reasons he doesn't have an understanding of how a conference works is because they have stopped us from going to conference on virtually everything.

He also says: We don't know what the prospects are for success. That is what conference is all about. The Senate passes a bill, the House passes a bill, and we sit down and try to work it out.

He said:

I think it's possible that we could succeed, but at this point we're not close enough to anticipate a successful conference, and that presents complications for the House.

We are the United States Senate, not the United States House of Representatives. We should do our business and not be worried about the tea party-driven House of Representatives. The budget process is the only way to work through our differences without bringing the country to the brink of another artificial crisis. To accelerate job growth and reduce the deficit without harming the economy, we have to make important and smart spending cuts, while asking the most fortunate among us to do a little better, contribute a little more.

The arbitrary across-the-board cuts of the so-called sequester do just the exact opposite. The sequester uses a meat cleaver where a scalpel is needed. The sequester cuts were designed to be too painful—so painful they would force the supercommittee to reach a bipartisan compromise. We all remember what happened there. Republicans refused to allow one penny of revenue. When they did that, they insisted on a cuts-only approach. They ensured the sequester would kick in.

Eliminating sequester is part of a larger challenge: to set sound long-term fiscal policy through the regular order of the budget process, which they said they wanted—they, the Republicans. Now they have walked away from it. That will take cooperation. Remember, Democrats and Republicans voted for these arbitrary cuts, and Democrats and Republicans will have to work together to reverse them.

Why are my Republican colleagues so afraid? We know the two sides will not agree on every aspect of the budget. We know finding common ground will not be easy.

We can get it done. We used to do it until we have been stopped from doing everything by a tea party-driven House of Representatives and the strongly influenced Republicans in the Senate by the tea party. Republicans believe in one set of principles for how the government should spend money and how it should save money.

Democrats have very different principles. Republicans would lower taxes for the rich while the middle class foots the bill. Democrats would ask the wealthiest individuals and corporations to contribute a little more to reduce the deficit. Republicans would turn Medicaid into a voucher program, in effect doing away with Medicaid as we know it.

Democrats would preserve and protect Medicare for future generations. Republicans would use more harsh austerity to reduce the deficit. Democrats would adopt a balanced approach that couples smart spending cuts with new revenue from closing loopholes.

Remember, we have already cut more than $2.5 trillion from the debt. We have our differences, but Democrats aren't afraid to work out those differences. We are ready to go to conference to begin the difficult work of compromise.

If this Congress is serious about reducing the deficit and protecting the economy, we need to go to work now, not wait until this minor impasse—and that is what it is—turns into another major manufactured crisis, which the House loves to send to us at the last minute.

UNANIMOUS CONSENT REQUEST—H. CON. RES. 25

Mr. REID. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent the Senate proceed to the consideration of Calendar No. 33, H. Con. Res. 25; that all after the enacting clause be stricken; that the amendment, which is at the desk, the text of S. Con. Res. 8, the budget resolution passed by the Senate, be inserted in lieu thereof; that H. Con. Res. 25, as amended, be agreed to; the motion to reconsider be considered made and laid upon the table; that the Senate insist on its amendment, request a conference with the House on the disagreeing votes of the two Houses, and the chair be authorized to appoint conferees on the part of the Senate, all with no intervening action or debate.

I have just been informed that there is no one from the Republican side to object to this, so I will renew this. I want everyone put on notice that we are going to ask that we follow regular order, which the Republicans have been whining about for 2 years. That is what we want to do, and that is what this consent is all about.

I would withdraw this request until the Republicans show up to object.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. KAINE). The unanimous consent request is withdrawn.

RESERVATION OF LEADER TIME

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the leadership time is reserved.

MORNING BUSINESS

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the Senate will be in a period of morning business until 5:30 p.m., with Senators permitted to speak therein for up to 10 minutes each.

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

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

MARKETPLACE FAIRNESS ACT

Mr. ENZI. Mr. President, I rise today to urge my colleagues to vote for the Marketplace Fairness Act in just over an hour or so from now. I have said many times over the past few weeks—and, in fact, I have been saying it for the past 12 years as I have worked on this issue, but it is worth repeating—this bill is about fairness. It is about leveling the playing field between the brick and mortar and online companies and it is about collecting a tax that is already due. It is not about raising taxes, taxing the Internet, or taxing Internet access.

This bill in general, and this bill in particular, has grabbed the attention of Members of the Senate and their constituents back home. Unfortunately, the misinformation that is being disseminated by many has added confusion and anxiety about what the bill does and does not do. For example, the Americans For Tax Reform sent me a detailed letter last week asking many questions. It appears the letter was not meant to find resolution or a path forward with this issue but ultimately to confuse my colleagues prior to tonight's vote. Senator ALEXANDER and I responded to the 16 questions in order to provide clarity for the organization and its members.

Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent to have printed in the RECORD the two letters to which I just referred.

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

AMERICANS FOR TAX REFORM,
Washington, DC, May 2, 2013.

Hon. MIKE ENZI,
Senate Russell Office Building, Washington, DC.

DEAR SENATOR ENZI: We believe that there are a number of unanswered questions concerning the Marketplace Fairness Act that remain troubling to taxpayers. We would appreciate your leadership in answering the following questions regarding the legislation as it stands and the recent manager's amendment that you filed to S. 743, the Marketplace Fairness Act.

1) What measures protect businesses from tax audits, court proceedings and penalties like tax liens imposed on a business by state departments of revenue where the business has no physical presence? How will businessmen and women be protected over time from politicians in a different state that they cannot vote for or against? Is there a danger of establishing taxation without representation?

2) Does the bill prevent double taxation by removing the Use Tax? If states still have a Use Tax law on the books what provisions of MFA prevent states from charging Use Tax in addition to sales tax?

3) Can states audit remote sellers for customer data and then retroactively (i.e., prior