

well. But I also wish now we could do what we could in these closing hours. We have been guaranteed 30 hours of debate—we have used probably about 5—that we look at how we can bring this debate to a close in an agreed-upon way on both sides of the aisle so we can then move on to the budget debate of fiscal year 2014.

I am sorry, I did not know the Senator from Kansas was here. We will not recess until the Senator has a chance to speak.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Kansas.

Mr. MORAN. Madam President, I thank the Senator from Maryland, my chairwoman.

I spoke last night on an amendment I have continued to ask be made in order on this continuing resolution. As I indicated last night, we are going to spend in excess of \$1 trillion in this bill, and I am hoping that my amendment, and perhaps others, could be made in order yet during this postclosure 30-hour period of time.

One of the concerns that has been raised is whether, if my amendment were adopted, this would create difficulties in the House of Representatives for the final passage of the continuing resolution. I am pleased to be on the floor, particularly with the chairwoman being here, the Senator from Maryland, to indicate that I now have indications from the Speaker's Office that they would have no objection to the amendment I continue to offer, that I hope will be made in order, that I hope a vote will be taken on related to the air traffic control towers.

Also in the period of time since I last spoke, we have numerous Members of the Senate who have now joined as co-sponsors of this amendment. The number is now 14 Democrats and 12 Republicans. The number continues to grow. And I have had a number of conversations with particularly Democratic Members of the U.S. Senate who indicate to me: Why can't your amendment be made in order?

So I am hoping, as Members of the Democratic Caucus and the Republican Conference meet during this 12:30 lunch period, that perhaps there is still an opportunity for this issue to be resolved.

I would indicate once again that, while I listened to the suggestion of the majority leader this morning that we move to the budget during this 30-hour postclosure timeframe, in the absence of some agreement related to this amendment, I will object to moving to the budget until the 30 hours expire.

I also have indicated publicly that I will object to the next 30 hours—the next opportunity in which unanimous consent is requested as we get back to the base bill. It is not my nature to be an obstructionist. This is an amendment that matters greatly. It has been determined by the Parliamentarian to be germane and, in my view, ought to be made in order.

Just as the chairwoman talked about bipartisan efforts, this is one that clearly is bipartisan and apparently bicameral. So I am hoping to utilize the rights as a Member of the Senate to see that there still is an opportunity for this amendment to be considered. I would say that the reason this matters so much in this timeframe is that I am of the view, and I think it is shared by many, in the absence of this amendment being adopted and included in this continuing resolution, and the continuing resolution being passed, that the control towers will be eliminated on April 7, and there will be little if any opportunity for the Appropriations Committee then to restore funding to, in a sense, a program that no longer exists.

There are many of the topics I share with my colleagues here about the consequences of the sequester. I am willing to work with them to see that we move money from one place to another to solve that problem. In the absence of that happening, there is still an opportunity for the Appropriations Committee and ultimately the Congress in the appropriations process to solve those problems. But should April 7 come, the 179-plus contract towers are eliminated. Then it seems highly unlikely to me that any appropriations process would include money for a program that is no longer in existence.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Maryland.

Ms. MIKULSKI. Madam President, I appreciate the tenacity and persistence of the Senator from Kansas in being an advocate for his constituents. I would hope that during this noon hour—I can give no promises. There are leadership concerns on both sides of the aisle. But we have to acknowledge the Senator is a real fighter for what he believes in. We admire that. How that gets translated will be subject to further discussion during this noon hour.

RECESS

Ms. MIKULSKI. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate stand in recess until 2:15 for the respective party conferences to discuss important issues.

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

There being no objection, the Senate, at 12:32 p.m., recessed until 2:15 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—Continued

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Oklahoma.

Mr. INHOFE. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent to be recognized for up to 7 minutes.

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

Mr. INHOFE. Madam President, we have been listening to our good friend from Kansas concerning this contract air traffic control tower amendment. I think there is no better example to use when talking about a bureaucracy taking something that everybody wants, that is very inexpensive, and using that to try to force people to do something that should never have happened.

In terms of the contract air traffic control towers, this is not just a rural issue. This is something that can happen all around. It happens that I have six in my State of Oklahoma and up in Kansas I believe they have five, but the fact is this is a major safety issue. We have a huge, bloated bureaucracy in the FAA. Yet we are saying we have to close a handful of towers and let people be uncontrolled. I know a little about that; it is what I did for a living. It is totally outrageous.

So we have an amendment, Senator MORAN and I, to redirect the money within the FAA budget. There would be no additional cost. It would rescind \$23.8 million from FAA facilities and equipment. Now, I ask, are facilities and equipment more important than actually having an active control tower in these congested areas? Also, it would take \$26.2 million from FAA research and development. Well, I can assure you this is more significant, and no one looking at this would rationally say it is not. So I encourage my good friend from Kansas to pursue this.

Similar to this is something that I, along with several Democrats—the primary one being KAY HAGAN—am concerned about, and that is what has happened in terms of a decision that was made by the Secretary of Defense to take out the tuition assistance. This is a very small amount of money for our troops who are over there serving now.

This is kind of interesting because I was a product of the draft. My service was not voluntary when I was in, and I thought a total voluntary force would not be effective. As I found out, it was. Well, one of the main reasons people do sign up—a lot of people say: Yes, I want to serve my country. A lot say: Yes, I want a career in the Army, Navy, Marines, or Air Force. However, they also want to advance themselves. They want an education, and in many cases, the only way they can get one is to have this tuition assistance program.

I can recall being over in the mess halls in Afghanistan and actually out in the field in Afghanistan where we have some 200,000 Army troops there now who are participating in this program. This is not an expensive program. All we want to do is make sure we give what was taken away from those individuals who are trying to better themselves, trying to better their lives, perhaps work toward a career in the military.

Stop and think about the amount of money that could come out of, say,