It is also hard for me to believe, candidly, that we are going to set up a select committee that is going to report back in 4 or 5 months when all of us know what the issues are. We understand the math. I know we get ridiculed a lot for the way we act in this body, but I think most of us candidly pretty well understand what the solutions are. We all know nobody gets to work on anything around here until there is an imminent deadline. So even with this committee being potentially set up by mutual discussion down the road—I know there are a lot of negotiations—to me they should report back. I agree with the Senator from California. Let's report back at the end of this fiscal year, September

30—there is no reason to wait—and if that type of bill were to pass where we have a two-stage process, let's go ahead and get the work out of the way.

I want to go back to the bigger picture for a moment and I will conclude momentarily. We have an opportunity right now where we have never been focused in the way we are right now—in the 4½ years I have been here—on something as important as this as it relates to us getting our house in order. We have never been this focused. What I am afraid of, in the name of political efficacy—people saying, Hey, look, let's take what we can get and get on out of here so we don't mess up our potential, on both sides of the aisle, for the 2012 elections—take what you have on both sides. Basically, let's think about it. For the other side of the aisle, the way all of the proposals before us are laid out, there is no dealing with trying to make the entitlements sustainable, so they can run in 2012 on the entitlement issue. With all of the proposals laid out right now, we don't deal with spending appropriately, so our country is probably going to have its debt downgraded, so Republicans can run on the fact that we haven't reduced spending enough. So if we look at it, this works well for everybody, except the citizens of our country.

Again, we are finally on the right topic, which is a rarity here. We are finally focused on the problem. We have two bills that don't go far enough. Again, I applaud both the Democratic leader and the Republican leader for putting forth proposals. We all know they don't do what they need to do—either proposal. We know the aspirational goals of each proposal don't take us far enough.

I would say to all: I agree. Let's don't default. Let's don't buck up against August 3. Let's pass a short-term time extension. Let's take us through the end of August or the first 2 weeks in September, or let's take a week, but let's finish our work in this body. Let's don't miss this seminal opportunity where everybody in this country and everybody in this world is looking at how undisciplined we have been and the opportunity we have before us to actually be disciplined and send a signal to the world that our future is not the future that Greece is seeing today; our future is the continuation of American exceptionalism all around this world. We are squandering that opportunity right now in this body at a time when we are finally focused on the right topic.

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

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The bill clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. ROCKEFELLER. 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. ROCKEFELLER. I thank the Presiding Officer, as I always do.

FAA REAUTHORIZATION

Mr. ROCKEFELLER. Mr. President, Senator TOM HARKIN is on his way from the meeting the Presiding Officer and I were just at because we both want to talk more about this National Mediation Board crisis and also the fact that the FAA is on hold, that we cannot do anything with it. What the House did—you see, one of the revelations of the modern era, which hopefully will last only a couple years, is that the folks in the House are willing to say ''no'' to the very end. In other words, the question I would raise is that my plan is to raise the stakes on the airlines, doing quite dreadful things to them, in hopes they will engage with the House Members to say we have to have an FAA bill.

As I said yesterday, all I seek is a clean bill of extension. That has been done 20 times on this FAA bill. It has taken us 4 years, and we have not been able to reauthorize it. There are some things to work out, but they can all be worked out.

The House sent over a message saying they did not like what we were doing on the essential air service. Well, the Presiding Officer knows what the essential air service means for rural communities, which is to have it in order that communities have an economic future of any kind at all. But, on the other hand, we have been willing to make reforms. In fact, the reforms we have suggested are more dramatic reforms than the House has suggested: put a cap on the number of airports—some quite dramatic things I actually hate doing in order to try to get agreement on that subject.

But what is more interesting is, that is not what they care about. Mr. MICA, who is my counterpart in the House, has often said he does not have a dog in the essential air service fight. Yesterday I was meeting with him and Secretary LaHood, who is completely with the Senate in our desire to get this done and to break the intransigence of the House, and my counterpart simply said—I said: Why did you send that over when that is not what you care about? He said: Well, sometimes it is a little political thing.

I was not shocked by that because that is why I knew he had done it, but what it says is they are willing to tank the Federal Aviation Administration unless the Senate caves to their position on the National Mediation Board, which would undo 75 years of labor law and which would take an extraordinary situation, which Senator HARKIN, when he gets here, if he gets here, is going to talk more about.

But the principle they want and they like is the fact that if you have an election—it could be a union election, it could be any kind of an election, but let's say for the purposes of this it is a union election—and people do not show up to vote, as is always the case. Then for those people who did not show up to vote, their vote is automatically characterized as a ''no'' vote on the idea of certifying to get a union.

This is purely the work of Delta. Most of the legacy airlines are unionized. Delta is not. Delta's CEO makes $9 million a year, their top management another $20 million a year. They could practically pay for the whole Essential Air Service Program themselves. But they do not want to fool around with this language to protect their antiworker ambitions.

They have had four union elections in the last several years. They have prevailed. The airline has prevailed in all four of those elections. But they still want this language changed so that if you do not vote, you are put down as a ''no'' vote; that is, not to be able to organize. That is un-American. It is unprecedented in American history. And it goes against, as I said, 75 years of labor law. That is very dangerous.

What we have to do is to try and make it clear—frankly, the other airlines have been rather tepid in their support of my position. Airlines are a close group and they tend to stay together. They have to stop that. They have to make the House understand that if they persist in this rule, we will have a Federal aviation system that will shut down altogether. I am talking about air traffic controllers. I am talking about the whole deal. It is not a long process. It is a horrible process. It is an antiworker process which they are dumping in our laps. They want to see that happen. They are willing to see that happen. They will not compromise on the National Mediation Board. They will not compromise. They have said that. I have often talked with my counterpart over there, and he says: Well: I do not make those decisions. Those are made at a higher pay grade. He uses that word. Why does somebody run for public office if they simply take orders from other people? Well, that is sort of the way they do things over there in the House, but it is extremely dangerous.

The truth lies in the fact that the House provision that cuts the Essential Air Service Program by $16 million—that is what it does. At the same time, the House has been willing to let $150 million drain from the airport trust fund in less than a week. Every day we do not get this bill resolved, $25 million drops out of the airport trust fund, which is flush for now but is becoming very unflush very quickly.

The FAA extensions are very necessary. They are not something which people walk around here talking about all the time, but if they find they do not have flights to get to their homes on the west coast or in the South or anywhere else, they will be very angry. People will be very angry. I do not know of any alternative but to ratchet up the pressure, to make those who are blocking this understand they are

causing a national disaster and they need to back off from that position.

They have said they will not. Well, will that be the final solution? It may very well be, and we have to understand that. But you cannot negotiate something which is so antiworker. You cannot negotiate that. The President has said he will veto it if it appears in the bill in any form. The House has voted for it. The Senate has voted against it. We have been very clear that it cannot pass over here and will not pass over here. So why are they playing that game?

The airlines are not now even paying for their use of the national airspace system. The carriers also do not appear to care about the impact on the dedicated FAA workforce that serves them—once again, 4,000 already having been furloughed. Most of the airlines are not even passing any savings on to the customers they serve. Why do I say that? Because they are having a tax holiday now because our extension ran out. So all of a sudden they do not have to pay taxes on jet fuel and a number of other things, so they are getting a lot of money. But what will you do with that money? Would you keep it for yourself or would you turn it over to the trust fund or would you keep ticket prices the same and not raise them? Well, they keep it. Frontier Airlines, I think Alaska Airlines, Virgin, all have kept their fares exactly where they were. They are trying to protect the consumer.

Delta and the other airlines are raising ticket prices as fast as they can, even though, because the time has run out on the agreement, they are getting endless millions of dollars. They are choosing to keep it and make a profit for themselves. That is unconscionable behavior in terms of national policy.

What are the real benefits to Delta from what they are doing? How badly were they harmed by the decision, the NMB decision? After the change, several unionization votes were held among components of their work force, which I have already said. None of those units voted to organize. So what is their game? It is a game. It is politics. It is theology. You cannot let that stand. You cannot allow people to get furloughed who are serious about their jobs, who are engineers and technical people—the first 4,000. Many of them will not come back. They will choose to figure: Well, they will never get this settled. They will go out and find other jobs, and they will be able to get other jobs. It is unconscionable. It is almost you cannot believe you are in this situation, that you are in some ''Disney World'' somewhere where people do not take life seriously and do not take policies seriously.

I want to reiterate that the Senate appointed conferees—which is sort of necessary to try and reach resolution—on the very day the House sent over its FAA package for us to consider. We appointed conferees. More than 100 days later—1–0-0 days later—the House still dragged its feet. The House has still not named any conferees.

What am I to make of that? They are not serious about this. So if they are not serious about it, do we then buckle because they are not serious or do we stand for what is right and what is fair for the people who work for the Federal Aviation Administration and also, frankly, for consumers of aviation all over this country?

I will tell you, you wait until some of these air traffic control systems shut down, the towers shut down because there is nobody to man them. Then business, American business and these airlines are going to understand how bad it is going to be. The only policy I know how to adopt is to try and drive home to them what they are actually doing to their own futures. They will shut themselves down if they continue on their course.

We can still get this process working again, but we need to get the FAA stable first. We should pass a clean extension, that which we have done forever. All extensions are clean. Senator CORKER was just talking about a clean extension on something else. We should pass a clean extension and then get to work finding a compromise on our remaining differences.

Mr. President, I yield the floor and await the presence of Senator HARKIN who will be speaking on this subject.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The bill clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mrs. HAGAN). Without objection, it is so ordered.

Mr. BROWN of Ohio. Madam President, first, I wish to thank Senator ROCKEFELLER for his leadership on the FAA issue. It is so important in rural areas. It is so important to attract and retain a workforce. It is so important to the local economies in large cities like Cleveland, Cincinnati and Columbus and in smaller communities too. As Senator ROCKEFELLER said, our aviation system is absolutely critical for economic development.

People in big cities might make fun of small airports that they do not have all the hustle and bustle. But we do know medium-sized and smaller airports matter a great deal.

With the refusal of the House to take up a clean extension of FAA, nearly 4,000 employees across the country have been furloughed and dozens of construction projects have come to a halt. In this economy, some radicals in the House of Representatives have decided—because they have a political mission and ideology that does not quite fit with the majority of Americans—they are going to again hold hostage something that simply needs to be done; that is, what is called reauthorization of the Federal Aviation Administration.

As Senator ROCKEFELLER said, these furloughed employees may be forced to look elsewhere for jobs to meet their mortgage payments or pay for groceries—these are very skilled technicians and engineers. And what does this mean to these construction projects? FAA helps to pay, all over the country, for modernization of airports—rebuilding air traffic control towers, improving runways, and making countless safety improvements.

We have all heard stories—I do not recall that I have ever seen it, but we have heard stories of the Beijing or Shanghai airports or some of these airports—I have not seen them in the last many years—about the new technologies and the modern features of those airports. As a country we cannot afford to fall behind. We have to keep up.

Not passing a clean extension of the FAA bill is exactly the wrong thing to do. The unemployment rate in the construction industry is nearly double the national average. Yet we are idling cranes and we are idling bulldozers all because of a political mission, an ideology that some Members of the House—some radical Members of the House—have decided to inflict on us.

A clean extension of FAA has been done 20 times. All of a sudden it is not. I hope the House gets serious. I hope they appoint conferees and come to the table and work this out. I appreciate very much Senator ROCKEFELLER's leadership. He is making a difference on these important issues, and our House colleagues need to follow.

SUPPORTING AMERICAN MANUFACTURING

Mr. BROWN of Ohio. Madam President, I wish to talk also about another issue where we should have done a clean extension—as we have done dozens of times in this country. In the past three decades alone, we have avoided default by addressing the debt limit 38 times; 34 of those were with Republican Presidents. That is almost 90 percent of the time we have raised the debt ceiling—more precisely, avoided default—it has been under Republican Presidents.

A lot of us did not like it. We maybe made a public statement saying we did not like their fiscal policy, but we never stood in the way, we never tried to take hostage—take the government hostage or each other hostage by saying—almost like children—if I do not get my way, then I am going to block this and I am going stop—I am going to potentially throw our financial system and our economy into turmoil. What kind of behavior is that for adults?

Then, when I hear Speaker BOEHNER and some of his radical kind of cheerleaders on the far political right say we should do this again in 6 months, I wonder what are they possibly thinking, when we go through this right now.

I spend a lot of time with manufacturers around my State. I love seeing

things made. My State is the third largest manufacturing State in the country, exceeded in production only by California, three times our population, and Texas, twice our population. I talk to manufacturers, and some of them are not investing now for a variety of reasons. Mostly they do not see the demand for products because the demand is still anemic in our society, in our economy, for companies to grow.

But they also talk about the uncertainty. They talk about the uncertainty in the economic environment. This is the worst kind of uncertainty we are going to inject into our economy if we are going to say let's do this in 6 months. Do they think anybody in North Carolina or Ohio or around the State, around the country, any businesses are thinking: This is a great time to invest, right when Moody's and Standard & Poor's might downgrade us, right when we do not know what is going to happen in the next week with a potential default.

Do they think anybody is going to make a major investment decision right now? Of course, they are not. So let's do it again in 6 months? When I heard Speaker BOEHNER—I like JOHN BOEHNER personally. He is from my State. Our offices obviously work together in places such as Butler County, Preble County, and the Dayton-Cincinnati areas. But I would have thought people would have laughed when he said: Yes, let's do this again in 6 months because we do not have a jobs problem to worry about. Clearly, we should get this done with and focus—that means cutting the budget. I understand that. We have to work toward a balanced budget.

We knew how to do it in the 1990s. In the early 1990s, President Clinton—I came to the House the year he was elected President. We faced a terrible budget situation and an unemployment situation. But you know what. We cut spending. We increased taxes appreciably for only a relatively few number of people, the wealthiest people in our society. We continued to make investments in education, health care and infrastructure and our economy.

We had almost 8 years—not quite, maybe 7 years some months—of regular economic growth, and 21 million new jobs were created. So we know how to do this. But this crowd wants to hold the government hostage saying, if you do not do it exactly our way, we are going to let the government go to default, and once we solve that, let's do it again in 6 months.

I just think it does not make sense. What we should be doing instead is focusing—I know what an important manufacturing State the Presiding Officer represents in North Carolina, as in Ohio—on manufacturing. We are still a country that makes things. My State is particularly a State that makes things.

The year after what is called the American Recovery Act passed, my State got more new jobs in clean energy than any State in the United States of America. My State is a leader in aerospace. It is a leader in auto and steel and chemicals and cement and paper and aluminum and glass. Yet we are also in the kind of traditional industries, and we are also, as I said, a leader in solar, in Toledo, OH, and other places.

We are a leader in wind turbine component manufacturing, especially in the northeast but all over Ohio. We are a leader in aerospace, as I mentioned. We are a leader in biomedical and biotech, in large part because we have great universities and great teaching hospitals in, I was going to say, prominently in northeast Ohio but also Columbus, also Cincinnati, also Toledo—all over our State. Clearly, we know how to do these things. But what we have seen in the past three decades is a shift in our Nation. Thirty years ago, manufacturing was 25, 26, 27 percent of our gross domestic product. Basically, one-fourth of the dollars in our economy were all about manufacturing.

That created great wealth, because the way to create wealth is to make something, to grow something or to mine something, preeminently. So 30 years ago, manufacturing was some 23, 24, 25, 26 percent of our GDP. Financial services was only 11 percent in those days. Today, it is almost the reverse. Financial services makes up about 20 or 22 percent and manufacturing makes up only about 11 percent of our GDP and even a slightly smaller percent of our workforce.

Why does this matter? It matters because we know when we make things it creates wealth. Manufacturing jobs pay 20 percent more, on average, than service jobs. We know the difference between retail versus making steel or the difference between fast food restaurant work versus making cars or chemicals or glass or biotech.

We know manufacturing jobs have a strong multiplier effect. So if we have an auto company—let me give an example. The Chevrolet Cruze is a car my daughter just brought—by and large, an Ohio car. It would not have happened if we had not done the auto rescue that so many of my colleagues opposed for ideological reasons, not substantive, practical, let's-make-it-work reasons. Nonetheless, we know the auto industry is coming back and we know manufacturing jobs have increased—far too anemically, but they have increased over the last year.

But the Chevy Cruze, the engine is made in Defiance, OH, and the bumper is made in Northwood, OH, and the transmission is made in Toledo, OH, and the steel comes out of Cleveland, OH, for much of the car. The aluminum wheels come out of Cleveland, OH. The stamping is done in Parma, OH. Some of the other stamping is down in Lordstown, OH. The assembly is done in Lordstown, OH. There are 5,000 people working just on the assembly alone. So that is the multiplier effect. When we assemble in Toledo, we assemble the Jeep. Chrysler assembles the Jeep in Toledo.

Some 3 years ago, only 50 percent of the components for the Jeep were American made. Today, over 70 percent are American made. So we know manufacturing creates all kinds of jobs, making 20 percent more, on average, than service jobs.

Since the beginning of the recession, though, we still see profits at large financial institutions and other service firms increase, but our Nation's unemployment rate is still hovering around 9 percent. So when profits go up for those financial services firms—and I appreciate JPMorgan Chase in Columbus, OH. I met with their top person in Ohio just this week—just moving from Cleveland to Columbus. I know the important work they do in my State. I know they provide thousands and thousands and thousands of jobs. That is all a good thing.

But I also know in an economy which is not paying attention to manufacturing, we do not get the multiplier effect, we do not get the higher wages, we do not get the employment growth that we might get otherwise.

That is why, yesterday, Senator ROCKEFELLER and I convened a meeting, where Senator WHITEHOUSE, Senator JACK REED, Senators SCHUMER and KLOBUCHAR and FEINSTEIN and others attended. We talked about a real national manufacturing strategy. That means closing the skills gap. We have a lot of jobs in places such as Iowa and North Carolina, Ohio, where they go unfilled because we do not have well enough connected worker training with those jobs, with the needs. We need to pursue better tax and trade policies. We need to pay special attention to manufacturing.

Yesterday, the Senate sent to the House legislation we passed unanimously that said: When the government buys American flags, rather than 50 percent—a requirement that 50 percent of them be made in the United States—the requirement now is that 100 percent be made in the United States.

Why do we not put more focus on ''Made in the USA''? It will matter for us. It matters for our national pride on flags, to be sure, but it matters for our communities, it matters our companies, and it matters for our workers.

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

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

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

FAA REAUTHORIZATION

Mr. HARKIN. Madam President, I meant to be here earlier when Senator

ROCKEFELLER was on the floor speaking about the situation with the Federal Aviation Administration. However, I was unavoidably detained while chairing a hearing on the HELP Committee that just adjourned a few minutes ago. I wanted to be here to discuss with Senator ROCKEFELLER the sad situation we are facing right now with the shutdown of the Federal Aviation Administration.

We are now in the sixth day of the defunding of the Federal Aviation Administration. What that means is that right now we have some 4,000 FAA workers who are furloughed, and tens of thousands of people out of work in airport construction jobs—infrastructure. These are people who are not working for the government; they are working for private contractors who have a contract with FAA for runway construction, putting in lights, safety measures, things like that. So tens of thousands of people are out of work in the private sector because of the cutoff of FAA reimbursements to these businesses around the country.

It is costing the Federal Government about $25 million in tax revenue a day—$25 million a day in lost revenue. That money would be plowed back into the economy to pay for aviation operations and for the people who are working out there on construction jobs building runways, lighting systems, and things like that.

At a time when we have so many people who are unemployed in our country—and the underemployment rate is really somewhere between 16 and 18 percent—with over 23 million people in America out of work, what do the Republicans do? They hold up funding for the Federal Aviation Administration, which puts 4,000 more FAA people on furlough and tens of thousands of people working on construction jobs around the country out of work. Why would the Republican Members of this Congress do such a thing? Because they want to overturn a National Mediation Board decision that was handed down a little over a year ago to align the election procedures under the National Railway Labor Act with the provisions that have always been in place under the National Labor Relations Act.

Let me explain that. Under the National Labor Relations Act, which has been in existence since the late 1930s, if you have an election to see whether workers want to organize a union, you count the yeas and you count the nays of those who vote. If the yeas are more than the nays, the workers form a union. If the nays are more than the yeas, they don't form a union. Under the Railway Labor Act, an odd thing took place. Under that, it said that if you have an election for a union, you count the yeas, you count the nays, and then all those people who didn't vote, you put them in the ''nay'' column. Interesting. If you don't vote, you are an automatic no.

What the National Mediation Board did a year ago was realign this using rulemaking procedures. They said that from now on you would only count the yeas and the nays. You would not assign to one side or the other those who didn't vote. To most of us, that just seems to make plain old common sense. After all, any election for your local school board—and we know the turnout is pretty low; school board elections usually turn out maybe 20 percent of the electorate, maybe less than that. Yet I submit there is probably no more important election in America today than school board elections. I will not get into that right now. What if we said: In all these school board elections, take the yeas, and then all the people who didn't vote, they are a no.

What if we did that in Senate races? That strikes home to people around here. Say a Senator is running for reelection, and if you are lucky, you get a 60-percent turnout of voters. That means the people who don't vote are considered a ''no'' vote on the incumbent. Is that what we want to see? If you don't vote, that is a ''no'' vote on your reelection. Most people would think that is inherently unfair. It is inherently unfair.

The same is true in elections on whether workers want to form a union. There are a lot of reasons people don't vote in an election. Maybe they are sick and they can't go vote. Maybe they can't make up their mind one way or the other. Maybe they said: Well, I see this side, and I see that side, and I cannot make up my mind, so I am just not going to vote. Some people just say: I don't care which side wins; I am disinterested in this election. Thankfully, in America, we don't have somebody forcing somebody to vote. So it makes common sense that if you don't vote, you should not be counted on one side or the other.

The National Mediation Board put this rule in place. They went through all the hearings, the comment period, and all the stuff necessary to pass the rule. Then it was brought up in the Senate within the last year under a procedure called the Congressional Review Act, wherein there is an expedited procedure for the Senate to take up and vote on a regulation as to whether we want to overturn it. It is an expedited procedure, an up-or-down vote. That was brought up here, and, as the chairman of the committee that has jurisdiction over labor, I debated it with my colleagues on the other side of the aisle. It was a fairly good debate, I thought, and we voted. The Senate voted not to overturn that regulation. Well, you would think that would be the end of it. No, you would be wrong.

What does that have to do with the FAA? Because the Republicans in the House and some in the Senate are saying they are not going to let this FAA reauthorization bill get through unless and until we overturn the decision—this rule of the National Mediation Board which basically says that if you don't vote in the election, you are not counted on one side or the other. They are holding the FAA hostage—4,000 workers furloughed, tens of thousands in airport construction out of work, $25 million a day being lost in revenue that would be taken in so we could put these people back to work. It is all because they want to make it harder for workers to form a union.

Think about it this way. We are going to have a Presidential election next year. Let's say all the people who don't vote would be tallied as a ''no'' vote for the incumbent President, assuming he runs for reelection. Some of my Republican friends would probably like that, and I understand that. Do you think the American people would think that is fair, that if you don't vote, you are counted as a ''no'' vote?

A Federal district court—they took this to court—also rejected a legal challenge to these new rules, finding that the National Mediation Board was acting well within its legal authority in modernizing the election.

We see this time and time again. It is happening now in this Congress. Whenever we try to make things more fair or to use a legitimate procedure to address something that I think most people would think would be unfair; that is, counting somebody who didn't vote as a ''no'' vote—when we do that, Republicans always try to find an end run to try to undo that.

We are down to about 10 percent of our labor force that is now unionized. My friends on the other side will not be happy until there are no more unions in America. They will not be happy until unionization is less than 1 percent, and then only a company-sponsored union, not an independent union.

Right now, Republicans are voting to change the law in the middle of a trial as a special favor to the Boeing company. Boeing was accused of retaliating against its workers for going on strike.

As I have pointed out in numerous talks on the Senate floor, there is a judicial process that has been used by both labor and management for more than 70 years to settle disputes. That process has been to go to the NLRB—and management has done it, as well as labor—to find out if a certain thing was wrong or if a union has overstepped its bounds or if management has overstepped its bounds. The NLRB tries to mediate and get the two sides to agree, but if they can't, a process is set in motion whereby the General Counsel—who, by the way, was a career person, not a political appointee, as some have said—then begins an investigation to see whether the facts as presented warrant the next step, which is bringing the case to an administrative law judge.

That is what happened in this Boeing case. I have heard all this nonsense about how they are trying to take jobs out of South Carolina, trying to destroy right-to-work States. That is nonsense. Right now, the case is before an administrative law judge to see whether Boeing actually retaliated

against its employees for their exercising a legal right to organize and bargain collectively as a union.

Did Boeing retaliate against them for doing that? I don't know. My Republican friends seem to think they know. But it should go through the process before the administrative law judge, and that finding can be appealed by either side—management or labor—and it goes to the NLRB, and then they make a decision, which could be appealed to the Federal appeals court or circuit court. That decision can be appealed to the Supreme Court. Yet the Republicans want to interfere in that process and make it a political decision as to whether this case should go forward. Just as they are wrong to try to change the rules in the middle of a case going forward to benefit Boeing, what is happening now with the FAA is also wrong. They are trying to interfere in the reauthorization of the Federal Aviation Administration to change a rule from the National Mediation Board.

The other day, one of my colleagues was talking about when are we going to stop doing favors for the union bosses or big unions or something like that. I never thought the National Mediation Board rule was a favor to a union. I always looked upon it as a fair decision, regulation, to make it in line with the National Labor Relations Act. Why should we have two separate kinds of election procedures for forming a union in this country? Take it to the American people. It is common sense. I think that most people would say that someone who doesn't vote shouldn't be counted as a ''no'' vote? As I said, we don't do that in the National Labor Relations Act. We have had this sort of anomaly for years. We finally tried to get it straightened out, and that is what is costing us these jobs and $25 million a day.

There is another issue they have brought up, and that is the essential air service at a number of small airports. We can debate that. We can talk about essential air service to small airports. The bill would eliminate it. That is about $16 million a year—$16 million a year—that it would save. Clearly, that is not what the Republicans care about. Every week—every week—they hold up the FAA reauthorization, it is costing the Federal Government some $150 million in uncollected taxes to support our airports. So in order to save $16 million a year, they are willing to cost the government $150 million a week. Boy, that is some kind of economics on the part of my Republican friends. So strictly from a budget perspective, the House's obstructionism is not just absurd, it is grossly counterproductive.

Again, this is uncalled for, what they are doing, to hold up the FAA reauthorization. As I said, we are now going into the sixth day, and it is going to have an effect on air travel. It is going to have a profound effect on air travel the longer this plays out. So I ask the House Republican leadership to get off of this obstructionism—get off of this—and let us deal forthrightly on the bill before us—which is the FAA reauthorization—and quit trying to overturn this rule of the National Mediation Board.

On essential air service, I think there are probably some compromises that can be made. There are some adjustments and modifications that can be made. I think that is probably so. We ought to work in good will in doing that on the longer term bill. But it is not right to hold up the FAA reauthorization right now on either the essential air service objections or their trying to overturn the decision of the National Mediation Board.

Again, I want to thank Senator ROCKEFELLER for his leadership on this issue and for his vigorous opposition to the House Republicans' effort both to eliminate totally essential air service and to try to do a backdoor, end run around the National Mediation Board's rule on providing for fair elections for those who seek to belong and to form a union in the airline or railway industry.

With that, Madam President, I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from New Hampshire.

Mrs. SHAHEEN. Madam President, let me begin by applauding Senator HARKIN, my colleague from Iowa, for his comments relative to the FAA and the need to put the people who are out of work back to work and to get the FAA reauthorization done. It has been way too long.

We have a number of people who staff the tower that deals with air traffic coming into the United States north of Boston. That tower is in New Hampshire. We have people out of work. We need to get them back to work and we need to see this legislation done and moving forward.

DEBT DEFAULT

Mrs. SHAHEEN. Madam President, I came to the floor this afternoon because the United States Government is now less than 1 week away from defaulting on its obligations for the first time in our history. As we have heard from economists and business leaders across the country, a default could result in hundreds of thousands of lost jobs and in higher interest rates for every American, yet we are still debating whether we should avoid default. It is a very dangerous game, and we are risking permanent harm to the American economy.

I want to examine one consequence of default for a minute. All three credit rating agencies—S&P, Moody's, and Fitch—have said a default would automatically result in a lower credit rating for the U.S. Government. I think we all understand the principle of credit rating. It is like the credit scores on record for most of us in our personal lives. The better we have been about paying our debts in the past, the better our credit score. When we go to buy a house or a car, when we ask for a loan, the bank looks at that credit score and decides how much interest to charge us. The worse we have been at paying our debts in the past, the lower our score and the more money we pay in interest.

The credit rating agencies are keeping a credit score on the U.S. Government. So far, it has been perfect. The United States has never failed to pay its debts. That is why we have the lowest interest rates in the world, and loaning money to the U.S. Government is considered the world's safest investment. With a default, that would all change. And here is the key: It would change in just minutes, and that change would last for generations. If we default, the credit rating agencies will lower our credit rating immediately.

I recently had a conversation with Martin Regalia, the chief economist of the U.S. Chamber of Commerce. In that conversation he said the market reaction to default would take ''nanoseconds.'' Once we have defaulted, we can never unring that bell. Our special status as the world's safest investment may never return. We will have increased our interest rates for decades to come and maybe even longer. JPMorgan Chase said this week that a lower credit rating could cost our government $100 billion a year in interest.

This is the worst kind of wasteful spending because that money wouldn't be going to investments in our economy or to secure a better future for our children. It would go to nothing. It would do nothing. It would be money down the drain.

We have a path forward. It is the plan that has recently been proposed by Senator REID. There are a lot of things about this plan I don't like. I am concerned because I don't think it takes a balanced approach toward deficit reduction that I have long called for, and I am disappointed that it lacks the $4 trillion in deficit reduction we need. But I am ready to support it. And because all the cuts in this bill are cuts that Republicans have already supported, they should be prepared to support this plan too.

The Reid plan would cut at least $2.2 trillion of our debt while allowing us to avoid default through the end of next year. These two elements are crucial to avoiding the lower credit rating we have been hearing raised as a concern. We need to provide the markets with some long-term certainty that will avoid default, and some proof we can deal seriously with our long-term deficits and debt.

A short-term, 6-month increase, as proposed in the House, would kick the can down the road. It won't prevent a lower credit rating. We need to end this constant threat of default which is paralyzing our government and our economy. The Reid plan achieves this through a combination of cuts to our

domestic spending, reduced spending on the wars in Afghanistan and Iraq, and through targeted cuts to mandatory spending. It doesn't raise taxes, and it doesn't touch Medicare, Medicaid, or Social Security.

Again, this is not a perfect plan. I have been on the floor many times in favor of a balanced package that includes cuts to spending—domestic, defense, and mandatory—but also includes increased revenues. The Reid plan doesn't achieve those goals, but I do have hope that we will get there eventually.

This is not a proposal I would have written, but I am 1 of 100 Members of the Senate and 1 of 535 Members of Congress, so I don't get everything I want. None of us here in Congress get everything we want. That is the nature of compromise. That is the nature of democracy. That is why the Framers of the Constitution created checks and balances in government. That is why they created two Chambers in Congress and three branches of government. When you are a leader in government, you don't have the luxury of drawing a line in the sand and walking away. You have to be prepared to stay at the table and to give up something.

I have just laid out what I and I believe many of my colleagues are willing to give up in this proposal—our demand for a comprehensive balanced plan to reduce the deficit. In exchange, I am willing to accept a plan that includes more cuts than any other plan on the table. These are cuts that 40 of our colleagues on the other side of the aisle have already supported. This is a plan that I think neither side is going to love but both sides should be able to accept. It is a plan that gets the job done.

We here in the Senate and in Congress have to get the job done, so I urge that we come to the table, we adopt a compromise, and we put this debt ceiling vote behind us.

Madam President, I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The majority leader.

Mr. REID. Madam President, we are not in a quorum call?

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Correct.

Mr. REID. It is a rare occasion.

ECONOMIC STABILITY

Mr. REID. Madam President, today the House of Representatives will vote on Speaker BOEHNER's short-term plan to raise the debt ceiling. As soon as the House completes its vote tonight, or this afternoon, the Senate will move to take up the message they send to us. It will be defeated. They know that, and the American people now should understand that clearly.

No Democrat will vote for a short-term bandaid approach that will put our economy at risk and put the Nation back in the untenable situation we are in today in just a few short months from now. Economists have said a short-term arrangement holds many of the same risks as a technical default. Democrats are not willing to put our economy on the line for something such as that. It is something we cannot do for the good of the country. Our economy and the financial markets desperately need stability. Speaker BOEHNER's bill does not provide either. It does not provide stability, and it certainly doesn't help our economy in any way.

I believe it is time for the tea party Republicans to stop resisting compromise. They must join Democrats and Republicans of good will to put the economy ahead of politics.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from New York.

Mr. SCHUMER. Madam President, I wish to underscore what the leader has said.

The bottom line is very simple. Speaker BOEHNER is busy twisting arms right now to try to get his bill passed through the House, but it is a futile gesture because that bill is not going to pass the Senate. We have made that clear in the letter that 53 of us signed yesterday, and nothing has changed. The idea that we will take BOEHNER's bill and pass it or take BOEHNER's bill and tweak it and pass it is not what is going to happen. So we would urge Speaker BOEHNER and all of our Republican colleagues to sit down and negotiate.

Throwing a hot potato over to us that will not pass just delays things a day, and we are simply 4 days away from one of the worst financial catastrophes that could face this country; namely, for the first time in our 230-year history, a refusal to pay the debt. That means the time for these kinds of political games and political posturing is over.

Speaker BOEHNER is having a rough time getting the votes over there, but my guess is he will. But it will not make a darned bit of difference. It will not make a darned bit of difference because it is not going to pass this house, the Senate. It will not pass because a short-term extension risks the same things that no extension risks: a downgrade, a lack of confidence in the markets, and gridlock. We have seen gridlock up to now; 3, 4, 5, 6 months from now the same gridlock will occur. We cannot play with this kind of risky fire.

So our plea to the Speaker is stop continuing to throw pieces of red meat after red meat after red meat, piece after piece after piece of red meat to that rightwing lion in your caucus. Start taming the lion. That is what you have to do because otherwise that lion will devour you and devour the economy of our country.

The kind of narrow ideological approach that we have seen in the House will not get us anywhere. The shame of it all is that not every Member of the House, and I don't believe the Speaker, has that ideology, the sort of my-way-or-no-way ideology, the no-compromise ideology, and it is time to break free. It is time to do what is good for the country.

A short-term solution will not work. The leader has just made clear that as soon as the House passes its bill, it will be defeated in the Senate. Let's not waste 5, 6, 7, 8 more hours. Let's start negotiating something that will save this country from potential financial catastrophe now.

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

Mr. SCHUMER. I would be happy to yield to my friend from Iowa.

Mr. HARKIN. I thank the Senator from New York for his very lucid remarks and for his great leadership in trying to get through this mess.

I say to my friend, a lot of people in the country are looking and thinking that this is some kind of food fight; that somehow everybody is to blame for this here in Washington.

I ask my friend, the Senator from New York, isn't it true that there are some 50 members of the Republican caucus in the House who have said forthrightly that they will not vote to raise the debt ceiling under any circumstance? One of those, of course, being Representative BACHMANN, who is seeking the Presidential nomination on their ticket, said she would not vote to raise it under any circumstance.

Does the Senator know of any one Democrat, either in the House or the Senate, who has said they would not vote to raise the debt ceiling under any circumstance? I ask the Senator, is there one? I have not been able to find one.

Mr. SCHUMER. I thank my colleague from Iowa for the question. I concur in his findings. I haven't found one either.

Democrats know we have different views on this side of the aisle, and many of us would write deficit-reduction bills differently than some others of us would. But we realize that to let the debt ceiling lapse would be a disaster to not raise it. So I have not heard of a single Democrat who has said the debt ceiling ought to lapse, and I have heard scores of Republicans, elected, official Republicans and thousands of others and groups in that rightwing firmament pushing their members to let this debt ceiling lapse.

My guess is—and God forbid it happens; and we are doing everything we can to prevent it from happening—they will retract that language or they will find ways to explain what they meant because their analysis that it doesn't matter or it will not do much harm is, unfortunately, dead wrong.

Mr. HARKIN. If the Senator will yield for another question. Again, there is a lot of misunderstanding—and I sympathize with this—among the general populous that somehow raising the debt ceiling means that somehow we can go and borrow more money in the future and go further in debt.

Isn't it true that raising the debt ceiling just simply means that we are going to pay for what so many of us, Republicans and Democrats, have

voted in the past to appropriate money for? I ask my friend, it is like using your credit card to go out and buy something, but now you say, I don't want to pay the bill? I think that kind of puts it in terms that the average American can understand. If you have used your credit card, and you have run up a debt, you have to pay the bills; otherwise, your credit is going to go down, and you are going to lose your credit card, and you are not going to be able to do anything else.

Isn't that sort of what we are confronting? In the past, Democrats and Republicans—we all share the blame, perhaps, for having deficits. We can go into the causes of that. I don't mean to do that here. But the fact is, the United States of America has an obligation to pay its bills. The Republicans say, no, they don't want to pay the bills. Doesn't that sort of strike the average American as saying: Wait a minute. No, we have to honor our debts. We have always honored our debts in this country since the Revolutionary War. Is that not the fact?

Mr. SCHUMER. That is absolutely the fact. My colleague from Iowa is exactly correct.

The bottom line is, yes. What we are talking about with the debt ceiling is debts we have already incurred. No American family has the luxury, once they sign up for a mortgage, to tell the bank: Well, I am not going to pay you unless you do A, B, and C. No American family has the luxury of telling the credit card company: Hey, unless you buy me a year's supply of groceries, I am not going to pay my credit card debt.

Once you incur the debt, you have an obligation to pay. That is one of the foundations of American life. It has been that foundation since Alexander Hamilton argued with Thomas Jefferson, and it has served our country well.

The awful example that it would set if America, this great land, this Federal Government said: Well, I am not going to pay the debt, I am not going to pay the debt unless A, B, C, D is done—what kind of example does that send to American families, to American young people? It is the opposite, frankly, of the conservative philosophy—part of which I agree with in this regard—that you pay your bills, that you pay your debts. If you don't, there is a consequence.

So it is just amazing. This is the first time, I believe—check the history books—in American history where a large group in either House of this Congress has made it a campaign not to pay the debt unless they get their way on certain other issues, whatever they be. If every one of us did that, this country would be paralyzed. We wouldn't be able to do a thing. It is leading down a road that nobody should want to travel.

Mr. HARKIN. I would like to ask one more question and then I would yield.

Isn't it true that we—I would say the Senator from New York has been a leader in this and so many others here. We want to, first of all, pay our bills, but then we want to get our deficit under control and reduce our debt. To that end, on the Democratic side, I would say we have tried to propose a balanced approach, I ask my friend from New York, who has been a leader in this area of both cutting spending and also raising revenue so that we are kind of all in this together.

We are asking everyone. We are not willing just to cut the deficit on the backs of the poor or people who are out of work, the elderly on Medicare. We are saying everybody has to take a little bit. But we are also going to ask some sacrifice from those who have much in our society; that we want to raise some revenue from those who have benefited in the last 10, 15 years so much and have gotten so much wealth in our society. We are asking for them also to share in this.

We have proposed that, have we not, I ask the Senator? And has it not been true that the Republican side has been unwilling to ask the richest people in our country to help us reduce the deficit? They will not agree to any revenues. I ask my friend from New York, is that not the case?

Mr. SCHUMER. Again, my colleague from Iowa is on the money.

There needs to be balance. The President has stressed this. I think everyone on our side has stressed this. We do have a serious deficit problem and a serious debt problem. We have to deal with it. I think there is agreement in this Chamber, and I will give some credit to those on the other side of the aisle who made this their signature issue in influencing policy. But if we are going to have to do that and do belt tightening, shouldn't it be across the board?

Here is the fact of the matter: If you are a middle-class person, it is hard to pay for college. It is hard to pay for prescription drugs. It is hard to take that paycheck and make sure it deals with all the needs you and your spouse and your children have. Over the years, we have established ways that the government helps with student loans or with prescription drug programs or other kinds of help. It so happens that the wealthy among us, God bless them, don't need a student loan. They have plenty of money to pay for their children's college. They don't need a prescription drug plan. Even with the high expense of these prescription drugs, they can afford it. God bless them.

The way the wealthy benefit from the Tax Code, because they have a lot of money, is there are tax expenditures, tax breaks they get. They think they are important. I understand that. But they are no more important than helping young people go to college or helping our elderly, average folks pay for their prescription drugs. If you are going to be across the board and you are going to say no revenues, you are going to have an unbalanced and unfair approach.

Let me say this: Our colleagues on the other side of the aisle have tried to scare people. This has not happened just this year but for many years. They say: Democrats want to raise your taxes. That is not the case if you are an average middle-class American. In fact, the President has made it a watch word, and we have religiously concurred and followed, that no one who makes below $250,000 a year should get any tax increase. That is 97 percent of all Americans.

So when we say we want revenues, we are talking about two things: We are talking about tax breaks, tax loopholes for the very wealthy, whether they be individuals or corporations, and we are talking about tax breaks for the wealthiest among us who, under the previous administration, got much greater breaks than anybody else. That is all we are talking about.

So I would ask my colleagues, I would ask the American people to understand that. Don't be scared when somebody gets up and says they want to raise taxes, that it means your taxes. It doesn't unless, God bless you, you have a whole lot of money or you are a corporation with a very nice little break that may not be as necessary as, say, helping middle-class students go to college or helping the elderly get lifesaving prescription drugs. So there has to be balance.

Now, I know my good colleague from Iowa, who has spent his lifetime creating government programs that help people, it pains him when he hears there has to be spending cuts in those programs. But I have never heard him say: If there are any spending cuts, I am not going to vote for deficit reduction. But the mirror image on this side says: I will not vote for any bill if it even has one plug nickel of revenues. That is not fair. That is not right. That is not balanced. It is totally against what just about every American believes, including a majority of Republicans. So that is why we are making this fight.

I will say one other thing in reference to my colleague's question. It is unfair when the commentators and the people say: Well, on the one hand, the Democrats aren't compromising and, on the other hand, the Republicans aren't compromising. I understand that we should always not just look at our own position and try to understand somebody else's position. That is the way it works around here; otherwise, we would have a dictator, a benevolent dictator. We do not. But when we are willing to give on spending cuts, serious spending cuts we do not like, and the other side says they are not willing to give a nickel on revenues, it is not each side is failing to give. It is not that each side is compromising a value. It is not that each side has walked about the same distance to come up with a compromise. In this case—it is not true every time—my Republican friends have been unwilling to compromise one jot and we have been willing to do things very painful to us.

I say to my friends who comment and write about this: Be fair. Let the public know who is willing to move away from their hard-line position for the sake of compromise, for the sake of raising the debt ceiling, for the sake of getting our large debt and deficit down, and who has refused to budge. I think the answer is pretty obvious.

I yield the floor.

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

THE FAA REAUTHORIZATION

Mr. BENNET. I thank the Senator from Alaska for allowing me to jump ahead in the queue. I will have a word to say about the issues raised by the Senators from Iowa and New York at the end, but I am rising to talk about an issue that is actually separate. I have been out on the floor week after week talking about the debt limit and debt reduction negotiations, but today I want to talk about another absurd and needless Washington-inflicted, what I can only think of as a mistake, and that is the partial shutdown of the FAA. This shutdown—while buried in the headlines—is affecting Colorado jobs and the economy across the United States. Unable to walk and chew gum at the same time, Congress's inability to resolve this impasse has caused the furloughing of thousands of workers nationwide and put at risk several very important summer construction projects at our airports in Colorado.

Earlier this year, the Senate worked together to pass a long-term FAA reauthorization bill. This important bill, which I supported, will modernize our Nation's air transportation system and reduce frustrating and costly delays. The American people would be astonished to learn how antiquated our system is right now. But the House and Senate conference committee have been unable to finalize the bill.

Last Friday, Congress failed to pass a short-term authorization measure to buy negotiators more time. Now certain FAA functions have been shut down. This shutdown makes absolutely no sense to the people in Colorado who rely on this industry for their livelihoods, their businesses, and travel.

I know the same is true in Alaska. It is more than that. Colorado has a short summer construction season—probably not as short as Alaska's, but nevertheless short—and many airports set aside the summer months to complete much-needed improvement projects, so this shutdown has come at the worst time for them.

In Loveland-Fort Collins Airport in Colorado, they are very near cancelling a planned runway improvement project. Loveland-Fort Collins is a one-runway airport. Officials had already canceled summer flights to accommodate a $7 million runway rebuilding project. Now they could be forced to shelve the project, which was bringing around 150 jobs to the area.

At Pueblo Memorial Airport—by the way, keep in mind this is about Washington's dysfunction. There are not big policy debates here. It is Washington turning its back on the rest of the country once again. At Pueblo Memorial Airport, officials have said they may be forced to delay a $12 million runway rebuilding project.

At the Durango Airport, officials are concerned that an ongoing $3 million apron rehabilitation project—which currently employs 30 Coloradans—will receive a stop-work order next week if Congress refuses to act.

At the Denver International Airport, one of the crown jewels in this country, officials are concerned that the shutdown will affect scheduled concrete and asphalt work on a runway and maintenance on passenger loading bridges.

These delays could affect the overall safety of Colorado airports and they are affecting jobs right now.

Nationwide, an estimated 3,500 FAA workers began to be furloughed this past Saturday; 27 of these workers are in Colorado. They were either sent home or forced to work without pay.

To his credit, Chairman ROCKEFELLER recently introduced legislation that would allow the FAA to continue to pay those workers during the shutdown. I have cosponsored the legislation. I hope the Senate considers doing it today, but we need to do more than that. We have been asked to do more than the bare minimum by our constituents. We have gotten to the point around here where just keeping the lights on somehow is a success. That is a pretty low bar. It is a low bar to Heather Hilgers of Englewood, CO. She is an engineer. Airports hire her to complete construction projects so they can meet FAA safety standards. She wrote to my office:

> Next week, if there is no one to reimburse the contractor, the job has to stop. The stall is affecting engineering contracts. The visible impact would be the construction contractors' jobs.

Andrew Vogt of Denver, CO, is also an engineer. He wrote:

> It's a frustrating experience that this whole industry has gone through. We are hoping a long-term solution can be achieved in short order.
>
> As a professional engineer, certified construction manager for airport improvement projects, there is literally no work to do this year. . . . Put me back to work.

Jeff Campbell, also of Engelwood, CO—these are not government employees, by the way. We are talking about private-sector employees whose jobs and expectations and salaries and plans for their families are being put on hold by the games that are being played here in Washington.

Jeff Campbell, also of Engelwood, CO, is an aviation engineer who is involved with five projects that are being affected by the shutdown. One is the failing runway at Fort Collins-Loveland. He said 150 people, expecting to begin work next week, are about to be put on hold and the project will have to be rebid for the third time.

A lot of people in Congress talk about putting people back to work. They talk about fiscal responsibility. But this delay is costing thousands of jobs and an estimated $30 million a day in lost revenue. If this shutdown continues, these losses could dwarf the entire yearly budget of the EAS Program, which some claim is holding up the bill. Congress must not allow the debate over our debt limit or deficit to prevent action on a short-term FAA extension. Such inaction only proves once again to the American people how broken this place is.

It would be a terrible shame for Members of Congress to resolve this debt debate, adjourn, and board their planes home for recess without resolving this issue. What a slap in the face to people all across this country. On behalf of our constituents who make a much more forceful case than I ever could, I implore my colleagues and Members of the House to resolve this impasse and reauthorize FAA now.

THE DEBT LIMIT

With the indulgence of the Senator from Alaska, I want to take the opportunity to say a word or two about this debt limit discussion we are having right now. We face enormous challenges in our country right now. Our economy is almost producing what it was producing before we went into this terrible recession, but we have 14 million people who are unemployed. The great productive American economy has figured out how to produce what it was producing before with fewer people. But we have not figured out how to put people back to work. My own view is that we need to look hard at our Tax Code, our regulatory code, and other things to make sure we are inspiring innovation and job growth here in the United States and we are not just shipping it overseas and saying it is too bad for everybody who is here.

We are at the end of a decade when median family income has declined for the first time in our country's history. It never happened before. The cost of health care has gone up. The cost of higher education has gone up. It is harder and harder for the middle class in this country to survive. If you are a child living in poverty in the United States, your chances of getting a college education are 9 in 100 in the 21st century in the greatest country in the world.

There are countries all over this globe that sense weakness, that are trying to out-compete us, trying to out-educate us, trying to out-invest in their infrastructure while we play foolish political games. They are not waiting for permission from us to out-compete us.

One of the single greatest assets this country has had since almost its founding has been our bulletproof credit rating. It has been the fortress that is our full faith and credit of the United States. Financial transactions all over the globe, spanning decades, centuries, have been financed based on the

strength of our credit, the full faith and credit of the United States, and generation after generation of politicians has done everything they could to protect it, as any mayor in my State, as any superintendent of schools in my State, would do anything to make sure they protected the credit rating of their city or of their school district.

Now we face, for the first time in our country's history, a threat of downgrade, a threat that our interest rates would spike. That is not a political observation; that is coming from the credit rating agencies. They are not politicians. What the math tells us is that every 1-percent increase in our cost of borrowing adds $1.3 trillion to our debt over the next 10 years, making the problems we face today even harder to solve.

The President knows I have supported for a long time a comprehensive approach, one that would actually make a meaningful difference to our debt and to our deficit, and I will continue to fight for it, as will, I know, the Senator from Alaska. But it is time for Washington to move past these political games and reassure our capital markets that we are not going to be the first generation of Senators to blow up our credit rating over politics, to reduce the full faith and credit of the United States to rubble—for politics. I don't want to be somebody who, 30 years from now or 40 years from now where somebody comes and says: Hey, we detect you were once in the Senate, you were 1 of 100 people here when we compromised one of the greatest assets this country has.

I implore the leadership of both parties, both here and in the House, to work this out. Then let's get on with the tough discussion we have to have about our debt and deficit.

Mr. President, I thank again the Senator from Alaska for allowing me to speak ahead of him, and also for his leadership throughout this entire debate. He, like a number of us, has been working hard with Members across the aisle to try to get a bipartisan solution that is balanced and that makes sense heading toward the future. I thank him for his leadership.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Alaska.

Mr. BEGICH. Mr. President, my friend and colleague from Colorado is always so passionate on the floor when it comes to the issues pertinent not only to his State and his country. He has laid out such a logical case on the debt of this Nation and why we need to deal with it. I will address the debt also.

But I came down here, like the Senator from Colorado, to talk about the FAA reauthorization bill. I was not planning to come down. I was in my office. As Senators, we have lots of meetings, events, activities and photo ops—meet and greets, they call them. People come in and say hello and chit-chat take a few photographs with you. They are residents from your State.

I was sitting there and having a great conversation with young people, four of them from Girls and Boys Nation here from the American Legion Auxiliary: Clara Farley, from Kodiak, Joseph Mueller from Healy, Derick Hanna from Palmer, and Marissa Torgerson from Anchorage. Then there was another young woman who was there, a young leadership student, Jocelyn Cayce from Juneau.

You know, to have a ''photo op'' is what they call them. We shake hands and take some photos. It was interesting having this conversation. The first question they asked me was what was going to happen with the debt of this Nation. Before I elaborate on my thoughts and what I told them, I, first would like to talk about the FAA extension because they are both related. The FAA bill and what is going on with the debt is all related. It is related because of the House majority's inability to function and their inability to do their work.

The FAA is a great example. I know the Senator from Colorado mentioned that the conference committee has not brought out a bill. What is amazing about this is the Senate appointed their conferees in April. For those who are watching, the way this works is the House passes a bill and the Senate passes a bill. They are not always exactly the same, so they go to a joint conference committee made up of Members from the House and Members from the Senate—Democrats and Republicans—and they work out a compromise. The Senate appointed their Members to the conference committee in April. The House has not appointed anybody.

The battle we are in is because of one person. There is one person who has decided that 4,000 people should be furloughed—about 80 in Alaska—to stop projects that are critical to the safety of air transportation. I can tell you there is no other State that depends on air transportation like Alaska, with 82 percent of our communities not able to be accessed by road, they are predominantly accessed by air. For one person in the House to decide he wants to play politics with aviation safety because he doesn't like something—oddly enough, the items he wanted to eliminate are from States that are represented by Democrats and chairmen of committees. It is unbelievable.

I did not come here 2½ half years ago to play those games. I came here to do the work the people of Alaska sent me to do. Part of that work was to make sure the Federal Aviation Administration actually has a reauthorization they can operate under because they haven't had it since 2007. I was elected in 2008. There have been 20 short term extensions of the FAA's authority while the House and Senate try to pass legislation and work out the differences. The Senate did pass a bill. We did our work. We did it, and we did it with a lot of debate.

I sit on the Senate Commerce, Science and Transportation Committee with jurisdiction over the FAA. Senator ROCKEFELLER and Senator HUTCHISON, Democrat and Republican, worked in a bipartisan manner with all the members. The Senate passed our FAA bill. The House passed theirs, and now we are waiting for the House to appoint conferees. We are waiting for the House to do something. Not one person. That is not how this system should work. They need to appoint conferees so we can sit down and resolve these final minor issues. Instead the chairman in the House decides he knows best.

Here is what happens: Yes, 4,000 FAA employees get furloughed all across this country. These are people who have mortgage payments to make and kids planning to go to college this fall, or maybe they are the only breadwinner in their homes—but 4,000 people are furloughed.

There are 79 FAA employees in Alaska who have been furloughed. Compound that with the next piece of the equation. Part of the FAA reauthorization bill is to invest in our aviation infrastructure. I think I will hit 100,000-plus miles this year, maybe more, 125,000 miles flying back and forth from Washington to my home State, visiting communities all across my State. I pay a small fee like everyone who flies does. We pay for our airline tickets and a portion goes to the FAA, who then invests this money into making our runways and our air traffic facilities safer. It is the people who fly who pay for our aviation system, and their money goes to the FAA to pay for the improvements that we use to make sure we fly safely. It is not complicated. Yet what is happening because the FAA doesn't have the authority to collect this fee, is the airlines and passengers are getting a tax holiday. That fee is important. I will get back to that fee and what has happened with that money.

First, without that money, we cannot do airport construction projects. It is all part of the system. In Alaska it is a pretty important piece.

In Bethel, a project now has a stop-work order issued by the FAA because they cannot complete the project without an extension. As my friend from Colorado mentioned, Colorado has a short construction season, and we have a very short construction season in Bethel, Alaska. We are trying to build a project that improves the approach lights to make it safer for people to land at the Bethel Airport. That project has been stopped. There is no other access to Bethel except by air. Bethel is 400 miles from Anchorage, the largest city in the State, by air. We cannot drive to Bethel. That project has stopped because the House hasn't passed a clean FAA extension.

Another project makes seismic improvements to the air traffic control tower in Anchorage. People say it is just a tower, what does it matter? The

tower is old. It needs improvements. It is not only important for Alaska and the people who would work on the project, it is important for this country. We are the third busiest air cargo airport—in the sense of cargo throughput—in the world. We move products that are produced in this country and around the world through Anchorage. If you are shipping something to Europe or Asia and you are west of the Mississippi, the odds are you are coming through Anchorage's international airport.

Almost 700 wide-body jets fly through Anchorage every single week carrying cargo. It is the third busiest airport in terms of cargo throughput in the world. It is an economic engine. It is a job creator. I remember almost 25 years ago when the idea came from a couple of companies, FedEx and UPS. They said: We will look at Anchorage as our international hub because of its location. Today it is a robust facility and many other airlines cargo carriers use our airport facilities. It is huge.

Instead of the House doing their job and appointing conferees to resolve this issue, one person in the House decided he wanted to play politics over the life-safety of our air traffic system, the Federal aviation system, and now that project is not happening. Not only are the 79 FAA employees furloughed in Alaska, but projects in Bethel and Anchorage are not moving forward. So that means the private contractors—it is not government employees who make these improvements and build lighting systems or remodel the tower. It is private contractors who employ people who then pay mortgages and buy cars and spend money in the economy and help our economy move forward. This is clearly a job-killing action. That is what it is. They will say some other reasons, but that is what it is doing. It is killing jobs, and it is hurting America.

Again, it costs more because when the construction season in Bethel is over in the next month or month and a half, we don't get to come back in November and say we are going to finish this project. We can't. The weather conditions don't allow it.

What will happen is, next year the costs will go up because the private contractor will have to remobilize—I hear a lot from folks on the other side over there in the House talk about the private sector. I am from the private sector. I don't know how many of those guys worked in the private sector, but I have. That is where I made my living, and that is how my wife makes her living, from the private sector. They spout off about how they want to support the private sector. Well, pass the FAA reauthorization legislation that the private sector supports and wants moved forward for the creation of more jobs and the opportunity to make our air safer.

Again, it is astounding to me how dysfunctional the House majority is and how they are unable to do their work. They complained a lot earlier this year that the Senate doesn't do their job, and we are not doing our work. We are doing our work. We passed the Military Construction-VA bill. We passed the FAA bill. We passed several things. They go over there and they die. They go over there, and they have one person who decides they know best.

A lot of those guys ran in 2010 on the effort to open government, 72 hours to review bills, which is great. I have not seen it. They had some Rules Committee meeting earlier last night or whatever late night they did it to set the rules on what they are going to vote on in less than 12 or 13 hours. I am sure that has been notified to a lot of people. It is amazing they ran on the fact that they want to open government, the system is broken, and then it is so dysfunctional over there.

The FAA bill, as I mentioned, these airlines collect fees that then go to the FAA to make sure all this happens. It is part of the fee we pay to travel. Now the FAA is not authorized to collect it, but what happened? Several of these airlines jacked up their fees to collect the money for their own. There is $200 million a week coming from consumers into the pockets of these airlines for their profit, not to improve the safety of the airports, which is what the money is supposed to be designed for. I will say Alaska Airlines—and I am proud to say Alaska Airlines, Hawaiian Airlines, and Spirit Airlines are three examples of companies that did not do that. They did not jack up the price to the consumer for their own bottom line. Also, remembering that those fees are for the purpose of improving airports and not improving the corporate profits or the CEO's million-dollar-plus checks they get at the end of the year for the work they do.

The problem is—something like this happened many years ago—we are not going to be able to get those resources back to make sure these airports are safer.

I, of course, implore the airlines to do one of two things: Lower those fares they jacked up or put that money aside and work with Congress to make sure that money goes into the fund to ensure that we improve these airports. I challenge every one of those airlines that have done that.

As a consumer who is watching this issue, you should be appalled that $200 million a week that you thought was going to improve the airports you fly through, it is not. It is going into the pockets for profit for some of these companies. Again, I point out Alaska Airlines, Hawaiian Airlines, Spirit Airlines are a few of the only major airlines that are not doing that. I commend them for that. I commend them for doing the right thing by the consumer.

I was originally coming down and going to talk—as I got inspired by the students sitting there—about the budget, but then I wanted to talk about the FAA. I want to get back to the budget.

As I mentioned, these young people came to my office and asked the first question: What are we going to do about the debt? Great. It is the question of the day. What are we going to do? We can debate how we got here. Everyone got us here: Democrats, Republicans, current, past, everybody. We have a problem. We have a challenge. I know the Presiding Officer is new. You came here to solve problems, create solutions, not just play the politics and push it off for another day, but actually do some things. That is why people sent me here, and I know that is why they sent you here: to do the job the American people expect us to do—I know Alaskans expect me to do.

There is no question in my mind why we are here today. It is because, again, the House majority, I will point out, cannot do their job. They are unable to do their job. They are not dealing with reality.

Do I want to add more debt to the Nation? No. No one does. As my colleague from Colorado earlier said—and I know the Presiding Officer—we have been working on ideas. One thing that is unique about the Senate is there is an effort here—it may not be as visible as the press would like to portray because they would like to see the battles, that is better press. There is a lot of bipartisan discussion going on. The Gang of 6, you can argue if that is good or bad, but the point is three Republicans, three Democrats sat down for months. In the Budget Committee, we sat down for months. We came up with proposals. We are talking to Republicans. Republicans are talking to Democrats. We are looking for solutions. We are trying to weed through this. The Senate is trying to do this. We are trying to solve this problem and create a solution that moves us forward. But there are several in the House majority over there who believe to drive off a cliff is good policy. I don't know, I don't think that is good policy. I would rather drive on the road, going somewhere. That is what we are trying to do over the next few days.

As I think of the differences—and people say: Well, why don't you just take that deal or this deal? Here is the difference. They are fundamental. They are not complicated. The deal the leader, Speaker BOEHNER, has in the House is about $900 billion in reductions. It is short term. It has a joint committee to look to the long term. What is the Reid proposal? The Reid proposal, as it is now scored by CBO—the Congressional Budget Office, for those who are watching and wondering what all these things mean—is $2.2-plus trillion in reductions, almost 2½ times more than the House version, and it is long term. Here is why that is important. I am not voting for anything short term. Let me make that very clear to the Presiding Officer and others who might be watching. If we want to disrupt and continue to disrupt this economy, keep doing these shenanigans and keep doing these

2-, 3-, 4-month deals, that is disastrous to this economy.

I have heard and talked to business leader after business leader, from associations, to individuals, to people back in my home State, and they say over and over: Don't do short term. Whatever you decide, give us certainty—certainty.

The unique thing about the U.S. Senate and the U.S. House: Only we would describe long term as 16, 18 months because that is all we can do around here. But short term, as one can imagine, is 3, 4 months. That would be more disruptive to this economy than anything we can imagine because all we do as we shift it—and I can describe this because I understand this business. I have been in it. My wife is in it. Here is what happens. We will have this same debate in November, probably. Here is what happens in November. This is the biggest time for people who are buying. For retailers, this is the most important time—actually, back to school a little bit, but November through December is when people make their expenditures and are buying things, consuming, and spending money in our economy. But people always like to blame Democrats: It is all about government. I come from the private sector. As I said earlier, that is where I made my living. It is an important part of our economy.

So here we are going to debate, create more uncertainty at the most important time, when consumers are going to try to judge what to do. What do they do? Do they spend a little bit extra for a gift for their friend? Do they go on that trip they were planning? Do they make that extra expenditure? Yet we will have the same debate. So long term is important—again, 16, 18 months, but that is better than the short-term plan.

No businessperson has come to me—and I challenge any businessperson: Pick up the phone. Call me. Let me know. Tell me you want a short term, and I will be happy to come down here to the floor and say that. I will mention your company name. I will tell people: This company is interested in short term. I would be happy to do that. I am not going to get those calls because they know that is not the way to run a business, that is not the way to run a household, and that sure as heck should not be the way we run our government.

So there is a clear difference. For all of those people who—I get a lot of pro and con on this issue, calling my office, sending me e-mails—for all of those people who say: Hey, just vote for the Boehner thing, I will tell them why I will not. I want people to understand clearly my position. It is not about, he is a Republican, I am a Democrat. That is irrelevant. It is short term. It is fewer spending reductions. It keeps us in turmoil. It doesn't move us forward. It is all about shenanigans and gameplaying and politics. That is what he is presenting.

Now, maybe the Reid proposal isn't perfect. I know there are Republicans who have some ideas here in the Senate who want to modify it. Great. But it is long term, it has more significant reductions, and it moves us down a path in the right direction. It is not perfect, but I can tell my colleagues that the idea they have over there will not work for this economy.

I have probably spoken too long, but those kids from Juneau and Healy and Anchorage and Kodiak had a great question. When kids are asking that question and they say to me—and I give them the same exact presentation. I say: Here are the differences. I give them the papers and say: Here, you look at it. And they say to me: Why aren't we doing a long term, because these kids are now at an age where they are thinking about their future. They are not thinking about the next weekend; they are thinking about their future. They have a position we could learn a lot from around this place, I will tell my colleagues they made it very clear to me: Whatever you do, make it long term, because they are thinking about their future and where they want to be. It is an incredible commentary when we have kids who have more wherewithal in the sense of their knowledge of what should be done in the body we sit in today. It should wake us up.

The last thing I will note is this. I think about what my colleague from Colorado said about the value of our position in this world when it comes to ensuring that people understand America will stand behind everything we do—the debt we do, the positions we take. As a matter of fact, it was so important, it was written into the Constitution that we should never question the ability to pay our bills.

For those on the other side who like to spout off, and they pull out of their pocket the little portable Constitution—all of us get those; we all have those—and they cite the Constitution, sometimes they forget sections of it. I hope we don't forget this section. We should never be questioned in regard to our debt. We pay our bills. We stand behind what we do. That is what makes our country different from any country in this world.

So I challenge them to get their job done, maybe on the FAA bill, maybe on this issue involving the debt, but the House needs to get their act together—the majority. Let me make that clear. The majority over there needs to get their job done, quit killing things over there, from jobs to legislation, and focus on the work people sent them here—especially the group of 2010—but who sent me here and sent the Presiding Officer here—we were sent here to do a job.

It is outrageous to me that we cannot move forward when it is so simple in the sense of a plan that gets us on a path that is long term and has better spending reductions. Maybe it is too logical. Maybe that is the problem around here: If it is too simple, too logical, it doesn't work. It has to be complicated with a lot of gamesmanship is the only way it works. I want to prove that wrong.

I thank the Chair for allowing me the time to say a few words. Hopefully, the people who are watching us and listening will hear the real debate and cut through all the moment-in-time politicizing. Maybe, hopefully, they will hear those five kids whom I heard and will hear their concerns and what their position is.

So, again, I thank the Chair for the time, and I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Minnesota.

Mr. FRANKEN. Mr. President, are we in morning business?

The PRESIDING OFFICER. We are in morning business.

TRIBUTE TO BERT BLYLEVEN

Mr. FRANKEN. Mr. President, I rise today to pay tribute to former Minnesota Twins pitcher Bert Blyleven, who this week received his sport's highest honor when he was inducted into the Major League Baseball Hall of Fame.

To Bert, I offer hearty and well-deserved congratulations.

To the rest of the baseball world, I ask the question: What took so long? In the 14 years since he first became eligible for the Hall of Fame, we in Minnesota all assumed that, with his rare talent and Hall of Fame numbers, Bert was a shoo-in, and for many of those 14 years he was considered the best player never to have been inducted. I am proud to say as a Minnesotan and a lifelong Twins fan that this year Bert Blyleven was officially voted into the Hall of Fame.

People in Minnesota all know Bert belongs on the distinguished list of Minnesota Twins already in the Hall of Fame, including Harmon Killebrew, Rod Carew, and Kirby Puckett, as well as two other baseball greats who grew up in St. Paul, MN, and later played for the Twins and were inducted into the Hall of Fame: Paul Molitor and Dave Winfield. Each of them had Hall of Fame careers, and now Bert has finally joined them.

Bert pitched 22 seasons in the Major Leagues, 11 of them for the Twins, but he also took his talents to Texas, Pittsburgh, Cleveland, and California. During his career, he won 287 games, he struck out an amazing 3,701 batters, and is fifth on the alltime career strikeout list, with more career strikeouts than pitching greats Tom Seaver, Walter Johnson, Bob Gibson, Greg Maddux, Cy Young, or even his boyhood idol, Sandy Koufax. He pitched 60 shutouts and led the league in shutouts three times. He had a career earned run average of just 3.31. He pitched 242 complete games, something that would be unheard of today. He played on two world championship teams: in Minnesota, with the 1987 Twins and in Pittsburgh. For Twins fans, we all know Bert was a major part of that

1987 Twins world championship team which we all revere for finally bringing a world championship to our State. And we won again in 1991.

Bert mentioned in his acceptance speech on Sunday that he is the first Hall of Famer born in Holland. He moved to California as a child and became interested in baseball by watching Sandy Koufax pitch for the Dodgers. His father Joe, also a baseball fan, built him a pitcher's mound in the backyard, where he developed one of the best curveballs in baseball history. I would like to think if my dad had built me—no, I don't think so.

Bert finished his playing career in 1992. In 1996, he rejoined the Twins in the broadcast booth, where for many years he and Dick Bremer have become familiar voices to Twins fans all over the upper Midwest. I personally love nothing more than watching a Twins game on TV and listening to Dick and Bert, who, in my humble opinion, are an authoritative and amazingly entertaining broadcast team.

During broadcasts, Bert has created a phenomenon using his telestrator to circle Twins fans who, whether they are in the Target Field or on the road, are holding up signs that catch Bert's interest, and then he will circle them. There is no higher honor for a Twins fan than to be circled by Bert, and every game is packed with fans holding signs that simply say ''Circle Me, Bert.''

It was great to see that Bert was joined at Sunday's induction ceremony by his wife Gayle, their children, Bert's siblings, and his mother Jenny. During his speech, Bert spoke about his father Joe, who died in 2004 of Parkinson's disease, saying, ''I know he is up there right now looking down.''

In memory of his father, Bert and his wife Gayle started the ''Circle Me, Bert'' Web site to raise research money for the National Parkinson Foundation Minnesota. That says volumes about Bert Blyleven. Bert is known in Minnesota for his dedication to other charities and to the community there.

So, once again, Bert, as a lifelong Twins fan, thank you and congratulations. After 14 years of waiting, you are hereby ''circled'' by the Major League Baseball Hall of Fame, where generations of fans from Minnesota and around the country and around the world will know of your career and of your amazing contributions to the game of baseball and to the community of Minnesota.

Thank you very much. I yield the floor and maybe also put in a word for Tony Oliva and also 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. LAUTENBERG. 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. LAUTENBERG. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent to speak for 15 minutes.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered. The Senator may speak for up to 15 minutes.

NATIONAL DEBT

Mr. LAUTENBERG. Mr. President, I think it is obvious to the world around us that the atmosphere here is hardly one of comfort or satisfaction. The public does not see the agony of the debate that is taking place, as we watch how dysfunctional the discussion about the national debt has been.

We feel the threat to America's world financial leadership that is lurking around here, and it is not very satisfying to those people whose homes are close to foreclosure or the people who need to be assured that health care is going to be there for them or that their child who can learn can get an education without mortgaging their future or cannot even get a mortgage on that.

So we look around and we watch and we listen and we see that the Republicans in the House and the Republicans in the Senate are in a search for political gain regardless of the cost to our society and our Nation.

I do not make this statement casually. But after months of watching and listening to the targeted goal of politics over the pain that could follow a default, no other conclusion may be drawn. We want to consider the evidence. By way of example, Vice President BIDEN convened a bipartisan working group to find solutions to get the national debt problem over with, get it resolved, and let us go on to our normal and needed debate and business. After that, Republicans walked out. Walked out.

Next, President Obama offered Republicans what he called a ''grand deal'' that would reduce the deficit by $4 trillion. Republicans ran away. Now our majority leader, HARRY REID, has proposed a plan that includes more than $2 trillion in spending cuts, $1 in cuts for every dollar the debt limit is increased—and not even insisting on a dollar of revenues, which has been suggested several times.

But there is no way of getting through the obstinacy on the other side. Republicans turn their back time after time. Democrats in this Senate and in the White House have offered the Republicans compromise after compromise. But they do not see their target. Their target is to do damage to the Obama administration so that it hurts sufficiently to discount the progress that has been made for our society under President Obama.

Time and time again the Republicans have changed their demands to find reasons to say no. Are we asking the Republicans to do something radical, something that has never been done before? That is certainly not the case. Over the past half century, the debt ceiling has been raised 75 times, almost two-thirds of those occasions under Republican Presidents. In fact, the debt ceiling was increased 18 times under President Reagan, and 7 times under President George W. Bush.

Our country has never defaulted. So the question that must be raised is: What is different about today? Why, at a time when we already face a real jobs crisis in this country, would Republicans plan for another economic crisis? Why would they do that? Will destroying the economy help Republicans win seats next year when people across our country are already expressing their dissatisfaction with the deadlock they see being displayed?

We heard the minority leader say his No. 1 priority is stopping the President from winning another term. What a goal that is. He is our President, elected by the people of the country. He has a term of 4 years and will be up for reelection. We hope and we pray that he continues to be the President of our country. What good does it do to target the system?

Make known what it is they stand for. So far we have seen that they stand for nothing that is helpful to the average American. So what we need is a chance to have an honest discussion. Insecurity reigns as people grow more and more conscious about their inability to afford the basics of life, jobs, health care, education. They see prices being raised around them as their purchasing power shrinks. Look at the price of gasoline. You see a perfect example of what is happening. We had one Republican Presidential candidate who was asked: ''Does it strike you that as the unemployment rate goes up your chances of winning office also go up?''

Do you know what her answer was? She said, ''I hope so.'' Hope so. What an outrageous thing to say from the halls of government, the high halls of government. I hope so. I hope that unemployment goes up, says she, so she might have a chance to win office. How cruel that statement is.

Make no mistake, if the United States Treasury runs out of cash next week, the principal burden will fall on middle-class families. But the effects on our total economy will be devastating as well. We may not be able to send out Social Security checks to seniors, benefit checks to veterans, the people who serve the country. Let's stop paying them? Or paychecks to the men and women who now bear our country's uniform in Afghanistan and Iraq. Sorry, we cannot pay you. Is that what we are going to say?

Interest rates could rise almost immediately, greatly increasing the cost of mortgages, car loans, student loans, credit cards, you name it. If middle-class Americans think their 401(k) plan suffered during the Wall Street crisis a few years ago, imagine what will happen to the markets if the U.S. Government cannot pay its bills, or redeem bonds that are ordinarily turned in for cash.

A default will lead to increased job losses at a time when we are still emerging from a recession and 14 million people are now out of work. And those are the relatively short-term impacts. A default crisis will damage our reputation, our credit standing around the world. It will call into question America's credibility, stability, financial leadership. It will make our bonds and our currency less attractive to investors, and we may never recover the exalted status of our financial instrument.

But in response to this looming crisis, our friends, the Republicans, are digging their trenches deeper and offering little but circuitous routes to avoid a more serious plan to resolve this situation. Their latest trick is to propose a short-term debt limit. That increase will leave us in the exact same position 6 months from now so they will have another opportunity to make political mischief.

Imagine. Imagine. All types of tricks, all kinds of devices to try and cut short something that can be dealt with and left behind. Let's continue trying to solve the serious problems that our country has.

The Boehner plan poses the same grave risk to our economy as default. CNN reported that the Boehner plan would probably still lead to a downgrade of the United States credit rating. Christian Cooper, head of U.S. dollar derivatives trading at Jefferies and Company, said—he is an authority:

> From the markets' point of view, a two-stage plan is a non-starter. . . . There is significant risk of a downgrade with a deal that ties further cuts to another vote only a few months down the road.

It is time for the Republicans to remember that all of our citizens are entitled to be heard, not just the wealthy ones, not just the millionaires, the billionaires, the tea partiers and the powerful, because they have positions that get attention when they make phone calls here.

Inherent in our responsibilities is our obligation to preserve our strength as a democratic society. It is time to get serious. No more sleight of hand. Honest discourse is essential. The other day we were reminded—I describe my own reaction. Shock. They had a picture of lovely looking young people walking away from daddy's airplane that they had—whether it is a charter or owned I do not know—to go to camp. I did well in business. I ran a big company. I got there because I got the GI bill to help me. The GI bill helped me start a company with two other fellows that now has 45,000 employees—45,000 jobs—because I was able to get an education under the GI bill. It was fantastic. So when I see what is being prized as a front-page picture in the New York Times of this child, looked like a lovely child walking to camp from daddy's airplane—and to me, I do not object to that. If they make their money the legal, responsible way, they can spend it any way they want. But why in the devil would they not want to contribute something to the underpinnings of this country? I do not understand it. Why is there resistance from those who have made so much that they can have yachts and airplanes and this and that? It is said sometimes here class warfare is what we are witnessing. Class warfare.

The warfare comes from the top down, because average citizens, those who work for a living, those whose jobs right now are often insecure, those who watch their 401(k), their precious savings maybe dwindling as a result of a negative change in the marketplace—saying to young people and their families, sons and daughters who have the capacity to learn: I wish that I could afford—says dad or mom—to send you to the right kind of a school that your ability suggests you can handle, but we cannot afford it—we do a disservice to that family. We do a disservice to country when those things happen. So I do not understand why those who have so much, made not by their own ingenuity exclusively but made by the fact that we have a foundation in this society of people who want to go to work every day and do the right thing. That is what holds up this facility of ours. I am not talking about the building, I am talking about the facility this country has.

You cannot build a house from the ceiling down, from the chimney down, and you cannot build a society from the top down. You need the underpinnings. You need those people who bring their skills daily to work and hold out hope for their children to succeed. That is what we need. We need a regeneration of the spirit in this country of ours.

But it is not going to happen when the Republicans' dominant view is: No, let's get Obama. That is what we have to do. Foul play. It is almost like desertion. I wore the country's uniform proudly, and that is what we are talking about, loyalty to country. It says we need everybody to participate. We are not going to get it with the foul schemes that are being proposed.

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

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

The bill clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

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

Mr. WHITEHOUSE. I am about to yield the floor to my distinguished senior Senator JACK REED. I ask unanimous consent at the conclusion of his remarks I be granted recognition.

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

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

TRIBUTE TO GOVERNOR SUNDLUN

Mr. REED. Mr. President, Senator WHITEHOUSE and I have come to the floor today to pay tribute to Governor Bruce Sundlun. He passed away last Thursday. He was an extraordinary gentleman.

I think it is particularly appropriate that my colleague is here along with me because he was the director of policy for Governor Sundlun, and many of the achievements in the Sundlun administration were directly attributed to Senator WHITEHOUSE's extraordinary efforts.

Today, I am here, first, as a Rhode Islander to say on behalf of the people of my State how much we appreciate the leadership, vision, and determination of Governor Bruce Sundlun. He was elected in the middle of the worst financial crisis in the history of our State since the Great Depression—a collapse of the private credit union system. He got through that crisis as only he could. Then he went on to reconstruct our airport, to reform our workers' compensation system, and to make lasting contributions to the people of Rhode Island.

So I come to salute an extraordinary Governor. I also come as a colleague in government. When Governor Sundlun was elected to the statehouse in 1990, I was elected to my first term in the Congress. I was there to observe his extraordinary intellect, determination, skill, and his relentless commitment to doing his best to help the people of Rhode Island. I saw it firsthand.

Truly, without Bruce's leadership, we would not have weathered the financial crisis of 1991 in Rhode Island. His extraordinary grasp of the financial details, his unwavering determination to do the right thing, not the popular thing, and his ability to withstand withering criticism from all quarters resulted not only in the restitution of the savings of thousands of Rhode Islanders, but essentially the repayment of the moneys that had to be borrowed to take care of the crisis. It was extraordinary work. Frankly, I think everybody in Rhode Island rapidly conceded that only Bruce Sundlun could have done it.

I also come here, like Bruce, as a veteran of our Armed Forces, but unlike Bruce, who was a combat veteran. Bruce joined the U.S. Army and qualified as a pilot in the Air Corps in World War II. He was brave. He was tough. He led his crew with great distinction on numerous bombing raids over occupied Europe. In one of those raids, he was shot down. Of course, he had the presence of mind to keep the aircraft as steady as he could to let crewmen escape.

Finally, at the last moment, he himself parachuted to Earth. He was behind enemy lines without any weapons except his determination, his courage, and his determination, again, not only to survive but to return to the fight.

Through an amazing series of breathtaking episodes that read like a novel, Bruce would go from village to village and seek out the priests in the French village, or Belgian village. He would

say in fluent French that he was an American flier and needed their help. He always received their help. He would be given assistance and would be hid for a while. He told me with his great sardonic smile—that he would find unusual ways to get around. He would go into the village at market time when the ladies of the village parked their bicycles, and he would take one of them and pedal as fast as he could to the next village where he could find another bike. So he covered the route through occupied Europe, finally making his way into Switzerland. That was a remarkable bit of courage.

After the war Bruce continued to distinguish himself in business, and in so many ways. But one thing is that he left a legacy not just to the people of Rhode Island, not just a public record, but he was part of the ''greatest generation'' that left an indelible image on the soldiers, sailors, aviators, and marines who serve today, a fidelity to duty, of courage, and of determination to serve and sacrifice on behalf of your comrades and your country. That image continues to sustain our forces in the field and this great Nation.

To Governor Sundlun, to his family, as a Rhode Islander, I thank you. As a colleague in government, I thank you. As someone who was inspired by your service to this country, I thank you. May you rest in peace.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The junior Senator from Rhode Island.

Mr. WHITEHOUSE. Mr. President, I am very pleased to follow Rhode Island's distinguished senior Senator with remarks about our friend and our former Governor, Bruce Sundlun. As Governor, he served with some of our colleagues who are in the Senate today, including BEN NELSON, who was Governor of Nebraska, and TOM CARPER who was Governor of Delaware. They served with Bruce, and he was one of those irrepressible characters they remember very distinctly to this day.

Bruce Sundlun had a remarkable Rhode Island life. He was the son of a jewelry store owner, who was the son of an immigrant watchmaker. It turns out that he had real athletic talent. He was a track star, breaking record after record around Rhode Island. It was as a competitor in that era that he first felt the sting of discrimination over being Jewish, and that gave him a lasting characteristic to stick up for the underdog.

As I mentioned at his funeral service, he was the opposite of a fair-weather friend. He became a better friend the stormier the weather got around you.

He went on, with his great generation, to defend our country and fight for freedom around the globe in World War II. He was a pilot of a B–17, the Damn Yankee, at a time when the life expectancy for bomber crews over Europe was not very long. Unfortunately, his aircraft was shot down and crashed in Belgium. He was able to survive the crash, although, as the pilot, he was the last living person out. When he went back to Belgium years later, people who remembered that day remembered being astonished at the parachute that appeared out of nowhere just above the ground, just before he hit, just in time to save him. But he was injured and hid in the manner of the purloined letter. He hid in plain sight as troops swept the area looking for the survivors of the bomber crash. He laid out in the middle of the field in a deep place in the plowed furrow where you could only see him if you got down at the end of the furrow and looked.

As the Nazi's were poking through the hay bales and prowling through the sheds and looking under whatever they could find, there he lay more or less in plain sight. But still, he was shot down on December 1, 1943. You can imagine how cold it was lying in that field in Belgium while the search went on around him for hours. For the rest of his life, he hated the cold. There was no weather that was too warm for him.

I remember when First Lady Hillary Clinton came to speak in Rhode Island when he was Governor, he was wearing this enormous black sheepskin coat—very thick and warm—as he prepared to step outside of the statehouse and go out on the stone deck looking out over downtown on a cold winter afternoon. Mrs. Clinton started needling him and saying how Jack Kennedy didn't need a coat and it was not really very fashionable and people would question how tough he was if he went out with this big coat on.

So he ended up taking off the coat. He went outside into the bitter cold, made the introduction of the First Lady, turned to welcome her to the podium, and out she came with a smile from ear to ear wearing his coat. He loved that kind of exchange with people. I think he immensely loved the Clintons. He was one of the first Governors—if not the first—to endorse President Clinton, and the Clintons never forgot it.

Bruce did not get to Switzerland until May 5, 1944. He spent 156 days as an American Jewish bomber pilot behind Nazi lines in Belgium and France. No greater testament to this man's resourcefulness and drive could be imagined than succeeding for that long in that circumstance.

When he came back from the war, he went to Harvard Law School and became an attorney at the Department of Justice. He was an assistant to a Rhode Islander who became Attorney General, J. Howard McGrath. He began a successful career in the law. It was also at a time when President Kennedy came to office representing that ''greatest generation''—then a new generation—and he trusted Bruce Sundlun to run his inaugural parade, which was the kind of logistics feat that Governor Sundlun loved.

The fact that it snowed like crazy the night before didn't phase him a bit. The entire parade went off on schedule and without incident, as planned, in very inclement weather because Bruce prepared so well in advance.

He was appointed to the board of COMSAT by President Kennedy. He was the longest serving director of COMSAT, a public-private partnership that helped open the skies to the space age. His business career was remarkable. He took a foundering airline, called Executive Jet, and turned it into the largest private and charter airline in the country. He took a department store in downtown urban Providence, at a time when New England cities were in decline, at a time when cities across the country were losing ground to the suburbs that were sprouting up around them—he took this dying business, I guess you would say, and he saw in that downtown department store a media empire. He went off and began buying radio stations and TV stations and created this remarkable company, the Outlet Corporation, as a media empire. He also turned it into a refuge from time to time.

In the blizzard of 1978, the State of Rhode Island was clobbered by snow. People were trapped downtown for hours and hours, in some cases days. He saw to it that the Outlet Company stayed open, that the cafeteria kept serving, and that the department store that sold clothing gave clothing to whoever needed it. The part of the store that sold bedding was spread all over the store so people could sleep on the bedding. He responded to a crisis better than anybody I know. It brought out his best characteristics, which were certainly necessary when he was elected Governor, because on the very first day of his administration, he was obliged to close more than 30 different lending institutions across Rhode Island, serving more than 300,000 of Rhode Island's 1 million population.

He went from being sworn in, to the receiving line where he greeted all his happy supporters and all the welcoming officials and the well-wishers who came from Rhode Island, and rolled immediately from that into a press conference in which he announced they had to close these institutions because the deposit insurance provider ended up having been crooked and had failed and they could not operate without deposit insurance. So they had to be closed. That was a heck of a way to start a governorship.

He also found out that he had inherited the biggest budget deficit the State had ever seen, and we could never find a State with a bigger percentage deficit than he inherited. The compensation system melted down, and every worker's compensation insurer said: I am leaving the State.

A lesser person might have failed under all that pressure. Not only did Bruce meet all of those exigencies of the moment, he also worked very hard to set a better ethical tone and restructured our State government so that it would be lasting because most of those things went wrong because of failures

in ethics in the Rhode Island State Government.

That was a pretty remarkable added accomplishment on top of solving all those underlying problems. He had confidence in Rhode Island and in America, and we were in a terrible recession. So he went to work and got things done. He built a new airport terminal, he got a new mall started that would be built, he built a new hotel that allowed for the convention center to go forward and so he built a new convention center. He changed the skyline of Providence. He moved one of our universities to a downtown campus. He understood that in times of economic distress, activity was good and positive activity that brought jobs was better still.

In his personal characteristics, he was a remarkable individual. He was relentless, determined, and decisive when issues were presented to him. With his staff, he was demanding and abrupt and terse. I asked him once why he didn't bother to say hello. When a person got a phone call from him, he just started talking at them, and when the conversation was over, he hung up without saying goodbye or any pleasantries. I said: Don't you think it would go a little further if you said hello and goodbye in your telephone conversations? He said: How much time do you think I would waste in my entire life? Add up all the times you have wasted saying hello and goodbye. Doesn't do anything that is productive. He had that kind of attitude. But he was bold and he was willing to take big leaps. I guess, back to his early days as a broad jumper, he was willing to take big, big leaps.

As a staff person, he was extraordinary to work for. I have told the story of opening day. A few of us were in on that news, but it had to be very closely held because it would have created a run on all those banks if word had leaked. So even many of his staff people had no idea this was going on until he announced it. So that was kind of a shocker and made for an interesting time to be a staff person.

On another occasion, he had a couple of raccoons on his property and they were bothering a den of baby foxes. He didn't want the baby foxes to be killed by the raccoons, so he took out a shotgun, went down to the end of his property and shot the two raccoons. He then climbed in the car with his State trooper and headed off to work and, of course, he described the exciting episode of his morning and the trooper said to him: Governor, don't you realize it is against the law to fire off a weapon in the city of Newport? In his customarily brusque and decisive way, he said: Well, take me to the courthouse.

A trial was going on in the Newport County Courthouse, but into the trial walks the Governor and he interrupts the trial and tells the judge: I would like to plead guilty. The judge, thankfully, said: I am not going to accept your plea, I am doing something else right now. Plus, you don't have the benefit of counsel. To which he tartly responded: I am as good a lawyer as there is in Rhode Island. The judge responded: Well, a lawyer who is representing himself has a fool for a client, and on your client's behalf, I tell you I will not accept that plea.

So there is the Governor's staff. The phone rings and the message is: Your boss is in court trying to plead guilty to a criminal offense. One can imagine how that lights up a staff's day. So down we went to help take care of that.

Another day saw the arrival of his daughter. When he was elected Governor, Sundlun had three sons—Tracy, Stuart, and Peter. It turned out there was also a daughter, and at age 16—in midterm—Kara arrived and was recognized as Bruce's daughter from a relationship he had years before. She was taken into the family and is now—and was to the end of his days—as beloved as any of his sons.

But that was an exciting day for staff members, when suddenly the boss turns up with a brandnew 16-year-old daughter nobody knew about before.

He had five wives, in addition to those four children. He led a rich, full, exciting, passionate life, and I miss him very much. He died on Thursday. He died very peacefully, with his family around him. He was 91 years old. I think he probably put about 151 years of living into those 91 years, and he left a family who loved him, a State he had served incredibly well, and staff members who had their lives changed by their exposure to this remarkable, hard-driving, affectionate, bold man.

We are in Washington, as I close, and we are in a situation in which one party is holding the economic future of the country hostage in order to force changes the American public doesn't want, wouldn't vote for, and wouldn't accept if they were consulted on them. But by virtue of having, in effect, a gun to the head of the economy, they want to force these things, such as killing off the Medicare Program.

Americans are wildly opposed to that in huge numbers, and when they found out that was in the House Republican budget, they rejected it by 4-to-1 margins. The response to that was to bring back something called cut, cap, and balance, which had hidden beneath the slogan an even worse cut to Medicare. They didn't learn their lesson the public didn't want this, so they insisted on doing even worse and doing it by holding the economy hostage.

That is the kind of thing Governor Sundlun would not accept. He was, first and foremost, a patriot. As hard as he worked and as much as he challenged everyone around him, he always had the purpose of making America better, making America stronger, making Rhode Island better, making Rhode Island stronger, and building toward the future. He had incredible confidence. The notion of holding an economy hostage and threatening the well-being of people to force down their throats something they would not want would be completely alien to his patriotic character, and it makes me miss him a lot as we are trapped in this day.

The other party appears to be, in large part, acquiescing to this. Governor Sundlun's streak of willfulness and determination to do the right thing, I think, is missed on the other side of the aisle as much as his patriotism and desire to put the well-being of people first is missed on the first. So he was a man whose life and accomplishments made a great difference in Rhode Island and have great relevance and resonance as we stand here today.

As I said, I miss him very much. He was very important to me, and I wish we had his forceful, patriotic, buoyant, and determined spirit with us today.

Mr. President, I mentioned in my remarks the speech I gave on behalf of Governor Sundlun, which was delivered at his funeral service. I ask unanimous consent to have printed in the RECORD those remarks.

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

EULOGY FOR GOVERNOR BRUCE SUNDLUN AS DELIVERED BY U.S. SENATOR SHELDON WHITEHOUSE, SUNDAY, JULY 24, 2011

What a man. What a life.

Bruce Sundlun's accomplishments—as a record-breaking athlete, as a resourceful war hero, as a superb lawyer, as a successful business entrepreneur, and as political leader of our state—would each on their own be significant. You could probably write a book about each. Together, packed all into one energetic life, it makes Bruce Sundlun one of the most accomplished and remarkable men in our state's history.

And that's not even counting five marriages, four children, three unsuccessful runs for governor, two dead raccoons, and one long escape on the loose, behind enemy lines.

There's really just no way to fit it all in.

Let me step into my role as a Sundlun staffer, and ask you to think just of his brief four years as governor. Hit (on Day One of his administration) by an unprecedented bank failure affecting 300,000 Rhode Islanders, and by the worst budget deficit in state history, and by an implosion of the state's entire worker's compensation system, and with the urgent need to restore ethics in government, Bruce was the man for that moment, and swung into his customary decisive action.

The budget was promptly and fairly balanced and the whole budget process improved.

Inventive solutions to repay the depositors and clean up the RISDIC mess were found and implemented, and those at fault were made to pay—over a hundred million dollars.

His worker's compensation reform moved the state from an embarrassment to a model, moving what was then the business community's worst problem completely off the problem list for now going on 20 years.

As a problem solver, he had no peer.

And that alone would be pretty extraordinary. But there was that ethics gap. So Bruce wrote Executive Order 91-One, the ethics executive order that succeeding governors renewed virtually unchanged. He reformed our Ethics Commission. He changed the way we appoint judges, to reduce the politics. He changed the way we fund elections, with a public finance plan and donor limits.

Through an intense storm of legal and political opposition, he opened up the pension records; putting an end forever to backroom special pension bills. He got our State Police nationally accredited.

He even cleaned up the Capitol literally!

All that was extraordinary—but still not enough.

In the worst economic times the state had seen since the Depression, with a shrinking budget, he decided to extend universal health care to children—and started the program that became Rite Care. Against immense opposition, he built our new airport terminal. He embarked on the Westin Hotel, the Convention Center, and the Providence Place Mall. He finished the Jamestown Bridge and built the Expressway. And even that's not the end of it.

It was an amazing burst of activity. I will bet that almost every Rhode Islander, almost every day, is somehow touched by something Governor Sundlun did.

And through it all, he drove his staff crazy. He was irrepressible, impatient, imperial, unscriptable, combative, frustrating, willful, constantly threw caution to the winds, impossible to keep up with—he drove us nuts.

And we loved him.

We loved him because he was bold and brave, and was warm-hearted and trusting and generous, and because he was willing to throw caution to the winds to do what was right. We loved him because he never once had us make excuses or try to shift the blame.

That was not his style. ''Never complain; never explain.''

We all remember his Bruce-isms:

''Always touch base with those concerned before taking action.''

''How fast would you get it done if the Russians were in South Attleboro?''

''When you've won, stop talking, close your briefcase and leave.''

''Message to Garcia.''

''Who, what, where, when; don't bother me with why.''

The phone calls, at all hours, that began with no ''hello'' and ended with dial tone.

The road shows known to his staff as ''Dome on the Roam,'' or more precisely, ''Bruce on the Loose.''

And sometimes just that big foxy grin.

We saw that his qualities of friendship and loyalty had an almost physical force; that he had your back even if you made mistakes (no one ever was thrown under the bus); and that he was a better friend the more the chips were down.

Politics is full of fair weather friends; Bruce Sundlun was your stormy weather friend. Politics is full of people who take tiny cautious steps with their finger up constantly testing the winds; Bruce stepped boldly down the path he thought was right, even if that meant stepping right in it.

People wonder what lives on after they die. Well, Bruce, we do. And every one of us has been changed: made better, and stronger, harder-working and more resourceful, by your vibrant elemental force in our lives.

We've gone on to be judges and lawyers, to run state and federal agencies, to become Senators and councilmen and Lieutenant Governors, banking leaders and senior partners in national accounting firms, but none of us ever will be more proud of anything than the simple title: ''I was a Sundlun staffer.''

Soozie and Marjorie, Tracey and Stuart and Peter and Kara: Thank you. Thank you for sharing your husband and father with our state. For those who loved and were changed by him, I thank you. For those who knew and were touched by him, I thank you. And for those who never knew him directly, but whose lives are better today because of what he did, I thank you.

As I close, I want to take you back to a scene from that wonderful movie I saw as a kid, ''To Kill A Mockingbird.'' As you'll recall, Atticus Finch takes on the courageous but unpopular defense of a black man wrongfully accused of rape. At the end of the trial, Atticus's daughter Scout—proper name Jean Louise—is up in the gallery of the courtroom, with the black townspeople, who aren't allowed down on the regular courtroom floor. The courtroom floor empties, but they remain, and slowly stand. As Atticus packs his papers together, closes his bag, and walks out, an elderly man leans down to the little girl and says, ''Stand up, Miss Jean Louise. Your father's passing.''

At the end of this service, as Bruce is taken to his gravesite after 91 years of a life well and fully lived, we will all stand up. And rightly so. A governor will be passing.

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

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Alabama.

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

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

THE DEBT CEILING

Mr. SESSIONS. Mr. President, there are currently two bills headed for a vote to raise the debt ceiling and to reduce spending. One of those two bills from the House, Speaker BOEHNER's, cuts about $1 trillion in spending and raises the debt ceiling by $1 trillion until the end of the year, approximately. That is about how long it would take to run up another $1 trillion in debt. The other bill from Senate Majority Leader REID cuts about $1 trillion and raises the debt ceiling about $3 trillion—or past the 2012 election. This is because the President said emphatically just a few days ago at a press conference:

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

So it is really quite simple. Speaker BOEHNER's bill lives up to the principle that I thought we had all agreed to: that every $1 in debt ceiling increase should be tied to a $1 reduction in spending. The spenders get an advantage since the spending reductions occur over 10 years, whereas the debt ceiling would increase immediately. But that is the principle on which we have been operating.

Senator REID's bill is a hoax. It uses Washington gimmicks designed to make it look three times as large as it is. In reality, it hikes the debt ceiling $3 for every $1 in spending cuts over 10 years. The House bill is 1 to 1, the Senate bill is 3 to 1. We have demonstrated this exhaustively in a Budget Committee analysis that I don't think people would dispute. And the House approach—one of the primary ways this is accomplished is to count the reduction in spending over the war in Iraq and Afghanistan that is projected to occur and has already been projected to occur and count that as a spending cut. Speaker BOEHNER didn't do that. His would look $1 trillion better also if he used those numbers.

The House approach is honest, it is straightforward, and it achieves $1 in cuts for every $1 in debt ceiling increase. It allows us to return to the table in a few months to assess our progress, see what is happening in the economy, and begin working toward the greater cuts that are needed.

Senator REID's bill relies on accounting tricks, takes the debt limit off the table until after the election, and exchanges a record $3 trillion in debt hike for only one-third as much in debt cuts.

My colleagues on the other side of the aisle signed a letter vowing to defeat the Boehner plan. I find this a little shocking, frankly, and surprising. Is it the position of the Senate Democratic majority that $1 trillion in cuts over 10 years is all we need to achieve between now and 2013? Is it their view that $1 in cuts for every $1 in debt limit increase is too steep or is it a political effort to protect the President by pushing the debt limit ceiling past the next election, creating the highest increase in debt ceiling, I think, in history, except for perhaps the one that the super Democratic majority in the Senate slipped through during the passage of the health care bill? Is it this election issue that Democrats would turn down an agreement on and put us at risk of financial disruption of our economy?

So let's step back for a moment and look at the wider context. Washington is often consumed by political fights and blame games. It can be hard to differentiate between facts and talking points. But I would like to provide as honest an assessment as I can as to why we find ourselves in this unfortunate situation at the eleventh hour.

We have a process, a statutory and legal process to arrive at a budget deal every single year. It is written into the law of the United States. The President is required to submit a budget, by law, each year, and each Chamber is required to pass one separately and then agree on one together.

If the year had begun with a serious budget proposal from the President, we wouldn't be in this mess today. But he submitted a budget that would double our debt in 10 years, while he claimed it would not add to the debt and he claimed it would cause us to live within our means. Indeed, he had a substantial tax increase, very real tax increases of significant amounts, but his spending increased even more than that. So the net total of the President's budget was to make the debt trajectory we are on not better but worse, even with the tax increase. Indeed, his budget next year that he submitted proposed increases for the Education Department, the Energy Department, the State Department, and the

Transportation Department—those double-digit increases at a time when we are running the biggest deficit the Nation has ever sustained.

Senate Democrats have refused to pass, meanwhile, in this body—pass or bring up a budget for 820 days, 2 years. The majority leader said it would be foolish to pass a budget. Foolish to not pass a budget?

So these are facts. Our colleagues who run the Senate here have defied the law and sound policy all year long, and now we are paying the price—a last-minute, take-it-or-leave-it, panic vote. Nobody yet knows what is going to be in the legislation finally because of the rejection of any bill that seems to be out there at this time.

If the White House or Senate Democrats had taken the budget process seriously last year and if they had presented a single credible plan to cut spending, we wouldn't be here at this eleventh hour. Indeed, our Democratic colleagues have insisted on secret meetings that shielded them from making any of their budget plans public, that shielded them from any real votes on spending and debt, and it appears those meetings have failed.

Democrats have campaigned and sought control and a majority in the Senate, and they chose, in this time of fiscal crisis, not to engage in the budget process in a serious way. In fact, they are apparently so determined to avoid the public budget process that the Reid bill even includes language designed to circumvent the process for 2 more years.

So you will forgive me if I am a little concerned by all these attacks on the tea party. They didn't start this fire; they sounded the alarm. Before the last election, when Democrats controlled both Chambers of Congress by substantial majorities, every conversation was about increasing spending, more, more, more. Congress passed a stimulus bill—the largest single onetime expenditure ever passed by any Congress or any nation in history, every penny of that borrowed. We were already hugely in debt. We are now borrowing 40 cents of every dollar. It passed. The Congress also passed the President's massive new health care entitlement. It passed the President's request for extraordinary increases in discretionary spending. Nondefense discretionary spending has gone up 24 percent at a time of record deficits in the last 2 years. We have added $4 trillion to our gross debt since the President took office. Just in the time since the Senate Democrats last passed a budget, we have spent more than $7 trillion without a budget. These are the facts.

But after the 2010 election and the emergence of the tea party and commonsense American people who knew better about what is going on in Washington, we have finally begun to look at Washington's spending problems. Now, instead of just raising the debt ceiling with no spending cuts, as the White House initially and repeatedly demanded, we are talking about how to cut some spending.

People in the tea party and those who share their concerns should not be the ones vilified. They are good, decent, patriotic Americans whose only crime is rightly fearing for the future of their Nation. Are they wrong to be concerned when this Congress spends money willy-nilly every day, 40 cents of it borrowed? They know this is not right, and that is the kind of message they have sent to us. We need to listen to the heart of America speaking.

The last point I would like to make is about the issue of compromise. There have been suggestions that the Republicans have simply been unwilling to budge from their position. But the Boehner proposal represents only a small portion of the cuts the Republicans have advocated and that they believe should be achieved. This is truly a critical point and one the White House will not acknowledge. The House budget that they passed, a long-term 10-year budget that would change the debt trajectory of America and put us on a sound financial course in a responsible way, cuts $6 trillion in comparison to the President's request. The Toomey budget the Senate voted on cuts about $8 trillion. The House passed a plan, which I cosponsored, that not only cuts and caps spending but that requires the passage of a constitutional balanced budget amendment. In fact, all 47 Republican Senators have cosponsored a constitutional amendment to balance the budget.

The $1 trillion in cuts Speaker BOEHNER is asking for would be, indeed, a modest first step, an effort to compromise and reach a number that had a realistic chance of passing this body. But under his plan we will return to the table after that $1 trillion increase in the debt ceiling has been used. This is far from the level of savings I wish to see, or the Republican House wishes to see. One trillion dollars is a bitter pill for a lot of those Members who know it is not enough. The economists and others and bondholders are telling us we need at least $4 trillion. That just reduces the crisis nature we are in. That would not come close to putting us on a path to a balanced budget over 10 years. Reducing deficits by $4 trillion over 10 years when our deficits are going to increase by $9 trillion to $13 trillion over 10 years obviously does not solve our debt crisis. But $1 trillion is even much smaller. That was a figure that was believed that this Senate might accept, so the House Members, in order to avoid a debt crisis and a financial crisis over the debt ceiling, are apparently working hard and maybe they will send it over here, I don't know. They are working hard to try to do that. I think that is a reasonable compromise and a fair approach to this Congress.

We are going to spend around $45 trillion over the next 10 years. That will add as much as $13 trillion to the gross debt. It is clear we have a lot more work to do. We are going to be fighting for cuts in spending bills, omnibus bills, continuing resolutions, and in every other place we can to impose fiscal discipline on this country. We must control spending. We must control and conquer the debt.

The President said he wants a balanced approach to the deficit—a balanced approach. But a balance is not a tax hike that bails out the big spenders who surged our spending with stimulus bills and surging 24-percent increases in discretionary spending. He is going to bail them out by raising taxes. We should never have run up that kind of spending. But balance is not a tax hike of that kind. Creating real balance, the right balance, means shifting power away from Washington, placing it in the safe hands of the American people. That is what the voters said last year when they gave a shellacking to the big spenders and that is what we should do now, and that is what I will be working for and I believe a lot of other people in the Congress on both sides of the aisle will be working for.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mrs. MCCASKILL). The clerk will call the roll.

The assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

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

PRIORITIZING DEBT

Mr. TOOMEY. Madam President, last January—probably late in the month I think it was—it occurred to me that as we proceeded in the direction of approaching the statutory limit of our borrowing as a government, the discussion was becoming a little bit counterproductive in some respects. One, in particular, was this constant threat we would default on the loans we had taken out as a government, the bonds that were held by millions of Americans, and that a default would have cataclysmic repercussions. It occurred to me that this is an unproductive discussion, in part, because no such default was ever going to happen. Certainly, it didn't need to happen. In the event we didn't raise the debt limit upon reaching it or prior to that, we would have enough ongoing tax revenue to cover the debt service by many multiples.

So I introduced legislation that would clarify this. It would take this risk off the table and try to provide some clarity to markets and to senior citizens who are savers and who have invested their savings in Treasurys and to have a constructive and honest debate about what the implications are of reaching the debt limit without raising it. So I introduced a bill that would instruct the Treasury Secretary to prioritize debt service in the event we

didn't raise the debt limit upon reaching it.

Unfortunately, the idea was dismissed by the administration. It was derided. It was castigated. It was described as reckless and irresponsible and unworkable. This idea of prioritizing the payments we would make if we didn't raise the debt ceiling was dismissed out of hand.

Now we have two reports that have come out this week. One cites the fact that senior Treasury officials have been calling around to big banks assuring them that in the event we don't raise the debt ceiling, which we will hit within just a few days, Treasury is assuring the banks there will be no default; they have this covered, and they have taken care of this. The scheduled interest and principal payments on our bonds will occur on schedule.

It is nice that the administration is informing the banks of this. I think it would be nicer still if they would inform the American public and everybody who has such an important stake in ensuring that the U.S. Government not default on its debt. So that was the first report.

The second report came out just late last night—and it has been confirmed today—which is that the Treasury has, in fact, been working on a plan of the very nature they have been deriding and denying for many months now; that they, in fact, have been developing and are continuing to refine a plan to prioritize the payments that will be made in the event the debt limit is not raised by August 2.

I am glad they have finally come to this conclusion. I wish they had approached Congress and worked with us constructively many months ago when I first suggested we ought to have a plan B, but I would say it is better late than never. But now I think we ought to get this plan, such as it is, exposed to the sunshine of public discourse. We ought to understand what this process will be and Congress ought to have a role in it.

That is why I introduced an updated version of this bill last week. I have 33 Senate cosponsors on the bill. The purpose of the bill is not to be a substitute for raising the debt limit. I understand if we don't raise the debt limit close to August 2, the results will be very disruptive. We can minimize that disruption if we have a game plan, and we ought to work this out. The bill I introduced with a number of colleagues is a bill that identifies three very high priorities, that we ought to make sure we make these payments, whether or not we raise the debt ceiling. We know we will have enough money to do so, and I think we have an obligation to do that.

The three categories embodied in our bill are, first, interest on our debt. By making sure we make those payments we avoid a catastrophic default and we avoid the financial consequences which could be very dire. So that ought to be one of the top priorities. The second, equally important, is making sure we send out all the Social Security checks in full and on time to everybody who has one coming. Senior citizens all across America, including my parents, depend on Social Security checks, and they have earned those benefits by virtue of the contributions they made into that system, in many cases, for many decades.

The third and final item I think ought to be prioritized in the event we don't raise the debt ceiling by August 2 is salaries paid to Active-Duty military. I think the men and women who are risking their lives for all of us deserve to have the peace of mind of knowing that their families back home will not have to wait until Congress gets its act together for them to get their paycheck in arrears. It ought to be done on time.

So these three items, if we add them all and look at the amount they would cost during the month of August and we compare that to the tax revenue that is going to come in the door in August, these three expenses are less than half the amount of tax revenue that is going to come in. Clearly, and obviously, this is easily manageable—or easily affordable, I should say.

Technically, the Treasury and the Fed have some work to do, no doubt, to make sure this is all done smoothly. That is precisely why they should have engaged with us a long time ago, so we could have had a constructive period of time to work out whatever details are necessary so we could have as smooth a functioning process as possible—one that would have the benefit of a transparent debate.

I acknowledge there might be other items that ought to be added to the list, and we ought to have a debate on the floor to consider those items. What we would end up with is a process that the American people would understand, they would know, they could anticipate, and it would be far more constructive. It is getting late in the day, but maybe it is not too late. I hope this body will take up my bill and it will have that debate, we will have some kind of resolution, and we will provide some guidance. I think it is part of our constitutional obligation to have control over spending that occurs in our government, and this should be no exception.

I urge my colleagues to join me in supporting this legislation. If my colleagues have constructive suggestions of how we can make it better, I welcome them, as I welcome working with the Treasury and the administration, to make sure that we, in the unfortunate event—if it should occur—that we don't raise the debt ceiling by August 2, do everything we can to minimize the disruption that will follow.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Illinois.

THE DEBT CEILING

Mr. DURBIN. Madam President, in 1939, we passed a law and the law created the debt ceiling. Before that law was passed, whenever the Government of the United States of America wanted to borrow money, it had to come to Congress. Congress had to approve it and the President would sign it. We decided then to change it. Instead, we said Congress will approve a certain amount of money that the President can borrow and we will change it as needed. In other words, we don't have to approve every single bond issue, every single borrowing of the Federal Government. In 1939, that is what we did.

Since then, on 89 different occasions, Presidents of the United States have come to Congress and said the money Congress spent I have to borrow to cover. We don't have enough in the Treasury. Eighty-nine different times Presidents have come and asked for the authority to borrow money to cover expenses Congress approved. Fifty-five times Republican Presidents; 34 times Democratic Presidents. Not once—not once—did we ever default. Oh, there was a period, I think in 1979, where there were a few days of technical default, but there was never any conscious decision by Congress not to fund this debt ceiling and extend it.

It is ironic that Members of the Senate have come to the floor and said: I will never vote to extend the debt ceiling as long as I serve in the Senate. They are the same Members of the Senate who have been voting for and sending to this President requests to spend money. An example: the war in Afghanistan. Some of the most conservative Senators on the other side of the aisle not only want us to wage this war but to stay there and keep spending money. Do we know what it costs? It costs $10 billion a month for us to protect our troops in Afghanistan. For every $1 we spend—every $1 we spend—whether it is on the war, on food stamps, on missiles, on highways—but for every $1 we spend, we borrow 40 cents. We should not be borrowing all this money, but we do because Congress says there are certainly things we have to do as a nation.

Many of the same Senators who have said to the President of the United States: Do not withdraw the troops from Afghanistan, keep them there even longer, are now coming to the floor and saying to the President: But we are not going to join in asking for the authority you need to provide that money for those troops.

The Senator from Pennsylvania has come here the second day and given his take on what would happen if Congress fails to extend the debt ceiling on August 2–5 days away, August 2. What would happen?

First, understand, this is a self-inflicted wound. We have created this crisis. Madam President, 89 times we have extended the debt ceiling without incident. Presidents of both parties have asked for this over and over.

Who holds the record for extending the debt ceiling the most during his 8-year Presidency? Ronald Reagan. Eighteen times—18 times—more than twice a year, he asked Congress to extend the debt ceiling because under his 8-year watch the debt of the United States tripled.

Who holds the record for second place on the list of increasing the national debt? President George W. Bush, who, I believe, came to us seven or nine times asking to extend the debt ceiling.

It has been done by Presidents of both parties.

Now there is this controversy that is raging between the House and the Senate about whether we extend the debt ceiling. It is a vote we have done customarily without this confrontation in the past. Now we face it. But we have created this crisis. It is a self-inflicted wound, and to blame anybody else for it is just plain wrong. History tells us Congress not only has the authority but, I believe, has the responsibility to extend the debt ceiling. It is hypocritical to pass bills on the floor of the Senate—to call for the President to wage a war or build a building—and then not give this President the authority to borrow the money to do it. That is what I am hearing from the other side.

The Senator from Pennsylvania comes and says: We can live with this default. We have to figure out how to manage this default. I think he said at one point it could be managed easily. Wrong, completely wrong.

Let me tell you what happens if we default on the national debt for the first time in history. First, what does it do to the reputation of the United States of America? We have a credit report too. I do not know if you can get a free credit report for the government, but we have one. We have a AAA rating. Pretty good, right? The best in the world, the strongest economy in the world. It means when we borrow money, we borrow it at the lowest interest rate because people trust the United States of America to keep its word.

If we borrow money and say we are going to pay it back, we have always done it. We have never defaulted. We are pretty trustworthy as a debtor, and creditors understand that and charge us the lowest interest rates.

If this goes through as promised by the tea party people, and we default on our national debt, for the first time in history, what do you think it is going to do to our credit status? I can tell you what it is going to do. It is going to diminish our credit reputation in the eyes of lenders. What happens when lenders think it is riskier to loan money? They raise interest rates. In other words, the money we borrow to sustain our government will cost us more. How much more? For every 1 percent increase in interest paid by our government on our debt, it costs us $130 billion a year added to the debt. That is not $130 billion worth of money for education or $130 billion worth of money to protect us from terrorism. That is $130 billion to international bankers and countries that loan us money from this self-inflicted wound.

What else would happen? Sadly, when interest rates on our Federal Government go up, interest rates go up across our economy. It affects every family, every individual, every business in America. It affects how much you pay on your credit card bill, how much you pay for an automobile loan, a home loan, a student loan. All of these are affected. It is as bad, if not worse, than a tax because it hits everybody.

It could not come at a worse time. When our economy is struggling to create jobs, with millions out of work, to think that this unnecessary, manufactured political crisis, self-inflicted wound is going to hurt our economy in its recovery is just plain wrong.

Let me go to the specific point made by the Senator from Pennsylvania. Stay tuned and listen to what he just said. He said to us he has asked our government to tell us how they would manage a default—who would you pay, who would you fail to pay—and the government has not been forthcoming, the President, with a plan on who will be paid and not paid.

Well, we will get that plan, and we will not like it one bit. Here is why. If we do not extend our debt ceiling, in the month of August here are the raw numbers we have to work with. We will have $172 billion on hand in our Treasury to spend in August, and we will have obligations of $306 billion.

So what do you do when you have 55 percent of what you need? You make choices. The Senator from Pennsylvania said: Here are my three choices. First, we pay interest on other debts we have so we do not default on everything. That is sensible. Secondly, he said, we pay Social Security because these folks—many of them—have no other source of income. That is sensible too. Then he said we ought to pay our troops in combat and the military. I vote for that too. These men and women are risking their lives and they should be our highest priority. He says we can talk about the rest.

What is the rest? I will tell you what the rest includes. It includes every Medicare payment to every hospital and doctor in America. It includes every payment to a disabled veteran in America. It includes the decision as to whether we are going to fund Federal employees. If they are not your favorite class of people—I happen to think a lot of them, but many people do not—keep in mind some of the things they do that we will have to decide whether we should continue doing.

I was at the Greenville Federal Correctional Facility 2 weeks ago. The men and women risking their lives holding people in prison, thousands of them across the United States—pay them or not? They were not on the list. They were not on the list of the Senator from Pennsylvania.

We just had a meeting where we talked about our weather satellites collecting information about weather around the world, warning people when severe weather patterns are developing. Should we pay NOAA to maintain those satellites in orbit?

As you go through this list—whether you are talking about the FBI fighting terrorism, whether you are talking about the men and women representing the United States at embassies around the world, whether you are talking about law enforcement, whether you are talking about the intelligence agencies of the United States that watch on a minute-by-minute basis the activities of terrorists who would kill us—they were not on the list from the Senator from Pennsylvania. He did not put those on the list.

If we get down to a choice, and if it becomes that terrible a choice, understand this President—no President—wants to face that. They do not have to. It is time for us to get this resolved.

When I call radio shows back in Illinois—and I will bet the Presiding Officer gets the same thing back in Missouri—people are fed up with what they see going on in Washington. They cannot believe grownups in the House and Senate, paid to do this job, are failing; that they are dragging this out.

I will tell you what I got yesterday: an e-mail from a businessman in Chicago. He is a friend. He has a lot of businesses. He has a lot of people working for him. He had a closing yesterday on a deal worth more than $100 million to renovate a major building in Chicago. It would have been a lot of jobs. It would have been great for our city. The closing was canceled. The parties at the table said: Until Congress gets this figured out, we are not going to close the deal.

He sent me an e-mail and said: For God's sake, when is this going to come to an end?

I am hearing that all over from people who are just fed up.

The Chicago Tribune printed an article today entitled: ''Across state, businesses fret over debt ceiling showdown.'' They went through a long list of individuals who talked about what this stalemate might mean.

As the article states, Ed Wehmer, with Wintrust Financial Corporation, ''worries that a prolonged stalemate could lead to a double-dip recession,'' even more unemployment.

> ''The possibility of not getting a Social Security or other government check will make people skittish,'' Wehmer said. That could weaken consumer spending and hamper economic growth. Higher interest rates, he said, would hit an already stressed real estate market.

A banker in Lake Forest said: ''Could you imagine if we ran our business like that,'' referring to what is going on in Washington. ''These are the people who make the regulations we have to live with.''

> The Illinois Hospital Association figures that its members will have to absorb $8 billion in federal payment reductions over 10

years as a result of the 2010 health care overhaul act. Now, [they are] bracing for another blow.

''We're concerned that any additional cuts to hospitals, whether through Medicare or Medicaid, will have a dramatic impact on hospitals and health care providers . . . ''

The Illinois Finance Authority—all of these groups look at this situation and say: This makes our economy even worse. It is a self-inflicted, politically manufactured problem. It is a crisis which does not have to exist. Should we ignore our debt? Of course not.

Madam President, you know I have worked on this issue for a year and a half now with more specificity than ever in my career. I was on the deficit commission the President appointed. Then I stuck around afterwards as six Senators—the Group of 6, we called ourselves; it was not a very inspired name, but that is what we came up with: three Democrats and three Republicans—and we sat down for 6 months and hammered out an agreement among us to reduce our Federal deficit by $4 trillion over the next 10 years, with a balanced approach that puts everything on the table—everything—revenue, entitlements, spending—everything.

We came to an agreement. We presented our agreement to the Senators just 2 weeks ago. Forty-nine Senators showed up at that meeting, Democrats and Republicans. It was amazing. Then we followed up and said: Are you ready to put your name on the bottom line? Will you support moving forward with this bipartisan way to deal with the deficit in a responsible way that does not endanger our economy and make us face bankruptcy as a nation?

We now have 36 Senators, Democrats and Republicans, who have signed up. That is a pretty good number. It shows that this is not an idea that we came up with that does not have legs. Sure, we are going to have to change it. We understand that. But look what happened. Democrats and Republicans sat down—no cameras, no reporters—and worked out a reasonable way to deal with the deficit and our Nation's debt.

What is better? Lurching from this crisis to another crisis 4 months from now, as Speaker BOEHNER suggests, or dealing with this in an honest, bipartisan way today?

Madam President, I can tell you what the American people want us to do—at least I think I know what they want us to do. They do not want us to endanger this economic recovery. They do not want us to kill jobs. They do not want us to hurt businesses. They want us to help this economy recover and create jobs. They want us to extend this debt ceiling so we do not see interest rates going up across America at exactly the wrong time. They certainly do not want to see us put in a position where we have to decide between paying Social Security recipients and our soldiers who are in combat. That is what the administration would face if this crisis that has been manufactured on Capitol Hill continues.

What they expect us to do is to earn our pay as Members of the House and Senate, to work hard to come up with a reasonable approach, and to be willing to give a little. It is the only way you reach a compromise. Compromise is the nature of this political process. Those who condemn it—and there are some who do, who say: Never give up, stick to your principles, never change—we are not going to get a solution. We have to be willing to work together to give and get this done.

Here is what I predict is going to happen soon.

I predict Speaker BOEHNER is going to call his bill on the floor of the House. We have told him in advance it is a nonstarter here. If it passes the House, it will come here, and it will likely be voted down. We will then propose an alternative.

Majority Leader HARRY REID has an alternative which basically extends the debt ceiling beyond next year so our economy has time to recover. It cuts spending by over $2 trillion so we address our deficit. It does it with a list of spending cuts that every Republican has voted for so it is not controversial in substance. I think that is the best approach.

He creates a joint committee to deal with the long-term deficit. I have been involved in those, and I think we should. I think it is a good, balanced approach that solves our problem and gets us through this crisis. We are likely to vote on it either tomorrow or the next day. But we are down to 5 days. We are running out of time. We have to get this done.

I want to tell you, any Senator who comes to the floor and says defaulting on our debt and reaching the first point in our history where the credit reputation of the United States is in doubt is OK, it is a good political tactic, they do not understand the gravity of that decision and the impact it will have on businesses and families for generations to come.

This notion that we can pick and choose the checks we are going to send out in August when we are going to have 55 or 60 percent of what we need is going to put us in an impossible position. Deciding among all of the valuable, important functions of government which ones will not be funded—that is an impossible position for this President to be in. We cannot do that to him. We cannot do that to our government. We cannot do this to our country.

I hope that after the House votes today or tonight, whenever it may be, that we take up the measure quickly. Let's move this forward. Let's get this done. Let's avoid this crisis. Let's meet the responsibility we were elected to address.

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

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

The assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

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

Mr. PRYOR. Madam President, I understand that we are in morning business and Senators are allowed to speak therein for up to 10 minutes.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. That is correct.

A HOUSE DIVIDED

Mr. PRYOR. Madam President, our greatest Republican President, Abraham Lincoln, in his drive to end slavery, said ''a house divided against itself cannot stand.'' With these few words, Lincoln is calling to us through the echoing halls of history. He is calling for us to put aside our differences and to become unified into one people, one Nation, one common purpose.

Mr. Lincoln recognized that the issue of slavery was tearing this great Nation apart and that it could not survive half slave and half free. Slavery was the great unfinished business of our Founders. The institution of slavery was so ingrained in the infant country's past and future that even Washington, Adams, Jefferson, Madison and Franklin could not disentangle it. I am not trying to equate carrying too much debt with slavery, please understand that, but the truth remains. A house divided against itself cannot stand.

This house, this Nation, this Republic, is divided against itself. Our Founders called their effort at establishing a new Nation ''a great experiment''—and it has been. Nothing like it had ever been tried and America has been the unequaled success in all of world history. Truly, we are the envy of the world. We began as 13 weak and barely united States but quickly became the strongest country in the Western Hemisphere. About 70 years after we adopted the Constitution, we survived a deadly Civil War. All the while we grew in stature and in favor with other nations. Our economic power grew rapidly. American influence grew as we became the agent of democracy and capitalism for the entire world. Although our military power was slow to develop, we fought on the winning side in two world wars and we grew into an economic, military and cultural super power.

We are a Nation of immigrants, of many faiths, of many races and our national call to union is E Pluribus Unum. Out of many, one. Out of many States is forged one Nation. Out of many races is forged one people. Out of many, one. The Founding Fathers had to balance the agrarian interests of the South and West with the industrial and shipping interests of the North and East. They balanced small States and big States. They balanced regions dominated by the frontier with regions dominated by the old world. They balanced Catholicism and Protestantism and Judaism. They balanced English

culture with German culture with French culture. Out of many, one. Had previous generations of leaders not achieved oneness, we would not be, could not be, the great Nation we are today. The Senate was added to the Constitution as a compromise. Washington, DC, was placed on the banks of the Potomac as a compromise. States were added to the union as the result of compromise. In this sense, America's ability to find compromise has always been our pathway to greatness. Our Founders established this more perfect union with the clear-eyed knowledge that came from experience that a house divided against itself cannot stand.

Division leads to failure. To make our democracy work, we all must work together. We must acknowledge that we have differences of opinion and differing points of view, but we must commit to unity. The floor of the U.S. Senate is the marketplace for ideas and it is a window into democracy that is a living testimony to the greatness and diversity of our Nation. The floor of the U.S. Senate should not be a graveyard for ideas or innovation or promise. Campaigns should stop at the threshold of this chamber. What happens in this chamber is much greater than any single Senator's political fortunes, and it is much more important than a political party's fate at the next general election. We have a sacred responsibility to the people through the Constitution, and if we orient ourselves to the next presidential election, we are failing in our duty. The U.S. Senate, at its core, by its nature, is where decisions get made. We have our ideological battles here, that is certain, but this is where consensus should be achieved. The Senate should fuel the engine that propels us to a better future, not stall that engine.

All Americans should fully participate in our government. We should register to vote and serve on the jury. We must volunteer in the schools and pay our taxes. We must teach our children about our country, their country, and prepare them for their time to lead. We must tell them that our system of government is the best that man ever devised and that it works. It works very well if we allow it to work.

This moment in history is a day where we can show our children, as well as our Founding Fathers, that this is no longer a house divided. We can show the world that our parents instilled in us the value of E Pluribus Unum. America's best days lay ahead if we are mutually committed to that future. It is, however, not possible unless we set aside our differences and work together for that common goal. My fellow Senators, please heed the words of Abraham Lincoln and understand that there is truth of what he said, ''A house divided against itself cannot stand.''

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from New Mexico is recognized.

FAA REAUTHORIZATION

Mr. BINGAMAN. Madam President, let me speak for a few minutes about the disappointment I have and I am sure many other colleagues have with the situation we find ourselves in with respect to the partial shutdown of the Federal Aviation Administration.

My colleague from Colorado, Senator BENNET, was on the Senate floor this afternoon and spoke eloquently about how this partial shutdown is affecting his State of Colorado. I wanted to talk briefly about the similar concerns I have for my State of New Mexico.

Frankly, some in this Congress, in my view, have lost sight of what they were elected to do in Washington. Aviation is a critical piece of our transportation infrastructure, a critical piece of our economy. Yet, for nearly a week now, the Congress has failed to extend the necessary authorizations to keep the Federal Aviation Administration doing the work that needs to be done.

It has been over 5 months since the Senate passed its reauthorization bill for aviation programs. That vote was overwhelming; it was 87 to 8. So this was not a partisan bill; this was a bill supported strongly by both Democrats and Republicans.

The bill included a number of programs important to my State of New Mexico and to the entire Nation, including the Airport Improvement Program that provides grants for the construction of runways, taxiways, which help to make airports safer. These projects also create hundreds of jobs in the construction industry in my State and tens of thousands of jobs in the construction industry nationwide.

One of the most important features of the Senate's bill relates to our air traffic control system. Our current system is universally recognized as being antiquated, inefficient, and increasingly it is recognized as being unsafe. The bill we passed out of the Senate dramatically accelerates the FAA's efforts to convert the air traffic control system to one based on satellites and global positioning systems, similar to the GPS many of us have in our cars. When implemented, NextGen—the name given to this improvement of the air traffic control system—will improve safety, will increase efficiency of operations, will reduce delays, and will save fuel and help to reduce greenhouse gas emissions.

Thanks to the good work Chairman ROCKEFELLER and Ranking Member HUTCHISON in the Commerce Committee did, the Senate passed a good bill to reauthorize aviation programs. That was in February. Then in April, the House passed its own version nearly on a party-line vote. The House majority, unfortunately, chose to include partisan and divisive provisions in that legislation that were not appropriate in an aviation bill.

Let me give a little description of what those partisan and divisive provisions I am referring to are. There was an editorial in the New York Times this morning that summed it up well. It says:

> Last year, the National Mediation Board changed a rule to make it easier for airline and railroad workers to unionize. Until then, workers who did not vote in union representation elections were counted as ''no'' votes; after the change [this is the change by the National Mediation Board—its own rules] they are counted as abstentions. Pushed by the airline lobby, House Republicans passed a long-term FAA reauthorization bill that would have undone the rule change. The Senate's reauthorization bill, passed in February, maintained the rule.

In spite of this difference in the two bills, the Senate did appoint conferees, did begin working to resolve differences—as we should have—and working out the required compromise is never easy. Unfortunately, now the House has decided that in order to gain leverage over the Senate to accept the House anti-union provisions, there would not be any additional clean extensions of existing law.

We have had 20 extensions of existing law to just keep the Federal Aviation Administration operating while the House and Senate negotiate the final resolution of this larger bill. Unfortunately, the situation now is that the Congress's failure to extend the authorization one more time has shut down important aviation programs across the country, and 4,000 FAA employees have been furloughed and forced to go without pay. Across the Nation, important airport improvement projects are now on hold.

In New Mexico, $26 million in funding for over two dozen projects has been stopped. These include a new firetruck for the airport in Roswell, runway projects in Raton and Santa Rosa, and snow removal equipment in Clayton and Vaughn. In Santa Fe, work on a vital new radar system has been stopped. In Albuquerque, progress has stopped on a $10 million project to replace the airport parking apron.

What is particularly troubling to me is that the authority to collect the ticket tax has also been suspended. Why should this matter? This is the money that goes into the airport trust fund and allows us to continue to make improvements and maintain our airport infrastructure around the country. This is funding that is used to pay for safety and infrastructure projects at airports in my State and everywhere in the country. As I understand it, it amounts to about $30 million a day being lost from that trust fund. At a time when we are being told the country is falling behind in its investments in basic infrastructure, this loss of funding is clearly going to have major impacts on airport projects down the road.

People also need to realize that the fact that the FAA is no longer able to collect the ticket tax does not mean people don't have to pay the full price they would be paying if the tax were being charged. The airlines, with very few exceptions, have announced they

are going to continue to charge the full price for tickets and pocket the extra money themselves, instead of turning it over for infrastructure projects at our airports.

So here we are. It is simply, in my view, unacceptable for the Congress not to restore to the FAA the authority to collect airline ticket taxes and to resume normal operations.

Senator ROCKEFELLER has introduced a clean extension of the aviation programs. Whatever differences there are between the two bodies in provisions in the short-term extension are trivial compared to this $30 million a day the Nation is losing in funding for our Nation's airport projects.

We all here in the Senate, in the Congress, and in the country, are focused on the need to extend the debt limit, and that is the most urgent need we face, but in addition to that we need to restore to the FAA the authority to resume its normal operations and to resume payments into the airport trust fund. To leave for an August break without having fixed the problem of the lack of FAA authorization as well would be seriously irresponsible.

Madam President, I ask unanimous consent to have printed in the RECORD the editorial from this morning's New York Times entitled ''This Is Called 'Small' Government.''

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

[From the New York Times, July 27, 2011]

THIS IS CALLED 'SMALL' GOVERNMENT

What has happened to the Federal Aviation Administration in the last few days should remind everyone of the costs of the Republicans' obstructionism and their slash-and-burn budget games.

Taxes on airline tickets expired on Friday when the F.A.A. lost its operating authority, including the authority to collect taxes. Passengers are rightly furious at the nation's airlines, many of which are pocketing the difference. But the masterminds of this fiasco are the House Republicans who let this happen.

The F.A.A. has also had to furlough some 4,000 workers. Needed airport construction projects—to maintain runways, build new traffic control towers and upgrade other facilities—have been halted across the country. The only good news is that the air traffic control system is still working because traffic controllers are paid from the Aviation Trust Fund, which still has a positive balance.

All of this happened after House Republicans inserted a new provision into a routine bill to temporarily extend the F.A.A.'s operational authority. The provision would end $16.5 million in federal subsidies to 13 airports in rural communities. The bill passed the House. But Senate Democrats balked, arguing that the right place for changing policy is in the regular F.A.A. reauthorization bill—noting that the temporary extension has passed 20 times since 2007 without any additional provisions.

''If we can't put an end to these extravagant subsidies, then we will never be able to rein in spending where really hard decisions are necessary,'' said Tom Petri, the chairman of the House aviation subcommittee, upon submitting the bill. Talk about pound foolish. When the F.A.A. lost operational authority, it lost its ability to collect $200 million in taxes a week. These taxes would have paid for the airport subsidies in about 14 hours. There is more going on here. As we have seen in many Republican-led states, an attack on ''excessive'' government spending is also often a bid to break labor unions.

Last year, the National Mediation Board changed a rule to make it easier for airline and railroad workers to unionize. Until then, workers who did not vote in union representation elections were counted as ''no'' votes; after the change, they are counted as abstentions. Pushed by the airline lobby, House Republicans passed a long-term F.A.A. reauthorization in April that would have undone the rule change. The Senate's reauthorization bill, passed in February, maintained the rule.

Earlier this month, John Mica, the chairman of the House Transportation and Infrastructure Committee, told an aviation conference that adding the airport subsidy provision to the temporary bill to keep the F.A.A. running is ''just a tool'' to force the Senate to give in on the union issue.

Next time voters hear Republicans talking about taking a principled stand against government spending, they should keep this sorry and cynical tale in mind.

Mr. BINGAMAN. Madam President, I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Wyoming.

THE DEBT CEILING

Mr. BARRASSO. Madam President, I follow my colleague who mentioned our need to prevent default. The need we have—the reason we are here and why there will be a vote in the House and the Senate tonight—has to do with the need of our Nation to prevent default, and also, of course, the need to cut spending. Our problem is that we spend too much. Americans all around the country are calling in to Members of the House and Senate and saying: Hey, let's get things under control and let's cut the spending.

My friends on the other side of the aisle, I am happy to see with the proposals being brought forth, are beginning to understand what my constituents in Wyoming have known from the very beginning: Americans are not taxed too little, Washington spends too much. But the President seems to be more concerned about the next election than about the next generation of Americans.

I was astonished last week when the President was addressing the Nation and he talked about what his bottom line was in this whole debate. He said:

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

This was the President of the United States saying this:

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

Since 1962, the debt ceiling has been raised 74 times. On average, the debt ceiling is usually for about 8 months. But now the folks on the other side, and the President, are calling for the largest debt ceiling increase in history and it is designed to last a lot longer than 8 months—almost for a year and a half, as the President wants it to go into 2013; and specifically, as he said, through the next election.

The President's Treasury Secretary has essentially said the same thing. He said:

> We have to lift this threat of default from the economy for, you know, for the next 18 months. We have to take that threat off the table through the election.

Well, if the President and the Treasury Secretary get their way, they will be able to ignore the single biggest threat to our national security until after the next election. As the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff has said: The greatest threat to our national security is the debt.

The President could have gotten what he wanted last week—which is an increase in the debt ceiling beyond the election—when the House passed its cut, cap, and balance legislation. I was one of the original cosponsors of that in the Senate. I was in favor of it, supported it, and continue to support that. Instead, the President issued a veto threat. He told Democrats in the Senate to kill it. After all, they are still the majority party.

The Senate Democrats, I believe tonight, will have the power to save our country's finances once again. They can do that by passing the Boehner plan—pass it through this body and send it to the President's desk for him to sign. Instead, the majority leader has said no Democrat—not one—will support this plan. It has what the President wants. It raises the debt ceiling. It lets us, as a nation, avoid default. But it doesn't take us beyond the election.

It is interesting. It would seem support by the Democrats for this plan would clearly signal their desire to continue working to rein in Washington's wasteful spending, to get our fiscal house in order. But that doesn't seem to be the signal the President wants to send. The Boehner plan is the only plan currently on the table that can get through the House of Representatives and protect us from default.

Republicans have put forward plan after plan. Democrats and the White House have done nothing but criticize from the sidelines. The White House Press Secretary has even said:

> Leadership is not proposing a plan for the sake of having it voted up or down and likely voted down.

That is what he said. He said the Democrats have even sent a letter asking for a long-term debt increase. But how can we have a long-term debt increase if they have no plan to get there? The White House Secretary claimed recently the President's plan is well-known. He said:

> There is no plan that has been offered, certainly in the last several months, about which more detail is known.

I say: Where are the details? I want to know how I could get this well-known plan and share it with my constituents back home in Wyoming. How

did the CBO score this plan that, according to the President's Press Secretary, is a plan about which so much detail is known? Where is it? What is the CBO score? Where is the text of it? How can we read it and bring it here and discuss or debate it?

These things don't exist—neither a CBO score nor a text—because the White House has continually refused to release a plan, even with pleas coming from Congress and from the media. I can understand why the President might be reluctant, since the time he last brought a budget to this body it was defeated 97 to 0. Not one Democrat voted in support of what the President had proposed—not one. No one supported the President's budget plan.

There is a Reid plan being proposed. According to the Congressional Budget Office, the Reid plan cuts about $2.2 trillion from our budget over the next 10 years. But if you dig a little deeper, you find these so-called cuts are accounting gimmicks. The House Budget Committee looked at the Reid plan and their assessment was not very flattering. Let me quote from that assessment:

> Reid's plan relies on the inaccurate assumption that surge-level spending in Iraq and Afghanistan is scheduled to continue over the next decade.

No one in America, and I would hope no one in the White House, believes that surge level spending in Iraq and Afghanistan is scheduled to continue over the next decade. But the plan endorsed by the President relies on such an inaccurate assumption. Why is he trying to mislead the American people? The Democrats are claiming to save money by cutting spending that was never, ever going to be spent in the first place. This is the strongest possible proof the White House is not realistically dealing with the situation and is not, in my opinion, serious about realistically and reliably cutting the debt.

In fact, even if you assume the Reid plan would work, it wouldn't cut spending fast enough to keep up with the spending the President is doing. The President wants to borrow at least $2.4 trillion to get him through the election—to get him into 2013. But the last draft of the floor plan we are going to be asked to discuss cuts $2.2 trillion over 10 years while raising the debt ceiling by $2.7 trillion. It would take over a decade to pay back what this President wants to borrow over the next year and a half. So we would still be borrowing at a much higher rate than we are cutting. That is not responsible leadership. Responsible leadership would be to recognize the solution to our country's financial woes, and that solution is to avoid default, while consistently cutting spending and balancing our books the way that families do. That solution would require us to keep working until we get it right. That is the theory at the heart of Speaker BOEHNER's plan.

The President talks about wanting a balanced approach. That means different things to different people. When the President is talking about wanting more taxes, I think what Americans want is actually a balanced budget. Speaker BOEHNER will bring us one step closer to that balance by forcing a vote on the balanced budget amendment to the Constitution. I look forward to voting for a balanced budget amendment to the Constitution.

We live under a constitution in the State of Wyoming, and from the very beginning we have balanced our budget. As a result, we have excess money and scholarships available to all students to study at our universities and community colleges, because year after year we live within our means.

The President talked a bit about public opinion being important in this debate. Yet he is opposed to a balanced budget constitutional amendment. In a recent Sachs/Mason-Dixon poll, 65 percent of Americans say they support a balanced budget constitutional amendment. So where is the respect for that public opinion? The Boehner plan works because its authors have listened to the American people.

The White House refuses to seriously confront the problems facing our Nation, and Democrats are trying to shut down the only plan that can pass the House and save us from default. I am alarmed at their denial about how to solve these problems. The President must not veto America into default. It is time we pass a real plan that cuts spending and avoids default. We don't need to wait until midnight on August 1 or August 2. We can do it, and we should do it today.

Madam President, I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The majority leader is recognized.

EXTENSION OF MORNING BUSINESS

Mr. REID. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent that morning business be extended until 7 p.m., with Senators permitted to speak for up to 10 minutes each during that time; and further, that I be recognized at 7 p.m.

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

The Senator from West Virginia.

TOUGH FISCAL CHOICES

Mr. MANCHIN. Madam President, I rise today to speak about the tough fiscal choices this body, this government, and our President now face. But before I say anything else, I wish to start off with a profound apology. I want to apologize to every West Virginian and all Americans for the terrible process they have been made to endure and witness. With 5 days before the August 2 deadline to raise the debt ceiling, this government faces yet another crisis of its own making. Yet it is not we who pay the price for our failures to govern, it is the American people. To the tens of millions of American families who work hard to take care of their families, I can only imagine the anger and disgust they have at witnessing a broken government and a President and Members of Congress who can't seem to even agree sometimes on what day it is, let alone on how to solve the Nation's debt crisis.

The American people deserve better.

Some will say Washington is broken and that is the best we can do, but I do not believe that for one moment. Washington may be broken, but it will not break me, and you should not let it break you either. I came to fix things, not to make things worse. I came to solve problems, not to ignore them, and I came to worry about the next generation, not my next election.

I, for one, am willing to make the tough and painful decisions that will improve the lives of every West Virginian and all Americans for generations to come, regardless of what it means for my party or for the next election, and I know I am not alone.

After our beloved Senator Byrd passed away, I chose to run for the Senate for one simple reason: I saw the great challenges our Nation faced: exploding debts and deficits, our Nation's energy dependence, costly wars in Afghanistan and Iraq and a painful jobs and economic crisis, and I wanted to help make things better by bringing a little common sense to Washington. I knew we had to focus on rebuilding America and doing so meant making hard, politically difficult choices.

Some of my colleagues often remind me that fixing problems as complex as our debt crisis isn't easy. But with all due respect, it seems we make it harder than it needs to be. My friends, it doesn't need to be this way.

I did not come to Washington with the illusion that I could reinvent the wheel, but I did come to help balance the wheels and make the car run a little smoother.

Months ago, when I said I would not vote to raise the debt ceiling without a long-term fix, I thought this Congress and our President would be able to tackle the issue head-on and have it done by now. As I made clear on that day, the choices we make to address our debt now will determine whether the vital programs we all deeply care about, Social Security, Medicare, Medicaid, our veterans programs, education for our children, Head Start, are there for those in need and for the decades to come. However, instead of coming together months ago to focus and deal with the gravity of our debt, we delayed, and we continue to delegate.

While I will never question someone's motivations or their heart, we all have a right to question the strategies of our leaders and colleagues, whether they are Democrats or Republicans, because these strategies have once again led us to a crisis and the brink of a disaster. At a minimum, this entire process has, once again, fed a growing public cynicism that is corrosive to the very fabric of our government, and we all bear the responsibility for that.

I truly believe we can do better. I know this to be true because we proved it in West Virginia.

When I first became Governor of the great State of West Virginia, our State faced similar grave fiscal concerns. After facing dismal credit ratings for far too long and a dark fiscal future, some thought our State's best days were behind us. But after confronting our fiscal challenges head-on in West Virginia, even during the deepest recession in our lifetimes, we are one of the few States in the Nation that has had its credit rating upgraded the last 3 years in a row, and we had surpluses for 6 years in a row during the toughest times. We did this in West Virginia by cutting spending but not cutting the vital programs or services we hold so dear. We did this not by raising tax rates but by ensuring that everyone paid their fair share in our State. We did this by tackling waste, fraud, and abuse so as to ensure that we took care of those most in need, not those bent on greed. By doing this, we helped to restore confidence to the economy of our State, and that is a factor we can't overestimate.

West Virginia may be a small State, but these are commonsense solutions I strongly believe can apply right here.

I did not blame these fiscal challenges we had in our State on the mistakes made by past Governors or legislators, whether they were Democrats or Republicans. I reached out to all members of our legislature, whether they were on the front row or the so-called back row, and I met with them and anyone who had an idea on how we best could solve our fiscal problems. It required sacrifice, it required patience, and it required trust and respect. Can anyone honestly say that with all that has taken place here? In fact, if we turn on cable news right now, we will see exactly where this broken process stands. We as Democrats sometimes are rushing out to attack our colleagues, the Republicans, and the Republicans are rushing out to attack us, the Democrats.

We are better than this, and for the sake of this Nation's future we must do better. I owe it to all West Virginians and we all owe it to this great Nation to do much better than we have. From time to time, we should remind ourselves we took an oath to do just that.

As idealistic as it may sound, I implore this great body, each Member, the leaders of both bodies, the President, the two parties, and especially the political committees, to put away their political knives and swords and let us do something that has become rare in Washington: Put aside the political attacks for a few months and actually work together, openly, honestly, with respect for our profound differences, and build a trust that will fix the big problems we face as a nation.

The stakes are too high to do anything else. Our Nation faces not only a threat of default but of a downgrade. The credit rating agencies, such as Standard & Poor's, have made it clear that the United States needs to cut nearly $4 trillion over the next decade or they will lose the confidence in our long-term ability to pay our bills.

Yet in my estimation, neither of the two plans that are currently proposed by both Republican and Democratic leadership comes close to preventing our Nation from being downgraded or actually solving the debt crisis we face. Each falls far short, whether it is in time or dollars.

The truth is, both of the plans being discussed and that the Senate may consider, one offered by the leader of the Republican Party, Speaker JOHN BOEHNER, and the other offered by the leader of our Chamber and my party, Senator REID, do not solve the Nation's long-term fiscal problems as presented.

Make no mistake, I have the utmost respect for both of these fine public servants. Both find themselves in difficult positions, and I know they are trying their best to do what is right. I understand the desire to prevent our Nation's default. But what we have before us are effectively a short-term fix and a shorter term fix. Either one might prevent a default, which is a good thing, but neither may prevent a credit downgrade, which is a terrible thing.

To me, it doesn't matter if it is a Republican proposal or a Democratic proposal, but including $1.2 trillion in savings from the wars we should not be fighting as savings doesn't make sense. Saying we will save money that we haven't even budgeted or spent is akin to saying that because your family bought a $20,000 car instead of a $50,000 car, you saved $30,000. It is even worse when we consider we couldn't afford to buy any car in the first place. Most of the American people understand that, and I know in West Virginia they do.

As for Speaker BOEHNER's plan, his was supposed to save $1.2 trillion, but the Congressional Budget Office just took a look and determined it would save only $917 billion. So instead of fixing our problem, it kicks the can down the road to 2012, which will be an election year. If we think this process is ugly now, we ain't seen anything yet.

As these two proposals currently stand, I could not, in good conscience, support either one of them unless they include a pathway for a long-term debt fix. While it is true our Nation will suffer if we only enact a short-term deal, we will suffer much more if we fail to fix our greater fiscal problems.

We must solve our Nation's problems now, not in 2012 and certainly not in 2013. This is not just my opinion. As many rating agencies have warned and economists have predicted, every year that goes by, the options on how to fix our looming debt crisis will become worse and worse.

If we are being honest, neither of these proposals, as they stand today, can prevent a credit rating agency's downgrade, an event that would be as catastrophic or maybe even worse than default because I, personally, know a government's climb back from a low credit rating is extremely long and painful.

To be clear, a downgrade in our credit worthiness could lead to selloff of stocks, Treasury securities, and U.S. dollars. Gold prices could rise even higher, and interest rates could increase across the board, which would not only have a devastating impact on consumers, small businesses, and local governments but would make the price of financing our Nation's debt even more costly. At a minimum, the shock to our Nation's confidence from our first-ever downgrade could prove more costly than we could even fathom.

We can't let this happen. For the sake of our Nation's future, we must come to a compromise that acknowledges that a long-term debt fix is needed and our spending is out of control and that raising tax rates, whether it is the rich, the middle class, and most especially even the poor, will not cure our spending problems.

But we must also come to a compromise that acknowledges that tax reform is not the same as raising taxes and that there is something morally wrong when a large corporation, such as G.E., pays zero in Federal taxes while small businesses or a middle-class family pays more.

We must also come to a compromise that finally acknowledges we simply can't fight three wars for years to come while we cut services here at home and we choose to keep taxes low. I have said this before, but it is so important. If I have to choose between rebuilding America and rebuilding Afghanistan, I choose America.

So with the clock ticking toward default, what can we do?

As part of any deal to raise the debt ceiling, I would respectfully encourage leaders in the Senate and the House and our President to find common ground by committing to a guaranteed vote on a long-term fix; otherwise, as I said months ago, I simply cannot support a short-term deal that is just a little better than the shorter term deal.

With all due respect to my colleagues, I will not look West Virginians in the eye and say: Don't worry, all is good; I saved myself for the 2012 election, but you are on your own.

A vote on such a long-term debt fix, I would hope, could come within the next 90 days or a reasonable period of time so as to prevent what I fear the most, a downgrade of our Nation's credit rating. I believe such a vote on a long-term fix is possible because many good people have already worked hard to put together the framework and pieces of what such a long-term fix could look like.

Already we have seen two promising, commonsense proposals from bipartisan groups: the Bowles-Simpson debt commission, which presented its report nearly 9 months ago, and a similar framework that was presented last week by the bipartisan Gang of 6.

In fact, the day the Gang of 6 announced their proposed framework was one of my better and prouder days as a Senator. For the first time since I have been in the Senate, I saw Democratic and Republican Senators, almost equally divided, come together to put politics aside and agree to the principles of a commonsense solution that recognizes the urgency of fixing our long-term problems.

No plan is perfect; no plan will be. No plan will please all, and no plan can. But within these two plans I believe lies the path our Nation can take if we are to get our fiscal house in order. Of course, some will have other ideas, whether from the right or whether from the left, and we should listen to them all. But I would ask each of us and all the groups that undoubtedly will be mobilized to stop any fix, to think hard about what will happen to our great Nation if we fail and do nothing. What will happen to the programs we cherish, such as Social Security and Medicare, for all those people who depend on that for their only means of livelihood? What will happen to our Nation's defense and to our tax rates? What will happen to the people who are truly in need? What will happen to our seniors, our veterans, and our children if we choose to do little or nothing at all?

Finally, as the negotiations for this long-term fix proceed, I would hope we could all remember that if we are to negotiate in good faith, we must have faith in each other. We cannot turn a fair compromise into the enemy, and we can't tear each other apart with attacks if we are to come together to solve our Nation's great problems. We can respectfully disagree as long as we never forget to respect each other.

As difficult as the next few days and weeks and months will be, I believe we, the President and this esteemed Congress, have the opportunity to make this one of our finest hours. We have within our hands an opportunity where we can prove to the naysayers and the doubters that the government of the people is as great as the people which it serves.

I, for one, am willing to do whatever I possibly can, whatever is asked of me; I will work hard every day, across the aisle, until we have a long-term solution to our debt crisis.

I know no Senator or Member of Congress can do this alone. But together, putting politics aside, we can do this. For the sake of this great Nation, our children, the State I love, West Virginia, and this wonderful country of ours, the United States of America, I truly hope we do.

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

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

DEFENSE DEPARTMENT INSPECTOR GENERAL AUDITS

Mr. GRASSLEY. Mr. President, at least two times in the last couple of months I have come to the floor to tell my colleagues about some work I am doing on investigation of waste, fraud, and abuse in the Defense Department and primarily to focus them on the work of the Inspector General's Office in regard to how they do audits. So I come to the floor today to renew my call for better audit reports.

As a Senator dedicated to watchdogging the taxpayers' money, audits are a primary instrument in my toolbox. They are like a hammer and a wrench. They are the tools of the trade. But like other Members of Congress conducting oversight, I can't do audits. We don't have staff for that, so we must rely on the inspectors general of the various departments to do the independent audits of the work of those departments. So today I speak about the Defense Department inspector general.

The audit should be the inspector general's primary weapon for rooting out fraud, waste, and theft. Audits should be the tip of their spear, and that spear should have a very sharp point. The mere possibility of audit should have the fraudsters—people who commit fraud—quaking in their boots, but that is not the way it is, at least not at the Defense Department.

The audit weapon belonging to the Defense Department's inspector general is not as effective as it should be. This problem is not entirely the inspector general's own doing. The broken Defense Department accounting system is also to blame. It is incapable of generating accurate and complete finance and accounting data. When the books are in shambles, as they are, then there are no audit trails to follow, and following the money is how we get to the bottom of things when it comes to waste, fraud, abuse, and mismanagement. Of course, that makes the auditor's job doubly difficult. So the auditors need to adjust the audit strategy to meet the challenge that there is not a very good financial management system within the Defense Department.

As a watchdog, degraded audit capabilities give me serious heartburn. It puts the taxpayers' money in harm's way. When we have unreliable accounting data coupled with ineffective auditing, theft and waste can thrive undetected. Those concerns are the driving force behind my ongoing audit oversight review.

Starting in January of 2009, I began receiving anonymous letters from whistleblowers. They alleged gross mismanagement in the audit office. In response, my staff initiated an in-depth oversight review. It focused on audit reporting by that Inspector General's Office.

On September 7, 2010, I issued my first report. It evaluated 113 audit reports issued in fiscal year 2009. That study determined that those audits, which cost the taxpayers about $100 million, were not on target. I offered 12 recommendations for getting the audit process back on track.

Inspector General Heddell responded to my report in a very positive and constructive way. He promised to ''transform the audit organization.'' The newly appointed deputy for auditing, Mr. Dan Blair, produced a roadmap pointing the way forward. He, too, promised reform and transformation and the creation of a ''world-class oversight organization.'' All of this, of course, was music to my ears. All signals were very encouraging. But the big question before us now is this: When will the promised reforms begin to pop up on the radar screen? And that radar screen is our further reading of additional audits as they come out this fiscal year and into the future. When will we see sustained improvement in audit quality?

To establish a solid baseline for assessing the highly touted transformation plan, my staff took another snapshot of recent audits. My latest oversight review is best characterized as a report card, and it was issued on June 1 of this year. Each of the 113 unclassified reports published in fiscal year 2010 was reviewed, evaluated, and graded. After each report was graded, all the scores for each report on each rating category were added up and averaged. This created a composite score for each of the 113 reports.

Although 15 top-quality audits are highlighted in the report card, the overall score for all 113 was D-minus. That is low, I know. Maybe the score should have been a little higher. Obviously, the grading system isn't perfect. It may need some fine-tuning, and we are working on that. But I still believe it provides a rough measure of audit quality.

Clearly, none of the 2010 reports reflected any reforms that Inspector General Heddell put in place in December of 2010 because all those reports were published 3 months before the reforms went into place before October 1, 2010. That was a good 3 months before those reforms were approved.

Shortly after my report card was issued, Inspector General Heddell pounced on it. He objected to the low score. He complained that it did not adequately reflect $4.2 billion in what he calls ''achieved monetary benefits'' identified in the 2010 audits.

To address Mr. Heddell's concerns, I had my staff ask the audit office to prepare an information paper on the reported savings. That document was provided to me on June 20. I call it a ''crosswalk.'' It takes me to the exact page in each report where savings are discussed and identified. This document lists $4.2 billion in ''identified potential monetary benefits'' and $4.2 billion in ''collections.'' These alleged savings were uncovered in 19 reports, including one classified report we didn't look at.

After reviewing the crosswalk, I concluded that Inspector General Heddell

had a legitimate gripe about the report card. The report card should have included a section on savings. The first time around, we did not give sufficient credit for those accomplishments. As a practical matter, we gave those reports only partial credit for pinpointing waste. I say partial credit because six of those reports were given top scores in my report card, so they did get some credit—just not enough credit.

In order to fully assess Mr. Heddell's complaints, I directed my staff to reassess the scoring process for all 18 unclassified audits. In rescoring the reports, we asked ourselves key questions such as, Was the audit objective aligned with the inspector general's core mission? Did contract audits connect all the dots in the cycle of transactions? Did they match contract requirements with payments? Did the audits answer the key oversight question, which is, Did the government receive what it ordered at an agreed-upon price and schedule? Did the audit verify the exact dollar amount of alleged fraud and waste using primary source payment records? I do not have time to go into this, but the use of primary source payment records is very important if we are going to follow the money, and following the money is where we determine whether there is fraud, waste, and abuse.

Other key questions we asked were: Were the recommendations tough and appropriate? Did they recommend accountability for waste and mismanagement? Did they propose workable remedies for recovering improper payments? How quickly were the audits completed?

The answers to these questions take us right to the heart and the soul of an audit—any audit, in any department. They are a good yardstick for measuring audit quality.

This is my bottom line: Were the audits hard-hitting, down-in-the-trenches audits that produced results or were they softball audits with no redeeming value?

After completing the review, my staff upped the overall score of those 18 reports from a D-plus to a solid C.

Excellence in several reporting categories pushed the scores up as follows: All reports were highly relevant and were aligned with the core mission. They detected and reported $4 billion in waste. Most reports offered reasonable recommendations for recovering unauthorized payments.

Poor performance in other categories pulled scores down as follows: Most reports did not verify exact dollar amounts of waste using primary source payment records. I wish to emphasize again the necessity of using primary source pay records. Follow the money. Most dollar amounts for alleged savings were taken from untested Army budget documents. Most did not offer meaningful recommendations for holding responsible officials accountable for waste and mismanagement. Of course, in government, if people are not held responsible for what they do and accountable for what they do, then, of course, we do not see change in culture. So accountability and responsibility and holding people responsible is very important if we are going to bring changes. Then, lastly, I would say, most reports were old and stale, having taken far too long to complete.

I wish to point this out by saying, the single biggest factor that keeps dragging the scores down into the pits is timeliness or lack of it and, in most cases, the lack of it. The Audit Office continues to publish old, stale reports. Of these 18 reports we reviewed and on which I am reporting to you, they took an average of 17 months to complete. Eight took a total of 168 months to complete, and none of these numbers includes the 4 to 6 months it takes to get an audit started. So we are looking at a minimum of 2 years to complete top-quality audits.

Under my scoring system, audits completed in 6 months or less earn a grade A, those completed in 12 months earn a C, and those that take more than 15 months get an F.

These 18 reports, of course, as we can see from my comments, were over the top. So they earned a grade of F for taking so long to finish.

I have said this before, and I wish to say it again. The power of top-quality audit work is greatly diminished by stale information. Out-of-date audits have little impact—with the passage of time, records disappear, particularly financial records—because following the money is a very important part of good auditing. People retire and move on. Money cannot be recovered and no one can be held accountable, and without people being held accountable, we do not change the culture of organizations.

The new Deputy for Auditing, Mr. Blair, is part of the problem. He has not set any goals for audit completion times. I hope he will do that. Reasonable goals need to be established.

I would like to summarize. In my summarization, I would point out that I wish to talk about the $4 billion that was potential waste and was saved. These 18 reports clearly put the spotlight on $4 billion of potential waste. The auditors detected it. They reported it. They did exactly what they are supposed to do. That is a major accomplishment worthy of recognition and praise. So they ferreted out waste. They presumably saved the money.

But what happened to the $4 billion? Busting $4 billion in waste did not produce $4 billion in savings. The savings touted by Inspector General Heddell were lost, in a sense.

Then there is a technical lingo around government: The money got reprogrammed. In plain English, that means it got put to better use but not necessarily saved. As seen through the eyes of this skeptical watchdog, all the loose change got scooped up and shoveled out the backdoor and into the jaws of the Pentagon spending machine on some other program. That machine is known to have an insatiable appetite for money.

The disappearance of the savings is part semantics. The word ''waste'' is not in the audit lexicon. Sprinkling waste with perfume and calling it savings does not make it savings. Perhaps if the auditors started calling it what it is—waste—it might be easier to reach the Promised Land, but they never got there. Mr. President, 99.9 percent of the $4 billion got spent. Only in government could we spend all the money and still claim savings.

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

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

DEBT LIMIT

Mr. THUNE. Mr. President, later today, we will get a chance—another chance, I should say—to vote to raise the debt limit.

My understanding is, the House of Representatives has delayed the time at which they are going to vote on their plan, the so-called Boehner plan. But at some point I suspect that vote will move forward and we will end up receiving that legislation from the House of Representatives, and we will have an opportunity to act on that as well.

It will be the second bill we will vote on in the Senate that would raise the debt limit. The first one was the cut, cap, and balance plan that was first approved by the House before being sent to the Senate over 1 week ago.

This was a three-pronged approach that would have required a downpayment on our deficits by immediately cutting spending. It would have put us on a path to reform entitlements and cut spending over the medium term by putting a cap on spending as a percentage of our economy. Finally, it would have made sure we do not keep adding to our debt by approving a debt limit increase after a balanced budget amendment to our Constitution was passed by Congress.

This was the Republicans' first choice as to how to deal with this crisis. Unfortunately, Senate Democrats killed this commonsense bill which had the support, according to a CNN poll, of 66 percent of Americans. So we did not have an opportunity to debate it, offer amendments or get an up-and-down vote on that legislation. In the interest of solving the problem before us, it was recognized that probably we would have to find another approach.

There have been a lot of observations made by the media and others that somehow the Republicans need to compromise more in this situation. My

only question would be: Compromise with whom? With themselves? Because they are the only ones out there who have put forward a plan. And, in fact, this current proposal that will come from the House of Representatives actually is a compromise. The spending reductions in that proposal are two-thirds of those that were proposed in the House budget that was passed by the House of Representatives earlier this year. So it still addresses the fundamental problem, and Speaker BOEHNER came up with a new plan that would cut spending by $915 billion and create a process to reduce the deficit by $1.8 trillion on top of that.

This is not a perfect plan. As I said, it is certainly not our first choice, but it is a plan that cuts spending more than it increases the debt limit, and it does it without raising taxes on job creators. In a little while the Boehner plan will hopefully join the cut, cap, and balance plan as the only plan which has passed a body of Congress.

Senate Democrats do not have a plan to cut spending more than they raise the debt limit. Senate Democrats do not have a plan that can pass a single House of Congress. Of course, this is more than the White House can say, because the White House does not have a plan, period. So when the Boehner plan comes up for a vote here in the Senate, hopefully sometime later this evening, I would encourage my colleagues from across the aisle to support this measure.

They have been speaking constantly about the need to raise the debt limit, and here is their chance to do so. All they have to do is vote for this bill and send it to the President for his signature and we can put this issue to rest for the time being. Then it puts a pathway in place for us to get, as I said before, to a debate about entitlement reform several months down the road.

I understand there are some concerns among my colleagues on the other side about how long it will be before we would need to increase the debt limit again. But if you look at the past 20 years or so, 72 percent of the time our debt limit increases have been for less than a year. So this increase is hardly out of the normal time range. If you think about it, almost 75 percent of the time—almost three-fourths of the time—we have raised the debt limit, we have done it for less than a year.

What we are talking about here would be something that would take us into next year, at which point we would have to have another vote on the debt limit as we come to a conclusion about the entitlement reform component or element of this particular legislation.

So this increase, as I said, is not out of the normal time range. Markets are not going to care about for how long we increase the debt limit. They simply care that we do not breach the debt limit and, more importantly, over the long term we lay out a long-term plan to cut the debt.

Many of us have spoken on the floor of the Senate in the past and indicated that the real crisis, the real issue before our country right now is not the debt limit, it is the debt. It is the fact that we are borrowing literally 40 cents out of every dollar that we spend here in Washington, DC, and we continue to pile up and accumulate massive amounts of debt that get passed on to future generations and put in great peril the economy of our country and our ability to create jobs. So a longer term increase is not needed to calm the markets.

But what this bill does not do is raise the debt limit past the elections. I think that is where the real rub comes in. Because the President has made it very clear, as have some of my colleagues, that this is one of their major concerns. They want to have a debt limit increase that gets us past the 2012 election. That is a political concern, it is not an economic concern.

But today it has arisen that these concerns are more than political, they are personal. You see, the White House is concerned that this would require Congress to approve another debt limit increase sometime in January, which they complain would ruin their Christmas vacation plans. I certainly do not want to ruin the President or anyone else's Christmas vacation plans, but I think it is a bit more important that we prevent our country from adding $9.5 trillion to the debt held by the public, as the President's budget would do. I think it is a bit more important that we prevent our country from being forced to implement severe austerity programs, such as they have had to do in Europe because of their inability to constrain spending. I think it is a bit more important that we reform entitlements so these important programs are around for our children and grandchildren.

Finally, I think it is a bit more important that we leave our country in better shape for our children than the one we received. This has been the American ethic. Each generation has sacrificed so that the next generation could have a better quality of life. Today we risk turning that tradition on its head. If we continue to run up debts and deficits such as those proposed, our children and grandchildren will have an astounding burden to pay off to our country's creditors. We do not have to leave them this burden.

We have proposed, as I said, the cut, cap, and balance plan, which would make great strides in reducing this debt burden. We will have, hopefully later today—if not today perhaps sometime tomorrow—in front of us the Boehner plan, which will make significant downpayments on these burdens.

What I would simply say is that we have consistently now put before this Senate different plans we have had a chance to vote on. We voted on the cut, cap, and balance plan. Unfortunately, it was a tabling motion, it was a procedural motion. It was not an up-and-down vote, because the leader did not want us to get on that legislation and have an opportunity to debate and amend it and ultimately vote on it. But we did have a vote on a tabling motion. Hopefully, we will get a vote on the Boehner plan which, as I said, hopefully will be in front of us in the not too distant future. But my point very simply is there has not been any effort put forward by our colleagues on the other side to, one, put forward a budget which we know now has been I think 820 days since the last time the Senate acted on a budget. You have to go back to April 29 of 2009. That was the last time the Senate voted on a budget.

It starts there. It starts there. That is where we set our priorities. That is where we determine how we are going to spend the people's tax dollars. So we have not had a budget. The House of Representatives passed a budget. They did it on schedule. They did it on time. As far as I know, there are no plans here to move a budget any time in the future.

Then we have the cut, cap, and balance plan that passed the House of Representatives, which was an attempt to deal with the debt limit increase, but do it in a way that forces us to focus on the real issue, which is spending reductions, spending reforms, puts in place a pathway to get a result on entitlement reform, forces a vote on a balanced budget amendment, which many of us think is a priority if we are going to get long-term spending under control, and then, hopefully later today, we are going to get a vote on the Boehner plan which will come over from the House of Representatives, which is yet another attempt to get the debt limit increased, but do it in a way that actually makes a dent in the long-term challenge facing this country, which again is not the debt limit, it is the debt.

That is the problem. That is fundamentally what we have to deal with. It is fundamentally a spending problem. Much has been made about a balanced approach. What does the other side mean when they say balanced? Usually it means we are going to take more of your money and spend it on more government. Many of us would support tax reform that would close tax loopholes, broaden the base, if you could lower the rates at the same time. I happen to believe that is important if we are going to get the economy growing again and creating jobs. I think you would see tremendous growth as a result of tax reform. But if you talk about raising taxes to pay for even more government, that is precisely the wrong approach. That is why we are in the mess we are in today, because we spend more than we take in. We have been doing it year over year. We have got to learn to live within our means and to quit spending money we do not have.

Many States have amendments in their constitutions that enable them

and force them and require them to do this every single year. It is time our Federal Government started operating in a way that makes fiscal sense. I think the American people understand very clearly what this is about. This is about spending. It is about getting Washington to live within its means, to quit borrowing 40 cents out of every dollar it spends, and to put this country on a path fiscally that will ensure we do not bankrupt the country for future generations, and that we get our economy back in a place where it can start growing and creating the jobs we need to get people in this country back to work.

I see the Senator from Utah. I expect he will have some remarks about this subject. There are many of us on this side, I know, who are anxious to vote and certainly are doing everything we can to facilitate this process where we deal with the crisis before us next week, but, importantly, do it in a way that addresses the fundamental issue here which is not the debt limit, it is the debt.

It is time Washington started living within its means, started to make sure we have got a pathway in place for not only cutting spending today but dealing with the long-term issue by putting a balanced budget amendment in our Constitution. I hope my colleagues will join us in this legislation that will come before us sometime we hope later today, and it will be yet another attempt to address this issue. I implore my colleagues here, I think we are going to get most of the Republicans to vote for this. I hope there will be some on the other side who will join us in this endeavor. It is too important to the future of this country not to.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. UDALL of Colorado.) The Senator from Utah is recognized.

Mr. HATCH. I ask unanimous consent that I be permitted to finish my remarks.

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

FAA REAUTHORIZATION

Mr. HATCH. Mr. President, before turning to the issue of the moment, I want to thank my dear friend for his good remarks here on the floor of the Senate. He is a great leader, a great human being, and he certainly outlined, I think in a fair way, some of the problems and some of the solutions we might have here on the floor.

But before turning to the issue of the moment, the need to restore the Nation's fiscal stability by reducing our deficits and debt, I want to return to a matter I discussed on the floor yesterday, and that is the FAA reauthorization bill.

I must respond to some of the comments made by two of my colleagues earlier today regarding one of the major sticking points in our efforts to pass the FAA reauthorization bill. Their arguments are, to put it quite simply, fallacious and cannot go unanswered.

As you might expect, these comments were regarding the provision in the House bill affecting the way votes are counted in union elections in the airline industry. My colleagues, the senior Senator from West Virginia and the junior Senator from Iowa, characterize the House's actions as some sort of radical endeavor, a change that lacks justification and common sense.

In fact, the Senator from West Virginia even argued that the House's provisions would ''undo 75 years of labor law.''

These were his exact words. Well, nothing could be further from the truth. In fact, the claim is so far from being accurate I simply have to assume that my good friend, Senator ROCKEFELLER, simply misspoke. I know this is the line the labor unions and the administration are peddling, but here is the truth: The House of Representatives or Senate Republicans are not trying to undo 75 years of labor law, it is the National Mediation Board—or NMB, I will call it—that has already done so in a highly partisan fashion.

It is the NMB, controlled by pro-union appointees of President Obama that in a partisan way unilaterally undid 75 years of labor law, and put their finger on the scale for the unions that bankroll Democratic political campaigns.

I know what I am talking about. I won the American Jurisprudence prize for labor law. I have led labor fights on the floor for our side for the last 35 years. House and Senate Republicans are only trying to restore long-lasting labor law following its highly partisan corruption by the National Mediation Board. This is not an opinion. This is fact.

Put the talking points and revisionist history aside, this is what you have: a highly partisan NMB changing 75 years of settled law, settled labor law, to benefit the Democrats' political allies. For 75 years, NMB-supervised elections required that a union receive the votes of a majority of the entire workforce before it can be certified. That has been the law. There is good reason for it. This was not just a mathematical trick to disadvantage unions, as my colleagues have argued. It is plain common sense.

Let's suppose, for example, that only 50 percent of a proposed bargaining unit votes in a union election, and the union wins by a very slim majority of the votes cast. In that case, a union representative would be certified with only the demonstrated support of one-fourth of the bargaining unit. That is what would happen if we follow the language the NMB fallaciously put into their ruling. One-quarter of a workforce could vote to certify a union and bind every other coworker to have to live with that decision. Apparently a commitment to Democratic and true majority rule only matters to the left when it suits them. What is going on in this country is outrageous, not just at the National Mediation Board but the NLRB as well. Democratic radicals, very brilliant labor lawyers, who do not give a darn about what the law is, are now starting to change the laws by regulatory fiat.

Apparently a commitment to democratic and true majority rule only matters when it suits certain people's politics.

The Senator from Iowa compared these votes to Senate and schoolboard elections, suggesting that only a majority of those voting is necessary to prevail. This is a misguided comparison. First, union elections are not a choice among competing representatives. They are, instead, held to determine whether the workers want to be represented at all. Even setting that aside, how many schoolboards are going to be empowered to make decisions that affect every hour of every day an employee goes to work? How many Senators are elected to serve a small, narrowly defined group of constituents? And, in the end, if your vote is not counted in a Senate or schoolboard election, you will get another chance to vote a few years down the line.

Employees voting in these union elections have no such options. That is why the law has been completely different from what my two friends and colleagues have said on the floor. Requiring the support of the majority of the whole unit before certifying a union representative only makes common sense. This is why the procedure at NMB used for these elections went unchanged for 75 years. Boards appointed by Democratic Presidents Roosevelt, Truman, Johnson, Carter, and Clinton all agreed with that process that the House bill is only attempting to restore.

In fact, the NMB appointed by President Carter unanimously ruled it did not have authority to administratively change the form of the NMB's ballot used in representation elections, and that such a change, if appropriate, can only be made by Congress. That makes sense.

Yet today we have an administration bent on greasing the rails in favor of the unions, and a Democratic Senate all too willing to go along with it. They are so willing that they have opted to stall passage of the FAA reauthorization to prevent Congress from restoring a system that served the Nation and airline industry well for decades. This is another example of the administration showing its true colors. Rather than provide certainty to travelers, the transportation industry, and airports, they are holding up a long-term FAA reauthorization in order to benefit their union allies. It is wrong. This type of thing should not go on. Nor should the National Mediation Board be issuing what ought to be congressional decisions.

I wish we were not having this debate. I wish we could get this FAA reauthorization done. I want to get it done. I don't want anybody furloughed, but these are important issues. This isn't some itty-bitty nonessential issue. I am not going to yield on this issue. I will not let an out-of-control National Mediation Board and their patrons in Congress and the White House rig the rules so a small minority can jam unionization on unwilling employees.

I expect we will be debating this issue for some time. I am willing to have the debate in full view of the public. But, at the very least, I expect my colleagues to acknowledge the truth as to what has transpired at the National Mediation Board. It is not the House of Representatives that has taken a radical position; it is the Obama administration, and some of my colleagues on the other side should know better.

Let me add a couple of other things. I don't enjoy the fact that people are being furloughed. But it is not Republicans who are holding this bill up. It is those people demanding outrageous changes in the law by individuals who were never elected to make those changes. We ought to fire that whole doggone National Mediation Board—or at least the Democrats on the board, who don't seem to care about what the law is.

And it is the same with the NLRB. At least one of them, and maybe more, could not make it through this process and had to be recess appointed. They could care less about what the laws are, and they want to change them without proper congressional approval. It is outrageous. It is not something my friends on the other side should encourage. It just makes sense.

All those Democratic Presidents, until now, have honored that 75-year history of how votes should be taken in union elections. Unions win over 60 percent of their union elections. The system is not unfair. They lose some, sure. But to stack the rules so they can win every time is not right either. It certainly isn't democratic. It is wrong for those employees who didn't have the opportunity, or didn't vote. It is wrong. You can have 10 people vote in a 100-person union, and if 6 vote for it, under their rule, that would change the rule for all 94 of the others. That is what we are ignoring. So much for that. All I can say is I don't want to have anyone whining from the other side, because they are the ones who are holding up the FAA reauthorization. And they are doing it for the most crass of reasons.

THE DEBT CEILING

Turning to the matter that is consuming the Nation, I want to address the so-called August 2 deadline we hit next week.

In early April of this year, Treasury Secretary Geithner informed Congress that Treasury might run out of ways to stay at the debt limit and have enough cash to pay its bills around July 8. About a month and a half later, on May 16, the Treasury Secretary updated his guess to August 2.

This August 2 deadline, which the administration has insisted is when Treasury runs out of sufficient cash to pay bills, was estimated back in the middle of May. It is only reasonable to expect that Congress would be kept apprised of Treasury's cashflow status and estimates. If we indeed face an economic catastrophe on August 2, it is only reasonable to expect warnings from those in government responsible for issuing such updates and monitoring threats to our financial stability.

We have a group in government that is charged with that responsibility. It is called the Financial Stability Oversight Council, or FSOC, set up in the Dodd-Frank financial regulation law. The FSOC is chaired by the Treasury Secretary and composed of members such as the Federal Reserve Chairman and banking regulations czars. Indeed, the FSOC was sold by Democrats as a body that would be able to spot threats to our financial system and then warn and protect us all.

The President, Treasury officials, the President's Press Secretary, and others in the administration daily warn of catastrophe, crisis, and the potential for conditions even worse than we saw during the financial crisis. They seem to be channeling Dr. Peter Venkman, who, faced with another catastrophe, once predicted a disaster of biblical proportions—human sacrifice, dogs and cats living together, mass hysteria.

Yet through all these predictions, the FSOC has essentially remained silent. That body of unelected bureaucrats either doesn't see an impending threat to stability from the debt limit impasse, or from a ratings downgrade for the United States, or it is too busy writing a mountain of new regulations to make a warning.

I sent a letter, which I wish to have printed in the RECORD, to eight voting members of the FSOC yesterday, asking two basic sets of questions. I ask unanimous consent that that be printed in the RECORD.

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

U.S. SENATE,
COMMITTEE ON FINANCE,
Washington, DC, July 27, 2011.

Hon. TIMOTHY GEITHNER,
Secretary, Department of the Treasury, Washington, DC.
Hon. BEN BERNANKE,
Chairman, Board of Governors, The Federal Reserve System, Washington, DC.
Hon. GARY GENSLER,
Chairman, Commodity Futures Trading Commission, Washington, DC.
Hon. MARY SCHAPIRO,
Chairman, U.S. Securities and Exchange Commission, Washington, DC.
MARTIN J. GRUENBERG,
Acting Chairperson, Federal Deposit Insurance Corporation, Washington, DC.
EDWARD DEMARCO,
Acting Director, Federal Housing Finance Agency, Washington, DC.
Hon. DEBBIE MATZ,
Chairman, National Credit Union Administration, Alexandria, VA.
JOHN WALSH,
Acting Comptroller, Office of the Comptroller of the Currency, Washington, DC.

DEAR SECRETARY GEITHNER, CHAIRMEN BERNANKE, GENSLER, MATZ, SHAPIRO, ACTING CHAIRPERSON GRUENBERG, ACTING DIRECTOR DEMARCO, AND ACTING COMPTROLLER WALSH: The President, on July 25, spoke to the American public about risks associated with failure to raise the statutory debt limit, saying that: ''We would risk sparking a deep economic crisis. . .'' The President warns of a deep crisis and risks to financial stability.

You, the voting members of the Financial Stability Oversight Council (FSOC), are charged by the Dodd-Frank Wall Street Reform and Consumer Protection Act with the responsibility to identify risks and potential emerging threats to the financial stability of the United States.

Does the Council agree with the President's assessment that possible failure to raise the statutory debt limit by sometime in early August represents an emerging threat to the financial stability of the United States?

Does any voting Council member dissent from whatever is the majority view of the Council? If so, please explain precisely why.

Neither the Minutes of the FSOC July 13, 2011 meeting nor the Annual Report of the FSOC, which was approved on July 22, 2011, identify possible failure to raise the statutory debt limit by August 2 as an imminent risk to the financial stability of the United States worthy of a warning to the American people, and do not come close to recent statements by Treasury officials warning of ''catastrophe.''

In addition to inquiring about the Council's views on possible risks to financial stability, I write to ask the Council and its voting members about their current knowledge of recent Treasury cash inflows and outflows and projections of those cash flows, daily, through the month of August.

Treasury officials have warned that based on actual and projected revenues and expenditures, along with potential exhaustion of available ''extraordinary measures'' to avoid breach of the statutory debt limit, the United States will exhaust its borrowing authority under the limit and possibly run out of available cash to pay obligations of the federal government that are due.

Unfortunately, Congress and the American people do not have sufficient information about Treasury's actual and projected revenues, expenditures, and cash flows to make informed judgments. Many Americans and members of Congress are, unfortunately, relying on estimates and projections from either large Wall Street financial institutions

or non-governmental organizations often labeled ''think tanks.'' The lack of information is unsatisfactory.

In a May 2, 2011 letter to Congress, Treasury Secretary Geithner stated that as a result of stronger than anticipated tax receipts, Treasury then estimated that extraordinary measures to provide headroom under the statutory debt limit would be exhausted on August 2, 2011. Since that time, more data have become available. Some reports since that time have indicated that receipts may have been turning out higher than previously expected. Further, the Federal Reserve's July 2011 Monetary Policy Report to the Congress identifies that ''Federal receipts have risen rapidly lately—they are up about 10 percent in the first eight months of fiscal 2011 compared with the same period in fiscal 2010.''

I recognize that receipts and Treasury's cash inflows and outflows can be lumpy and are stochastic. However, the date at which extraordinary measures available to Treasury become exhausted, and cash inflows may prove insufficient to meet incoming obligations that are due, has almost surely changed from the August 2 date estimated by Treasury on May 2. Given incoming data since May 2, does August 2 remain the date with the highest statistical likelihood of being the point in time at which Treasury will run out of extraordinary measures to provide additional headroom under the debt limit and will face insufficient cash inflows relative to obligations that are coming due?

Please provide, by 5:00 p.m., Eastern Standard Time on Thursday, July 28, detailed information known by the Council and by any voting member on:

Actual revenues and expenditures through July 27;

Projected or actual daily Treasury cash inflows and outflows for each day between July 28 and August 31, along with methods used to make projections;

Whether, given current projections of cash inflows and obligations coming due, Treasury would run out of cash and not have sufficient cash available to meet all obligations that become due on any date between August 2 and August 31 (projections here mean point estimates, with the acknowledgement that projections are inherently uncertain);

Any cash or liquid accounts available (presently or any time during August) to Treasury, such as Treasury's $5 billion liquid balance sitting idle in its Supplementary Financing Program Account at the Federal Reserve, established to allegedly assist the Federal Reserve with management of its balance sheet during the financial crisis (the Daily Statement of cash and debt operations of the United States Treasury for Monday, July 25, 2011 indicates that the $5 billion was available to Treasury on that date);

Current values of securities and other marketable assets available (presently or any time during August) to Treasury, including mortgage-backed-securities and other financial claims amassed by Treasury during the recent financial crisis, which could be liquidated and converted to cash (my request is for total values, not an assessment of the advisability of asset sales);

Contingency plans for generation of cash within Treasury in the event that the statutory debt limit is not raised by August 2, 2011;

Contingency plans of regulators of financial institutions, including any plans for regulatory forebearance, in the event of a ratings downgrade of United States Treasury debt securities;

Contingency plans of the Federal Reserve System and the Federal Reserve Bank of New York in the event of a ratings downgrade of United States Treasury debt securities, including plans related to ''breaking of the buck'' by a money market mutual fund, disruptions in the tri-party repo market, disruptions in payment systems or systemically important financial utilities, or creation of programs or facilities with broad-based eligibility under authorities provided by Section 1101 of the Dodd-Frank Wall Street Reform and Consumer Protection Act;

Any private assurances by any government officials to any financial institution or significant financial market participant that the United States Treasury will not fail to pay principal and interest on Treasury securities even if the statutory debt limit is not raised.

As Ranking Member of the Senate Finance Committee, with a responsibility for oversight of our sovereign debt and Treasury's cash management practices, I am deeply concerned about the lack of information about upcoming cash flows and reliance of Congress and the American people on non-governmental projections of those flows in decisionmaking. Time is of the essence, and I require, as I stated, the information that I have requested by 5:00 p.m. Eastern Standard Time on Thursday, July 28. Please contact Jeff Wrase at 202–224–4515.

Sincerely,

ORRIN G. HATCH,
Ranking Member.

Mr. HATCH. Mr. President, one is whether they see any imminent threat to financial stability from the debt limit impasse, or from an impending downgrade to our Nation's credit rating. Of course, we face warnings of downgrades of our credit rating not merely because of the debt limit impasse; we have had dozens of such impasses in recent decades, with no effect on our credit rating. Yet we do face warnings of a ratings downgrade because of President Obama's acceleration of deficits and debt along our unsustainable fiscal path and unsustainable entitlement promises.

With spending as a share of the economy up to levels not seen since World War II, and a lack of willingness by the administration to break its deficit spending addiction, ratings agencies have been brought to the edge and warn of impending downgrades. Those downgrades would immediately harm job creation, the economy, the cost of credit for every American family and business, and, indeed, overall financial stability.

However, instead of a forthright discussion of this threat, the FSOC chose to instead bury an academic discussion of it in their annual report. Let me remind everyone how important Democrats said the FSOC would be as an early warning system, protecting us from the imminent threats to stability. It was supposed to be a watchdog, a cop on the beat combing global financial markets for imbalances and stability threats, and then giving warning to everyone.

The President, the Treasury Secretary, ratings agencies, Secretary of State, Fed Chairman Bernanke, admirals, investors, former administration officials across party lines—all have issued warnings of threats to financial stability from our fiscal crisis. Yet the FSOC buried whatever observation it has about our crisis in its annual report.

Another set of questions I asked the FSOC involves Treasury's cashflows through August and the date at which Treasury now believes it is most likely to run short of cash. I asked about contingency plans that Treasury, the Fed, and bank regulators have if there is a ratings downgrade. Reports of meetings of Treasury Secretary Geithner, Fed Chairman Bernanke, and New York Fed President Dudley suggest that contingency plans certainly are in the works.

Yet as the ranking member of the Senate Finance Committee, the administration has provided me with no information on what those plans might be, in spite of my responsibility for oversight of debt and cash operations at Treasury. I wish I could say I was surprised, but the fact is, the promise of the most open, deliberative, and rational administration in history has given way to a highly secretive and partisan operation that denies the people of this country the leadership they are owed.

Perhaps I am supposed to wait, as in the past, for news reports on Sunday afternoon before the opening of financial markets in Asia to find out what we would do if an economic catastrophe in fact unfolds.

It is an unsatisfactory and unacceptable state of affairs that the American people and Members of Congress do not have updated and sufficient information about Treasury's cashflows and liquid assets, or the contingency plans of our financial regulators. It is disturbing to me that in recent days Members of Congress in both Chambers have gone to their respective floors to discuss Treasury's cash and liquidity position using information supplied either by large Wall Street financial institutions, or by nongovernmental think tanks.

Press reports of the U.S. Treasury's financial condition have also been relying on these sources. Why? Why do Members of Congress not know details of Treasury's projected cashflows for August? Why are we relying on dated numbers Treasury gave us months ago? How can we decide whether August 2, a threshold date estimated by Treasury back in May, is even close to some sort of deadline date for dealing with the debt limit?

Maybe the date is July 29. I don't know, and neither the administration nor the FSOC has told us. Maybe the date is August 15. I don't know, and neither the administration nor the FSOC has told us. I don't know. The American people don't know. This is unacceptable.

Wall Street firms have recently put out their own projections and say that August 2 may not be relevant at all. Maybe it will be August 8 when Treasury runs into a cashflow problem. Maybe it will be August 13. Does Treasury still believe August 2 is the date when cashflow problems are most likely to arrive, given new information on

government receipts since early May? If not, we need to know, and we need to know how that assessment has been made. If so, then why is Treasury not telling us and showing us why?

My letter to FSOC members, which includes the Treasury Secretary, includes a request for updated information about Treasury cashflows and liquid assets. Given warnings from the administration that there is special urgency to act by August 2, time is of the essence, so I asked to receive responses from the FSOC members by 5 o'clock today, which is now an hour and a half ago. I have received no reply about Treasury cashflows and liquid assets. Nothing. Radio silence.

Television cameras can't be turned on in this town without capturing some administration official reminding Americans about the looming default, but they are unable to provide Congress with the numbers that would show when the default would happen, after all these months of recommending we should know, and after warnings months ago.

Let me say this again. I asked for, and have not received, critical information about the state of our Nation's short-term finances that I specifically requested from eight voting members of the FSOC, including the Secretary of the Treasury.

I have received no response at all regarding the cash and liquid assets Treasury has and expects to have available. But worse than the refusal by the Treasury Secretary and the FSOC members to inform us about the Nation's cash position is their refusal to keep the American people duly informed about the state of our finances. It is, quite simply, a shirking of their responsibility to the citizens of this country. Rather than providing transparency—which we were promised—the administration has chosen to scare Social Security recipients about their benefits in politicized debt-limit negotiations.

We are debating debt and deficit plans that involve trillions of dollars. Yet we only have guesses about how much cash the Federal Government expects to have in August from a nongovernment think tank and from Wall Street firms. This is unacceptable.

Mr. President, one of the most troubling aspects of this lack of disclosure is the way it is affecting our Nation's seniors. I listened to my constituents in Utah, and many of them who rely on Social Security are very worried, and they are, frankly, scared. The Obama administration has been hard at work frightening them about the prospects of default. More concerned about his election prospects than resolving this crisis, President Obama commented recently that he could not guarantee Treasury would be able to make Social Security payments in early August.

Really? This fearmongering is shameful—absolutely shameful. For the President to threaten not to send out Social Security checks is a stain on his Presidency. Those relying on Social Security benefits rightfully count on timely payments. They worked hard and paid taxes, and timely benefit payments are due to them. These payments can and should be assured, no question.

Why is the President using the politics of fear on our seniors? I think we all know the reason. Given the information that is available, it appears that roughly $50 billion of Social Security payments are due during August. Recent estimates from outside sources put flows in the Treasury of between $170 billion and over $200 billion in August from various tax receipts and other sources. That alone is more than enough to pay $50 billion in Social Security payments, with cash left over for the $30 billion due on our debt in August and more.

Perhaps the President is worried about the timing of cashflows in August. Yet even if all $50 billion of Social Security payments come due on August 3—and they won't—Treasury can easily get its hands on cash to pay those bills. According to the Daily Treasury Statement for July 26, Treasury has $5 billion sitting idle at the Federal Reserve. Treasury can call that up. They can call up the Fed right now and get that $5 billion in cash.

Treasury has roughly $90 billion in mortgage-backed securities that it bought in the financial crisis to bail out the housing markets. It sold $10.6 billion of those just last month. Treasury can go out and sell more next week if it is worried about not having cash to pay seniors. It could raise almost $80 billion.

There are many more options for Treasury to get cash, and if the administration had any concern for seniors it would have had its officials working hard since at least May to ensure enough cash is available in August. Treasury could easily have $50 billion of cash on August 3 to pay our seniors if it wants to do that.

Why, then, did the President choose to strike fear into all of our Nation's seniors? Why would the President say to our seniors that he could not guarantee there would be cash available to pay benefits in August when he can absolutely guarantee there would be cash available?

It seems clear the President has chosen to use fear and to scare seniors in order to boost his chances at reelection and to strengthen the hand of our friends on the other side who are insistent on raising taxes as a means of deficit reduction. If we raise taxes, I guarantee you the other side will spend every dime of it. It will not be used to pay down the deficit, and especially with a Presidential election in a couple of years.

Using Social Security and the financial security of our seniors as bargaining chips in a political poker game over the debt ceiling is, to put it bluntly, shameful. To do so to try to raise taxes at a time when unemployment is 9.2 percent and trending up—and that doesn't even include the underemployment rate, which is hovering around 17 percent when you count those who will not even look for jobs anymore, and others who will not work—well, it represents an odd way to express concern about jobs.

The only reason Social Security payments would not be made in August by the administration would be a conscious choice by the administration to stiff seniors and to blame Republicans. It would be a conscious political choice, not a choice forced by the debt limit or lack of cash.

Well, Mr. President, it is time for me to conclude, but I want to be clear. The American public has been shortchanged by the new Financial Stability Oversight Council that was created by the job-killing Dodd-Frank financial regulation act. That is one of the worst bills I have seen in all of my 35 years.

The FSOC, chaired by Treasury Secretary Geithner, has refused and ignored my request for basic information about government finances and government contingency plans in the face of dire warnings of threats to our Nation's financial stability.

I don't enjoy coming on the Senate floor and excoriating this administration and the President and FSOC. But this is shameful. The American people deserve transparency, and they deserve accountability. Yet the administration and its regulators chose instead to withhold information from the people and their elected representatives in Congress. The refusal by members of FSOC, including the Treasury Secretary, to provide simple basic information about government finances is unacceptable and requires investigation and action.

Mr. President, we have to get to where this government starts to work again. We shouldn't have to rely on Wall Street for these figures or rely on Wall Street to know what the administration's plan is. We shouldn't have to rely on anybody except those who are designated to provide this information. Unfortunately, they haven't done that.

I admit, I only gave them a few days, but they have been working on this for months. I don't know about their office, but I tell you one thing. We get things done on time. We are at rug-cutting time on the floor of the Senate and in the House of Representatives. We know August 2 is the heralded date by this administration. Since they chose the date, I think they should justify what they are going to do and how they are going to do it; to make sure if we don't somehow increase the debt ceiling, which I am not going to do, we at least know what their plan is.

I hope the administration will get a little more active on some of these things that are so important on Capitol Hill—important to Democrats as well as Republicans. We need to have the facts. We need accountability, we need transparency, and I am calling on the administration to get on the ball.

With that, I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

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

Ms. KLOBUCHAR. Mr. President, I rise today to speak about the urgent need to act on the debt ceiling before the August 2 deadline. While I believe we have reached a defining moment as a country, which has not been wasted—we need to reduce our debt—we also can't afford to play Russian roulette with our economy by toying with the debt limit.

We have had months to work this out. Yet less than 6 days from a possible default that would plunge this country into a serious crisis, here we stand in opposite corners of the boxing ring. The markets are jittery, investors and businesses are deeply concerned, but, most importantly, the people of this country are fed up with this political stalemate. They do not want their interest rates to rise, the value of the dollar to fall, and they do not want to see their retirement savings decimated again because some in Washington believe if they refuse to compromise, the resulting crisis will score them political points.

Ever since the economic downturn, families across the country have sat down at their kitchen tables to make the tough choices about what they hold most dear and what they can learn to live without. We all know those conversations. They have to end with compromise.

A poll released Monday by the Pew Charitable Trusts found that 68 percent of Americans say lawmakers who share their views on this issue, on either side, say those lawmakers should compromise. So people who actually share a view with a particular lawmaker, 68 percent of them say lawmakers should compromise, even if it means striking a deal they disagree with.

Just 23 percent say lawmakers who share their views should stand by their principles even if it leads to default.

My colleagues and I don't need polls to tell us that. We have all had our offices flooding with calls and e-mails in the last few days from well-meaning constituents with advice and from those who are mad and asking us to work it out. Just this morning I received this e-mail from Dave and Cheryl of Northfield, MN. This is what it says:

Dear Amy,

The political positioning and wrangling over the Federal Budget and debt ceiling limit has gone on long enough! It's time for our elected leaders to step up and resolve the debt ceiling and budget crisis in a mature, adult fashion. We realize that this is easier said than done, but after experiencing the shutdown of the State of Minnesota, it is unconscionable to even have the possibility of the crisis that we will face as a nation if we don't raise our debt ceiling and begin reducing the deficit. We urge you and your colleagues to do all it takes to resolve this issue prior to the deadline. There has to be some compromise that can be identified. Each side will need to give to make this happen—let's focus on the art of compromise and get this wrapped up. It's time to show the world that we are still a truly great nation and can step up to resolve the challenges placed before us. The greater good of the nation has to be placed as a top priority. Hoping and praying for successful resolution to the outstanding issues.

That is Dave and Cheryl of Northfield, MN—just citizens who sent an e-mail today. I wish everyone in this Chamber and everyone over in the House would listen to this today. I think it sums it up very well.

Outside the Halls of Congress there isn't much disagreement over the urgency to act or the consequences of failing to do so. There also isn't a lot of disagreement over the importance to our economy of a long-term extension. Who seriously believes dragging this country through this again in 5 or 6 months will help our economy get back on track?

Economists and experts from across the political spectrum have warned that a short-term approach would likely lead to a downgrade of our credit rating, which would cost us billions of dollars more in interest payments on our existing debt and drive up our deficit. For families and businesses, it would mean a spike in interest rates, making everything from mortgages, car loans, and credit cards more expensive.

I think the most common refrain I hear from the business community in Minnesota when we talk about what it will take to spur investment and create jobs in this country is a need for certainty—certainty in the Tax Code, certainty in expenses, certainty in our government's budget. Let's provide some certainty.

After months of debate, it is clear what sort of plan is needed to garner the support necessary to get us across the finish line. We will all ultimately have to accept things with which we don't necessarily agree. It is time to get serious about advancing a deal that is both fair and achievable.

On August 2, the borrowing authority of the United States will be exhausted. No one benefits if we are unable to reach an agreement by this deadline. Every day that passes without a deal only increases uncertainty in the markets and puts the brakes on economic activity. Failure to bring the national debt under control also threatens America's future, but the danger of default threatens our economy today.

We have two options: We can either set a precedent of holding our debt hostage to political maneuvering, raising the cost of borrowing and increasing our deficit at the same time or we can show the world we are serious about working together to address our fiscal challenges to reduce the debt, reduce the cost of borrowing, and strengthen our financial outlook. I believe the choice is clear, and I believe a lot of our colleagues on both sides of the aisle know that.

The sooner we can agree on a long-term package, the better for our economy and the better for our country. It is time to put our political differences aside and work on an agenda that strengthens our economy, promotes fiscal responsibility, and increases global competitiveness because if we refuse to have an honest conversation, if we insist on using the debate as a vehicle for rhetoric only, we will not just be doing ourselves a disservice, not just be doing this institution a disservice, we will be cheating our children and grandchildren out of knowing the America in which we grew up. If we are committed to our country and not to unmoving ideologies, we will get this done.

Last month, I received a lesson in what commitment as a public servant means when I attended the funeral of Jack Murray, who was the former mayor of International Falls, MN, right on the Canadian border. It is a town where they often test cars to show that they can withstand the cold, but it is a hardscrabble, thriving town.

Mayor Murray was a decorated marine who served for 14 years as a member of the city council and for 14 more years as mayor. He figuratively and literally wore ''I love International Falls'' on his sleeve with a button he was never without. At his funeral—and he was 89 years when he died—we heard countless stories of his commitment to his city that didn't end when he retired. The priest at the funeral told this story. He said that every morning, including the morning Mayor Murray died, he would rise early and walk the streets of International Falls. He would wear his orange highway vest to keep him safe, at 89, and he would have a cup of coffee and a bag for trash, and he would walk the streets of his beloved town collecting trash up until the day he died. He was a public servant to the end. He believed in his town, in his State, and in his country. And that is an example for all of us now.

We are all public servants. We must have a commitment to the larger good, to our country, and to the people we represent. None of us wants to see our economy crippled. Democrats don't want it. Republicans don't want it. So what are we waiting for? It is time for Congress to step forth and show some leadership. It is time for us to work together to show the American people that Washington isn't broken; that, instead, we are willing to put aside our politics to do what we were elected to do, to do what is right for America.

Mr. 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 majority leader.

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

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

EXTENSION OF MORNING BUSINESS

Mr. REID. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the period of morning business be extended until 8:30 p.m., with Senators permitted to speak for up to 10 minutes each and, further, that at 8:30 I be recognized.

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

Mr. REID. The reason we are extending morning business is the House is having trouble passing the bill, I understand, and so we are waiting until action is taken. They started at 4:30, and it is taking longer than they anticipated. As I understand, they have another caucus in which they are now engaged. It is 7 o'clock, so that is why I thought that at 8:30 we would have a better idea whether they are going to take action tonight.

Again, I would suggest the absence of a quorum.

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

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. NELSON of Florida. I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

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

DEBT CEILING

Mr. NELSON of Florida. Mr. President, we are here awaiting the action of the House of Representatives. We don't know whether the House is going to pass the JOHN BOEHNER proposal, but regardless of what they do, we have the solution right underneath our noses. There have been discussions today. I have had a number of discussions with our colleagues. I have had a discussion first this morning with my colleague from Florida and I have had discussions with others.

It seems to me the obvious solution, since we are now at the eleventh hour and getting close to the 59th minute of the eleventh hour, is that we take elements of the Reid proposal, the McConnell proposal, and the Boehner proposal. So I would suggest our leadership consider, regardless of what happens in the House—because the Senate is going to have to act on something to get 60 votes to meet the filibuster threshold in this Chamber and then send a package back to the House. I would suggest it be this: that we take the Reid proposal which includes the larger amount of spending cuts. Senator REID at first said that is $2.7 trillion. Maybe it has been by CBO marked down to about $2.2 trillion. But whatever that larger amount—clearly larger than the Boehner proposal, even though some would argue it is the Iraq and Afghanistan war wind-down savings we would get, but whatever it is, it is larger than the House proposal—and use that as the first cut by lifting the debt ceiling. But there would be a sequence of events that would happen after that to avoid what the Senate Democrats do not want, which is that the markets and the rating agencies cause the debt instruments—the U.S. Treasury bills—to be downgraded. There needs to be certainty for those rating agencies, for the U.S. Government debt, and it could be achieved this way: We have a BRAC-like committee—that being a committee that would be composed equally of Republicans and Democrats—that would come up with a package that would then come back to each House, no amendments, for an up-or-down vote.

The fail-safe backup, in case that committee were not able to come to agreement or in the event that it came back to both Houses and one of the Houses did not pass it, that we would then have the McConnell proposal, which is that the President would request the increase of the debt and there would be this procedure that Senator MCCONNELL laid out that there would be a resolution of disapproval. If there were such a disapproval, then the President, of course, could veto it. In order for the President's veto to be overridden, there would have to be a two-thirds vote. There would not be a two-thirds vote, and, therefore, there is the assurance that we would have the raising of the debt ceiling to get us through this next year and a half.

It seems as though it is right under our nose, if the parties will just realize that now is the time we have to act to find a workable solution so we can get the votes.

If we can get, with that kind of proposal, 60 votes in the Senate, then it goes down to the House, whether they pass the Boehner proposal or not. At the eleventh hour and the 59th minute, recognizing what is at stake for the country, then the House of Representatives is going to do the right thing and they are going to pass it.

I am just a little country boy, but it seems to me sometimes we get so wrapped up in all the intricate details that the obvious solution is right there under our nose, staring us in the face. I respectfully request the Senate consider this.

I yield the floor.

CRISIS IN THE HORN OF AFRICA

Mr. CARDIN. Mr. President, I rise today to bring attention to the ongoing humanitarian crisis in the Horn of Africa. More than 11 million people—twice the population of my State of Maryland—are now in need of emergency assistance to survive.

Large portions of the Horn of Africa region are now in the grip of one of the worst humanitarian crises in the region in recent decades. Nearly half of the population in Somalia is in urgent need of assistance, and malnutrition rates are on the rise in neighboring Ethiopia and Kenya. Without the immediate action of the international community, it is projected that an additional 180,000 people will perish in the coming months due to the drought and famine.

It is difficult to fully comprehend the levels of human suffering currently occurring in the region, as refugees flee famine-affected areas. People are literally walking for days without food and water to try to reach food and safety. More than 166,000 desperate Somalis are estimated to have fled their country to neighboring Kenya and Ethiopia in recent months—approximately 3,500 people are arriving every day at refugee camps in those countries compounding the already tenuous humanitarian situation in the region.

On July 21, the United Nations declared a famine in two regions in southern Somalia. This declaration is not done lightly and is the first declared since 1992. Famine is only declared when acute child malnutrition rates exceed 30 percent and more than 2 people per 10,000 die per day. The U.S. Agency for International Development, USAID, reports that the under-5 death rates in southern Somalia are higher than 4 children per 10,000 per day in all areas and as high as 13 to 20 per 10,000 per day in areas of south central Somalia. Already, outbreaks of measles, cholera, and watery diarrhea have been reported in affected areas as well. Unless this is addressed immediately through immunization campaigns and medical treatment, more people will perish from these preventable diseases.

The United States is one of the largest donors of emergency assistance to the region, helping more than 4.4 million of those in need and providing over $431 million since last October. The actions taken by our Nation and the international community in anticipation of the drought last year has helped save countless lives. Through the Famine Early Warning System, we saw data come in, and we were able to move resources into the region and implement programs to provide food in critically affected areas throughout the Horn of Africa. However, emergency assistance alone cannot solve the underlying long-term problems. The United States continues to provide longer term development assistance through Feed the Future and other programs, which are working in the region to address the root causes of hunger and malnutrition.

USAID Administrator Shah was in Kenya last week and met with Somali refugees there. He met with a woman who had traveled for 33 days by foot with her two children and suffered a robbery along the way, in order to arrive at a refugee camp in Kenya and have access to safety, food, and basic human security. He also visited with a 4-year-old boy who, in the acute malnutrition wing of the hospital at the

camp, weighed only 19 pounds and was reliant on a nasal feeding tube and very specific feeding regimens in order to, hopefully, survive. There are countless more stories like this, of people who risked their lives to bring themselves and their families to a safe environment.

This crisis has several contributing factors—most notably the worst drought on record in 60 years, which has devastated crops and livestock. But another major contributor to this crisis is the complete lack of governance in Somalia, a failed state for more than two decades, and the ongoing conflict there and in particular, the al-Qaida-affiliated Somali militia, al-Shabaab. Since 2009, al-Shabaab has prevented most Western aid organizations from operating in their territory, and it is no coincidence that the areas of famine are areas controlled by al-Shabaab. My sincerest hope is that al-Shabaab will stand aside and allow international organizations to assist people in their territory, people essentially held hostage by this radical, Islamist group.

The U.N. estimates that an additional $300 million will be needed just in the next few months to help those affected by this humanitarian disaster and that approximately $1.8 billion will be needed to fully address the massive scope of this crisis and help the people in the Horn of Africa. Without this crucially important funding, nearly 200,000 people could die. To date, this appeal is less than half way met by the international community. The international community must do more to meet this appeal.

This situation is a clear example of the critical importance of maintaining a strong U.S. commitment to emergency food assistance. The House of Representatives passed a fiscal year 2012 Agriculture appropriations bill that would cut funding for emergency food assistance by 75 percent from just 3 years ago. This comes at a time when not only is there famine in the Horn of Africa, but around the world needs are increasing as food prices remain high and the number of people affected or displaced by natural disasters and conflict continues to increase.

The international disaster assistance level specified in the House State-Foreign Ops appropriations bill for fiscal year 2012 would result in emergency humanitarian programming reaching 19 million fewer disaster-affected people than it would if the account were appropriated at the fiscal year 2011 level, based on average costs per person by the Office of Foreign Disaster Assistance at USAID between 2006 and 2009.

If we cut the migration and refugee assistance and emergency refugee and migration accounts, as the House Foreign Operations bill does, we would jeopardize U.S. support for many of the world's 48 million forcibly displaced people, the majority of whom are assisted and protected by the international community. This includes almost 1 million Somalis. Before the current crisis in the Horn, 725,000 Somalis were seeking refuge in the region. Since the onset of the current crisis, 100,000 Somalis have arrived in Kenya and 75,000 in Ethiopia. Obviously, cuts of that magnitude would lead to catastrophic consequences. This could affect millions; primarily women and children suffering from hunger as a result of conflict and natural disasters would lose access to lifesaving food. This would significantly reduce America's ability to address instability in volatile countries and decrease its capacity to respond quickly to the needs of hungry people affected by conflict and natural disasters.

Aside from the national security implications for the United States in this already unstable region, the U.S. Government has a moral responsibility to help the least fortunate, both at home and abroad. As a global leader, the United States should not shy away from helping the least fortunate, regardless of race, religion, or nationality. In addition, the United States should encourage greater international participation. It is the moral, human course of action to take, but it is also the smart thing to do: a more stable and prosperous Somalia keeps the rest of the world and the United States more secure as well.

NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

Mr. NELSON of Nebraska. Mr. President, today I join Senator MIKE JOHANNS and Congressman ADRIAN SMITH of Nebraska in paying tribute to the National Park Service, which will be celebrating its 95th anniversary this year on August 25, 2011.

The National Park Service currently administers 394 units across 49 States and U.S. territories, including five National Park Service units in our home State of Nebraska. These units consist of the Agate Fossil Beds National Monument, Homestead National Monument of America, Missouri National Recreational River, Niobrara National Scenic River, and Scotts Bluff National Monument. In addition, the National Park Service administers five National Historic Trails, including the California, Oregon, Pony Express, Mormon, and Lewis and Clark.

National Park areas generate $12 billion in tourism dollars to local economies, creating 247,000 private-sector jobs. Within Nebraska, National Park Service units generate approximately 8.8 million in tourism dollars and create approximately 170 private-sector jobs. And in western Nebraska, Agate Fossil Beds and Scotts Bluff monuments, along with the Chimney Rock National Historic Site, which is an affiliated area of the National Park Service, generate close to $3 million in tourism dollars and create 90 private-sector jobs.

Nebraska has been supportive of the mission of the National Park Service even before the agency existed. In fact, in 1914, 2 years before the National Park Service was created, citizens in the Scottsbluff/Gering area sought to get a National Park or Monument established. Prominent local champions included elected officials and newspaper editor, A.B.Wood.

Scotts Bluff National Monument is named for a fur trapper by the name of Hiram Scott who was wounded and deserted by his companions in 1828. He gained immortality by making his way to a magnificent formation of bluffs along the North Platte River before succumbing to his wounds. It was for Hiram Scott that Scotts Bluff National Monument, Scotts Bluff County, and the city of Scottsbluff have been named.

Scotts Bluff National Monument, which rises 4,649 feet above sea level, was an imposing landmark which guided wagon trains along the California, Oregon, Pony Express, and Mormon Trails. Native Americans originally called this natural formation ma-a-pa-te, which translates into ''hill that is hard to go around.''

The Summit Road to the top of the bluff was completed in 1937, allowing visitors to drive to experience the spectacular view of the valley 800 feet below. This road is the oldest existing concrete road in Nebraska and includes the only three automobile tunnels in our State.

In the Scottsbluff/Gering area, numerous events to commemorate the 95th anniversary of the National Park Service have been scheduled for August 2011, beginning with a Kick-Off Ceremony at Scotts Bluff National Monument on August 12, 2011. Platte Valley Attractions, a coalition of visitor venues in and around the area, is hosting a variety of events and special exhibits through grants and donations from local and regional sponsors to commemorate the theme, ''Westward Expansion as seen through National Parks,'' including: Farm and Ranch Museum is hosting westward expansion orientation films and an interactive exhibit of westward expansion transportation methods.

Midwest Theater is hosting both the premiere of a new documentary film on the Pony Express and a film by Ken Burns on America's National Parks.

North Platte Valley Museum is hosting a westward expansion map exhibit.

Western Nebraska Community College is hosting a seminar, ''Recognizing and Preserving Westward Expansion,'' with speakers who are all nationally recognized in their fields.

Western Nebraska Community College sponsored a summer youth camp that developed posters to help promote these commemorative events.

Again, on behalf of the people of Nebraska, we offer our congratulations to Scotts Bluff National Monument on its Kick-Off Ceremony and the National Park Service on its 95th anniversary.

TRIBUTE TO GENERAL JAMES E. CARTWRIGHT

Ms. COLLINS. Mr. President, I rise today to pay tribute to GEN James E. Cartwright, who is retiring after 40 years of accomplished military service. Since becoming the Vice Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff on August 4, 2007, General ''Hoss'' Cartwright has testified numerous times and provided expert testimony, leadership, and advice to Congress, the President, and the American people regarding our Nation's security and the future of our Armed Forces.

General Cartwright hails from Rockford, IL. He graduated from the University of Iowa in 1971 and was commissioned a second lieutenant in the U.S. Marine Corps shortly thereafter. The general served as a naval flight officer in the F–4 and as a pilot in the F–4, OA–4 and the F–18. His flying career culminated with command of the First Marine Aircraft Wing in Okinawa, Japan. The general is also a distinguished graduate of the Air Command and Staff College and earned his master of arts in national security and strategic studies from the Naval War College.

After an assignment as the Director for Force Structure, Resources and Assessment, J–8, on the Joint Staff, then-Lieutenant General Cartwright was selected for promotion to general and became the first Marine Corps officer to lead U.S. Strategic Command. While at STRATCOM, General Cartwright led the development of strategies during a rapidly evolving national security environment, particularly in the areas of cyber, space, nuclear proliferation, and missile defense. He reorganized the command to increase interagency cooperation and streamlined operations. As a result of the changes the general implemented at STRATCOM, the effectiveness of the command for the deployed warfighter increased substantially to meet the new challenges of the 21st century.

During the last 4 years, General Cartwright has served as Vice Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff. One of his top priorities has been to reduce the loss of American lives in combat by leveraging technology and streamlining acquisition processes to quickly iver new capabilities to the battlefield. His efforts to lead the MRAP program resulted in a 50 percent decrease in deaths attributed to improvised explosive device attacks.

The general can take pride in many other notable accomplishments, including the integration of technologies that enabled the destruction of a failing satellite by a missile for the first time and the successful raid against Osama bin Laden.

During his service, General Cartwright took every opportunity to recognize the efforts and sacrifice of the 2.4 million active, guard and reserve members of the Armed Forces and their families. He remains actively engaged for the benefit of our wounded warriors and always remembers the families of those who made the ultimate sacrifice on our battlefields. General Cartwright will be remembered for his strategic intellect and his ability to drive innovative change. His tenure leaves a lasting legacy to the Armed Forces. I appreciate his extraordinary service to our country and wish him all the best in the next chapter of his life.

NAVAL AIR STATION WHIDBEY ISLAND

Mrs. MURRAY. Mr. President, as we celebrate the U.S. Navy's centennial of aviation, I would like to personally recognize the exceptional contributions of the men and women, past and present, who have served at Naval Air Station Whidbey Island.

From the base's commissioning day on September 21, 1942, to the present, it has been the mission-ready men and women of Naval Air Station Whidbey Island who have protected the skies of the Pacific Northwest and projected power throughout the world.

A long tradition of excellence began on Whidbey Island during World War II when it was named Ault Field, in memory of Commander William B. Ault who was missing in action following the Battle of the Coral Sea. During the war, Naval Air Station Whidbey Island's patrol planes flew long-range navigation training missions over the North Pacific to protect the Pacific Northwest from the real threat of attack that gripped Alaska and the region. During this period, the earliest squadrons of F4F Wildcats, PV–1 Venturas, F6F Hellcats and SDB Dauntless's, also etched their place in U.S. Navy's distinguished history.

Naval Air Station Whidbey Island continued their legacy of excellence throughout each subsequent conflict. Their patrol planes proved to be paramount to successful operations during the Korean War and their initial deployments to Southeast Asia in 1972. Today, Naval Air Station Whidbey Island remains the premier naval aviation installation in the Pacific Northwest.

Currently the proud home of the EA–6B Prowlers, EA–18G Growlers, P–3 Orions and the EP–3E Aries, I know Naval Air Station Whidbey Island will continue to protect not only the Pacific Northwest, but the whole United States, for the next 100 years.

In recognition of the past century's naval aviation achievements, I would truly like to thank the men and women both in and out of uniform and the veterans of Naval Air Station Whidbey Island for their service and sacrifice.

ADDITIONAL STATEMENTS

TRIBUTE TO THOMAS E. ''JAKE'' FISHER

• Mr. BLUNT. Mr. President, it is with great pride that I pay tribute to a dedicated public servant from my home State of Missouri. Jake Fisher has devoted his professional life to helping others through his work at the University of Missouri Delta Center.

Shortly after graduation from high school, Jake was employed at the University of Missouri Delta Center as a farmworker I. From that position, he was promoted to technician, senior technician, and research specialist. In 1986 he became the assistant superintendent. Three years later, Jake was promoted to Superintendent of the Delta Center and continues to serve in that leadership role today. Next month, Jake will retire after 50 years of dedicated service to agriculture research in Missouri.

Besides his work at the Delta Center, Jake serves on the board of directors for a number of organizations, including Progressive Farm Credit Services of Southeast Missouri, Pemiscot-Dunklin Electric Cooperative, M&A Electrical Cooperative, Associated Electrical Cooperative, and Pemiscot County Port Authority. He is a member of the executive committee of the Research Administrator's Society. Along with his service to these organizations, Jake is a 32nd degree Mason and Shriner.

Due to his selfless efforts, Jake has received numerous awards, including the State Farm Management Award in 1981 by Production Credit Association of Eastern Missouri. He was named ''Man of the Year in Service to Agriculture'' by the Progressive Farmer Magazine in 1995 and in 1996 was granted honorary membership to the University of Missouri Ag Alumni Association. He was awarded a lifetime membership to the Cotton Producers of Missouri in 1997 and in 2000 received the outstanding staff award by the University of Missouri's College of Agriculture, Food and Natural Resources. In 2001, Jake was named ''Ag Leader of the Year'' by Missouri Ag Industries Council. He was honored with the A.C. Burrows Service Award in 2009 by the Association of Missouri Electrical Cooperatives. In 2011, Jake received the Agribusiness Service Award from the Sikeston, MO, Chamber of Commerce. He was awarded the Frank Stork Democracy Award in 2011 by the Missouri Association of Electrical Cooperatives. In 2006, the conventional soybean variety ''Jake'' was named for Jake Fisher.

Jake is also a loving and devoted husband to his wife of almost 50 years, Shelly, and an outstanding role model for his daughter, Stacey Kersey, and for his grandsons, Gunnar Young and Kasen Kersey.

Thomas E. ''Jake'' Fisher's career has been built on character, dedication, and service to his fellow Missourians. His accomplishments during his 50 years of loyal service will be felt for generations to come. I ask my colleagues to join me in congratulating this great Missourian and extending our best wishes as he begins a new chapter in life.•

REMEMBERING DR. DON LINKER

• Mrs. BOXER. Mr. President, I ask my colleagues to join me in honoring the memory of Dr. Donald Linker of Marin County, who passed away on June 16, 2011. Dr. Linker dedicated his personal and professional life to helping others and was passionate about living his life to the fullest.

Donald Linker was born and raised in Louisville, KY. He graduated from the University of Michigan and received his doctor of medicine from the University of Kentucky, School of Medicine.

Don served honorably in the U.S. Navy as a doctor treating marines in Vietnam. After his service, he moved to San Francisco, married, and had three children. He opened his own medical practice and after many years of practicing medicine, returned to school and received his master's in public health from UC Berkeley.

Don Linker was an activist and philanthropist who was committed to bettering his community. He was a founding member of the Foundation for Reed Schools in Tiburon and also served a number of other organizations, including the Jewish Community Federation, the American Israel Public Affairs Committee, the Marin Community Federation, the Bernard Osher Foundation, and the Buck Center for Research and Aging.

Don was an adventurous man with a fiery demeanor and an infectious spirit who loved travel and extreme sports. One of his passions was pushing himself to the limit physically. He loved windsurfing, skiing, and mountain biking, and some of his greatest personal accomplishments involved those activities.

Don was a friend who will be greatly missed by all those whose lives he touched.

I send my heartfelt sympathies to his family, including his son Kevin Linker, daughters Jodi Linker and Dana Linker, son-in-law Richard Steele, brother Stephen Linker and his grandchildren Lauren and Sarah Steele.•

TRIBUTE TO JORDAN BURROUGHS

• Mr. NELSON of Nebraska. Mr. President, today I pay tribute to the best collegiate wrestler in America, Jordan Burroughs, who is an All-American from my alma mater, the University of Nebraska-Lincoln.

Earlier this year Jordan was awarded the Dan Hodge Trophy, which is often referred to as the ''Heisman Trophy of wrestling.'' This award is named in honor of Dan Hodge, who was undefeated during his 3-year career at the University of Oklahoma. The criteria considered for the Hodge Trophy, according to the University of Nebraska, are the wrestler's record, number of pins, dominance on the mat, past credentials, quality of competition, sportsmanship, and heart.

Wrestling at 165 pounds, Jordan compiled an impressive 36-to-0 record this last season and captured his second crown from the National Collegiate Athletic Association; his first was in 2009. Despite Nebraska facing one of the toughest schedules in the Nation this year, Jordan had only three matches this season which did not end by pin, tech fall, or a major decision.

Congratulations also go to Nebraska's head wrestling coach, Mark Manning, who recruited Jordan from Winslow Township High School in Sicklerville, NJ, where Jordan was listed as the seventh best high school wrestler in the country. As Coach Manning says, ''Winning the Hodge Trophy puts Jordan in an elite group of wrestlers and makes a strong statement about him as an athlete.''

Most recently, Jordan Burroughs added to his list of impressive tournament wins by taking home his first senior international wrestling gold medal on July 17, 2011, at the Outstanding Ukrainian Wrestlers Memorial International in Kiev, Ukraine. There will be other matches between now and next year, but his ultimate goal is to compete at the 2012 Summer Olympics in London, England.

From the Garden State to the Cornhusker State, Jordan Burroughs makes us all proud as America's best collegiate wrestler of 2011. As a former Husker, he will forever remain in the hearts of Big Red fans everywhere who will continue rooting for him wherever his travels take him.•

TRIBUTE TO PAMELA LYNNE WELLER

• Mr. ROCKEFELLER. Mr. President, today I wish honor Pamela Lynne Weller, legal special assistant to Commissioner Thomas H. Moore at the U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission, CPSC. Ms. Weller is retiring after more than 26 years of distinguished Federal Government service.

Pamela was born in Baltimore and has lived in Maryland for most of her life. She graduated with honors from the University of Maryland and received her law degree from Georgetown University.

Pamela began her Federal service during her last year of law school, when she worked for Senator Lawton Chiles on the Government in the Sunshine Act, Public Law 94–409, and later for Senator Richard Stone. For part of that time she actually worked for both Senators simultaneously, for Senator Chiles as part of a law school program and as a salaried employee of Senator Stone. After graduation, she continued working for Senator Stone on a variety of important issues through the end of his term of office.

After leaving Senator Stone, she went to work at the Civil Aeronautics Board, CAB, as an assistant to board member James Smith, as the agency worked through the deregulation of the national air transportation system, and then as it wound down its operations prior to being incorporated into the Department of Transportation.

Following nearly 10 years of continuous government service, Pamela went to work in the private sector, opening her own law practice. She continued in this line of work for over 11 years, specializing in family law and real estate transactions.

In 1995, she went back into the public service to become an assistant to Commissioner Thomas H. Moore at the U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission. During her work for Commissioner Moore, the longest serving Commissioner in the agency's history, she advised him on all agency actions including rulemakings, enforcement actions and administrative matters. Additionally, she served as acting chief of staff during Commissioner Moore's 9-month stint as acting chairman of the agency in 2001 and 2002. She also helped construct his 2007 legislative proposals to Congress, a number of which were incorporated into the Consumer Product Safety Improvement Act of 2008, Public Law 110–314.

During her notable tenure at CPSC, Ms. Weller has played a significant role in protecting the public from unreasonable risks of injury posed by consumer products. On numerous occasions, she has demonstrated inspiring leadership and has always been considered a valued employee at the CPSC.

Mr. President, I am pleased to thank Pamela Lynne Weller for her honorable service to our Nation, and I wish her a rewarding retirement.•

MESSAGES FROM THE PRESIDENT

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

EXECUTIVE MESSAGES REFERRED

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

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

REPORT ON THE CONTINUATION OF THE NATIONAL EMERGENCY THAT WAS ORIGINALLY DECLARED IN EXECUTIVE ORDER 13441 WITH RESPECT TO LEBANON—PM 16

The PRESIDING OFFICER laid before the Senate the following message from the President of the United States, together with an accompanying report; which was referred to the Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs:

To the Congress of the United States:

Section 202(d) of the National Emergencies Act (50 U.S.C. 1622(d)) provides for the automatic termination of a national emergency unless, prior to the anniversary date of its declaration, the

President publishes in the *Federal Register* and transmits to the Congress a notice stating that the emergency is to continue in effect beyond the anniversary date. In accordance with this provision, I have sent to the *Federal Register* for publication the enclosed notice stating that the national emergency declared with respect to the actions of certain persons to undermine the sovereignty of Lebanon or its democratic processes and institutions is to continue in effect beyond August 1, 2011.

Certain ongoing activities, such as continuing arms transfers to Hizballah that include increasingly sophisticated weapons systems, serve to undermine Lebanese sovereignty, contribute to political and economic instability in the region, and continue to pose an unusual and extraordinary threat to the national security and foreign policy of the United States. For these reasons, I have determined that it is necessary to continue the national emergency declared on August 1, 2007, to deal with that threat and the related measures adopted on that date to respond to the emergency.

BARACK OBAMA.
THE WHITE HOUSE, *July 28, 2011*.

MEASURES PLACED ON THE CALENDAR

The following bill was read the second time, and placed on the calendar:

H.R. 1938. An act to direct the President to expedite the consideration and approval of the construction and operation of the Keystone XL oil pipeline, and for other purposes.

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–2676. A communication from the Chief Counsel, Federal Emergency Management Agency, Department of Homeland Security, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Changes in Flood Elevation Determinations'' ((44 CFR Part 65) (Docket No. FEMA–2011–0002)) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on July 26, 2011; to the Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs.

EC–2677. A communication from the Chief Counsel, Federal Emergency Management Agency, Department of Homeland Security, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Interim Changes in Flood Elevation Determinations'' ((44 CFR Part 65) (Docket No. FEMA–2011–0002)) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on July 26, 2011; to the Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs.

EC–2678. A communication from the Chief Counsel, Federal Emergency Management Agency, Department of Homeland Security, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Final Changes in Flood Elevation Determinations'' ((44 CFR Part 65) (Docket No. FEMA–2011–0002)) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on July 26, 2011; to the Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs.

EC–2679. A communication from the Assistant Secretary for Management and Chief Financial Officer, Department of the Treasury, transmitting, pursuant to law, a report relative to acquisitions from entities that manufacture articles, materials, and supplies outside of the United States for fiscal year 2010; to the Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs.

EC–2680. 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 ''Obsoleting Rev. Rul. 58–225'' (Rev. Rul. 2011–15) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on July 26, 2011; to the Committee on Finance.

EC–2681. A communication from the Senior Counsel for Regulatory Affairs, Departmental Offices, Department of the Treasury, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Department of the Treasury Acquisition Regulation'' (RIN1505–AC04) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on July 25, 2011; to the Committee on Finance.

EC–2682. 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 ''Chapter 4 Implementation Notice'' (Notice 2011–53) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on July 26, 2011; to the Committee on Finance.

EC–2683. 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 related to the sale of Colt M4 Carbines to the Ministry of Defense of Malaysia in the amount of $50,000,000 or more; to the Committee on Foreign Relations.

EC–2684. A communication from the Associate Administrator, Office of Government Contracting and Business Development, Small Business Administration, transmitting, pursuant to law, the Fiscal Year 2010 Report to Congress on Minority Small Business and Capital Ownership Development; to the Committee on Small Business and Entrepreneurship.

EC–2685. A communication from the Senior Program Analyst, Federal Aviation Administration, Department of Transportation, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Establishment of Helicopter Area Navigation (RNAV) Routes; Northeast United States'' ((RIN2120–AA66) (Docket No. FAA–2011–0078)) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on July 27, 2011; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

EC–2686. A communication from the Senior Program Analyst, Federal Aviation Administration, Department of Transportation, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Modification of Restricted Areas R–4401A, R–4401B, and R–4401C; Camp Shelby, MS'' ((RIN2120–AA66) (Docket No. FAA–2008–0110)) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on July 27, 2011; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

EC–2687. A communication from the Senior Program Analyst, Federal Aviation Administration, Department of Transportation, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Update of August 2001 Overflight Fees'' ((RIN2120–AJ68) (Docket No. FAA–2010–0326)) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on July 27, 2011; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

EC–2688. A communication from the Senior Program Analyst, Federal Aviation Administration, Department of Transportation, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Antidrug and Alcohol Misuse Prevention Programs for Personnel Engaged in Specified Aviation Activities; Final Regulatory Flexibility Determination'' ((RIN2120–AH14) (Docket No. FAA–2002–11301)) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on July 27, 2011; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

EC–2689. A communication from the Senior Program Analyst, Federal Aviation Administration, Department of Transportation, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Airworthiness Standards; Rotor Overspeed Requirements'' ((RIN2120–AA62) (Docket No. FAA–2010–0398)) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on July 27, 2011; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

EC–2690. A communication from the Program Analyst, National Highway Traffic Safety Administration, Department of Transportation, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Vehicle Labeling—Fuel Economy, Greenhouse Gas and Other Emissions'' (RIN2127–AK73) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on July 27, 2011; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

EC–2691. A communication from the Senior Program Analyst, Federal Aviation Administration, Department of Transportation, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Manual Requirements'' ((RIN2120–AA66) (Docket No. FAA–2001–11133)) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on July 27, 2011; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

EC–2692. A communication from the Program Analyst, National Highway Traffic Safety Administration, Department of Transportation, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Make Inoperative Exemptions; Vehicle Modifications to Accommodate People with Disabilities, Side Impact Protection'' (RIN2127–AK77) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on July 27, 2011; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

EC–2693. A communication from the Program Analyst, National Highway Traffic Safety Administration, Department of Transportation, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Insurer Reporting Requirements; List of Insurers Required to File Reports'' (RIN2127–AK90) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on July 27, 2011; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

EC–2694. A communication from the Assistant Chief Counsel for General Law, Pipeline and Hazardous Materials Safety Administration, Department of Transportation, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Hazardous Materials; Miscellaneous Amendments'' (RIN2137–AE46) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on July 27, 2011; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

EC–2695. A communication from the Assistant Chief Counsel for Hazardous Materials Safety, Pipeline and Hazardous Materials Safety Administration, Department of Transportation, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Hazardous Materials Transportation: Revisions of Special Permits Procedures'' (RIN2137–AE73) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on July 27, 2011; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

EC–2696. A communication from the Senior Program Analyst, Federal Aviation Administration, Department of Transportation, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Standard Instrument Approach Procedures (48); Amdt. No. 3431'' ((RIN2120–AA65) (Docket No. 30789)) received

in the Office of the President of the Senate on July 27, 2011; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

EC–2697. A communication from the Senior Program Analyst, Federal Aviation Administration, Department of Transportation, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Standard Instrument Approach Procedures (81); Amdt. No. 3430'' ((RIN2120–AA65) (Docket No. 30788)) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on July 27, 2011; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

EC–2698. A communication from the Senior Program Analyst, Federal Aviation Administration, Department of Transportation, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Standard Instrument Approach Procedures (136); Amdt. No. 3432'' ((RIN2120–AA65) (Docket No. 30790)) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on July 27, 2011; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

EC–2699. A communication from the Senior Program Analyst, Federal Aviation Administration, Department of Transportation, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Standard Instrument Approach Procedures (25); Amdt. No. 3433'' ((RIN2120–AA65) (Docket No. 30791)) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on July 27, 2011; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

EC–2700. A communication from the Deputy Assistant Administrator for Operations, National Marine Fisheries Service, Department of Commerce, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Atlantic Highly Migratory Species; Atlantic Bluefin Tuna Quotas and Atlantic Tuna Fisheries Management Measures'' (RIN0648–BA65) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on July 27, 2011; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

EC–2701. A communication from the Deputy Assistant Administrator for Operations, National Marine Fisheries Service, Department of Commerce, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Fisheries of the Exclusive Economic Zone Off Alaska; Bering Sea and Aleutian Islands Crab Rationalization Program'' (RIN0648–AY33) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on July 27, 2011; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

EC–2702. A communication from the Deputy Assistant Administrator for Operations, National Marine Fisheries Service, Department of Commerce, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Fisheries of the Exclusive Economic Zone Off Alaska; Bering Sea and Aleutian Islands Crab Rationalization Program; Amendment 37'' (RIN0648–BA11) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on July 27, 2011; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

EC–2703. A communication from the Acting Director, Office of Sustainable Fisheries, Department of Commerce, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Fisheries of the Exclusive Economic Zone Off Alaska; Northern Rockfish, Pacific Ocean Perch, and Pelagic Shelf Rockfish for Catcher Vessels Participating in the Limited Access Rockfish Fishery in the Central Regulatory Area of the Gulf of Alaska'' (RIN0648–XA538) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on July 27, 2011; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

EC–2704. A communication from the Acting Director, Office of Sustainable Fisheries, Department of Commerce, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Fisheries of the Exclusive Economic Zone Off Alaska; Shallow-Water Species Fishery by Catcher/Processors in the Gulf of Alaska'' (RIN0648–XA539) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on July 27, 2011; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

EC–2705. A communication from the Acting Director, Office of Sustainable Fisheries, Department of Commerce, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Fisheries of the Exclusive Economic Zone Off Alaska; Deep-Water Species Fishery by Catcher Vessels in the Gulf of Alaska'' (RIN0648–XA536) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on July 27, 2011; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

EC–2706. A communication from the Acting Director, Office of Sustainable Fisheries, Department of Commerce, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Fisheries of the Exclusive Economic Zone Off Alaska; Pacific Ocean Perch for Catcher Vessels Participating in the Rockfish Entry Level Trawl Fishery in the Central Regulatory Area of the Gulf of Alaska'' (RIN0648–XA543) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on July 27, 2011; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

EC–2707. A communication from the Acting Director, Office of Sustainable Fisheries, Department of Commerce, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Fisheries of the Exclusive Economic Zone Off Alaska; Northern Rockfish and Pelagic Shelf Rockfish for Trawl Catcher Vessels Participating in the Entry Level Rockfish Fishery in the Central Regulatory Area of the Gulf of Alaska'' (RIN0648–XA546) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on July 27, 2011; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

EC–2708. A communication from the Acting Director, Office of Sustainable Fisheries, Department of Commerce, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Fisheries of the Exclusive Economic Zone Off Alaska; Pacific Ocean Perch in the Western Regulatory Area of the Gulf of Alaska'' (RIN0648–XA542) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on July 27, 2011; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

EC–2709. A communication from the Acting Director, Office of Sustainable Fisheries, Department of Commerce, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Fisheries of the Northeastern United States; Atlantic Mackerel, Squid, and Butterfish Fisheries; Closure of the Directed Butterfish Fishery'' (RIN0648–XA523) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on July 27, 2011; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

REPORTS OF COMMITTEES

The following reports of committees were submitted:

By Mrs. BOXER, from the Committee on Environment and Public Works, without amendment:

S. 1302. A bill to authorize the Administrator of General Services to convey a parcel of real property in Tracy, California, to the City of Tracy (Rept. No. 112–40).

By Mrs. BOXER, from the Committee on Environment and Public Works, with an amendment in the nature of a substitute:

S. 1313. A bill to amend the Federal Water Pollution Control Act to reauthorize the National Estuary Program, and for other purposes (Rept. No. 112–41).

By Mr. LEAHY, from the Committee on the Judiciary, with an amendment in the nature of a substitute:

S. 401. A bill to help Federal prosecutors and investigators combat public corruption by strengthening and clarifying the law.

By Mr. LEAHY, from the Committee on the Judiciary, without amendment:

S. 409. A bill to ban the sale of certain synthetic drugs.

S. 839. A bill to ban the sale of certain synthetic drugs.

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. CARPER (for himself and Mr. BLUNT):

S. 1434. A bill to protect information relating to consumers, to require notice of security breaches, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs.

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

S. 1435. A bill to amend part A of title IV of the Social Security Act to exclude child care from the determination of the 5-year limit on assistance under the temporary assistance for needy families program, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Finance.

By Mr. WYDEN (for himself, Mr. HOEVEN, and Mr. BEGICH):

S. 1436. A bill to provide $50,000,000,000 in new transportation infrastructure funding through bonding to empower States and local governments to complete significant infrastructure projects across all modes of transportation, including roads, bridges, rail and transit systems, ports, and inland waterways, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Finance.

By Mrs. BOXER:

S. 1437. A bill to authorize the Secretary of Health and Human Services to carry out programs to provide youth in racial or ethnic minority or immigrant communities the information and skills needed to reduce teenage pregnancies; to the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions.

By Mr. JOHNSON of Wisconsin (for himself, Mr. PAUL, Mr. CORNYN, Mr. LEE, Mr. TOOMEY, Mr. RISCH, Mr. COBURN, Ms. AYOTTE, Mr. RUBIO, Mr. DEMINT, Mr. VITTER, Mr. GRASSLEY, Mr. ISAKSON, Mr. HATCH, Mr. WICKER, Mrs. HUTCHISON, Mr. INHOFE, Mr. BURR, Mr. COATS, Mr. BOOZMAN, and Mr. ENZI):

S. 1438. A bill to provide that no agency may take any significant regulatory action until the unemployment rate is equal to or less than 7.7 percent; to the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs.

By Mr. BROWN of Ohio (for himself and Mrs. HAGAN):

S. 1439. A bill to amend the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965 regarding ready school needs reviews; to the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions.

By Mr. ALEXANDER (for himself and Mr. BENNET):

S. 1440. A bill to reduce preterm labor and delivery and the risk of pregnancy-related deaths and complications due to pregnancy, and to reduce infant mortality caused by prematurity; to the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions.

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

S. 1441. A bill to provide assistance for workforce investment activities to unique

populations in Alaska and Hawaii; to the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions.

By Mr. HELLER (for himself, Mr. BURR, Mr. VITTER, and Mr. BOOZMAN):

S. 1442. A bill to provide that Members of Congress may not receive pay after October 1 of any fiscal year in which Congress has not approved a concurrent resolution on the budget; to the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs.

By Mrs. FEINSTEIN:

S. 1443. A bill to extend certain trade preferences to certain least-developed countries in Asia and the South Pacific, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Finance.

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

S. 1444. A bill to provide for the presentation of a United States flag on behalf of Federal civilian employees who are killed while performing official duties or because of their status as Federal employees; to the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs.

By Mr. SCHUMER (for himself, Mr. BLUMENTHAL, Mrs. BOXER, Mrs. FEINSTEIN, and Mrs. GILLIBRAND):

S. 1445. A bill to designate certain conduct by car and truck rental companies relating to motor vehicle safety defects and recalls as unfair and deceptive acts or practices to be regulated by the Federal Trade Commission, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

By Mr. COBURN (for himself, Mr. MCCAIN, Mr. LEE, Mr. DEMINT, Mr. PAUL, Mr. VITTER, Mr. KYL, Mr. CORNYN, Mr. HATCH, Mr. COATS, Mr. CHAMBLISS, Mr. BURR, Mr. ISAKSON, and Mr. PORTMAN):

S. 1446. A bill to free States to spend gas taxes on their transportation priorities; to the Committee on Environment and Public Works.

By Mr. CRAPO (for himself and Mr. WHITEHOUSE):

S. 1447. A bill to amend the Safe and Drug-Free Schools and Communities Act to authorize the use of grant funds for dating violence prevention, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions.

By Mr. PRYOR (for himself, Ms. KLOBUCHAR, Mr. MANCHIN, and Mr. TESTER):

S. 1448. A bill to exempt off-highway vehicles from the ban on lead in children's products, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

ADDITIONAL COSPONSORS

S. 48

At the request of Mr. INOUYE, the name of the Senator from Delaware (Mr. COONS) was added as a cosponsor of S. 48, a bill to amend the Public Health Service Act to provide for the participation of pharmacists in National Health Services Corps programs, and for other purposes.

S. 252

At the request of Mrs. HUTCHISON, the name of the Senator from Texas (Mr. CORNYN) was added as a cosponsor of S. 252, a bill to permit a State to elect to receive the contributions of the State to the Highway Trust Fund in lieu of the Federal-aid highway program apportionment of the State for the subsequent fiscal year, and for other purposes.

S. 260

At the request of Mr. NELSON of Florida, the name of the Senator from Kansas (Mr. MORAN) 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. 387

At the request of Mrs. BOXER, the names of the Senator from Kansas (Mr. MORAN) and the Senator from Maine (Ms. SNOWE) were added as cosponsors of S. 387, a bill to amend title 37, United States Code, to provide flexible spending arrangements for members of uniformed services, and for other purposes.

S. 401

At the request of Mr. LEAHY, the names of the Senator from Connecticut (Mr. BLUMENTHAL) and the Senator from California (Mrs. FEINSTEIN) were added as cosponsors of S. 401, a bill to help Federal prosecutors and investigators combat public corruption by strengthening and clarifying the law.

S. 409

At the request of Mr. SCHUMER, the name of the Senator from Vermont (Mr. LEAHY) was added as a cosponsor of S. 409, a bill to ban the sale of certain synthetic drugs.

S. 797

At the request of Ms. MIKULSKI, the name of the Senator from California (Mrs. FEINSTEIN) was added as a cosponsor of S. 797, a bill to amend the Fair Labor Standards Act of 1938 to provide more effective remedies to victims of discrimination in the payment of wages on the basis of sex, and for other purposes.

S. 961

At the request of Mr. KERRY, the name of the Senator from Louisiana (Ms. LANDRIEU) was added as a cosponsor of S. 961, a bill to create the income security conditions and family supports needed to ensure permanency for the Nation's unaccompanied youth, and for other purposes.

S. 1025

At the request of Mr. LEAHY, the name of the Senator from Missouri (Mrs. MCCASKILL) 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. 1048

At the request of Mr. MENENDEZ, the name of the Senator from Alaska (Mr. BEGICH) 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. 1061

At the request of Mr. BARRASSO, the name of the Senator from Texas (Mrs. HUTCHISON) was added as a cosponsor of S. 1061, a bill to amend title 5 and 28, United States Code, with respect to the award of fees and other expenses in cases brought against agencies of the United States, to require the Administrative Conference of the United States to compile, and make publically available, certain data relating to the Equal Access to Justice Act, and for other purposes.

S. 1251

At the request of Mr. COBURN, the names of the Senator from Missouri (Mr. BLUNT), the Senator from Wisconsin (Mr. JOHNSON), the Senator from Oklahoma (Mr. INHOFE), the Senator from Alabama (Mr. SESSIONS), the Senator from Arizona (Mr. KYL), the Senator from Indiana (Mr. COATS), the Senator from Iowa (Mr. GRASSLEY), the Senator from Georgia (Mr. ISAKSON) and the Senator from Mississippi (Mr. WICKER) were added as cosponsors of S. 1251, a bill to amend title XVIII and XIX of the Social Security Act to curb waste, fraud, and abuse in the Medicare and Medicaid programs.

S. 1265

At the request of Mr. BINGAMAN, the name of the Senator from Michigan (Ms. STABENOW) was added as a cosponsor of S. 1265, a bill to amend the Land and Water Conservation Fund Act of 1965 to provide consistent and reliable authority for, and for the funding of, the land and water conservation fund to maximize the effectiveness of the fund for future generations, and for other purposes.

S. 1359

At the request of Mr. TESTER, the name of the Senator from Delaware (Mr. COONS) 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. 1392

At the request of Ms. COLLINS, the names of the Senator from Wisconsin (Mr. JOHNSON), the Senator from Mississippi (Mr. COCHRAN) and the Senator from North Carolina (Mr. BURR) were added as cosponsors of S. 1392, a bill to provide additional time for the Administrator of the Environmental Protection Agency to issue achievable standards for industrial, commercial, and institutional boilers, process heaters, and incinerators, and for other purposes.

S. 1433

At the request of Mr. ROCKEFELLER, the names of the Senator from Colorado (Mr. BENNET), the Senator from New York (Mr. SCHUMER) and the Senator from Florida (Mr. NELSON) were added as cosponsors of S. 1433, a bill to pay personnel compensation and benefits for employees of the Federal Aviation Administration.

S. RES. 132

At the request of Mr. NELSON of Nebraska, the name of the Senator from Connecticut (Mr. BLUMENTHAL) was added as a cosponsor of S. Res. 132, a resolution recognizing and honoring

the zoos and aquariums of the United States.

S. RES. 216

At the request of Mrs. BOXER, the names of the Senator from Utah (Mr. LEE) and the Senator from Wyoming (Mr. BARRASSO) were added as cosponsors of S. Res. 216, a resolution encouraging women's political participation in Saudi Arabia.

At the request of Ms. AYOTTE, her name was added as a cosponsor of S. Res. 216, supra.

STATEMENTS ON INTRODUCED BILLS AND JOINT RESOLUTIONS

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

S. 1435. A bill to amend part A of title IV of the Security Act to exclude child care from the determination of the 5-year limit on assistance under the temporary assistance for needy families program, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Finance.

Mr. KERRY. Mr. President, today too many families are at risk of losing the child care assistance that helps maintain their financial stability and ensure the well-being of their children. That is why I am introducing the Children First Act to address the growing unmet need for affordable and safe child care.

Until now, most states were able to maintain their child care assistance programs through the recession due to the additional $2 billion in Federal Child Care and Development Block Grant, CCDBG, funding for 2009 and 2010 from the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act, ARRA.

However, with only a portion of these ARRA funds being continued, and with persistent state budget gaps, many states are forced to scale back child care assistance for families. Some states' waiting lists for subsidized child care are beginning to rise and a few states have stopped or plan to stop providing child care assistance to families who are not receiving Temporary Assistance to Needy Families, TANF, together.

Cuts and restrictions in the availability of child care assistance make it harder for parents to afford child care and have forced some parents to leave their jobs and turn to welfare programs for support. Children lose access to the stable, good-quality child care that encourages their learning and development and prepares them for school success. And child care programs can find difficulty filling their classrooms, leading them to lay off staff or close their doors entirely. That is wrong and we can do better.

Child care consumes a large portion of family budgets, and can cost up to $18,773 annually for full-time care depending on where the family lives, the type of care, and the age of the child. Child care prices are higher than other household expenses and typically exceed the average amount families spend on food. In 39 States and the District of Columbia, the average annual price for child care for an infant in a child care center was higher than even a year's tuition at some 4-year public colleges.

Without assistance, many low-income families can find it impossible to secure child care. For example, in 2007, the median monthly income of families receiving child care assistance was just $16,680 a year. Nearly half, 49 percent, of families receiving child care assistance live below the poverty line and 86 percent of these families were single parent households. In these challenging economic times, it is especially important to help low and moderate-income families with their child care costs.

The Children First Act which I am introducing today will help address the growing unmet need for affordable and safe child care. It will help—States meet the significant demand for child care assistance by increasing funding for mandatory child care by $500 million for fiscal year 2012, $700 million in 2013, and $750 million in 2014 thru 2021, resulting in an increase of $3.45 billion over 5 years and $7.2 billion over 10 years.

This increase is necessary because only about one in six children eligible for Federal child care assistance receives help and there have been no increases in mandatory' child care funding since 2007. This increased funding will be used to provide approximately 212,000 additional children access to safe and affordable child care as compared to current funding levels.

The Children First Act would exclude child care from the definition of TANF assistance so that unemployed families who receive child care assistance will not have it count towards the 5-year time limit for Federal TANF assistance. The legislation would also ensure that the minimum child care health and safety standards required for providers receiving Child Care Development Block Grant, CCDBG, funding also apply to providers who receive funding through TANF. In Massachusetts, all licensed providers are required to the same health and safety standards regardless of subsidy type received.

This legislation would increase the availability of child care for parents who are required to work. States are currently prohibited from withholding or reducing assistance to a single parent with children under 6 who does not meet work requirements for reasons related to the unavailability or unsuitability of appropriate, affordable child care arrangements. The Children First Act would prevent States from withholding or reducing cash assistance to parents of a child with children under age thirteen.

Enactment of this legislation is incredibly important for my home State of Massachusetts which currently has approximately 24,000 children on a waitlist for child care subsidies. The high cost of child care is the most significant issue facing families currently on the waitlist in Massachusetts. Massachusetts families pay more on average than families in all other states for child care, with the average price of full time care in center based settings totaling $18,773 for an infant and $13,158 for a preschooler. This legislation will help lower the waitlist and help our children become more productive citizens.

I would like to thank a number of organizations who have been integral to the development of the Children First Act and who have endorsed it today, including the including the American Federation of State, County, and Municipal Employees, AFSCME, the Children's Defense Fund, CLASP, the National Women's Law Center, and the Service Employees International Union, SEIU.

These reforms would significantly increase access to stable and affordable child care to low-income families and would make our Nation's children more prepared for school and success later in life. I look forward to working with my colleagues in the Senate to pass this legislation.

By Mrs. BOXER:

S. 1437. A bill to authorize the Secretary of Health and Human Services to carry out programs to provide youth in racial or ethnic minority or immigrant communities the information and skills needed to reduce teenage pregnancies; to the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions.

Mrs. BOXER. Mr. President, I rise today to introduce the Communities of Color Teenage Pregnancy Prevention Act.

Teen pregnancy is closely linked to a number of issues that affect the welfare of children in our Nation, particularly child poverty. A child in the United States is nine times more likely to grow up in poverty if their mother gave birth when she was a teen, if the child's parents are unmarried when they are born, and if the mother did not graduate from high school.

The United States has the highest teen pregnancy rate of any developed nation. Each year close to 750,000 teens in the United States become pregnant. Despite some progress in reducing teen pregnancy overall, many minority communities continue to struggle with disproportionately high rates of teen pregnancy.

Over half of all Latina and African American girls will become pregnant at least once before they turn 20. In 2009 the teen birth rate for Latinas, African Americans and American Indians/Alaska Natives was more than double the teen birth rate of non-Hispanic Caucasians.

The Communities of Color Teenage Pregnancy Prevention Act takes would address teen pregnancy in communities of color by supporting teenage pregnancy prevention programs that work with community-based organizations that are experienced in serving youth

in ethnic and racial groups with the highest teen pregnancy rates; using multimedia campaigns to provide public health education and increase awareness about teen pregnancy, and researching what factors contribute to disproportionately high rates of teenage and unintended pregnancy in communities of color.

I am proud that our country has made progress in reducing the rate of teen pregnancy by one third over the last decade, but our work is not done. We need to strengthen our efforts, especially among the youth in communities of color who are now so much more likely to face the unexpected and difficult challenges of parenting before they have finished growing up themselves.

I am pleased to be joined in this effort by Representative LUCILLE ROYBAL-ALLARD, who is sponsoring this legislation in the House, as well as Hispanas Organized for Political Equality, the National Campaign to Prevent Teen and Unplanned Pregnancy, the Futures Without Violence, and the National Latina Institute for Reproductive Health.

I urge my colleagues to join us in taking the next step forward in preventing teenage pregnancy by supporting this important legislation.

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

S. 1441. A bill to provide assistance for workforce investment activities to unique populations in Alaska and Hawaii; to the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions.

Mr. INOUYE. Mr. President, Mr. BEGICH and I recognize that Alaska and Hawaii's educational and workforce needs are linked to the indigenous cultures, learning styles, and geographical realities of our home States. We would like to commend the University of Hawaii Maui College for their hard work and dedication in developing a Remote Rural Hawaii Training Project. Over the years, the University of Hawaii Maui College has led the way in education and workforce development. Since the inception of the Rural Development Project in 1997, the University has supported 300 hundred projects. The initial projects served over 29,000 participants. We would also like to praise Cook Inlet Tribal Council for their dedication and efforts relating to workforce development for Native Alaskans. For example, in fiscal year 2010 the Alaska's People Career center served 2,269 job seekers and they helped 58 people obtain their General Educational Development diploma. These initiatives, many made possible by the unique environment created by the natural resources of Alaska and Hawaii, have proved to be an invaluable source of current and future growth of workforce development and training programs. We are truly impressed by the innovative projects developed by these two organizations and we need continued support for workforce development in these unique populations in Alaska and Hawaii.

Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the text of the bill be printed in the RECORD.

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

S. 1441

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

SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.

This Act may be cited as the ''Workforce Investment for Unique Populations in Hawaii and Alaska Act of 2011''.

SEC. 2. ASSISTANCE TO UNIQUE POPULATIONS IN ALASKA AND HAWAII.

(a) IN GENERAL.—Notwithstanding any other provision of law, the Secretary of Labor is authorized to provide assistance to the Cook Inlet Tribal Council, Incorporated, and the University of Hawaii Maui College, for the unique populations who reside in Alaska or Hawaii, respectively, to improve job training and other workforce investment activities (as defined in section 101 of the Workforce Investment Act of 1998 (29 U.S.C. 2801 et seq.)).

(b) AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS.—There are authorized to be appropriated to carry out this section such sums as may be necessary for each of fiscal year 2012 and each subsequent fiscal year.

By Mrs. FEINSTEIN:

S. 1443. A bill to extend certain trade preferences to certain least-developed countries in Asia and the South Pacific, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Finance.

Mrs. FEINSTEIN. Mr. President, I rise today to introduce the Asia-South Pacific Trade Preferences Act to help some of the world's poorest countries sustain vital export industries and promote economic growth and political stability.

This legislation will provide duty free and quota free benefits for garments and other products similar to those afforded to beneficiary countries under the Africa Growth and Opportunity Act.

The countries covered by this legislation are 13 Least Developed Countries, LDCs, as defined by the United Nations and the U.S. State Department, which are not covered by any current U.S. trade preference program: Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Bhutan, Cambodia, Kiribati, Laos, Maldives, Nepal, Samoa, Solomon Islands, East Timor, Tuvalu, and Vanuatu.

They are among the poorest countries in the world.

Nepal has per capita income of $240. Unemployment in Bangladesh stands at 40 percent. Approximately 36 percent of Cambodia's population lives below the poverty line.

Each country faces critical challenges in the years ahead including poor health care, insufficient educational opportunities, high HIV/AIDS rates, and the effects of war and civil strife.

The United States must take a leadership role in providing much needed assistance to the people of these countries.

Yet humanitarian and development assistance should not be the sum total of our efforts to put these countries on the road to economic prosperity and political stability.

Indeed, the key for sustained growth and rising standards of living will be the ability of each of these countries to create vital export industries to compete in a free and open global marketplace.

We should help these countries help themselves by opening the U.S. market to their exports as we have done for other developing countries in the past.

By doing so, we will demonstrate the best of American values: reaching out to a neighbor in need and helping him to stand on his own two feet.

Success in this endeavor will ultimately allow these countries to become less dependent on foreign aid and allow the United States to provide assistance to countries in greater need.

But make no mistake. These countries will not automatically receive the trade benefits provided by this legislation.

Our efforts to promote economic growth, jobs, and political stability will fail if these countries are strangled by human rights abuses, corruption, and the absence of the rule of law.

Instead of lifting the citizens of these countries out of poverty and giving hope for a better future, we will ignore our values and sustain the status quo.

So, this legislation has been drafted to ensure that the benefits are granted on a performance-driven basis.

That is, to be eligible, a beneficiary country must demonstrate that it is making continual progress toward establishing rule of law, political pluralism, the right to due process, and a market-based economy that protects private property rights.

So, this legislation would help promote democracy, human rights, and the rule of law while sustaining vital export industries and creating employment opportunities.

The beneficiary countries have a clear incentive to stay on the right path or they will lose the benefits of this bill.

I firmly believe that these benefits will make a difference.

The garment industry is a key part of the manufacturing sector in some of these countries.

In Nepal, the garment industry is entirely export oriented and accounts for 40 percent of foreign exchange earnings. It employs over 100,000 workers, half of them women, and sustains the livelihood of over 350,000 people.

The United States is the largest market for Nepalese garments and accounts for 80–90 percent of Nepal's total exports every year.

In Cambodia, approximately 250,000 Cambodians work in the garment industry supporting approximately one million dependents. The garment industry accounts for more than 90 percent of Cambodia's export earnings.

In Bangladesh, the garment industry accounts for 75 percent of export earnings. The industry employs 1.8 million

people, 90 percent of whom are women, and sustains the livelihoods of 10 to 15 million people.

Despite the poverty seen in these countries and the importance of the garment industry and the U.S. market, they face some of the highest U.S. tariffs in the world, averaging over 15 percent.

In contrast, countries like Japan and our European partners face tariffs that are nearly zero.

Surely we can do better.

By targeting the garment industry, we can make a real difference now in promoting economic growth and higher standards of living.

This legislation will help these countries compete in the U.S. market and lift their and let their citizens know that Americans are committed to helping them realize a better future for themselves and their families.

Doing so is consistent with U.S. goals to combat poverty, instability, and terrorism in a critical part of the world. We should not forget that the vast majority of the people from these beneficiary countries are Muslim.

The impact on U.S. jobs will be minimal.

Currently, the beneficiary countries under this legislation account for only 4 percent of U.S. textile and apparel imports, compared to 24 percent for China, and 72 percent for the rest of the world.

These countries will continue to be small players in the U.S. market, but the benefits of this legislation will have a major impact on their export economies.

At a time when we are trying to rebuild the image of the U.S. around the world, we need legislation such as this to show the best of America and American values. It will provide a vital component to our development strategy and add another tool to the war on terror. I urge my colleagues to support this bill.

Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the text of the bill be printed in the RECORD.

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

S. 1443

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

SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.

This Act may be cited as the ''Asia–South Pacific Trade Preferences Act''.

SEC. 2. FINDINGS.

Congress finds the following:

(1) It is in the mutual interest of the United States and least-developed countries to promote stable and sustainable economic growth and development.

(2) Trade and investment are powerful economic tools and can be used to reduce poverty and raise the standard of living in a country.

(3) A country that is open to trade may increase its economic growth.

(4) Trade and investment often lead to employment opportunities and often help alleviate poverty.

(5) Least-developed countries have a particular challenge in meeting the economic requirements of and competitiveness necessary for globalization and international markets.

(6) The United States has recognized the benefits that international trade provides to least-developed countries by enacting the Generalized System of Preferences and trade benefits for developing countries in the Caribbean, Andean, and sub-Saharan African regions of the world.

(7) Enhanced trade with least-developed Muslim countries, including Yemen, Afghanistan, and Bangladesh, is consistent with other United States objectives of encouraging a strong private sector and individual economic empowerment in those countries.

(8) Offering least-developed countries enhanced trade preferences will encourage both higher levels of trade and direct investment in support of positive economic and political developments throughout the world.

(9) Encouraging the reciprocal reduction of trade and investment barriers will enhance the benefits of trade and investment as well as enhance commercial and political ties between the United States and the countries designated for benefits under this Act.

(10) Economic opportunity and engagement in the global trading system together with support for democratic institutions and a respect for human rights are mutually reinforcing objectives and key elements of a policy to confront and defeat global terrorism.

SEC. 3. DEFINITIONS.

In this Act:

(1) ASIA OR SOUTH PACIFIC COUNTRY.—The term ''Asia or South Pacific country'' means a country listed in section 4(b).

(2) BENEFICIARY ASIA OR SOUTH PACIFIC COUNTRY.—The term ''beneficiary Asia or South Pacific country'' means an Asia or South Pacific country that the President has determined is eligible for preferential treatment under this Act.

(3) FORMER BENEFICIARY ASIA OR SOUTH PACIFIC COUNTRY.—The term ''former beneficiary Asia or South Pacific country'' means a country that, after being designated as a beneficiary Asia or South Pacific country under this Act, ceased to be designated as such a country by reason of its entering into a free trade agreement with the United States.

SEC. 4. AUTHORITY TO DESIGNATE; ELIGIBILITY REQUIREMENTS.

(a) AUTHORITY TO DESIGNATE.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—Notwithstanding any other provision of law, the President is authorized to designate an Asia or South Pacific country as a beneficiary Asia or South Pacific country eligible for preferential treatment under this Act—

(A) if the President determines that the country meets the requirements set forth in section 104 of the African Growth and Opportunity Act (19 U.S.C. 3703); and

(B) subject to the authority granted to the President under subsections (a), (d), and (e) of section 502 of the Trade Act of 1974 (19 U.S.C. 2462), if the country otherwise meets the eligibility criteria set forth in such section 502.

(2) APPLICATION OF SECTION 104.—Section 104 of the African Growth and Opportunity Act shall be applied for purposes of paragraph (1) by substituting ''Asia or South Pacific country'' for ''sub-Saharan African country'' each place it appears.

(b) COUNTRIES ELIGIBLE FOR DESIGNATION.—For purposes of this Act, the term ''Asia or South Pacific country'' refers to the following or their successor political entities:

(1) Afghanistan.
(2) Bangladesh.
(3) Bhutan.
(4) Cambodia.
(5) Kiribati.
(6) Lao People's Democratic Republic.
(7) Maldives.
(8) Nepal.
(9) Samoa.
(10) Solomon Islands.
(11) Timor-Leste (East Timor).
(12) Tuvalu.
(13) Vanuatu.

SEC. 5. ELIGIBLE ARTICLES.

(a) IN GENERAL.—Unless otherwise excluded from eligibility (or otherwise provided for in this Act), preferential treatment shall apply in accordance with subsections (b), (c), and (d).

(b) CERTAIN ARTICLES.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—The President may provide duty-free treatment to any article described in subparagraphs (B) through (G) of section 503(b)(1) of the Trade Act of 1974 (19 U.S.C. 2463(b)(1)) if—

(A) the article is the growth, product, or manufacture of a beneficiary Asia or South Pacific country; and

(B) the President determines, after receiving the advice of the International Trade Commission in accordance with section 503(e) of the Trade Act of 1974 (19 U.S.C. 2463(e)), that the article is not import-sensitive in the context of imports from beneficiary Asia or South Pacific countries.

(2) RULES OF ORIGIN.—The duty-free treatment provided under paragraph (1) shall apply to any article described in that paragraph that meets the requirements of section 503(a)(2) of the Trade Act of 1974 (19 U.S.C. 2463(a)(2)), except that for purposes of determining if the article meets the 35-percent requirement under subparagraph (A)(ii) of such section—

(A) if the cost or value of materials produced in the customs territory of the United States is included with respect to that article, an amount not to exceed 15 percent of the appraised value of the article at the time it is entered that is attributed to such United States cost or value may be applied toward meeting the 35-percent requirement; and

(B) the cost or value of the materials included with respect to that article that are produced in one or more beneficiary Asia or South Pacific countries or former beneficiary Asia or South Pacific countries shall be applied toward meeting the 35-percent requirement.

(c) TEXTILE AND APPAREL ARTICLES.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—The preferential treatment described in subsection (a) of section 112 of the African Growth and Opportunity Act (19 U.S.C. 3721(a)) shall apply with respect to textile and apparel articles described in paragraphs (1), (2), (4), (5), (7), and (8) of subsection (b) of such section and paragraphs (2) and (3) of this subsection that are imported directly into the customs territory of the United States from a beneficiary Asia or South Pacific country except that such section 112 shall be applied and administered with respect to such articles—

(A) in subsection (a), by substituting ''a beneficiary Asia or South Pacific country (as defined in section 3 of the Asia–South Pacific Trade Preferences Act)'' for ''a beneficiary sub-Saharan African country described in section 506A(c) of the Trade Act of 1974''; and

(B) in paragraphs (1), (2), (4), (5), (7), and (8) of subsection (b), by substituting ''beneficiary Asia or South Pacific country'' and ''beneficiary Asia or South Pacific countries'' for ''beneficiary sub-Saharan African country'' and ''beneficiary sub-Saharan African countries'', respectively, each place such terms appear.

(2) TEXTILE AND APPAREL ARTICLES ASSEMBLED FROM REGIONAL AND OTHER FABRIC.—

(A) IN GENERAL.—Textile and apparel articles described in this paragraph are textile

and apparel articles wholly assembled in one or more beneficiary Asia or South Pacific countries or former beneficiary Asia or South Pacific countries, or both, from fabric wholly formed in one or more beneficiary Asia or South Pacific countries or former beneficiary Asia or South Pacific countries, or both, from yarn originating either in the United States or one or more beneficiary Asia or South Pacific countries or former beneficiary Asia or South Pacific countries, or both (including fabrics not formed from yarns, if such fabrics are classifiable under heading 5602 or 5603 of the Harmonized Tariff Schedule of the United States and are wholly formed and cut in the United States, in one or more beneficiary Asia or South Pacific countries or former beneficiary Asia or South Pacific countries, or any combination thereof), whether or not the textile and apparel articles are also made from any of the fabrics, fabric components formed, or components knit-to-shape described in paragraph (1) or (2) of section 112(b) of the African Growth and Opportunity Act (19 U.S.C. 3721(b)) (unless the apparel articles are made exclusively from any of the fabrics, fabric components formed, or components knit-to-shape described in paragraph (1) or (2) of such section 112(b)).

(B) LIMITATIONS ON BENEFITS.—

(i) IN GENERAL.—Preferential treatment under this subsection shall be extended in the 1-year period beginning January 1, 2012, and in each of the succeeding 10 1-year periods, to imports of textile and apparel articles described in subparagraph (A) in an amount not to exceed the applicable percentage of the aggregate square meter equivalents of all textile and apparel articles imported into the United States in the most recent 12-month period for which data are available.

(ii) APPLICABLE PERCENTAGE.—For purposes of this subparagraph, the term ''applicable percentage'' means 11 percent for the 1-year period beginning January 1, 2012, increased in each of the 10 succeeding 1-year periods by equal increments, so that for the period beginning January 1, 2022, the applicable percentage does not exceed 14 percent.

(3) HANDLOOMED, HANDMADE, FOLKLORE ARTICLES AND ETHNIC PRINTED FABRICS.—

(A) IN GENERAL.—A textile or apparel article described in this paragraph is a handloomed, handmade, folklore article or an ethnic printed fabric of a beneficiary Asia or South Pacific country or countries that is certified as such by the competent authority of such beneficiary country or countries. For purposes of this subsection, the President, after consultation with the beneficiary Asia or South Pacific country or countries concerned, shall determine which, if any, particular textile and apparel goods of the country or countries shall be treated as being handloomed, handmade, or folklore articles or an ethnic printed fabric.

(B) REQUIREMENTS FOR ETHNIC PRINTED FABRIC.—Ethnic printed fabrics qualified under this paragraph are—

(i) fabrics containing a selvedge on both edges, having a width of less than 50 inches, classifiable under subheading 5208.52.30 or 5208.52.40 of the Harmonized Tariff Schedule of the United States;

(ii) of the type that contains designs, symbols, and other characteristics of Asian or South Pacific prints—

(I) normally produced for and sold on the indigenous Asian or South Pacific market; and

(II) normally sold in Asia or South Pacific countries by the piece as opposed to being tailored into garments before being sold in indigenous Asian or South Pacific markets;

(iii) printed, including waxed, in one or more beneficiary Asia or South Pacific countries; and

(iv) fabrics formed in the United States, from yarns formed in the United States, or from fabric formed in one or more beneficiary Asia or South Pacific countries from yarn originating in either the United States or one or more beneficiary Asia or South Pacific countries.

(4) SPECIAL RULE.—

(A) IN GENERAL.—Preferential treatment under this subsection shall be extended through December 31, 2019, for textile and apparel articles that are wholly assembled in one or more beneficiary Asia or South Pacific countries or former beneficiary Asia or South Pacific countries, or both, regardless of the country of origin of the yarn or fabric used to make such articles.

(B) COUNTRY LIMITATIONS.—

(i) SMALL SUPPLIERS.—If, during a calendar year, imports of textile and apparel articles described in subparagraph (A) from a beneficiary Asia or South Pacific country are less than 1 percent of the aggregate square meter equivalents of all textile and apparel articles imported into the United States during that calendar year, such imports may be increased to an amount that is equal to not more than 1.5 percent of the aggregate square meter equivalents of all textile and apparel articles imported into the United States during that calendar year for the succeeding calendar year.

(ii) OTHER SUPPLIERS.—If, during a calendar year, imports of textile and apparel articles described in subparagraph (A) from a beneficiary Asia or South Pacific country are at least 1 percent of the aggregate square meter equivalents of all textile and apparel articles imported into the United States during that calendar year, such imports may be increased by an amount that is equal to not more than ⅓ of 1 percent of the aggregate square meter equivalents of all textile and apparel articles imported into the United States during that calendar year for the succeeding calendar year.

(iii) AGGREGATE COUNTRY LIMIT.—In no case may the aggregate quantity of textile and apparel articles described in subparagraph (A) imported into the United States during a calendar year under this subsection exceed the applicable percentage set forth in paragraph (2)(B)(ii) for that calendar year.

(d) OTHER RESTRICTIONS.—The provisions of subsections (b)(3)(B) and (e) of section 112 and section 113 of the African Growth and Opportunity Act (19 U.S.C. 3721 and 3722) shall apply with respect to the preferential treatment extended under this section to a beneficiary Asia or South Pacific country by substituting ''beneficiary Asia or South Pacific country'' for ''beneficiary sub-Saharan African country'' and ''beneficiary Asia or South Pacific countries'' and ''former beneficiary Asia or South Pacific countries'' for ''beneficiary sub-Saharan African countries'' and ''former sub-Saharan African countries'', respectively, as appropriate.

(e) TECHNICAL AMENDMENT.—Section 6002(a)(2)(B) of the Africa Investment Incentive Act of 2006 (Public Law 109–432) is amended by inserting before ''by striking'' the following: ''in paragraph (3),''.

SEC. 6. REPORTING REQUIREMENT.

The President shall monitor, review, and report to Congress, not later than 1 year after the date of the enactment of this Act, and annually thereafter, on the implementation of this Act and on the trade and investment policy of the United States with respect to the Asia or South Pacific countries.

SEC. 7. TERMINATION OF PREFERENTIAL TREATMENT.

No duty-free treatment or other preferential treatment extended to a beneficiary Asia or South Pacific country under this Act shall remain in effect after December 31, 2022.

SEC. 8. EFFECTIVE DATE.

The provisions of this Act shall take effect on January 1, 2012.

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

S. 1444. A bill to provide for the presentation of a United States flag on behalf of Federal civilian employees who are killed while performing official duties or because of their status as Federal employees; to the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs.

Mr. AKAKA. Mr. President, I rise today to introduce the Civilian Service Recognition Act of 2011. This bill ensures that the next of kin of Federal civilian employees killed in the line of duty are presented a United States flag honoring the service and sacrifice of their loved one. This legislation is cosponsored by Senator LIEBERMAN and is a companion to a bi-partisan bill introduced by Representative HANNA. Representative HANNA's bill was recently reported favorably by the Committee on Oversight and Government Reform by unanimous voice vote.

Every day, Federal civilian employees serve our nation at home and abroad, fulfilling critical roles that protect our citizens, our economy, and our freedom. Some put their lives at risk when doing so. Approximately 100,000 Federal civilian employees have served alongside the U.S. military in Iraq and Afghanistan over the last decade. Since 1992, nearly 3,000 Federal civilian employees have died in service of their country, including 24 killed in Iraq and Afghanistan. Employees who make this ultimate sacrifice deserve the utmost gratitude and respect from their nation.

U.S. law currently requires that a United States flag be presented to the next of kin of deceased U.S. military veterans, but no law or government-wide policy requires that Federal civilian employees killed in the line of duty be similarly recognized. Some Federal agencies have already established internal practices to honor employees killed in service with a U.S. flag, but others have not. Every Federal civilian employee who dies as a result of their honorable service to this country should at least be recognized with the symbolic but nonetheless significant appreciation embodied in the presentation of an American flag.

The bill I am introducing today would remedy the current inconsistency. It requires that Federal agencies present a flag to the next of kin of Federal civilian employees killed in the line of duty. In the unusual circumstance where the national security, such as in the case of a covert employee, or employee misconduct dictate otherwise, the requirement would not apply. It is a modest but meaningful step in expressing our condolences and gratitude to the families of those killed while serving this country; reminding Federal employees that their service and sacrifices are appreciated; and highlighting the important role

Federal employees play, sometimes at great personal risk, in promoting the general welfare of this great Nation.

I urge my colleagues to join me in supporting this legislation.

Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the text of the bill be printed in the RECORD.

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

S. 1444

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

SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.

This Act may be cited as the ''Civilian Service Recognition Act of 2011''.

SEC. 2. PRESENTATION OF UNITED STATES FLAG ON BEHALF OF FEDERAL CIVILIAN EMPLOYEES KILLED WHILE PERFORMING OFFICIAL DUTIES OR BECAUSE OF THEIR STATUS AS FEDERAL EMPLOYEES.

(a) DEFINITIONS.—In this Act:

(1) EMPLOYEE.—The term ''employee'' has the meaning given that term in section 2105 of title 5, United States Code, and includes—

(A) individuals who perform volunteer services at the discretion of the head of an executive agency; and

(B) an officer or employee of the United States Postal Service or of the Postal Regulatory Commission.

(2) EXECUTIVE AGENCY.—The term ''executive agency'' has the meaning given that term in section 105 of title 5, United States Code, and includes the United States Postal Service and the Postal Regulatory Commission.

(b) PRESENTATION OF FLAG.—Upon receipt of a request under subsection (c), the head of an executive agency shall pay the expenses incident to the presentation of a flag of the United States for an individual who—

(1) was an employee of the agency; and

(2) dies of injuries incurred in connection with such individual's status as a Federal employee.

(c) REQUEST FOR FLAG.—The head of an executive agency shall furnish a flag for a deceased employee described in subsection (a) upon the request of—

(1) the employee's next of kin; or

(2) if no request is received from the next of kin, an individual other than the next of kin as determined by the Director of the Office of Personnel Management.

(d) EXCEPTIONS.—Subsections (b) and (c) shall not apply if—

(1) the head of the executive agency determines that fulfilling the requirements of subsections (a) and (b) would endanger the national security of the United States or require the disclosure of classified information; or

(2) the employee is excluded from compensation for death under section 8102(a) of title 5, United States Code.

(e) EMPLOYEE NOTIFICATION.—The head of an executive agency shall provide appropriate notice to employees of the agency of the flag benefit provided under this Act.

(f) REGULATIONS.—The Director of the Office of Personnel Management, in coordination with the Secretary of Defense and Secretary of Homeland Security, may prescribe regulations to implement this Act.

AMENDMENTS SUBMITTED AND PROPOSED

SA 588. Mr. REID (for Ms. LANDRIEU (for herself, Ms. SNOWE, and Mr. COBURN)) proposed an amendment to the bill H.R. 2608, to provide for an additional temporary extension of programs under the Small Business Act and the Small Business Investment Act of 1958, and for other purposes.

TEXT OF AMENDMENTS

SA 588. Mr. REID (for Ms. LANDRIEU (for herself, Ms. SNOWE, and Mr. COBURN)) proposed an amendment to the bill H.R. 2608, to provide for an additional temporary extension of programs under the Small Business Act and the Small Business Investment Act of 1958, and for other purposes; as follows:

Strike all after the enacting clause and insert the following:

SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.

This Act may be cited as the ''Small Business Program Extension and Reform Act of 2011''.

SEC. 2. ADDITIONAL TEMPORARY EXTENSION OF AUTHORIZATION OF PROGRAMS UNDER THE SMALL BUSINESS ACT AND THE SMALL BUSINESS INVESTMENT ACT OF 1958.

(a) IN GENERAL.—Section 1 of the Act entitled ''An Act to extend temporarily certain authorities of the Small Business Administration'', approved October 10, 2006 (Public Law 109–316; 120 Stat. 1742), as most recently amended by section 2 of the Small Business Additional Temporary Extension Act of 2011 (Public Law 112–17; 125 Stat. 221), is amended by striking ''July 31, 2011'' each place it appears and inserting ''July 31, 2012''.

(b) EFFECTIVE DATE.—The amendments made by subsection (a) shall take effect on July 30, 2011.

SEC. 3. REPEALS AND OTHER TERMINATIONS.

(a) GENERAL PROVISIONS.—

(1) EFFECTIVE DATE.—A repeal or other termination of a provision of law made by this section shall take effect on October 1, 2011.

(2) RULE.—Nothing in this section shall affect any grant or assistance provided, contract or cooperative agreement entered into, or loan made or guaranteed before October 1, 2011 under a provision of law repealed or otherwise terminated by this section and any such grant, assistance, contract, cooperative agreement, or loan shall be subject to the applicable repealed or otherwise terminated provision, as in effect on September 30, 2011.

(3) APPLICABILITY OF TEMPORARY EXTENSIONS.—A repeal or other termination of a provision of law made by this section shall have effect notwithstanding any temporary extension of programs, authority, or provisions under the Act entitled ''An Act to extend temporarily certain authorities of the Small Business Administration'', approved October 10, 2006 (Public Law 109–316; 120 Stat. 1742).

(4) DEFICIT REDUCTION.—Any savings resulting from this Act and the amendments made by this Act shall be returned to the Treasury for deficit reduction.

(b) POLLUTION CONTROL LOANS.—Paragraph (12) of section 7(a) of the Small Business Act (15 U.S.C. 636(a)) is amended—

(1) by striking ''(A) The Administration'' and inserting ''The Administration''; and

(2) by striking ''research and development'' and all that follows and inserting ''research and development.''.

(c) SMALL BUSINESS INSTITUTE.—Subparagraph (E) of section 8(b)(1) of the Small Business Act (15 U.S.C. 637(b)(1)) is repealed.

(d) DRUG-FREE WORKPLACE GRANTS.—Paragraph (3) of section 21(c) of the Small Business Act (15 U.S.C. 648(c)) is amended—

(1) in subparagraph (R) by adding ''and'' at the end;

(2) in subparagraph (S) by striking ''; and'' and inserting a period; and

(3) by striking subparagraph (T).

(e) CENTRAL EUROPEAN SMALL BUSINESS ENTERPRISE DEVELOPMENT COMMISSION.—Section 25 of the Small Business Act (15 U.S.C. 652) is repealed.

(f) PAUL D. COVERDELL DRUG-FREE WORKPLACE PROGRAM.—Section 27 of the Small Business Act (15 U.S.C. 654) is repealed.

(g) PILOT TECHNOLOGY ACCESS PROGRAM.—Section 28 of the Small Business Act (15 U.S.C. 655) is repealed.

(h) NATIONAL VETERANS BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—Section 33 of the Small Business Act (15 U.S.C. 657c) is repealed.

(2) CORPORATION.—Beginning on the date of enactment of this Act, the National Veterans Business Development Corporation and any successor thereto may not represent that the corporation is federally chartered or in any other manner authorized by the Federal Government.

(i) LEASE GUARANTEES AND POLLUTION CONTROL.—Part A of title IV of the Small Business Investment Act of 1958 (15 U.S.C. 692 et seq.) is repealed.

(j) ALTERNATIVE LOSS RESERVE.—Paragraph (7) of section 508(c) of the Small Business Investment Act of 1958 (15 U.S.C. 697e(c)) is repealed.

(k) SMALL BUSINESS TELECOMMUTING PILOT PROGRAM.—Subsection (d) of section 1203 of the Energy Independence and Security Act of 2007 (15 U.S.C. 657h) is repealed.

(l) TECHNICAL AND CONFORMING AMENDMENTS.—

(1) SMALL BUSINESS INVESTMENT ACT OF 1958.—Section 411(i) of the Small Business Investment Act of 1958 (15 U.S.C. 694b(i)) is amended to read as follows:

''(i) Without limiting the authority conferred upon the Administrator and the Administration by section 201 of this Act, the Administrator and the Administration shall have, in the performance of and with respect to the functions, powers, and duties conferred by this part, all the authority and be subject to the same conditions prescribed in section 5(b) of the Small Business Act with respect to loans, including the authority to execute subleases, assignments of lease and new leases with any person, firm, organization, or other entity, in order to aid in the liquidation of obligations of the Administration hereunder.''.

(2) TITLE 10.—Section 1142(b)(13) of title 10, United States Code, is amended by striking ''and the National Veterans Business Development Corporation''.

(3) TITLE 38.—Subsection (h) of section 3452 of title 38, United States Code, is amended by striking ''any of the'' and all that follows and inserting ''any small business development center described in section 21 of the Small Business Act (15 U.S.C. 648), insofar as such center offers, sponsors, or cosponsors an entrepreneurship course, as that term is defined in section 3675(c)(2).''.

(4) VETERANS ENTREPRENEURSHIP AND SMALL BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT ACT OF 1999.—Section 203(c)(5) of the Veterans Entrepreneurship and Small Business Development Act of 1999 (15 U.S.C. 657b note) is amended by striking ''In cooperation with the National Veterans Business Development Corporation, develop'' and inserting ''Develop''.

SEC. 4. TERMINATION OF EMERGING LEADERS PROGRAM.

Notwithstanding any other provision of law, effective October 1, 2011, the Administrator of the Small Business Administration may not carry out or otherwise support the program referred to as ''Emerging Leaders'' in the document of the Small Business Administration titled ''FY 2012 Congressional Budget Justification and FY 2010 Annual

Performance Report'' (or any predecessor or successor document).

AUTHORITY FOR COMMITTEES TO MEET

COMMITTEE ON AGRICULTURE, NUTRITION, AND FORESTRY

Mrs. SHAHEEN. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry be authorized to meet during the session of the Senate on July 28, 2011, at 9:30 a.m. in room SD–G50 of the Dirksen Senate Office Building.

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

COMMITTEE ON ARMED SERVICES

Mrs. SHAHEEN. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Committee on Armed Services be authorized to meet during the session of the Senate on July 28, 2011, at 9:30 a.m.

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

COMMITTEE ON ENERGY AND NATURAL RESOURCES

Mrs. SHAHEEN. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Committee on Energy and Natural Resources be authorized to meet during the session of the Senate on July 28, 2011, at 10 a.m. in room 366 of the Dirksen Senate Office Building.

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

COMMITTEE ON FINANCE

Mrs. SHAHEEN. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Committee on Finance be authorized to meet during the session of the Senate on July 28, 2011, at 10 a.m. in room 215 of the Dirksen Senate Office Building.

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

COMMITTEE ON HEALTH, EDUCATION, LABOR, AND PENSIONS

Mrs. SHAHEEN. 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 ''FDA User Fees: Advancing Public Health'' on July 28, 2011, at 9:45 a.m., in room 430 of the Dirksen Senate Office Building.

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

COMMITTEE ON HOMELAND SECURITY AND GOVERNMENTAL AFFAIRS

Mrs. SHAHEEN. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs be authorized to meet during the session of the Senate on July 28, 2011, at 2:30 p.m.

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

COMMITTEE ON INDIAN AFFAIRS

Mrs. SHAHEEN. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Committee on Indian Affairs be authorized to meet during the session of the Senate on July 28, 2011, at 2:15 p.m. in room 628 of the Dirksen Senate Office Building.

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

COMMITTEE ON THE JUDICIARY

Mrs. SHAHEEN. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Committee on the Judiciary be authorized to meet during the session of the Senate, on July 28, 2011, at 10 a.m., in SD–226 of the Dirksen Senate Office Building, to conduct an executive business meeting.

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

SELECT COMMITTEE ON INTELLIGENCE

Mrs. SHAHEEN. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Select Committee on Intelligence be authorized to meet during the session of the Senate on July 28, 2011, at 2:30 p.m.

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

SUBCOMMITTEE ON AVIATION OPERATIONS, SAFETY, AND SECURITY

Mrs. SHAHEEN. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Subcommittee on Aviation Operations, Safety, and Security of the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation be authorized to meet during the session of the Senate on July 28, 2011, at 10 a.m. in room 253 of the Russell Senate Office Building to conduct a hearing entitled, ''Aviation Fuels: Needs, Challenges, and Alternatives.''

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

SUBCOMMITTEE ON NATIONAL PARKS

Mrs. SHAHEEN. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Subcommittee on National Parks be authorized to meet during the session of the Senate on July 28, 2011, at 2:30 p.m., in room 366 of the Dirksen Senate Office Building.

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

PRIVILEGES OF THE FLOOR

Mr. REID. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent, on behalf of Senator BINGAMAN, that three interns in his office, Shannon Simpson, Brooke Jordy, and Trey Debrine, be granted floor privileges during today's business.

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

Mrs. FEINSTEIN. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the two fellows in Senator ROCKEFELLER's office, Dale Orth and Janice Phillips, be granted floor privileges during consideration of S. 123.

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

Mr. HARKIN. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that Emily Boydston and Kevin Paulsen of my staff be granted floor privileges for the duration of today's proceedings.

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

RECESS SUBJECT TO THE CALL OF THE CHAIR

Mr. REID. Mr. President, we are awaiting action of the House of Representatives on their bill. For that reason, I will ask unanimous consent that we recess subject to the call of the Chair, and I will make that motion in just a minute.

For the information of all Senators, I don't expect or anticipate any action here before 9 o'clock, so I doubt we would reconvene before 9 p.m. tonight.

So I ask unanimous consent that the Senate stand in recess subject to the call of the Chair.

There being no objections the Senate, at 7:43 p.m., recessed subject to the call of the Chair and reassembled at 10:45 p.m. when called to order by the Presiding Officer (Mr. DURBIN).

ORDER OF BUSINESS

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The majority leader.

Mr. REID. Mr. President, thank you very much. I apologize to everyone for the late hour. We have been waiting for the House to conduct their business and they are having trouble conducting it. As a result of their not sending us the material we need, we are going to have to wait until tomorrow to do our work.

ORDERS FOR FRIDAY, JULY 29, 2011

Mr. REID. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that when the Senate completes its business today, it adjourn until 9:30 a.m. tomorrow, Friday, July 29; that following the prayer and the pledge, the Journal of proceedings be approved to date, the morning hour be deemed expired, and the time for the two leaders be reserved for their use later in the day; that following any leader remarks, the Senate recess until 11 a.m.; and that at 11 a.m., the Senate be in a period of morning business until 12 p.m. with Senators permitted to speak for up to 10 minutes each, with the time equally divided and controlled between the two leaders or their designees; further, that at 12 p.m. I be recognized.

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

PROGRAM

Mr. REID. For all Democratic Senators, they should be aware that we are going to have a caucus at 10 a.m. tomorrow.

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 10:48 p.m., adjourned until Friday, July 29, 2011, at 9:30 a.m.

NOMINATIONS

Executive nominations received by the Senate:

DEPARTMENT OF ENERGY

DAVID T. DANIELSON, OF CALIFORNIA, TO BE AN ASSISTANT SECRETARY OF ENERGY (ENERGY EFFICIENCY AND RENEWABLE ENERGY), VICE CATHERINE RADFORD ZOI, RESIGNED.

LADORIS GUESS HARRIS, OF GEORGIA, TO BE DIRECTOR OF THE OFFICE OF MINORITY ECONOMIC IMPACT, DEPARTMENT OF ENERGY, VICE JOSE ANTONIO GARCIA, RESIGNED.

THE JUDICIARY

EVAN JONATHAN WALLACH, OF NEW YORK, TO BE UNITED STATES CIRCUIT JUDGE FOR THE FEDERAL CIRCUIT, VICE ARTHUR GAJARSA, RETIRING.

RONNIE ABRAMS, OF NEW YORK, TO BE UNITED STATES DISTRICT JUDGE FOR THE SOUTHERN DISTRICT OF NEW YORK, VICE LEWIS A. KAPLAN, RETIRED.

RUDOLPH CONTRERAS, OF VIRGINIA, TO BE UNITED STATES DISTRICT JUDGE FOR THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA, VICE RICARDO M. URBINA, RETIRED.