don’t think anyone here would disagree with me when I say it—we can’t keep borrowing $120 billion every month or more, because the point and the day when will come when the people who lend us that money will stop lending us that money. If we keep doing this forever, we will one day reach a day in this country where we will face a debt crisis, but it won’t be because of the debt limit or because of gridlock in Washington. It will be because folks are no longer willing to buy America’s debt because they seriously doubt our ability to pay it back.

That is not hyperbole. It is not an exaggeration. It is a mathematical, indisputable fact that no Member of either party would dispute. There is general agreement on this. And there is general agreement the only way to solve this problem is a combination of two things: No. 1, this government needs to generate more revenue; and No. 2, this government needs to restrict its growth and spending. Because as bad as the $300 billion a month looks, it only gets worse from here on out, in ways I don’t have time to explain in the next 10 minutes. Suffice it to say our economy isn’t growing. It is not producing enough jobs to take the pressure off our budget. Meanwhile, all the programs we fund are about to explode in their growth because more people than ever are going to retire, they will live longer than they have ever lived, and the math doesn’t work. These are facts. No one disputes that.

The debate in Washington is not about that fact but about how do we solve it. How do we generate more money and reduce the spending at the same time? I will tell you this is not a debate we will solve in the month of August. In fact, I believe it will characterize the rest of this Congress, the 2012 elections, and the years that lie ahead. The division on how to solve it goes to the heart of what kind of country we should be. That is not more or less patriotic than the other. Patriotic, country-loving Americans can disagree on their future vision of what kind of country we should be. But this division—this difference of opinion—is the reason why even though this bill passed, this debate we have had is going to move forward for some time to come.

One group believes there are those who believe the job of government is to deliver us economic justice—which basically means an economy where everyone does well or as well as possibly can be done. There is another group who believes in the concept of economic opportunity—where it is not the government’s job to guarantee an outcome but to guarantee the opportunity to fulfill your dreams and hopes. One is not more moral than the other. They are simply different visions of the role of government in America. But, it lies at the heart of the debate we are having as a nation. Washington is divided because America is divided on this point, so we have to decide what every generation of America before us has decided, and that is what kind of government do we want and what role do we want it to have in America’s future.

The fault lines emerge from that. The solutions emerge from those two visions. For those who want to see economic justice, their solution is to raise more taxes. They believe there are some in America who make too much money. They believe it is the role of government to ensure that one does well or as well as possibly can be done. Patriotic, country-loving Americans who believe in economic justice, their solution is to raise more taxes. They believe there are some in America who make too much money, and the math doesn’t work. These are facts. No one disputes that.

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passed by the House and the Senate, the most controversial of which centered around the ruling by the National Mediation Board on unionization rules. But that is why Chairman Rockefeller and Ranking Member Hutchinson appointed Members to a conference committee where the House and Senate could work out our policy differences. So far, the House has refused to appoint conferees. Instead, they have decided to stop negotiating and, unfortunately, to play politics with 4,000 FAA workers and their families.

Right now the FAA has been shut down for 11 days and as long as that shutdown continues, the government will continue to lose $200 million a week, about $30 million a day, that would pay for airport maintenance and safety and for the replacement of our country’s outdated air traffic control system. If the shutdown continues through the August recess, we are going to lose billion in funding that could be used to upgrade our air transportation system. That is waste of the worst kind, and it makes our deficit problems worse at a time when everybody says they are so focused on the deficits.

Every day the shutdown continues has a very real, very painful impact on people all around the country who have been furloughed. I hope the House, in leaving for recess, has left open the opportunity to continue to address this dispute and resolve it in a way that will bring everybody back to work.

The FAA has issued stop-work orders for 241 airport construction projects worth nearly $11 billion that support 70,000 jobs. Again, these are real people who are being forced to make real sacrifices.

In my State of New Hampshire, a $16 million project to rebuild the runway of Boire Field in Nashua will be delayed. This project has an estimated $300 million impact. Boire Field is the busiest general aviation airport in New England, and breaking ground this fall on the runway reconstruction project would have created 50 jobs. Instead, because of this delay, construction likely won’t begin until spring and those 50 people are going to have to wait, something that shouldn’t have to happen. The tragedy is they won’t have jobs, not because they don’t have the skills or that the project isn’t needed but because the House is playing politics with the FAA.

Forty-two employees at the FAA’s air traffic control center in Nashua have been furloughed and this shutdown is taking a terrible toll on them. I want to tell you about one, Steve Finnerty.

I talked to Steve earlier today. He is a civil engineer and he has worked for the FAA for the last 15 years. He is the sole breadwinner for his family of five. He has a young daughter and a pair of 1-year-old twins who are struggling with medical issues. He has already lost nearly 2 weeks of pay, and he is not sure that he is going to get that pay back even when he does go back to work. He is concerned, understandably, about how he is going to pay his mortgage and his doctor bills and the grocery bills and all the other needs his family has. Now he is facing the possibility of an entire month without pay.

There are thousands of people all across the country who are stuck in the same circumstance who want to get back to work, who we need to get back to work. We need them to get back to work so they can pay their mortgages and their college tuitions and their medical bills. We need them to get back to work so they can continue to build a GPS-based air traffic control system like every other industrialized country has. We need to get this economy moving again. That means we need to be serious about our responsibilities here in Washington.

Let’s pass a clean extension of the FAA. Let’s get these people back to work, and let’s go about the business of rebuilding a modern air traffic control system like we should have in the United States.

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

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The assistant parliamentarian proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. NELSON of Florida. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent the order for the quorum call be rescinded. The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Without objection, it is so ordered.

Mr. NELSON of Florida. Madam President, I ask consent to speak as in morning business.

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

RECOGNIZING THOM RUMBERGER

Mr. NELSON of Florida. Madam President, I rise to recognize the important contributions of a special Floridian for his unrelenting determination to protect one of our Nation’s unique natural resources; that is, the Florida Everglades. He is a prestigious attorney. He is a commanding litigator.

This individual, Thom Rumberger, has dedicated much of his personal and professional life to advancing the restoration and protection of the Everglades. His brilliant, incisive mind, his creativity, and his fearlessness combine to make Thom one of Florida’s most influential Everglades leaders.

He has been a man proud to serve his country and his community. It goes back to the time he interrupted his college career to volunteer for the Marines. He served in the Korean war. Over the course of his life, he has continued this service as a dedicated public servant, a respected judge, and a respected leader.

In his family, he is a dedicated father and grandfather who obviously has always found great happiness with that ever-expanding family of his, and the relentless efforts he undertakes to preserve Florida’s natural heritage is a legacy gift, certainly to his family and to his colleagues but to all us Floridians—indeed, to us as residents of planet Earth.

Thom served 2 years in the Marines, earned his degree with honors, a law degree, and was associate editor of the Florida Law Review. He became the youngest circuit judge serving in a district in central Florida. He was the Belize County solicitor, he was special assistant State attorney, he was county attorney for Seminole County, he was Assistant to the Florida Governor, and he served as a member of the Florida Land Sales Board.

I knew Thom back in those early days in Melbourne and Brevard County as we were experiencing the explosive growth, at the time, of the Nation’s attempt to catch up with the Soviet Union since they had surprised us by launching Sputnik. Thom helped us into orbit with Yuri Gagarin before we could get Alan Shepard into suborbit and then John Glenn into orbit.

Those were exciting times. I will never forget I heard Thom, as we were sitting around one day, saying I am impatient having to sleep because I am so excited about getting up in the morning and going out and doing all these things. Of course, I just listed all those important positions of public service.

Along the way, Thom became a good friend of another Brevard County man, George Barley. Actually, I think George was from Orange County. George was married to Mary. Both of them dedicated their lives to restoration of the Everglades. George and Mary established the Everglades Trust and the Everglades Foundation and then, when George died a very tragic death back in 1995, Thom joined with George Barley’s dream of a restored Everglades became a reality.

Thom was an active member of the Republican Party, but I can tell you that in the friendship between us, partisan membership did not mean anything. We had a personal friendship, and one could often see that as he engaged in public service, but that was especially so when it came to the preservation and the restoration of the Everglades. The commitment that Thom Rumberger made to the legacy gift, certainly to his family and the ever-expanding family of his, and the relentless efforts he undertakes to preserve Florida’s natural heritage is a legacy gift, certainly to his family and to his colleagues but to all us Floridians—indeed, to us as residents of planet Earth.