

legislation, recognize this is not working and are making it abundantly clear in the statements that they are now making.

Just yesterday, as I mentioned, the President delivered a speech aiming to yet again pivot, as he says, back to jobs and the economy. He used the speech to kick off another campaign-style tour of speeches in hopes that touting his continued commitment to an economic recovery will overshadow these harsh realities of ObamaCare and other economic woes that plague this country.

During yesterday's speech, the President claimed he is dedicated to the middle class and growing the economy from "the middle out." What do these concerns tell us about the state of the middle class? Hard-working Americans are now fearful about their job security, about their health care coverage, and their ability to make ends meet all because of this catastrophic law.

The President's strongest political allies who represent millions of workers say the President's signature domestic achievement is "destroying the backbone of the middle class." Although the President continues to pivot to and away from these issues, Senate Republicans remain focused on creating jobs and growth in this country. It is time for a real recovery. The American people are ready to get back to work.

For 54 months, we have seen unemployment at or above 7½ percent. That number does not reflect the people who have given up looking for work. Let's remove the heavy hand of Washington regulations from our job creators. Let's create certainty for employers so they might hire new employees, not cut the hours of those they already have.

Let's spare the middle class from premium increases. I have seen studies all over the place that suggest, for families, for individuals, premiums across this country are going up. According to Kaiser, for families, it is \$2,500. In order to achieve the goals of addressing these issues in our economy, we have to start with a permanent delay of ObamaCare for all Americans—not just for the employers, not just the employer mandate but the individual mandates, the other regulations that are 20,000 pages high—7½ feet tall are the regulations that have been promulgated to implement this law. It continues to grow by the week.

We did not need a 2,700-page bill. We did not need 20,000 pages of regulations to address the problems we have in our health care delivery system and health care coverage system today. But that is what we got. But the President's job-killing tactics do not stop just at health care. The President's proposed climate change regulations alone would cost 500,000 jobs and reduce household income by up to \$1,000 per year.

Dodd-Frank has already cost \$15.4 billion and 58.3 million hours in paperwork burdens on businesses across the

country. Rather than more campaign-style speeches touting the same old flawed ideas, the President should work with Congress to put more Americans back to work.

By working together, we can enact meaningful regulatory reform that will provide relief to employers and to employees alike. We can fix our health care system in a manner that lowers costs while allowing families to keep the doctors they want. We can enact tax reform that will create economic growth, lower the unemployment rate, and reduce our unsustainable budget deficit.

We can expand access to domestic energy resources in a manner that fully realizes the benefits of increased energy production. This cooperation must start with President Obama getting off the campaign trail and getting to work with Congress on these important issues. So instead of pivoting yet again to the economy, in campaign-style speeches, we need a President that is here, that is working to address the economic woes American families are experiencing.

If you want to start by going out and touting things that you are going to do for the economy, start right away by approving the Keystone Pipeline. That is a no-brainer, in most people's estimation. In fact, the President's own administration has analyzed and reviewed and scrutinized and studied this thing now four different times and concluded it would have not an impact on the climate.

It would create immediate jobs, thousands of jobs, construction jobs, and then jobs over a long period of time. It would help lessen the dependence we have on foreign sources of energy by freeing up transportation of energy resources that come from friendly allies in countries such as Canada to get to American consumers in this country.

There are things the President could be doing that actually will create jobs. Come up here and engage in the debate on tax reform. Commit to tax reform that is revenue neutral, that does not raise taxes on people who create jobs in this country but, rather, lowers the rate to unleash economic growth and job creation in this country. Work with us to repeal, permanently delay, the ObamaCare regulations that are crushing jobs and the economy and, as I pointed out earlier, are forcing more and more Americans into part-time jobs, forcing employers to either cut and reduce their workforce or not hire people they otherwise might hire, and raising premiums for hard-working middle-class families.

Mr. President, it is not Washington that does not have its eye on the ball, it is you who does not have your eye on the ball.

We need you to focus like a laser on the economy and recognize that you can't close your eyes to the harmful, economic impact that your policies are having on too many middle-class Americans and small businesses who

create jobs in this country to generate the economic growth that is necessary to improve the standard of living and the take-home pay of every American family. This is what we need.

I hope the President will get off the campaign trail, come back, and focus on what really matters to middle-class Americans; that is, jobs, the economy, and a better life for their children and grandchildren.

I yield the floor.

Mrs. MURRAY. I suggest the absence of a quorum.

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

The legislative clerk called the roll.

Mrs. MURRAY. I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

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

ORDER OF PROCEDURE

Mrs. MURRAY. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that morning business be extended until 11:30 a.m., and at 11:30 a.m. the Senate proceed to executive session to consider Calendar No. 186, as provided under the previous order.

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

Mrs. MURRAY. Mr. President, I suggest the absence of a quorum.

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

The assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mrs. MURRAY. I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

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

THE BUDGET

Mrs. MURRAY. Mr. President, as the House and Senate have begun debating our separate appropriations bills for the coming year, we have been forced to take a very hard look at the numbers and exactly what so many important programs and services will look like next year under cuts that are forced by sequestration. I am here to tell you, it is not pretty.

As chair of the Budget Committee, it has only served as a reminder to me of just how important it is to fully replace the across-the-board cuts that sequestration has forced us to make, because it is only getting worse.

Some of my Republican colleagues in the Senate, and most of them in the House, it seems, don't believe sequestration has had a real impact on families, their communities, and our military.

I wish to take a few minutes to talk about what I have already seen in my home State of Washington, where the impacts of sequestration have been very severe.

Washington State has a proud history of supporting our Nation's Armed Forces. From Fairchild Air Force Base in eastern Washington to Joint Base Lewis-McChord in the Puget Sound region, our State is home to thousands of military families.

In addition to those active-duty servicemembers, Washington State is also home to thousands of civilian defense employees who work at these various military installations. Under sequestration, these men and women have borne the brunt of these across-the-board budget cuts. This month, weekly furloughs began for nearly 10,000 of these civilian employees in my home State of Washington. So now, once every week, they can't go to work. That amounts to a pay cut for them of 20 percent.

These are men and women—many of them veterans—with mortgages and medical bills and tuition costs, just like the rest of us. And thanks to the gridlock here in Congress, their lives have become 20-percent tougher. One of those people who is impacted is Will Silva. He lives in Tacoma, WA, and he works at Joint Base Lewis-McChord. We call it JBLM. Will is a former marine, he is an amputee, and he is a fire inspector at the base. Thanks to sequestration, he is one of 6,700 people in that community who won't be going to work tomorrow because Friday is furlough day at JBLM.

So tomorrow, Friday, in my home State of Washington, the 911 call center and fire departments will be understaffed, air fields will be shuttered except for emergencies, the military personnel office and the substance abuse center will be closed, the Madigan Army Medical Center will be forced to close clinics, and even the wound care clinic is going to be understaffed. All of this is because of the cuts we all agree are hurting our country.

Jennifer-Cari Green is another person who won't be going to work at JBLM tomorrow. Jennifer happens to be a single mother of a 6-year-old boy. She works at the Madigan Army Medical Center in the neurosurgery department. Her job is to care for servicemembers, many of whom are undergoing serious brain operations.

Jennifer was here in Washington, DC, on Tuesday to testify at our Budget Committee hearing about the impacts of sequestration. It is impossible to forget her story. Jennifer works very hard. She started there as a volunteer in the surgery center but has worked her way up. She doesn't make much money to support herself and her young son, and so she budgets every month right down to the dollar. She has no luxuries, and in her only spare time she cares for her son and works toward an associate degree at the community college.

Jennifer told me that because of these furloughs her take-home pay will be almost exactly \$1,000 a month—\$1,000 a month. That isn't enough for her to pay her most basic expenses. But

even with all of the challenges she faces, Jennifer came here to talk about what those cuts will mean for others, for the people she cares for at the army hospital where she works.

Because she has been furloughed—by the way, along with doctors and technicians and other employees at the hospital—servicemembers and veterans aren't going to get the care they need. These furloughs mean that everything from routine checkups to brain surgeries is being delayed for these men and women who served our country. Let me repeat that: brain surgeries at military hospitals are being delayed because of cuts from sequestration. That is unacceptable and, unfortunately, it is very real.

The impacts on our civilian defense employees are just the tip of this iceberg. Sequestration has resulted in dramatic cuts to countless other programs throughout our country. Head Start facilities have been forced to shut their doors, Meals-on-Wheels Programs—vital to our Nation's seniors—are serving less needy seniors, and even our judicial system has been forced to let go of prosecutors and public defenders. The cuts are clear and they are, across the board, impacting so many people in this country in our communities and in our families.

I understand many of us have different opinions here on how to address our Nation's financial challenges, but before we do that, all of us have to understand the devastating impact sequestration has already had on our Nation. I want to remind all my colleagues that it doesn't have to be this way. It doesn't have to be this way. It is now 124 days since the Senate passed a budget that fully replaced the sequestration, and 17 times my colleagues and I have stood here and asked to go to conference with the House to fix these ridiculous cuts. But 17 times now our Republican colleagues have said no. They have refused.

So I am here today absolutely committed to replacing sequestration. If some of my colleagues think this is about politics or this is some kind of game, I would ask them to talk to Will or Jennifer or any of the thousands of families who suddenly today can't pay their bills, because, for them, these cuts are very real and they need a solution now.

I hope other Members of the Senate will come and talk about these cuts. We can fix this. We can replace sequestration. We can manage our country responsibly. We can be much smarter about what we are doing, but we need the will of the Senate to allow us to go to conference to fix this and move forward and tell Will and Jennifer we, as a country, can work for them.

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

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

The assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mrs. MURRAY. 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.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

NOMINATION OF DEREK ANTHONY WEST TO BE ASSOCIATE ATTORNEY GENERAL

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Under the previous order, the Senate will proceed to executive session to consider the following nomination, which the clerk will report.

The assistant legislative clerk read the nomination of Derek Anthony West, of California, to be Associate Attorney General.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Under the previous order, there will be 1 hour of debate equally divided and controlled in the usual form prior to a vote on the nomination.

Mr. LEAHY. Mr. President, today the Senate considers President Obama's nomination of Tony West to be the Associate Attorney General, the No. 3 position at the Justice Department. He is a superbly qualified veteran of the Department of Justice who has been serving in this position in an acting capacity for over a year. He had previously been confirmed by the Senate to be the Assistant Attorney General for the Civil Division.

Before his work in the Justice Department, Mr. West spent 8 years in private practice in San Francisco, where he was a partner at a well-respected law firm and specialized in complex commercial litigation. He also served as a special assistant attorney general in the California Department of Justice, as an assistant U.S. attorney for the Northern District of California, and as a special assistant to two Deputy Attorneys General at the U.S. Department of Justice. Mr. West earned his B.A. from Harvard, and his J.D. from Stanford University Law School, where he was elected president of the Stanford Law Review.

The Judiciary Committee received dozens of letters in support of Tony West from various individuals and organizations, including the International Association of Chiefs of Police, the U.S. Conference of Mayors, the National Association of Attorneys General, the National Sheriff's Association, and Taxpayers Against Fraud. The National Association of Black Law Enforcement Executives wrote that "throughout Mr. West's career, he has proven to be an effective partner to law enforcement. With this experience, we believe him to be well-qualified to serve as Associate Attorney General and look forward to working with him on a broad range of law enforcement and public safety issues. It is our hope that the Senate will confirm Mr. West promptly to serve as the Associate Attorney General of the United States."