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Senate

The Senate met at 10 a.m. and was called to order by the Honorable WILLIAM M. COWAN, a Senator from the Commonwealth of Massachusetts.

PRAYER

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

Let us pray:

Eternal God, we place our hopes in You for our future is in Your hands. Strong deliverer, be our shelter in these challenging times. Lord, give our lawmakers the understanding, humility, and clarity they need to keep America strong. May they be good stewards of the generous gifts you have showered upon our land, laboring valiantly to assure that justice and righteousness will prevail. Help them to commit their plans to You, believing that You know what is best for our Nation and world. We pray in Your gracious Name. Amen.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The Honorable WILLIAM M. COWAN led the Pledge of Allegiance, as follows:

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

APPOINTMENT OF ACTING PRESIDENT PRO TEMPORE

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

The legislative clerk read the following letter:

U.S. SENATE,
PRESIDENT PRO TEMPORE,
Washington, DC, March 12, 2013.

To the Senate:

Under the provisions of rule I, paragraph 3, of the Standing Rules of the Senate, I hereby appoint the Honorable WILLIAM M. COWAN, a Senator from the Commonwealth of Massachusetts, to perform the duties of the Chair.

PATRICK J. LEAHY,
President pro tempore.

Mr. COWAN 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 leader remarks, the Senate will be in morning business until 12:30 today. The majority will control the first 30 minutes, the Republicans the second 30 minutes. Chairman MIKULSKI and Ranking Member SHELBY are expected to make opening statements about 11 o'clock this morning.

Just as an aside, this is a new day in the Senate. We are so grateful for the hard work of Senators MIKULSKI and SHELBY. The amendment is offered as their substitute amendment. I am very proud of the work they did. We are going to have to work through a number of amendments, but when it is all over, we are going to send over a bill I hope the House will accept. If not, we will have a quick conference—I hope that is not necessary—and continue the work on our other appropriations bills and finish the problems we have had in being behind.

The CR will fund the government until October 1. We hope by then we can complete work on our appropriations bills, so in 2014 we don't have to go through all this again—CRs and omnibuses and all that kind of stuff.

We are going to recess from 12:30 to 2:30 p.m. today for weekly caucus meetings. We have extended that for an extra 15 minutes because the President is going to be here today.

We expect to begin consideration of H.R. 933, which is the appropriations bill I just talked about, following the caucus meetings we are going to have.

THE RYAN BUDGET

Mr. REID. Earlier this year, with November election losses fresh in their minds, top Republicans promised a kinder, gentler Republican Party, a Republican Party that cared about ''every American . . . achieving their dreams.'' Republicans bandied about words such as ''fairness'' and ''opportunity.'' They made overtures toward women and Hispanics. They promised cooperation and an end to brinkmanship. House Majority Leader CANTOR even spoke of ''an agenda based on a shared vision of creating the conditions for health, happiness, prosperity for more Americans and their families.''

Rebranding, we thought, was underway. Then a few weeks passed and the Republican emphasis on fairness and equity made a direct U-turn back to where they started. Today the House Budget Committee Chairman PAUL RYAN will unveil an extreme budget that is anything but balanced. This budget reflects the same skewed priorities the Republican Party has championed for years, the same skewed priorities Americans rejected in November. The Ryan budget will call for more tax breaks for the wealthy, an end of Medicare as we know it, and Draconian cuts to education and other programs to help America's economy grow and prosper.

We have heard it many times and I will repeat it. Yogi Berra famously said, ''It's déjà vu all over again,'' and it really is. We have seen this before, déjà vu all over again. The Ryan budget will shower more tax breaks on millionaires and continue to tilt the playing field to the advantage of big corporate interests and raise taxes for the middle class.

I know Congressman RYAN is held out to be this guru who understands things so well. What he understands is gimmickry and that is what he has done so well. He has pulled the wool over the eyes of those people in the House and they continue following him, but his

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

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budget is anything but balanced, anything but fair. Members of the House should look at what they are being led into—or out of.

This plan, just like last year, refused to close a single tax loophole in order to reduce the deficit. Yet it guts investments in education, health care, public safety, scientific research, and job-creating clean energy technology. The Ryan budget would end the Medicare guarantee and force seniors into a voucher program. It would ax preventive health care such as cancer screenings and charge seniors more for prescriptions and further reduce the funding for food inspectors, police, and first responders generally. As if protecting the wealthy special interests is not bad enough, the Republican budget also devastates the economy, costing jobs and slowing economic growth.

Not only is this a wrong approach, it is the same old approach. To make matters worse, the Paul Ryan Budget No. 3—he has done it two other times—used the same fuzzy math and gimmickry as his previous two budgets, relies on accounting that is creative at best and fraudulent at worst to inflate its claims of deficit reduction. We believe it is critical to stabilize the deficit, but it will take more than accounting gimmicks to achieve real deficit reduction.

At a time when corporations are making record profits, the stock market is soaring, and wealthy Americans' income continues to rise, the deficit reduction should not have to be at the expense of middle-class families, senior citizens, and the poor. Americans have demanded a fair approach to deficit reduction for all Americans—Democrats, Independents, and Republicans. They want a fair approach to deficit reduction that makes sensible cuts and asks profitable corporations and the wealthiest among us to share the burden—balanced.

We have been listening. That is why this week Budget Committee Chair PATTY MURRAY will introduce a budget that reflects those balanced priorities. Her plan, the Democratic plan, will cut wasteful spending and reduce the deficit, close tax loopholes that benefit the rich, and invest where the economy needs to grow, to go really hard, to continue to build, to grow. It will create a strong middle class.

Congressman RYAN and his Republican colleagues in Congress have taken a different approach, an approach that makes it plain they missed the message in the November elections. Their budget once again will put moneyed special interests ahead of middle-class families, and no amount of rebranding will hide that.

RECOGNITION OF THE MINORITY LEADER

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

BUDGET PREVIEW

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, as we know, President Obama missed this year's legal deadline to submit a budget to Congress, just like he has nearly every year of his presidency. But this year it is even worse—we now know he does not even plan to submit a budget until after the House and the Senate have acted to pass one.

That has never happened in the more than 90 years that have gone by since the modern budgeting process was established in the 1920s. Somehow, Presidents managed to submit budgets on time in the middle of World War II, during the Great Depression—but not today? There is simply no excuse.

Rather than helping lead Congress toward a reasonable outcome, it appears the President is happy to drop a bomb on the congressional budget process instead by releasing his budget plan after the House and Senate have acted—presumably so he can campaign against Republicans if the process fails as he hopes. Let's hope he does not trot out that tired political playbook again.

The President should send over his budget now—not next week or next month, but today—so both sides can consider it at a time when it might be helpful, rather than destructive, to the process.

And speaking of serious delays, for 4 years my constituents in Kentucky and Americans across the country have been asking Senate Democrats a simple question: ''Where's the budget?'' Most families put one together. They want to know what Democrats who run the Senate have planned.

But for 4 years, Senate Democrats have ignored these concerns. Year after year, they have neglected one of their most important legislative responsibilities.

Evidently that is about to change. Senate Democrats are now pledging to finally—finally—produce a budget. I will be interested to see what they put forward.

I hope Senate Democrats take this exercise seriously and propose real spending reforms that can put our country on a stronger, more sustainable fiscal path, reforms that can control spending and lead to robust private-sector growth and job creation. We will see.

What about Republicans? Well, Republicans lead the House, and they have proposed budgets every year, right on schedule—budgets that would finally put our country on a path to growth and job creation, and that would put our creaky entitlement programs on a sound fiscal footing so they are around when people need them.

Today, House Republicans will unveil this year's budget blueprint. If the past is any indication, the reforms it contains would jump-start our economy, help more Americans join the middle class, and begin to tackle the debt that threatens all of our futures because Republicans understand we need to grow the economy, not the government. What's more, it would get us back to a balanced budget within just a few short years.

Call me a skeptic, but there is little chance the budget my Senate Democrat friends put forward will balance—either today, 10 years from today, or ever. And I doubt it will contain much in the way of spending reform either. We will probably just get more of what we have come to expect from them the past few years: lots of budget gimmickry, tons of wasteful spending, and even more tax hikes. That type of budget won't grow the economy or shrink the debt.

But here is the thing. The budgeting process is a great way for both parties to outline their priorities for the country, and that is something Senate Democrats have refused to do until now.

So, if they want to put forward a budget that allows Medicare to go bankrupt, that hikes up taxes on the families and small businesses that can least afford them, and that proposes a future of massive deficits without end—if that is really how they want to define themselves for the American people—then let the battle of ideas begin.

But we need to see their budget first, so it is time to end the years of delays and put those ideas on the table. And it is well past time for the President to do the same—not after Congress acts, but before.

Republicans have managed to play by the rules every year and produce serious budgets for our country. I hope Democrats are finally ready to get to work to do the same.

I yield the floor.

RESERVATION OF LEADER TIME

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

MORNING BUSINESS

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

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The Senator from Illinois is recognized.

Mr. DURBIN. Mr. President, I understand that the Democrats have the first half of morning business.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The Senator is correct.

CONTRASTING BUDGETS

Mr. DURBIN. Mr. President, this is a historic week because we will see congressional presentations of the congressional budgets, and I believe we will see stark contrasts.

Congressman RYAN of Wisconsin—nearby my home State of Illinois—is going to prepare and present to the Republicans in the House of Representatives a budget that he says will bring our overall Federal budget into balance over 10 years. It is a daunting task, and I commend him for his effort. I also have to say that we have been there before. We have heard this budget before. We know what it contains. There are several elements in the Ryan budget—as some have announced in advance—that repeat the mistakes of his earlier budgets, and some of them are grievous.

We understand we need entitlement reform to make sure important programs such as Social Security, Medicare, and Medicaid continue for years to come. We understand there will be some hard choices associated with efforts to make these programs more solvent.

The Ryan approach continues to have something called premium support. What it boils down to is this: In the outyears, Congressman RYAN and the House Republicans want to offer seniors across America less money to pay for their Medicare insurance. They want to privatize the Medicare insurance system.

Our side of the aisle—both in the House and the Senate—is dedicated to some basic principles. One of the first is to make sure men and women across America who are from working families have a fighting chance, to make sure the Tax Code is responsive to their needs, to make sure the programs they count on will be there when they need them.

Every hour of every day most American workers in States such as Massachusetts and Illinois pay into our Social Security and Medicare system with the belief that when the time comes for retirement, Social Security and Medicare will be there. Unfortunately, what Congressman RYAN is proposing is to really break that promise and to say to seniors across America: You can pay into it for a lifetime, but when the time comes and you really need Medicare and health insurance during your retirement, you probably won't be able to afford it. You won't be able to come up with the premiums.

What good is a Medicare system that a worker has paid into for a lifetime if it cannot provide the basic protections they will need during retirement? They can balance the books—at the cost of coverage and the cost of the Medicare promise that has been made for generations.

Therein lies the real crux of the difference between Democrats and Republicans when we look at these entitlement programs. We know that reform is necessary, but reform should be based on best medical practices, on reducing the obvious waste in the Medicaid Program, and not on penalizing seniors who are on a fixed income who cannot afford increasingly high Medicare premiums. That is the PAUL RYAN approach—privatizing Medicare. It is not a good approach for America. That is the real difference.

Of course, there is this dedication on the part of Congressman RYAN to reduce the tax rates for the wealthiest people in America. Those rates, after the fiscal cliff negotiation, go as high as 39 percent on the highest income. PAUL RYAN's budget wants to bring them down to 25 percent, which is a dramatic decline in the income tax rate for the wealthiest Americans. How will he achieve this? He says he will achieve it by changing the Tax Code to bring the rate down to 25 percent. I sat through the negotiations in the Bowles-Simpson Commission and other places, and the math does not work. If they are going to try to bring down the income tax rate for the wealthiest to 25 percent, sadly, they will eliminate the most basic income tax deductions for working and middle-income families across America. That is the reality; otherwise, they cannot reach that number.

We have to look at this. If the PAUL RYAN budget means the wealthiest Americans get a tax cut while working families see a tax increase and if the PAUL RYAN budget means Medicare will be fiscally solvent but unaffordable for most working Americans, this is a budget we need to reject out of hand.

We will see that budget in its entirety today, and by tomorrow the Democratic alternative here in the Senate, which has been worked on and prepared by Senator PATTY MURRAY of Washington and her colleagues in the Senate Budget Committee, will be presented as well, and it will be a stark contrast. What Senator MURRAY and the Senate Budget Committee will produce is a balanced approach that says: Yes, there will be deficit reduction, but it will be the right way. We need to make sure we have revenues coming from those who can afford to pay in the highest income categories. Yes, we need spending cuts, and they will continue. We need entitlement reform that is thoughtful and sensitive. We need reform that really makes sure these programs are here for generations to come.

I think America will applaud the efforts on the Senate side. I think they will have many questions to ask on the House side, and then the debate begins. Those of us on the Appropriations Committee wait for this to be completed because the budget resolution is basically our blueprint for what we can achieve during the remainder of the year and for the next budget year that starts October 1.

There are a couple of things that are part of the budget process that I will address very quickly.

SEQUESTRATION

I am very concerned about the impact of sequestration on health care. Reporters in Illinois asked me over the weekend: What is the big deal? Sequestration came and life didn't end. It seems as though we are going on in a normal way.

Unfortunately, they overlooked some obvious impacts. For example, community health centers are the frontline for primary health care across America. I visit them and always leave with a sense of hope and a positive feeling. The community health centers in Chicago and across Illinois are quality medical institutions. They serve people with limited insurance or no insurance, and they serve them in the most professional way. I have said with confidence that if I happen to get sick someday or someone in my family did, I would feel confident walking into these community health centers—they are that good.

Some 22 million people in more than 9,000 locations across America rely on them. As the point of care for uninsured and low-income people, community health centers provide preventive services that help avoid expensive procedures and emergency room visits.

At a time when 30 million new Americans are about to get health insurance so they can afford to get care, these across-the-board cuts are taking $115 million out of community health centers this year alone. Nationally, almost 900,000 patients will lose access. Community health center funding in Illinois will be cut by $6.2 million. Erie Family Health Center in Chicago is one of the best. They will do their best to protect clinical care, but the wraparound services that make Erie so effective, not to mention cost-effective, will be reduced.

Now is not the time to cut community health center funding. Instead, we should expand the centers so hardworking and low-income families get the care they need.

Regardless of where someone lives or where they go to see the doctor, the $1.6 billion cut to the National Institutes of Health threatens all of us. And that is what these cuts are going to do to medical research—cutting $1.6 billion from the National Institutes of Health. I have always said that I will take this issue to any corner of America, any group—liberal or conservative, young or old—and make my case that investment in health care research is one of the most important investments our government makes. When we shortchange medical research, we shortchange our future.

Great medical care is only as good as the science behind it. Drugs and devices work only as well as our understanding of the medical conditions they are treating. Our country is rich with promising research. We lead the world and should be proud of it. We have the bright minds, the curious scientists, and the innovative labs. Today countless people are engaged in work that will lead to better treatments for arthritis, Alzheimer's, AIDS, diabetes, cancer, and the list goes on.

Biomedical research supported by the NIH has established America as the leader in the world, and we are right on the verge of making life-changing discoveries through this research. But sequestration—which is now in place—

will have a ripple effect that could curb medical discoveries and weaken the economies across the country.

Dr. Francis Collins, Director of the NIH, says there is no question that sequestration will slow the development of an influenza vaccine and cancer research.

Eli Zerhouni, head of NIH under President George W. Bush, said:

> We are going to maim our innovation capabilities if we do these abrupt deep cuts at NIH. It will impact science for generations to come.

Right now, when so much good research is moving us forward, we should be doubling down on medical education, innovation, and infrastructure. Cutting back on NIH and biomedical research is so shortsighted. Medical research saves lives, keeps America's place as a leader in science and medicine, and it generates economic growth. Frankly, these cuts shake the confidence of people in this field. Trying to decide whether they should dedicate their lives to medical research with the uncertainty of sequestration and budget cuts is unfair.

For over a century, NIH-supported scientists have led the way for important breakthroughs to improve health and save lives through the discovery of things such as the MRI, extending the life expectancy for people with cystic fibrosis, revolutionizing our thinking about cancer, improving our understanding of stroke and heart disease, and creating new vaccines that save lives.

President Obama has called on congressional leaders to come together to create an alternative to the sequestration. A balanced mix of smarter spending cuts and revenue from closing loopholes that benefit higher income individuals will mean we can keep our commitment to medical research.

This week we are going to start the debate on the continuing resolution. One of the early amendments that is likely to be offered will be by Senator HARKIN, who chairs the Labor, Health and Human Services Subcommittee in Appropriations. I have spoken to Senator HARKIN. He is determined to do everything he can to give the Senate the opportunity to continue to cut the deficit but to do it in a way that will not make dramatic negative cuts in medical research.

I hope we can get a bipartisan consensus. Diseases and the threats of ill health strike all of us regardless of party affiliation. We should come together on a bipartisan basis to support increasing medical research and maintaining America's lead in the world.

I yield the floor and 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. CORNYN. 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.

REMEMBERING BORAH VAN DORMOLEN

Mr. CORNYN. Mr. President, I want to start my remarks today by remembering a great Texan who passed away just yesterday. Sandy, my wife, and I are deeply saddened by the loss of Borah Van Dormolen, a remarkable patriot, a respected leader, and a loving wife.

Borah rose through the ranks of the U.S. Army, achieving the rank of lieutenant colonel. After more than two decades serving her Nation in the uniform of the U.S. Army, she poured her energy and sense of duty into helping our State. Frequently offering frank advice in only the way Borah could, she was a leader by example and a great friend.

Borah's legacy will live in many ways, including in the young Texans she helped me select for nominations to our Nation's military academies through her service on my Military Academy Selection Committee.

Sandy joins me in sending our thoughts and prayers to Borah's husband, LTC Rich Castle, their families, and all those whom Borah touched throughout her journey in life.

THE BUDGET

Mr. CORNYN. Mr. President, I would like to mark this 1,413th day that the Senate has not had a budget. We will be talking a lot about the budget this week, as we should, in a debate that has been long overdue.

Since the Budget and Accounting Act was passed in 1921, no President has missed the legal deadline for submitting a budget to Congress. Unfortunately, for the fourth time in 5 years, President Obama will miss that deadline.

Given that our gross national debt is already larger than our entire economy, and given that we are facing more than $100 trillion in unfunded liabilities, one would think the President would make this a priority and he would feel a greater sense of urgency about America's fiscal dilemma.

In fact, not only will President Obama be late with his budget this year, he will not even be submitting it to the House and the Senate until after we have released our own budgets. So the President will not have any input whatsoever by submitting his budget—which he should have done on February 4—he will not have any input whatsoever on the deliberations of the House and Senate as we take up our proposed budgets.

As I say, since the Budget and Accounting Act was passed in 1921, no U.S. President has ever done that. The White House has always gone first. In fact, the President is the leader of our Nation not only as Commander in Chief but also as the one the Constitution looks to in the law to bear the responsibility to make at least an initial budget proposal. The White House has always gone first, providing a blueprint that helped guide negotiations on Capitol Hill, but not under this President.

The budget process is an opportunity for the President to outline his priorities. It is an opportunity for the President to tell the American people what we can afford and how we are going to pay for it. Above all, it is an opportunity for the President to show real leadership on issues of national importance.

As ADM Mike Mullen, the former Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, said: The greatest national security threat to the United States is our budget. What he meant by that is, unless the Federal Government gets its fiscal house in order, we are not going to be able to afford even the safety net for the most vulnerable of our people, nor are we going to be able to afford the national security that helps keep America strong and America and its allies safe.

Unfortunately, the President has failed to demonstrate the required leadership in this area. He has also ignored the recommendations of his own bipartisan fiscal commission. He submitted two consecutive budget proposals that failed to receive a single vote in this Chamber. His administration has racked up $6 trillion in new debt since he became President, and he created a massive new entitlement funded by a trillion-dollar tax increase—something known as ObamaCare. Now he is refusing to send us a budget until after the Senate and the House vote on their own budget proposals.

If the President really wants to play a constructive role in the budget process, he will send us his proposal right away. Further delays will only complicate and hinder our negotiations.

Mr. President, I yield the floor and 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.

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

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

TERRORISTS TRIALS

Ms. AYOTTE. Mr. President, I rise today to speak about an issue I am very concerned about, which involves a man who was recently captured overseas. His name is Sulaiman Abu Ghaith, and he is Osama bin Laden's son-in-law. Here is a photo of him sitting next to Osama bin Laden. In fact, he appeared with Osama bin Laden right after the 9/11 attacks on our country.

He is Osama bin Laden's son-in-law, captured overseas and brought to the United States of America. The Attorney General has made the announcement Osama bin Laden's son-in-law

will be tried in New York City in a civilian trial rather than being brought to Guantanamo Bay for further interrogation and held in military custody.

I am very concerned about this issue as this is a man who, based upon the relationship he had with Osama bin Laden in 2001 and 2002, served as a spokesman for al-Qaida. He urged others to swear allegiance to Osama bin Laden. On September 12, 2001, he appeared with Osama bin Laden and Ayman al-Zawahiri. He is shown in this photo.

He warned the United States and its allies, ''A great army is gathering against you.'' He also called on all Muslims to battle the Jews, Christians, and Americans. He also promised more 9/11-style attacks. Right after our country was attacked on September 11, he appeared with Osama bin Laden warning of more September 11 attacks. He said, ''The storms shall not stop, especially the airplane storms.''

In 2002, he reportedly arranged to be smuggled to Iran where he was held under some form of house arrest. Obviously, we need to understand why the Iranians were allowing such a prominent member of al-Qaida to be kept in their country. We have deep concerns about Iran, which is the largest state sponsor of terrorism in the world. It is threatening our country and right now marching toward nuclear weapons capability. It has threatened to annihilate Israel and threaten our country, while he was under loose house arrest following his direct allegiance with Osama bin Laden.

In addition, American authorities have tied him to an October 8, 2002, attack on the U.S. Marines while training on an island off the coast of Kuwait. This was a situation where one of our marines was killed and another was seriously injured.

The attack was conducted by al-Qaida fighters with direct ties to Mr. Abu Ghaith, who is Mr. Osama bin Laden's son-in-law. Kuwait actually stripped Mr. Abu Ghaith of his citizenship because of his role in recruiting Kuwaitis to become members of al-Qaida.

Last week he pled guilty to charges in Federal court in New York City. I am concerned when we take a top member of al-Qaida after his capture overseas, such as Osama bin Laden's son-in-law, bring him to our courts in New York City, and then all the full rights of our civilian court system apply to this individual. This includes the right, when one is in custody and interrogated, to hear Miranda rights.

My former role was as attorney general for the State of New Hampshire. I have great respect for our civilian system; however, our civilian system was not designed to deal with situations where we are at war. Mr. Abu Ghaith falls clearly within the definition of what this body has authorized as the use of military force against an enemy belligerent. When we bring him to New York City, we must Mirandize him and inform him he has the right to remain silent. We lose valuable opportunities to gather intelligence, to protect our country, and to discover if he was with Osama bin Laden.

We have photos of him one day after the September 11 attack. What does he know about al-Qaida? Who else was involved? What does he know about their network? During the time he spent in Iran, was he still communicating with members of al-Qaida? Obviously, he was because we allege he helped commit an attack in 2002 in Kuwait which killed at least one marine.

Who was he communicating with? What future attacks are they planning? What associations has he made with members of al-Qaida? When we tell someone such as this he has the right to remain silent and give him a lawyer, we lose opportunities to protect our country.

When we are at war, as we are with al-Qaida, we need to focus to discover as much information as possible about al-Qaida: who they are targeting and who are the members of al-Qaida. Obviously, all of us supported the President's decision to take out Osama bin Laden. Who are the other members of his network? What information are we losing when we bring him to a civilian court system instead of bringing him where he belongs as an enemy belligerent in Guantanamo Bay?

It seems to me inconsistent that the administration would take the position—and I support them on this—they would kill top members of al-Qaida overseas. Yet they are so averse—when they capture someone—to bringing them to Guantanamo Bay. It is their preference to take them into a civilian court system in the United States of America, where they must read Miranda rights to that individual rather than take them where they belong, to Guantanamo Bay.

I have visited Guantanamo, which is a secure detention facility where people are treated humanely, kept very securely, but not on U.S. soil. We may keep them in Guantanamo Bay under the law of war and interrogate the individual as long as we need to.

Let me remind everyone the intelligence we gathered, which allowed us to find and take out Osama bin Laden, took a matter of not just months but years to gather. To take someone such as Sulaiman Abu Ghaith and immediately, after he is captured, very quickly bring him to New York City, we lose the opportunity to go back to him over time to understand the full amount of information he may have about al-Qaida. This is why we have a distinction under our law between the law of war and our civilian system.

He is not a bank robber. He is not an average criminal who should be treated the same way as any other criminal in America. He is someone who has sworn to kill Americans and has asked others to take the oath for al-Qaida, which is at war with our country. I am very worried about the fact the administration seems to be bent on bringing these foreign terrorists to the United States to give them all of the rights of our civilian court system rather than focusing on ensuring we have all the intelligence we need to protect our country.

I would like to also speak about another individual and the inconsistency we have here. This is Anwar al-Awlaki. Anwar al-Awlaki was an American citizen. He was radicalized, possessed both American and Yemeni citizenship, and became a leader for al-Qaida in the Arabian Peninsula. He advocated for violent jihad against the United States and has been linked to a dozen terrorist investigations in the United States. These include links to the September 11 attacks against our country and links to the November 5, 2009, Fort Hood shooting.

The administration made the decision in September 2011 to take out Mr. al-Awlaki overseas in Yemen. I certainly support their decision in that regard.

I want to point out how inconsistent it is that we are willing to use the drone program to take out someone like al-Awlaki, and yet we will not use all the tools in our toolbox to ensure Osama bin Laden's son-in-law is held at Guantanamo and fully interrogated to give us the time we need to gather the full information he has. It is very inconsistent, and I think the administration should be detaining enemy belligerents in Guantanamo and ensuring they are interrogated.

I wish to mention one final person, Khalid Shaikh Mohammed. Let's not forget the administration's first decision with the mastermind of 9/11, Khalid Shaikh Mohammed, was to bring him to New York City for a civilian trial in New York close to Ground Zero, as they are now making the decision with Osama bin Laden's son-in-law.

The public outrage was great over bringing Khalid Shaikh Mohammed to New York City due to the amount of security it would take to secure someone like him. There was the concern he should be treated as an enemy of our country and tried by a military commission in Guantanamo. He was transferred there eventually by the administration, but only after great pressure from both sides of the aisle in Congress to say it would be appropriate that the mastermind of 9/11 belongs in Guantanamo before a military commission.

I think we find ourselves in the same situation now with Osama bin Laden's son-in-law. There can be no doubt he is a top member of al-Qaida; that he had close relationships with Osama bin Laden; that he is charged with conspiring to kill Americans. These are very serious charges, and there can be no doubt that he falls within our operation and the use of military force; that he is an enemy of our country and that we should be treating him in a similar fashion as to how we treated Khalid Shaikh Mohammed.

Most of all, we need to prioritize intelligence gathering to prevent future

attacks against our country rather than focusing on bringing them immediately into our civilian court system. A man such as Osama bin Laden's son-in-law should never hear the words ''You have the right to remain silent.'' We can't afford to have him be silent. We need to know everything he knows to protect our country, its citizens, and to prevent future attacks on America and our allies.

Mr. President, I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Maryland.

Ms. MIKULSKI. Mr. President, parliamentary inquiry: Has all time expired from the respective parties utilizing their morning business allocation?

The PRESIDING OFFICER. It has.

CONTINUING APPROPRIATIONS

Ms. MIKULSKI. Mr. President, I am rising to speak on the continuing resolution to keep government funded for the rest of the year.

I chair the full committee of the Appropriations Committee. My very able and esteemed colleague, Senator SHELBY, is the vice chairman. We come to the floor to talk about our legislation, which is an amendment to the House CR to fund the Federal Government for the rest of the fiscal year. It continues the bipartisan tradition of the Appropriations Committee working closely with both sides of the aisle, and I wish to thank Senator SHELBY for his excellent cooperation and his wise counsel in doing this and actually cosponsoring this.

Our leadership, Senators REID and MCCONNELL, has been critical to allowing us to come to the floor and have our bill be debated openly, to have appropriate amendments, and then to have it voted on by the full Senate. In today's toxic environment in Washington, I must say our conversations have been characterized by civility, collegiality, and absolute candor—what we can do; what we can't do, not what we would like to do but what we must do to keep the government's doors open.

I also want to comment on the excellent tone and conversation we have had with the House, specifically our House counterparts, HAL ROGERS, the chairman of the House Appropriations Committee, and Congresswoman NITA LOWEY. We have talked with each other and worked together, and if we continue to do that without other intervening dynamics, we can get this bill done.

Before I go into our bill to offer its content, I want everybody to understand there are three things at play in Washington this week. We use arcane language, so nobody knows what is going on. There is the sequester, there is the continuing resolution, and there is the Budget Committee. Everybody is going to get confused because everybody is getting it commingled. All of it is getting press and the American people don't understand there are three separate solutions to three separate problems.

Let me go to the Budget Committee, which will be on the floor next week, and Senator MURRAY is vociferously and persistently working on that bill. That is for fiscal year 2014. That is the framework on how we are going to approach our overall budget: What are we going to spend, what revenues we are going to have to raise, if any, and also a review of mandatory spending. That is going on over there. That is for fiscal year 2014.

The Mikulski-Shelby continuing resolution is the appropriations bill—not a personality bill—that will fund the government through 2013. The American people might say: Didn't you do that in October? Isn't our fiscal New Year's Eve October 1? Well, not really. What happened is we were going into the heat and passion and prickliness of an election year, so the wise heads thought it best to extend it where cooler heads would prevail in March. So here we are. We are the cooler heads, and we are ready to prevail. What we have here now is that legislation.

Everybody needs to understand this: On March 27, that continuing resolution expires. If we do not pass our bill and then have an agreement between the House and the Senate that is signed by the President, we could face a government showdown. There is no will on either side of this institution that wants to do that. We are absolutely committed to no shutdown, no showdown, no lockdown, no slamdown. We want to do the job, and that is why we have been working very carefully to do that.

What we will offer today is funding through the fiscal year, which will take us to October 1, and that meets the mandatory cap assigned to us by the Budget Committee of $1.4 trillion. That is a lot of money, but it is a big government with big responsibilities. It includes everything from defense—defending us over there—to the border control—defending us here—to meeting compelling human need and making investments in science and technology while ensuring we do what we need to do.

Our legislation is quite simple and straightforward. It includes five appropriations bills. Two are already in it from the House—defense, military construction, and veterans. It will also include agriculture, homeland security, and a subcommittee that Senator SHELBY and I are chair and vice chair of that funds the entire Justice Department. That means FBI, Federal law enforcement, and science and commerce. So we have Ag, CJS, homeland security and defense. Defense and military construction are identical to the House. Agriculture, CJS and homeland security are consistent with bipartisan and bicameral agreements negotiated last fall.

Remember, we are reaching across the aisle, we are reaching across the dome. That is how we are trying to do it. However, there are seven remaining bills in the continuing resolution, and they are energy and water—money for things such as the Corps of Engineers—interior and environment, financial services, transportation, Labor-HHS, state and foreign ops, and the legislative branch. That means they are provided current funding levels and policies with some very limited changes to fix present problems. These are called anomalies.

The Senate version, as I said, totals $1.43 trillion, which is equal to the House CR. So the top line is the same; the difference is how we achieve national goals. It is equal to the House continuing resolution, and it is the same as required by the Budget Control Act. We are absolutely in compliance with the Budget Control Act.

Sequester mandates another $86 billion in cuts. That comes over what we do, and that solution is to be negotiated by the President and the leadership with the concurrence of both bodies. That is part of the charm offensive that is going on now. OK. Sequester needs a balanced solution, and we will be listening and awaiting their ideas, but right now we are looking at our bill that includes bipartisan amendments, minimizing the problems of operating and returning to a regular order for fiscal year 2014.

The amendment we offer is much better than an extension of the current continuing resolution. Why don't we take a date and just change 2012 to 2013? We don't do that because our bill makes reforms. We actually get more value for the dollar. If we just extended it, we would sometimes be spending money on unneeded programs, one of which would be—in our bill, CJS—$500 million for a space shuttle that doesn't exist. We want to change that and put it where it belongs, into the proper defending of our Nation and investing in science and technology. So a date change in a continuing resolution is not workable.

The Senate amendment improves the House CR by adding those three domestic bills and, as I said, includes a number of changes. I could go through each and every one of those changes, such as in agriculture, but what I wish to do is explain the process now. I do want to explain the content of my bill; however, I am going to take 1 minute now and yield to Senator SHELBY for his opening statement and then I will come back and explain the details of our actual funding.

I must say again, I have appreciated not only the civility and the collegiality but the candor. We had to look at not what we would like to do and not even what we should do but what we must do to keep government operating, to achieve the national goals America wants: our national security, both those who wear the uniform of the U.S. military as well as others who defend the Nation, such as border control, Federal law enforcement, law enforcement at the local

level, food safety and drug safety inspectors, to make sure we meet compelling human need in the fields of education, biomedical research. This is what we are trying to do—weather satellites that predict future natural disasters.

Again, we don't have a bill that is what we would like to do, what we have is a bill that is what we must do. If we all work together—and we ask those who have amendments to be working with our leadership—we believe we can move this bill by the middle of this week; that by the week's end, the certainty of government funding will have been established and we will have shown we can govern.

I yield the floor so my vice chairman can say what he wishes to say to add to the debate.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Alabama.

Mr. SHELBY. Mr. President, first of all this morning I would like to thank Chairwoman MIKULSKI for her willingness to work together in good faith and to introduce the bill that keeps the government running for the rest of the fiscal year. The chair and I have had what I would characterize as a long and productive working relationship. I think this bill is a very clear signal that we intend to continue that relationship for the good of the legislative process and the American people.

I believe Congress must learn to deal with the spending constraints that have become a necessary reality for all of us. Much more work remains to be done to secure our fiscal future, including fixing entitlement programs and reforming our Tax Code. However, today we have taken the first step to show the American people Congress can come together on important issues. My hope is we will continue to do so.

I am pleased to say Chairwoman MIKULSKI and I have accomplished three shared goals in this proposed legislation. First, this bill will prevent a government shutdown. Nobody in America wants that. Moving from one continuing resolution to the next only delays our problems and creates added uncertainty. I hope we can return to the regular order of producing budgets and appropriations bills to avoid the threat of a shutdown in the future.

Second, this bill will provide more flexibility for the remainder of the year so that government agencies can deal with the reality of the sequester which remains fully in place here.

Third, I believe this bill is a product both parties in both Houses can support. It prioritizes spending and aims to steer clear of divisive issues.

In addition, discretionary spending is subject to the caps put in place by the Budget Control Act, and this bill complies with those levels. As noted, spending cuts made by the sequester will come on top of these constraints.

I support moving forward with this bill, and encourage my colleagues to join together to do the same. Many Americans have lost faith that Republicans and Democrats can work together on anything. I believe this bill demonstrates it is possible, and I hope it will pave the way for a more productive relationship in the future. And while we are sure to disagree on many issues, I remain positive we can restore regular order in the Congress and deal with pressing fiscal matters in a timely bipartisan manner.

I think I speak for both of us when I say we are committed—yes, we are committed—to putting the budget and appropriations process back on track. We look forward to working with our colleagues who share that goal and are willing to join us in this effort. This is a new beginning.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Maryland.

Ms. MIKULSKI. Mr. President, you can see our tone. We need everybody's cooperation, if they have amendments, to bring them to us and also to the leadership which is helping us negotiate which ones will come up, and I think we can get this bill done this week.

But I wish to say why getting it done is worthwhile. I want to speak about agriculture, and I wish to speak about some of the content we have, and do it in alphabetical order because it is easier for folks to follow.

In agriculture, our amendment makes sure we fund the Food Safety Modernization Act which is not included in the House bill. This is the first major reform of food safety laws in 70 years and is much needed. CDC says 48 million Americans suffer from food-borne illness each year.

This morning before I came to the floor, I attended a hearing on the Select Committee on Intelligence that I am a member of. General James Clapper, the Director of National Intelligence, along with key people from the military, civilian agencies such as FBI Director Mueller, gave us a 30-page report on threats to the United States. One of the things they talked about was the safety of our food supply. We need to make sure we have inspectors on the ground for what might occur through bacteria or what might also be induced. So food safety is a big issue.

This amendment is also better at improving clean water to rural communities, and provides 165 rural communities with clean water and waste disposal, creating construction jobs today, and improving community health. I am very well versed in that because, along with Senator CARDIN, we represent 2,000 miles of the Chesapeake Bay. We have older communities. We have issues related to wastewater treatment that are not only polluting the Bay but are very difficult to repair because of the very nature of our population—wonderful, patriotic people who don't have a lot of cash to pay a lot of taxes for wastewater. But in helping them, we improve public health and we save the Chesapeake Bay with all its seafood industry. That is just me. But we could go everywhere.

Commerce, Justice, Science, that is a subcommittee I chair. Boy, do I like it. Why do I like it? Because it goes to everything we are talking about: about justice, about jobs today and jobs tomorrow. When we look at our Department of Commerce, which should be the point place for American business really promoting private sector initiatives and, most of all, promoting exports—not sending jobs overseas but sending products and services—that is where the trade negotiation goes. This is part of our economic vitality. This is where we have bipartisan agreement. Let's engage in free and open and fair trade. That negotiation staff and so on is funded through our subcommittee.

We also want to protect our borders. That is going to be in homeland security. In our justice funding, we fund Federal law enforcement and provide funds to local communities on a competitive basis to put cops on the beat and to give them the appropriate things they need to protect themselves.

Let's look at the Byrne grants, the main Federal tool that helps State and local law enforcement. We provide more money. That means more money for body armor, more money for them to learn the latest tips and so on, and stopping the gang threat. It also provides COPS on the Beat grants. Both of those are modest increases over the House funding. When I say modest, do you know what I am talking about? For all that local law enforcement does, we are going to provide $15 million. That is not a lot of money by Washington's terms, but to the local police departments it will be a help.

Commerce-Justice also supports innovation. It is in this subcommittee that we fund the National Science Foundation $220 million more than the House. That means we will be able to provide more help to 7,000 scientists and teachers making new discoveries for new products that will lead to new companies and new jobs. This is what we do.

We are better than the House also in homeland security. This amendment does more to protect the Nation from cyber warfare. Cyber warfare is one of the greatest threats facing America. Again, in this 30-page report we have on threats, the first five pages were devoted to all of the cyber problems. What kind of cyber problems? Cyber attacks, cyber espionage, and the growing nexus between organized crime and nation states, preventing hacking, stealing our state secrets, our trade secrets and also the human trafficking of children and women, weapons of mass destruction. Where you sell women and children as a commodity across the borders of the world through organized crime and corrupt government officials, you will also sell other kinds of things, including weapons of mass destruction. So this is where we need to fund homeland security, the Department of Defense, the FBI, our contribution to Interpol. All of that is in the bill, and we do better—not a lot better

because we are frugal; again, not what we would like to do, but what we must do.

Also under homeland security, we make sure we look at that which puts people in harm's way. In my own State, and others, there is the issue of fires. Most fire departments in big cities are run by professionals, but in most rural communities they are run by the great volunteer fire departments. We have a fire grant program that I helped start that trains and equips local firefighters. What we do here is provide more money—$33 million above the House—to help provide those grants, and we also provide additional funds to help State and local fire departments.

In the area of compelling human need, I want to talk about the Subcommittee on Education, Labor, and Human Services. This is the subcommittee that funds compelling human need. And what do we do here? We look after childcare development block grants, we support care for 9,000 more children, and we also make sure we adequately fund Head Start by providing modest sums there.

In addition, we also provide more money to the National Institutes of Health, $71 billion. But put that into the context that they are going to take a $1.5 billion hit in sequester.

I know the Presiding Officer represents a great State, Hawaii. Who wouldn't love Hawaii? But I wish the Presiding Officer would look at Maryland. Not only do we have the wonderful Chesapeake Bay, a Super Bowl championship, but we have other ''super bowl'' winners. They are called the National Institutes of Health, the National Security Agency, the National Weather Agency.

Just the other day when I was over at NIH, they told me—and told America through their communications—that NIH's work, working with clinicians and the private-led science sector, has reduced cancer rates in the United States of America by 15 percent in breast cancer, prostate cancer, lung cancer. And it is all those wonderful researchers at the Bethesda campus and in academic centers of excellence all over America. But instead of pinning medals on those people and encouraging young people to come into science, we could end up giving them a pink slip. What are we doing?

I not only want to lower cancer rates, but I want to improve and raise the discovery rate. This is what we do in this CR. We are working with them on a bipartisan basis. This is helping American people and giving us products that are approved by FDA that we can sell and ship around the world, particularly to countries that could never do it.

So I am all about jobs—jobs today and jobs tomorrow. That is why what we do in transportation, housing, and urban development is also a big step forward. In addition to looking out for the homeless, we provide an additional amount of money for highway and road safety programs, where people actually working with funds going to Governors at the local level—not some shovel-ready gimmick—can identify projects in the pipeline we could generate in construction. We can improve public safety by smart highways. And, literally, we can help get America rolling again; we have a fragile economy.

I could go on about this bill, but this is a general outline, and I will talk more about it. I feel very passionate about it because we have squeezed every nickel, we have looked at it very fastidiously to make sure that we are right within our mandated spending cap to assess our national priorities: national security, compelling human needs, how we can help create jobs, look out for the middle class, and make those investments that improve the lives of the American people and generate jobs tomorrow.

I think we have a very good bill. I ask everyone's cooperation to get it passed.

Mr. President, I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Virginia.

THE SEQUESTER

Mr. KAINE. Mr. President, I rise in support of the work Chairwoman MIKULSKI and Ranking Member SHELBY and the Appropriations Committee have done and the place they will bring us to on the floor of the Senate this week as we take an important step forward to fix the fiscal year 2013 budget. I will be meeting tomorrow—as many legislators do during the course of the year—with my Governor. All of the Virginia delegation will be sitting down with Governor McDonnell, who will be visiting, and he and the State will view this as very good news as we can talk about this work product.

I made my first speech on the floor about 2 weeks ago, and it was a speech that was kind of a plea. It was a plea to avoid the economic self-inflicted wound of sequester. As we all know, we were not able to do that at the time. There were two bills, and neither of them was able to get sufficient votes to move forward. The negative consequences from that sequester have been felt in the Commonwealth, as I traveled around, whether it is warn notices to ship repairers in the Hampton Roads area, planned furloughs of DOD civilian employees, or a delay in a carrier deployment that could potentially leave us more vulnerable in the Middle East.

The good news is that we can fix it and improve it. The Appropriations Committee's work discussed today is a way to begin to do that. We have a chance to get it right and to reduce the negative effects of sequester by dealing effectively with the expiring CR for fiscal year 2013 and then producing a progrowth 2014 budget. This is the work before this body in the next few weeks, and we need to do our very best work.

On the continuing resolution, it has been made clear in the comments before, we do not have a fiscal year 2013 budget or appropriations bills at the current time, so since October, we have been operating out of 2012 appropriations bills, pushed forward for a few months at a time. This leads us to a situation where we are not forward-focused, but we are operating out of an old playbook. We need to align our spending around this year's priorities and not be locked into funding the priorities of the past.

The Department of Defense—just to focus on this for a minute because defense is critical to the Commonwealth, as it is to all States—is very constrained by the continuing resolution that is currently in place. There is a $11 billion operations and maintenance shortfall that is difficult for DOD to manage in a way that will keep us safe. There is a lack of flexibility to adjust to new needs. There are no new starts on important projects, including on the shipbuilding and naval side, which is so important to the Commonwealth. That has already led to a delay in the construction of one of the new Ford class aircraft carriers, the USS *John F. Kennedy*, with a consequent potential loss in jobs. Other agencies throughout the Federal Government have been similarly affected.

The good news is that there is a solution. Chairwoman MIKULSKI and Senator SHELBY, the ranking member, have worked together to lay that out today. This week we will work together on a true appropriations bill for the remainder of fiscal year 2013 for critical government functions: Department of Defense, military construction, the VA, but also homeland security, agriculture, commerce-justice- science. There are other governmental functions that will continue to operate under the fiscal year 2013 CR, but in many areas we will not be working off a backward-looking document. For the remainder of the year at least, because of the work of this committee, we can look at a forward-looking document.

Again, I congratulate Chairwoman MIKULSKI and Ranking Member SHELBY and the Appropriations Committee for working so hard together with House colleagues to put us in this posture. A true appropriations approach to the remainder of fiscal year 2013 fixes many of the DOD problems I outlined earlier. For example, it will allow us to go forward on the shipbuilding contract to construct a second Ford class carrier, the USS *John F. Kennedy*. That will be wonderful news for our defense and wonderful news for the shipyard that is the largest private employer in Virginia. It will allow us to move forward on significant ship refurbishment and repair contracts. The repair and refueling of the USS *Roosevelt* and the USS *Lincoln* were delayed as a result of the uncertainty about the budget, but the work this committee is doing will enable us to move forward.

We will be able to not completely eliminate the operations and maintenance deficits but at least make moves

among those accounts to mitigate the effects of the O&M deficit, and that will be across service branches.

Just last Friday, as I left the Senate and drove back to my home in Richmond, I stopped and did an economic development tour with a contractor in the Fredericksburg area working on robotics projects for all of the service branches. They talked about the fact that the CR was really putting a crimp in their planned expansions, their ability to hire students who are graduating from engineering programs around Virginia and around the Nation this fall. The CR fix going forward will give this company and so many others some certainty that will enable them to do the work we need to do and also help expand employment.

Other agencies have a similar upside from the fix of this fiscal year 2013 CR, as Chairwoman MIKULSKI was just outlining—improvements in domestic nutrition; improvements in international food aid, which is not only good for the most vulnerable people in the world but also good for the American farmer; improvements in State and local law enforcement support, immigration enforcement, workforce training, early childhood education. There are many aspects of this fix going forward that are far preferable to the CR and certainly preferable to flirting around the possibility of any kind of a shutdown after March 27. That is why I strongly support the approach the Appropriations Committee, under its leadership, has worked on. It is good for the United States and good for Virginia, and it represents a move to forward-looking budgeting rather than plays out of last year's playbook.

Make no mistake, the sequester is still in place, and the sequester is still having significant effects. The fiscal year 2013 appropriations bill we are discussing will mitigate the effects, but there will still be an operations and maintenance shortfall within DOD. Every service is still facing potential cuts in training and other readiness functions that should cause us concern.

Last Monday, a week ago yesterday, I went to the Pentagon and visited with Secretary Hagel, Deputy Secretary Carter, General Odierno, spent time with General Welsh last week, and not just with the brass but then went down into the cafeteria and heard the real deal from folks who were having lunch, and these were Active Duty assigned to the Pentagon, DOD civilian, Guard men and women who were back just coincidently to do training-related meetings that day, and veterans who were back having lunch with their friends. As I went table to table and talked about sequester, I heard about continuing effects and concerns regarding the furlough of defense civilians and potential cuts to contractors. So those are still out there, but the good news is that this bill will address and improve, and then we have a second chance to do so as well as we begin in short order to deal with a proposed fiscal year 2013 budget.

There is a strong budget process already underway that will bear fruit in the committee within the next couple of days. The Budget Committee, under the leadership of Chairman MURRAY, has worked very hard, and it started the process that will lead to committee discussion and voting and then amendment and debate later this week. The basic goal of what we are trying to do is pretty simple, under the chairman's direction: Let's grow the economy and create jobs while reducing our deficit and debt in an economically credible way.

If we do this right, together with the appropriations approach discussed today, we can help reduce and then shape the negative effect that sequester has had on the Commonwealth and the country by replacing a blunt, nonstrategic, across-the-board set of cuts with more strategic and targeted approaches.

We have a long way to go, obviously, whether it is on finding the path forward just on this bill—and it looks as if there is very strong bipartisan support, and that is positive—but certainly on moving forward with the budget and the possibility of finding some compromise with the House. There are going to be vast differences in the approaches, and we cannot sugarcoat that. But I think it is maybe important at least to stop and acknowledge some positive steps.

At year end, before I joined the body, the two Houses did come together and they found a compromise on the Bush tax cuts, which was positive. There were things not to like about it, but the fact of compromise was a positive. The House agreed earlier in calendar year 2013 that they would not use the debt ceiling as leverage over the American economy or leverage over these discussions. That, in an earlier instance, led to America's credit being downgraded, so stepping away from that is positive. In the Senate, we are returning to normal budgetary order under normal timing, and that is a positive step. Both sides have agreed to avoid brinkmanship surrounding government shutdown on March 27 and have worked assiduously to avoid it. This compromise to the fiscal year 2013 CR and the willingness to move forward in a true appropriations approach for the rest of the year in these key government functions is so positive. And the prospects, which I think are very good, of both Houses actually producing budgets on time for the first time in a number of years is also positive.

So while there are real and significant differences, and we will lay those on the table and debate them with vigor over the next few days and weeks, the American public will see this process unfold. They expect us to debate, listen, and find reasonable compromises. We have seen some, just in the last few days—I guess I will conclude and say this: We have seen some recent positive economic news—the jobs report Friday, some of the news about housing, the stock market. There are some positive economic trends that are starting to develop. Congress can accelerate these trends. Congress can accelerate the improvement of the American economy if we keep taking these reasonable steps forward to find a responsible budgetary path. This work on the CR bill to find an appropriations path for the remainder of the year is one of those positive steps, and I applaud the committee leadership for doing so.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Ms. HEITKAMP). The Senator from Maryland.

Ms. MIKULSKI. Madam President, I thank the Senator from Virginia for his comments. He and Senator WARNER are on the other side of the Potomac, and sometimes we are friends, sometimes we are rivals. But it is such a dynamic State. The junior Senator from Virginia knows his State has some of the greatest Federal assets there—the Pentagon, the Central Intelligence Agency. It is a home of vibrant technology. That is why we sometimes come as rivals.

But I want to ask a question of the Senator from Virginia, if the Senator will yield?

Mr. KAINE. I yield.

Ms. MIKULSKI. When we are moving the continuing resolution and he talks about being in the cafeteria and going table to table, which is something I do myself, and I know he enjoys it,—is it his point that we protect the men and women in uniform but the civilian employees, many of whom are veterans, would be at risk?

Mr. KAINE. Absolutely. I am just coming from an armed services hearing, I say to Senator MIKULSKI, where we were talking about that very same thing. The armed services mission, of course, requires that we protect the men and women in uniform. But so many of the DOD civilians are absolutely critical in doing their appropriate jobs. Sixty percent of the staff, for example, our strategic men, STRATCOM, are civilian employees. They are doing some of the most important work that we need done in the country right now around cyber security. The nurses who care for the wounded warriors I visited at Fort Belvoir Hospital, for example, are DOD civilians. So the furloughs that affect, more broadly, the civilian employees should be reason for significant concern.

Again, we are taking a positive step toward addressing some of these issues by embracing the appropriations approach that the Senator has worked on, and we will have an additional ability to take a positive step with respect to the fiscal year 2014 budget.

Ms. MIKULSKI. So just to prove our policy goal here, we cannot have government funding expire. The consequences of a government shutdown would be horrendous. What would it be on the Virginia economy?

Mr. KAINE. I say to the Senator, it is impossible——

Ms. MIKULSKI. Speaking from the old days as a Governor.

Mr. KAINE. It is like the old commercial about the price of various things but some things are priceless. There is no way to estimate it. Just off the top of my head, there have been analyses of the degree to which the Federal budget impacts the economy in each State, and the most recent, done by Bloomberg about 16 months ago, had Virginia as the State most affected by the Federal budget. So the prospect of more brinkmanship around shutdown, which has happened in the past, even if it does not occur, creates great anxiety. But if it were to occur, whether it is the nurses caring for our wounded warriors, whether it is the researchers helping us to figure out how to stay ahead of the cyber attacks that are frankly happening to our Nation every day, or whether it is the shipyard repairers at Newport News Shipyard who manufacture the largest in manufactured items in the world, nuclear aircraft carriers, which should be a story of American pride, who would find their jobs at risk—a shutdown and even the negative consequences of playing out of last year's CR, which is backward-looking rather than forward-looking, are significant. And that is why turning and facing forward is the approach we should take.

Ms. MIKULSKI. I thank the Senator for his insightful and cogent comments. He is a great fighter from Virginia. I look forward to working with the Senator from Virginia—just as I have worked with Senator SHELBY—where there is no brinkmanship, no ultimatums. We just want to get the job done. We need to do our job so other people get to do their job so America keeps rolling.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Alaska.

Mr. BEGICH. Madam President, I would like to speak for 15 minutes on the topic of revenue sharing.

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

Mr. BEGICH. Madam President, I did not come to the floor today to speak on the appropriations and CR, but I want to thank the chairwoman and ranking member for working in a bipartisan way. They are working on finding a solution and an ability to ensure that at the end of the day we can keep this government operating and moving forward, and I thank them for that.

REVENUE SHARING

Mr. BEGICH. Madam President, I rise to take exception with some of my colleagues—and I hate to say this—on my side of the aisle. This subject is very frustrating. I am talking about a letter I reviewed from March 8. It is a letter from the Senate Energy Committee. The letter talks about revenue sharing and offshore oil and gas development and how that Federal revenue should be shared.

When I read this letter, it sounds as if there is some evil monster lurking in the deep, which is far from the truth. It is very frustrating—and I hate to say this—to see some of my fellow Democrats trying to make energy policy without talking to folks who are in the energy-producing States.

Let me make this very clear. I am here to talk about revenue sharing. The letter is laid out as if it is about revenue sharing. After reading the letter, I found out that it is really about opposing offshore oil and gas development of any kind. I come from a State that is heavily invested in this endeavor, and to say revenue sharing is inherently inequitable is somewhat comical. What is inequitable is to drain resources from our energy-producing States without compensating them for the impacts of this needed development.

I introduced legislation 6 weeks ago to make sure Alaskans get their fair share of the resources developed along our coastlines. Our communities are greatly impacted by development. My goal is to share Federal energy resources generated off Alaska's coast with the State and local governments as well as Alaska's Native people. It is just common sense.

My bill not only encourages increased and responsible development of Alaska's energy resource, but it also makes sure our communities benefit directly from oil and gas being produced in our State. The idea is to help State, local, and tribal governments pay for the public sector infrastructure required to develop these resources.

My bill also requires oil produced in the Federal waters of the Chukchi and Beaufort Seas—for those who may not always know where Alaska is, it is not near the coast of California, which every map seems to show. It is up north near Canada and has an enormous amount of resources in the Arctic area, and it is called the Chukchi and Beaufort Seas.

My bill also requires oil produced in the Federal waters of the Chukchi and Beaufort Seas to be brought ashore by pipeline. This is safer than tanker transport and secures a future throughput for the Trans-Alaska Pipeline that feeds this country.

The bill provides Alaska with 37.5 percent of Federal bonus bids and royalty shares from any energy development—fossil or renewable. Let me make this clear: Again, when I first read this letter, they seemed to be outraged by revenue sharing. As I look at it closer, it is really about how they don't like offshore development. As I read it, it says they don't like oil and gas.

Before I got here, this Congress passed revenue sharing for the Gulf States, but they excluded Alaska. Even though Alaska is the farthest away from the lower 48, and it is one of this country's fuel sources, there is no revenue stream at all—period. We have a huge impact with the development of our housing, transportation, water, and sewer. We need to have the capacity so these communities can support this large development.

My bill provides just what the Gulf States get—37.5 percent of the Federal revenues. We are not adding new taxes. We are taking what is collected—- or in the future what would be collected. The 37.5 percent of Federal revenues would be delivered in the following way: 25 percent will go to the local governments; 25 percent will go to the Alaska Native village and regional corporations. In some ways they are similar to the Indian Country in the lower 48 States but different in how they operate. In any event, it will provide services to Alaska Native communities. Ten percent will go directly to tribal governments, and the remaining 40 percent will go to the State of Alaska to deal with the impacts of this.

This bill also requires 15 percent of the Federal share of royalties be directed to the Land and Water Conservation Fund. Why is that important? It is important because that not only touches coastal States, it touches every State. Almost $900 million annually would be directed for the purpose of land and water conservation throughout this country.

Finally, a percentage of the 37.5 percent of the Federal share would be dedicated directly to deficit reduction.

Again, as I read the letter, they make it sound very evil. They make it sound like it is some monster lurking in the waters. This doesn't sound so evil. This is about fairness to our State and any coastal State that develops oil and gas off their shores.

Again, as I read the letter, it is clear that friends and colleagues on my side of the aisle don't get what it means when we have this type of development and what type of infrastructure we have to provide to balance that infrastructure and ensure the people of that State get the resources and the development they need—especially when we extract from our State. People come and extract from our State and use it elsewhere. Our State should be left with some stream of revenue.

They make a point in the letter, which this bill does address, as far as having 37.5 percent of these resources go to the States. The answer to that is simply, yes. Yes, it does. Relying on the Federal Government to determine what is best for these States doesn't always work out so well. We are now finally doing a CR with some modifications, and I am glad we are.

After 4 years of seeing how this place operates, I will put my bet on State, local, and tribal governments to deliver the services we need. If it means that we take money from the Federal Government and give it to these local communities to do the job, I am all for it.

As a former mayor, I know what we can do when we are given the resources

and how we will spend it efficiently and do what is right for the communities we represent.

I appreciate the moment to talk on this issue. It is frustrating to see these letters. The Presiding Officer is from an energy State and knows what it is like when people propose their ideas for their States—and never talk to us about it—or propose what we should be working on. We should have communication.

It is frustrating to have people from my own side of the aisle say we are not sharing our resources with the rest of the country when we do share. It is also frustrating that some of those on my side of the aisle oppose something which makes so much sense. We need to give more control to the local people who are extracting resources from the coastline.

I thank the Presiding Officer for allowing me to speak.

At this time I yield the floor and note the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The bill clerk proceeded to call the roll.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Maryland.

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

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

CONTINUING APPROPRIATIONS

Ms. MIKULSKI. Madam President, shortly we will go to our respective party caucuses. I understand that we are going to be joined by the President of the United States so he may share with us his insights and recommendations to deal with our economy so we can get it going.

I know one of the issues that often comes up is the so-called entitlement reform. This is not the subject we are dealing with on the Appropriations Committee, but I would like to talk briefly about how we do impact the funding of Social Security, Medicare, and Medicaid.

I would like to take a minute to talk about Medicaid. I want to talk about what Medicaid funds. Remember, Medicaid, by and large, is not in our Appropriations Committee. Medicaid is not in our Appropriations Committee, but the people who work for Medicaid are. And that is a different topic.

I want everybody to understand Medicaid because it is a subject of great debate—and often a prickly debate. Eighty percent of the beneficiaries on Medicaid are children. Usually they are children of the working poor. It helps them to get the health care they need for the early detection of hearing problems. It may also be for a child with diabetes the family is concerned about.

Although 80 percent of the beneficiaries are children, 80 percent of the money goes to seniors or people in nursing homes or assisted-living homes due to some form of neurological or cognitive impediment.

Now, I don't want to sound like an MD, I don't even have a Ph.D, but from talking to my constituents, I do know 80 percent of those in long-term care facilities are often there due to something related to dementia, such as Alzheimer's or a neurological impediment such as Parkinson's.

Let's talk about NIH—and, remember, NIH does funding at the Bethesda campus in Maryland, and it also gives grants to brilliant researchers who are usually working in academic centers of excellence. Those centers could be Johns Hopkins or the University of Maryland or the University of Alabama or Kentucky. Those grants are competitive and peer-reviewed.

Let me get to the point I am trying to make. By funding NIH and the National Institutes of Aging, we are on a breakthrough trajectory for finding the cognitive stretch-out for Alzheimer's.

I have been on this for more than 20 years because my dear father, who ensured my education and looked out for me all the way through raising me as a young lady, died of the consequences of Alzheimer's. Alzheimer's is an equal opportunity catastrophe for the high and mighty and for the ordinary. Our own endearing President Ronald Reagan died of the consequences of Alzheimer's, as did my father, ordinary people, men and women who helped build America.

So we need to make public investments in research to find the cure for Alzheimer's and, if not a cure, cognitive stretchout. What do I mean by cognitive stretchout? It means if we have early detection, new tools, new MRI technology, new ways of identifying it early on, what could we do to prevent memory loss? If we could do it in 3 to 5 years, we would reduce the cost of Medicaid spending. If we find a cure for Alzheimer's alone—and I am not even talking about Lou Gehrig's disease or Parkinson's—we could reduce the Medicaid budget by 50 percent—5–0.

Nancy Reagan has spoken about it. Sandra Day O'Connor has spoken about it. BARB MIKULSKI is speaking about it. Most of all, America speaks, through the Alzheimer's Association and other groups. They march for the cure. They march for the stretchout. In that one area alone, we could have a dramatic impact on the lives of American families and on the future of Federal spending in Medicaid. It would meet a compelling human need. When a person has Alzheimer's, the whole family has Alzheimer's. I remember my dear mother, as my father became more and more lost in his memory, had to work a 36-hour day, as the family did as well, looking out for him. We were more than willing to do it.

I was born in the 1930s. I was a school girl in the 1940s and 1950s. There wasn't much talk about educating girls. But not from my father. I have two wonderful sisters. My father wanted his girls to have an education. He felt that by giving us an education, he could give us something nobody would ever take away from us so we would be ready for whatever life sent us.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The majority time has expired.

Ms. MIKULSKI. I ask unanimous consent for 3 additional minutes.

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

Mr. GRAHAM. I have no objection but——

Ms. MIKULSKI. Oh, I am sorry. I didn't realize——

Mr. GRAHAM. No objection, I just need about 7 or 8 minutes.

Ms. MIKULSKI. Let me just finish this, if I might. I need just 2 minutes. I didn't realize the Senator from South Carolina was on the floor.

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

Ms. MIKULSKI. I just want to make this point. My mother and father saw to my education. My father's business burned down when I was a senior in high school. My mother moved Heaven and Earth for me to go to college. When my father was stricken with the consequences of Alzheimer's, I was determined to move Heaven and Earth to help him. There was little help available.

It is not just about my father. It is about mothers and fathers everywhere. Let's spend the money where the people want us to spend it. Let's meet a compelling human need now and do the research we need to do to help those families and help the Federal budget in the future.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from South Carolina.

ENEMY COMBATANTS

Mr. GRAHAM. Madam President, I wish to bring the body's attention to a recent decision by the Obama administration to place the son-in-law of Osama bin Laden, Mr. Abu Ghaith—I think I am pronouncing the name correctly—into Federal district court in New York charged with conspiracy to kill American citizens. He has been presented to our criminal justice system. He is, in my view, the classic example of an enemy combatant.

I will be, along with Senator AYOTTE, writing the Attorney General asking for a rundown of how long he was interrogated before he was read his Miranda rights. I believe this is a classic example of a person of great intelligence value who should have been held as an enemy combatant at Guantanamo Bay for intelligence-gathering purposes as long as it took to get good intelligence. He, in my view, is a treasure trove of information about not only al-Qaida but maybe things going on in Iran. There is an allegation of his being held in Iran for a very long time as their houseguest, for lack of a better word.

I fear greatly we are beginning to go back to the criminal justice model that

preceded 9/11. The first time the World Trade Center was attacked, we had the Blind Sheik case and the prosecutors did a wonderful job of prosecuting the Blind Sheik and his conspirators in Federal court. But everybody at that time treated al-Qaida and terrorism as a criminal threat.

After 9/11, we changed our model. The attacks of 9/11 were viewed as an act of war and we authorized military force to go after al-Qaida and affiliates by allowing us to use the law of war model regarding al-Qaida operatives. From 9/11 forward, we can now hold them as enemy combatants.

Under the law of war—I have been a military lawyer for 30 years—there is no Miranda right component. If a person is captured as an enemy prisoner, he or she is not read their rights or provided a lawyer. When a commander hears we have a highly valued member of the enemy in our custody, the first thing the commander wants to know is what intelligence have we gathered. The last thing on the commander's mind is where we are going to prosecute them.

So when we are fighting a war, the purpose of interrogating an enemy prisoner is to find out information about enemy activity so we can win the war and protect our troops. In criminal law, the purpose is to convict somebody for a crime. Under criminal law—domestic criminal law—we cannot hold someone for interrogation purposes. We can't ask them about what they have been up to, what they know, and I don't suggest we should. They are entitled to a lawyer and Miranda rights and that is the way it should be.

But we are fighting a war, at least in my view we are fighting a war. I wish to remind the Nation—I doubt if we need a whole lot of reminding but every now and then apparently we do—this is the Twin Towers on fire, beginning to crumble from an attack on 9/11. This is the Pentagon, the damage done to the Pentagon, and 300 people lost their lives there, and this is the Shanksville, PA, site of Flight 93.

To those who suggest we are not in a war, I could not disagree more. I would say the single biggest loss of life in the war on terror was the first day; the very first day the war began, September 11, 2001. Do my colleagues remember where they were? Do they remember their reaction? The first three battles in this war cost us the most lives of any day in the war. We have lost a lot of soldiers, and our hearts go out to them, but there has never been a day when Americans bled more than 9/11 itself.

There are three battlefields in this war: New York, over 2,000 people killed; the Pentagon, around 300 killed; Shanksville, PA, the entire membership of that airplane was killed. To the people of flight 93: You fought back. You weren't fighting against a bunch of criminals. You fought back against a bunch of terrorists who were trying to take the last airplane and crash it into this building or some other building in Washington. To those who died on that flight, you are the first line of defense. You, above all others, were the first ones to fight back. I will not let your fight go unnoticed. You were not fighting a bunch of criminals. You were fighting people who are at war with us.

I wish we had understood in 1998 we were at war and not used a criminal model. If we had kept the Blind Sheik in military custody, interrogated him for a very long time, lawfully and humanely—because I believe that as a military lawyer—maybe we could have gotten information that would have prevented 9/11.

Here is why I am so upset. The person in custody in New York is the son-in-law of Osama bin Laden. Again, I remind my colleagues, this is the bloodiest day in the war on terror. These are three battlefields that cost us 2,900 lives. Over 2,900 American citizens died on the first day of the war.

Now, years later, we are still capturing people. The person we captured—and I congratulate all those who were involved in bringing this man into our custody. This person over here to the left sitting by Osama bin Laden is his son-in-law. He left Kuwait in 2000 and went to Afghanistan. He pledged allegiance to bin Laden. He was the spokesperson for al-Qaida. He was one of the key guys trying to get other people to pledge allegiance to al-Qaida and bin Laden.

So in 2000 he went to Afghanistan and he joined with bin Laden and became his son-in-law. He founded a charity that was used to support terrorist organizations.

On 9/11, after the attacks, he was one of the first people to speak and to glorify the attacks about how they attacked our homeland. I will get that quote later; I don't have it with me. He said: My brothers, we finally hit the homeland. We finally hit them in the heart of where they live.

On October 10 in a video he said: Americans should know the storm of planes will not stop. There are thousands of the Islamic nation's youth who are eager to die, just as the Americans are eager to live.

All I can say is if this man was interrogated by our intelligence officials and the FBI for hours, not days, before he was read his Miranda rights—under the law of war, we have the opportunity available to us to hold them indefinitely as a prisoner, an enemy combatant, a member of the enemy force, and to lawfully interrogate him without a lawyer, without reading him his Miranda rights because we are trying to gather intelligence and make sure we can prevent future attacks and to find out what this vicious enemy is up to. We did not take that opportunity.

This administration is refusing to use Guantanamo Bay, one of the best military jails in the history of the world—very transparent, well run, and it is the place he should be today, not in New York City awaiting trial in Federal court.

It is not about Federal court not being available in the war on terror. Article III courts have done a good job in many cases of prosecuting terrorists but so have military commission tribunals at Guantanamo Bay, where KSM, the architect of 9/11, is being prosecuted under the Military Commissions Act.

My complaint is that this man was, within hours, read his Miranda rights and given a lawyer and cut off the ability of our government to find out what he knew about the war on terror, current operations, and future operations. He should have been at Guantanamo Bay, interrogated by our military for as long as it took to find out what he knew. If the administration is telling me we got all we needed from this man in 1 day, they are offending my intelligence. I have been a military lawyer for 30 years. I understand what is going on at Guantanamo Bay, the information we have received over years. In some cases, it took months, if not years, to get the total picture of what a detainee knew. So if the administration is telling me and the American public the time they had with this man before they read him his Miranda rights was enough, then they are offending my intelligence.

They are making a huge mistake. The decision not to treat him as an enemy combatant and putting him at Guantanamo Bay for interrogation purposes under the law of the war is one of the most serious mistakes we have made since 9/11. We are beginning to criminalize the war.

This was not an intelligence decision or a military decision; it was a political decision, because they will never convince me or almost anybody else in America that interrogating him for hours was enough. The reason he was interrogated for hours and not days is that they did not want to take him to Guantanamo Bay. The reason he was read his Miranda rights is they are pushing everybody back into the criminal justice system.

All I can say is that Guantanamo Bay has been reformed. It should be the place we take people such as he, as an enemy combatant, to be interrogated under the law of war, and we are using the criminal justice model in a way that will come back to haunt our Nation. We are beginning to criminalize the war. I want my colleagues to know we are going down a very dangerous path, and I will do everything in my power to get this administration and future administrations back in the game when it comes to fighting a war because I believe very much, I say to my colleagues, that we are in a state of war with an enemy who does not wear a uniform, who has no capital to conquer, no Air Force to shoot down, and no Navy to sink. The only thing between them and us is our brave men and women in the military and good information. This man was interrogated for hours when he should have been interrogated for months.

We are beginning to do what got us into this mess to begin with, looking at al-Qaida as a group of common criminal thugs rather than the warriors they are. These people right here mean to kill us all. They are at war with us. I intend to be at war with them.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Delaware.

POULTRY INDUSTRY

Mr. COONS. Madam President, seeing the press of business here, I will be brief. I wanted to take the opportunity to rise and simply speak to the importance of the poultry industry, something that spreads across the Delmarva Peninsula and is central to the State of Maryland, State of Delaware, and many other States in our country.

With the sequester having kicked in, many of us who are from States that have livestock or poultry processing are aware of the impending and significant negative impact on our home States and our economies, on people's employment, and on their opportunity to continue to support their families. So I wanted to briefly speak in support of what I know are Senator MIKULSKI's tireless efforts to ensure that the 6,200 meat and poultry processing plants in this country do not get needlessly shut down.

In the last quarter of the last calendar year alone, 2.2 billion chickens and turkeys were inspected by the meat inspectors of the Food Safety and Inspection Service. This poultry industry, which is nationwide, provides vital employment to the people of Delaware, Maryland, and many other States.

Secretary Vilsack of the U.S. Department of Agriculture estimates that furloughs, if implemented, of these safety inspectors could cost $10 billion a year in losses and $400 million a year in lost wages just for those directly employed.

The private sector grows and the private sector has opportunity when Federal inspectors are a part of the total ecosystem of poultry in this country. We raise great turkeys, we raise great chickens in this country. We have the world's leading poultry industry, but the Food Safety and Inspection Service is a vital part of it.

I commend Senator MIKULSKI for her tireless effort to make sure we find some responsible way through the sequester to ensure it does not needlessly harm and put out of work the tens of thousands of Delawareans and Marylanders who rely on this vital industry for their opportunities going forward.

Madam President, I yield the floor.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

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

DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE, MILITARY CONSTRUCTION AND VETERANS AFFAIRS, AND FULL-YEAR CONTINUING APPROPRIATIONS ACT, 2013—MOTION TO PROCEED

Mr. REID. Madam President, I now move to proceed to Calendar No. 21, H.R. 933.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report the motion.

The legislative clerk read as follows:

Motion to proceed to Calendar No. 21, H.R. 933, a bill making appropriations for the Department of Defense, the Department of Veterans Affairs, and other departments and agencies for the fiscal year ending September 30, 2013, and for other purposes.

Mr. REID. Madam President, we expect to adopt the motion to proceed to this bill this afternoon and start on the amendment process. I have spoken to the Chair and the ranking member of this committee, and we are anxious to move forward and start doing some legislating.

As I said this morning when I opened the Senate, this is exemplary, the work done with the two managers of this bill, and we need to make sure we move forward on it. It would be good if we would have amendments that would be in some way germane and relevant to what we are doing, but we are going to take all amendments and try to work through them as quickly as we can. I hope people would agree to very short time agreements. I would hope we do not need to table the amendments. I hope we can move forward and set up votes on every one of them.

RECESS

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the Senate shall stand in recess until 2:30 p.m.

Thereupon, the Senate, at 12:33 p.m., recessed until 2:30 p.m. and reassembled when called to order by the Presiding Officer (Ms. BALDWIN).

DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE, MILITARY CONSTRUCTION AND VETERANS AFFAIRS, AND FULL-YEAR CONTINUING APPROPRIATIONS ACT, 2013—MOTION TO PROCEED—Continued

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Louisiana.

Ms. LANDRIEU. Madam President, as we begin our work this afternoon, I wished to come to the floor to make a few comments about the Homeland Security appropriations bill which is now going to be included in the amendment offered by Senator MIKULSKI and Senator SHELBY as part of an appropriations bill coming over from the House. This is such an important step forward, not just for the government but for the private sector jobs which depend on reliable, transparent, and appropriate government spending, for the whole country. We have been in gridlock and stopped on our funding bills for months now. We have not been talking about what makes Americans happy and prosperous—smart investments in their future and their interests.

We have been fighting about appropriations bills. That fight, hopefully, is coming to an end because of the extraordinary leadership of the Senator from Maryland, Senator MIKULSKI, the senior Senator from Maryland, and the newly minted—not new to the committee, a true veteran of the Appropriations Committee—chairwoman of our committee. She is in an able partnership with Senator SHELBY of Alabama, a longstanding appropriator who understands practical politics and compromise is necessary to move anything of importance through this body. I can't thank them and their staffs enough for salvaging several of these important bills.

They weren't able to come to an agreement on everything. I and others are still troubled we will not see much progress in the areas of education and health, as much as we would like, but that is for another day. We are going to move forward on the sections we may move forward together. One of those areas is funding for homeland security, which is a pretty big bill by Federal Government standards. It is not the largest, it is not the smallest, it is $42 billion. That is not chump change. It is a significant amount of money the taxpayers provide to us to make decisions about their security. It funds everything from Border Patrol and protection to Customs and Immigration.

It funds the Coast Guard, which is a very important part of our operations. We feel that directly as a coastal State in Louisiana and are very familiar with the needs of coastal communities. The Coast Guard is always there.

It funds a number of other entities. I do not want to fail to mention cyber security, which is one of the newest, most frightening threats to our country. This threat didn't even exist 20 years ago. You may see the ever-evolving capacity of people who would do us harm: not just governments that don't like the United States, not just groups that don't like the United States, but individuals who have some bone, some beef, some anger, and may actually act out in unbelievable ways through the Internet by attacking sensitive material and data.

This is not just an attack to the government functions of our country, but we have seen any number of attacks on our private infrastructure. This is so critical to our existence, whether it is our water systems, our financial systems, our utility systems, our electricity systems. I could go on and on.

This is a very important responsibility for the Federal Government to step up and figure out, working with the Department of Defense, Department of Commerce, and the Department of Homeland Security, which I chair. This is no insignificant matter.

On the contrary, it is not only important for us to have the right money but

invest it in the right places. We are trying very hard to do that. This is why it would have been very dangerous, in my view, to have this bill stuck. We would be funding last year's priorities, not being able to account for all the new intelligence which has come in over the last 12 months. This is an evolving, ever-growing, ever-changing threat. We would have been spending taxpayer money funding last year's threats, not tomorrow's threats.

This is why BARBARA MIKULSKI, the chair of our committee, fought so hard to say we must move some of these appropriations bills forward to ensure appropriate funding and not wasting the taxpayer money. She was right. She was able to negotiate with Senator SHELBY a yes—not a no, not a maybe but a yes—for the homeland security bill, and I could not be a happier chairman.

I also want to thank Senator COATS, who is my able ranking member from Indiana. He worked hand-in-glove with me to put this bill together. Our staffs worked very closely together. We had a few minor disagreements and views. We were able to work them out and work through it, obviously. This bill is here with his signature and mine on it. We were able to negotiate in very good faith with our House counterparts, and I want to thank them.

Chairman MIKULSKI says the four corners have signed off on our appropriations bill, both in the House and the Senate, the Republicans and the Democrats. It took some give and take, but that is what we need to do.

I want to highlight a few areas in the bill people have been very interested in. First, the bill includes total discretionary spending of $39.6 billion. As I said, $42 billion was what it was a few years ago. Like every committee, we have taken a cut, we have taken a reduction. Contrary to what you might hear, we are tightening our belts and we are cutting into some muscle. We are cutting into some bone. It is not easy, but it is necessary.

However, there is a point where you can't keep cutting or you won't be able to provide the security in the phrase homeland security. It will just be homeland. There won't be a big security piece around us because we have chopped it up. When people who want to harm this country discover this, they will find the weakness.

I am not trying to scare up additional funding, but I am speaking the truth. Do you want to secure a border? You may talk about it or you may actually build one. If you want a strong Customs agency, which moves people through quickly but ensures no bad things come into our country, you need to fund it. This does not happen on a wish and a prayer.

We have a flat budget. We have reorganized to accommodate what Senator COATS and I believe are the priorities for the Members here representing the people. The Coast Guard, cyber security, border security, travel facilitation I will return to in a moment.

For the Coast Guard, the bill includes $9 billion in discretionary spending, which is $400 million above the President's request. We have cut out some other things, but those of us on the committee believe the Coast Guard is important. The Coast Guard is on the front line for drug interdiction, which I don't have to explain to people. It is not classified information that now we have drug kingpins owning submarines which bring drugs into the United States. People read about this. It is true. It is not science fiction. We need to make certain the Coast Guard has access to stop drugs from coming into our country in smart, aggressive ways, working in partnership with other governments.

I don't have to remind everyone about the oilspill, the terrible accident. That trial is still going on in New Orleans as I speak, with hundreds of lawyers still debating the worst oilspill in the history of the country. Who showed up? The Coast Guard. They have to have all sorts of equipment to be able to respond for drug interdiction, which is different than an oilspill cleanup; and, of course, people are rescued literally every day by the brave men and women of the Coast Guard who risk their lives to keep our commerce and our recreational boating moving throughout this Nation.

We have $557 million for production of the sixth national security cutter. Let me say something about this that people don't understand. I see my good friend DICK SHELBY, and he most certainly understands this as a Senator from Alabama, but I want people who are not on our Appropriations Committee to understand something. When most people in America buy a big item, such as a house or even when they send their kids to college, they finance that. They take that big hit, such as a $40,000 loan to send their child to college for 1 year or $120,000 or $160,000 for 4 years, if they are going to a very fancy, expensive school. Happily, for some of us, at LSU we get a great bargain and a great education for $10,000. But for some families even $10,000 for 4 years is a lot of money. They do not pay cash for that. They finance that. The Senator from Alabama knows this.

Under the rules in Washington, we cannot finance most things. People don't understand this. We have to pay cash. So because we need that national security cutter, I had to find $557 million in our budget to pay for it this year, even though it takes a long time to build it.

I think this should be changed. Senator Snowe, who was the chair of this Committee on Defense, Navy, for many years, thought it needed to be changed, but it has not changed as yet. I want people to know the pressures we are under in this bill, because sometimes when we have to fund these big items in one year, basically, we have to pay cash.

Now, yes, ultimately this money is being borrowed through the general fund—and I don't want to get into a technical argument—but as far as we are concerned, we are paying cash for it in our budget—$557 million this year for the national security cutter.

We are also funding $77 million for long lead time, $335 million for six new fast response cutters, $90 million for a new C–130 J aircraft, and I have invested, at my priority, $10 million for military housing for the Coast Guard.

The Army, the Navy, the Air Force have been upgrading their housing. The poor Coast Guard, because they are smaller and they are more isolated, is not in areas where we can take advantage of that public-private partnership that is working so well. I think our Coast Guard families need some support, and I was able to find some funding there for them.

I don't need to take much more time. I don't know if the Senator from Alabama is here to speak, but I will take 5 more minutes, and if he needs me to cease, I will.

But I want to also point out that we put some investments in the bill to address the cyber threat, which the President has described, and I agree with him, as one of the most serious economic and national security challenges we face as a nation. This bill includes $757 million, which is $313 million above last year, and I was happy to do that. I think this is a priority. We have moved other items around in the budget because this is a real threat, it is evolving every day, and we have to have the research and technology to address it and work with the private sector to see what we can do to keep their network safe and our government strong.

The bill includes $7 billion for the Disaster Relief Fund. This was also a battle we fought. The money is in there for Sandy, for Isaac, for Irene, for Ike, for Gustav, for Rita and Katrina and there are a few other storms that are, even after 6 or 7 years, still open. So this is money there for them to finish their recovery.

In science and technology, the bill includes $835 million, a 25-percent increase. I want to say one other thing, and I think Senator SHELBY will agree with me, that people don't understand how important it is that the Federal Government invests in research and development. Yes, private companies do invest in research and development, but some of the investment we do is truly so farfetched that no one in their right mind would invest in it because there is no immediate return. Yet we have seen, time and time again, when the Federal Government steps up and makes those long-term investments in research, what happens—something is discovered. The Internet was a good example of research through the Department of Defense, and I could give other examples. But soon enough, the private sector realizes, oh my gosh, this research is breakthrough—such as that which came from our research in health on our DNA and all the new and exciting technologies in health.

I can tell you our State is benefiting a great deal from the research done 20 years ago on fracking. That wasn't done by Exxon or Mobil, it was done by the Federal labs out West because of research money in one of our bills. I am not sure which bill it was, but potentially in energy, and that is what is leading to the revolution in natural gas. As to this baloney that the Federal Government doesn't have to invest in research and technology, we do it in partnership with the private sector, and it is the best system in the world. We would be shortchanging ourselves and our future economic growth if we didn't continue it.

Finally, just one more word about another priority. I have put some additional funding by moving some things around for Customs and Immigration and for TSA. I am not the only Senator who represents a State that depends, in large part, on the hospitality tourism and trade. I could list many States in our country that do as well, but let me tell you about Louisiana. We believe in hospitality. We believe it is a good business. We enjoy having people come to our State. They come, and we all have a great deal of fun and excitement with our festivals and our fairs. But at the end of the day, we make money and we create jobs and it is an important industry. I am alarmed at the fallout of international travel to the United States since 9/11. It has only increased by about 1 percent.

To put that into perspective—and I believe this number is correct, but I will check it for the record—as the Senator from Alabama knows, international travel in the world has increased by something like 400 percent. So people are going to China, they are going to Korea. There is a growing middle class, and what middle-class people do, besides buy homes and send their kids to school, is travel. It is a middle-class thing. We now have more middle-class people in the world than ever, but they are not coming to the United States because we are not investing in the kinds of infrastructure in our airports and ports that provide a safe but pleasant environment. So I am working very closely with the International Travel Association—and I want to thank them publicly for the work they are doing—because I am one Senator who believes in this. I think the President has also said that international travel means jobs for Americans right here at home. It is something they cannot transport.

For border security, the bill maintains the legislatively mandated staffing floor of 21,370 border patrol agents and provides $76 million above the request for Border Patrol staffing within customs and border protection.

Similarly, the bill provides $240 million above the request for maintaining current staffing levels of frontline CBP officers at our land, air, and sea ports of entry. The fiscal year 2013 budget request for CBP submitted to Congress over 1 year ago resulted in an overall funding shortfall of more than $320 million. This bill fills the vast majority of that shortfall through internal savings and reductions in other, lower priority areas. CBP will continue to face challenges in meeting its staffing requirements and I am committed to helping this important agency fulfill its critical missions.

The bill includes $1.46 billion for first responders grants, an increase of $200 million above fiscal year 2012. These grants ensure our frontline responders are trained and equipped for catastrophic disasters. Recent examples of grant investments that supported disaster response are: communications assets, search and rescue units, generators, and medical equipment used during the 2011 tornadoes in Arkansas, Alabama, and Missouri; joint operations centers, rescue boats, and hazardous materials equipment used during Hurricane Sandy in New York, New Jersey, and Connecticut; and cutting-edge mobile vehicle radios and an upgraded 911 call center used during Hurricane Sandy in Maryland.

While the response to more frequent severe disasters has improved, the funding in this bill will help address remaining gaps in preparedness. For instance, the recent National Preparedness Report found that State and local governments are less than halfway to achieving needed recovery capabilities and defending against the growing cybersecurity threat.

Finally, in an effort to maximize resources for frontline missions, the bill approves the request to eliminate $800 million in administrative costs and rescinds $307 million in unobligated balances associated with low-priority programs. The bill also requires 30 expenditure plans to ensure oversight of taxpayer dollars.

I would like to conclude by emphasizing my concern with the impact sequester will have on the Department of Homeland Security. Despite the smart investments that are made in this bill, the problem of sequester remains.

The Secretary of Homeland Security has testified before the Appropriations Committee that these automatic budget reductions will be disruptive and destructive to our Nation's security and economy.

At our busiest airports, peak wait times could grow to over 4 hours or more during the summer travel season. Such delays would affect air travel significantly, potentially causing thousands of passengers to miss flights with economic consequences at the local, national, and international levels. New flights that bring in hundreds of millions of dollars to the U.S. economy would be delayed or potentially denied due to reduced staffing.

Sequestration will also impact our Nation's land borders. For example, daily peak wait times at the El Paso Bridge of the Americas could increase from 1 hour to over 3 hours.

The Coast Guard will have to reduce operations by up to 25 percent impacting drug and migrant interdiction efforts.

The sequester will impact our ability to detect and analyze emerging cyber threats and protect civilian federal computer networks, and

FEMA will delay implementing critical reforms to improve disaster response and recovery.

The Border Patrol workforce could be reduced by 5,000.

I urge Senators to work together on a bipartisan basis to repeal this ill-conceived sequester and approve legislation that includes balanced deficit reduction.

I again want to thank the chairwoman of the Appropriations Committee, Senator MIKULSKI; the vice chair, Senator SHELBY; and the ranking member on the Homeland Security Subcommittee, Senator COATS for their hard work in including the Homeland Security Appropriations Bill for fiscal year 2013 in this essential legislation to fund the Federal Government.

I am very happy to speak about this bill, but I do see the leaders are on the floor—the chairman and the ranking member—and I want to personally thank them both for bringing our appropriations bills to the floor. I have spoken about homeland security, but there are other bills that need to be talked about this afternoon. I am happy we could work out this agreement with my Republican counterparts, and, again, I thank the chairman and the ranking member for their extraordinary leadership.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Alabama.

Mr. SHELBY. Madam President, I just want to follow up on some of the comments the Senator from Louisiana has made—very positive comments about research and the role of the Federal Government in all aspects of research. She is a very hard-working member of the Appropriations Committee and she has been involved in a lot of this.

Whether it is research on health issues—the National Institutes of Health on cancer or you name it—information technology, energy, which the Senator from Louisiana referenced—there are so many good things that come out of this, and I believe, overall, the Senate and the House, on both sides of the aisle, realized this. But with all the breakthroughs in information technology we have had, we have only to go back to the research and development the Federal Government did that basically brought us our Internet to realize that didn't just happen. It was built over many years, with many ideas and research. Look at it today. We have all benefited from this overall.

There are threats to this information technology, in everything we use today dealing with energy; for example, our power grid, because a lot of that, as we all know, is computer driven and operated, our banking system's information technology, our military, our traffic

control systems we rely on every day, and I am sure our trains and other vehicles we run. There are threats to this today. A lot of us know it as cyber security threats, and they are real.

So as we do research in this area, as we continue our research, we cannot forget that. That is a job we all have to work together on, and I believe, on the Appropriations Committee, this is a good start today for challenges in our future to the security of our information systems—our grid, our banking system, our Federal Reserve, and I can go on and on because it affects everything in our everyday life, and we shouldn't forget it.

I think we are off to a good start today. Senator MIKULSKI, the chair of the committee, and I believe this is the first time in a few years we have come to the floor trying to work together on appropriations, and we are determined to make this regular order work. I believe the majority of the Senators on my side of the aisle—the Republicans—and those on the Democratic side of the aisle will, in a few days, bring this to a head and we will do something good for the American people and bring forth some certainty and some good legislation.

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

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

Ms. MIKULSKI. Mr. President, other Senators on the Appropriations Committee—and all are welcome to come and comment, but those on the Appropriations Committee actually assigned to do the work will be coming throughout the afternoon to actually describe the content of the bill. I would like to talk about the content.

We on Appropriations have 12 subcommittees. Of those 12 subcommittees, each has a chair and a ranking member from the other party. The reason I am telling you this is to describe what it takes to do a bill.

So through all of last week, after we got the guidance of our caucus, the guidance of the authorizing committee, the guidance from the leadership, we began to put a bill together. It is not easy. My own staff and Senator SHELBY's staff worked through that first snowstorm we had, took computers home and worked all day and through the evening. I was back and forth. We wanted to make sure there was no fog in our bill. And then out of that the subcommittees gave recommendations.

The reason I say that is that took us to Thursday. We didn't complete, from our end, the framework and substance of the bill until Saturday. That means me, the Democratic majority—the majority party has the responsibility of putting the bill together, but this is not a one-woman show here. So after we did, we gave it to our counterparts, who have been in consultation on broad principles, negotiations between the subcommittees, consultation with the authorizing committees on policy, where we are heading.

Then when we got it to Senator SHELBY and his staff, they had to exercise their due diligence. We wanted them to do the due diligence. We wanted them to look through every aspect of that bill to make sure with our word of honor, which we have had together for more than 25 years, that there were no hidden agreements, that there were no surprises parachuted in that if we woke up, neither would be happy about.

I must compliment Senator SHELBY and his staff. They worked through the weekend doing every line item to make sure, when they gave Senator MCCONNELL and the Republican caucus their best assessment, they had a chance to look at every single line item, and they sure did it, and they worked hard.

So there are those who would say: We would have liked to have had the bill sooner. We would have liked to have been able to get the bill sooner. But we are talking about the funding for the entire United States of America. That is a lot of lines and that is a lot of items that had to be gone through methodically, diligently, and meticulously, and we moved as expeditiously as we could.

So we then had our bill, and I really wanted to share it with the House. I think we have been working with the House in a very constructive way, communicating, but it took until very late yesterday afternoon for us to complete our process as members of the Appropriations Committee.

I would have really loved getting this bill to the floor and filing this bill sooner, but in order to do it right, and not only the right content but the right way, to make sure the appropriate committees were able to exercise their due diligence, their vigilance, their scrutiny, we now present a bill to the entire Senate.

So I hope we can move forward on our legislation. We want Members to take a look at it. We hope we can work on amendments this afternoon. I hope we have permission to go to our bill. We have two great amendments lined up—different philosophies, but that is what it is.

I talked to Senator AYOTTE on the floor a couple of weeks ago during sequester. Bring up the amendments. We have an amendment by Senator HARKIN on the Labor-HHS content, and we have an amendment to be offered on President Obama's health care bill. There is a Senator who would like to have the full Senate decide whether we should defund it. This is an important national debate. Let it come on out. The only way we can get to that is by letting us go to the bill.

We have an arcane procedure in the Senate called a motion to proceed. In order to be able to vote, we have to get permission to proceed. I want to get to amendments. I want to have a real debate on real issues. Where are we on Labor-HHS? What is the Senate's full view on the funding of ObamaCare? Let's get out there, and instead of fussing over procedure, let's get to real content. Let's talk about the real issues around funding and what we should be doing to pass the continuing resolution to keep America's funding going but where the majority rules and we have our bill.

So let's get to the situation where we can move through the bill, where we can offer amendments. Regardless of how you feel about amendments, we all feel Senators have the right to offer amendments. Let's get to it. Let's get the job done. Let's show we can function as the greatest parliamentary body in the world.

Mr. President, I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The majority leader.

Mr. REID. Mr. President, I am somewhat amazed and stunned. You would think that someone who is given an answer to the question—yes—should pretty much be satisfied.

We have been trying to keep the government from shutting down. I appreciate the work done by the Speaker. I didn't agree with his bill, but I appreciate what he did, and he did it in a timely fashion.

The chairwoman of the Appropriations Committee, Senator MIKULSKI, has been negotiating with her Republican counterpart, RICHARD SHELBY, for days now. They worked all weekend, late into Sunday night, and they worked out a bipartisan agreement. They offered the amendment here. Now we hear from a couple of Senators: Let's not take up the bill. They need more time.

I thought people wanted to have an open amendment process on this bill. Offer amendments. Now it appears that the day is gone. I guess we won't be able to offer amendments today. I have said all along that we would turn to it as soon as possible. Our Republican colleagues said they want to see the first amendment that was to be offered. They saw that. They were originally given to certain people in the leadership office on Saturday about noon, and there has been every effort to work together on this matter. They wanted to see the first amendment that will be offered. I have indicated that was done; they saw it. There were negotiations to get to where that is. But now Senators want to prevent us from going to the bill. Remember, if I file cloture today, the earliest we can have the vote is Thursday.

We are going to finish this CR, and we are going to finish the budget before there will be an Easter recess. That is a fact. So everyone should understand that delaying on this—because they want to read the bill more deeply, I guess—doesn't really make a lot of sense.

We are going to do the budget resolution. I have made that clear, and I emphasize that now. And the Republicans have been talking about—even though it is basically without foundation—that we haven't had a budget resolution. We haven't needed one. We had one that was not a resolution, it was a law that set the standards for what we would do with our budget. It set ceilings on how much we would spend. As a result of that, we were able to get the funding for our subcommittees and appropriations. But they want a budget resolution, which isn't as good as law, and we are going to do everything we can to get that done.

So if Republicans object to allowing the Senate to be in consideration of a bill negotiated with Republicans, then the only people who will be disadvantaged are other Republicans who want to be able to offer amendments.

So I regret that again we have come to this. Just when you think it can't get worse, it gets worse. There are things we have to do. The CR is one of those. If it means cutting into the April recess—we have 2 weeks to do a lot of things people have planned for some time—then that is what we will need to do. But I am stunned.

I learned about this when we had the President at our caucus. I really am flabbergasted that here we are on the eve of doing something together, regular order, but regular order around here is stopping every bill from going on the floor. That is what the regular order is here. I thought we had some kind of an agreement at the beginning of this Congress that this wasn't going to go on anymore. We had that 2 years ago. We changed the rules here a little bit.

There is going to be tremendous angst within my caucus and I think the country to continue trying to legislate with the burdens that we bear, that just one or two people do everything they can to throw a monkey wrench into everything we do. As a country, we are being looked at as being inoperable. It is too bad. It is not good for this institution, and it is really not good for the country.

Mr. SHELBY. Mr. President, 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.

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

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

Ms. MIKULSKI. Mr. President, if people are watching us on C–SPAN—and they do, in our own country and around the world—they will say: Well, it is Tuesday afternoon, 3:30. What is happening in the Senate? We see two Senators—able, seasoned, experienced. Where is the debate? Where are the amendments? Where is the clash of ideas in an open and public forum on what is best?

We are not doing that because we have arcane rules that Senators can put what they call a hold on a bill so we cannot proceed. In the old days that was a good idea; you placed a hold. This goes back to stagecoach days. You are an Indiana man, you understand that, I say to the Chair respectfully. But it was so you could get back. You would put a hold on a bill if you believed I offered legislation that could hurt Indiana, and in your stagecoach you could dash back here.

We don't have stagecoaches anymore. In fact, we are all right here. I would like to be able to move this bill. There are those Senators who want more time. They could actually be looking at the bill if they would let us go this afternoon, because we have two amendments that would take us to 5 or 6—well, gosh now—until this evening. But we would get two amendments done on two pretty big topics, one of which should be, are we or are we not going to fund the President's health care initiative?

We need to move this bill. What is it that Senator SHELBY and I are trying to do? We are trying to pass a continuing resolution to fully fund the Federal Government with the scrutiny and oversight of the Congress by October 1. Right now we have the CR, as it is called, the funding. The continued funding expires March 27. Some people might say that is 15 days from now. Not really because we have to pass our bill, we have to go to the House, and then we have to have a bill signed by the President. We would like to do that before the Easter-Passover recess, for which we break next week. We would really like to do it.

I know one of my colleagues is on the Senate floor. I recognize the right for Senators to review and scrutinize a bill. I have done it myself. I respect that.

In the days when we were skeptical and even suspicious of one another, you wanted to look at it to make sure there were no cheap gimmicks, no little fast hand motions, no earmarks parachuted in. But I can say this: After the Democrats finished the bill, we gave it to Senator SHELBY and his staff. This bill has been very much scrutinized so that any of those tricks of the old days are not here.

I really need everybody's attention. There is a lot of conversation going on.

What I want to say is this: If anyone spots something they think is a cute gimmick, I would sure like to know about it. I recognize the Senators' rights, but I ask them if we could at least proceed to the bill where, while we debate these two big amendments, we would do it.

Would I have liked to have made it available 72 hours ago? The answer is, yes. But given the magnitude of what we did and the due diligence necessary by the Republicans, it was physically and intellectually impossible, not with the scrutiny and oversight not done until yesterday. When we get back to regular order it will be better. But I feel like I have multiple decks I have been dealt: a real deck, a pinochle deck, a poker deck, and so on.

I am making a plea that we go to our bill, recognizing the Senators should scrutinize the bills and recognizing Senators' rights to offer amendments. That is simply my plea. Some of my colleagues are on the Senate floor, and I will be happy to engage in a conversation with them, two of whom I have enormous respect for.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Oklahoma.

Mr. COBURN. Mr. President, first, I want to tell the chairwoman of the Appropriations Committee that I actually very much appreciate her work. I actually trust her to do the right thing. But we got this bill last night at 9 o'clock. It is a 500-page bill. It has multiple levels of authorizations in it that we found so far—authorization on an appropriations bill. It has what I would consider—and we haven't been completely through it—some things that are totally counterintuitive to where we find ourselves today in terms of spending money.

Before I could grant a unanimous consent—and I will; as soon as we get through with the bill I plan on granting unanimous consent. But I want to know, we just heard the majority leader say he can't understand why somebody wants to read this bill. We are talking about in excess of $1 trillion. That is one of the problems, one of the reasons we are $17 trillion in debt. It is because people don't read the bills.

I also want to say to my friend from Alabama, I have the greatest praise for him. He knows some of the heartburn we have on this, but we knew that was coming from the House. But to not allow us the time to assess what you have produced by being able to read and study the bill is going against the best traditions of the Senate. It is also going against common sense.

How do we know whether we want to offer amendments unless we have been able to read the bill? Are we just to blindly say: Whatever you want to do we are going to approve it because we have a deadline at the end of this month?

I am willing to do whatever is necessary to make sure we get a continuing resolution, but I am not willing to do that blindly. I am going to study this bill. We have three Members' staff working on this full time. They have been working since last night. They are investigating and looking at this bill. I will not go into the details of the things we have seen so far, but we ought to at least have the opportunity before we rush into granting unanimous consent to go forward.

I plan to allow unanimous consent, but I will not do so until I know what the agreement is going to be in terms of amendments. Even if we read the bill and have some good ideas, we don't know whether we are going to be able to offer any. This is an appropriations

bill. We ought to be able to offer amendments with our ideas on ways to save this country money, increase its efficiency, increase its effectiveness, and still meet the deadline that the chairwoman outlined.

I hope the Senator understands why we are not in a mood to grant it until we actually know what we are talking about. To ask anything less of us would be asking us to deny the very oath we took when we came here.

With that, I yield the floor and thank my colleague JOHN MCCAIN for being here.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Arizona.

Mr. MCCAIN. Mr. President, along with the Senator from Oklahoma, I intend to object. I think the Senator made the case. I will remind my colleagues that 1 week ago Senator COBURN and I sent a letter to Senator REID and Senator MCCONNELL with copies to Senator MIKULSKI and Senator SHELBY.

We stated in one sentence:

> We write to inform you of our intention to object to entering into a time agreement before consideration of a continuing resolution until we have had at least 72 hours to review its contents.

That is what we wrote. That is what we asked for.

I will remind my colleagues again, it is a 587-page bill of over $1 trillion that we got at 9 p.m. last night. Is there anyone who has had time to read this entire bill that is 587 pages long? We are talking about $1 trillion, and we are holding up the Senate? We have had since 9 p.m. last night until 3:30 p.m. this afternoon to examine a 587-page bill of over $1 trillion.

What we have already found—and we have not finished, but we hope to be finished with examining this legislation within a few hours—is the most egregious pork-barrel spending during a time of sequestration. I find it mind-boggling. We spent 3 weeks in December on the floor of this Senate doing the fiscal year 2013 Defense authorization bill. There are provisions in this CR that were directly prohibited in the Defense authorization bill.

I respect the knowledge of the Senator from Alabama and the Senator from Maryland on defense issues, but we spent 3 weeks and hundreds of hours in hearings including amendments and markup. For example, we said there would be no money for Guam until we have a coherent strategy laid out by the administration as to how we were going to implement the base realignment. The fiscal year 2013 National Defense Authorization Act prohibited expending that money.

What have they crammed into this 587-page bill? There is $120 million for a public regional health laboratory and civilian wastewater improvements in Guam. Why? I ask my friend from Alabama: Why does this directly contradict the authorization bill which was just passed that said no money would be given to Guam for these purposes until such time as we had developed the strategy for the base realignment in Guam? Is it because the Senator from Alabama and the Senator from Maryland know something more than the Defense authorization bill authorizers did? We had debate, discussion, and authorization of this, and we specifically prohibited it.

So here we are. We have not been able to deploy an aircraft carrier because of sequestration. We have had to cut down on flying hours. We have had to reduce maintenance. We have had to make all kinds of tough decisions as to the men and women who are serving, not to mention the equipment, operations, and maintenance.

What have we already found out in this bill? I want to assure my colleagues I am not making this up. There is an additional $5 million for the National Guard Youth Challenge program. I think the National Guard Youth Challenge Program is a pretty worthwhile project, but is it worthwhile when we are having to keep a carrier from deployment? There is $5 million for the National Guard STARBASE Youth Program; another $154 million for the Army, Navy, and Air Force ''alternative energy research initiatives.'' This type of research has developed such shining examples as the Department of Navy's purchase of 450,000 gallons of alternative fuel for $12 million, which is over $26 per gallon.

There is $18 million for unspecified ''industrial preparedness,'' $16 million for Parkinson's disease research. That part is out of Defense, my friends. That is not out of Health and Human Services; it is out of Defense. There is $16 million for neurofibromatosis research, $16 million for HIV-AIDS research, which is a worthy cause, but it is taken out of Defense. There is $9 million for unspecified radar research, $567 million for unrequested medical research, $20 million for university research initiatives, and $7 million for the Civil Air Patrol program increase.

The list goes on and on, and we have not finished. How in the world do we have a provision ''for an incentive program that directs the Department of Defense to overpay on contracts by an additional 5 percent if the contractor is a Native Hawaiian-owned company,'' how in the world is this justified during this time of sequestration?

I note the presence of our leader on the floor, and I want to assure the leader, with all due respect, that this is a 587-page bill of over $1 trillion. We got it at 9 p.m. last night. I hope that in a few hours we will be able to finish examining this bill. What we have found so far is so egregious it is hard to imagine that anybody—in light of the sequestration and the damage it does to the lives of the men and women who are serving the military—could have added these kinds of provisions and, frankly, is beyond anything I think I have ever seen in the years I have served in the Senate.

I yield to the distinguished majority leader, but before I do, I object.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The majority leader.

Mr. REID. Object to what?

Mr. President, through the Chair to my friend from Arizona, this is a 587-page bill that has been available to the public because the vast majority of this bill is identical to what the House already passed—identical. He, along with his staff and the Senator from Oklahoma, have had days and days to look this over.

I want to make sure everyone understands I can only do so much. I try not to be too sensitive, but the Senator from Oklahoma seems to have a problem—I assume he was referring to me or perhaps he was referring to Senators DURBIN, SCHUMER, and MURRAY. Here is what he said on one of the Sunday shows:

> ''The Senate's not nearly as dysfunctional as it is made out to be . . . '' said Coburn. ''Our problem in the Senate is the leadership in the Senate.''

I don't know if he is referring to Senator MCCONNELL, I don't know whom he is referring to, but one day he should look in the mirror.

I want to try and get along here. The vast majority of the stuff that is in this bill came from the House of Representatives. It has been available for days. I cannot remember what day we received this. I think it was last Wednesday or thereabouts, so it has been many days.

I know Senator MCCAIN very well. He and I came to the House and the Senate together. I understand how he feels about these issues. I don't blame him for being upset about some of the things in this bill, but it is not our fault. We are trying to get a bill to fund the government, and what we need to do is get on the bill.

I am criticized for not allowing amendments to be offered. We cannot have amendments offered until we get on the bill. I think it would be much better if we could get on the bill. If people want to offer amendments, it is kind of jump ball here. We have 100 Senators, and a few of them want to offer amendments. We cannot dictate what amendments will be offered before we even get on the bill.

I hope my friend from Arizona will take some time with the staff and look the bill over—it has been around since last Wednesday or thereabouts—so we can get on the bill. The time is being wasted. We have to finish this and the budget before we leave for Easter vacation.

We can do the bill this week, next week or the week after that. We have to get this done. I am not trying to fight with anybody, but as I said, I do have some sensitivities about my friend from Oklahoma continually berating the leadership in the Senate. I have come to the rationalization that maybe he is talking about his own leadership. I don't know.

Mr. MCCAIN. I ask through the Chair if my friend would yield for a question.

Mr. REID. Of course.

Mr. MCCAIN. First of all, I appreciate very much the majority leader's responsibility to make sure we take up and pass legislation. There are many times when I have to say that the majority leader has been frustrated by some events and individuals which arouses my sympathy for the responsibility he has and his inability to carry out his duties.

I point out to my friend from Nevada that we just got this bill last night, so to rely on the fact that a House bill should be our guide when we know there were many provisions added—at least some provisions that were added that we already found in the Senate version of the bill—I would hope he would understand we need a little more time to try to get through the entire bill, which I hope will be sooner rather than later. Once that is done, then we can—as the majority leader said—be open for amendments.

I hope the majority leader understands our point of view, that this is bill over $1 trillion with 587 pages. For us to take sort of an act of faith that this is the bill that came from the House is obviously not the case.

Mr. REID. If my friend would yield—

Mr. MCCAIN. I appreciate the majority leader's responsibilities, and I appreciate his frustration. I hope he will understand ours and we will try to move this as quickly as possible.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The majority leader.

Mr. REID. For many years and decades Senator MCCAIN has been a watchdog of what goes on with spending in this country. I expect that from him, so I don't say that in a negative fashion. I don't have a problem with Senator MCCAIN looking over this legislation so he feels comfortable with moving on to it, and then if he has amendments to offer, we can move on amendments. I have no complaint about JOHN MCCAIN.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Illinois.

Mr. DURBIN. Mr. President, let me thank the Senators from Maryland and Alabama for their leadership on this bill. I might say to my friend, the Senator from Arizona, that I have a new assignment in the Appropriations Committee following the departure and passing of our great friend Senator Danny Inouye. I am trying my best to make sure we are doing our best on national defense, which I know is near and dear to the Senator from Arizona.

There was an extraordinary effort made in the House to accommodate the Department of Defense in the continuing resolution as well as accommodating military construction and veterans. I think it is a good bill. It comes over to us with provisions that will be helpful with some of the problems and challenges they will face.

What these Senators have tried to do is to add several other areas of agreement in the appropriations process. If I am not mistaken, most everything they have added has been subject to debate within the subcommittee and full committee. So there is no attempt here to conceal anything, and we knew full well that the watchful eye of the Senator from Arizona and his friends would be applied to this bill.

I think what we were trying to achieve today is to start the amendment process—not to close it down but start the amendment process. That would give Members who want to come forward with an amendment the time to offer those amendments and others the time to review this legislation closely. I think that was our goal, only to have this shut down now, where no amendments can be taken up or considered. Without foreclosing the Senator from Arizona or the Senator from Oklahoma, wouldn't it be a healthier situation for us to be actively considering amendments of Members who know what they wish to offer at this point?

Mr. MCCAIN. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent to engage in a colloquy with the Senator from Illinois.

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

Mr. MCCAIN. The point of the Senator from Illinois is very well made, but unless we know the entirety of the bill, we don't know what our priorities are as far as amendments are concerned. I am sure the Senator knows that even though amendments are going to be allowed, there is going to be a limited number of amendments. We know how things work around this place come Thursday afternoon.

All we are asking is to give us a little more time. It was 9 o'clock last night when we received the final version of the bill.

I would say to my friend from Illinois, unless we know what is in the bill in its entirety, it is hard for us to know what the priority amendments we intend on proposing are. I think we are nearly through the examination of the bill. I do not wish to impede the progress of the Senate on this legislation. I know how important it is.

I also hope my friend will understand that we asked a week ago to have 72 hours, which is the normal Senate procedure, to examine the bill before we consider it. I understand the exigencies of the moment—all the back and forth between both sides of the Capitol—but I don't believe, for a $1 trillion bill, 587 pages, it is too much to ask for about 12 hours, or 14 hours, 15 hours—we have our staff working full time, and I wish to assure the Senator we will have it done soon.

Mr. DURBIN. Mr. President, if I might engage further in this dialogue, I see the Chair is seeking recognition. But there are Senators on both sides who have amendments ready to go. They have ideas they wish to present to the Senate for consideration. Without foreclosing the Senator from Arizona and his colleagues of the possibilities to offer amendments tomorrow or whenever they are prepared to, I don't know why we want to shut down this deliberation today. We can consider some of these amendments and still not in any way prejudice the rights of Senators to review the bill and offer amendments of their choice.

Mr. MCCAIN. Look, my dear friend, every Senator has their responsibilities in this body. I have a responsibility particularly where defense is concerned. We spent 3 weeks on this legislation, including hundreds of amendments, hours and hours of debate, markup in the committee of hours and hours, hundreds of hours of hearings by the leaders of our military and the administration. I haven't finished examining the defense part of this bill.

Now, why am I so worried about the provisions of this bill? Because there are provisions in this bill that directly contradict the Defense authorization we spent weeks on. We prohibited money for Guam, OK? We prohibited it. Now there is $120 million in the bill for it. So that makes me curious as to what else is in this bill.

So I think for me to go back and tell my constituents in Arizona, who are heavily dependent on our national defense and our bases, to say, Yes, I went ahead without even reading the whole bill, without even my staff going through the entire bill; we were in such a hurry with our over $1 trillion legislation that they didn't want me to hold up the Senate so people could propose amendments—that is not my duty to the citizens of Arizona.

So I say with respect to my friend, I respect the rights of all other Senators. I hope the rights of the Senator from Oklahoma and my rights would be respected and that includes reading a piece of legislation that is 587 pages long.

Mr. DURBIN. If I might respond to the Senator, the Department of Defense Appropriations Act for 2013 provides $604.9 billion, including $87.2 billion for overseas contingency operations. That is a reduction from the 2012 level of $633.2 billion.

There are no changes in the defense section of this bill. There are no changes in the bill that was passed by the House of Representatives last week. The bill fully complies with the spending caps in the Budget Control Act. It contains no Member-requested earmarks, in compliance with the earmark moratorium. There are cuts in the defense budget to define programs with excess funding, scheduled delays, and the like.

The bill includes 671 cuts as it came out of the House to programs in the budget request of funds that are not needed for the remaining 6½ months of the year.

I might say to my friend from Arizona, this is what the House passed. We have not added anything to it that I think would be of Senate authorship that changes it in substance.

So I understand. It is the Senator's right. I respect his right and I will

fight for his right as a Senator. But I would hope that at least for those Senators prepared to offer amendments, without in any way prejudicing the right of the Senator from Arizona to do so, we could proceed with the amendment process.

Mr. MCCAIN. Well, again, I thank my friend from Illinois and I thank him for his point of view. I understand it. I understand the frustration of our two leaders on the Appropriations Committee and their desire to get this done. I understand the time clock is running out. We are talking about a very short period of time. But I have to repeat to the Senator from Illinois one more time: I am not going to go back to my State and say, By the way, I started the amendment process and debating on a bill that I hadn't read. I don't do that, and I hope the Senator from Illinois respects it. I hope in a very short period of time we can agree to proceed and have vigorous debate and amendments.

I also have to say this is remarkable. Here we are, I say to my friend from Illinois, in a period of sequestration, and there is a provision in here for $15 million for an incentive program that directs the Department of Defense to overpay contracts by an additional 5 percent if the contractor is a Native Hawaiian-owned company. That boggles the mind. It is unbelievable. While we are keeping ships tied up at the pier because we can't deploy them, we are now going to tell Native Hawaiian companies they are going to be overpaid by an additional 5 percent if they are based in Hawaii. What is that all about? That is why the Senator from Oklahoma and I have to read the bill. I thank my colleagues.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Maryland.

Ms. MIKULSKI. Would the Senator from Arizona yield for a question?

Mr. MCCAIN. Yes, ma'am.

Ms. MIKULSKI. We acknowledge the validity of the concerns of the Senator from Arizona. We also acknowledge that we would have liked very much for people to have seen this 72 hours in advance. There was no intent to stiff-arm. Please understand that. We weren't trying to be cute and come in late and all that. It was just the sheer physicality of moving the bill, not getting it from the House until Thursday. So there was no intent to not honor the request of the Senator from Arizona, in which he was very plain, and he has been consistent in every bill. The Senator's request was not unusual and it was no surprise. So that is essentially where we are.

Mr. MCCAIN. I would say to the Senator, the distinguished chairperson, I respect that and I would never impugn her motives. I said I thought I understood the time constraints the Senator from Maryland is under, given the House and the Senate and all that. I certainly did not intend to believe that there was anything——

Ms. MIKULSKI. I just wanted to assure the Senator from Arizona of that and I have respect for the Senator and his regard for the purse.

Does the Senator from Arizona have a sense of when he will be finished reviewing the bill?

Mr. MCCAIN. I think in a very short time. I have to coordinate with the Senator from Oklahoma, but I think within a couple of hours.

Ms. MIKULSKI. We would appreciate it in any way the Senator feels he can exercise his traditional due diligence. We are not going to engage in arguments, but we would like to go ahead if we could get something going even later on this evening.

Mr. MCCAIN. Could I say to the distinguished chairwoman, I will go back to my office right now, get together with Senator COBURN, and see if we can't come up with a definite time, and I assure the Senator from Maryland it will be a short period of time.

Ms. MIKULSKI. And if perhaps there are amendments the Senator from Arizona could share with Senator SHELBY. I expect there to be amendments from Senators MCCAIN and COBURN. It wouldn't have been a real bill if they did not offer amendments. It somehow or another wouldn't have counted in the process. So we look forward to it. If we can move it in an expeditious way, and courteously understanding the Senator's right to offer amendments, I think we can get going.

Mr. MCCAIN. Mr. President, I will try to carry out my mission as assigned by the distinguished chairperson. I thank her for her leadership and her excellent work. I thank both leaders.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Vermont.

Mr. LEAHY. Mr. President, I will not engage the Senator from Arizona with questions. I don't want to delay his reading time.

I appreciate the work the distinguished chair of the Appropriations Committee has done, and the distinguished ranking member, the senior Senator from Alabama. I worked with both of them for decades on the Appropriations Committee. I know they are diligent. They are hard working. In fact, I recall a discussion with the distinguished senior Senator from Maryland when she agreed to take this assignment. I told her I couldn't think of anybody better on our side of the aisle to be the chair of this committee because I know how hard she works and how well she works with the ranking member.

I spoke also with the distinguished Senator from Alabama at the time—again, somebody who knows how to get things done on appropriations. He and I have negotiated things over the years. We have always kept our word to each other, just as the Senator from Maryland has. Now it is time to debate the bill on the floor and it pains me that having got this far, two senators are preventing anyone else from offering amendments.

It is unfortunate we are discussing a continuing resolution because if left to the three Senators who are currently on the floor—the Senator from Alabama, the Senator from Maryland, and myself—we know we would be fully capable of completing action on individual appropriations bills. In fact, they were painstakingly negotiated by the Senate and the House as part of an omnibus legislative package last December. But then, for reasons we don't have to go into here, a year's work of seven appropriations subcommittees was dumped in the wastebasket, not because of the two leaders but because of others.

Unfortunately, that means we have been funding the government on autopilot. None of us who have spent time on the Appropriations Committee wants this because we know it wastes money and sequestration will make a bad situation even worse.

Having said that, I think what Chairwoman MIKULSKI and Ranking Member SHELBY have done in negotiating this continuing resolution is far better than putting the government on autopilot as we did last December.

I wish to talk about title 7 of this resolution, which concerns the Department of State and Foreign Operations. The House continuing resolution included several changes in the fiscal year 2012 appropriations act. The Senate incorporated those changes with minor modifications. Senator LINDSEY GRAHAM and I included other changes we believe are critical to our national security. Top officials at the State Department and the Pentagon agree with us.

We did our best to avoid spending money on things that may have made sense in fiscal year 2012 but are a waste today. I will give an example. The House continuing resolution includes another $250 million for the Iraq police training program, the same amount as in fiscal year 2012. Yet the State Department plans to spend zero in fiscal year 2013. That is just an example of why we should go, if we could, by the regular order, because nobody wants this money.

There have been a lot of changes in the world since December 2011 when the 2012 bill was signed by the President. There is the catastrophe in Syria, with millions of people fleeing their homes, which threatens to engulf the entire region. Benghazi and Mali are other examples. Conditions are changing in Egypt, Afghanistan, and in our own hemisphere. We face growing challenges in East Asia and the Pacific.

Now, we should not say, as these challenges come up—sometimes overnight—that well, two or three years ago we passed a bill, so there is no need to do one this year. The world does not stand still.

I think the chairwoman is doing a superb job, and Ranking Member SHELBY is showing, as usual, his many years of experience and hard work. I thank Senator LINDSEY GRAHAM and his staff, who have provided very constructive input.

In the past, appropriations bills were always a bipartisan effort. We worked together. I think of Senator Byrd and Senator Stevens on this floor working things out; my predecessor as President pro tempore, Senator Inouye, and Senator COCHRAN working things out.

Title VII of this resolution is a grand total of 11½ pages. Out of over 500 pages, it is 11½ pages. It should not take long to read. We do not expect amendments, but if we get them, I hope we can act on them quickly.

Mr. President, if nobody is seeking the floor, I ask unanimous consent that I be allowed to continue for 5 minutes as though in morning business.

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

ARREST AND PROSECUTION OF SULAIMAN ABU GHAITH

Mr. LEAHY. Mr. President, last week the Obama administration announced that Osama bin Laden's son-in-law, Sulaiman Abu Ghaith, had been brought to the United States to be prosecuted. Several of us who have oversight in particular committees were notified a week before this became public. We were briefed on what was happening as he was being flown here to this country to be prosecuted.

I commend the work of our Nation's dedicated law enforcement and intelligence officials who are helping bring him to justice. I was briefed on exactly what they did and how they did it, and there was a superb combination of work by the Justice Department and intelligence communities, at the CIA, FBI, and other agencies. And I applaud the Obama administration for their unanimous decision within the National Security Council to prosecute him in a Federal court.

We have reason to be proud of our courts. Our Federal courts are an example of impartiality, competence, and integrity seen the world over. We, as Americans, are not afraid to take somebody who has acted against us and prosecute them in our courts. We should not act as though we are afraid and simply say that we can't have them in our Federal court, and that we should just lock them up in Guantanamo.

As a practical matter, our Federal prosecutors have established a tremendous record of convictions of terrorism defendants. They have convicted over 450 terrorism-related defendants since September 11, 2001.

The military commissions at Guantanamo Bay—where some said they wanted to send Abu Ghaith—are largely untested. There have only been 8 convictions there—not the 450 we have seen in Federal courts but 8—and on average the sentences handed down in military commissions are shorter than those given in the Federal court. In fact, two of these military commission convictions were overturned just last year. Indeed, based on the recent decisions of the U.S. Court of Appeals for the D.C. Circuit, it is unclear whether a conspiracy case against this defendant could even be legally sustained in a military commission at Guantanamo Bay.

Why do we act as though we are afraid to bring this terrorist before our Federal courts where we bring mass murderers and everybody else, and instead argue that we should send him off somewhere where he may never be convicted? In fact, regardless of the outcome of a military commission proceeding against Abu Ghaith, it is possible that he could have been stuck there without the possibility of a Federal prosecution, given the shortsighted limitations on detainee transfers imposed by Congress. When you look at how well the Federal courts have done, I am surprised to hear people criticize the decision to bring him before an Article III Federal court.

I would say that using our justice system is not mutually exclusive from gathering intelligence. In fact, from public accounts—and I refer to what has been in the press—it appears the FBI gathered information and intelligence from him for about a week before he was formally even arraigned in court last week. In fact, according to one of the prosecutors, law enforcement officials were able to obtain detailed, extensive audio recordings and roughly 22 pages of post-arrest statements from Abu Ghaith. And the fact is, also, as we have seen in some of these other cases, once you present the defendant in court, oftentimes they continue to cooperate and talk.

It is clear to me that President Obama's national security team did the right thing. But we also show the rest of the world that we are not afraid, that as Americans we are not cowering and afraid to use our courts, and that we are not afraid to use the law and procedures that have made us free and strong.

We have had several hearings in the Judiciary Committee on how best to handle terrorism suspects. I am convinced that the Attorney General and the administration must have all options available. For example, the case of the Fort Hood shooter went to a military trial, as it should have. That case involved a military officer committing a crime on a military base against other military personnel, even though influenced by somebody from al-Qaida overseas. But in the Abu Ghaith case we have somebody that we can and should prosecute on conspiracy charges in Federal court. As a former prosecutor, I have looked at that, and I have absolute faith in the abilities of our Federal courts and our prosecutors and law enforcement officials to bring terrorists to justice. They have a tremendous record.

Let's not be afraid of these people. Let's not say: Oh, we have to hide them down there in Cuba at Guantanamo Bay. No, we are Americans. We are America. We are not afraid of terrorists. Bring them before our courts, and let them face American justice. Let them face our prosecutors and our courts. Let's do it in a way that we can show the rest of the world how justice truly works. When we tell them, why aren't you running your courts in an open way, or when we criticize other countries, as we often do, let us not give them an opportunity to come back and say, well, you don't do it that way yourselves. No—we can and must say that we do. We have captured the son-in-law of Osama bin Laden, who conspired with him to commit a horrible crime against our Nation. It took us years to find him, but we got him. We brought him back here. And now we are taking him to court, and we are going to let a jury decide his guilt or innocence. That is the way it should be done. That is the American way. And that shows that we do not have to hide. We Americans are willing to stand up and face those who would attack us.

Mr. President, I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Maryland.

Ms. MIKULSKI. Mr. President, before the distinguished Senator from Vermont leaves the floor, I really wish to compliment him not only in the way he has moved legislation but really the values, the American values, behind it. I think he has worked steadfastly on a bipartisan basis with Senator LINDSEY GRAHAM on our foreign operations. This is what has been called soft power, but there is nothing soft about it. It is part of our smart power strategy.

And what has it meant? It has meant healing the sick, feeding the hungry, making sure children whose legs have been blown off with land mines have an opportunity for rehabilitation or for the children of Haiti who lost their limbs because of the horrific nature of the earthquake—taking lessons learned from other places in the world, that they have a chance to do it.

Baltimore is the home of the Catholic relief organization. These are people who serve the world without religious creed. They serve whomever is in need. The way they extol the virtues of what they have been able to do has been amazing. What they say to me is that because of the work Senator LEAHY has done, they are able to leverage philanthropic dollars. Rather than being in lieu of government, they can leverage it because we are coming in to help the children, to help the children learn to walk, and they then come in with community development so that they learn a trade, so that we are literally rebuilding the lives of children in Haiti but also giving them a future where they are going to earn a livelihood. It is pretty terrific.

We have President Clinton, who does his global initiative like in Haiti, but we all have to be in it together, whether it is Bill Gates—the women of the Senate on a bipartisan basis last week met with Melinda Gates in terms of the great Gates Foundation, and they talked about their health care initiatives.

We said: Well, what does all this mean in terms of us?

They said: If you do the job only government can do, we can then do what we need to do.

This is unique. I do not know of other countries in the world that quite work with this synergy, letting our private philanthropic community do splendid, inspirational work. But they need a government.

The other thing we are able to do in this bill is provide something very near and dear, which is embassy security. We know we wanted to do more. We know that over the last couple of years the House has denied $400 million in embassy security. So we are heartsick at the way our Ambassador died. And while there is all that back-and-forth over talking points, which we are not getting into, the fact is that we need to protect our American men and women working in embassies because they are at a duty station, and now that duty station has become a battle station. We need to make sure we provide embassy security in the best way possible. We can debate policy, management, and so on, but at the end of the day we need to put money in the Federal checkbook to do that.

We lost an Ambassador in Benghazi. I lost an Ambassador, and America lost many others a few years ago at Khobar Towers. One was our Consul General. His name was Bartley. He was the highest ranking African American in the Foreign Service. His son was interning with him. They blew up the Embassy. He and his son died. We need to look out for these people. There was also a young lady who was there from the community, from CDC, working to make sure we were doing the right health initiatives, teaching, educating the leadership there. She died. Again, they were at their duty station, which has now become a battle station.

So I compliment the Senator for the children, his work on land mines, and his work on feeding the hungry. And do you know what. We make wise use because of the strong oversight. I know the Senator from Vermont listens to the inspector general, scrutinizes those GAO reports. We get a dollar's worth of assistance, and at the end of the day America is stronger because of what we do in this bill.

I wish to salute the Senator for his sense of bipartisanship, his leadership and stewardship not only in this bill but over the years. The Senator should be saluted, and I want to make sure this bill moves forward so we can get on to next year and even do a better, smarter job.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Vermont.

Mr. LEAHY. Mr. President, I thank the senior Senator from Maryland for her kind comments. We do a lot. It is interesting. In the foreign aid part, it is less than 1 percent of our budget. But what we do is show the face of America—the best of the face of America throughout the world. The distinguished Senator has been, throughout her career, both in the other body and here, a strong supporter of those programs and made life better for an awful lot of people who never know who Senator MIKULSKI is or Senator LEAHY or anybody else. All they know is that life is better because of the things we have done.

I was in Haiti just a couple of weeks ago. I have been there several times since the earthquake. I have seen how our programs have helped, including the Leahy War Victims Fund, which helps land mine victims around the world. The Senator from Alabama knows, as he was there with me a year ago.

I saw youngsters with prosthetics learning to walk again. I saw people from other parts of the world who were inspired by what the United States was doing.

I remember a physician from Brussels who had gone to Haiti. When I asked him why he spent so much time volunteering there, We were speaking French with each other, but I remember the emotion in his voice as he grabbed my arm and said, ''pour les enfants,'' for the children. Those children are not rich. They are not powerful. They will never vote for us. But we are human beings, and we have a responsibility.

The Senator from Maryland has spoken about security at our embassies. We tell people to go to some of the most dangerous parts of the world and show the best face of America. We have a responsibility to protect them. We have tried to get that money passed only to have had it held up in the other body. Let's continue our work.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from South Dakota.

Mr. JOHNSON of South Dakota. Mr. President, the bill Chairwoman MIKULSKI and Senator SHELBY have compiled is an excellent example of how hard work, cooperation, and good-faith negotiating can produce results in a body which is too often paralyzed by gridlock. The combined omnibus and CR, while not all I would wish for, is a balanced approach to keeping the government functioning through the remainder of the fiscal year while avoiding the specter of a government shutdown.

The Military Construction and Veterans Affairs appropriations bill is one of five bills in this package, and it reflects the agreement reached between the Senate and the House last fall. The Senate bill is identical to the House-passed MILCON–VA bill, and it sends a strong message of support to our Nation's vets and military families, including previously appropriated advances for vets' medical care. The fiscal year 2013 bill provides a total of $144.8 billion for military construction, family housing, the VA, and four related agencies, including Arlington National Cemetery. Of that amount, $71.9 billion is discretionary funding. This includes $10.6 billion for military construction, $61 billion for the VA, and $347 million for related agencies.

This bill deserves the full support of the Senate. The alternative is a continuing resolution which is out of step with current requirements or a crippling government shutdown. A CR would be disastrous for military construction. The CR prohibits new starts, which would block execution of 97 percent of the fiscal year 2013 military construction program. As a result, more than 250 MILCON projects in 42 States, the District of Columbia, and overseas which are funded in the bill before us would be put on indefinite hold in the CR.

For the VA, a CR would not provide advance funding for fiscal year 2014 for vets' health care. Advance funding is an important tool to protect funding for vets' health care from the very predicament we find ourselves in today.

Another small but important program in this bill which would be scuttled by a CR is funding for needed cemetery expansion at Arlington National Cemetery. All of these problems are solved in this omnibus package.

Our Nation's vets, our military troops and their families, have made and are continuing to make great sacrifices in defense of this Nation. The bill before us recognizes and honors that commitment by funding a wide array of programs essential to the health and well-being of both vets and military families.

I urge the Senate to support this bill.

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

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The bill clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

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

Ms. MIKULSKI. I would like to compliment the Senator from South Dakota, who does an excellent job as assistant chairman on the Subcommittee on Military Construction, VA. He has worked steadfastly to bring up this bill. We are in agreement with the House. I wish to share a sense of urgency why this needs to happen.

In this bill, thanks to the leadership provided here, it increases funding to improve and accelerate claims processing to increase staff, business processes, and infotech enhancements. This kind of sounds bloodless and technocratic, but I stand before you today to tell you we have a claims processing crisis for our veterans, particularly in the area of applying for disability benefits.

I hate to tell you, Baltimore has one of the worst records. There are many reasons for this situation. It wasn't my fault. We let the infrastructure deteriorate, there are staffing issues, and there are an incredible number of our men and women coming back from the longest war we have fought with incredible injuries, with some bearing the permanent impact of the war, and

they are eligible. Many have multiple problems. This is not your World War II benefit claim.

So we have a backlog. We need to deal with that backlog; otherwise, shame on us. Those men and women fought hard. They gave it everything they had. Thanks to the skill and dedication of military medicine, we saved more lives in combat than in any other war.

I don't want to sound like an epidemiologist; I am a Senator. The fact is we have reduced what doctors call morbidity and mortality. That is the good news back to the hospital from the battlefields, from training medics, all the way to Germany, all the way now to Walter Reed National Military Medical Center in Bethesda.

What is the issue when they come back home? Because we have saved their lives, they have injuries. It means they have some level of disability. They may not be totally disabled, but they are eligible. If they have a permanent injury, they should have a permanent benefit from their government. While they were on the frontline, they should not need to stand in line to have their claims processed.

We have some claims which take as many as 3 or 4 years to complete. We need to pick it up. We need to up our game.

These are improvements. We have spoken to General Shinseki. I know the gentleman. The chairman of the committee has talked to him and was quite vigorous and insistent in his advocacy. I had General Shinseki come to Baltimore. I was ballistic about the claims situation in Baltimore. What did we need? We needed increased staff.

Did you know we do most of our disability claims by paper? We might as well be doing it by papyrus.

When you look at it—I am rarely brief, but I am short—the average disability claim, which I know you have gone to look at, sir, is sometimes 6, 8, and 12 inches tall. That is just the VA. In order to be certified you need to have the military give you information, you need to have Social Security give you information, and you need to have doctor information. In the meantime, somebody who lost a leg, somebody who has lost an arm, somebody who has lost so much time fighting a war, we ask too much from too few for so long who are there waiting for their benefit.

We need to go digital. If we are going to run government like a business, let's give them the standard business tools. That means more technology.

I really want to thank the Senator from South Dakota and his Republican vice chair for much of what they have done in this bill. What is nearest and dearest for me are two things: increased funding to deal with the claims process to receive what they deserve and also advance funding for VA medical to enable the veterans to receive the health care they were promised, they need, and they deserve. If you ever want to talk about an earned benefit, it is the men and women who need VA medical care and the men and women who need their claims processed to receive what they deserve and what they are entitled to.

This in and of itself is a reason to ensure we don't have a government shutdown and blow this program out of the window. I want to thank the Senator for his advocacy and also for taking good intentions and putting them in the Federal checkbook.

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

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The bill clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

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

Mr. RUBIO. Madam President, I rise today to speak about an amendment to the pending matter, an amendment I intend to file when it becomes procedurally appropriate to do so.

The amendment I intend to file is about foreign aid to the nation of Egypt. But let me start by talking about foreign aid in general because there is a lot of debate about that and a lot of concern around the country about foreign aid. In fact, a lot of places I go people ask me: With things so tough here in the United States, why do we give money to other countries? Why are we giving money to other countries?

That is a very good question to ask. First, I would say, and I would caution people, that foreign aid is not 20 percent of our budget. It is not 30 percent of our budget. It is actually, on some days, less than 1 to 3 percent of our total budget.

Secondly, I would say that foreign aid has a very useful role. Just to set the table, I think people need to understand that our foreign aid has accomplished a tremendous amount of good around the world. For example, the USAID programs to fight HIV/AIDS in Africa has helped save millions of people. Millions of people are alive today because of the generosity of the American taxpayer.

It has helped to alleviate poverty. I think you should look at some of the great examples of foreign aid like the Marshall Plan or the work we undertook to rebuild Japan and the alliances we have today as a result.

One of the great stories of foreign aid is South Korea, a nation that was long a beneficiary of foreign aid—and not just from the United States but from the world—and today it is a donor in many of these forums.

So that is the good news about foreign aid—and foreign aid is important because it increases our influence. It is part of how we can influence what is increasingly a global economy. I think it is important to understand when people talk about the American economy, we don't just live in a national economy anymore. We live in a world where, increasingly, things that happen to you on a daily basis—the price of things that you are buying—some of these things are set halfway around the world not just halfway down the street or halfway across the city. So foreign aid is important because it deals with America's influence around the world and, in particular, our ability to influence things toward our national interests.

Foreign aid is not charity. Although it may be charitable, and although it may be motivated by us and our efforts to advance our principles and the things we think are right, foreign aid is not charity. Foreign aid is designed to further our national interests. That means every single dime we give in foreign aid should be conditioned toward our national interests, should be about furthering our national interests. And I think that is true all over the world, everywhere we give it, whether it is military aid or economic aid.

I think today we have one example of a place where we should start to examine how we give our foreign aid and examine it in a way that allows us to maximize our national interests. That country I want to talk about today is Egypt, and there is a lot of concerning things happening in Egypt.

We have all been witness to the amazing Arab spring and all the changes that it brought about to the region, potentially democracy, et cetera. And Egypt, obviously, has been a prime example of that, a country where all this has been occurring. It has brought to power a government that largely is governed today by the Muslim Brotherhood.

Here is the good news. The good news is these changes have occurred, and, theoretically, there is a more open society. The bad news is some of the people who have been brought to power bring with them an ideology that at times is troubling and, in fact, in practice has been deeply troubling.

For example, we have seen efforts in Egypt to undermine democratic institutions. We have seen efforts in Egypt to undermine the judiciary. We have seen open examples in Egypt of the freedom of religion being undermined. We have seen women and women's rights regress. We have seen irresponsible economic behavior in Egypt. And we can talk about the causes of all this, but this is the reality of what is going on in Egypt.

In addition to that, we should be deeply concerned about Egypt's ability or willingness to live up to their security arrangements with their neighbors, particularly our strong allies in Israel. They have a commitment they made years ago to securing the Sinai, to preventing weapons and terrorists and others from crossing through the Sinai and into the Gaza Strip and into Israel. This is a commitment and an obligation they have, and we should be

concerned about their unwillingness or inability, or both, to live up to these commitments.

So what I am asking for in this amendment is for us to reexamine the way we give foreign aid to Egypt, not to get rid of it because there is a real danger that we can start to lose some of these foreign aid programs. The American people are fed up with story after story of countries that are benefiting from our generosity, and then they open the newspaper and they read inflammatory comments that are made about us. They open the newspaper or turn on cable television, and they see reports from these countries where democracy is being undermined, where the rights of women are being trampled, where religious minorities are being persecuted, and they have a right to ask: Why are we giving so much money to these countries?

We actually have a record in Egypt of working very closely with their military organizations, and we hope that can continue. But we also want to ensure that Egypt continues to move toward a direction of true democracy.

Democracy is not just having elections. Having elections is one part of democracy. You have to govern like a democrat. You have to govern in an open process where you allow people to speak out, opposition parties to organize, have a court system that doesn't skew things in your favor and against the opposition. You don't just have to have elections to have a democracy; you need a lot more than that.

We saw last week where former Senator Kerry, now Secretary of State, awarded a sum—by the way, we have given over $70 billion of aid to Egypt since the 1940s. That is not an insignificant sum. But we look now at the $250 million in aid they received last week, and I believe that was unfortunate.

We have significant interests in ensuring that Egypt remains at peace with Israel, that the Morsi government does not undermine the democratic process, and that human and political rights of all Egyptians—including that of religious minorities and women—are respected, and our foreign aid should reflect that.

So what this amendment which I intend to propose does is a few things. Let me begin by saying this is not about canceling foreign aid to Egypt per se. This is about restructuring it in a way that lines up with the national interests of the taxpayers of the United States of America. I will have more to say about this amendment when the appropriate time to file it comes up, but let me just briefly describe it, and I hope to gain support from my colleagues and the public at large.

First, it would block the disbursement of additional economic support funds and new—not the existing but new—foreign military financing contracts until Egypt begins to enact economic reforms and the administration certifies that Egypt has done a few of the following:

It has adopted and implemented legal reforms which protect the political, the economic, and religious freedoms; it is not acting to restrict the political, economic, and religious freedoms and human rights of the citizens and residents of Egypt; it is continuing to demonstrate a commitment to free and fair elections and is not taking any steps to interfere with or undermine the credibility of such elections.

Another condition is that it has lifted restrictions in law and practice on the work and the funding of Egyptian and international NGOs—nongovernmental organizations—comprising those in human rights and democracy fields. Those include the International Republican Institute, the National Democratic Institute, and Freedom House; that it is fully implementing the Egypt-Israel Peace Treaty; that it is taking all the necessary actions to eliminate smuggling networks and to detect and destroy tunnels between Egypt and the Gaza Strip—tunnels that are used to smuggle weapons and terrorists into the Gaza Strip—and is taking all other necessary actions to combat terrorism in an increasingly ungovernable space of the Sinai.

The second thing it does is it begins to recalibrate the U.S.-Egyptian security relationship toward Egypt's actual security needs.

Now, let me say this: It does not appear—and I don't know of anyone who would disagree with this—that Egypt has any imminent threat of being invaded by any one of their neighbors. It is not going to happen. Egypt's real security needs are its ability, No. 1, to live up to its obligations to stamp out terrorism within its borders and, in particular, to secure the Sinai, to close those tunnels that lead to Gaza. But the second security need it has is internal—in particular, street crime.

One of the ways Egypt is going to be able to rebuild its economy is through tourism, and I am not a tourism expert, but I think muggings, murder, and kidnappings are not good for tourism. People don't usually visit countries where these things are happening. This is the actual aid that Egypt needs in terms of its security.

It doesn't need tanks, it doesn't need jet fighters. It is not going to be invaded by a foreign country. That is not its real threat. I understand their desire to have those things—and, by the way, there are existing contracts to give them those things. But their real security needs are largely internal, and we want to recalibrate our military aid in the future to Egypt to meet their actual needs.

To that end, the amendment would require an analysis of Egypt's security requirements, produced by the Department of Defense in consultation with the Egyptian Government, and to be shared with the relevant congressional committees both in the House and the Senate. We also want the administration to certify that the Department of Defense has allocated a portion of Egypt's foreign military financing—no less than $100 million—toward counterterrorism tools, including the equipment and training related to border security, and to address the instability in the Sinai.

We also want a report on all FMF contracts the Department of Defense has carried out over the last 10 years, as well as the Department's plans for contracting over the next decade. I think it is wise to look at what we have done in the past, to fully understand the contributions the American taxpayer has made to Egypt's security in the past. But we also need to see the contracts that are pending move forward. All of these need to be aligned so we can ensure the aid we are giving them isn't just what they want, but it, in fact, is what they need, within the confines of what is in our national security and in our national interests because, once again, this is our money.

We should begin to shift U.S. assistance away from military programs and increasingly toward civilian assistance. So what this amendment would do is require the administration to begin a dialogue with the Egyptian Government and with the Egyptian civil society about the need to rebalance our system away from its current, almost obsessive focus on military aid by reallocating economic funds not provided to Egypt during periods when certification is not in effect toward democracy and governance programs, including direct support for secular, democratic, nongovernmental organizations, as well as programming and support for rule of law and human rights, good governance, political competition, consensus building, and civil society.

We should look at transferring the interest earned in Egypt's account. They have an account where this money sits when we give them this aid. Those accounts have a lot of money and generate a lot of interest. We should be able to take that interest that is generated from these funds and make it available and allocate these funds for democracy and for governance efforts.

Last but not least, we should require the President to submit a report to the Congress describing the specific results of an Egyptian policy review that includes a dialogue with the Government of Egypt and also civil society on how to rebalance the U.S. military and economic assistance.

Now, as most of these bills will have in them, this is going to have a national security waiver. In essence, if the Secretary of State comes to us and says: It is in our national security not to implement or fully implement this amendment at this time, as they do with almost all aid programs, they would have the right to do that. But they are going to have to do it every 180 days, at least twice a year, so we can be sure we are keeping up with the transition that is going on in Egypt.

Let me briefly address a few of the arguments that are going to come

against this potentially. One is that we have this incredibly strong relationship with the Egyptian military, and we don't want to undermine that. This is not intended to do that. We value that relationship. We hope it will continue to grow stronger. But the reality of it is, No. 1, these are hard-earned taxpayer dollars. At a time when the United States of America really doesn't have a lot of money to throw away—in fact, it has no money to throw away—we have to ensure the aid we give is aid that is effective, that is actually doing what it needs to be doing, not simply going to a wish list of some general or military official somewhere. This is not about cutting off the Egyptian military; this is about recalibrating our relationship with them to ensure that what we are making available to them is not just what they want, but it is what they need. That is the first thing I would say in that argument.

The second argument I would have—and we hope this day will never come—but as Egypt continues to transition, we don't know what the Egyptian military is going to look like 2 years from now, 5 years from now, 10 years from now. In fact, many of the top people we have been dealing with in the past aren't in those positions anymore. They have been replaced by the new government. And I would tell you, history is a lesson.

If the Morsi government and the Muslim Brotherhood take Egypt in a direction that is not in our national interests, that is not in the best interests of the region or our allies in the world, they are not going to be able to do that unless they replace the military leadership with people who agree with them on these things. So while we hope that never happens, we hope to do everything we can to prevent that from happening, we hope the Egyptian military will continue to be governed and run by professional men and women. But we can't guaranteed that, and we don't know what the Egyptian military will look like 5 years from now or 3 years from now.

That is why it is so important this waiver provision require the Secretary of State to do so twice a year, so we can keep up on the recent events. Who would have predicted 3 years ago that the events that happened in Egypt would have happened in our time? Yet they did. So we can't predict what Egypt is going to look like 3 years from now. We hope it will be better, but we don't know.

The other argument I have heard is, well, this is going to offend their sovereignty. They don't like us to tell them what to do with the aid we give them. The Egyptians are not going to take kindly to the idea of the United States dictating to them.

I, quite frankly, don't understand that argument because this is our money. They don't have to take our foreign aid. They don't have to accept it. But our foreign aid has never been—or should never have been—a blank check. This idea that somehow the money we are going to make available to people should be unconditional, quite frankly, doesn't make sense to me. This is our money. If they don't want the aid, they don't have to take it. But if they are going to accept our aid, we should have some say in it.

If it is the U.S. dollars of the U.S. taxpayer that are going toward this program, shouldn't the American people, through their elected representatives and their government, have some say—if not a predominant amount of say—over how these dollars are spent and on what these dollars are spent? And shouldn't we ensure those countries are headed in a positive direction, not in a direction that acts against our national interests?

I believe in foreign aid. I think foreign aid is important for the United States. But it needs to be done the right way. I think it needs to be done the right way across the board, in all of our aid programs. But this is one that is pressing, that is right in front of us.

I recently took a trip to the Middle East. I went to Jordan. I went to Israel. In many places where I went, I heard over and over again a lot of concern about the direction Egypt is headed. They are going through a balancing act right now, is what it appears. On the one hand, you have a deeply seated ideology that I think many people would find offensive. We have heard some of the past comments of the President of Egypt. We have heard some of the past comments of some of the leadership in the Muslim Brotherhood. It is downright offensive, and that is their ideology. We have seen some of that seep through in their public policymaking.

We also understand there is a pragmatic argument going on. They know they cannot survive in government and in power if they don't have an economy. They know—at least, I hope they know—they have to take steps to reform their economy. They have to take steps to increase their security so tourism will return. They know they need to do these things, and right now they are calibrating those two things: the pragmatism of needing to secure their country and needing to provide for economic growth versus their ideology.

In the ideological base of the Muslim Brotherhood that is calling for a rapid expansion of Islamist-type rule, you can see those pressures building within Egyptian society in and of itself. I think U.S. aid has an opportunity to tilt that conversation toward pragmatism. If we are smart about how we use our foreign aid, we can actually help tilt that conversation away from the ideology and toward pragmatism, toward security that is not designed to crack down on internal dissent, that is not designed to one day wage war against their neighbors in Israel or anywhere else, but in fact is designed to provide security against common street crimes, security against terrorism, to seal those tunnels in Gaza, to live up to their international obligations.

I think if we condition this the right way, we can help encourage them to take on the kind of economic reforms that Egypt needs to have the kind of economy they need. After all, that was the heart of the Arab spring, the heart of the Arab spring where hundreds of thousands of unemployed people—starting in Egypt particularly—were desperate for a better future and didn't think they could find it. Then they looked at a government that they saw as repressive and corrupt, and they wanted to replace it. But not with this.

The reason I feel so strongly about this is that as the Egyptian leaders are undertaking this cost-benefit analysis—should they lean more toward ideology or should they lean more toward pragmatism—through our foreign aid we actually have an opportunity to push them, to nudge them, to encourage them toward pragmatism.

I hope I can achieve bipartisan support for this amendment. I hope people will find it to be thoughtful and insightful. In the days to come, I look forward to addressing more questions that my colleagues may have on it. We are going to put some releases out about this, and I hope my colleagues will become interested in helping us achieve its passage.

Madam President, I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

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

Ms. MIKULSKI. Madam President, you have heard me speak to the Democratic caucus and to the press that moving the continuing resolution, or I should call it the continued funding resolution—remember, continuing the funding for fiscal year 2013 to our fiscal New Year's Eve, October 1, is our goal. We don't want a government shutdown, we don't want a government slamdown, lockdown. So we have been working very diligently on a bipartisan basis to fashion the bill that would get 60 votes so we would be filibuster-proof.

In the old days, majority ruled. Now it is supermajority. That is not a fight I am going to do here on this bill. My job is to keep the government funded, to work in an open, transparent, bipartisan and hopefully bicameral way.

I said this was like the last helicopter leaving a disaster area. I was trying to get the cargo on it to make sure we protected national security. We honored compelling human need, particularly for women and children in the area of education and health care, and we also looked at how we could generate jobs—not in government but government-generated jobs in the private sector, such as transportation, and make important investments in

science and technology that come up with the new ideas for the new products that will create jobs in our country and hopefully even for export around the world. That is what I have been trying to do.

I also had to give up a lot. I had to give up the funding for ObamaCare. This was not my choice. I know there will be an amendment offered to even defund it further. I happen to believe in what we did with President Obama's health care framework. I liked ending discrimination against women. I liked ending the discrimination against people who have children with preexisting conditions. I liked funding the amendment that provided access for women for mammograms, and for children for early detection and screening. But we could not do it.

One of the other things we could not do was we could not add a very modest pay raise for Federal employees. This bill will continue the existing pay rates. It is necessary to avoid a government shutdown for the entire government. Shutting down the government would make a tough situation worse for Federal employees. It would jeopardize our economic recovery. Shutting down the government would threaten the viability of small and medium-size businesses. It would even threaten the safety of our families, our economy, maybe even our country.

This is not a happy day for me and it is not a happy day for the millions of people who work diligently for the Federal Government. I have the great honor to represent 130,000 Federal employees—I wish you could tour Maryland with me, the way I have been up to your home State—each one doing important work for the Nation. And who are they, these employees? They are people who work at the National Institutes of Health, finding cures or ways to contain diseases—the next vaccine to help the flu endemic or protect us against a pandemic.

They are the civilian employees at the National Security Agency. We employ the largest number of mathematicians in the world. What do they do? They invent the kind of technology that breaks the codes and protects us—now in this whole new cyber domain. They are the people who run the weather satellites. The European model might have done a better job last week than they did, but do you know why? Because we have not had the resources to fund them the way the Europeans have.

I have employees at FDA right this very minute at their jobs, looking at medical devices to see if they are safe. Right at this very minute they are working with the private sector, which is bringing them new pharmaceuticals, new biotech and biologics that they could look at to see if they are safe and effective so they could go into clinical practice to help save lives here and be certified by the FDA, which would give us the ability to sell them around the world. We say to them: We know what you are doing, but tough luck; we can't give you a pay raise because we say we have out-of-control spending. I don't think we have out-of-control spending. Do we have to be more frugal? Do we have to be smarter? Do we have to get more value for the dollar? Absolutely. We are onto that. But don't attack Federal employees for the mismanagement of the Federal Government. That is right here. That is what we do. Don't blame them and don't make them pay the price. It is like making the middle class pay the price for more domestic cuts while we protect subsidies to corporate jets.

These 130,000 Federal employees help run the Hubbell Space Telescope, more discoveries—the most important telescope since Galileo invented the first one. I can't tell you how bad I feel that we are not at least giving them a .05-percent pay raise. And they are facing sequester, which could mean for many of them a 20-percent pay cut, if they are furloughed.

I visited NIH to see what was the impact of sequester. There was Carol Greider from Hopkins. She won the Nobel Prize 2 years ago. We are proud of her. NIH, within a week of my arrival there to meet with them, as I have done so often—they cut cancer rates 15 percent. Instead of pinning medals on them, we say: You don't get a pay raise. We have more important things to do with the money. You are the problem.

I don't think they are a problem at all. I think they are part of the solution—coming up with ways to help compelling human needs and creating jobs in our country in life sciences and giving us something to sell overseas. I think it is wrong to keep asking them for more when oil and gas companies make record profits and we don't ask them to give up tax breaks. It is wrong when we can't close one tax loophole that sends jobs overseas. When Senator MURRAY brings up her bill, I will talk more about these lavish tax earmarks. This is not the time and place. But it is time to say we have to protect our civil service.

Senator RUBIO just spoke about Egypt and he said they have to be able to govern. It is not enough to just bring down a dictator. That is an excellent point. We have to govern, too. And the hallmark of a democracy is a civil service that has integrity, that is promoted on the basis of meritocracy, that is independent of politics, doing missions that serve the Nation in research, technology, administering programs that help get transportation funding to Governors to build roads, bridges, and fund our pent-up demand for physical infrastructure, and then in human infrastructure—education, health care. That is what a democracy does and you need a civil service that is independent, has integrity and is promoted and hired and so on on the basis of meritocracy. What is the hallmark of a despotic, autocratic government, be they Communist or just plain despots? They are corrupt. You get ahead by taking a bribe, by doing a party favor, by looking the other way, on so many other things where you cannot even open a business or get a permit or so on unless there is a series of tipping fees. You can't get through an airport unless you bribe your way through it. That is what a corrupt, despotic, autocratic government does.

But when you visit democracies, the first thing you see is they have a civil service. What is the civil service? Integrity, competency, incorruptible. But we say: Yeah, yeah, you know, we know you have a Ph.D, or we know you are the blue-collar worker who manages the facilities at NIH to keep the lights on so the researchers can do their work. It is those people who help us have a great country, and a country we can be proud of.

I hope we resolve this sequester thing, with layoffs and furloughs and potential cuts of 20 percent. I wish we could have at least said one thing to the Federal employees, that we are at least going to give you a .05—a half of 1 percent—pay raise. I didn't like it because I thought it was so skimpy and Spartan.

But I will say this. The helicopter could not take off if it was on it. I think this is a terrible mistake. I hope in next year's regular order we can make this up. But I want to say to my Federal employees this was a Draconian choice. Do we try to give you a pay raise that would be important to you? Every penny and every dollar counts.

You led the Consumer Protection Agency. You certainly have the reputation, Madam President, of being a real fighter for the consumer, and you were the first in America to do a study that showed people were going bankrupt not because they bought too many Volvos, ate out too much, or lived a life of brie and wine and so on. It was because of medical catastrophes that faced them. You were the first to tell us about that, so you know about family incomes and what makes them and what breaks them. But I say this to you: Thank you for your work.

And I want to say to the Federal employees, thank you for your work. I wanted to do it with a modest pay raise, but right now my duty in the situation I find myself in reluctantly is that the way I serve you is to make sure there is no government shutdown. Because you know what. In my heart and in my mind—and as I see how different places function—there is no such thing as a nonessential Federal employee. Everybody at the workplace and who serves the Nation is doing their job with honesty, integrity, meritocracy, and is incorruptible. Let's make sure we honor them. We have to get this bill done. Let's get on the Murray budget and right our economy. Whatever problems we have, don't blame the Federal employees for the decisions made by the Congress to get us in the deficit and debt we are in.

They didn't do it, we did it. We should take the pay cut, not them.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Alabama.

Mr. SHELBY. Madam President, I have been listening to the remarks of my colleague from Maryland, and as we say down South, she is spot on. Before she became chairperson of the Appropriations Committee, she was a member of that committee for many years. We worked together when I was chairman of the subcommittee and she was the ranking member and when she was the chairperson and I was the ranking member. We both came from the House. We were on the same committee in the House. We worked together. We struggled with each other from time to time, but in the end, we knew we had to come up with a product, and that is what we are trying to do here today.

I was hoping we could bring this bill to the floor. As the Senator from Maryland has been saying, there are a lot of Members who want to offer amendments. We could offer some amendments and debate them tonight and perhaps even vote on them tonight. We know we have this deadline. At the end of March the CR expires, along with the funding of the Government of the United States. I don't think any party—Democrat or Republican—is interested in any way of going to the brink again. It serves no purpose. It creates uncertainty in the marketplace; it creates uncertainty with the role we play in the Senate and the House.

As the Senator from Maryland has said, we have worked together. We have a continuing resolution which came from the House, with the Department of Defense and the MILCON-VA—military construction and VA—in it to fund until September 30, which is the fiscal year. It is about 6 months from now. We have added to the legislation which we hope to bring before the Senate the Commerce, Justice, Science Subcommittee, of which she is the subcommittee chair and I am the ranking member. We have worked together on that. Agriculture, which affects everybody in this country one way or the other, and homeland security, which is the essence of the security of this country at home, have been added by the Senate.

We scrubbed these bills all weekend. Both sides scrubbed them. I have given up things I would personally like, and she has given up things, probably including some things from the Democratic leadership. We have done the same over here. We are doing this to show the American people that America comes first. We need to show we can work together. We need to pass these bills. The sooner they get up here, the sooner amendments can be offered by Republicans and Democrats, the sooner we get the process working and we get into the debates. That is what this legislative body is all about.

The CR we are bringing up—or the hybrid CR—is funded at the fiscal year 2012 levels, and it is consistent with the Budget Control Act. It would leave the sequester in effect. It gives some leeway—some but not unbridled—to enable the situation with sequester to maybe work a little better. I think it is good policy and bad procedure.

We are going to have to cut because we cannot sustain deficits of $1 trillion. We cannot continue to go down the road we are on. We have to change the trajectory of this country. We cannot sustain ourselves if we have a $20 trillion or $25 trillion debt. Whether you are a Democrat, Republican, Libertarian, Independent, or whatever you are, you should want a strong monetary policy and a strong economic policy.

We have a few more years left, and this is a good start here in the Senate. If we can get this bill up and pass it, then the House will do something. We will fund the government until September 30, which is what we are supposed to do. If we do that, then we can start on the 2014 budget. From there we can perhaps go to regular order. That is what we wish to do in the appropriations process so we are not going from crisis to crisis.

What we have done in the House and the Senate—and the White House is involved in this too—in recent years is we have been lurching from crisis to crisis, and then we come up to the deadline and people say: Oh, we have to have certainty. So we kick the can down the road a few more yards. That is not the way to do business. This country is too important. The business community needs certainty, people in government need certainty, and I think this is a good first start. I hope we can get this process moving.

I thank the Chair.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Michigan.

Ms. STABENOW. Madam President, as I rise to talk about the budget that was released in the House of Representatives, I want to first commend our chair Senator MIKULSKI and ranking member Senator SHELBY for working together. I could not agree more with what Senator SHELBY said about getting back to regular order and getting back together. This is an example of what we need to do. I want to commend both Senators.

We obviously have very different points of view. People can come together and listen to each other and be willing to compromise, which is not a bad thing. I don't know any part of life where we don't compromise. I have been trying to figure that one out. When you have children, wouldn't it be nice not to have to compromise? Somehow we always have to. I want to commend both of our leaders on the Appropriations Committee.

I am very hopeful we can return to regular order and hash out our very different perspectives and very different views of the country. I think we have seen that today with Chairman RYAN with the Republican budget. We will see a different view tomorrow with Chairman MURRAY coming through with a budget as we work through the budget in committee this week and then on the floor. This way reasonable people can sit down and listen to each other and find a path forward.

Most importantly, I think if we listen to the American people we represent—their values and their priorities—we can move forward. I do feel strongly that what has been released today in the House is the wrong set of values; it is the wrong approach. Actually, I am surprised we are seeing the same kind of budget we have seen for the last couple of years come out of the House—particularly one where the public spoke so strongly against the foundations of what is in that budget. It has been called a balanced budget. It is anything but balanced.

Overall, it is my understanding that there is an identification of some $5 trillion that will be cut in spending, but nobody says where. Then they say: Oh, the budget is balanced. Well, as our leaders on appropriations know, we actually have to get in and say where it is going to be cut so we can balance the budget, which this does not do. It does not balance the budget, and it is certainly unbalanced when it comes to the values represented in the budget.

I have to start with the one issue that is so concerning to me, and that is the whole question of Medicare. Once again we are seeing in the Republican budget of the House the effort to eliminate Medicare. It basically eliminates Medicare as an insurance plan. It basically says: You go out and find private insurance. They changed the names to different things. They tried to make it sound better, but it all comes down to the fact that people will be given a voucher. Good luck trying to find private insurance.

It was the private insurance sector and the lack of affordable insurance for seniors which created Medicare in 1965. As we get older, we lose more health care because we are more expensive to cover. Before Medicare, it was very difficult to find affordable insurance. In fact, it was impossible for many people. As Americans we came together and said: If you are 65 or older or if you are disabled in this country, you have the right to have insurance and health care available and affordable to you. We created a health insurance system called Medicare. By the way, Medicare costs dramatically less to administer than any private sector plan. We are talking 3 percent or 4 percent to administer Medicare as opposed to 15 percent, 20 percent, 25 percent going to administrative costs and profits and so on. So it is very efficient.

There are issues we need to address, and we have been doing that. In fact, we have put in place cost savings over the next 10 years by eliminating overpayment to insurance companies that do what is called Medicare Advantage. It is interesting that while Chairman RYAN and the House Republicans say

they are going to do away with Medicare, they put the $700 billion we saved by stopping overpayments to insurance companies—as well as doing other things for prevention and cost savings—in their budget. After criticizing it, they want the savings, but they turn around and want to eliminate Medicare. It is a very interesting combination of things here that is a hocus-pocus kind of approach with smoke-and-mirrors as far as how they are coming up with their budget.

The bottom line is very clear: It guts Medicare. It guts Medicare, but not in order to fund or strengthen Medicare services or health care services in some way. The astounding thing is they continue to put forward a budget that guts Medicare in order to continue tax giveaways for the very wealthy and well-connected people in this country. It makes no sense. It makes no sense, and our budget will be very different than this one.

Medicare has been a great American success story. Medicare and Social Security have lifted a generation of Americans out of poverty. It has given them the ability to live longer and healthier lives. It has allowed my mom, who is on her way to 87, to play with her now great-grandchildren. By the way, my three grandchildren are the most beautiful children in the world. My mom is able to play with them and be healthy and active because of something called Medicare which was put in place to give her the opportunity to pay into a system so she could have health care and be able to live a longer life. That is a great American success story.

We know we are living longer. The greatness of Medicare is that people are healthier and living longer, and so we know we have to do some refiguring here and have some savings. We are already doing that. Over the next 10 years we are putting in place $700 billion in savings by focusing more on prevention. We are focused more on wellness visits and helping people on the front end before they get very sick, as well as cutting overpayments.

We are now hearing that Medicare is going to have a $500 billion savings as well, and that insurance rates and growth have actually slowed. We are seeing the actuaries reconfigure the savings. CBO, the budget office, reconfigured the cost of Medicare and Medicaid to create more savings because of things we have begun to do. Thanks to health care reform we are able to focus more on prevention and people being able to see a doctor. We are able to do all those things that save money without cutting health care for people.

We are very committed to making sure we have savings in Medicare and that we strengthen Medicare for the future. Whatever decisions we need to make, we need to do that for Social Security and other areas as well. The difference we have is, we think it should exist. We think it should exist as a health insurance plan. I cannot imagine any way in which our Senate majority would ever vote for what is in the budget that was released by the Republican caucus today. So we are looking at very different priorities.

In the area of Medicaid, we are also looking at very different priorities. The majority of Medicaid, in terms of the number of people, are children; the majority of money under Medicaid is actually spent on seniors—on nursing homes, people who are in extended care facilities, and so on. Again, when we think about the budget being released in the House of Representatives by Chairman RYAN and the Republicans, they go right to Medicare, eliminate Medicare as an insurance plan, and then they block grant and cut Medicaid, which goes to the poorest seniors in nursing homes, so they get a double whammy in the budget that has been released by Chairman RYAN and the House of Representatives.

We also know they are slashing investments for middle-class families as well as the vulnerable, as well as public safety, police, and fire. I just left my mayors from Michigan coming in and talking about what has happened to them on the frontlines. We have trickle-down cuts, and they end up with it all in their laps, having to figure out how to provide local services. When we talk about the fact that there would be dramatic disinvestments or cuts in public safety, police, fire, and so on, they are appalled and desperately worried about how they are going to make sure they can respond to the people who live in their communities.

In education, cuts, of course, to Head Start, financial help for people to be able to go to college, all of which are good things.

Roads and bridges.

Another piece that is very concerning to me is our nutrition programs which have been put in place for families who have challenges. People have lost their jobs and they need some help with putting food on the table for their families. We are seeing that program, the SNAP program—Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program—gutted with $160 billion—$160 billion in cuts that would leave millions of children, millions of families without help. Interestingly, the spending on the nutrition programs, on SNAP, is actually going down. Why? Because it is there when people need it, when they have a crisis, and then the spending is not used when families go back to work. So we are seeing over $11 billion in decreases in spending because the economy is improving and people are going back to work. That is the way we want to bring spending down.

Interestingly, within my purview as chair of the Agriculture Committee, I am also deeply concerned about the cuts in the Republican budget in the House to crop insurance. Within our farm bill, we have two disaster assistance programs. One is for families, which is nutrition assistance. It goes up and down with the economy. The other is crop insurance for farmers and ranchers, which goes up and down with the economy.

We have had huge droughts and late freezes on our orchards and others where folks have been decimated, but because of crop insurance this year, rather than doing ad hoc disaster assistance all over the country, we have crop insurance. People buy crop insurance are covered if they need it, and we have been able to see farmers sustain themselves because crop insurance has worked. So crop insurance costs again go up and down based on whether there are disasters. Supplemental nutrition goes up or down whether or not there is a family disaster. Both of those are hit in this budget and make absolutely no sense.

I can assure my colleagues that in the farm bill we will present again to colleagues as we did last year—and we are so grateful for the bipartisan support we had—we will strongly support efforts around crop insurance as well as nutrition.

Finally, let me just say that very different values are presented in the budget presented by Chairman RYAN and the Republicans in the House by going after the middle class, actually raising middle-class taxes in order to fund more tax breaks for the wealthy and the special interests in the country; gutting Medicare and using that money for additional tax cuts for the very wealthy; gutting our investments in science, innovation, and education to grow the economy in order to pay for more tax cuts for the wealthy.

This story seems to go on and on and on. It always comes back to the same place: The wealthy, the well connected, the special interests do very well. Middle-class families get hit, seniors get hit, the vulnerable get hit, children are hit and are asked to pay the tab for trying to bring down a deficit that, frankly, they didn't create. So that is the story in the House.

Our chairwoman of the Budget Committee, Senator MURRAY, will present a very different story tomorrow, one that is focused on growth in the economy, supporting the middle class, protecting Medicare and Medicaid and Social Security for the future, and making investments that grow the economy.

One of the things I know after working on the issue of jobs for a long time is that we will never get out of debt with 12 million people out of work in this country, so we better be focused on jobs and supporting the private sector to create jobs—large businesses, manufacturers, small businesses, partnering on innovation, education, and so on. That has to be part of our long-term strategy to get out of debt as well as making smart cuts and other kinds of smart investments.

Again, I come to the floor to commend colleagues who are on the floor showing the right way to do things—to work together, to listen to each other, to work across the aisle on a bipartisan

basis to get things done. We have a very different picture going on in the budget committees. We have a long way to go when we start with eliminating Medicare as we know it, but the House Republicans are saying, no, we want to strengthen Medicare for the future and keep it intact for seniors. All the other issues we are in a very different place. But I think it is very important that we make a commitment to listen to each other and do our best to find a path forward. We need to find a path. People are counting on us to get things done. They are counting on us to both grow the economy and create jobs and have a strong middle class and they are counting on us to reduce the deficit, all of which we can do if we are willing to work together and listen to each other and find a path forward.

I thank my colleagues for giving me the time. I wish to congratulate them again on the work they are doing. I ask that we work together as we go forward in completing the task on growing the economy and reducing the deficit.

Thank you very much.

Mr. SHELBY. 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. COATS. 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. COATS. Madam President, when I go back to Indiana and meet with Hoosiers, they often ask why Washington seems to experience a crisis every few weeks. It is a debt limit battle. It is a threat of a government shutdown. It is the fiscal cliff on New Year's Eve. It is the sequester. And the list goes on and on, including the funding battle we are in now. Of course, the next round of the debt limit debate is scheduled for May, and on and on it goes. Hoosiers and I think most Americans—and I think most Members of this body—are getting awfully tired of this soap opera drama that occurs every few weeks here.

I think we need to move to the point where we can address the major issues. One of the steps in doing that is to fund this government for the next 6 months. I do not know of anyone here who wants a government shutdown. We do have some urgent things we need to do. We do need to address our funding imbalance that is significantly creating a major problem for us, but in order to get there, we have to do some interim things here to keep the country functioning. We need to commit to go forward and do the big things. In the meantime a 6-month funding resolution has been brought forward here. There are things in this that none of us are going to like. Everybody is going to have problems with parts of this. Everybody is going to think it should have been fashioned just a little bit differently.

The leaders of the Appropriations Committee have put a great effort into constructing a resolution that I think will adequately fund this government going forward, but they do so with the understanding that the commitment to address our spending issues and the commitment to do everything we can to put together a large plan in order to deal with outgoing issues is absolutely necessary. Hopefully, that will be accomplished in the next few months. To start that, you have to have a budget.

I am pleased now that we are going to be taking up a budget debate in terms of the next fiscal year's funding, and we will be taking that up next week. So these two measures together, with the sequester that is already in place and actions that have already been taken, hopefully will be putting us on a path to fiscal health and solvency.

Every family, every business, even local and state governments have to operate on a budget or they cannot maintain and establish the kind of fiscal discipline necessary to get to the point where they are not spending more money than they are taking in. We have seen a cataclysmic plunge into debt that has enormous impact on the future of this country, and we have to address that.

Vice President BIDEN once said: Show me your budget, and I will tell you what you value. Well, for 4 years we have been waiting to see a Senate budget, so we do not know what is valued. Finally, we are getting to the point where we will address that.

I think the responsibility to provide a budget on which to operate is not only lawful, as it is currently enshrined in our statutes, but it is a moral obligation we must fulfill as a body. Without casting blame on one side or the other, it is time that we go through the budget process and establish the direction in which this government will go in terms of spending for the next fiscal year.

Given our soaring national debt and out-of-control spending, eventually we are going to have to make very tough choices that we have been avoiding for years. The more we prolong these challenges we face and the longer we wait to act, the harder it is going to be. We have the responsibility to wisely spend the taxpayers' dollars and not to ask more of them than is absolutely necessary to perform our essential functions.

I am urging my colleagues to go forward in doing what is necessary to keep this government operating but do so with the commitment that we will address these tough questions, that we will address the necessary procedures and make the tough, necessary decisions to put our country on a fiscal path to health. Without that, we are jeopardizing our future, and we are condemning millions of Americans to unemployment or underemployment. We are growing at half the historic rate and have been for the last 4 years. If this stands the way it is, we will continue to see a country in decline, and, more importantly, we will continue to see people hurting. We will continue to see people without meaningful work. We will continue to see an inability to provide the kinds of opportunities, innovation, and creativity that have made this country so successful in the past.

So with that, Madam President, there does not appear to be anyone ready to speak. I am happy to stop now, 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. BLUMENTHAL. 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. BLUMENTHAL. Madam President, in the midst of this momentous debate, truly one which will determine the future of the country, I rise on a matter of equal importance, in my view.

Today we welcomed to the Capitol 26 bicyclists, riders who left Saturday morning on this journey. This journey led them to travel the roads from Newtown, CT, to dramatize the importance of actions against gun violence in the United States.

I have said about Newtown that we saw on December 14 of last year enormous evil and depravity in the deaths of 20 beautiful, innocent children and 6 dedicated, courageous educators who literally perished trying to save the lives of those children. We saw evil that day in Connecticut, but we also saw enormous goodness and heroism in the educators who sought to save those children and the first responders who charged into the school. They did so not knowing what would befall them, what they would see, and thereby stopped the massacre.

The community came together in support of the families and all who were affected so deeply by that tragedy. This community has demonstrated enormous strength and courage over these months. It is an example of the quintessential values which make us proud to be an American.

The riders who came to the Capitol, who rode from Newtown on a rough and difficult journey, also showed something profoundly significant and important about Newtown as a community, as well as about themselves. They included as an honorary rider a parent of one of the victims, Chris McDonnell, who was at the departure, and his wife, Lynn, who was also there at the beginning, although she didn't ride.

They carried with them, those 26 riders, the memory of Grace McDonnell. As one of them said—, Monte Frank, who organized and led the effort—Grace was on their wheels. They carried with them the memory of Grace, but they also carried the hopes and

hearts of America. Everywhere they went on that journey, people stopped them, thanked them and honored them, as I seek to do today here on the floor of the Senate.

I ask unanimous consent to have printed in the RECORD two letters, both written to the chairman of the Judiciary Committee and the ranking member, along with Senators MURPHY and myself, letters written by Lynn and Chris McDonnell and a separate letter written by the families of some of those victims.

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

MARCH 11, 2013.

Hon. PATRICK LEAHY,
Chairman, Senate Judiciary Committee, Russell Senate Building, Washington, DC.
Hon. RICHARD BLUMENTHAL,
Senate Judiciary Committee, Hart Senate Office Building, Washington, DC.
Hon. CHUCK GRASSLEY,
Ranking Republican, Senate Judiciary Committee, Hart Senate Office Building, Washington, DC.
Hon. CHRIS MURPHY,
Senate Judiciary Committee, Dirksen Senate Office Building, Washington, DC.

DEAR CHAIRMAN LEAHY AND SENATORS GRASSLEY, BLUMENTHAL, AND MURPHY: We are 32 family members of victims who were killed in the massacre at Sandy Hook Elementary School on December 14, 2012—innocent children and their educators responsibly going about their day.

No one can describe our pain and the brutal day-to-day emotions we suffer. No one can bring our loved ones back and no one from our community of Newtown, Connecticut will ever go back to ''normal.''

In the midst of our anguish we have learned about the dangerous loopholes in our nation's gun laws and we are compelled to speak out to save others from suffering what we have endured. We are writing today to express our deep conviction and support for the President's plan to reduce gun violence in America.

Specifically we are asking members of Congress to:

1. Require a criminal background check for every gun sold in America that includes a review of all disqualifying records and meaningful record keeping for all sales—in the same manner that Federally licensed dealers are currently required;

2. Ban military-style assault weapons and high-capacity ammunition magazines; and

3. Make gun trafficking a federal crime, with real penalties for straw purchasers;

The epidemic of injury and death from gun violence is a plague on America, especially since the toll it takes on our families is preventable. Our nation's families deserve to be safe and free in their schools, movie theaters, workplaces and their homes. We ask Congress, in honor and memory of our loved ones, to support the measures that the President has put forward to help stem the epidemic of gun violence.

Our precious children and family members who were so brutally murdered on December 14th deserve nothing less.

Sincerely,

Jackie Barden, Mother of Daniel Barden; Mark Barden, Father of Daniel Barden; Neil Heslin, Father of Jesse Lewis; Veronique Pozner, Mother of Noah Pozner; Len Pozner, Father of Noah Pozner; Gilles Rousseau, Father of Lauren Rousseau; Teresa Rousseau, Mother of Lauren Rousseau; Andrew Rousseau, Brother of Lauren Rousseau; Matthew Rousseau, Brother of Lauren Rousseau; Suzanne Connors, Sister of Mary Sherlach; Jane Dougherty, Sister of Mary Sherlach; Joseph Greene, Brother of Mary Sherlach; Carlos Soto, Father of Victoria Soto; Donna Soto, Mother of Victoria Soto; Carlee Soto, Sister of Victoria Soto; Carlos M. Soto, Brother of Victoria Soto.

Jillian Soto, Sister of Victoria Soto; Donald Fagan, Grandfather of Victoria Soto; Debra Cronk, Aunt and Godmother of Victoria Soto; Robert Cronk, Uncle of Victoria Soto; Dean Fagan, Uncle and Godfather of Victoria Soto; Denise Fagan, Aunt of Victoria Soto; Don Fagan, Uncle of Victoria Soto; Linda Fagan, Aunt of Victoria Soto; Alex Fagan, cousin of Victoria Soto; Brianne Cronk, cousin of Victoria Soto; Christopher Fagan, cousin of Victoria Soto; Donald Fagan, cousin of Victoria Soto; Douglas Fagan, cousin of Victoria Soto; Heather Cronk, cousin of Victoria Soto; Wesley Cronk, cousin of Victoria Soto; Zachary Fagan, cousin of Victoria Soto.

MARCH 11, 2013.

Hon. PATRICK LEAHY,
Chairman, Senate Judiciary Committee, Russell Senate Building, Washington, DC.
Hon. RICHARD BLUMENTHAL,
Senate Judiciary Committee, Hart Senate Office Building, Washington, DC.
Hon. CHUCK GRASSLEY,
Ranking Republican, Senate Judiciary Committee, Hart Senate Office Building, Washington, DC.
Hon. CHRIS MURPHY,
Senate Judiciary Committee, Dirksen Senate Office Building, Washington, DC.

DEAR SENATORS LEAHY, GRASSLEY, BLUMENTHAL AND MURPHY, On December 14th our family was forever torn apart by gun violence. On that day we lost the love and light of our family, our daughter Grace. Grace and nineteen of her 1st grade classmates and six teachers were senselessly murdered at the Sandy Hook Elementary School. One can not describe the pain and anguish that our family has experienced, a pain that goes beyond just our immediate family, but permeates our entire community.

In the wake of our darkest day, we have become acutely aware that the state of our gun laws in America is at best ineffective. While no one thing led to the devastation that occurred in Sandy Hook on December 14th, it will be a compressive approach that leads us to preventing such loss of life in the future.

We are writing today to express our conviction and support for the President's plan to reduce gun violence in America. Specifically we are appealing to members of Congress to:

Require a comprehensive criminal background check for every gun sold in America that includes a review of all disqualifying records and meaningful record keeping for all sales—in the same manner that Federally licensed gun dealers are required;

Ban all military-style assault weapons and high capacity ammunition magazines;

Establish gun trafficking as a federal crime, with substantial penalties for straw purchasers.

We hope that all of our nation's elected representatives will step forward with the moral courage and commitment needed to tackle the grave issue of gun violence that confronts us. We ask that action is chosen over inaction when it comes to protecting the most vulnerable among us, our children.

We appeal to you as parents to honor the memories of those lives lost at Sandy Hook and support the measures that the President has put forward to reduce the epidemic of gun violence.

That much is owed to our children.

Sincerely,

CHRIS & LYNN MCDONNELL.

Mr. BLUMENTHAL. These letters summarize the reason for their journey in very specific terms, stating:

In the midst of our anguish we have learned about the dangerous loopholes in the Nation's gun laws, and we are compelled to speak out to save others from suffering what we have endured. We are writing today to express our deep conviction and support for the President's plan to reduce gun violence in America.

Specifically, we are asking Members of Congress to:

1. Require a criminal background check for every gun sold in America that includes a review of all disqualifying records and meaningful recordkeeping for all sales—in the same manner that federally licensed dealers are currently required;

2. Ban military-style assault weapons and high-capacity ammunition magazines; and

3. Make gun trafficking a Federal crime, with real penalties for straw purchasers.

The epidemic of injury and death from gun violence is a plague on America, especially since the toll it takes on our families is preventable.

The letters go on.

As I told them when they arrived, an event which was electric, literally in the shadow of the Capitol, their journey sent a message. Very simply, all of us who believe we must stop a scourge and epidemic of gun violence, all of us must keep on pedaling. We must do as they did. Even though our road, like theirs, may be rough and uphill at times, we need to keep on pedaling and working. Never give up. We need to keep faith with those victims and their families, the 26 victims of that massacre at Sandy Hook. When they rode to Congress, their message to us is we need to keep faith with those victims and assure Newtown never happens again. If it happened in Newtown, it can happen anywhere in America. It is not just a mass shooting which is involved, it is the 2,500 people who have been victims of gun violence since December 14, all around Connecticut, all around the Nation, not only in communities such as Newtown, the quintessential New England town, but on the streets of Bridgeport, New Haven, Hartford, in neighborhoods, in big cities, rural areas, and suburban towns.

Team 26 is really Team Connecticut and Team America. It brings those values, courage, and strength Newtown had shown to Congress. Congress needs to heed and hear the country, just as people on their route honored Team 26. The American people believe we must do something about gun violence in America. They believe overwhelmingly, the polls show 80, 90 percent on all of these issues. They want action from this Congress.

As the President of the United States said to all of us in his State of the Union, the American people want a vote. The victims' families from Tucson, Virginia Tech, and Aurora deserve a vote. This is why Team 26 made this journey, and why they embody the conscience of America. The letters they

have written to Senators here call for action on measures which are common sense and common ground. We can reach a bipartisan compromise if we recognize the carnage, death, and destruction that is the result of gun violence in America.

These measures are law enforcement tools. Background checks enable enforcement of existing laws, the prohibition against criminals, drug addicts, domestic abusers, and the seriously mentally ill from purchasing guns, not just from federally licensed dealers. Background checks are necessary to enforce that law, just as is the prohibition on purchase of ammunition by those same categories of people. Likewise, the Federal ban on illegal trafficking and straw purchases is necessary to enforce existing prohibition. We have work to do.

I want to conclude by thanking those who are all family, who have stood strong and spoken out. Every time they do, it is with grief and pain. Anyone who spent time with them—and I have been privileged to spend hours and hours, days, over these past months with those families, as well as first responders, who still bear the scars, emotional scars, which are deeply felt.

I have great admiration for their courage and strength. I hope this body will take heart from it and will take their leadership as a message we must act, we must vote, we must do something about gun violence in America.

I am proud to welcome Team 26.

I ask unanimous consent the full list of all riders and their support group be printed in the RECORD.

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

Rider #1. Monte Frank, who is here today with his wife Leah, and his daughters Becky and Sarah; Bill Muzzio Rider; Chris Peck, Newtown, Connecticut Rider; John Funk, South Kent, Connecticut Rider; Stephen Badger, Roxbury, Connecticut Rider; Andrea Myers, Danbury, Connecticut Rider; Mike Andrews, Danbury, Connecticut Rider; Tom Officer, Litchfield, Connecticut Rider; Jeremy Brazeal, Manchester, Connecticut Rider; Officer Jeff Silver, Newtown, Connecticut Rider; Matt Baldwin, Redding, Connecticut Rider; Jonathan Lowenstein, North Kingstown, Rhode Island Rider; Lieutenant Gary Lyke, Brookfield, Connecticut Rider; Michael Magur, Newburgh, New York Rider; Andy Officer, Goshen, Connecticut Rider; Fred Thomas, Cape Elizabeth, Maine Rider; Carl Reglar, Mt. Vernon, New York Rider; Wayne Prescott, Litchfield, Connecticut Rider; Kevin Fitzmaurice, Middlebury, Connecticut Rider; Megan Cea, West Harrison, New York Rider; Brian Suto, Oxford, Connecticut Rider; Matt Emeott, Woodbury, Connecticut Rider; John Ford, West Harrison, New York Rider; Aidan Charles, Middletown, Connecticut Rider; Heather Peck, Newtown, Connecticut Honorary Team; and Rider: Chris McDonnell, Sandy Hook, Connecticut.

And their Support Crew: Sean Cavanaugh, Danbury, Connecticut Support Crew; Becky Frank, Sandy Hook, Connecticut Support Crew; Adam Silbert, New York, NY Support Crew; Peter Olson, Bethel, Connecticut Support Crew; Greg Meghani, Bethlehem, Connecticut Support Crew; and Mike Conlan, Ridgefield, Connecticut.

Mr. BLUMENTHAL. I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Maryland.

Ms. MIKULSKI. Madam President, I wish to comment on the remarks by our colleague from Connecticut, Senator BLUMENTHAL.

I say to the Senator, we in Maryland want to once again express our condolences to the people of Newtown. We have lost people in gun violence, nothing like you have, but we have it there. Most recently when a high school opened, a young man who needed mental help came in and one of our young men was shot. Fortunately, he survived. He is an intellectually challenged young man, full of spunk. He has been made an honorary Raven, honorary Oriole. Lady Gaga, who is his favorite, even sent him CDs.

We need to deal with this issue. We need to deal with guns and—I agree with the NRA—we need to deal with mental health. We need to put mental health in the Federal checkbook to train the professionals, do the research and know we are doing the right thing.

One of the fathers from the Newtown tragedy has cycled through Maryland to raise the issue through all of the awful rain in the only way he can to speak up for his daughter.

I want to congratulate the Senator and his colleague from Connecticut, Senator MURPHY, for continuing to be steadfast. I wish to say we support you not only with words but deeds. It is wonderful to express our condolences, to send toys to the children, to do all of that. We need to put money in the Federal checkbook. We must first of all confirm our BATF Administrator. The very person in charge of guns should be confirmed. We need to then look at our own legislation about illegal guns, all of what the Senator is talking about.

On the mental health side, the Senator was a member of the HELP Committee. I know now Senator MURPHY of Connecticut is on the HELP Committee, the Presiding Officer also. We need to look, even now as we look at the CR, how we may do the right research.

I wish to close with one melancholy thing, which is a consequence of the sequester. Senator HARKIN with the HELP Committee held a hearing on mental health. The Director of the Institute on Mental Health was on that committee, and I believe the Presiding Officer was there. I asked him what would be the consequences of sequester on the National Institute of Mental Health, since everyone wants mental health, and that is the research.

This is what he replied: We are not going to fund certain research projects.

Let me tell you one that holds such promise it is going to be a sad day for us not to do it. Here is the test—and, please, I am not a scientist and certainly not a neurological scientist. But there are certain kinds of mental health problems that come on onset, particularly on young males, who are postpuberty, often after high school or as they go into college. As in Aurora, the young man who shot the people was already a graduate student. These things come on.

The Director of the NIH mental health said they wanted to do research for early detection, biochemical as well as environmental. This is not to earmark, paint them in a corner, or push them in a corner and stigmatize them, but they could receive that help early.

We need to know more. Whether that study is a good idea—I am sure it is, it is peer reviewed—I wish to say to the Senator, the reason we need to get this bill done, the budget done, and go on to regular order is to actually put money in the Federal checkbook to do what the American people want. We can do great gun control legislation on the this floor, but I want to support that mental health component.

I call upon the NRA and all of its members to support us to move the Federal budget, look at the mental health aspects. I believe we would have bipartisan support. I believe we would have grassroots support. At the end of the day not only would we prevent gun violence, but along the way, the President's brain initiative. We could learn a lot more and we could help our people. This is what I mean when I say we need to fund compelling human need and do the research. But I salute the Senator for his advocacy. And my condolences to the people of Newtown, but not with words, let's get to the deeds and let's get the deeds done.

Madam President, I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Connecticut.

Mr. BLUMENTHAL. I wish to briefly thank my great colleague and friend for those remarks stated so eloquently. I could not agree more. Mental health has to be part of a comprehensive strategy, as does school safety. No single measure for gun violence control can do it alone.

That is why I began by referring to the momentous debate we are having today about the future of initiatives such as mental health. And I join in challenging the NRA—for all its opposition, staunch and steadfast, against any measure trying to stem or stop gun violence in America—to join in seeking common ground on mental health initiatives and other measures that are common sense. I urge gun owners—responsible people who enjoy recreation and hunting—as well as others who are intent on stopping violence in America to support these mental health services for diagnosis and treatment. That is why I have joined in those measures as well for the Judiciary Committee and the HELP Committee.

But I really wish to thank the Senator from Maryland for her incomparable and invaluable leadership on this issue.

I thank the Chair.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Alabama.

Mr. SHELBY. Madam President, I think today has been an interesting day here in the Senate. We have been trying—the Senator from Maryland and I—to get the bill we have been talking about to the floor so people will have an opportunity to offer their amendments, to debate their amendments, and we in the Senate will be able to vote them up or down. That is what this process is about.

Although I know it is getting late in the evening, I am hoping we can lock in some time agreement with the leadership. I am sure Senator REID and Senator MCCONNELL are working on that, as well as Senator MCCAIN and Senator COBURN. But if we could get started on this tomorrow and have a healthy debate, there are some issues that ought to be brought up.

I wish to take a few minutes to review a few of the outlines of what we hope to accomplish this week—what is in this bill and what is not.

What this bill would do is allow agencies the additional ability to address priorities in light of sequester cuts. We all know they were Draconian—good policy, as I said, but bad process. The proposed legislation the Senator from Maryland and I are bringing to the floor, hopefully, is in full compliance with the spending caps required by the Budget Control Act, and it brings, with the sequester, the total to under $1 trillion. So we are doing some serious cutting, but we ought to do it wisely by what we do.

Both sides have given in to get to where we are. There is no new funding for ObamaCare, no new funding for Dodd-Frank, no State-specific earmarks.

The bill enables the Department of Defense—and we all care about security—to better implement sequester, and it increases the DOD transfer authority for reprogramming, thus mitigating a portion of the national security impact of the sequester and other across-the-board cuts.

The bill also ensures that veterans programs receive adequate funding—$2.5 billion above the fiscal year 2012 levels—for VA discretionary spending. So that is a good increase.

The bill requires greater accountability of government employees attending conferences, including associated expenses, so that we don't read these horror stories of people going to conventions and living high off the hog while people are struggling to make ends meet.

The bill also prohibits the transfer of Guantanamo prisoners to the United States, among other things.

The legislation would provide additional funding for worldwide diplomatic and facility security in the post-Benghazi environment. When we send somebody overseas, we want to make sure, whether it is an Ambassador, an employee, or somebody going temporarily, that they are as safe as we can keep them. We know we live in a dangerous world, and some parts of the world are more dangerous than others.

This bill provides over a $3.1 billion increase over fiscal year 2012 in assistance to Israel. Israel is the only democracy—I believe a real one—in that area and is a great friend of ours.

The legislation keeps in place the pay freeze for Federal employees for the remainder of this year, the fiscal year ending September 2013.

The bill prohibits distribution of any funds to ACORN, its subsidiaries, or successors.

It rescinds $50 million from the EPA to restrict its ability to implement certain environmental regulations.

It rescinds $10 million from the ObamaCare, as we call it, Independent Payment Advisory Board, which is the rationing board, some people call it.

The bill continues a provision to clarify the prohibition of Federal funds being used to lobby State and local legislative and executive authorities.

These are just some of the provisions in here, but I think tomorrow we will talk about more. Overall, I think we have put together a worthy and credible package, and I hope the Senate will soon get a chance to start debating it seriously.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Maryland.

Ms. MIKULSKI. Madam President, I would like to compliment the Senator from Alabama, my vice chairman. He outlined how we tried to look at this bill and scrub it for nonsense or no sense, OK?

I know we are waiting for the Senator from Oklahoma, Mr. COBURN, to lift his hold. I know he is looking closely at the bill. A few years ago, when I was moving the Commerce-Justice bill, he found that one of the agencies was hosting a conference and they were paying $4 a meatball, so we called it the lavish meatball amendment. Often, the Senator from Oklahoma has great ideas. You know, Madam President, that people from Oklahoma have great ideas, and so we would like him, as quickly as he can, to lift the hold so we can move our bill and he can offer amendments. And I hope he is scrubbing it. I am sure somewhere he will find a rogue meatball. I don't want to minimize what he is doing. He really does scrub for foolishness and folly, and if he has a foolishness-and-folly amendment, I probably will support it. I can't tolerate it either. My constituents really work hard for their money, and they want the money they pay in taxes to work hard for them.

So, Madam President, I see the distinguished majority leader here on the floor. I am hoping that we are going to have a solution to some of that deadlock here.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The majority leader.

Mr. REID. Madam President, it used to be, before the last Congress, the Senate had two speeds: one for deliberation and one for getting things done. Senators saved the deliberation speed for truly great issues of the day, and when we needed to get the country's business done, we came together to work things out. It used to be that all appropriations legislation was business the Senate came together to work on and to finish. Sometimes it was 1 day, sometimes it took 4 or 5 days, but we got it done.

These days—for the last 3 years—the Senate has one speed: slow—real slow. And we haven't had appropriations bills for a number of years because we haven't been able to do them because of the speed—slow. Even when we are talking about preventing a government shutdown, even when there is broad agreement across party lines that we want to prevent a government shutdown, even then we are stuck in slow.

Madam President, when we got the bill from the House, I didn't like it especially, but, as I said earlier—and I still feel this way—the Speaker at least got it to us at a decent hour, not at the last minute. These two good Senators, Shelby and Mikulski, worked very hard for days to get this done. Now, frankly, I didn't like some of the things Senator MIKULSKI agreed to, but I was with her, and we agreed to do the things together because we wanted to get a bill done. We swallowed a lot of pride. She gave up things in her bill she has worked on for decades and gave in to others so that they would feel better about this bill.

So then we come here today and are blindsided. This bill has been in the public for days. It passed the House last week, and 85 to 90 percent of the bill that is the so-called amendment was in the House bill.

We are going to finish this bill or not finish it before the recess. If we can't get 60 votes, then it will fail and the government will shut down but not for anything we have done—not for anything we have done. We have a few Senators who are doing everything they can—and have been doing it for years—to throw a monkey wrench into everything we do here. We should have been legislating today.

I came to the floor last week and said we are going to have a CR, we are going to have amendments. I said that when we opened the Senate yesterday. I have tried my best to move to this bill.

The Senate cannot continue like this. I took everyone at good faith at the beginning of this Congress when we made a few changes. I thought those changes would be helpful. To this point, they have done zero because we have had no cooperation from the Republicans.

The Senate has changed, Madam President. I am sorry the Presiding Officer, who has a wonderful background, has not seen the Senate and how it really should work. A small group of Senators has kept the Senate in slow, slow gear. They have prevented us from even starting debate on this important bill. We can't even start the debate on it. People want to offer amendments.

We had Senator HARKIN waiting to offer an amendment, and we had Senator CRUZ here waiting to offer amendments. They can't. We are through for the night, so we have wasted basically 2 days when we could have been considering amendments to this bill, and that is a shame.

We have a limited number of Senate days. In our lives, we have a limited number of days. The time of the Senate is too precious to spend it this way, so I am filing cloture on this bill. We will have a vote on proceeding to it on Thursday. How about that? Isn't that great? We are going to vote to proceed to it. So we will be on the bill Thursday, and we can start offering amendments on Thursday.

CLOTURE MOTION

I have a cloture motion at the desk, Madam President.

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

The bill clerk read as follows:

CLOTURE MOTION

We, the undersigned Senators, in accordance with the provisions of rule XXII of the Standing Rules of the Senate, hereby move to bring to a close debate on the motion to proceed to Calendar No. 21, H.R. 933, a bill making appropriations for the Department of Defense, the Department of Veterans Affairs, and other departments and agencies for the fiscal year ending September 30, 2013, and for other purposes.

Harry Reid, Barbara A. Mikulski, Benjamin L. Cardin, Sherrod Brown, Richard J. Durbin, Tom Harkin, Patrick J. Leahy, Angus S. King, Jr., Tim Johnson, Elizabeth Warren, Debbie Stabenow, Patty Murray, Mary L. Landrieu, Jack Reed, Jeanne Shaheen, Richard Blumenthal

MORNING BUSINESS

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

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

CONTINUING APPROPRIATIONS

Mr. REID. Madam President, I hope the record is very clear that I do not criticize Senator SHELBY. He has done his best. He was a tremendous advocate for what he thought should be in this bill. But we are going to have Senators stand up and talk about what is wrong with this place when, after all the work that goes into a bipartisan bill, we are stymied from going to that bill and offering amendments.

Ms. MIKULSKI. Madam President, a question for the majority leader.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Maryland.

Ms. MIKULSKI. This is tough, but the leader has to govern the Senate and move the bill. But a question for the people who watch us and don't know what all these parliamentary maneuvers mean. If there is an agreement to move forward with amendments, is it possible that tomorrow we could vitiate it?

Mr. REID. With the tremendous work Senator COBURN has to put into this so he can finish it in the next 12 hours, maybe we can move to the bill tomorrow. But I know he has a lot of work to do on the bill, so we will have to see how he feels about it tomorrow.

Ms. MIKULSKI. Madam President, I really want to thank my vice chairman, Senator SHELBY, for being on the floor all day today in anticipation that we would have already voted on two amendments. I think he and I both regret the present situation.

I would hope the Senator who has grave concerns and waited to read the bill could really finish it overnight. We worked every night, I must say, not only my staff, but in talking to the Senator, and we were available to each other by phone. I was talking to Congressman ROGERS, our House counterpart, and we were working. I know that Saturday night we didn't close out until 9 o'clock at night; Sunday, not until 11 o'clock at night. That is why we wanted to get this over, so they could look at it.

So I say to those holding up the bill, I would like you to work through the evening the way we worked through the evening. If you want to see if there are other issues—and we acknowledge the Senator's right to do that, but, really, we do not want to face a shutdown, and there is this other issue of the Budget Committee that we would like to get on the floor. What a great message to the American people that with good will and sensibility and give-and-take—and there was a lot of give-and-take—we can govern.

My hope is that by the time we get to the end of next week—actually, the end of this week—we will have passed the continuing funding resolution and we will have passed a budget, with ample debate.

The Senator and I, House Members, Senate Members—we welcome amendments. We welcome debate. But what is frustrating to me is that we have had a very interesting day, but we had two amendments pending, two different viewpoints on health care and human services. We could have debated and been able to dispose of them in a way that would have brought honor to the institution and moved our legislation forward.

So let's show we can govern. Let's really show we can govern. And I hope we can get to our bill tomorrow and not necessarily go through the whole usual filibuster rules.

Again, I thank the vice chairman, Senator SHELBY. I thank Senator MCCONNELL for the way he helped and conferred on many issues.

I yield the floor.

Mr. REID. Madam President, I want everyone to hear what I am saying now. If somebody comes to me and says: You can get on the bill if you give me these amendments, I won't agree. We will have cloture on it on Thursday.

We are through the dealmaking stage. We have been dealmaking on this bill—an important piece of legislation—for more than a week, and if a Senator comes to me and says: You can go to the bill tomorrow, but I want to make sure I have all these amendments, the answer is no.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Alabama.

Mr. SHELBY. Madam President, had we been able to move to this bill, we could have probably debated already and voted on a number of amendments because this is very essential legislation. There is a lot in this bill, a lot of good in this proposed legislation.

I hope that reason will prevail and that people, even if they have some amendments, will come to the floor, as I said earlier, and offer them. Let's debate them, and let's get to regular order, up or down. That is what it is about. But I think the essentials of this bill are solid and good. We have gone into this, and we will go into it more and more. We want the process to work, but the process is not going to work if we don't get the bill up so we can go to the regular order.

So I hope tonight that things will work out and we will get going. This is important legislation.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from New Hampshire.

Mrs. SHAHEEN. Madam President, I came to the floor to speak on an entirely different issue, but before I do that, I would like to commend Appropriations Chair MIKULSKI—and I do like saying that, Appropriations Chair MIKULSKI—and Ranking Member SHELBY for all of the work they and their staffs and the other Senators on the Appropriations Committee have done to try to put together a continuing resolution that is going to keep this government open.

I share the frustration and the concern we have heard expressed on the floor tonight about the hold-up when we thought there was agreement to get this done.

So I appreciate all the work that has been done, and hopefully we can get past this and get this bill done.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Maryland.

Ms. MIKULSKI. The Senator from New Hampshire is a member of the Appropriations Committee; is that correct?

Mrs. SHAHEEN. That is correct.

Ms. MIKULSKI. Is this her first year on the committee?

Mrs. SHAHEEN. It is.

Ms. MIKULSKI. Does the Senator from New Hampshire know what regular order is? This is not a quiz.

Mrs. SHAHEEN. I was hoping to learn that this session because unfortunately we have not had a lot of regular order in terms of moving appropriations bills and the budget through the Senate. As I talk to my constituents,

they really want to see us do that. They want to see us work together to move the agenda forward for this country, just as the chairwoman and Senator SHELBY have done in the last week.

Ms. MIKULSKI. The Senator is exactly right. What we are trying to do is to run a rescue operation to keep the continuing funding going on—really, the President will submit his budget next week, and the Budget Committee will be off and running. We will actually hold hearings on every subcommittee, and it will be an open and transparent process. Members will be able to participate, and we will return to that bill by bill. When you are dealing with a bill that has all 12 subcommittees in it and it is $1 trillion, they think, wow. But we are going to do that regular order.

I thank the Senator. I am so happy she is on the committee. I look forward to showing her what regular order is.

I know the Senator is going to stand up, as she has done on so many occasions, to champion the cause of women; is that correct?

Mrs. SHAHEEN. That is correct. And I appreciate the leadership the Senator has shown.

Ms. MIKULSKI. Well, in the dignified way of the Senate and the way we talk, go for it.

INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S DAY

Mrs. SHAHEEN. Madam President, the world came together once again last week to celebrate International Women's Day. Today I want to belatedly commemorate that special day here on the floor of the Senate and welcome the passage of this year's International Women's Day resolution, which I am proud to say that I cosponsored on a bipartisan basis with my colleague Senator COLLINS, and we had 14 other cosponsors on that resolution.

International Women's Day is observed all over the world. It honors the economic, political, and social achievements of women past, present, and future. It also highlights just how far women around the world still have to go and the many barriers and closed doors they continue to face in the fight for equal rights and opportunities.

I want to recognize and celebrate this year's nine recipients of the 2013 State Department International Women of Courage Awards. This prestigious annual award recognizes women who have shown exceptional leadership in advocating for women's rights and empowerment around the globe, often at great risk to their own well-being.

One of those recipients I want to talk about is Razan Zeitunah. She is a human rights lawyer in Syria, and she has made it her mission to track the ongoing atrocities that have been committed by the Assad regime. Mrs. Zeitunah was forced into hiding after the government accused her of being a foreign agent when she began reporting on these atrocities. Despite living in fear for her life, with her husband in prison, Mrs. Zeitunah continues to risk so much to make sure the world knows all about Assad's brutal crackdown on the people of Syria.

She is one of nine remarkable women who are being honored by the State Department this year, each with an equally inspirational story to tell.

I ask unanimous consent to have printed in the RECORD the names of all nine honorees.

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

Malalai Bahaduri
Tsering Woeser
Julieta Castellanos
Nirbhaya ''Fearless''
Dr. Josephine Obiajulu Odumakin
Elena Milashina
Fartuun Adan
Razan Zeitunah
Ta Phong Tan

Mrs. SHAHEEN. While I am very pleased that the Senate was able to take up and pass the International Women's Day resolution last night, I am also extremely disappointed that this bipartisan resolution was objected to at the eleventh hour over a clause that addressed the impact of our changing climate on women in developing nations, and I just want to read that clause.

> Whereas, according to the International Union for Conservation of Nature, women in developing countries are disproportionately affected by changes in climate because of their need to secure water, food, and fuel for their livelihood.

That was the extent of the clause that was objected to. Unfortunately, this clause from the resolution was blocked by a Member of the Senate on the other side of the aisle. It was a clause that was included in the 2011 resolution that unanimously passed in the Senate.

Just this past weekend, Navy Admiral Locklear, the commander of the U.S. Pacific Command, was asked during a 2-day trip to New England what was the biggest long-term security threat facing the Pacific region. His answer was very clear: climate change—this from an admiral who is dealing with a bellicose North Korea and escalating conflict between Japan and China in the East China Sea. His answer to what is the biggest threat to America is climate change. Yet we have one of our colleagues on the other side of the aisle who objected to a clause that points out what is very clear in data around the world, and that is the impact changes in our climate are having on women who are so often the food gatherers for their families.

This issue of climate change is not going away anytime soon. We can deny that it exists, but it exists. The data is clear, and I believe we need to come together to address this serious concern to help other countries find ways of mitigating the harmful effects of climate change.

Just as climate change deserves attention, we also need to continue our effort to promote equal rights and equal opportunities for women everywhere. We know that all of society benefits when women are more fully integrated into their communities and countries, and we need to remain focused on this effort. That is why International Women's Day is so important, and that is why passing a resolution to talk about that in this body is so important.

I am sorry we couldn't agree on everything, but I do think it is important for us to recognize International Women's Day and also to point out areas of disagreement that clearly are going to remain at the forefront in the future.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Oklahoma.

CONTINUING APPROPRIATIONS

Mr. COBURN. Madam President, I was sitting in my office listening to Senator REID, meeting with my staff on the bill we have on the floor, and I wanted to explain to the American people what this bill is.

This bill was published last night at 9:00. We got it at about 9:45. It spends well over $1 trillion. And I agree with the majority leader, it is important that we pass this bill, but knowing what is in it before you can decide where you would like to try to amend it is asking something of Senators that they can't give.

So I understand the majority leader's frustration, but I would also make a couple points.

In this bill is $8 billion taken out of the victims' compensation fund. That is not tax money. That is money which criminals have paid into a fund to give restitution to children and women around this country for the harm that has occurred from the crime that has been committed upon them, and we are stealing $8 billion from that fund. In this bill, we are taking it away—not tax dollars but fines and penalties—and we are going to spend it somewhere else. You talk about being for women and children? This bill is exactly the opposite of that. Money that is due them we are not going to let them have. We are going to go spend it somewhere else.

So knowing those things are in the bill is one of the reasons we ought to read the bill before we can know whether we are going to offer amendments on it.

I would also make one final point. The vast majority of this bill passed the Appropriations Committee in the Senate last spring and early summer. There is not one of the things that are in this bill that the Appropriations Committee hadn't already done, and we had a deliberate choice to not put these bills on the floor last time. So if we are in a snit over the problems we are having, it is because the bills didn't come in regular order to the floor of the Senate so there could have been a conference.

By the way, the House passed 12 of the 13. Our committees worked 12 of the 13 out. So they came out in regular process. They were not allowed to come to the floor.

We have just about finished studying the bill. We have no problems moving on the bill and giving consent to move on the bill once we have looked at the bill. But for the majority leader to say that Members of the Senate can't have amendments after having their staff work since 9:45 last night to look at the bill and attempt to make amendments to the bill, that doesn't fit on a trillion-dollar bill. And when the American people find out what is in this bill that should not be in it, and the options that we can offer of what should be in it, I think they are going to agree that maybe we ought to make some changes.

I understand the frustration of the majority leader, but I also understand our rights. This is not about filibustering anything. This is about being an informed Senator who knows what you are doing and knows how to make a decision about how to amend the bill. We can call it something other than that, but it is not. It is about doing our job. The fact is, we got this last night.

What I would say to everybody who was fine with us going on it without having read it, I would say there is a problem with their position in the Senate in terms of their oath to do what they were sent here to do, which is to read what you are voting on, know what you are voting, and prepare amendments to what you are voting on.

We have this outburst at 16 hours after we got an almost 600-page bill? That doesn't fit with any common sense. We have instructed our side we are willing to go ahead and allow this to move forward but in a process that recognizes that this bill is not perfect, just as both the chairman of the Appropriations Committee and the ranking member said. We do not have any problems with it moving forward. We do have problems spending money we don't have on things we don't need, and we ought to be able to offer amendments that would highlight that whether the body agrees with it or not—that would highlight it so the American people can see it. We may not be allowed, based on what the majority leader said, to offer any amendments. He is the majority leader. But if that is the case, we are probably going to be here all through the weekend because that is a right each Senator has and they ought to be able to offer them—especially on a $1 trillion appropriations bill.

I hope Senator REID has a good night's sleep. I will try to call him in the morning and work out an accommodation that will allow this bill to move so we do not have to be here on the weekend. I don't want to be here this weekend, but I will if it is the right thing to get the point out and let American people know.

Right now we are having no tours of the White House. I can show you hundreds and hundreds of thousands of dollars that are under the control of the executive that they could save that are a whole lot less important than tours of the White House. The same goes for us in the operation of our House, in terms of the Senate and the House.

I am sorry I irritated Senator REID. I am sorry he is upset with me, but I am going to do my job. I have been here, I am in my ninth year, and I have always kept my obligation to the people of this country to make sure I am thinking about the long term, I am thinking about priority on how we spend money and the best way, the right way, and offering amendments, whether they pass or not, offering those ideas. That is because that is not only my privilege but it is my obligation.

With that I yield the floor.

REMEMBERING YVONNE RICE

Mr. DURBIN. Madam President, I rise with sadness today to pay my respects and pay tribute to a dedicated public servant and a close friend whom I have known for decades.

For 12 years, when Illinoisans walked into Senator Alan Dixon's office—and then later into Senator Paul Simon's office—there was a pretty good chance that they would be greeted by the friendly, warm smile of Yvonne Rice.

She would work with them to solve whatever problems they may have had or to make sure they got the help they needed.

Thanks to her efforts, more often than not those Illinoisans walked away happy—and with one less thing to worry about.

But her service to her community wasn't limited by the walls of a Senate office. She worked in the Illinois State government for many years before joining the Dixon team and then working with Senator Simon.

She also broke new ground when she became the first African-American nominated by a major party for county-wide office in Sangamon County—the capital county of my home State.

Yvonne truly was a remarkable, wonderful, and spirited woman.

She will be dearly missed by her children, stepchildren, grandkids, great-grandkids and all of those—including my wife Loretta and myself—who were fortunate enough to know her.

RECOGNIZING DR. HANNAH GAY

Mr. COCHRAN. Madam President, today I rise to recognize the work of Dr. Hannah Gay, a pediatric infectious disease specialist at the University of Mississippi Medical Center's Blair E. Batson Hospital for Children in Jackson, MS. On March 3, the news broke that one of Dr. Gay's patients, a baby born with the human immunodeficiency virus, or HIV, had been ''functionally cured'' of the infection. Now 2½ years old, this child is only the second person in history to be cured of the virus. The infant was born to her HIV-infected mother at a rural Mississippi hospital and then transported to the University of Mississippi Medical Center, where she came under the care of Dr. Gay. Only 30 hours after the baby was born, Dr. Gay began an immediate and aggressive approach to treatment that seems to have made all the difference in this child's life.

News of Dr. Gay's work and this baby's apparent cure has been celebrated around the world. This development opens a significant door to advance research and treatment for HIV and AIDS, the acquired immune deficiency syndrome. Millions of children around the globe have been infected at or during birth, and it is my hope that the spread of HIV among newborns will begin to slow and eventually stop with what has taken place in Mississippi what one doctor at Johns Hopkins University Medical School called a ''game-changer.''

I share the pride of all Mississippians in Dr. Gay, a native of Jackson, for her achievement and her dedication to our State. She not only teaches and practices at the University of Mississippi Medical Center, but received her training there. As a mostly rural State, Mississippi faces many health care challenges, and our homegrown health care providers give us the best chance of finding solutions so that Mississippians can live healthy lives. Dr. Gay's work at the University of Mississippi Medical Center is addressing critical needs in our State with the potential to impact other countries and regions that struggle with the scourge of HIV.

Congratulations, again, to Dr. Gay and her colleagues. Thanks to them, one child has the opportunity to lead a normal, healthy life, and we may be one step closer to ending the global HIV/AIDS epidemic. I wish all the best to researchers at the National Institutes of Health and other institutions as they explore the potential for Dr. Gay's method of treatment. I ask unanimous consent to have printed in the RECORD the Clarion Ledger article from March 7, 2013, titled: ''Congratulations in order for Dr. Hannah Gay, UMC.''

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

CONGRATULATIONS IN ORDER FOR DR. HANNAH GAY, UMC

[From ClarionLedger.com, Mar. 7, 2013]

Yes, great things do happen in Mississippi.

That's something we've known all along. But the rest of the world seems to see us sometimes as a caricature of the lists we make—high in obesity, low in education and income.

But recent news that a baby born with HIV was likely cured at the University of Mississippi Medical Center by pediatrician Dr. Hannah Gay is something so powerful that the rest of the world could not help but notice.

Globally, it is arguably one of the most important stories to come along in years for the health community—real hope that HIV,

the virus that causes AIDS, can be cured. That's why when the case was presented at the 20th Conference on Retroviruses and Opportunistic Infections in Atlanta last Sunday, the story made headlines in newspapers throughout the world.

The story is: A baby was born to an HIV-positive mother at a rural hospital who was then transported to Jackson's UMC. At 30 hours old, the baby tested HIV positive and Dr. Gay, a pediatric HIV specialist at the hospital, put the baby on an intensive drug therapy that continued until the child was 18 months of age. Tests along the way showed a progressively lower viral presence in the infant's blood until it reached undetectable levels at 29 days of age. The child, a little girl, is now 2½ years old. She is healthy, with a normal immune system—meaning she is considered HIV free.

The child is only the second person in history according to health experts to have been cured of the HIV virus. It is also described as the first ''functional cure'' of an HIV-infected infant, which could lead to eliminating HIV in children throughout the world altogether.

And, it happened right here in Mississippi.

It's not that we are surprised. UMC and its staff, comprising more than 9,000 full and part-time employees, have long been known for excellence. It is Mississippi's only academic health science center, which strives to educate tomorrow's health care professionals and eliminate differences in health status of Mississippians based on race, geography, income or social status.

The stories of success over the years are too many to list here. But it's important at this critical moment, as UMC and Dr. Gay stand at the center of the world health stage for work that could ultimately change the fortunes for so many around the world, that we celebrate this accomplishment.

We congratulate UMC, Dr. Gay and the thousands of others who work for and with Mississippi's outstanding health facility. If there was any doubt before, the world certainly knows now—we do great things in Mississippi.

BUDGETARY REVISIONS

Mrs. MURRAY. Madam President, committee allocations and budgetary aggregates were previously filed pursuant to section 106 of the Budget Control Act of 2011. On December 18, 2012, those levels were revised pursuant to the Budget Control Act. Today, I am further adjusting those levels, specifically the allocation to the Committee on Appropriations for fiscal year 2013 and the budgetary aggregates for fiscal year 2013.

Section 101 of the Budget Control Act allows for various adjustments to the statutory limits on discretionary spending, while section 106(d) allows the Chairman of the Budget Committee to make revisions to allocations, aggregates, and levels consistent with those adjustments. This adjustment accounts for changes resulting from the following bills:

One, the American Taxpayer Relief Act (ATRA, P.L. 112–240).

Two, the Disaster Relief Appropriations Act of 2013 (P.L. 112–77).

Three, the Senate substitute amendment to the Continuing Resolution (H.R. 933).

ATRA reduced the overall discretionary spending level by $4 billion and redefined the firewalls. The supporting tables reflect totals that correspond to the revised security/nonsecurity definition included in ATRA. As such, I am reducing the security budget authority allocation by $2 billion, the nonsecurity budget authority by $2 billion, and the total outlays by $2.315.

The Disaster Relief Appropriations Act and the Senate amendment to the Continuing Resolution are eligible for adjustments under the Budget Control Act.

The Disaster Relief Appropriations Act includes $5.379 billion in budget authority that is designated as disaster relief and $41.669 billion that is designated as an emergency. That funding is estimated to result in $3.257 billion in outlays in 2013. The adjustment filed on December 18, 2012 included revisions related to the Disaster Relief Appropriations Act. Removing the adjustment for the Senate bill and including the enacted bill nets to a reduction of $8.909 billion in budget authority designated as an emergency, a reduction of $6.309 billion in outlays designated as an emergency, and an increase of $592 million in outlays designated as disaster relief. Furthermore, the Disaster Relief Act includes $3.459 in budget authority and $344 million in outlays as nonemergency and non-disaster funding, which is not eligible for an adjustment.

The Senate amendment to the Continuing Resolution includes $98.683 billion in budget authority designated as Overseas Contingency Operations (OCO), $11.779 billion in budget authority for disaster relief, $483 million in budget authority for program integrity, and $41.669 billion for emergencies. This is estimated to result in $55.766 billion in outlays in 2013.

Consequently, I am revising the budgetary aggregates for 2013 by a total of −$9.883 billion in budget authority and −$8.603 billion in outlays. I am also revising the budget authority and outlay allocations to the appropriations committee by −$3.504 billion in security budget authority, −$6.381 billion in nonsecurity budget authority, and −$8.605 billion in total outlays, pursuant to the new security/nonsecurity definition included in ATRA.

I ask unanimous consent that the following tables detailing the changes to the allocation to the Committee on Appropriations and the budgetary aggregates be printed in the RECORD.

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

BUDGETARY AGGREGATES

(Pursuant to section 106(b)(2)(C) of the Budget Control Act of 2011 and section 311 of the Congressional Budget Act of 1974)

$s in millions	2012	2013
Current Spending Aggregates:		
Budget Authority	3,075,731	2,986,115
Outlays	3,123,589	3,006,559
Adjustments:*		
Budget Authority	0	−9,883
Outlays	0	−8,603
Revised Spending Aggregates:		
Budget Authority	3,075,731	2,976,232
Outlays	3,123,589	2,997,956

* Excludes $2 million in off-budget Social Security funds.

REVISIONS TO THE BUDGET AUTHORITY AND OUTLAY ALLOCATIONS TO THE COMMITTEE ON APPROPRIATIONS

(Pursuant to section 106 of the Budget Control Act of 2011 and section 302 of the Congressional Budget Act of 1974)

In millions of dollars	Previous Allocation/Limit Under Old Definition	Previous Allocation/Limit Under New Definition	Adjustment	Revised Allocation/Limit Under New Definition
Fiscal Year 2012:				
Security Discretionary Budget Authority	816,943	0	0	816,943
Nonsecurity Discretionary Budget Authority	363,536	0	0	363,536
General Purpose Discretionary Outlays	1,320,414	0	0	1,320,414
Fiscal Year 2013:*				
Security Discretionary Budget Authority	639,663	805,008	−3,504	801,504
Nonsecurity Discretionary Budget Authority	565,836	400,491	−6,381	394,110
General Purpose Discretionary Outlays	1,284,553	1,284,553	−8,605	1,275,948

* The American Taxpayer Relief Act redefined the discretionary firewalls for fiscal year 2013. Security now includes the Departments of Defense, Homeland Security, and Veterans Affairs, all of budget function 150 (international), the National Nuclear Security Administration, and the Intelligence Community Management Account. Nonsecurity includes all other funding.

DETAIL ON ADJUSTMENTS TO FISCAL YEAR 2013 ALLOCATIONS TO COMMITTEE ON APPROPRIATIONS

(Pursuant to Section 106 of the Budget Control Act of 2011)

$s in billions	Program Integrity	Disaster Relief	Emergency	Overseas Contingency Operations	Other	Total
American Taxpayer Relief Act Cap Adjustment (P.L. 112–240)*:						
Budget Authority	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	−4.000	−4.000
Outlays	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	−2.315	−2.315
Disaster Relief Appropriations Act, 2013 (P.L. 112–77)*:						
Budget Authority	0.000	0.000	−8.909	0.000	0.000	−8.909
Outlays	0.000	0.595	−6.312	0.000	0.000	−5.717
Senate Amendment to the Continuing Resolution (H.R. 933):						
Budget Authority	−0.567	0.752	0.000	2.839	0.000	3.024

DETAIL ON ADJUSTMENTS TO FISCAL YEAR 2013 ALLOCATIONS TO COMMITTEE ON APPROPRIATIONS—Continued

(Pursuant to Section 106 of the Budget Control Act of 2011)

$s in billions	Program Integrity	Disaster Relief	Emergency	Overseas Contingency Operations	Other	Total
Outlays	−0.477	−0.083	0.000	−0.013	0.000	−0.573
Total						
Budget Authority	−0.567	0.752	−8,909	2.839	−4.000	−9.885
Outlays	−0.477	0.512	−6.312	−0.013	−2.315	−8.605
Memorandum 1: Breakdown of Above Adjustments by Newly Revised Categories (Pursuant to ATRA):						
Security Budget Authority	0.000	0.919	−5.262	2.839	−2.000	−3.504
Nonsecurity Budget Authority	−0.567	−0.167	−3.647	0.000	−2.000	−6.381
General Purpose Outlays	−0.477	0.512	−6.312	−0.013	−2.315	−8.605
Memorandum 2: Cumulative Adjustments for FY 2013 (Includes Previously Filed Adjustments):						
Budget Authority	0.483	11.779	41.669	98.683	−4.000	148.614
Outlays	0.430	1.453	2.124	51.759	−2.315	53.451
Memorandum 3: Cumulative Adjustments for FY 2013 by Newly Revised Categories (Includes Previously Filed Adjustments):						
Security Budget Authority	0.000	11.612	7.042	98.683	−2.000	115.337
Nonsecurity Budget Authority	0.483	0.167	34.627	0.000	−2.000	33.277
General Purpose Outlays	0.430	1.453	2.124	51.759	−2.315	53.451

*The American Taxpayer Relief Act (ATRA), signed January 2, 2013, revised the discretionary firewalls from defense (budget function 050)/Nondefense (all other budget functions) to Security/Nonsecurity and reduced the overall discretionary funding level by $4 billion. The Security category for 2013 includes the Departments of Defense, Homeland Security, and Veterans, all of budget function 150 (international), National Nuclear Security Administration and the Intelligence Community Management Account.

**These totals reflect the difference between the Senate-passed Supplemental (which was included in the previous adjustment) and the enacted supplemental. The Disaster Relief Appropriations Act includes $3.459 billion in non-emergency and non disaster spending for Corps of Engineers projects.

USS ''THRESHER'' 50TH ANNIVERSARY

Ms. COLLINS. Madam President, on April 10, 1963, the submarine USS *Thresher* sank off the New England coast. The loss of 129 officers, sailors, and civilian technicians was a tragedy for the Navy, our Nation, and especially for the families of that gallant crew.

The USS *Thresher* was built in Kittery, ME, at the Portsmouth Naval Shipyard. Each year, the people of Kittery and neighboring communities in Maine and New Hampshire gather on the anniversary of the loss of the *Thresher* to pay their solemn respects to those who made the ultimate sacrifice in defense of our Nation.

This year is the 50th anniversary of that tragedy. On April 10, 2013, the USS Thresher Memorial will be dedicated. Located at Kittery Memorial Circle, this tribute features a flagpole rising from a black granite base. The height of the flagpole—129 feet—is a powerful reminder of those who perished.

The memorial is made possible by contributions from throughout the region—from schoolchildren and civic organizations to such U.S. Navy veterans as President George H.W. Bush. The depth of support for this inspiring project demonstrates the gratitude the American people have for all who serve.

The USS *Thresher* was the first of a new class of submarines for the Navy that was designed to be the world's most modern, quiet, deep-diving fast-attack submarines. It was during deep-diving trials some 200 miles east of Cape Cod when a crucial system failed.

The loss of life on the USS *Thresher* was the worst submarine disaster in American history. Among the 129 lost were a veteran submariner whose service began during World War II and extended into the Cold War, 2 brothers, and a young husband who had just learned he was to become a father. Each of the 129 men left behind a grieving family and a hometown in sorrow.

They did not die in vain. The *Thresher* disaster directly led to the SUBSAFE program that ensures every submarine in America's fleet undergoes rigorous testing to safeguard our submariners. Every safe voyage and every crisis survived since that terrible time is the legacy of the USS *Thresher*.

The courage and sacrifice of those aboard the USS *Thresher* exemplify the devotion of all submariners, past and present, and their commitment to the mission. The ''silent service'' is a critical component of America's defenses, and those who step forward to serve willingly take on one of the most challenging assignments in our armed forces. The USS Thresher Memorial in Kittery, ME, ensures that we will never forget those who are on eternal patrol.

REMEMBERING LEO SANCHEZ

Mr. BARRASSO. Madam President, on Sunday, March 10, 2013, Wyoming lost a beloved veteran and citizen, Leo Sanchez. I would like to tell my colleagues about this patriot.

There is a Marine Corps saying, ''Marines never die; they regroup at the pearly gates and wait for Saint Peter to issue them orders.'' Those who knew Leo are certain he is running through a list with Saint Peter regarding his ideas to improve heaven.

Leo served our great Nation first in the Army National Guard and then in the Marine Corps. He fought in Korea. Following his service, he came home to Wyoming and had a successful career as an educator. His desire to serve his community did not end in the classroom; Leo became an involved member of every veteran organization. His priority was helping fellow veterans from every branch and period, at every opportunity.

It is impossible to measure the loss of a man like Leo Sanchez. His absence will be felt by Wyoming for generations. Leo was one of my State's great treasures. He always gave more than he himself required. I could always count on seeing Leo in uniform beaming with pride and celebrating fellow veterans and our Nation's patriotic events.

Leo was not only a veteran but a beloved teacher. Leo's legacy is in the children of Wyoming, those whom he taught and inspired. Leo recognized a secret that very few embrace: regardless of the conditions of the day, America will always remain great as long as her children understand patriotism and choose to live their lives to those patriotic standards. Leo wholeheartedly believed that there is always hope as long as the next generation values the cost and necessary sacrifice that accompany freedom.

Regardless of an individual's race, creed, or handicap, Leo found a way for every man, woman and child to participate in what it means to be an American. He appreciated that what makes the United States great isn't the flag on a flagpole but rather the hands that hold the flagpole. Leo instilled in everyone the importance of service, sacrifice, duty and love of country through his every action.

Semper Fidelis, Leo Sanchez, you will be missed.

RECOGNIZING RxIMPACT DAY

Mr. TESTER. Madam President, as the cochair of the Senate Community Pharmacy Caucus, I rise to recognize the fifth annual NACDS RxIMPACT Day on Capitol Hill. This is a special day where we recognize pharmacy's contribution to the American healthcare system. This year's event, organized by the National Association of Chain Drug Stores, takes place on March 13–14. Hundreds from the pharmacy community—including practicing pharmacists, pharmacy school faculty and students, State pharmacy leaders and pharmacy company executives—will visit Capitol Hill. They will share their views with Congress about the importance of supporting legislation that protects access to community and neighborhood pharmacies and that utilizes pharmacists to improve the quality and reduce the costs of providing health care.

Advocates from 37 States have travelled to Washington to talk about their contributions in over 50,000 community pharmacies nationwide. These important health care providers are here to urge Congress to recognize the value of pharmacists and protect access to these medication experts as a part of

our health care delivery system. And just as these providers travelled to meet with us, over 100 Members of Congress have toured a local pharmacy over the past 5 years.

Patients have always relied on their local pharmacist to meet their health care needs. The local pharmacist is a trusted, highly accessible health care provider deeply committed to providing accurate prescriptions, catching possible drug interactions and helping patients take medications as prescribed.

As demand for health care services continues to grow, pharmacists have expanded their role in health care delivery, partnering with physicians, nurses and other health care providers to meet their patients' needs. Innovative services provided by pharmacists do even more to improve patient health care. Pharmacists are highly valued by those that rely on them most—those in rural and underserved areas, as well as older Americans, and those struggling to manage chronic diseases. Pharmacy services improve patients' quality of life and health care affordability. By helping patients take their medications effectively and providing preventive services, pharmacists help avoid more costly forms of care later. Pharmacists also help patients identify strategies to save money, such as understanding their pharmacy benefits, using generic drugs and obtaining 90-day supplies of prescription drugs from local pharmacies. The importance of medication adherence and the effectiveness of local pharmacists in delivering patient care is resonating with policymakers.

Pharmacists are the Nation's most accessible healthcare providers. In many communities, especially in rural areas, the local pharmacist is a patient's most direct link to health care. Eightly-six percent of rural Americans reside within a 10-mile radius of a sole community pharmacy. Usually these pharmacists are substantially closer than their physicians. Pharmacists are one of the most trusted professionals. Pharmacy has a long history of receiving, filling, billing and dispensing prescriptions in tandem with patient counseling. Utilizing their specialized education, pharmacists also play a major role in medication therapy management, disease-state management, immunizations, health care screenings, and other health care services designed to improve patient health and reduce overall health care costs.

As the face of neighborhood health care, pharmacies across the Nation offer these and other cost saving programs and services to patients. For more than a century, pharmacies and pharmacists have made a difference in the lives of Montanans and all Americans through these important patient care services, and it is critical we work to support their unique contributions.

As we refine health care reform and seek new strategies to improve health and reduce costs, pharmacists will play a critical role. They help patients adhere to their medications and that improves health outcomes and reduces the risks of adverse events and unnecessary costly hospital readmissions and emergency room visits. Pharmacists as providers with a comprehensive understanding of a patient's medical needs, are uniquely qualified to work with patients to help manage all of their medications and play an essential role in helping them take their medications as prescribed. Unfortunately, only one half of Americans living with chronic diseases adhere to their drug regimens. This patient non-adherence costs the Nation's economy an estimated $290 billion each year, not to mention the avoidable loss of quality of life for patients and their loved ones. Congress recognized the important role of local pharmacists when it included a Medication Therapy Management, MTM, benefit in Medicare Part D. As we have seen the increasing value of this benefit in improving patient health outcomes, I support community pharmacy's efforts to strengthen the MTM benefit so it is available for seniors and others struggling with chronic conditions and other illnesses.

Today, I celebrate the value of pharmacy and support efforts to protect access to neighborhood pharmacies and utilize pharmacies to improve the quality and reduce the costs of health care. In recognition of the fifth annual NACDS RxIMPACT Day on Capitol Hill, I would like to congratulate pharmacy leaders, pharmacists, students, and executives and the pharmacy community represented by the National Association of Chain Drug Stores for their contributions to the good health of the American people.

ADDITIONAL STATEMENTS

THIBODAUX, LOUISIANA

• Mr. VITTER. Madam President, today I recognize the City of Thibodaux. This month, Thibodaux, LA, celebrates its 175th anniversary. First named Thibodauxville to honor Henry Schuyler Thibodaux, the city was both a trading post between New Orleans and Bayou Teche in the late 1700s and also a popular settling place for Acadians, Africans, Italians, and Spaniards coming to Louisiana during that time. However, it wasn't until 1838 that Thibodaux became the official name. In fact, city resident and Louisiana Governor E.D. White, Sr., commissioned the name change.

Thibodaux is also where the Battle of Georgia Landing was fought during the Civil War, and the Battle of Lafourche Crossing happened a few miles east. Affectionately known as the Queen City of Bayou Lafourche, Thibodaux's history can be seen in places such as the Laurel Valley Village, home of the oldest working sugar cane plantation in the United States, and the home of Governor E.D. White. Both are listed on the National Register of Historic Places.

Along with Governor White, Governor Francis T. Nicholls also was a native of Thibodaux, and Nicholls State University is named in his honor. Governor White's son, E.D. White, Jr., served as U.S. Senator from 1891 to 1894. Later, he was an associate justice and chief justice of the United States Supreme Court from 1894 until his passing in 1921. A statue of Chief Justice White stands in our U.S. Capitol commemorating his service to Louisiana and the Nation. These are just a few of the historically significant residents of Thibodaux.

The City of Thibodaux, its people, and Cajun heritage are at the heart of the culture and traditions that have made Louisiana great. Louisiana and the City of Thibodaux's history are represented through our culture, our traditions, and especially our food. They all symbolize who we are and the devotion we have to preserving our heritage.

Thibodaux's motto is ''Where Yesterday Welcomes Tomorrow,'' and it is my honor to celebrate the City of Thibodaux's 175th anniversary while looking forward to its bright future.•

REPORT OF THE CONTINUATION OF THE NATIONAL EMERGENCY WITH RESPECT TO IRAN THAT WAS DECLARED IN EXECUTIVE ORDER 12957 ON MARCH 15, 1995—PM 5

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, within 90 days 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 with respect to Iran that was declared on March 15, 1995, is to continue in effect beyond March 15, 2013.

The crisis between the United States and Iran resulting from the actions and policies of the Government of Iran has not been resolved. The actions and policies of the Government of Iran are contrary to the interests of the United States in the region and continue to pose an unusual and extraordinary threat to the national security, foreign policy, and economy of the United States. For these reasons, I have determined that it is necessary to continue

the national emergency declared with respect to Iran and to maintain in force comprehensive sanctions against Iran to deal with this threat.

BARACK OBAMA.

THE WHITE HOUSE, *March 12, 2013.*

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–774. A communication from the Program Manager, Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services, Department of Health and Human Services, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act; Amendments to the HHS Notice of Benefit and Payment Parameters for 2014'' (RIN0938–AR74) received during adjournment of the Senate in the Office of the President of the Senate on March 1, 2013; to the Committee on Finance.

EC–775. A communication from the Program Manager, Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services, Department of Health and Human Services, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Medicare Program; Extension of the Payment Adjustment for Low-volume Hospitals and the Medicare-dependent Hospital (MDH) Program Under the Hospital Inpatient Prospective Payment Systems (IPPS) for Acute Care Hospitals for Fiscal Year 2013'' (RIN0938–AR12) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on March 7, 2013; to the Committee on Finance.

EC–776. A communication from the Program Manager, Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services, Department of Health and Human Services, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act; HHS Notice of Benefit and Payment Parameters for 2014'' (RIN0938–AR51) received during adjournment of the Senate in the Office of the President of the Senate on March 1, 2013; to the Committee on Finance.

EC–777. A communication from the Administrator, U.S. Agency for International Development, transmitting, pursuant to law, the fiscal year 2012 Agency Financial Report; to the Committee on Foreign Relations.

EC–778. A communication from the Secretary of Health and Human Services, transmitting, pursuant to law, a certification regarding the Essential Health Benefits (EHB) requirements of the Affordable Care Act; to the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions.

EC–779. A communication from the Program Manager, Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services, Department of Health and Human Services, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act; Health Insurance Market Rules; Rate Review'' (RIN0938–AR40) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on March 7, 2013; to the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions.

EC–780. A communication from the Program Manager, Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services, Department of Health and Human Services, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act; Health Insurance Market Rules; Rate Review'' (RIN0938–AR40) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on February 25, 2013; to the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions.

EC–781. A communication from the Program Manager, Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services, Department of Health and Human Services, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act; Standards Related to Essential Health Benefits, Actuarial Value, and Accreditation'' (RIN0938–AR03) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on March 7, 2013; to the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions.

EC–782. A communication from the Deputy Director for Policy, Legislative and Regulatory Department, Pension Benefit Guaranty Corporation, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Benefits Payable in Terminated Single-Employer Plans; Interest Assumptions for Paying Benefits'' (29 CFR Part 4022) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on March 5, 2013; to the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions.

EC–783. A communication from the Director of Regulations and Policy Management Staff, Food and Drug Administration, Department of Health and Human Services, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Additional Safeguards for Children in Clinical Investigations of Food and Drug Administration-Regulated Products'' ((RIN0910–AG71) (Docket No. FDA–2011–N–0009)) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on March 7, 2013; to the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions.

EC–784. A communication from the Assistant Secretary, Employee Benefits Security Administration, Department of Labor, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Filings Required of Multiple Employer Welfare Arrangements and Certain Other Related Entities'' (RIN1210–AB51) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on March 5, 2013; to the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions.

EC–785. A communication from the Assistant Secretary, Employee Benefits Security Administration, Department of Labor, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Ex Parte Cease and Desist and Summary Seizure Orders—Multiple Employer Welfare Arrangements'' (RIN1210–AB48) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on March 5, 2013; to the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions.

EC–786. A communication from the Special Inspector General for Iraq Reconstruction, transmitting, pursuant to law, a report entitled ''Learning from Iraq''; to the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs.

EC–787. A communication from the Acting Assistant Secretary, Legislative Affairs, Department of State, transmitting, pursuant to law, a report relative to the status of Data Mining Activities by the Department of State; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

EC–788. A communication from the Director, Administrative Office of the United States Courts, transmitting, pursuant to law, a report relative to compliance by the United States courts of appeals and district courts with the time limitations established for deciding habeas corpus death penalty petitions; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

EC–789. A communication from the Federal Register Liaison Officer, Alcohol and Tobacco Tax and Trade Bureau, Department of the Treasury, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Amendment to the Standards of Identity for Distilled Spirits'' (RIN1513–AB33) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on March 7, 2013; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

EC–790. A communication from the Acting Assistant Attorney General, Office of Legislative Affairs, Department of Justice, transmitting, pursuant to law, the Department of Justice's Office of Justice Programs Annual Report to Congress for fiscal year 2011; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

EC–791. A communication from the Deputy Assistant Administrator for Regulatory Programs, Office of Sustainable Fisheries, Department of Commerce, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Fisheries Off West Coast States; West Coast Salmon Fisheries; Amendment 17 to the Salmon Fishery Management Plan'' (RIN0648–BC28) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on March 7, 2013; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

EC–792. A communication from the Acting Deputy 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; Pollock in Statistical Area 630 in the Gulf of Alaska'' (RIN0648–XC493) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on March 7, 2013; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

EC–793. A communication from the Acting Deputy 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 Cod by Catcher/Processors Using Pot Gear in the Bering Sea and Aleutian Islands Management Area'' (RIN0648–XC465) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on March 7, 2013; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

EC–794. A communication from the Acting Deputy 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 Cod by Vessels Using Pot Gear in the Western Regulatory Area of the Gulf of Alaska'' (RIN0648–XC466) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on March 7, 2013; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

EC–795. A communication from the Acting Deputy Director, Office of Sustainable Fisheries, Department of Commerce, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Fisheries of the Caribbean, Gulf of Mexico, and South Atlantic; Coastal Migratory Pelagic Resources of the Gulf of Mexico and South Atlantic; Trip Limit Increase'' (RIN0648–XC474) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on March 7, 2013; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

REPORTS OF COMMITTEES

The following reports of committees were submitted:

By Mr. LEAHY, from the Committee on the Judiciary, with an amendment in the nature of a substitute:

S. 146. A bill to enhance the safety of America's schools.

S. 374. A bill to ensure that all individuals who should be prohibited from buying a firearm are listed in the national instant criminal background check system and require a background check for every firearm sale.

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. THUNE (for himself, Mr. BARRASSO, Mr. ROBERTS, and Mr. ISAKSON):

S. 523. A bill to require that the Federal Government procure from the private sector the goods and services necessary for the operations and management of certain Government agencies, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs.

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

S. 524. A bill to amend the National Trails System Act to provide for the study of the Pike National Historic Trail; to the Committee on Energy and Natural Resources.

By Mr. SANDERS:

S. 525. A bill proposing an amendment to the Constitution of the United States to restore the rights of the American people that were taken away by the Supreme Court's decision in the Citizens United case and related decisions, to protect the integrity of our elections, and to limit the corrosive influence of money in our democratic process; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

By Mr. BAUCUS (for himself and Mr. HATCH):

S. 526. A bill to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to make permanent the special rule for contributions of qualified conservation contributions, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Finance.

By Mr. REED (for himself, Mr. WHITEHOUSE, Mr. CARDIN, Ms. KLOBUCHAR, Mr. FRANKEN, Ms. WARREN, and Mr. COWAN):

S. 527. A bill to provide for the adjustment of status of certain nationals of Liberia to that of lawful permanent residents; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

By Mrs. HAGAN (for herself and Mr. HARKIN):

S. 528. A bill to amend the Higher Education Opportunity Act to restrict institutions of higher education from using revenues derived from Federal educational assistance funds for advertising, marketing, or recruiting purposes; to the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions.

By Mr. BURR (for himself, Mrs. HAGAN, Mr. NELSON, and Mr. RUBIO):

S. 529. A bill to amend title 38, United States Code, to modify the commencement date of the period of service at Camp Lejeune, North Carolina, for eligibility for hospital care and medical services in connection with exposure to contaminated water, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Veterans' Affairs.

By Mr. PAUL (for himself, Mr. MCCONNELL, Mr. VITTER, and Mr. JOHANNS):

S. 530. A bill to make participation in the American Community Survey voluntary, except with respect to certain basic questions, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs.

By Mr. HARKIN (for himself and Mr. WICKER):

S. 531. A bill to provide for the publication by the Secretary of Health and Human Services of physical activity guidelines for Americans; to the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions.

By Ms. KLOBUCHAR (for herself and Mr. TESTER):

S. 532. A bill to amend the Help America Vote Act of 2002 to require States to provide for same day registration; to the Committee on Rules and Administration.

By Mrs. HAGAN:

S. 533. A bill to correct the boundaries of the John H. Chafee Coastal Barrier Resources System Unit L06, Topsail, North Carolina; to the Committee on Environment and Public Works.

By Mr. TESTER (for himself, Mr. JOHANNS, Mr. BENNET, Mr. CRAPO, Mr. MURPHY, Mr. CHAMBLISS, Mr. WARNER, Ms. HEITKAMP, Mr. WICKER, Mr. CARPER, Mr. MORAN, Mr. MENENDEZ, Mr. NELSON, and Mr. HELLER):

S. 534. A bill to reform the National Association of Registered Agents and Brokers, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs.

By Mr. RUBIO (for himself, Mr. RISCH, Mr. ENZI, Mr. JOHNSON of Wisconsin, Mrs. FISCHER, Mr. VITTER, Mr. PAUL, and Mr. SCOTT):

S. 535. A bill to require a study and report by the Small Business Administration regarding the costs to small business concerns of Federal regulations; to the Committee on Small Business and Entrepreneurship.

By Mr. RUBIO:

S. 536. A bill to require a study and report by the Comptroller General of the United States regarding the costs of Federal regulations; to the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs.

By Ms. LANDRIEU:

S. 537. A bill to require the Small Business Administration to make information relating to lenders making covered loans publicly available, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Small Business and Entrepreneurship.

By Mrs. MCCASKILL:

S. 538. A bill to amend title 10, United States Code, to modify the authorities and responsibilities of convening authorities in taking actions on the findings and sentences of courts-martial; to the Committee on Armed Services.

By Mrs. SHAHEEN (for herself, Ms. COLLINS, Ms. KLOBUCHAR, and Mrs. HAGAN):

S. 539. A bill to amend the Public Health Service Act to foster more effective implementation and coordination of clinical care for people with pre-diabetes and diabetes; to the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions.

By Mrs. SHAHEEN (for herself and Ms. AYOTTE):

S. 540. A bill to designate the air route traffic control center located in Nashua, New Hampshire, as the ''Patricia Clark Boston Air Route Traffic Control Center''; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

By Ms. LANDRIEU (for herself and Mr. GRAHAM):

S. 541. A bill to prevent human health threats posed by the consumption of equines raised in the United States; to the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions.

SUBMISSION OF CONCURRENT AND SENATE RESOLUTIONS

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

By Mr. KIRK (for himself and Mr. DURBIN):

S. Res. 75. A resolution condemning the Government of Iran for its state-sponsored persecution of its Baha'i minority and its continued violation of the International Covenants on Human Rights; to the Committee on Foreign Relations.

ADDITIONAL COSPONSORS

S. 54

At the request of Mr. LEAHY, the names of the Senator from New York (Mrs. GILLIBRAND) and the Senator from Illinois (Mr. KIRK) were added as cosponsors of S. 54, a bill to increase public safety by punishing and deterring firearms trafficking.

S. 146

At the request of Mrs. BOXER, the name of the Senator from West Virginia (Mr. ROCKEFELLER) was added as a cosponsor of S. 146, a bill to enhance the safety of America's schools.

S. 170

At the request of Ms. MURKOWSKI, the name of the Senator from Idaho (Mr. CRAPO) was added as a cosponsor of S. 170, a bill to recognize the heritage of recreational fishing, hunting, and recreational shooting on Federal public land and ensure continued opportunities for those activities.

S. 177

At the request of Mr. CRUZ, the names of the Senator from Idaho (Mr. CRAPO) and the Senator from Nevada (Mr. HELLER) were added as cosponsors of S. 177, a bill to repeal the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act and the Health Care and Education Reconciliation Act of 2010 entirely.

S. 183

At the request of Mrs. MCCASKILL, the name of the Senator from Minnesota (Mr. FRANKEN) was added as a cosponsor of S. 183, a bill to amend title XVIII of the Social Security Act to provide for fairness in hospital payments under the Medicare program.

S. 185

At the request of Ms. AYOTTE, the name of the Senator from Florida (Mr. RUBIO) was added as a cosponsor of S. 185, a bill to eliminate the automatic inflation increases for discretionary programs built into the baseline projections and require budget estimates to be compared with the prior year's level.

S. 193

At the request of Mr. COONS, the name of the Senator from Virginia (Mr. KAINE) was added as a cosponsor of S. 193, a bill to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to provide for startup businesses to use a portion of the research and development credit to offset payroll taxes.

S. 210

At the request of Mr. HELLER, the name of the Senator from Mississippi (Mr. COCHRAN) was added as a cosponsor of S. 210, a bill to amend title 18, United States Code, with respect to fraudulent representations about having received military declarations or medals.

S. 218

At the request of Mr. LEVIN, the name of the Senator from Indiana (Mr. DONNELLY) was added as a cosponsor of S. 218, a bill to ensure that amounts credited to the Harbor Maintenance Trust Fund are used for harbor maintenance.

S. 226

At the request of Mr. TESTER, the name of the Senator from Connecticut (Mr. MURPHY) was added as a cosponsor of S. 226, a bill to amend the Family and Medical Leave Act of 1993 to provide leave because of the death of a son or daughter.

S. 289

At the request of Ms. LANDRIEU, the name of the Senator from Georgia (Mr. ISAKSON) was added as a cosponsor of S. 289, a bill to extend the low-interest refinancing provisions under the Local Development Business Loan Program of the Small Business Administration.

S. 290

At the request of Mr. REED, the name of the Senator from Minnesota (Ms. KLOBUCHAR) was added as a cosponsor of S. 290, a bill to reduce housing-related health hazards, and for other purposes.

S. 309

At the request of Mr. HARKIN, the names of the Senator from Arkansas (Mr. PRYOR), the Senator from Delaware (Mr. COONS), the Senator from North Carolina (Mrs. HAGAN), the Senator from New Mexico (Mr. HEINRICH), the Senator from California (Mrs. BOXER), the Senator from Mississippi (Mr. WICKER) and the Senator from Minnesota (Ms. KLOBUCHAR) were added as cosponsors of S. 309, a bill to award a Congressional Gold Medal to the World War II members of the Civil Air Patrol.

S. 323

At the request of Mr. DURBIN, the name of the Senator from Montana (Mr. TESTER) was added as a cosponsor of S. 323, a bill to amend title XVIII of the Social Security Act to provide for extended months of Medicare coverage of immunosuppressive drugs for kidney transplant patients and other renal dialysis provisions.

S. 338

At the request of Mr. BAUCUS, the names of the Senator from Maine (Mr. KING) and the Senator from Hawaii (Ms. HIRONO) were added as cosponsors of S. 338, 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. 367

At the request of Mr. CARDIN, the name of the Senator from Minnesota (Mr. FRANKEN) was added as a cosponsor of S. 367, a bill to amend title XVIII of the Social Security Act to repeal the Medicare outpatient rehabilitation therapy caps.

S. 382

At the request of Mr. SCHUMER, the names of the Senator from Iowa (Mr. GRASSLEY) and the Senator from Idaho (Mr. RISCH) were added as cosponsors of S. 382, a bill to amend title XVIII of the Social Security Act to allow physician assistants, nurse practitioners, and clinical nurse specialists to supervise cardiac, intensive cardiac, and pulmonary rehabilitation programs.

S. 407

At the request of Mr. CASEY, the name of the Senator from Iowa (Mr. HARKIN) was added as a cosponsor of S. 407, a bill to provide funding for construction and major rehabilitation for projects located on inland and intracoastal waterways of the United States, and for other purposes.

S. 411

At the request of Mr. ROCKEFELLER, the name of the Senator from Washington (Ms. CANTWELL) was added as a cosponsor of S. 411, a bill to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to extend and modify the railroad track maintenance credit.

S. 461

At the request of Ms. HIRONO, the name of the Senator from Alaska (Ms. MURKOWSKI) was added as a cosponsor of S. 461, a bill to exempt children of certain Filipino World War II veterans from the numerical limitations on immigrant visas and for other purposes.

S. 462

At the request of Mrs. BOXER, the names of the Senator from Idaho (Mr. CRAPO), the Senator from Arkansas (Mr. BOOZMAN) and the Senator from Nebraska (Mr. JOHANNS) were added as cosponsors of S. 462, a bill to enhance the strategic partnership between the United States and Israel.

S. 464

At the request of Mr. INHOFE, the name of the Senator from Arkansas (Mr. BOOZMAN) was added as a cosponsor of S. 464, a bill to declare English as the official language of the United States, to establish a uniform English language rule for naturalization, and to avoid misconstructions of the English language texts of the laws of the United States, pursuant to Congress' powers to provide for the general welfare of the United States and to establish a uniform rule of naturalization under article I, section 8, of the Constitution.

S. 470

At the request of Mr. MCCONNELL, his name was added as a cosponsor of S. 470, a bill to amend title 10, United States Code, to require that the Purple Heart occupy a position of precedence above the new Distinguished Warfare Medal.

At the request of Mr. TESTER, the names of the Senator from Alabama (Mr. SESSIONS) and the Senator from Alaska (Ms. MURKOWSKI) were added as cosponsors of S. 470, supra.

S. RES. 65

At the request of Mr. GRAHAM, the names of the Senator from Oklahoma (Mr. COBURN), the Senator from Utah (Mr. LEE), the Senator from California (Mrs. FEINSTEIN) and the Senator from Alaska (Ms. MURKOWSKI) were added as cosponsors of S. Res. 65, a resolution strongly supporting the full implementation of United States and international sanctions on Iran and urging the President to continue to strengthen enforcement of sanctions legislation.

STATEMENTS ON INTRODUCED BILLS AND JOINT RESOLUTIONS

By Mr. BAUCUS (for himself and Mr. HATCH):

S. 526. A bill to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to make permanent the special rule for contributions of qualified conservation contributions, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Finance.

Mr. BAUCUS. Mr. President, I rise today to introduce the Rural Heritage Conservation Extension Act of 2013.

As we continue to find ways to tackle the important issues of this nation's long-term future, we begin this new congress with an opportunity to take responsibility. This includes the ways we look to safeguard our land. Today, I am introducing the Rural Heritage Conservation Extension Act as part of our collective mission to ensure a prosperous nation for future generations.

We all know our land has a deeper worth than the goods we have cultivated or extracted from beneath the earth. It is our heritage. And when a piece of our heritage is lost, we do not simply lose its future value in dollars. We also lose the wildlife habitat and the open areas that may be enjoyed by people from around the world, on top of the very personal value it has held for generations of landowners. It is our job in government, as stewards of the land, to safeguard this precious gift for our grandchildren and to provide support to the farmers, ranchers and other hard-working landowners who rely on it to make a living.

For this reason we have decided to provide targeted income tax relief to small farmers and ranchers who donate their land under a qualified conservation easement. The provision increases the deduction amount eligible farmers and ranchers may receive for charitable contributions of qualified conservation easements by raising the adjusted gross income limitation from 50 percent to 100 percent and extending the carryover period from 5 years to 15 years. For all other landowners, the AGI limitation was raised from 30 percent to 50 percent. This provision was included in the fiscal cliff package and will expire at the end of this year. The bill before you, the Rural Heritage Conservation Extension Act of 2013, will make this valuable incentive permanent.

Conversation easements have been established as an effective land preservation method across the country. In Montana, we currently have over 2.1 million acres covered by conservation easements. To some, that may seem like a large amount, but this is Montana, and those easements are only 2.2 percent of the total state land area. But we leverage far more value out of these easements because they are often located within or next to large tracts of public lands. In Montana, we fully recognize the importance of using these easements to protect our lands. Now is the time to help my country and my State to do all they can.

This legislative body, the individual States, and the Nation together should stand up for future generations and declare that the time for land preservation is now. I believe that we should do all we can to help landowners afford to choose conservation and preservation, and this bill is a step in the right direction. Let us get rid of the uncertainty that comes with temporary provisions and build on the success of what we have already begun to do. Let us pass the Rural Heritage Conservation Extension Act.

By Mr. REED (for himself, Mr. WHITEHOUSE, Mr. CARDIN, Ms. KLOBUCHAR, Mr. FRANKEN, Ms. WARREN, and Mr. COWAN):

S. 527. A bill to provide for the adjustment of status of certain nationals of Liberia to that of lawful permanent residents; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

Mr. REED. Mr. President, today I introduce the Liberian Refugee Immigration Fairness Act along with Senators WHITEHOUSE, CARDIN, KLOBUCHAR, FRANKEN, WARREN, and COWAN.

In December 1989, Liberia became engulfed in a devastating 7-year civil war, which killed over 150,000 people, displaced more than half the population, and destroyed the country's infrastructure. Thousands of Liberians who were forced from their homes sought refuge in the United States and in 1991, were granted Temporary Protected Status, TPS. Since that time, the status of many of these refugees, as well as many of those who fled to the United States during Liberia's second civil war, 1999–2003, has been extended through renewals of both TPS and Deferred Enforced Departure, DED.

America is now home to these law-abiding and tax-paying Liberians. They came here to escape violence and are strengthening our communities. Many now have children of their own who are U.S. citizens, some of whom serve in the U.S. military. They are here legally, and they continue to work hard and play by the rules.

We are currently less than 20 days away from the expiration of DED on March 31, 2013. In the short term, I have been joined by several colleagues in urging the Administration to extend DED so Liberians who have lived here legally do not face deportation.

The Liberian Refugee Immigration Fairness Act, which I have introduced every Congress since 1999, offers a more long-term solution. It seeks to provide a path to citizenship for qualifying Liberian refugees. After decades of perennial uncertainty about whether they will be able to stay in their communities or whether their families will be split up, this bill would give eligible Liberians the opportunity to apply for legal permanent residency, and begin the process of finally becoming citizens.

Currently, a bipartisan group of my Senate colleagues is working towards a comprehensive immigration reform bill. I look forward to working with them and others to include the Liberian Refugee Immigration Fairness Act in immigration reform. I thank Senators WHITEHOUSE, CARDIN, KLOBUCHAR, FRANKEN, WARREN, and COWAN for cosponsoring this bill and urge our colleagues to join us in taking the next steps to finally provide a path to citizenship for qualifying Liberians.

By Ms. LANDRIEU:

S. 537. A bill to require the Small Business Administration to make information relating to lenders making covered loans publicly available, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Small Business and Entrepreneurship.

Ms. LANDRIEU. Mr. President, as Chair of the Senate Committee on Small Business and Entrepreneurship, I remain focused on the needs of small businesses. Much of what we do on the committee involves overseeing the Small Business Administration's contracting, counseling, and capital programs, and we are always looking for ways to improve them. As our country slowly recovers the economic downturn, one of the most pressing issues facing small business owners is access to capital.

In the past two fiscal years alone, the Small Business Administration, SBA, supported over $30 billion in loans to approximately 60,000 small businesses each year through its 7(a) and 504/CDC lending programs. As of September 2012, there were over 2,400 SBA lenders nationwide. While the SBA currently releases some information publicly about SBA lending activity, it is extremely difficult to find and comprehend if you are not an SBA lending professional. If a small business, mayor, or governor wants to determine SBA lending activity in their area, they lack the ability to do so easily.

I come to the floor today to introduce a bill that would increase accountability at the SBA in its lending reporting activity. The Communicating Lender Activity Reports from the Small Business Administration, CLEAR SBA, Act would require the SBA to establish an online database to provide consumers with more transparent, user-friendly data about their local SBA lenders.

More specifically, the CLEAR SBA Act would require the SBA to post a user friendly Lender Activity Index on the SBA website. Users will be able to access the following data for any given bank: name of bank or Certified Development Company, CDC, number of SBA loans each lender made, total dollar amount of SBA loans of each bank or CDC, zip code of lender activity, not where every single loan was made, but a list of every zip code where the bank has made an SBA loan, industries lent to, hospitality, manufacturing, service, software, etc., stage of business cycle, new, or existing business, and business specific information, i.e. Women Owned Businesses, Minority Owned Businesses, or Veteran Owned Businesses. Data will be available for the year to date and users will be able to compare to 3 previous fiscal years. Both quarterly and annual data will be included.

I would like to emphasize that this proposal has already received bipartisan support. In the 112th Congress, the SBA Lender Activity Index was included as a provision in Title II of the SUCCESS Act. On July 12, 2012, the Senate voted on the SUCCESS Act. On July 12, 2012, the Senate voted on the SUCCESS Act as part of Senate Amendment 2521 to S. 2237, the Small Business Jobs and Tax Relief Act of 2012. Although the amendment came up short of the 60 votes needed to end debate, the SUCCESS Act received a strong 57 bipartisan votes, including five of my Republican colleagues. I urge my colleagues on both sides of the aisle to come together in support of this common sense proposal to increase transparency and accountability at the SBA.

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. 537

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 ''Communicating Lender Activity Reports from the Small Business Administration Act'' or the ''CLEAR SBA Act''.

SEC. 2. SBA LENDER ACTIVITY INDEX.

Section 4 of the Small Business Act (15 U.S.C. 633) is amended by adding at the end the following:

''(g) SBA LENDER ACTIVITY INDEX.—

''(1) DEFINITION.—In this subsection, the term 'covered loan' means a loan made or debenture issued under this Act or the Small Business Investment Act of 1958 (15 U.S.C. 661 et seq.) by a private individual or entity.

''(2) REQUIREMENT.—Not later than 6 months after the date of enactment of this subsection, the Administrator shall make publicly available on the website of the Administration a user-friendly database of information relating to lenders making covered loans (to be known as the 'Lender Activity Index').

''(3) DATA INCLUDED.—

''(A) IN GENERAL.—The database made available under paragraph (2) shall include, for each lender making a covered loan—

''(i) the name of the lender;

''(ii) the number of covered loans made by the lender;

''(iii) the total dollar amount of covered loans made by the lender;

''(iv) a list of each ZIP Code in which a recipient of a covered loan made by the lender is located;

''(v) a list of the industries of the recipients to which the lender made a covered loan;

''(vi) whether the covered loan is for an existing business or a new business;

''(vii) the number and total dollar amount of covered loans made by the lender to—

''(I) small business concerns owned and controlled by women;

''(II) socially and economically disadvantaged small business concerns (as defined in section 8(a)(4)(A)); and

''(III) small business concerns owned and controlled by veterans; and

''(viii) whether the covered loan was made under section 7(a) or under the program to provide financing to small business concerns through guarantees of loans under title V of the Small Business Investment Act of 1958 (15 U.S.C. 695 et seq.).

''(B) INCORPORATION OF DATA.—The Administrator shall—

''(i) include in the database made available under paragraph (2) information relating to covered loans made during fiscal years 2009, 2010, 2011, 2012, and 2013; and

''(ii) incorporate information relating to covered loans on an ongoing basis.

''(C) PERIOD OF DATA AVAILABILITY.—The Administrator shall retain information relating to a covered loan in the database made available under paragraph (2) until not earlier than the end of the third fiscal year beginning after the fiscal year during which the covered loan was made.''.

SUBMITTED RESOLUTIONS

SENATE RESOLUTION 75—CONDEMNING THE GOVERNMENT OF IRAN FOR ITS STATE-SPONSORED PERSECUTION OF ITS BAHA'I MINORITY AND ITS CONTINUED VIOLATION OF THE INTERNATIONAL COVENANTS ON HUMAN RIGHTS

Mr. KIRK (for himself and Mr. DURBIN) submitted the following resolution; which was referred to the Committee on Foreign Relations:

S. RES. 75

Whereas, in 1982, 1984, 1988, 1990, 1992, 1994, 1996, 2000, 2006, 2008, 2009, 2012, and 2013, Congress declared that it deplored the religious persecution by the Government of Iran of the Baha'i community and would hold the Government of Iran responsible for upholding the rights of all Iranian nationals, including members of the Baha'i Faith;

Whereas the United States Commission on International Religious Freedom 2012 Report stated, ''The Baha'i community has long been subject to particularly severe religious freedom violations in Iran. Baha'is, who number at least 300,000, are viewed as 'heretics' by Iranian authorities and may face repression on the grounds of apostasy.'';

Whereas the United States Commission on International Religious Freedom 2012 Report stated, ''Since 1979, Iranian government authorities have killed more than 200 Baha'i leaders in Iran and dismissed more than 10,000 from government and university jobs.'';

Whereas the United States Commission on International Religious Freedom 2012 Report stated, ''Baha'is may not establish places of worship, schools, or any independent religious associations in Iran.'';

Whereas the United States Commission on International Religious Freedom 2012 Report stated, ''Baha'is are barred from the military and denied government jobs and pensions as well as the right to inherit property. Their marriages and divorces also are not recognized, and they have difficulty obtaining death certificates. Baha'i cemeteries, holy places, and community properties are often seized or desecrated, and many important religious sites have been destroyed.'';

Whereas the United States Commission on International Religious Freedom 2012 Report stated, ''The Baha'i community faces severe economic pressure, including denials of jobs in both the public and private sectors and of business licenses. Iranian authorities often pressure employers of Baha'is to dismiss them from employment in the private sector.'';

Whereas the Department of State 2011 International Religious Freedom Report stated, ''The government prohibits Baha'is from teaching and practicing their faith and subjects them to many forms of discrimination that followers of other religions do not face.'';

Whereas the Department of State 2011 International Religious Freedom Report stated, ''According to [Iranian] law, Baha'i blood is considered 'mobah', meaning it can be spilled with impunity.'';

Whereas the Department of State 2011 International Religious Freedom Report stated that ''members of religious minorities, with the exception of Baha'is, can serve in lower ranks of government employment'', and ''Baha'is are barred from all leadership positions in the government and military'';

Whereas the Department of State 2011 International Religious Freedom Report stated, ''Baha'is suffered frequent government harassment and persecution, and their property rights generally were disregarded. The government raided Baha'i homes and businesses and confiscated large amounts of private and commercial property, as well as religious materials belonging to Baha'is.'';

Whereas the Department of State 2011 International Religious Freedom Report stated, ''Baha'is also are required to register with the police.'';

Whereas the Department of State 2011 International Religious Freedom Report stated that ''[p]ublic and private universities continued to deny admittance to and expelled Baha'i students'' and ''[d]uring the year, at least 30 Baha'is were barred or expelled from universities on political or religious grounds'';

Whereas the Department of State 2011 International Religious Freedom Report stated, ''Baha'is are regularly denied compensation for injury or criminal victimization.'';

Whereas, on March 6, 2012, the United Nations Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in the Islamic Republic of Iran issued a report (A/HRC/19/66), which stated that ''the Special Rapporteur continues to be alarmed by communications that demonstrate the systemic and systematic persecution of members of unrecognized religious communities, particularly the Baha'i community, in violation of international conventions'' and expressed concern regarding ''an intensive defamation campaign meant to incite discrimination and hate against Baha'is'';

Whereas, on May 23, 2012, the United Nations Secretary-General issued a report (A/HRC/19/82), which stated that ''the Special Rapporteur on freedom of religion or belief . . . pointed out that the Islamic Republic of Iran had a policy of systematic persecution of persons belonging to the Baha'i faith, excluding them from the application of freedom of religion or belief by simply denying that their faith had the status of a religion'';

Whereas, on August 22, 2012, the United Nations Secretary-General issued a report (A/67/327), which stated, ''The international community continues to express concerns about the very serious discrimination against ethnic and religious minorities in law and in practice, in particular the Baha'i community. The Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in the Islamic Republic of Iran expressed alarm about the systemic and systematic persecution of members of the Baha'i community, including severe socioeconomic pressure and arrests and detention. He also deplored the Government's tolerance of an intensive defamation campaign aimed at inciting discrimination and hate against Baha'is.'';

Whereas, on September 13, 2012, the United Nations Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in the Islamic Republic of Iran issued a report (A/67/369), which stated, ''Reports and interviews submitted to the Special Rapporteur also continue to portray a disturbing trend with regard to religious freedom in the country. Members of both recognized and unrecognized religions have reported various levels of intimidation, arrest, detention and interrogation that focus on their religious beliefs.'', and stated, ''At the time of drafting the report, 105 members of the Baha'i community were reported to be in detention.'';

Whereas, on November 27, 2012, the Third Committee of the United Nations General Assembly adopted a draft resolution (A/C.3/67/L.51), which noted, ''[I]ncreased persecution and human rights violations against persons belonging to unrecognized religious minorities, particularly members of the Baha'i faith and their defenders, including escalating attacks, an increase in the number of arrests and detentions, the restriction of access to higher education on the basis of religion, the sentencing of twelve Baha'is associated with Baha'i educational institutions to lengthy prison terms, the continued denial of access to employment in the public sector, additional restrictions on participation in the private sector, and the de facto criminalization of membership in the Baha'i faith.'';

Whereas, on December 20, 2012, the United Nations General Assembly adopted a resolution (A/RES/67/182), which called upon the government of Iran ''[t]o eliminate discrimination against, and exclusion of . . . members of the Baha'i Faith, regarding access to higher education, and to eliminate the criminalization of efforts to provide higher education to Baha'i youth denied access to Iranian universities,'' and ''to accord all Baha'is, including those imprisoned because of their beliefs, the due process of law and the rights that they are constitutionally guaranteed'';

Whereas, on February 28, 2013, the United Nations Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in the Islamic Republic of Iran issued a report (A/HRC/22/56), which stated, ''110 Bahai's are currently detained in Iran for exercising their faith, including two women, Mrs. Zohreh Nikayin and Mrs. Taraneh Torabi, who are reportedly nursing infants in prison.'';

Whereas, in March and May of 2008, intelligence officials of the Government of Iran in Mashhad and Tehran arrested and imprisoned Mrs. Fariba Kamalabadi, Mr. Jamaloddin Khanjani, Mr. Afif Naeimi, Mr. Saeid Rezaie, Mr. Behrouz Tavakkoli, Mrs. Mahvash Sabet, and Mr. Vahid Tizfahm, the seven members of the ad hoc leadership group for the Baha'i community in Iran;

Whereas, in August 2010, the Revolutionary Court in Tehran sentenced the seven Baha'i leaders to 20-year prison terms on charges of ''spying for Israel, insulting religious sanctities, propaganda against the regime and spreading corruption on earth'';

Whereas the lawyer for these seven leaders, Mrs. Shirin Ebadi, the Nobel Laureate, was denied meaningful or timely access to the prisoners and their files, and her successors as defense counsel were provided extremely limited access;

Whereas these seven Baha'i leaders were targeted solely on the basis of their religion;

Whereas, beginning in May 2011, Government of Iran officials in four cities conducted sweeping raids on the homes of dozens of individuals associated with the Baha'i Institute for Higher Education (BIHE) and arrested and detained several educators associated with BIHE;

Whereas, in October 2011, the Revolutionary Court in Tehran sentenced seven of these BIHE instructors and administrators, Mr. Vahid Mahmoudi, Mr. Kamran Mortezaie, Mr. Mahmoud Badavam, Ms. Nooshin Khadem, Mr. Farhad Sedghi, Mr. Riaz Sobhani, and Mr. Ramin Zibaie, to prison terms for the crime of ''membership of the deviant sect of Baha'ism, with the goal of taking action against the security of the country, in order to further the aims of the deviant sect and those of organizations outside the country'';

Whereas six of these educators remain imprisoned, with Mr. Mortezaie serving a 5-year prison term and Mr. Badavam, Ms. Khadem, Mr. Sedghi, Mr. Sobhani, and Mr. Zibaie serving 4-year prison terms;

Whereas, since October 2011, four other BIHE educators have been arrested and imprisoned, with Ms. Faran Hessami, Mr. Kamran Rahimian, and Mr. Shahin Negari serving 4-year prison terms, and Mr. Kayvan Rahimian serving a 5-year prison term;

Whereas the efforts of the Government of Iran to collect information on individual Baha'is have recently intensified as evidenced by a letter, dated November 5, 2011, from the Director of the Department of Education in the county of Shahriar in the province of Tehran, instructing the directors of schools in his jurisdiction to ''subtly and in a confidential manner'' collect information on Baha'i students;

Whereas the Baha'i community continues to undergo intense economic and social pressure, including an ongoing campaign in the town of Semnan, where the Government of Iran has harassed and detained Baha'is, closed 17 Baha'i owned businesses in the last three years, and imprisoned several members of the community, including three mothers along with their infants;

Whereas ordinary Iranian citizens who belong to the Baha'i Faith are disproportionately targeted, interrogated, and detained under the pretext of national security;

Whereas the Government of Iran is party to the International Covenants on Human Rights and is in violation of its obligations under the Covenants; and

Whereas the Comprehensive Iran Sanctions, Accountability, and Divestment Act of 2010 (Public Law 111–195) authorizes the President and the Secretary of State to impose sanctions on individuals ''responsible for or complicit in, or responsible for ordering, controlling, or otherwise directing, the commission of serious human rights abuses against citizens of Iran or their family members on or after June 12, 2009'': Now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the Senate—

(1) condemns the Government of Iran for its state-sponsored persecution of its Baha'i minority and its continued violation of the International Covenants on Human Rights;

(2) calls on the Government of Iran to immediately release the seven imprisoned leaders, the ten imprisoned educators, and all other prisoners held solely on account of their religion;

(3) calls on the President and Secretary of State, in cooperation with responsible nations, to immediately condemn the Government of Iran's continued violation of human rights and demand the immediate release of prisoners held solely on account of their religion; and

(4) urges the President and Secretary of State to utilize all available authorities, including the Comprehensive Iran Sanctions, Accountability, and Divestment Act of 2010, to impose sanctions on officials of the Government of Iran and other individuals directly responsible for serious human rights abuses, including abuses against the Baha'i community of Iran.

AMENDMENTS SUBMITTED AND PROPOSED

SA 27. Mr. RUBIO submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by him to the bill H.R. 933, making appropriations for the Department of Defense, the Department of Veterans Affairs, and other departments and agencies for the fiscal year ending September 30, 2013, and for other purposes; which was ordered to lie on the table.

SA 28. Mr. PAUL submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by him to the bill H.R. 933, supra; which was ordered to lie on the table.

SA 29. Mr. INHOFE submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by him to the bill H.R. 933, supra; which was ordered to lie on the table.

SA 30. Mr. CRUZ (for himself, Mr. LEE, Mr. INHOFE, Mr. PAUL, Mr. RUBIO, Mr. CORNYN, Mr. JOHNSON of Wisconsin, Mr. RISCH, Mr. VITTER, Mr. COBURN, Mr. SCOTT, Mr. HELLER, Mr. TOOMEY, and Mr. JOHANNS) submitted an amendment intended to be proposed to amendment SA 26 submitted by Ms. MIKULSKI (for herself and Mr. SHELBY) and intended to be proposed to the bill H.R. 933, supra; which was ordered to lie on the table.

SA 31. Mrs. FISCHER submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by her to the bill H.R. 933, supra; which was ordered to lie on the table.

TEXT OF AMENDMENTS

SA 27. Mr. RUBIO submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by him to the bill H.R. 933, making appropriations for the Department of Defense, the Department of Veterans Affairs, and other departments and agencies for the fiscal year ending September 30, 2013, and for other purposes; which was ordered to lie on the table; as follows:

On page 571, between lines 20 and 21, insert the following:

SEC. ____. (a)(1)(A) None of the amounts appropriated or otherwise made available by this Act or any prior Act making appropriations for the Department of State, foreign operations, and related programs for bilateral economic assistance under the heading ''ECONOMIC SUPPORT FUND'' may be made available to the Government of Egypt unless a certification under subsection (c)(2) is in effect.

(B) Except as provided under paragraph (3), none of the amounts appropriated or otherwise made available by this Act or any prior Act making appropriations for the Department of State, foreign operations, and related programs for assistance for Egypt under section 23 of the Arms Export Control Act (22 U.S.C. 2763; relating to the Foreign Military Financing program) may be obligated or expended for contracts with the Government of Egypt entered into on or after the date of the enactment of this Act unless a certification under subsection (c)(1) is in effect.

(2) Not later than 90 days after the date on which the Secretary of State transmits to the appropriate congressional committees an initial certification under paragraph (1) or (2) of subsection (c), and every 6 months thereafter, the Secretary shall transmit to the appropriate congressional committees—

(A) a recertification that the requirements contained in such paragraph are continuing to be met; or

(B) a statement that the Secretary is unable to make such a recertification and that the certification is no longer in effect.

(3) The Secretary of State may waive the requirements of subparagraph (B) of paragraph (1) for one or more 180-periods if, for each such 180-day period, the Secretary determines and certifies to the appropriate congressional committees that it is in the national security interests of the United States to do so and submits to the appropriate congressional committees a report with detailed reasoning for the determination and certification.

(b) During a period in which a certification described in subsection (c)(2) is not in effect, amounts that may not be made available for Economic Support Fund assistance to the Government of Egypt pursuant to the limitation under subsection (a) shall be reallocated for democracy and governance programs for Egypt, including direct support for secular, democratic nongovernmental organizations, as well as programming and support for rule of law and human rights, good governance, political competition and consensus-building, and civil society.

(c)(1) A certification described in this paragraph is a certification submitted by the Secretary of State to the appropriate congressional committees that the following conditions have been met:

(A) The Government of Egypt has adopted and implemented legal reforms to protect the political, economic, and religious freedoms and human rights of all citizens and residents of Egypt.

(B) The Government of Egypt is not acting to restrict the political, economic, or religious freedoms and human rights of the citizens and residents of Egypt.

(C) The Government of Egypt is continuing to demonstrate a commitment to free and fair elections and is not taking any steps to interfere with or undermine the credibility of such elections.

(D) Egypt is implementing the Egypt-Israel Peace Treaty.

(E) The Government of Egypt is taking all necessary action to eliminate smuggling networks and to detect and destroy tunnels between Egypt and the Gaza Strip.

(F) The Government of Egypt is taking all necessary action to combat terrorism in the Sinai, and the Department of Defense has allocated a portion of Egypt's Foreign Military Financing (FMF) assistance, not less than $100,000,000, toward counterterrorism tools, including equipment and training related to border security, to address this problem.

(G) The Department of Defense has consulted with the Government of Egypt and produced an analysis of Egypt's current security needs, and the analysis has been shared with the relevant congressional committees.

(H) The Government of Egypt has lifted restrictions in law and practice on the work and funding of Egyptian and international nongovernmental organizations, comprising those in the human rights and democracy field, including the International Republican Institute, the National Democratic Institute, and Freedom House.

(2) A certification described in this paragraph is a certification submitted by the Secretary of State to the appropriate congressional committees that—

(A) the conditions set forth in paragraph (1) have been met; and

(B) the Government of Egypt has signed and submitted to the International Monetary Fund a Letter of Intent and Memorandum of Economic and Financial Policies designed to achieve such actions as reducing and streamlining energy subsidies, improving the government financial management, and increasing taxation revenues through a broadened tax base and reducing tax exemptions and has begun to implement such measures.

(d) Any interest earned from amounts in an interest bearing account for Egypt related to funds made available under section

23 of the Arms Export Control Act (22 U.S.C. 2763) shall be—

(1) transferred to and consolidated with amounts available for assistance for the Middle East Partnership Initiative under chapter 4 of part II of the Foreign Assistance Act of 1961 (22 U.S.C. 2346 et seq.; relating to the Economic Support Fund); and

(2) allocated for democracy and governance programs for Egypt, including direct support for secular, democratic nongovernmental organizations.

(e) Not later than 180 days after the date of the enactment of this Act, the President shall submit to the appropriate congressional committees a report describing the results of a policy review on Egypt conducted after a dialogue with the Government of Egypt and civil society on how to rebalance United States military and economic assistance to Egypt.

(f) Not later than 180 days after the date of the enactment of this Act, the President shall submit to the appropriate congressional committees a report listing all of the Foreign Military Financing contracts for the Government of Egypt carried out over the previous 10 years and describing plans for such contracts over the next 10 years.

(g) In this section, the term ''appropriate congressional committees'' means—

(1) the Committee on Foreign Relations and the Committee on Appropriations of the Senate; and

(2) the Committee on Foreign Affairs and the Committee on Appropriations of the House of Representatives.

SA 28. Mr. PAUL submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by him to the bill H.R. 933, making appropriations for the Department of Defense, the Department of Veterans Affairs, and other departments and agencies for the fiscal year ending September 30, 2013, and for other purposes; which was ordered to lie on the table; as follows:

At the appropriate place, insert the following:

SEC. ____. None of the amounts appropriated or otherwise made available by this Act or any other Act may be made available to the Government of Egypt until the President certifies that the President of Egypt has publicly declared, in English and Arabic, his intent to abide by the Camp David Accords.

SA 29. Mr. INHOFE submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by him to the bill H.R. 933, making appropriations for the Department of Defense, the Department of Veterans Affairs, and other departments and agencies for the fiscal year ending September 30, 2013, and for other purposes; which was ordered to lie on the table; as follows:

At the end of title VII of division C, insert the following:

SEC. 17_____. No funds made available under this Act shall be used to implement or enforce with respect to any farm (as that term is defined in section 112.2 of title 40, Code of Federal Regulations (or successor regulations)) the Spill, Prevention, Control, and Countermeasure rule, including amendments to that rule, promulgated by the Environmental Protection Agency under part 112 of title 40, Code of Federal Regulations.

SA 30. Mr. CRUZ (for himself, Mr. LEE, Mr. INHOFE, Mr. PAUL, Mr. RUBIO, Mr. CORNYN, Mr. JOHNSON of Wisconsin, Mr. RISCH, Mr. VITTER, Mr. COBURN, Mr. SCOTT, Mr. HELLER, Mr. TOOMEY, and Mr. JOHANNS) submitted an amendment intended to be proposed to amendment SA 26 submitted by Ms. MIKULSKI (for herself and Mr. SHELBY) and intended to be proposed to the bill H.R. 933, making appropriations for the Department of Defense, the Department of Veterans Affairs, and other departments and agencies for the fiscal year ending September 30, 2013, and for other purposes; which was ordered to lie on the table; as follows:

At the appropriate place, insert the following:

SEC. ____. PROHIBITION ON FUNDING.

None of the funds made available in this Act may be used—

(1) to carry out any provision of the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act (Public Law 111–148) or title I or subtitle B of title II of the Health Care and Education Reconciliation Act of 2010 (Public Law 111–152), or the amendments made by such Act, title, or subtitle; or

(2) for rulemaking under such Act, title, or subtitle.

SA 31. Mrs. FISCHER submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by her to the bill H.R. 933, making appropriations for the Department of Defense, the Department of Veterans Affairs, and other departments and agencies for the fiscal year ending September 30, 2013, and for other purposes; which was ordered to lie on the table; as follows:

At the end of subtitle VIII of division C, insert the following:

SEC. 8131. (a) INCREASED AMOUNT FOR OTHER PROCUREMENT, AIR FORCE, FOR STRATEGIC COMMAND AND CONTROL.—The amount appropriated by title III of this division under the heading ''OTHER PROCUREMENT, AIR FORCE'' is hereby increased by $25,000,000, with the amount of the increase to be available for Strategic Command and Control.

(b) OFFSET.—The amount appropriated by title III of this division under the heading ''DEFENSE ACT PRODUCTION PURCHASES'' is hereby decreased by $25,000,000.

NOTICE OF HEARING

COMMITTEE ON HEALTH, EDUCATION, LABOR, AND PENSIONS

Mr. HARKIN. Mr. President, I wish to announce that the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions will meet in open session on Thursday, March 14, 2013, at 10 a.m. in room 430 of the Dirksen Senate Office Building to conduct a hearing entitled ''Keeping Up With a Changing Economy: Indexing the Minimum Wage.''

For further information regarding this meeting, please contact Anna Porto of the committee staff on (202) 224–5363.

AUTHORITY FOR COMMITTEES TO MEET

COMMITTEE ON ARMED SERVICES

Ms. MIKULSKI. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Committee on Armed Services be authorized to meet during the session of the Senate on March 12, 2013, at 9:30 a.m.

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

COMMITTEE ON BANKING, HOUSING, AND URBAN AFFAIRS

Ms. MIKULSKI. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs be authorized to meet during the session of the Senate on March 12, 2013, at 10 a.m.

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

COMMITTEE ON COMMERCE, SCIENCE, AND TRANSPORTATION

Ms. MIKULSKI. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation be authorized to meet during the session of the Senate on March 12, 2013, at 2:45 p.m. in room 253 of the Russell Senate Office Building.

The Committee will hold a hearing entitled, ''Oversight of the Federal Communications Commission.''

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

COMMITTEE ON HEALTH, EDUCATION, LABOR, AND PENSIONS

Ms. MIKULSKI. 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 ''Job Corps Budget Shortfall: Safeguarding Workforce Training for America's Disconnected Youth'' on March 12, 2013, at 2:30 p.m. in room 430 of the Dirksen Senate Office Building.

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

COMMITTEE ON THE JUDICIARY

Ms. MIKULSKI. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Committee on the Judiciary be authorized to meet during the session of the Senate, on March 12, 2013, at 10:15 a.m., in SD–226 of the Dirksen Senate Office Building, to continue its executive business meeting from March 7, 2013.

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

SELECT COMMITTEE ON INTELLIGENCE

Ms. MIKULSKI. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Select Committee on Intelligence be authorized to meet during the session of the Senate on March 12, 2013, at 10 a.m.

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

APPOINTMENTS

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Chair announces, on behalf of the Republican leader, pursuant to the provisions of S. Res. 64, adopted March 5, 2013, the appointment of the following Senators as members of the Senate National Security Working Group for the 113th Congress: MITCH MCCONNELL of Kentucky (serving in his capacity as Republican Leader); MARCO RUBIO of Florida (Republican Co-Chairman and designated as Administrative Co-Chairman); THAD COCHRAN of Mississippi (Republican Co-Chairman); LINDSEY

GRAHAM of South Carolina (Republican Co-Chairman); BOB CORKER of Tennessee; JEFF SESSIONS of Alabama; JOHN MCCAIN of Arizona; JAMES RISCH of Idaho; ROY BLUNT of Missouri; and JAMES INHOFE of Oklahoma.

ORDERS FOR WEDNESDAY, MARCH 13, 2013

Mrs. SHAHEEN. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent that when the Senate completes its business today, it adjourn until 9:30 a.m. on Wednesday, March 13, 2013; that following the prayer and pledge, the morning hour be deemed expired, the Journal of proceedings be approved to date, and the time for the two leaders be reserved for their use later in the day; and that following any leader remarks the Senate resume consideration of the motion to proceed to Calendar No. 21, H.R. 933.

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

PROGRAM

Mrs. SHAHEEN. This evening cloture was filed on the motion to proceed to the continuing appropriations bill. If no agreement is reached, the cloture vote will be Thursday morning.

ADJOURNMENT UNTIL 9:30 A.M. TOMORROW

Mrs. SHAHEEN. If there is no further business to come before the Senate, I ask unanimous consent it adjourn under the previous order.

There being no objection, the Senate, at 6:49 p.m., adjourned until Wednesday, March 13, 2013, at 9:30 a.m.