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Senate

The Senate met at 10 a.m. and was called to order by the Honorable BRIAN SCHATZ, a Senator from the State of Hawaii.

PRAYER

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

Let us pray.

God of love and light, You never fail those who trust You. As people make contingency plans for a possible government shutdown, give us Your grace in our difficulties, enabling us to rest in the assurance of Your wisdom and love.

Lord, when our Senators have done their part in all honesty and diligence, may they resolutely commit themselves to the unfolding of Your loving providence. Teach them to say even in dark seasons: Father, let Your will be done. Forgive us our penchant for division, as You stir our hearts to look for common ground.

We pray in Your merciful Name. Amen.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The Presiding Officer 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, September 26, 2013.

To the Senate:

Under the provisions of rule I, paragraph 3, of the Standing Rules of the Senate, I hereby appoint the Honorable BRIAN SCHATZ, a Senator from the State of Hawaii, to perform the duties of the Chair.

PATRICK J. LEAHY,
President pro tempore.

Mr. SCHATZ 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 my remarks and those of the Republican leader, the Senate will resume consideration of the continuing resolution. At 10:30 this morning, after Senator MCCONNELL and I finish our remarks, the majority and the Republicans will control alternating 1-hour blocks of time, with the majority controlling the first hour.

I filed cloture last evening on the continuing resolution. As a result, the filing deadline for all first-degree amendments to the resolution is 1 p.m. today. Absent consent, the cloture vote will occur 1 hour after the Senate convenes tomorrow, Friday.

Mr. President, as I said yesterday—I tell everyone here again today—we know what the end is like. We can finish this sometime Saturday, but it would seem to me that we should do everything we can to get this back to the House as quickly as we can. So it would be my suggestion that—we have the ability to wrap this up today. I would suggest that would be the best thing to do, but it is up to my Republican colleagues as to whether they will let that happen.

GOVERNMENT SHUTDOWN

Mr. REID. Mr. President, yesterday I warned of the economic consequences if a few extremist Republicans force a government shutdown. Already, the stock market has slipped, and that is an understatement. Five days in a row—the longest continuous period since 2012—the stock market has gone down, and they all say it is the result of the fear of the government shutting down. And why should the financial markets feel any differently? People are still speaking about closing the government.

Now, the talk by a few Republicans over here has stopped the last 24 hours, but they over there are taking up where the long talk over here ended: Close the government. The tea party is still insisting on a shutdown. It is hard to comprehend, but it is true.

The dark consequences do not end just by saying that. If the Federal Government closes its doors, seniors applying for Social Security will not be able to apply. Veterans applying for disability will not be able to apply. They would be forced to wait until the Federal workers return to their posts. The FBI, because of sequestration and other anomalies we have around here, is talking about furloughing their employees, closing their offices 1 day a week. Across the country, mortgage loans and small business loans would be delayed. Members of the military will be forced to defend this country without even a paycheck as thanks. Billions of dollars will drain from the economy every day the government is closed for business.

This is not hyperbole, not conjecture. It is the truth. If you look back at history, it pretty well determines where you are on a given day, and if you look back to when Newt Gingrich and the Republicans controlled Congress—the House of Representatives—they shut down the government in 1995 because President Clinton would not meet their every demand, and it cost the country tens of billions of dollars.

So yesterday I urged Republicans to consider the impact of a shutdown on

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

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the recovery. But the economic price of shutting down the government should not be the only thing keeping the Republicans up at night; they should worry about the political consequence as well.

Mr. President, we are all politicians, all 100 of us. A brandnew poll—CBS, a respected organization—says 80 percent of Americans—that is almost as much as favor background checks on guns—80 percent of Americans—you rarely get 80 percent of Americans to agree on anything, but they agree that those who want the government to be held hostage to extract these concessions are people they will not vote for. Seventy-five percent of Republicans feel that way in this poll.

So those of us who remember the government shutdowns of 1995 and 1996 know the story did not end well for Republicans. Just ask Charles Krauthammer. There is no more respected conservative—really conservative—columnist than Charles Krauthammer. He has penned a conservative column for the Washington Post since the 1980s. Here is what he wrote just a week or two ago:

> Every fiscal showdown has redounded against the Republicans. The first, in 1995, effectively marked the end of the Gingrich revolution.

That is a direct quote.

As they did in the 1990s, today's radical Republicans have called for concessions they know we will never agree to. Senate Democrats will not agree and the President will not agree. The Senate will never pass, nor will President Obama sign, a bill that guts the Affordable Care Act and denies millions of Americans access to lifesaving health care.

The statement made by JOHN MCCAIN yesterday said it all. He has some credentials to talk about that. He was the Republican nominee for President of the United States. He did not like what happened with health care, and he talked about it here. He wished it had not passed, but it passed. He said it was a fair fight and he and the Republicans lost. Move on to something else is what he said.

The Senate will never pass, as I have indicated before, a bill that guts the Affordable Care Act, ObamaCare. Tea party Republicans have demanded the impossible and vowed to shut down the government unless they get it.

Mr. Krauthammer and I do not agree all the time, but he aptly measured the fallout from the shutdowns of the mid-1990s and correctly predicted a similar result from a modern shutdown—a modern shutdown. He wrote what nearly two dozen mainstream Republican Senators have also said: ''This gambit is doomed to fail.''

He also wrote:

> This is about tactics. If I thought this would work, I would support it. But I don't fancy suicide. It has a tendency to be fatal.

That is an understatement.

I commend Republican Senators who have spoken in favor of reason, and you cannot imagine how satisfied I am because that is how we used to get things done here. I can look back at John Breaux from Louisiana. If he thought we were not doing enough on this side of the aisle, he reached out to Republicans and worked something out.

So what Republican Senators have said in the last few days is really important. They have spoken out for reason, calling the tea party's shutdown ultimatum a ''box canyon,'' a ''suicide note,'' and ''the dumbest idea ever.'' Although these reasonable Republicans dislike ObamaCare as much as their more radical colleagues, they also realize the futility and the danger of political hostage-taking. They know this country cannot be governed by one faction of one party on one side of the Capitol. Governing must be a cooperative effort that sets aside ideological or parochial concerns in favor of what is best for the Nation, for the economy, and for middle-class families.

On November 14, 1995—the first day of the first government shutdown—President Clinton urged Republicans in Congress to govern with him instead of fighting against him. This is what he said:

> There is, after all, a simple solution to the problem. All Congress has to do is to pass a straightforward bill to let government perform its duties and pay its debts. Then we can get back to work and resolve our differences . . . in an open, honest, and straightforward manner.

Mr. President, every Thursday when we are in session, I do a ''Welcome to Washington.'' A lady from Boulder City, NV, came up to me. She said: I work for the Park Service, and we are so afraid. At the Park Service, we don't know what we are going to do. The last time there was a government shutdown, the parks closed. There is so much confusion. That is the way it is throughout government.

So I offer today the same advice that President Clinton gave in 1995. Let government perform its duties. The way out of this predicament is as simple today as it was in 1995. So again I invite my Republican colleagues to return with me to the time when we worked to resolve our differences in an open, honest, and straightforward manner.

Mr. President, I am going to take a few minutes. I apologize to my Republican counterpart, but we have to understand, the American people have to understand the seriousness of what is going on around here.

Tom Friedman wrote yesterday in his op-ed piece—he is a renowned syndicated columnist. He has won three Pulitzer Prizes. He has had six or seven best-selling books. I am not going to read everything he wrote, but I want to read a little bit that he wrote yesterday.

> The Republican Party is being taken over by a Tea Party faction that is not interested in governing on any of the big issues—immigration, gun control, health care, debt and taxes—where, with just minimal compromises between the two parties, we'd amplify our strengths so much that we'd separate ourselves from the rest of the world. Instead, this group is threatening to shut down the government and undermine America's vital credit rating if it doesn't get its way.
>
> This kind of madness helped to produce the idiotic sequester—the $1.2 trillion in automatic, arbitrary and across-the-board budget cuts from 2013 to 2021—that is already undermining one of our strongest assets.

And here he goes:

> Ask Dr. Francis Collins, the director of the National Institutes of Health, the crown jewel of American biotech innovation. In fiscal 2013, the sequester required the N.I.H. to cut $1.55 billion across the board: 5 percent at each of its 27 institutes and centers, irrespective of whether one was on the cusp of a medical breakthrough and another was not. ''There was still an ability within each institute to make adjustments, but, as N.I.H. director, I could not decide to emphasize cancer research and down modulate something else,'' Collins explained.
>
> Because of the sequester and the fact that the N.I.H. budget has been losing ground to inflation for 10 years, ''we will not be able to fund 640 research grants that were scored in the top 17 percent of the proposals we received,'' said Collins.

He goes on to say:

> ''They would have been funded without the sequester, but now they won't. They include new ideas on cancer, diabetes, autism and heart disease—all the things that we as a country say are a high priority. I can't say which of those grants would have led to the next breakthrough, or which investigator would be a Nobel Prize winner 20 years from now.''
>
> Of those 640 top research proposals, 150 were from scientists financed in a previous budget cycle who had returned to the N.I.H. to secure another three to five years of funding—because they thought they were really on to something and a peer review board agreed. ''Now we are cutting them off,'' said Collins, ''so you damage the previous investment as well as the future one.''
>
> In 2014, the N.I.H. was planning to offer new money to stimulate research proposals in a dozen areas including how to speed up the use of stem cells to cure Parkinson's and other diseases, how to better manage pain in sickle-cell disease, and how to improve early diagnosis of autism. All were shelved because of the sequester, said Collins: Why ask people to submit applications we would just have to turn down.
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> In addition, in 2013, the N.I.H. had to turn away from its research hospital 750 patients who wanted to be part of a clinical trial for disorders for which medicine currently has no answers. America's biomedical ecosystem depends heavily on N.I.H. doing basic research the private sector won't do.
>
> So we're cutting the medical research that has the potential to prevent and cure the very diseases that are driving health care costs upward.
>
> In short, we're cutting without a plan—the worst thing a country or company can do—and we're doing it because one of our two parties has been taken over by angry radicals and barking fools and the old leadership is running scared. But when the Republican Party goes this far off the rail, it isn't even remotely challenging President Obama to challenge his base on taxes and entitlements.
>
> And thus does a great country, with so much potential, slowly become ungreat.

Not only do we have sequestration, now they want to do even more and shut the government down and not extend the debt ceiling. This is a say bad time for America. I hope people come to their senses.

RECOGNITION OF THE MINORITY LEADER

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

OBAMACARE

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, later this morning in Maryland, the President will try again to sell his namesake health care plan to an increasingly skeptical public. He will claim that Americans will have lots and lots of options under ObamaCare. Unfortunately, keeping the plan you have and like will not be an option for a great many Americans.

It must be frustrating for the President that folks keep tuning out all of this happy talk. It is not hard to see, frankly, why Americans are not buying the spin. Over the past couple of years, I have participated in more than 50 health care town halls in my home State. I have met with health care professionals, doctors, and nurses. I have met with patients, and I have met with everyday Kentuckians, folks who are just concerned about providing health care for their families.

Many of the Kentuckians I have met with are a lot more knowledgeable about ObamaCare than the Washington intelligentsia might like to assume. In fact, more than a few of them seem to know more about the law than some of my colleagues who rammed it through Congress. Let's be clear. A person does not need a Ph.D. to understand that a law that drives costs up rather than down is a bad deal.

Kentuckians understand that the new government bureaucracies are less likely to lower costs and improve care than they are to just simply get in the way. So it is for these and so many other reasons that Kentuckians and people across this country are rightly concerned about ObamaCare.

Two nights ago, I had another great opportunity to connect on this issue with Kentuckians via a tele-town hall. I will tell you, the good people of my State are as concerned about this law as ever. One woman who participated said she thought she had been making it, but reports that she will now be forced to get a second job due in no small part to ObamaCare.

I have received more than 50,000 letters from constituents frustrated by ObamaCare as well. Single parents want to know what they are supposed to do when their hours are cut. Families want to know why Washington is OK with their insurance premiums going up by double digits. Small business owners want to know how they are ever going to comply with more than 20,000 pages of regulations. They want to know how they are going to be able to keep their employees insured, workforces growing, businesses expanding, and far too often, their doors open once this law comes on line.

One Kentuckian from Henderson wrote to me about the small trucking business she and her husband own. They have got 13 employees, and they have always provided insurance for all of them. But their agent recently told them their premiums would go up, a 100-percent increase in premiums. Here is what she wrote to me:

> We can't afford this, even if we raise the portion the employees pay. Then they wouldn't be able to afford it.

That was the experience reported to me by a woman and her husband running a small business in Henderson. These are the utterly predictable consequences of a law rammed through by a Democratic majority over the objections of the American people early on a cold, dark, Christmas Eve morning.

Until a few brave Democrats join our united Republican conference in voting to get rid of ObamaCare and starting over with a real bipartisan reform, we are going to continue hearing this same heart-wrenching stories over and over again.

We are going to keep seeing articles like the one that appeared earlier this week in Politico. It is titled, ''Obamacare: One Blow After Another.'' I want to read the opening paragraph:

> The ObamaCare that consumers will finally be able to sign up for next week is a long way from the health plan President Barack Obama first pitched to the nation.

Among other things the story notes that ''millions of low-income Americans will not receive coverage'' and ''a growing number of workers won't get to keep their employer-provided coverage.'' Just yesterday, we heard the District of Columbia's exchange hit a huge bump in the road just days before launch. I would not be surprised if we see more stories of these types of problems popping up all across our country.

Let's talk about premiums too. A few weeks ago one veteran at a town hall wanted to know how this law could possibly be free. This veteran said: How can it possibly be free? Well, of course it is not free. He was right. Premiums are part of that story. Based on the administration's own data, along with some intrepid reporting, here is how much more a single 27-year-old can expect to pay under ObamaCare in Columbus, OH: 436 percent increase, for a 27-year-old under ObamaCare in Columbus, OH.

In Charlotte, NC, it is 523 percent; Little Rock, 613 percent more, 613 percent. Imagine for a moment. You are 27. You have done everything right. You have studied hard, graduated from college. You have student loan debt, car payments, car insurance payments, utility bills, rent, renter's insurance, 401(k) contributions, and health insurance, of course. Then there is gas, food, and maybe just maybe, occasionally having a little bit of fun.

Then you lose your employer-sponsored health plan thanks to ObamaCare. You get dumped into the exchanges. So jack up those monthly health insurance payments by 300, 500, even 600 percent. What are you supposed to do now, go uninsured and pay penalty taxes? Stop contributing to your retirement account? You cannot very well give up the car you need to get to work, or food, or paying back your student loans.

None of this is a good option. They are not good for our society either. We should not be setting up disincentives for 27-year-olds to insure themselves or contribute to their own retirement. But this is the incentive structure that ObamaCare creates. When you consider how hard the Obama economy has hammered millennials already, it is hardly fair to whack them again, especially when so many are just barely hanging on as it is.

So this law is a mess. It needs to go. It is way past time to start over. As I have been saying all week, we need just five brave Democrats to join us to make that happen. So I hope some of our Democratic friends who voted for this law will look at themselves in the mirror and think, truly think, about whether protecting the President's pride is really more important than helping the American people, because we owe our constituents better than ObamaCare.

We can do better. With your help we can do that. With your help we can start over with the kind of real bipartisan reform that Kentuckians and Americans are actually hoping for.

I yield the floor.

RESERVATION OF LEADER TIME

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

MAKING CONTINUING APPROPRIATIONS FOR FISCAL YEAR 2014

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Under the previous order, the Senate will resume consideration of H. J. Res. 59, which the clerk will report by title.

The legislative clerk read as follows:

> A joint resolution (H. J. Res 59) making continuing appropriations for fiscal year 2014, and for other purposes.

Pending:

> Reid amendment No. 1974, to perfect the joint resolution.
>
> Reid amendment No. 1975 (to amendment No. 1974), to change the enactment date.
>
> Reid motion to commit the joint resolution to the Committee on Appropriations with instructions, Reid amendment No. 1976, to change the enactment date.
>
> Reid amendment No. 1977 (to (the instructions) amendment No. 1976), of a perfecting nature.
>
> Reid amendment No. 1978 (to amendment No. 1977), of a perfecting nature.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Under the previous order, the time will be controlled in hour increments, with the majority controlling the first hour and alternating thereafter.

The Senator from Washington.

Mrs. MURRAY. Mr. President, the families that I talk to in my home

State of Washington are not interested in partisan back and forth that we see so much of here in Washington, DC. They are thinking about how they are going to get their bills paid. They are wondering when and if they will be able to save enough to retire. They are hoping that they are going to be able to give their children a better future.

They, rightfully, expect us to focus on strengthening the economy and creating jobs which will make it easier for them to reach those important goals. We have had an opportunity, many opportunities over the last few months, to move forward on legislation like the Senate budget and the appropriations bills that were approved in Senator MIKULSKI's committee, which could remove some of the uncertainty that is putting a drag on our economic recovery.

But instead we are here on the floor of the Senate, to debate a temporary—a temporary stopgap measure to fund the government just days away from a possible shutdown. I think all but a few of my colleagues would agree with me that these circumstances are far from ideal. So as we work to pass this bill, this temporary stopgap bill, and continue negotiations on the longer term budget deal, I think it is really important to consider exactly how we got to this point, what this continuing resolution means in the context of ongoing discussions and what needs to happen for us to reach a more comprehensive agreement that works for our families and for our economy.

As we all remember, if Democrats and many Republicans as well had their way, we could have begun a bipartisan budget conference between the House and Senate months ago and prevented this chaos. When the Senate passed a budget, I was very hopeful that both sides would come together and work out an agreement that would end this cycle of governing by crisis and allow us to focus on creating jobs and economic growth.

Democrats have came to the floor 18 times now—18 times—to try to begin a bipartisan conference with the House on our budget resolution. Many Republicans thought this made sense. They agreed. We should at least sit down and try to get a deal. But as we all know now, an extreme minority of Republicans saw things differently, and they believed they would have more leverage if they created a crisis—like the one we are approaching now—than a few months when there was not a looming deadline.

Those Tea Party Republicans, backed by the Republican leadership, stood and said no to the bipartisan budget negotiations 18 times, against the wishes of Members on both sides of the aisle.

So, today, when we could have been focusing on the real challenges Americans are facing, we are instead focused on preventing the Tea Party from shutting down the government, all because Tea Party Republicans want another shot at dismantling the Affordable Care Act, which, by the way, was passed by a super majority, upheld by the Supreme Court, and was a major issue the American people weighed in on in the 2012 election.

In the House continuing resolution, tea party Republicans are fighting to take away health care coverage for millions of Americans and get rid of crucial services such as prevention and wellness visits for Medicare patients, prescription drug savings for our seniors for which we fought so hard, and coverage for over 92,000 Americans who have preexisting conditions.

This is absurd. It is a nonstarter.

There is no way Democrats are going to give in to these demands that are so clearly harmful to the American people. The same is true of the fight the tea party Republicans are trying to pick over the debt limit.

Some Republicans claim it is typical to threaten a catastrophic and unprecedented default in order to extract political concessions, but the fact is the opposite is true. The vast majority of debt limit increases in the last three decades occurred independent of efforts to reduce the deficit or put in place budget reforms.

While Democrats are more than happy to negotiate on the budget—and we have been trying to do that for the last 6 months—we do stand firmly behind President Obama and are not going to negotiate about whether the United States of America pays its bills. We believe families and businesses should not have to deal with any more of that uncertainty.

Honestly, I do think a lot of Republicans agree. More than a dozen Republicans have spoken to discourage the tea party from starting a pointless debate over defunding the Affordable Care Act in the bill to prevent a government shutdown. I do know quite a few Republicans agree. Brinksmanship over the debt ceiling is the height of irresponsibility.

Given all the infighting we have seen recently, governing by crisis clearly isn't working for Republicans. It is certainly not helping Democrats make the investments we feel very strongly our country needs to succeed in the 21st century, and it has put a completely unnecessary burden on our families and our economy. It seems the only ones benefiting from this perpetual crisis mode are tea party Republicans, and I see no reason to keep doing them any favors.

I call on the House Republicans to cut the tea party loose, give up these partisan games, and pass the Senate's bill to prevent the government shutdown. This bill is, by no means, a permanent fix. It is temporary. It continues the cuts from sequestration that are already in place and locked into law until we get a bipartisan deal.

It will keep our government operating while those negotiations continue. This is critical, because even though some might not be able to see it in Washington, DC, a government shutdown will have serious consequences for families across this country.

My home State of Washington is home to more than 100,000 uniformed civilian and defense employees at places such as Joint Base Lewis-McChord and Fairchild Air Force Base. If this government shuts down, these men and women will still have to go to work the next day, but they will not get paid for it.

Thousands of civilian defense employees in places such as Tacoma, Whidbey Island, and Spokane would be forced to do the same and thousands more could face furloughs. These hard-working Americans and families across my State and the country are already dealing with the consequences of gridlock in Washington, DC. They are dealing with the across-the-board cuts from sequestration, which continue to pile up.

Hundreds of thousands of our defense employees, who now have to wonder about the effects of a shutdown, have been furloughed already and have taken pay cuts. Crucial supports and opportunities for vulnerable families and communities, from Head Start to Meals On Wheels, have been slashed. Sequestration is crippling our ability to plan for the future and make the kinds of investments in research, education, and infrastructure that will help our workers succeed. I hear about the impact of these arbitrary cuts whenever I am home in Washington State. I know every single one of my colleagues has heard similar stories. The cuts are only going to get worse with time and they simply have to go.

When we send this legislation back to the House, Republicans have to put an end to the tea party temper tantrums and pass our bill without any gimmicks and games. After we do that, I hope we can leave the tea party brinksmanship behind so those of us on both sides of the aisle who believe in commonsense bipartisanship can move forward with negotiations on a desperately needed longer term deal.

In those negotiations, I am going to continue fighting for an agreement that ends this governing by crisis and supports our families and economies by replacing sequestration with smarter deficit reduction, evenly divided between spending cuts and new revenue from the wealthiest Americans and biggest corporations. I am fully aware the Republicans have their priorities as well. I have never said reaching an agreement would be easy, but I know many Democrats and Republicans are sick of brinksmanship and crisis. I know they understand, as do we, that compromise is part of our job description. I truly believe if those Republicans work with Democrats, we can reach that critically needed bipartisan agreement we have been working toward.

I have heard some of the tea party Republicans here in Washington, DC,

dismiss the damaging and costly disruptions a shutdown could cause. Some even seem to think that a default wouldn't be that bad, despite warnings from countless economists that default would, in fact, be catastrophic.

Americans across the country who are still fighting to get back on their feet don't have the luxury of dismissing these risks because they are the ones who are going to be affected. They are rightfully expecting us to work together and reach a fair budget agreement that offers hard-working families more opportunity and more security. I believe putting the gimmicks and games aside and keeping the government open is a necessary step toward that goal.

I am going to vote for this temporary continuing resolution and against the tea party's dysfunction and brinkmanship. I urge my colleagues on both sides of the aisle to do the same.

Part of the reason I am confident we can reach an agreement is because I know what we can do when we do work together. During this past summer, I worked with Senator COLLINS to write the transportation and housing appropriations bill for the coming fiscal year. It included priorities of Members on both side of the aisle, and it was approved in our committee with the support of six Republicans. That bill received strong bipartisan support because it helps families, helps communities, and it gets workers back on the job. It was fiscally responsible, and it laid down a strong foundation for long-term and broad-based economic growth.

Our bill stands in stark contrast to the across-the-board sequestration cuts we have been operating under for the last 6 months. Rather than slashing crucial investments in our infrastructure, our bill supports critical transportation projects across the country. It fully funds the highway and transit grant programs that allow our States and local agencies to keep our transportation system working.

Rather than leaving our cities and towns that have been hard hit by the recession to pull themselves up by their own bootstraps, our bill strongly supports community development grants which offer the tools to strengthen small businesses and local economies.

Instead of asking the most vulnerable to bear the burden of spending cuts, our bill funds a critical piece of the safety net, housing assistance and homeless shelters, for millions of struggling families and seniors who are just one step away from the street.

As any business owner will tell you, it makes no sense to slash the investments that allow one to compete and prosper in the long term only to make the numbers work in the short term. The investments that are laid out in our bill are great examples. They make our country stronger by supporting job creation, economic growth, and by keeping our commitment to help those most in need get back on their feet.

The need for these investments far exceeds the resources of the bill. The bill Senator COLLINS and I have written keeps our commitment to our States, communities, and makes sure the agencies in the bill can meet their statutory responsibilities. That will not be the case as sequestration continues for yet another year, which would make these commitments impossible to keep.

It is important to note that the housing and transportation bill addresses challenges our country faces today. A full-year bill enables Congress to adjust funding levels to meet current needs and to implement new policies that address the problems that have come to light in recent years. This is something that does not happen when we opt for long-term continuing resolutions.

A great example is we know that one of every four of our bridges is considered deficient by the Federal Highway Administration. Our bill includes funding to repair or replace deficient bridges across the country in order to protect the safety and reliability of our transportation system.

If we simply extend the funding levels we debated 2 years ago, then those investments and many others that create jobs, protect public safety, and support the most vulnerable will be lost. We will also lose the improvements our bill makes to programs, including reforms that address concerns Members have raised the last time the transportation and housing bill came to the Senate floor.

Our bill includes important section 8 reforms that will reduce costs and create efficiencies. It contains reforms to improve oversight of public housing agencies and boards, ensures accountability for property owners who don't maintain the quality of their HUD-assisted housing, and it increases accountability in the CDBG Program.

It is very important that we enact those reforms and do the important oversight of Federal programs and agencies that the public expects us to do. For all these reasons, we need to pass this continuing resolution to keep the government running. Then we have to move forward on a longer term budget agreement that replaces sequestration with more responsible deficit reduction, a bill that puts our families and economies first, and allows us to enact real, thoughtful solutions to our country's challenges, instead of these stopgap measures that do not move us forward.

Investing in our families, communities, and our long-term economic growth shouldn't be partisan. The bipartisan work that went into the housing and transportation bill and the strong support it received in committee proves they don't have to be.

I yield the floor.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The Senator from Maryland.

Ms. MIKULSKI. Mr. President, I rise in support of the Democratic amendment to the House continuing resolution. We have offered this amendment because its content offers a clear path forward to do three things:

No. 1, avoid a government shutdown; No. 2, lay the groundwork for ending sequester for hopefully the next 2 years, which means finding a way to reduce our public debt in each of those years by $100 million; and, No. 3, get rid of the theatrical veto-bait-provocative amendments that are in the House bill calling for the defunding of the President's Affordable Care Act and also for the way they structure public debt.

We offered this amendment because we think it is the best way forward. The American people expect us to do our job. It is Thursday morning, 10:45, and we are only now getting on the amendment. Why? Because for the last several days we had to put up with theatrical politics, rather than get the job done and begin deliberation. We have gone from being the greatest deliberative body in the world to the greatest delay body in the world. The American people are fed up, and so are many of us in the Senate. When all is said and done, more gets said than gets done. This is the time to act.

We have an amendment on the floor that is open for full debate. I am absolutely for this, but we need to do the business of government to be able to do our job. We must replace the sequester and allow a 2014 Omnibus appropriations to move forward before the end of the year. That sentence alone shows what is wrong in communicating with the American people. Factually, it is accurate. It is absolutely truthful. But nobody understands sequester. Nobody understands the word omnibus and nobody understands what we are doing or, most of all, what we are not doing.

Sequester was an invention by the Congress, working with the President, to say that we will reduce public debt over a 10-year period by $110 billion a year, do it in a balanced way—strategic cuts, a review of mandatory spending and additional revenue—and if we fail to do that, sequester triggers, which means across-the-board cuts—50 percent in Defense, 50 percent in domestic.

The problem with across-the-board cuts is that it cuts good programs as well as programs that are dated, duplicative, or dysfunctional. I oppose that. I would rather make strategic cuts arrived at by the committee I chair—the Appropriations Committee.

For the last year, our committee has done its due diligence. Our job is to review programs and to put them in the Federal checkbook and bring them to the floor for debate, for amendment, and then for passage and sending them to the President. What we want to do in our amendment is to change the date of December 15 in the House bill to November 15. That will keep the pressure on to get the deal needed so Congress can get to work and enact 12 fiscally responsible appropriations bills, lay the groundwork for canceling sequester for 2 years, and invest in the

needs of America today and the needs of the future.

This amendment is important for two reasons. It prevents a government shutdown. The President has already said he will veto any bill that defunds ObamaCare; he will veto any bill that undermines the full faith and credit of the United States. So you can huff and puff for 21 hours, but you can't blow ObamaCare away. I repeat: You can huff and puff for 21 hours, but you can't be the magic dragon that blows the Affordable Care Act away. So if we pass the House continuing resolution, the President will veto it, which means more wasted time in getting the job done, and our agencies, instead of doing their job and fulfilling their missions—making wise use of taxpayer money and being responsive to the American people—will be spending their energy in planning for a shutdown, which amounts to a slamdown.

The President can sign the continuing resolution and keep the government open if we pass the Senate amendment, which will keep the government open until November 15 and gives us 1 month to arrive at pragmatic solutions. It cancels the provocative elements in it—the elimination of ObamaCare and the public debt—and also lays the groundwork for moving forward.

There will be a few things that will happen if we can't enact a clean continuing resolution, meaning keeping the government open by October 1. There are consequences here. This isn't just about show business. The government has to be open for business. An estimated 800,000 civil servants will be sent home or furloughed. What does that mean? If you are an FBI agent during this time, you will be on your job, you will be at your duty station, but when you are working, you won't get paid. You will get an IOU. What does that say to people who put themselves in the line of fire?

Shutting down the government means we will affect crucial research and lifesaving discoveries that will be put on hold. The NIH clinical center won't be able to admit new patients for new clinical trials. Weather forecasters, food safety inspectors, and those involved with public safety will be at their duty stations, but they are going to be earning IOUs and looking forward to across-the-board cuts, which means they could be furloughed when we have already told them there will be no cost-of-living increase for 3 years.

We want to recruit the best and the brightest for the FBI, to oversee our drug approval process, or to be border control agents—work that is dirty and dangerous out there. What are we doing here?

We show a contempt for the people who work for the government, and that also shows contempt for the people who pay for the government. Our government should be working as hard as the people who pay the taxes to support the government. The way they work hard is to put the money in there for the mission and purpose of these agencies, insist they do their jobs, and then we insist we get rid of the dated, the duplicative, and the dysfunctional. We have laid the groundwork for doing this. In fact, we have been doing it all year long.

I chair the Appropriations Committee. It is made up of 12 subcommittees. You will be hearing from my subcommittee chairmen throughout the day. I am so proud of them. For the last year they have listened. They have taken the President's budget and they have analyzed it. They have conducted hearings. They have reviewed it, they have scrubbed it—as I said, they have analyzed it and squeezed it. I am proud of them. Out of what they have done they are ready to bring to the Senate floor legislation that makes wise use of taxpayer dollars. They have listened at every single hearing to inspectors general, where we learn about the dated, dysfunctional, or duplicative, and they are ready to move. But we cannot move if we continue having theatrical showdown politics.

This will have grave impact. When we hear shutdown politics and eventually slowdown through sequester, what we are facing here will have a negative impact on our economy. It will add to the uncertainty for businesses to make wise decisions. It will also slow down, in a way, the impact to jobs because we fund infrastructure and other needed programs. It will impact public safety and it will impact future generations because of the big hit on research and development that comes up with the new ideas for the new jobs.

Later on today I will be talking about the NIH, which is in my State. Yes, the NIH. Because of NIH funding, thousands of people work in Maryland but thousands of people are working for the United States of America. And at the end of the day, they are trying to come up with cures—cures that can be opportunities to create—so we are talking about saving lives, doing the basic research that then helps us get those jobs in biomedical and pharmaceuticals, and also to improve the lives of our people, improve our economy, and get the job done.

I will have more to say, but right now I want to turn to Senator PRYOR, who is the chair of the agriculture subcommittee. He is a new chairman, but he is not new to getting the job done. In fact, we refer to him as ''Tightwad'' PRYOR. He has looked at the programs, he has analyzed how we are truly going to get value for the dollar and at the same time feed the hungry here and around the world, and also make sure that important, vibrant sector of our economy—the agricultural industry—is viable.

I yield the floor for Senator PRYOR.

Mr. PRYOR. Mr. President, I rise today to talk about the Agriculture appropriations bill, but I have to start by thanking our chairwoman of the Appropriations Committee. She has already done so many good things for that committee and for the Senate. Obviously, she has been a great Senator for the State of Maryland, and we see that greatness as she leads the Appropriations Committee. I think all the members of the Appropriations Committee, both Democrats and Republicans, would like to thank her for her service and her leadership.

Today I do want to talk about the agriculture appropriations bill and the impact a government shutdown would have on the activities it supports and the negative ripple effects—and there would be many negative ripple effects—that would come to our Nation's economy if that in fact does happen.

When people hear the phrase Agriculture appropriations, they naturally think about farmers, and that is certainly a key part of what is in our agriculture sector and in this bill, but that is certainly not all it does. The bill helps farmers with operating loans and conservation projects and marketing—all those are very important—but it also funds programs that benefit rural communities to supply clean drinking water for people in rural areas, and housing. It supports nutrition programs. It helps kids all across the country. It also not only involves food but the international food programs—programs such as Food for Peace, et cetera. It also has the Food and Drug Administration in it, and that is critically important. We need a strong, robust FDA.

This bill has been very bipartisan. This bill is about investing in our future. What we do here in this bill is actually try to save money. We understand there are budget constraints. We get that. We want to lead the way by responsible governing, making sure we do things in the right way by making smart, targeted investments and saving taxpayer dollars by eliminating redundancy and streamlining loan programs and doing things to make the USDA and the FDA spend their money wisely.

At the same time we are trying very hard not to reduce any services to hard-working Americans, and we are also certainly trying not to hurt any industries in this country.

Sequestration is already taking a toll on many of these programs. If we look at the cuts these agencies have had to undergo in the last 2 or 3 years, we already see a strain on their budgets and the difficulties there. A government shutdown would wreak havoc on our economy.

I think I speak for most Americans, certainly most Arkansans, when I say I am currently undergoing shutdown fatigue. We are tired of this. We are tired of the drama. We are tired of, honestly, the other Chamber embarrassing the Congress and engaging in these dramatics. People are just tired of it. When I am home in Arkansas, whether I am filling up at the gas station or I am at the grocery or at the ball game or wherever I happen to be, people

come up to me and say: What is wrong with Congress?

In fact, I was at a major fundraising event for cancer research in Little Rock on Friday evening. I bet I had a dozen people come up to me and say: What is going on with the House of Representatives? Why do they continue to do this? And I agree. It is hard to watch. It is not good for the Congress. As I say, I have shutdown fatigue. We don't need any more drama. We need to get back to the business of governing. Governing isn't always easy. We have to make hard decisions. That is why we run for these jobs. We run for these jobs to work to get things done and to try and make good and wise decisions for our people and for our Nation. That is the way it is supposed to work.

I think my colleagues will agree with me when I say that strengthening our economy and creating jobs is our No. 1 priority right now. We look at the recession we have been through and we see the hardships folks have gone through. Strengthening our economy and creating jobs is our No. 1 priority, and this bill will help us do it. Again, it is hard to get to that No. 1 priority when we have some of the shenanigans going on here in the U.S. House with some of these manufactured crises they have created.

What I want to say about agriculture is it is one of the core strengths in the U.S. economy.

We do a lot of things well. Our economy does a lot of things well. But no one does agriculture better than America. It is something we should be proud of. We do it so well, we probably take it for granted sometimes, but it is a core strength in the U.S. economy.

If we want one little bit of evidence for that, look at our trade deficit. Everyone in this Chamber knows our trade deficit is not good. We know it is bad. We know it is ugly. We want to change that. We want to make it better. But our trade deficit would be horrendous if it were not for agriculture. That is our No. 1 export. This is something we need to be mindful of: Agriculture is very good for the U.S. economy.

Take something as simple as raising chickens. That is not very exciting and a lot of people don't understand the first thing about it, but think about what impact it has on the States and the counties and the communities where this happens.

First, someone has to build the chicken house, someone delivers the chicks, someone delivers the feed. Someone has to maintain the trucks that deliver the chicks and the feed. Someone has to generate the electricity, someone has to supply the water. Someone is paying taxes on all this, and it is helping local schools and local police and fire departments, et cetera. Someone at some point picks up the chickens and delivers them to the processing plant, and it all starts over. Someone has to build the plant. This has a huge ripple effect on the U.S. economy and on everything about agriculture. It is not just the farmers, it is a ripple effect and a positive effect on the economy.

Take the example of Arkansas, and I am sure this is true in many other States. I haven't looked at the numbers, but I bet this is true in 35 or 40 other States, and it is our largest industry. We love having our Fortune 500 companies there and we have several that are based in Arkansas. We have more that have some sort of facility or plant or site of some sort. We love that and we are proud of that. But agriculture is our No. 1 industry. One in six jobs in Arkansas is tied to agriculture. It has a $17 billion net effect on the economy and it is 25 percent of our State's economy.

I was speaking with DEBBIE STABENOW not too long ago. She said, We are all known for manufacturing and heavy manufacturing in Michigan. And they are. But, she said, our second largest industry is agriculture. She is chairman of the Agriculture Committee, and she fought very hard to get the farm bill back on track, and much to her credit she has moved that ball farther down the field than I think anyone else could.

Another reason I want the House to stop with this manufactured crisis and follow the Senate's lead to pass a commonsense, comprehensive farm bill—and I don't say that lightly. I have a lot of respect for the House. Certainly they are a separate institution within this branch of government. I certainly have a lot of respect for that and their position, and their role is critical. But they need to follow the Senate's lead. They need to follow the Senate and do what the Senate has done. We are trying to be responsible. We are trying to show leadership. We are trying to get things back on track.

But when I mentioned Arkansas a moment ago, we are not alone. There are over 3 million farmers in the United States, and as a nation agriculture employs about 22 million people. The Agriculture appropriations bill would allow us to build on this economic powerhouse that we have in this country. This bill helps farmers get started. It helps farmers increase their yield and it helps them become better stewards of the land. Funding these programs creates jobs in rural America. If you haven't been there recently, rural America needs jobs.

Take a program such as the USDA Rural Development Program. They create construction jobs. They rebuild hometowns and schools and other facilities, and they keep our rural communities strong. We don't want the Tale of Two Nations here where you have urban and suburban America, and rural America is left behind. We want rural America to be strong as well.

Almost every Member of this body has sizeable rural portions in their State. We want those areas to grow and be prosperous. So in this bill we provide guaranteed loans for rural businesses to let them grow and to get small and emerging businesses where they need to be. We also provide money for creation and expansion of businesses in rural settings. A government shutdown would stop these programs. It would bring these programs to a dead halt in rural America. Why break the momentum? Our economy is just turning the corner. We do not need to do this. We can't forget the role that Agriculture appropriations bill plays in keeping our families and communities safe.

One thing I have to say is the Food and Drug Administration does a great job. Again, a lot of people may take them for granted because they do such a good job, but we have the safest food supply in the world and we have the safest drug supply in the world. Do we want to jeopardize that? No. Please, let's not jeopardize that. Why are we playing games with people's food and medicine? It makes no sense at all. It is an unbelievable statistic, but in Arkansas alone the FDA oversees 1,300 facilities, just in my small State. They also have presence there with the National Center for Toxicological Research in Jefferson County that employs about 500 people. They do great things there, and it is a very important, vital part of what FDA does. We are certainly proud to have them.

Arkansas has 85 poultry and 50 meat processing plants. These are inspected by the Food Safety Inspection Service, FSIS. Last year my good friend, Senator BLUNT from Missouri, and I worked very hard with the chairwoman of the committee and others in this Chamber to make sure those meat inspectors stayed on the job; because the day that they miss, that jeopardizes thousands of private sector jobs and productivity and disruption to a very efficient market. So we were able to do that. Here again, all that is in jeopardy because of the games they are playing in the House on this issue.

The progress we made when it comes to infrastructure would also stop. We don't want to see that. We want to lay that foundation for future economic growth. We all know infrastructure creates jobs. Clean water, waste disposal systems, broadband expansion we have been fighting for, not just in rural Arkansas but in every rural State.

These investments are critical to growing our Nation's businesses and they are critical to local communities. This helps all Americans.

The programs I have talked about today are supported by Members on both sides of the aisle. When we moved this through the committee, we got a 23–6 vote. Senator BLUNT and I worked together, hand in hand, on every single provision. We produced a better bill because we did work together. It is a good solid case for bipartisanship and how to get things done. It is one of the strongest bipartisan votes we have had in the committee so far.

Nonetheless, I urge my colleagues to please follow the example of the Appropriations Committee generally, but the

Agriculture appropriations subcommittee specifically. Let's come together and let's do what is best for our economy and for the American people.

Before I yield the floor, I thank Senator MIKULSKI for her leadership. It is not always easy to lead Senators. It is sometimes like trying to herd cats, but nonetheless we are responding to her leadership. She is doing great things, not just for the State of Maryland but for the country and the Senate.

Mr. President, I yield the floor.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The Senator from Rhode Island.

Mr. REED. Mr. President, I will begin where Senator PRYOR left off, and that is to commend our chairwoman for her extraordinary leadership—not only on behalf of her constituents but for the Nation. These are very difficult times, and we all feel much more confident because of her leadership, because of her commitment, because of her incredible and energetic advocacy for commonsense solutions, in terms of not just her work on appropriations but in terms of the way we conduct ourselves in the Senate. We are fortunate to have her leadership.

Along with many of my colleagues I am here to address the looming fiscal deadlines, and, more importantly, how to keep our economy growing and increasing jobs. That is why I believe we were sent here, not to engage in some of these procedural arguments, not to challenge the basic presumptions and the history of our country—which show that, with few exceptions, we have always managed to keep our government open, and with virtually no exceptions we have paid our bills. Yet today we are consumed by these debates when most every American in every corner of this country is asking us: What about our jobs? What about growth? What about the future for our children? So we have to refocus on growing our economy and investing in our country. A big part of that is to fund our government and to pay our debts.

Let me start by pointing out that denying health insurance to 30 million Americans doesn't help the economy and it doesn't create jobs. It will do quite the opposite—it will set us back. We had substantial debate and we passed legislation; the Supreme Court of the United States declared the legislation constitutional, and we are going forward now, as most Americans want us to do, to deploy it, to fix it where it needs to be fixed, but not to use it as a political wedge for purely political means. We are for the first time about to achieve the dream of many people in many decades—that every American will have affordable access to health care; and, by the way, to do what other nations have been able to do and reduce the cost of health care so it's affordable, not just today but in the generations ahead. I think the idea that you would threaten a government shutdown to try to defeat this objective is unfortunate and inappropriate.

We are facing two fiscal deadlines, and they can be reduced to very simple questions: Do we fund the government? Do we pay the Nation's bills? My answer, and the answer of the vast majority of constituents, is: Yes, we do. We have to.

We understand we have to have an economy that works and a government that helps that economy work. We have to be efficient and effective. But we simply can't leave to the mercies of the market and fate what happens in our economy. We have to take purposeful action. That means we have to have a government that is prepared and able and has the resources to act.

If Republicans force a shutdown of the government, it will have extraordinarily adverse consequences to thousands of Rhode Island workers, my constituents, and people all across this country. It would hurt our economic growth. Rather than doing this, we should be working to expand our growth. We should be doing more to get people back to work.

But, instead, we have heard Republicans from both Chambers talking about another round of brinkmanship. We saw this in August 2011, and the results there were palpable. It set back our economy. It suppressed job creation. It took what looked like growing economic momentum and it deflated that momentum. Our credit rating was downgraded for the first time in anyone's recollection and perhaps in history. It was a shortsighted political game that hurt people all across this country. Yet Republicans are here again, apparently prepared to play the game. People do not want us to gamble with their futures, their children's futures. They want us to be helping them, both sides investing in those futures in a positive and collaborative way.

But we are back arguing over whether to pay existing bills. Will we pay our bills by voting to raise the debt ceiling? Will we keep the government open and working so we can help people who need help, so we continue to research issues, so we continue to innovate, so we continue to build, literally, the country? We believe we must do this.

This March, Senate Democrats passed a budget that set spending levels, responsibly replaced the sequester, reduced the deficit, and included a $100 billion targeted jobs and infrastructure package that would start creating new jobs quickly, begin repairing the worst of our crumbling roads and bridges, and help train our workers to fill 21st century jobs.

The Republican-controlled House also passed a budget. It is in stark contrast to ours, but they have a budget too. The basic constitutional approach, the basic procedural approach is to bring those two budgets to conference, to iron out the differences, and to have a plan to go forward to fund the government.

But we cannot do that because repeatedly Republicans here have objected to going to conference. This is ironic since the refrain we heard several years ago from Republicans was ''the Senate Democrats don't have a budget, they don't have a budget, et cetera.'' This of course was a political refrain; it ignored the fact that in the Budget Control Act of 2011 we actually set budget limits and effectively had a budget. But now the Republican refrain is sort of, ''never mind, they have a budget,'' and Senate Republicans object to conferencing the Senate and House budgets because they do not want the Congress to have a budget.

We need to pass a budget. We need to responsibly deal with sequestration. We have to create jobs and strengthen the middle class.

Last Friday, the House Republicans played their latest card in this gambit, which they have extended over several years, to achieve their political goals by holding the economy hostage. This time they want to defund health care reform as a condition of keeping the government open—indeed, a tactic that I believe even some Republicans in this body have rejected, and I think sensibly rejected.

There is no doubt if the House position prevails it will hurt our economy, it will reduce revenue, it will waste taxpayers' dollars. According to the Congressional Budget Office, the shutdowns of the mid-1990s reduced GDP by half a percent. Those shutdowns during the Clinton administration, again prompted by a Republican political agenda in the House, not an economic agenda, cost Americans jobs and growth. It is estimated every week the government shuts down it will cost the economy about $30 billion. This is a very expensive political gambit—something that should be rejected on its face but also rejected because of the harm, the demonstrable economic harm, it will do to the country. If you do care about jobs and the economy, the last thing you want to do is shut down the government.

First of all, it eliminates directly a lot of people who work for the Federal Government—who pay taxes, who provide critical services. The secondary effect is they cannot do their job so economic activity stalls. Then the tertiary effect is that the local vendors in the community who rely on government contracts lose their business. It is a downward spiral. Everyone here, particularly my colleagues, the chair men and women of the appropriations subcommittees, recognize this.

Senator PRYOR was articulate about some of the effects on the agricultural sector. I have the privilege of chairing the Interior appropriations subcommittee. A shutdown would be very disruptive. For example, lease sales and permits for oil, gas and coal and other minerals on Federal lands would be stopped. Processing onshore oil and gas drilling applications would be stopped. Processing applications for permits to drill offshore will stop. Review and approval of offshore exploration and development plans will stop. What will be the effect? This will delay

revenue, obviously, both to the Federal Government and for the private sector, as those private entrepreneurs who are out there investing their own capital to try to develop natural resources and provide them to the marketplace will lose out too.

Another example, public access to recreation on Federal lands will virtually cease. The national parks, national monuments, and national wildlife refuges will be closed to visitors. Campgrounds, lodging, visitor centers, marinas, food services, and other concessions will be closed, with thousands of people without jobs. Businesses that operate in the parks or as outdoor outfitters will not be able to access permitted areas.

If you go to any national park there is typically around it a group of small businessmen and women who provide backpacking gear, who provide rental of rafts and boats and outdoor equipment. What happens when the park closes? Their business goes to zero, practically. That is a consequence that is predictable, in fact, inevitable in the event of a shutdown.

There is another aspect to this government shutdown too. While many Federal employees will be furloughed—again directly losing their pay, not contributing their tax dollars to the national economy—there are some who will not be. In the Interior Department alone, thousands of Federal workers will continue their jobs in order to protect life and property, but they will not be paid. This will include the Park Police. They were one of the first responders a few days ago to the Navy Yard shootings. Typical of their ethic of service and dedication to the country, they risked their lives, rushed to that place to try to protect fellow Americans. Those men and women of the Park Police will still stand guard, but they will not be paid.

It also includes park rangers who provide valuable safety. It would include tribal law enforcement officers for our tribal police departments, tribal child protection services, and the oil and gas inspectors who have to go out and make sure existing operations are being conducted in a technically appropriate way.

Turning to the EPA, Administrator Gina McCarthy has said, in her words: ''EPA effectively shuts down with only a core group of individuals who are there in the event of a significant emergency.''

EPA is planning to furlough approximately 95 percent of its total workforce. Staff will not be reviewing air, water, and hazardous waste permit applications or writing such permits. This will slow construction of new facilities and major improvements to existing ones, impacting jobs and impacting industry's overall willingness to plan investments.

This could shrink construction in the United States, it could halt major construction projects, because you can't just take out the permitting process, or nullify it; these projects cannot go forward legally without permits, permits from EPA, permits from local regulators. We could have a huge construction contraction. We will have projects that have been planned, that are going forward, that will be put on hold, and it will ripple through the economy.

EPA, for example, also will stop certifying that manufacturers are complying with all vehicle emission standards and without EPA certification, automakers will have a difficult time selling products in the United States.

One of the great examples of what the President's leadership has done, the revitalization of the American automobile industry, could be jeopardized simply because they cannot have their vehicles certified by the EPA, which has basically closed.

A shutdown compounds the hidden costs of the sequester. Sequestration is an inefficient and blunt instrument. It forces the Agency to make drastic decisions that frustrate that mission, that do not allow them to prioritize their work, and it frustrates our work here and throughout the United States. It will complicate and compound our life going forward.

We are already feeling—put aside for the moment a potential government shutdown—the effects of the pending sequestration. We are seeing forced furloughs up in Rhode Island at the Newport Navy Base and other facilities and we are seeing the ripple effect of that. The local businesses are seeing demand go down, revenues go down. Their financial stability is being threatened. Rhode Islanders who have been laid off in private enterprises, through no fault of their own, are seeing their unemployment insurance cut by the sequester already. The average weekly benefit of $377 is being cut by $46. The Rhode Island Department of Labor and Training estimates 6,000 to 7000 Rhode Islanders are being affected, taking $1.4 million per month directly out of our economy. Our economy is at 9.1 percent unemployment. This is something that is causing pain and hardship to families throughout my State. The sequester is cutting back on the very modest benefits that they might be receiving after losing employment.

Head Start is an extraordinarily valuable program that serves more than 2,400 children in my State. For fiscal year 2013, the sequestration has reduced funding by $1.3 million, which is a big number when it comes to the smallest state in the Union. To manage these sequestration cuts, staff have been laid off, transportation has been reduced, as have other support services. Even with those savings, 370 slots—children, don't call them slots—children will not gain access to Head Start. That means in many cases their parents cannot continue to work because they cannot leave their child alone, and the problem becomes more and more complicated. These problems have profound implications and they reach very far across the spectrum.

Then there is one other point I wish to make. Some people are saying sequestration is bad, but we just have to deal with the defense aspects of it because that is the most important thing—that these other programs, they can go away. Norm Augustine is one of the premier leaders in the defense industry. He is former chairman of Lockheed Martin, former Secretary of the Army. He served on so many different boards as one of the great public servants as well as one of the great industrial leaders—National Academy of Engineering, Defense Science Board, American Institute of Aeronautics and Astronautics. In his speech recently, Mr. Augustine said that much of the nondefense spending people are dismissing as unimportant is more critical to our national security or as critical as some of the defense programs. He talked about how today's youngest generation will be the first in history to be less well educated than their parents, if trends continue. They are likely to be less healthy, particularly if we do not continue to support the health care improvements of the Affordable Care Act. One of the startling discoveries is that the military, according to Mr. Augustine, is claiming that 70 percent of today's young people are ineligible for military service because of mental, physical, and moral shortcomings.

The mental and physical shortcomings are a function of two things—education and health care. Republicans are proposing to say: Let's cut them. Let's defund the Affordable Care Act. Who will be the beneficiaries of the Affordable Care Act and better Head Start and better education? Probably those 70 percent of the young people who cannot qualify to be recruits in the Army. So if you think we have a problem of national defense, we do have a problem of defense, but it is not simply solved by buying more platforms, more ships, more planes; it is by having a generation of Americans who can stand and serve.

I could go on, but I simply want to say we are in a situation where we have to basically do what we have always done, stood and said: We are going to keep the government moving. We are going to make choices about priorities, but we are going to keep our government open. We will debate those choices and we will debate those priorities and we will come to a conclusion and we will move forward and we are going to pay the debts we already accumulated.

The American people should understand this is not like an initial offer of a debt security.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The time of the Senator has expired.

Mr. REED. I ask unanimous consent for an additional 30 seconds.

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

Mr. REED. We are not going out there and saying: Listen, let us borrow

some more money so we can spend this new money. We are just trying to pay for programs and appropriations that have been approved by Congress, both Republicans and Democrats in both the House and the Senate. These are accumulated debt. Many of the debts were accumulated in the previous administration while we were fighting two wars.

We are not—and we shouldn't—turn our back virtually for the first time in our history on what we have voted previously to spend. Indeed, if we do that, it will create chaos in the economic markets. It will create chaos like we have never seen before. The international markets are so fragile that we dare not risk this.

With that, I yield the floor.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The Republican whip.

TRIBUTE TO ARNOLD GARCIA

Mr. CORNYN. Mr. President, before I begin my other remarks today, I would like to say a few words about my friend, Arnold Garcia, who recently announced his retirement as editor of the Austin American-Statesman editorial page. During a time of political polarization in Washington, Austin, and other cities across the country, Arnold enjoys the respect and admiration of Republicans and Democrats alike.

He is a veteran of the United States Army and the Texas National Guard, and he spent 40 years at the Austin American-Statesman serving as head of the editorial page for more than 2 decades.

One of the most prominent and influential journalists in Texas, Arnold has a great love and respect for our state, his country, and the men and women who defend us. He is, by all accounts, a fair-minded reporter—which is saying something if you are in our business, because we know that there is a natural adversarial relationship between the press and elected officials. Everyone in Texas who knows Arnold agrees that he is a fair-minded reporter who has always made time to talk to almost anyone and has always had an open door for those who wanted to have a discussion on virtually any topic.

I wanted to say a few words today about Arnold Garcia.

Arnold, I salute your pioneering accomplishments. I thank you for all of these years of your friendship, and I wish you and your family nothing but the best in this next chapter of your life.

Mr. President, turning to the topic du jour, along with many of my Republican colleagues, I spent the past several days discussing all of the negative consequences of ObamaCare. I think it is important to remember that these are human consequences, not just about numbers.

When taxes and premiums rise, when doctors are forced to drop their patients, when people lose their preexisting insurance coverage, when full-time jobs become part-time jobs, and when our health care safety net is stretched to the breaking point, each has a profound impact on the lives of real people. That's especially true for the neediest and most vulnerable among us who rely on the safety-net programs that the President's health care law is further weakening.

To better appreciate the consequences of ObamaCare, we should consider the following questions:

Question No. 1: What does ObamaCare mean to a 28-year-old college graduate who can only find part-time work and living with his parents?

It means he will either pay higher insurance premiums or pay higher taxes, and it also means he will have a harder time finding full-time employment and starting a career.

Question No. 2: What does ObamaCare mean for a single mom who is insured with Medicaid—that safety-net program I was talking about?

It means that her family's primary insurance program, a program that is already broken—for example, in my State only one doctor out of every three will see a new Medicaid patient because it reimburses at such a low rate. So Medicaid is already failing to reliably deliver access to health care. With ObamaCare, and the dumping of millions of additional people into this broken program, it means this program will be flooded with millions of new beneficiaries, and it means Medicaid will soon be even less effective at delivering access to quality health care to the most vulnerable people in our society, the very people it was designed to protect.

Question number 3: What does ObamaCare mean to a 70-year-old retiree who is enrolled in Medicare?

It means that fewer and fewer doctors will accept him or her as a patient, because Medicare pays doctors at a fraction of what private health insurance pays in terms of reimbursements for their services. ObamaCare also means that unelected bureaucrats will soon be making decisions about whether they will get the care their doctor believes they need.

Question No. 4: What does ObamaCare mean for a working family that has been receiving employer-provided health insurance from their small business?

It means they very easily could lose their existing coverage and get dumped into an ObamaCare exchange. It also means they could very easily find themselves paying higher premiums for lower-quality insurance.

The final question I would ask is: What does ObamaCare mean for a small business owner with 49 employees?

It means they have a powerful incentive to stay below that 50-employee cap which would then kick them over into the employer sanction if they don't provide government-approved health care for all of their employees. So their incentive is to keep employment low and not hire anymore workers because of ObamaCare's extensive regulations and financial penalties.

As we think about each of these questions, we should also think about what business owners across America are telling us—I daresay all of them—about ObamaCare. For example, a small business owner named Linda Peters who runs a radio communications company in Anchorage, AK, recently said ObamaCare's health insurance tax ''hurts our future and threatens the stability of the small-business sector.''

In Arkansas, the owner of Little Rock Tours and Travel, a woman named Gina Martin has said, ''None of us really understand how we are going to continue to stay in business.''

In Louisiana, the owner of Dots Diner restaurant group, a gentleman by the name of Larry Katz recently told a Senate committee that he was being ''forced to put 16 people out of work just to save himself from the negative effects of [ObamaCare].''

In North Carolina, a franchise holder of the popular Five Guys burger chain, a man named Mike Ruffed, has estimated that ObamaCare will cost him roughly an additional $60,000 a year.

Each of the business owners I mentioned lives in a State with at least one Democratic Senator who voted for ObamaCare back in 2009. I want to emphasize once again that ObamaCare is not inevitable. Any law that Congress passes it can repeal, it can amend, and it can change.

The Members of this Chamber now have an opportunity to correct the mistake that the Senate Democrats made in 2009 when ObamaCare passed on a party-line vote. All the Democrats voted for it, and all the Republicans voted against it—including me. We now have an opportunity to stop this law before it does any more damage to people like those I mentioned and millions more across America.

To add insult to injury, yesterday we learned that the IRS has somehow misplaced $67 million that was allocated to the ObamaCare slush fund. I daresay, given all of the money being pushed into the implementation of ObamaCare, we can expect more stories like that in the weeks and months ahead, unless Congress acts.

As I said, I am proud to say I voted against ObamaCare 4 years ago because I simply did not see how it could possibly work. I was concerned about the higher taxes on hard-working American families such as my constituents in Texas. I was concerned about the command and control of Washington, DC, on all the health care decisions that should have been left to doctors, patients, and families trying to work together to determine what is in the best interests of those individuals and those families.

And, yes, I was concerned that the government would continue to cut reimbursements to providers which would make it more and more likely that fewer and fewer doctors and hospitals could actually see Medicare or Medicaid patients. I was concerned

that ObamaCare represented a statement and an attitude that Washington knows best and that nothing anybody has done at innovative medical facilities around the country and in different States matters because Washington really knows best.

Many people had the audacity to say that even though ObamaCare was unpopular when it was passed, people would learn to love it—sort of like when Social Security and Medicare were originally passed.

Many of our Democratic colleagues who were responsible for giving us ObamaCare have what we don't have often in life, and that is a second chance. These Senate Democrats who voted for ObamaCare—having seen and heard the stories I just described—have a second chance to help save the American people from a looming disaster. When we have people like Senator MAX BAUCUS, chairman of the Senate Finance Committee, on which I serve, telling Kathleen Sebelius, the secretary of Health and Human Services, that the implementation of ObamaCare is like a train wreck, we ought to listen.

When some of the biggest cheerleaders for ObamaCare, such as organized labor, are now traveling to the White House and saying: Please, Mr. President, won't you give us a waiver or exemption because this is turning out different than you told us it would, we ought to listen.

Full-time work—the 40-hour workweek—is in jeopardy because in order to protect themselves from employer sanctions, employers are moving people from full-time work to part-time work—if they can hire people at all—which may be one reason why the labor participation rate, which is a percentage of Americans who are actually in the workforce looking for work, is the lowest it has been in the last 30 years.

As I said earlier, each of these stories is a human tragedy, and the stories behind the numbers tell a very sobering tale. But we are now powerless to deal with this looming disaster and impending train wreck, as Senator BAUCUS said.

I hope Senate Democrats will vote with Senate Republicans and take a stand, as we will have a chance to do, when we get a chance to vote to defund ObamaCare on the continuing resolution. If we do, we will be protecting the American people from one of the most unpopular, unworkable, and unaffordable laws in modern history.

I yield the floor.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The Senator from South Dakota.

Mr. THUNE. Mr. President, I would like to elaborate on the comments from my colleague from Texas who I think laid out in very clear terms what is at stake and the debate we are having and really what the vote that we are going to have here in the not-too-distant future means.

I think it is pretty clear—if we look at any objective measurement or metric—ObamaCare is a huge disaster, and obviously we have seen tremendous anecdotal evidence of that. Anybody who travels in their State or around the country or talks to anybody who is in business, the message comes back very clear that ObamaCare is making it more difficult and more expensive for them to create jobs.

It is creating uncertainty; there are mandates and requirements associated with the new law because employers are being forced to provide a government-approved plan, and so costs go up. As a result, that means there are people who are not getting hired who otherwise might have gotten hired. Companies are looking at reducing their workforce and obviously creating a tremendous amount of disruption in our economy. I think it is pretty evident that the middle class in particular is being crushed by the President's policies, and ObamaCare is certainly no exception.

Yesterday, in Forbes magazine, Avik Roy reported on a recent study done by the Manhattan Institute that ObamaCare will increase insurance rates for younger men by an average of 97 to 99 percent and for younger women by an average of 55 to 62 percent.

In my home State of South Dakota, that is more than just a statistic, it is a grim reality facing thousands of young men and women. By comparing a typical low-cost plan for a healthy 30-year-old in South Dakota this year with a bronze plan in South Dakota's health care exchange next year, the premium increases are staggering. Younger women are going to face a 223-percent premium increase and younger men are going to face a 393-percent—393-percent—premium increase when comparing new data from the Health and Human Services Department with data that came out from the Government Accountability Office about premiums in my State just this year—earlier in January.

For those millennials in South Dakota, that is a $1,500 increase in health care premiums each year for women and a more than $2,000 increase in health care premiums for men. So the money that could be used for other things will now be put toward this increase in health insurance premiums that people are going to have to pay to get covered. They could have used that money to pay off a student loan. They could have used it to save for a home or to start a family. So this has a tremendous impact on the economy and particularly on those who are going to get hit hardest, and in my State of South Dakota, not unlike other States around the country, it is young people, younger men and younger women.

Interestingly enough, the President is talking about how the HHS study or report confirms what they have been saying, which is that somehow premiums are going to go down. The reason they are saying that is because they are comparing the exchange premiums—what they think people are going to pay—with what the Congressional Budget Office predicted they might pay earlier this year. So it is a hypothetical. It is a mythical comparison. There is nothing to it. It is fiction, if you will.

What we have to do is make this real for people. When we make it real, when we compare it to what they are paying today, young people in particular are going to see dramatic increases in their premiums. So the report was a complete fraud in terms of informing people with real information about what their health insurance premiums are going to be under these exchanges. As I just pointed out, when we compare what they would be paying in the exchange in my State with what people are paying today with similar-type coverage, the increases are staggering—a 223-percent premium increase for younger women and a 393-percent increase for younger men.

They are saying that some of these individuals are going to be eligible for premium tax credits to help cover the increased costs, but not everyone is eligible for those premium tax credits. A lot of people are not going to be eligible for the credits, and they don't cover all the costs. According to a new analysis by Avalere Health, Americans could face steep cost-sharing requirements, such as copayments, coinsurance, and deductibles, layered on top of the monthly premiums, which are going to increase dramatically. It is clear that health care costs are going up, particularly for younger Americans.

President Obama promised that health care premiums would go down by an average of $2,500 per family. If we look at what the real situation is with regard to families, those premiums have actually jumped by more than $2,500 since the President took office and since ObamaCare became law. So we have costs that continue to increase despite the President's promises to the contrary, and household income has been dropping since the time the President has been in office—about $3,700, according to a recent study. So when an American family is looking at their economic situation, they are saying: Let me get this straight. I have higher costs and lower income. How does the President expect that we are going to be able to cover these higher costs?

That is the reality, as I said, that most Americans are dealing with and that people in my State of South Dakota are dealing with, particularly millennials, who are going to be most adversely and harmfully impacted by the new plan.

With respect to jobs, the other thing I wish to point out—obviously the cost of health care is a very important situation and something every American has to think about as they think about their own personal economic circumstances, but we also have to have jobs, and most people get health insurance coverage—a lot of them do—through their job. Well, what is the

ObamaCare legislation doing to our jobs and to our economy? Nearly three in four small businesses plan to fire workers or to cut hours as a result of ObamaCare. According to Investor's Business Daily, more than 250 employers have cut jobs or slashed hours as a direct result of ObamaCare's high cost and job-killing regulations.

Another thing that is important to point out is that 60 percent of the jobs created this year are part-time jobs—not full-time jobs, part-time jobs. The way the ObamaCare legislation and the law is structured, there is a disincentive for companies to grow because if they get bigger, if they get more than 50 employees, they will be subject to a lot of new regulations and mandates when they provide government-approved health care.

There is also a definition in the law of what a full-time employee is. If someone works more than 30 hours, they are a full-time employee. So what are companies doing? What are businesses doing? They are hiring more and more people to work 29 hours a week. The President is probably going to go down in history as the President who created the most part-time jobs. But Americans want full-time jobs, they want to be able to have a job that allows them to make ends meet for their families, to plan for their children's education and for their own retirement, and having to work more than one job—multiple part-time jobs—just doesn't get it done for them. So this trend we are seeing occur of part-time jobs being created is largely because of mandates imposed in ObamaCare.

The middle class is being squeezed from both ends. Americans' premiums are going up, while their hours and take-home pay are going down.

The job impacts are as clear across the country as they are in my State of South Dakota. I wish to give one example of a South Dakota business owner who was recently interviewed. He was asked in that interview about the higher costs and mandates of ObamaCare, and this is what he said:

> You'll just have to adjust accordingly and you'll have to cut jobs, and you probably won't hire as many people, and I think you'll see a lot of that.

That is a small business owner in my State of South Dakota responding to a question about the impact of ObamaCare on his ability to hire people, to create jobs, and to help expand his business and grow the economy in my State.

It is no wonder the President's approval rating is underwater. Nearly 60 percent of Americans say they oppose ObamaCare, the President's signature accomplishment. So while support for the President's signature law continues to fade, we are also seeing an impact on the President's personal approval rating. For the first time, more Americans view the President unfavorably than they do favorably. According to yesterday's Gallup poll, the President is struggling with his own base. Support among Democrats has dropped 13 points since December of 2012.

I say all that to point out that the effects of these policies—particularly ObamaCare in the specific—are having an impact on the President's standing. I think people are understanding what the impacts are, what the effects of this are, what the results of this are, and they are starting to react accordingly.

What is also of great concern to anybody who is thinking about going into an exchange or looking to do this next week when the exchanges ''go live'' or go online is that there are an awful lot of glitches and bumps. As I said, premiums are on the rise, workers' jobs, wages, and hours are being cut, and now we have glitches and bumps when it comes to implementation. The latest example of an ObamaCare glitch comes from the District of Columbia exchanges. A report that came out just yesterday said the District of Columbia ObamaCare exchange is experiencing ''a high error rate'' in calculating the tax credits that low- and middle-income people are going to receive. You can't make this stuff up. The government-run exchange is experiencing ''a high error rate'' in handling health care. Who would have thought that would be the case? These exchange shoppers are not going to have access to the premium prices now until mid-November. This is according to the recent report on the District of Columbia.

There are similar glitches happening at the Federal level as well and in other States. Oregon and Colorado have faced setbacks.

Reuters reports:

> On Monday, employees running Connect for Health Colorado told board members that the exchange would not be able to calculate federal subsidies either, at least for the first few weeks.

Inaccuracies, glitches, and malfunctions mean this law is not ready for prime time.

Meanwhile, we have top Democrats here in the Congress who I think are in complete denial. The President said earlier this summer, ''I think it's important for us to recognize and acknowledge this is working the way it is supposed to.'' Representative PELOSI on the House side said, ''The implementation of this is fabulous.'' Senator REID said on ''Meet the Press'' not too long ago, ''ObamaCare has been wonderful for America.'' Well, that message is being lost on Americans.

We have an opportunity to correct that. We get a chance at a do-over. We can fix this. We can correct this wrong. We can do this in a much better way. It doesn't take a 2,700-page bill and 20,000 pages of regulations to fix the problems we have in our health care system today. What we have now is a government takeover of one-sixth of our economy, and we are seeing what that means for many Americans: higher premiums, higher costs, fewer jobs, lower take-home pay, and glitches and bumps when it comes to implementation.

At a minimum—at a minimum—we ought to delay the implementation of this not just for a favored few, not just for those select constituents the President wants to grant waivers and exceptions for, but we should allow a delay of ObamaCare for all Americans because it is not ready for prime time.

I think ultimately what maybe drives or motivates people to stay with this in spite of all this—every day, news stories, news organizations talking about the flaws, the errors in implementation; the, I guess, overpromises made by the administration when it comes to what costs were going to be for people and whether they would be able to keep their old insurance—but when we look at all that, the cumulative effect of all of that, the wise thing for us to do is to recognize that this was a mistake and, at a minimum, delay its implementation. At best, my favorite scenario would be to repeal it and start over.

I think we have a lot of people here, as was mentioned by Senator REID not too long ago, whose goal really is to get to a single-payer system. If that is the goal, then people want this thing to muddle along and get so bad that the only thing people are left with is a single-payer system—in other words, socialized medicine. I don't think that is consistent with what the American people want. It is certainly not consistent with our history and heritage of freedom and competition and giving people in this country more choices. That might explain why many of the things we have proposed, alternatives we have proposed on this side of the aisle, consistently get voted down.

Why don't we allow people to buy insurance across State lines and create interstate competition that drives prices down? Why don't we allow pooling for small businesses so they can get the benefit of group purchasing power? Why don't we reduce the cost of defensive medicine by ending junk lawsuits in this country? Why don't we allow people to have their own refundable tax credit so they can buy their own health insurance? We want to come up with a system that is portable, that creates competition, that allows people to have more choices, and that is based upon market impulses and market principle. When we have a free market and it is working, we get much lower costs because competition brings that about.

I hope we can get to the point where we acknowledge that this was the wrong direction. We are going to have a chance to vote on that later today. The vote that is going to be before us—and I am not aware of any Republican in this Chamber who is not going to vote to defund ObamaCare—will present us with an opportunity, as Republicans and Democrats, to acknowledge what the American people have already recognized, which is that this is not working. It is not working as it was intended, it is not working as planned, and the best thing we can do is acknowledge that and give the

American people a break and give the American economy a break by delaying its implementation or, more importantly, just repealing it and starting over and doing this the right way by building upon the strengths we have in our health care delivery system today, acknowledging the challenges and weaknesses but things that can be fixed without passing a 2,700-page bill and 20,000 pages of regulations.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Ms. BALDWIN). The Senator from Arkansas.

Mr. BOOZMAN. Madam President, I appreciate the Senator from South Dakota and his words but also his leadership, not only in this area but in so many areas of such importance facing our Nation. Again, we appreciate him very much.

With the exchanges set to open in a matter of days, we are getting an up-close and personal look at how bad this law is for Arkansans.

On Monday, the ObamaCare premiums were released for the Arkansas exchanges. The exchanges were supposed to provide choices. The President said it would be like booking travel on Expedia.

Do you know how many insurance companies you can pick from in el Dorado and Magnolia? Two. In Pine Bluff, Helena, and Lake Village? Two. In Jonesboro and Hot Springs? Three.

There are not a lot of options, and none of them are affordable. Sticker shock, I think, is the best way to describe the response I have heard from Arkansans.

Yesterday, a caller to my Fort Smith office said he could barely afford his diabetic medicine. With the new premiums, he simply cannot afford it. That is one example of many similar calls i have received and am receiving.

With a pricetag of nearly $3 trillion, the law creates more problems than it solves. It drives up health care costs, busts our budget, bankrupts Medicare, and deflates our economy. On top of that, it does not create economic stability for Arkansans. It raises their taxes.

On some level, even President Obama acknowledges this will not work. He has delayed, without legal recourse, the employer health care mandate. More relief for other allies will certainly come. It is clear the White House is picking and choosing who has to comply with the law, which leaves the rest of America asking: Where is my exemption? Why can't everyone get a special deal? They rightfully want to know why they have to follow a law the President's allies are not following.

Every Republican in this Chamber wrote the President shortly after he made this decision to delay the employer mandate. We demanded that he extend relief to the public. In fact, we asked him to permanently delay implementation for everyone.

Senator COATS and I, along with several other of our colleagues, have introduced a bill that would accomplish just that because this law is not just bad for U.S. businesses, it is bad for workers, it is bad for American families.

The President says he is working for a ''better bargain for the middle class.'' This law crushes the middle class. It is going to make coverage unaffordable for everyone, including the very people the President seeks to provide coverage to—low-income workers.

Because this law is poorly written, a worker making $21,000 a year may be offered plans with premiums that are near $2,000. How is this affordable? For a basic plan they could also face an annual deductible upwards of $3,000 before coverage kicks in. That is almost a quarter of the annual salary of a worker making $21,000. And this is supposed to be affordable?

One of my constituents hit the nail on the head during a telephone townhall I had on Monday night when he said this law is actually making health insurance more expensive for the average person.

Nowhere in the 20,000 pages of regulations can you find one that drives down the cost of health care. That is the core of the problem.

This law has to be replaced with reforms that drive down the cost of health care and make insurance truly affordable for every American.

Instead of allowing the government to dictate our health care needs, we should strive to reward quality health care, encourage healthy living, and minimize waste through patient choice and health care ownership.

We should pass laws that expand health savings accounts. We should allow small businesses, people such as my barber, to pool together with other barbers and purchase group insurance to cover their employees at a low rate. We need to allow Americans to purchase insurance across State lines, as we do for car insurance.

There are other reform avenues we can explore, some I think that we can even get the majority and the President to support.

Every Republican in this Chamber wants to do away with this law. We may disagree on strategy, but we all seek the same goal.

For me and many of my colleagues, it is hard to find the logic in opposing a bill that defunds ObamaCare. Again, this bill the House has sent us is exactly what we were trying to accomplish. It defunds ObamaCare and keeps the government open. We must also ensure it keeps us on a path to fiscal responsibility.

If the majority leader attempts to restore funding for ObamaCare, you can be assured that I will vote against it.

My vocal opposition to the law, my record of voting against the original bill, and my support of efforts to repeal it are evidence that I want to replace this law with real reform that will drive down the cost of care and increase coverage for all.

However, at the end of the day, it is not wise to force a shutdown by holding up a bill to continue the funding of government. Our troops in harm's way deserve to be paid. Seniors in Arkansas need their Social Security checks in a timely manner just to get by. And Arkansans who have jobs that require government action—regardless of the situation—will have their livelihoods at stake as a result of a shutdown.

Perhaps most concerning is what a shutdown could do to the markets in this very fragile economy. Our economy is in a far more precarious position than it was during the last shutdown. The retirement and savings of millions of Arkansans could take a dramatic hit.

We face a serious crisis. Health care costs are crippling this country and many Americans lack access to quality affordable care. It is stifling our Nation's overall economic development. These are real difficulties patients, physicians, and hospitals face.

I understand this problem firsthand. For 24 years, I practiced optometry with my brother and my partners in Arkansas. My experience as both a health care practitioner and a clinic owner led me to understand there is a right way and a wrong way to address this crisis. The President's health care law is the wrong way. Let's move forward by supporting the House-passed continuing resolution that defunds ObamaCare. Let's work together for affordable and effective health care reforms through free market principles.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Georgia.

Mr. ISAKSON. Madam President, I rise to discuss the current dilemma before the Senate with regard to whether to vote on the motion to close debate and go to the debate and final vote, if you will, on the House-passed version of the CR which put in the language that defunds ObamaCare.

I will vote yes for cloture so we can go to the vote I have promised my constituents in my State 57 different times in other votes I have cast in the Senate in favor of defunding the ObamaCare legislation because I believe there is a better way to do it.

We only have two options before us. One is to end debate and go to a vote on legislation passed out of the House that will continue the government and defund ObamaCare, understanding the leadership will have an amendment to strip out the defunding. I will vote against that amendment because I want to be consistent with the other 57 votes I have taken.

But the other alternative is an alternative not to shut off debate, to continue the debate, which means we come up to Monday night, midnight, when the fiscal year ends and the government shuts down. Government shutdowns are a bad idea. They are bad for the people who send us here to this body to represent them. They are bad for seniors on Social Security. They are bad for those whose husbands and wives and sons and daughters are fighting in harm's way in Afghanistan and

other parts of the world. It hurts our military. It hurts our health care system. And it does not do anything to stop ObamaCare.

What a lot of people do not realize is, if you shut the government down, you are not shutting down ObamaCare. A great percentage of that is mandatory funding. If you shut the government down, you are actually encouraging ObamaCare and discouraging our government to function as it should.

I will not vote to shut the government down. I will vote to end the debate. And I will vote in the way that I have promised every citizen of my State since the ObamaCare legislation came before us.

Look, I am on the HELP Committee. We did the markup on the Affordable Care Act in 2009. Like almost every other Member of the Senate, I was here on Christmas Eve 2009 and voted against the ObamaCare legislation on the final vote. Since that period of time we have had a plethora of votes and challenges and opportunities, and I have remained consistent. I am not going to all of a sudden, in a debate, change my consistency and vote to shut down the government and continue ObamaCare. I want to be consistent with the way I voted. I want the Senate to take up its responsibility. I want us to be sure we do not shut down the government for our people. I want to be sure everybody in the Senate has the opportunity to cast their vote, both on the continuing resolution and on whether ObamaCare stays or is defunded. That is the question before us—not whether we shut the government down.

So while I respect and appreciate everybody's position, I think it is irresponsible for us as a Senate to knowingly and voluntarily shut down our government and extend ObamaCare when we have the opportunity to have the debate, have the vote, strip out the funding for ObamaCare, and move forward as some of us have tried.

I do not know how it will end up. I think I know. But I know one thing: Inaction and not voting is wrong. The people of Georgia sent me here to take action, not to avoid action. They sent me here to run the government, not to shut down the government. In fact, I got to the Senate and the House because of a government shutdown, and I want to tell that story.

In the 1990s, when President Clinton was President and Newt Gingrich was Speaker, many issues came about on fiscal spending, and the Speaker and the President and the majority leader of the Senate, Bob Dole, got in a conflict over whether to extend the budget. The Republicans took the position: We will shut the government down rather than yield to what President Clinton wants to do. So the government shut down. About 3 weeks later, the government was brought back. The Speaker, Mr. Gingrich, came back and capitulated. We reopened the government, but he lost a lot of ground. Two years later he was reelected by a narrow margin but was not reelected Speaker and resigned. I replaced him. Be careful if you shut down the government. You might get another me.

So that is what happens when government happens. The voters speak out. The voters make sure we are accountable and responsible. It cost us a Speakership. It cost us leadership in the House, and politically that is unsustainable and something we should not do.

I want to be a part of doing my responsible action, voting like I have told my voters I am going to vote; instead of shutting down the government, having the vote we need to have to see which way we are going to move forward as a country.

I yield the remainder of my time and suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The bill clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. UDALL of New Mexico. 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. UDALL of New Mexico. For this hour of majority time, I ask unanimous consent that the following Senators have 15 minutes each: Senator UDALL of New Mexico, Senator MERKLEY, Senator BALDWIN, and Senator WHITEHOUSE.

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

Mr. UDALL of New Mexico. Five years ago, our economy went off a cliff. We all remember how bad it was. Wall Street crashed, great industries faced ruin, trillions of dollars in savings of American families gone, wiped out. That was the reality. It was a nightmare for millions of Americans. They lost their jobs, they lost their homes. So many saw a lifetime's work disappear through no fault of their own.

Five years later we are slowly making our way back. We have seen 42 months of private sector job growth. That is 7.5 million jobs. That is a new start for millions of Americans, but as families in New Mexico know, having a job in this economy does not mean the struggles are over. We are moving forward, but not fast enough. Too many folks in my State are still looking for jobs, or they are working and still struggling to pay for rent, food, and gas. They still have not caught up to where they were before, even though they are working harder than ever.

New Mexico's unemployment remains too high. It is at 6.9 percent, and it has been stuck at around 7 percent for far too long. We still have a way to go, so we can't afford any more self-inflicted wounds—no more manufactured crises and no more manufactured government dysfunction.

Unfortunately, we are seeing this again and again. A minority of radical obstructionists in the House and in the Senate is threatening a government shutdown unless they get their way. They wish to repeal the law of the land even though they lack the votes to do so. They are driving us toward another cliff.

They are willing to endanger the full faith and credit of the United States, all for their narrow ideological agenda. The American people will be the ones who feel the consequences.

There is no reason for this drama that threatens our struggling economy. The American people don't want this. From Wall Street to Main Street, most Americans are watching this spectacle with disbelief. They are looking for progress, for recovery, and they are getting gridlock over and over, with no budget, no long-term plan. If this continues, we have a government in paralysis—all this to drive a tank through health care reform.

The American people don't want to shut down the government to prevent people from getting their health insurance. They want jobs and they want economic recovery.

It is clear to folks on all sides of this desperate stunt that this is dangerous. Even the U.S. Chamber of Commerce, not exactly a leftist group, has said, ''Stop.'' Last week they told the Representatives:

> It is not in the best interest of the U.S. business community or the American people to risk even a brief government shutdown. . . . Likewise, the U.S. Chamber respectfully urges the House of Representatives to raise the debt ceiling in a timely manner and thus eliminate any question of threat to the full faith and credit of the United States Government.

We need to move past these partisan games and get back to working on our economy. We need to provide stability so our Nation's families and businesses can grow and prosper. We need to pass a bill that prevents a government shutdown and funds the programs critical to our economic health.

I wish to talk about the effect on my home State of New Mexico. New Mexico's economy can't afford these partisan games. We are already struggling with sequestration.

In New Mexico, sequestration is a painful reality, having a chilling effect on our economy. Folks are worried about their jobs. The most vulnerable groups—the poor, families with children, seniors, and Native Americans—face serious cuts in education and social services.

Our State has two great national laboratories, Sandia and Los Alamos. Their work is essential to the security and safety of all Americans, keeping our Nation's nuclear stockpile safe and secure.

We are host to three Air Force bases, as well as White Sands Missile Range. This budget impasse is damaging to these installations and it threatens economic chaos in the nearby communities.

Businesses that rely on Federal contracts wonder if they can keep their doors open. Sequestration is already

damaging small businesses that survived the recession, businesses such as Queston Construction, a general contractor. Queston's president, Tina Cordova, has seen the number of employees shrink from near 40 to only 18 today.

Then there are the businesses such as PSC, a 100-percent Native-American, woman-owned security personnel business that had to let go employees last year. Threatening shutdowns only makes this worse.

These partisan games are also hurting businesses that depend on tourism. According to the National Park Service, New Mexico's national parks and monuments had 1.5 million visitors last year. We can't afford to close down sites such as Bandelier National Monument, Carlsbad Canyons, Chaco Canyon, Tent Rocks National Monument, Bosque del Apache Wildlife Refuge, and a host of other unique and special places. Customers who visit these sites stay in our hotels and eat in our restaurants. Tourism means big dollars for New Mexico and our small businesses, about $5.9 billion in direct spending.

However, here we are with a House resolution that is playing politics with our economy. This is a dead end. We are on the wrong train, the wrong track, and going nowhere. Americans understand this, and I think that is why they are so disappointed in us.

Our economy can't afford even the threat of government shutdown. Too many businesses and families are still barely making ends meet 5 years after Wall Street crashed.

Today's vote is some good news. We are facing obstruction, but we are moving forward. In a bipartisan way, I believe the Senate can do its job. It can pass a bill to fund the government without partisan poison pill amendments. Then it will go back to the House. With little time to spare, we can only hope the House leaders will come to their senses and allow a bipartisan bill, not a partisan bill, to move forward.

When that happens, if it happens, we have more challenges ahead. The House has drastically underfunded programs that American people depend on.

I spoke about the impact on New Mexico. Now I wish to speak for a minute as chairman of an appropriations subcommittee.

We see the needs out there. We see the need for investments. We can't keep kicking the can down the road hoping that somehow a miracle will happen and our roads and bridges will fix themselves, that our veterans will get the resources they need without funding, and that our national labs will be able to take on additional responsibilities without additional resources.

In the case of my subcommittee, Financial Services and General Government, we are making sure our financial systems are sound so Americans won't have to worry about a collapse, about losing their retirement, their homes, or their life savings. We are making sure we do not need a government bailout again and we are protecting consumers against fraud.

The House bill would put all of those important functions at risk. We can't afford that, the American people can't afford that, and we will continue fighting for a commonsense path forward.

One of the areas in my subcommittee is small business and funding the Small Business Administration. If we go into a government shutdown, the Small Business Administration closes down. All those small businesses across America that rely on loans, rely on advice, and rely on small business development centers aren't going to be able to do that, take an idea from the beginning of a business through a business plan. It is going to thwart entrepreneurs and entrepreneurship. We can't afford that.

I plead with my friends in the House, when you get our bill this week or near the end of the week, please think long and hard. Let's pass it and move this forward.

I yield the floor, and 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. MERKLEY. 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. MERKLEY. Madam President, I rise today to address some of the challenges we face here on September 26. The significance of that date is it is only 4 days before September 30, the close of the financial year, and October 1, the following day, starts a new financial year. So it has been our responsibility as a Congress to prepare for October 1 by passing a budget, reconciling that budget with the House of Representatives, then using that budget to produce 12 appropriations bills, reconciling those 12 appropriations bills, and have a spending plan completely in place so that we smoothly begin the start of a new financial year. No crisis, just adults working out a spending plan for the next 12 months on time.

I would like to say that is where we are today. But instead, as I stand here on the floor of the Senate, we are only 5 days away from a shutdown of the U.S. Government, a shutdown because that spending plan has not been put together. For the many Americans who have been following the challenges of the last couple of years, this will sound a little like déjà vu all over again, to quote Yogi Berra, because we have been here before. We have been through this crisis before.

Indeed, it was April 2011 when we had a near government shutdown, and that had a huge impact on job creation, and it had a big impact on the stock market. In other words, it wounded our economy at a time when Americans wanted us to build a strong foundation for a better economy, to create jobs for the middle class, to put people back to work, and to get momentum built up to put American families in a better place. Instead, we had this manufactured crisis in April 2011, courtesy of my colleagues, who felt more about exercising partisan warfare than caring about the success of our middle-class families. Quite simply, that is just wrong.

Then it was just months later, in July of 2011, when we had a debt ceiling crisis. This is quite interesting, because the debt ceiling is simply a term for paying the bills we have already incurred. President Reagan had something to say about this. President Reagan said: Don't mess with the good faith and credit of the United States of America. We pay our bills on time. And we have always paid our bills on time. We didn't manufacture crises to do damage to the economy because of extremely poisoned partisanship gripping this Chamber and the Chamber on the other side of Capitol Hill.

Not only did that combination of crises do significant damage, but in 2012 we faced the big fiscal cliff. This is where the tax structure developed under the Bush Presidency was set to expire, so a new set of policies had to be worked out. We were unable to have that adult, responsible conversation due to the extreme partisanship gripping this Chamber and gripping the other Chamber. So we had a crisis at the close of that year that, quite frankly, did damage as well. Suddenly businesses were seeing that not only did we have the great recession of 2008, as a result of out-of-control failures in regulation that allowed predatory mortgages and predatory securities—securities that melted down and took a large part of America's financial world with them—but we had this follow-on of not being able to have a reasonable, thoughtful, commonsense budget plan in place to take us forward.

So 2012 led to March of 2013—3 months later—and now we had the delayed implementation of the sequester. The sequester comes from the Budget Control Act—an Act I voted against because Members on both sides of the aisle described it as ''dumb and dumber,'' so dumb we will not let it happen. I thought it was so dumb it should never be written into law, so I voted against it. But I was on the losing side of that battle. So this diabolical financial plan exploded onto the American scene in March 2013, creating a significant problem for the American economy and doing significant damage to the American economy. And here we are, 6 months later, unable to complete our budget and our appropriations bills for the coming financial year.

This has become a pattern where we see ourselves lurching from crisis to crisis—manufactured crises—due to this poisoning partisanship, rather than working together to address the challenges of working families and the middle class. The American people are

quite tired of it. That is why they rate the quality of work we are doing so low. That is why they rate Congress so low.

There was a time not so long ago when it was a very different story. When I was growing up, the story about Congress was that we had had this Great Depression but we came together as a Nation and recognized many of the problems that contributed to that. Those problems included allowing banks to stop doing loans and start gambling on risky ventures, and we stopped that when we put in Glass-Steagall. It included having mortgages that were balloon mortgages, and those could be called in at any time, which meant an individual had to return to the mortgage market to get a replacement loan. That created a crisis for a family if the loan was called and they couldn't actually get another loan. So we fixed that by creating full amortizing long-term mortgages with no balloon payments, and we got rid of that callable feature.

We also created the Securities and Exchange Commission to take on the predatory scams and practices of Wall Street so people would have faith in investing. Faith in investing meant you had the capital to fuel a strong comeback.

We created the Federal Deposit Insurance Corporation so people could trust putting their money in banks, knowing the bank wouldn't collapse and take their money with them.

We did all these things as a Congress, coming together to respond to great national problems. Sure, there was some partisanship, some disagreement between the parties, but there was a deeper understanding that we as Americans must work together as Americans, including on the floor of the House and the Senate, for the greater benefit of our American families.

Unfortunately, that has apparently been lost. It has been lost not just in these last few days but in these last few years.

When World War II was thrust upon us, in a short period of time, with congressional help, we transformed our economy into a war economy and played a big role in basically resolving a terrible worldwide crisis. After World War II we rebuilt, through our loan programs and our trade relationships, much of the world economy as well as our own economy, creating the largest middle class the world has ever known.

All of this is what we did in this Chamber and in the Chamber on the other side of Capitol Hill—decisions that were made together to put America back on track. But today we don't have legislators thinking about the health of America. They are thinking about the next election. They are thinking only about their own election. They are thinking about how to undermine our President. Yet he is our President. He is America's President. He is not the Democrats' President or the Republicans' President. He is our President, and he only gets to sign or veto bills that we send to him.

It is our responsibility in this Chamber to work together in a respectful, responsible fashion to do the basic work that is at the foundation of our ongoing expenditures—to get the budget in place and to get the spending bills in place.

The story of this year is really one that belongs in a fiction novel, because here we go: The U.S. Senate passed a budget, the U.S. House passed a budget. Immediately, the next day, the conference committee should begin. But, no, it didn't happen because Senators in this Chamber decided to filibuster that conference committee and stop any conversation from occurring between the House and Senate about getting a common budget.

This is really akin to burning down the house—blocking the House and the Senate. And by ''the house'' I mean a house that encompasses this whole legislative process. It is like lighting a bomb and letting it blow up. Don't let the budget process proceed; don't let there be a conference committee. ''Completely irresponsible'' should be the sign worn on every legislator who has blocked there being a conference committee on the budget. Without a budget we can't get common appropriations bills because they are based on different numbers.

Let us look at this appropriations process. There are essentially twelve spending bills, called appropriations bills. If we look at the period from 1988 through 2001—that 13-year period—we passed the vast bulk of appropriations bills every year through this Chamber before the next fiscal year started—the vast bulk of them. Some years we got every one done and some years most of them done, but the process worked.

Now let's come to the modern era: 2008, zero appropriations bills passed through here; 2009, we actually got half of them done, six; 2010, zero; 2011, one; 2012, zero; this year, 2013, zero. Any schoolchild in America grading the Senate on their success in getting the spending bills in place would give us an ''F'' for ''failure'' because we can't come together as responsible parties and have a debate on this floor, adopt amendments, and have an up-or-down vote.

This does enormous damage in multiple ways. The first source of damage is that we end up with late-night emergency continuing resolutions. And when you have a continuing resolution, it means you keep doing what you did before whether they made sense or not. So for every person who believes we should spend a dollar wisely—and I certainly do—we should take advantage of a year's worth of conversations and testimony about what is not working and we should end those programs, not keep continuing them. And when those hearings show that more money is needed in certain areas to make America work better, then we need to spend more in those areas, not continue spending less.

So this effort to blockade the budget process is a determination to continue government waste and inefficiency. I propose that Senators who are blocking the Budget Committee from even getting the numbers and blocking the spending bills should come to this floor and say: Yes, I am for government waste. Because that is what they are doing. They are wasting the taxpayers' dollars. They are investing in inefficiency.

Meanwhile, businesses across America are looking at these sets of crises—April 2011, July 2011, December 2012, March 2013, September 2013—and saying: We are not reinvesting in America until this Chamber and the other Chamber on Capitol Hill get their act together—so that we are not legislating from crisis to crisis, doing great damage to the economy. They know they can't sell their wares unless there is a middle class ready to buy them, and there can't be a middle class unless there are jobs, and there can't be jobs lurching from crisis to crisis.

The end is not in sight. We have colleagues in this Chamber right now planning to have another crisis over the next debt ceiling, the responsibility to pay the bills we have already incurred. We have Members who are not remembering that President Reagan said: Do not mess with the good faith and credit of the United States of America. They want to mess with the good faith and credit of the United States of America, which increases interest rates, which puts an essential tax on all Americans. So the fact that we don't have momentum of the amount we want in the economy is the result of this deliberative determination to force us to lurch from crisis to crisis.

Our middle-class families are worried about a lot. They are deeply concerned about the cost of college. They are deeply concerned about living-wage jobs. They are deeply concerned about funding for K–12. They are concerned about things that affect the real quality of life and the success of our families in every way. And they wonder why it is that we are lurching from manufactured crisis to manufactured crisis rather than getting a spending plan in place and doing more of the things that make sense.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. HEINRICH). The Senator's time has expired.

Mr. MERKLEY. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent to speak for an additional minute.

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

Mr. MERKLEY. I will wrap up. Anywhere you look in America, you see problems for public safety, for public education, for college education, for living-wage jobs. These are the pillars of success of the middle class. Let's focus on those problems and do right by the American people and quit the irresponsibility and self-manufactured damage that is happening here on Capitol Hill.

Mr. President, I look forward to the remarks of my colleague, Senator BALDWIN.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Wisconsin.

Ms. BALDWIN. Mr. President, I have come to the floor today to speak about the divisive and irresponsible path down which some Members of Congress wish to take our country.

Last week my former Republican colleagues in the House of Representatives continued to put their own personal partisan politics ahead of progress for the American people. Some of my colleagues on the other side of the aisle here in the Senate have voiced support for a responsible approach and rejected this path. For that, I applaud their independence. But some here in the Senate are committed to playing the same political games offered by the House, and here are the rules of the games they are playing: crisis-to-crisis governing; uncertainty for our economy; and for families and businesses, economic insecurity.

Instead of working together across the party aisle to create jobs and move our economy forward, a minority of extremists are intent on threatening our economic recovery with brinkmanship meant to appeal to a narrow political interests—namely, their own. Instead of working together to pass a responsible budget that invests in the middle class, this political game calls for locking in the sequester cuts and putting up a roadblock to economic growth. Instead of working together to do what is best for middle-class families, moving health care reform forward, this political game of drama and division insists on shutting down the government unless health care is repealed for millions of Americans. And instead of working together to do what is best for businesses and the economy, they are creating yet another manufactured crisis that threatens the full faith and credit of America with a government default, knowing full well that would hurt economic growth and the families and businesses who are working so hard to move our recovery forward. Let's be clear about how they would like to see their game end.

According to independent economists, the damaging cuts from the sequester are slowing down the economy and killing jobs. Locking in these devastating sequester cuts would gut investments in economic development, innovation, and education.

The House Republican budget would cut the National Institutes of Health by $8 billion compared to the Senate budget, so it would cost 25,000 jobs, compromising the next generation of research in our country and holding back the development of treatments for cancer, diabetes, Alzheimer's, and other chronic diseases.

Repealing the Affordable Care Act would mean children with preexisting conditions can be denied health care by insurance companies. Repealing America's new health law would mean many young people would not have health insurance coverage because they could no longer stay on their parents' health insurance until they are 26 years old. Repealing ObamaCare would mean women will no longer have free preventive health care and we will go back to the day when women could be charged more than men for their health coverage.

They will shut down the government unless we agree to increase the out-of-pocket costs for seniors on their prescription drugs and deny them wellness programs.

They are threatening a government default which would weaken our economy when we should be doing everything we can to strengthen it. They don't seem to care that even the hint of defaulting on our obligations by a minority of Republicans in Congress had severe consequences for our economy when it last happened in the summer of 2011. The stock market plummeted, and the U.S. credit rating was downgraded for the first time in our Nation's history. Businesses froze hiring in August of 2011, and that was one of the lowest months of job growth over the last 2 years. Consumer confidence dropped, and widespread uncertainty was created for middle-class families.

What we don't need right now is more political games. The last thing we need right now is to create another self-inflicted economic wound in Washington that will hurt middle-class families, small businesses, and those who are working so hard to get ahead. We need to create jobs. We need to invest in the middle class and build an economy that produces shared prosperity.

Instead of protecting tax breaks for the wealthiest Americans and tax loopholes for big corporations, it is time for Republicans to join our efforts and ask those at the top to pay their fair share. It is time for Republicans to join our efforts to continue making smart spending cuts that reduce the deficit without shortchanging our future. It is time for Republicans to join with us in passing a responsible budget that strengthens the middle class while also giving American businesses the certainty they need to grow our economy. It is time to break this destructive pattern of bringing the country to the brink and instead return to making Washington work for the American people.

Chairwoman MIKULSKI has called for a return to regular order so that Congress can pass individual appropriations bills every year, and she is 100 percent correct. I support her efforts because regular order allows us to prioritize key investments that support the middle class and avoid these annual shutdown showdowns.

As I have traveled the State, Wisconsinites have told me that the powerful and well-connected seem to get to write their own rules in Washington while the concerns and struggles of middle-class families go unnoticed here. They feel that our economic system is tilted toward those at the very top, that our political system exists to protect those unfair advantages instead of to make sure everybody gets a fair shot.

Last week an economic report was released showing that income equality has been worsening and expanding, with almost all—in fact, 95 percent—of the income gains since our economic collapse 5 years ago going to the top 1 percent of income earners. The American people would be right to expect that both parties work together to offer solutions that address the challenge of closing this gap, but it has been ignored by those playing the game of threats and ''divided we stand'' politics. They are wrong to ignore the gap between the economic security Americans work so hard to achieve and the economic uncertainty they are asked to settle for. They are wrong because if we can't close that gap, we might someday talk about the middle class as something we used to have as opposed to something to which every generation can aspire.

Unfortunately, the ''divided we stand'' crowd in Congress refuses to be governing partners committed to meeting this challenge and advancing our common good. Worse yet, the threats of a government shutdown and a government default are immensely disrespectful to the hard work of people who get up every day and through their sheer grit and determination have helped to move our country forward.

The American people deserve better. They deserve to have their hard work respected. Our economy demands better. It demands that hard work is rewarded.

Senate Democrats have a plan to keep the government running while ensuring that millions of Americans do not lose access to affordable health care. Republicans should join us so that we end this shutdown crisis and the irresponsible political game of division.

It is my hope that those who choose divisive politics over progress for America's economy reconsider and begin to join us on this bill and work with us to once and for all end the drift from one crisis to the next. This is not a political game, and those who continue to play these games need to stop and get to work, get to work with us to move our economy forward.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Rhode Island.

Mr. WHITEHOUSE. Mr. President, as the Senator from Wisconsin has so eloquently said, we are indeed nearing the brink of the self-imposed catastrophes of government shutdown or government default or both. Unless Speaker BOEHNER can find a way to restrain his rightwing tea party extremists, find a way to work sensibly with Democrats and steer us back from the brink, then an unnecessary and self-imposed calamity awaits. I should probably be

more specific. It is not just self-imposed, it is tea party imposed.

While we try to find our way around this unnecessary tea-party-imposed disaster, a real disaster is looming. It is a real disaster, it is really looming, and we could address it. Instead, we are having to fend off totally unnecessary disasters cooked up by rightwing tea party extremists. It is infuriating. When the real disaster has fully hit us, folks will look back at this era and they will wonder: What was wrong with them? Who were those people? The warnings were everywhere and they did nothing? Instead, they wasted time threatening each other with cooked-up calamities, rather than deal with the real disasters? That is disgraceful.

They will be right. Of course the real and looming disaster is what unprecedented levels of carbon pollution and unprecedented levels of atmospheric carbon are doing to our weather and our oceans. That is for real. That is Mother Nature. That is not just political gamesmanship and hostage taking. That is what brings me here now for the 44th time to say it is time for us to wake up to the threat of climate change.

While Congress keeps sleepwalking on this issue, I am proud to say President Obama has awoken. Last week his administration announced important new carbon pollution standards for future powerplants. These standards will reduce the carbon pollution that has been wreaking havoc on our oceans, our atmosphere, and our health.

Those of us who believe in science and who are awake to the changes already happening all around us should rally behind the President and EPA Administrator Gina McCarthy to support these proposed standards. Just look at the evidence of what carbon pollution is doing to our planet.

According to news articles, the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, or IPCC, will soon announce it is now more certain than ever that human activity is the main cause of the recent climate changes we have seen. This may surprise some of my Republican colleagues who tried pointing to a recent slowdown in surface temperature as evidence that climate change has stopped. According to the IPCC, this phase is, unfortunately, only temporary, as other slowdowns have been in the past.

If you look at the history of global warming and of temperature, you can see that across time you can add steps in because of the variability that is inherent in our climate. But nobody could look at that and not see the constant rising thread that runs through it. No regression analysis, to use the technical term, would not show that global warming is real. The fact that we are at a step is—well, here is what Richard Muller, noted physics professor at UC-Berkeley, had to say in an article that came out today. He quoted himself from 2004 when he wrote:

> If we believed that natural fluctuations in climate are small—then we might conclude (mistakenly) that the cooling could not be just a random fluctuation on top of a long-term warming trend. . . . And that might lead in turn to the mistaken conclusion that global warming predictions are a lot of hooey.
>
> If, on the other hand, we . . . recognize that the natural fluctuations can be large, then we will not be misled by a few years of random cooling.

Which has happened over and over through the progression of climate change.

He followed on today:

> The frequent rises and falls, virtually a stairstep pattern, are part of the historic record, and there is no expectation that they will stop, whatever their cause.

The land temperature record is full of fits and starts that make the upward trend vanish for short periods. Regardless of whether we understand them, there is no reason to expect them to stop. The current cause is consistent with numerous prior causes. When walking upstairs in a tall building, it is a mistake interpreting a landing as the end of the climb.

Whatever the cause of these recurring steps, even contrarian scientists understand the principle that is operating here: More carbon dioxide leads to more warming. It is as simple as that. It is a 150-year-old established basic principle of physics.

The oceans, which I talk about a lot in these speeches, have a lot to do with it. The deep oceans absorb excess heat, saving us from a lot more heat here on the surface. Researchers say the oceans have absorbed more than 90 percent of the excess heat over the last 50 years.

If the ocean has absorbed this much of the heat, think what a small fluctuation in what the ocean is doing will do to our atmospheric temperature: 93.4 percent, only 2.3 percent. You do not have to wiggle this much in order to create the kind of steps and changes and oscillations that we have seen in the stairstep of climate change. Oceans don't just absorb the heat, they also absorb about 30 percent of our carbon emissions chemically, emissions that would otherwise be in our atmosphere, causing more warming. Absorbing those emissions has already made the oceans more acidic, with dangerous consequences for marine life as this continues. But it has spared us even more extreme climate effects here on land.

Environment America recently released a report earlier this month highlighting the power sector's pollution, which creates an enormous amount of this. In 2011, 5.2 billion tons of carbon dioxide were emitted in the United States. The blue circle is the whole country.

Just over 40 percent of that total, 2.2 billion tons, came from the power sector. That is the green sector.

The inner circle, the red one, is the emissions just from the 50 dirtiest powerplants in America. One out of every 8 tons of America's carbon dioxide emissions, the ones that are causing these changes in the oceans—the ones that are causing these changes in the atmosphere—come from these filthy 50 powerplants, such as Luminant Generation Company's Martin Lake Plant in Texas, emitting the equivalent of 3.9 million car emissions, or Alabama Power Company's H. Miller, Jr. Plant, emitting the equivalent of 4.3 million car emissions, or the champion, Georgia Power's Scherer Plant, the largest emitter of carbon pollution in America, which emits as much pollution as 4.4 million cars.

If these 50 plants were an independent country, that country would alone be the seventh largest emitter of carbon dioxide in the world, just behind Germany, just ahead of South Korea.

From my State's perspective, these out-of-State powerplants are a hazard. It is out-of-State powerplants that emit the chemicals that turn into ground level ozone in downwind Rhode Island. Rhode Islanders pay the price, particularly on bad air days, and we have had six of them so far in 2013. About 12 percent of Rhode Island's children and 11 percent of our adults suffer from asthma, and ground level ozone puts them at greater risk.

We have a lot of good Rhode Island reasons to clean up the power sector. That is why I support the administration's proposed standards for new powerplants. The standards will limit the effects of climate change on future generations by telling polluting industries it is time to clean up your act, it is time to stop dumping toxic carbon pollution, it is time to get responsible about what you are doing to our environment and our health, to our children, our oceans, and our atmosphere.

We can still avoid the worst outcomes of climate change. Some changes cannot be avoided; some are already happening. But if we act now, we can avoid the worst predictions for heat waves, sea level rise, ocean acidification, storms, and other disruptions. That is why we in Congress should support the President's goal to reduce emissions to 17 percent below our 2005 output at the end of this decade and to get emissions to 80 percent of 1990 levels by 2050.

The standard for good powerplants is a good first step, but we also need to clean up existing powerplants, particularly these 50, which I will remind everybody emit more carbon dioxide than South Korea. We should get serious here in Congress and fix the market failure in our power sector that ignores the true costs of burning these fossil fuels. We should pass carbon-fee legislation.

What do we see instead, here in Congress? Here is an example. Last week a House subcommittee hearing on the President's climate action plan brought out these wildly misleading statements, such as: ''We can say over 40 years we've got almost no increase in temperature'' went one.

''The arctic ice has actually increased by 60 percent'' went another.

In reality, surface temperatures are up about 1 full degree Fahrenheit over the last 40 years. That increase in Arctic sea ice is only relative to last year's all-time record low. The National Snow and Ice Data Center reported that this year's summer minimum is the sixth lowest in the 34 years records have been kept, and it is right in line with the long-term rapidly declining ice cover trend.

The Republicans did a lot of complaining at the hearing about the President's climate action plan. To my Republican colleagues who don't like the President's plan, I say come to the table. Let's negotiate climate legislation in Congress. Republicans in Congress should support a carbon fee, as many Republicans outside of Congress do. If you do not like polluting interests having to bear 100 percent of the costs of complying with the carbon pollution standards, let's look at a carbon fee. A carbon fee, by contrast, would give those same companies an opportunity to work with Congress to share in some of the revenue generated by the fee. Or the revenue could be returned to the American people as a tax cut, if Republicans prefer; even as a corporate tax cut, if Republicans prefer. Or we could use that revenue to forgive all Federal student debt in this country—forgive all Federal student debt in this country. What a shot in the arm that would be to our economy. Or we could give struggling seniors a $1,600 Social Security raise.

There are a lot of wonderful things that could be done, but my colleagues must first come to the table. What they cannot do is deny. To deny is to lie. The time for that has passed. It is time to wake up.

I thank the Presiding Officer, and I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Louisiana.

Mr. VITTER. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that this hour of time for the Republicans be divided as follows: I ask for 12 minutes for myself and then Senator HATCH for 15 minutes, Senator PORTMAN for 10 minutes, Senator COATS for 10 minutes, and Senator TOOMEY for 10 minutes.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection? Without objection, it is so ordered.

Mr. VITTER. Mr. President, I rise again in strong support of my no Washington exemption from ObamaCare amendment. I have refiled it on the CR, which is before us, the spending bill, and it is a germane amendment as I filed it to the CR. It is amendment No. 1983.

We are on a timetable—a collision course—where unless we act, a horrible policy and illegal Obama administration rule will go into effect, and so it is important that we vote, we act, and we do that now. That is why as soon as we came back from the August recess, I brought this to the attention of the Senate and the Congress and the country and I demanded a vote. It wasn't my choice to be on that tight timetable. It certainly wasn't my choice on the administration issue, a draft illegal rule, but that is where we are, and so we must vote and act before October 1.

After being blocked out of a vote on the previous matter on the floor, the energy efficiency bill, and after being blocked out for 2 weeks by the distinguished majority leader and others, I bring it again in the context of this spending bill as a germane amendment numbered 1983 to this spending bill.

The principle is clear, and to me it is the first principle of a democracy—in our case, the United States of America. What is good for America should be good for Washington, and what is applied to America should absolutely be applied in the same way to Washington across the board and certainly including ObamaCare.

We had a debate about that several years ago during the ObamaCare debate. Actually, that concept won out, and we were able to add a Grassley amendment to the bill, which was passed into final law. I was a strong supporter of that language. I was somewhat amazed that we got it included, but it did go through the democratic process, and it is now part of the law, part of the statute.

That law says clearly and unequivocally that every Member of Congress and all official congressional staff have to go to the exchange for their health care. They have to go to the same fallback plan as is there for the American people under ObamaCare. I advocated for that strongly since the very beginning of the ObamaCare debate. Whatever the fallback plan for America is, that should be the plan for Washington. There should be no other choices, no special privileges or exemptions or subsidies for Washington.

That was part of the statute that passed into law, but I guess it was a classic case of what NANCY PELOSI said—we need to pass the law in order to figure out what is in it—because after it passed, a lot of folks on Capitol Hill read that provision and said: Oh, you know what, we can't live with this. We can't let this stand. We need to ''fix this.''

So there was furious scheming and furious lobbying to fix that simple concept that what applies to America should apply to Washington. Where that ended up after months of scheming and lobbying was the President of the United States, President Obama, became personally involved. This was confirmed in numerous news reports. He had his administration issue a special rule to save Congress from this horrible fate that is being visited on at least 8 million Americans.

As Congress was leaving for the August recess—conveniently getting out of town and away from the scene of the crime—the Obama administration issued this draft rule. In my opinion, it is clearly and unequivocally illegal because it is in conflict with the language of the statute.

The rule does two things:

First of all, even though the statute clearly says that every Member of Congress and all official congressional staff go to the exchange, the draft rule says: We don't know what official staff is, so we are going to leave that up to every individual Member of Congress to decide who on his or her staff is official staff for purposes of this provision and we are never going to second guess them. So in theory, a Member of Congress can say: My committee staff is part of the official staff; my leadership staff is part of the official staff. In fact, in theory, under this proposed rule a Member of Congress can say: Nobody on my staff is ''official staff'' for purposes of this provision. OPM has made it clear that they are not going to second guess that. That is ridiculous on its face.

Second, the rule says that for Members and any staff who do get to go to the exchange, they get to take a big taxpayer-funded subsidy with them—a subsidy that is completely unavailable to any other American at that income level going to the exchange. That is not in the statute at all. That is contrary to the statute, the letter and spirit of the law. That is completely contrary to it. Again, that is what provoked me to act with many other Members.

I wish to recognize and thank all of the cosponsors of this important legislation on the Senate side and also Congressmen DESANTIS of Florida and all House cosponsors of identical legislation on the House side.

Our fix is simple, basic, and important. It is, first of all, let's live by the law with regard to Congress. So every Member of Congress and all congressional official staff have to go to the exchange as mandated by law with no special deal, exemption, or subsidy. They can only have what is available to other Americans going to the exchange. The whole purpose of that language was for Congress to feel the dislocation, inconvenience, and experience of millions of other Americans going to the exchange—8 million or more Americans going there against their will. They had health care. They had employer-provided health care. They heard the President say: If you have coverage you like, you can keep it, and they found out that was a big lie. So now they are losing that and going to the exchange. The whole purpose of the language was that Congress walk in their shoes.

This amendment goes further and applies the same principle of fairness to the administration. It says the President, the Vice President, and all of their political appointees will do the same thing—go to the exchange for their health care, just like every other American does, with no special deals, exemptions, subsidies, and no special rules.

Again, this is very time-sensitive because this rule is set to be made final October 1. That is not my choice. I

think the rule is flatout illegal. That is a decision and action by the administration, but it does demand that we vote and act now. That is why as soon as we came back from the August recess and went back into session, I filed the fix and demanded a proper up-or-down vote. Unfortunately, that was blocked out for 2 weeks by the distinguished majority leader. That is why I am on the floor again in the context of this spending bill. It is very appropriate to have the debate on this spending bill. We are talking about spending. I filed it as a germane amendment to this spending bill, and we need a full debate and vote on this matter before October 1.

Interestingly, in the previous bill, after blocking me out of any vote, the distinguished majority leader said he had no problem with this clean up-or-down vote. I guess he said that in theory because it never happened in practice.

This is a perfect and appropriate time to have that up-or-down vote. It won't delay anything. It is perfectly appropriate to have it on the spending bill. This is a germane amendment.

I urge us to vote and act and not block out this debate and not block out this vote. My request is as simple and basic and straightforward as that. I think it is consistent with the distinguished majority leader's promise that we would have a vote. He said that. Again, that must have been in theory because he blocked it in practice.

Mr. President, in that spirit, I ask unanimous consent that the pending amendments be set aside and that it be in order to call up my amendment No. 1983.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection?

The Senator from Montana.

Mr. TESTER. I object.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The objection is heard.

Mr. VITTER. Mr. President, reclaiming my time, I think that is very unfortunate. It is very inconsistent with what the distinguished majority leader said. We need a debate and a vote on this matter. It should happen before October 1—and it will happen, I guarantee that. I don't know when. I don't know if it will be before October 1, but it will happen. We will have this debate and vote.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Utah.

Mr. HATCH. Mr. President, it is no secret that the so-called Affordable Care Act is a train wreck waiting to happen. Some of it has already happened. We know that. The American people know that. My constituents all over Utah know that. But sadly the President of the United States doesn't seem to know it. In fact, the President is out today trying to convince the American people that his signature domestic achievement is a winner. Few people believe him, however, and no amount of spin on his part will change that.

Frankly, Republicans have been saying ObamaCare would be a disaster since well before it was enacted. Indeed, if we look back at the original debates on ObamaCare, we will find that we predicted virtually all of the problems we are seeing now as the administration attempts to implement this poorly crafted law.

Let's look at some of the predictions we made. We predicted, for example, that in order to avoid the employer mandate, businesses would cease hiring new workers and they would move existing employees to part time. ObamaCare requires employers with 50 or more full-time employees to offer their workers health coverage of a minimum value or pay a penalty. As we predicted, a number of small businesses, which are the main job creators in this country, are simply opting to unilaterally limit their full-time employees in order to avoid the mandate. Just think about that. We have the lowest labor participation rate since the Carter administration, but instead of working to create the jobs American families and workers need, more and more businesses have stopped hiring to avoid the costs that come with ObamaCare.

The law defines full-time employees as those working more than 30 hours a week. As a result of this bizarre definition, many employers have opted to simply cap workers' hours. That is happening everywhere. It is happening in the private sector and among public schools and municipalities. In fact, it is happening so often that even the leaders of big labor, who are among the biggest supporters of ObamaCare, have publicly argued that the law is destroying the 40-hour workweek. That is just one Republican prediction about ObamaCare that came true.

We also predicted that ObamaCare would cause people who currently have health insurance to lose it. We all remember the President's infamous promise that ''if you like your plan, you can keep it.'' Sadly, our post-ObamaCare experience hasn't borne that out. At the time, Republicans said there was no way he could fulfill that promise, and we were right. According to the Congressional Budget Office, millions of Americans are likely to lose their current employer-provided health insurance under the President's health law.

We also predicted that the cost of health insurance premiums would skyrocket as insurance companies struggle to comply with all of the new mandates under the law. This is also happening. Numerous studies have shown that the cost of premiums have continued to go up since ObamaCare was passed and are predicted to go up even further next year as the law is more fully implemented.

The question is: How high are the costs going to go?

Yesterday, the administration released a report claiming that ObamaCare is bringing down the cost of health insurance premiums. Specifically, the report claims that premiums ''will be 16 percent lower than projected.'' Lower than projected is not the same as lower than they are now.

If we compare the cost of ObamaCare health plans with the cost of plans available on the market today, it is indisputable that costs are going up under the law. The administration is free to cherry-pick data in order to make the best case possible. Indeed, that is what they have done with this most recent report. However, even when they cite the most favorable data available, we see that ObamaCare is making health insurance premiums more expensive in this country.

When we look at the more complete picture of the data, we find it is even worse. As the Manhattan Institute for Policy Research recently found, individual market premiums will increase 99 percent for men and 62 percent for women nationwide under ObamaCare. This, once again, was not unforeseen. While the President was claiming his health care plan would reduce premiums by an average of $2,500 a year, Republicans predicted costs would actually go up under the law. As it turns out, we were right on that one too.

Republicans also predicted that health care spending would increase as a result of ObamaCare. The President, if my colleagues recall, promised the law would lower the costs of health care. However, health care spending is projected to increase dramatically as a result of ObamaCare.

Republicans also predicted that ObamaCare would increase the deficit. Wouldn't you know it, a former Director of CBO has projected that the health care law will add $500 billion to the deficit in the first 10 years and more than $1.5 trillion in the second decade.

We predicted middle-class families would see their taxes go up as a result of ObamaCare. When we look at the law, we see it includes no fewer than 11 taxes and penalties that directly impact the middle class, including taxes on medical devices, prescription drugs, and flexible spending accounts.

In addition, Republicans predicted health insurance exchanges, where people go to sign up for ObamaCare's mandated insurance, and the system of verifying and approving premium and cost-sharing subsidies for people in those exchanges would be a nightmare to manage. This has been confirmed time and time again as the administration has continually missed deadlines and offered only scant details as to how these exchanges are going to work, even as they are set to go live on October 1.

Studies from the Government Accountability Office have confirmed that the exchanges are not likely to be ready in time. In fact, just yesterday, the District of Columbia announced it will be delaying the implementation of its exchange because of ''high error rates.'' Two other States, Idaho and

Minnesota, also might delay their exchanges.

During the debate over ObamaCare, Republicans predicted that despite all the claims that ''health care reform is entitlement reform,'' the law would not shore up our unsustainable entitlement programs. We are set to spend more than $10 trillion on Medicare and Medicaid over the next 10 years. The CBO has called our health care entitlements our ''fundamental fiscal challenge.'' According to the CBO—the Congressional Budget Office—the President's health care law hasn't done anything—has not done anything—to diminish the problems facing these massive programs.

As I said, none of the problems we are seeing today were unforeseen. Republicans predicted all of these difficulties years ago. We weren't psychic; we just know how markets work and, more important, we have learned from experience just how inept government can be when it ventures into uncharted territory.

The Democrats who drafted this monstrosity and forced it through Congress either didn't understand the inherent problems with the legislation or they just plain didn't care. I suspect it was a little of both. At the time, they were more concerned with just getting something passed so the President could claim victory on one of his central campaign promises than they were with passing something that would actually work. Now we are all seeing the results and only part of the results. I am only mentioning a few things today.

Nearly every week we learn of another problem the administration is having with implementing ObamaCare. As I said, we constantly hear announcements that certain elements of the law are going to be delayed. We have heard this about the employer mandate, the small business health insurance market, and employee automatic enrollment in the exchanges.

We got the latest announcement just today. Today we found out the Obama administration is postponing online enrollment in some of the small business exchanges that were scheduled to open this coming Tuesday. The administration makes these announcements almost nonchalantly, never acknowledging they are indications of larger problems with the law. Instead, they simply press forward, ignoring the warning signs and pushing our Nation's health care system even further toward the cliff.

It is clear what needs to be done. It is not complicated or convoluted. On the contrary, it is quite simple. This law needs to be eliminated and Congress should do whatever is in its power to get that done. This has been my position since the day the law was passed, and it continues to be my position today. I have supported repealing ObamaCare, I have supported delaying it, and I support defunding it.

I have introduced multiple pieces of legislation that would repeal the most egregious parts of ObamaCare, including the individual mandate, the employer mandate, the medical device tax, and the health insurance tax. With days to go before the exchanges go live on October 1, I have legislation backed by 31 of my colleagues delaying them until the GAO can certify that private and personal information of consumers and patients will be secure. I have come to the floor on numerous occasions to call for either repeal or a permanent delay to the implementation to the law. Regardless of how the debate over the continuing resolution plays out, I will continue to do so.

This law costs more and will do far less than was promised when the bill was first drafted, debated, and passed. The Democrats who wrote this law and forced it through Congress may have thought the American people were naive enough to believe all the promises that came with ObamaCare, but from the beginning polls have shown the majority of Americans do not support it and with good cause. That is why I publicly applauded the House of Representatives for passing its continuing resolution that defunds ObamaCare.

Getting rid of ObamaCare is just the first step. Once we do that, we need to work together on a bipartisan basis to find a way to reduce health care costs for the American people while also making sure we cover the American people. We have seen what happens when one party tries to fix health care on its own. What we got was a disaster of a law that has actually increased health care costs, all while imposing new taxes and mandates on the American people and creating chaos of the entire American health care system.

The American people deserve better, and the legislation before us is the first step toward giving them that.

I understand the Democrats are going to peel out the one provision the Republican side supports. Everyone on the Republican side supports the defunding of ObamaCare and starting over and doing it right in a bipartisan way, instead of this partisan way that has wound up with the biggest fiasco I have seen around here in my 37 years in Congress.

I am concerned. We can do better. This has become too much of a partisan exercise and, frankly, I am very concerned that our country is going to suffer because some of our friends think they have to continue to support this dog of a bill, even though day after day after day we find more and more reasons to oppose it.

We have brought up these things before, maybe not some of these because some of them have just occurred, as a matter of fact, just in the last day. Think of the fraud. Think of the open door for scam artists because they are going to go ahead on October 1 with individuals saying they think it is fine. But there has been no independent verification done by this administration, or by anybody, to make sure the private information of our individual citizens is protected. It is a disgrace. It is a disgrace that we are letting them get away with it, and it is a disgrace that is going to come back to hammer us as Members of Congress who didn't do our job right in the first place and who continuously keep supporting a bill that is eating us alive.

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

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Ms. HEITKAMP). The clerk will call the roll.

The bill clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. PORTMAN. 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. PORTMAN. Madam President, over the next couple of days we will have a chance to vote on ObamaCare. This will be an opportunity for us to allow our views to be expressed on both sides of the aisle. I am glad we are going to have that opportunity. We will see what happens. But I think it is certainly an opportunity for us to have a good debate about why we think it is important for us not just to change ObamaCare but to actually start over and do it right. It is a time for us to undo the mistake this Senate made 3 years ago when that legislation was jammed through the process—without a single Republican vote, by the way—which is something the American people are tired of. The partisanship, on that particular vote, I think has led to a bad result.

ObamaCare was sold, by the way, to the Nation under false pretenses. We were promised that ObamaCare would bring premiums down. You remember those discussions: This is a way to get health care costs down and reduce premiums. In fact, what we are learning—and there is a new report out this week—is that premiums are going up.

We were promised that Americans would be able to keep the insurance they have. That was a specific commitment made. Yet millions of Americans are losing the insurance they have. It is insurance they like, and they cannot keep it.

We were promised that if you like your doctor, you can keep your doctor; everything will be fine. In fact, many Ohioans and many Americans are losing their doctors.

We were also told that ObamaCare would help grow the economy and create jobs. Unfortunately, just the opposite is happening. More Americans are looking for work because many of the jobs that are available now are part time, in part because of ObamaCare encouraging more part-time work. There are companies that are not expanding because they do not want to reach that magic number of 50 employees.

As we talk today, we are learning that there are even more problems with the implementation of ObamaCare. One of our Democratic colleagues on the floor said he thought

this implementation was going to be difficult. In fact, one Democrat who was prominent in the legislation said it is likely to be a train wreck. Well, unfortunately, that train wreck is occurring. We see the District of Columbia this week making changes. We see today apparently the administration now saying the small business part of the exchanges is not going to go forward as planned. We have already seen a 1-year delay in terms of the business mandate and on and on. So that train wreck is already upon us as we move toward October 1.

Let me give one example of the impact of ObamaCare. In Columbus, OH—my home State of Ohio—the Wall Street Journal reported that premiums could increase by as much as 436 percent. Some of my colleagues will take issue with that number. Maybe it is not going to be 436 percent, but the point is that we know it is going to be more expensive, we just do not know how much. That is part of the uncertainty the law creates. In other words, sometimes uncertainty is the worst thing, and that is what we are seeing not just in Ohio but around the country. We do not know what the effect is going to be on our families. We do not know what the effect is going to be on small businesses. We do not know what the effect is going to be on our economy.

Throughout this debate over the continuing resolution, my colleagues on the other side of the aisle have talked about this uncertainty. They have talked about how a showdown going up to a potential government shutdown creates uncertainty in the economy. I agree. I do not think we should shut down. In fact, I am offering an amendment to say we should never be shutting down government. It is called the no government shutdown amendment. It is bipartisan. In the budget debate we actually had a few Democrats support it, I am sure against the urging of their leadership, and I appreciate that.

Uncertainty is a problem, but, boy, talk about uncertainty—in the implementation you have some things delayed, others things not delayed, a lot of confusion about how the legislation is going to work. Every day it seems as if we discover a new wrinkle in the law that is going to cost more money and cause more problems in terms of people just understanding what their options are.

The effects of ObamaCare, by the way, do not stop at the hospital door, and they are not limited to our pocketbooks. If you ask Americans what is the most important issue to them, they will tell you it is the lack of good jobs—jobs and the economy. ObamaCare kills jobs.

Take the Cleveland Clinic. The Cleveland Clinic, as some of you know, is the largest employer in northeast Ohio. It has been talked about on the floor by other Members. They have about 40,000 employees.

By the way, it is one of the few things that both President Obama and Governor Romney agreed on in the campaign, which was that the Cleveland Clinic is providing cutting-edge health care that should be a model for the rest of the country. They do a terrific job.

A week ago the Cleveland Clinic announced it is cutting $330 million from its budget. What does that mean? That means a bunch of my constituents in the Cleveland area are going to lose their jobs. Why is the Cleveland Clinic having to cut $330 million from their budget? According to their own spokesperson, to prepare for increased costs and decreased revenues because of ObamaCare.

So, look, it is something I have heard about again and again when I visit with small business owners throughout Ohio. I hear it from our employers, who say they have no choice but to freeze growth. I have a friend who runs a small company in the Cleveland area. He has 47 employees. He has confided in me: You know what. I am not going to 50. Even though I have some additional business—he is starting to see a little pickup in his particular sector—I am not going there. I don't want to get to 50 because I simply don't want the uncertainty and the cost associated with the new mandates and requirements I would have to endure because of ObamaCare.

So you have the ''49ers''—employers who are sticking at 49 or fewer because they do not want the onerous requirements of ObamaCare when they cross that threshold of 50 employees.

Others, of course, are reducing the hours of folks who already work for them to well under 40 hours because they have to get under the 30-hour-a-week threshold in ObamaCare. It is so very sad.

You go to somebody and say: You know what. You have to come in at 28 hours now because the health care I am going to have to offer under ObamaCare is not something I can afford. It does not fit within our bottom line.

And this person says: I have a car payment or I have a house payment.

This is sad, and it is having an effect in my State, and I know it from talking to people, but I also know it just by looking at what these requirements are doing to small businesses. It is no surprise to me that this ''underemployment'' figure we see every month in the employment numbers is growing. Those are the people who are not working full time but working part time. Unfortunately, if you look over the last few months, we have seen a big increase in part-time jobs and not full-time jobs.

In 2010, I do not think many of my Democratic friends thought they were voting for a bill that would kill jobs. I really do not. I do not think they would have voted for it. I cannot believe they thought ObamaCare would drive up premium costs and make health care harder to get, as it has, but that is what is happening. That is why I believe it needs to be repealed and replaced with more sensible reforms.

The current health care system—before ObamaCare—is far from perfect. It cries out for reform. But, unfortunately, the prescription of ObamaCare is not making things better but worse.

I know this is hard to believe, but sometimes Congress makes mistakes. In this case, in my view, Congress made a big mistake. But we can fix it, and we can replace it with real bipartisan health care reform that does foster an environment where jobs can be created, that does provide for health care to be available rather than harder and harder to get. We can get there but only if we start by—in this vote today—saying: Let's defund it, let's repeal it, and let's replace it with something better.

As we learn more about the effects of ObamaCare, we are seeing some courage on the other side of the aisle. I know one of my colleagues today on the Democratic side said he could look to delaying ObamaCare's individual mandate for a year, for instance. That only makes sense. We have already told the businesses they are going to get a 1-year delay, but a woman or a guy who works at that business is told: You have a mandate even though your business does not, and you have to pay a fine if you do not get health care. So 22 House Democrats voted in favor of delaying the individual mandate as well. So I think on both sides of the aisle you are beginning to see some interest in at least having a delay to be able to try to improve this legislation.

But the Senate has the opportunity to speak here this afternoon. We are going to vote on this amendment as to whether to defund ObamaCare. I have heard from my constituents. I am sure you have heard from yours. Overwhelmingly, I say to my colleagues, what I am hearing is they do not want this law to continue. Do they think the health care system is perfect? No. But they think what ObamaCare is offering makes it worse, not better.

Republicans cannot do it alone. We have 46 votes here. You need 60. But in an act of bipartisanship and real political courage, maybe we will have a good result this afternoon and begin this process of moving toward a better system. I urge my colleagues to show that courage so we can turn to a better way to lower health care costs, to increase health care choices, and ultimately to improve the quality of care for all the families we represent.

I yield back my time.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Pennsylvania.

Mr. TOOMEY. Madam President, I wish to take a moment to reflect a little bit on this impasse where we find ourselves. The Senator from Indiana is going to join me in a discussion here, and I will have a unanimous consent request along the way.

First of all, as to where we are, as we all know, we are at an impasse on how to fund the roughly 40 percent of the

Federal Government that is funded through discretionary spending—the spending that Congress controls, the spending that is supposed to happen through the ordinary appropriations process but does not around here.

As we address this issue, it has become obvious that every single Republican in the House and the Senate wants to defund ObamaCare as a step in the direction of completely repealing this completely unworkable bill. But all the Democrats support ObamaCare, and they want to implement it and they want to fund it and they want to move forward.

The impasse arises, obviously, because the Democrats cannot have their way in the House where the Republicans are in control, and we Republicans cannot have our way in the Senate where the Democrats are in control. So I have a suggestion. My suggestion is, maybe—maybe—there is a third way. Maybe this does not have to be completely binary. Maybe this does not have to be an all-or-nothing proposition in which one side completely wins and the other side completely loses.

Among my Democratic friends—who are big fans of ObamaCare—I would think there is nobody who actually thinks that is a perfect bill. I cannot imagine that when the American public has made clear, overwhelmingly, their opposition to this bill. When you cannot pick up a newspaper in America today without reading a front-page story about the huge problems and costs and negative effects ObamaCare is creating, I cannot imagine that anyone thinks this is all perfect.

So here is my suggestion: Why not repeal a few of the more egregious flaws that have been acknowledged as flaws on both sides of the aisle—those things that are not working that are most problematic—just a few. Couldn't we do that and at least make some progress?

So the three items I have in mind are the subject of my unanimous consent request. One would be repeal of the medical device tax, which is one of the most egregious flaws in this badly flawed bill, and I will speak some more about this tax in a little while. A second would be to delay for 1 year the individual mandate. I think Senator COATS from Indiana is going to speak a little bit more about how important it would be to delay that individual mandate. The third would be to protect the religious freedom of those who object based on deeply held religious views. They object to the contraception mandate that is imposed on them, including faith-based institutions.

So I am going to request that we consider these amendments. That is all—just asking for an up-or-down vote on these amendments. I think that is a pretty reasonable request. Every one of these has had bipartisan support.

By the way, the repeal of the medical device tax was supported by 79 Senators. Two-thirds of the Democratic Senators voted in favor of an amendment to repeal the medical device tax, and every single Republican. That is not even controversial anymore, to repeal the medical device tax.

They all have some level of bipartisan support. Taken together, they are about budget neutral. Repeal of the Medical device tax would cost the government some revenue, but the delay of the individual mandate would save the government expenses, so it is about revenue neutral.

This could probably speed up the whole process. If we allow these amendments, frankly, they all would probably pass. If they became part of the underlying bill and if Senator REID has the votes to pass the amendment he wants to pass, what would go back to the House would probably pass the House and it probably would not have to get ping-ponged back here and risk a government shutdown. Finally, it would break this impasse, and it would demonstrate that we are at least able to come together on the things where there is bipartisan agreement.

So I think the most reasonable thing in the world is to have the vote. That is all. I do not know for sure how it will turn out. I think it will pass because these items have demonstrated bipartisan support before. But I think it is unreasonable not to be able to have the vote.

So, Madam President, I ask unanimous consent that the pending amendments be set aside and that it be in order to call up the following amendments, which are at the desk: No. 1971, to repeal the medical device tax; No. 1972, to delay the individual mandate; and No. 1973, to protect religious freedom; I further ask consent that each amendment be limited to up to 1 hour for debate equally divided in the usual form; I further ask consent that following use or yielding back of time on each of the amendments, the Senate proceed to a vote in relation to each amendment with no intervening action or debate.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection?

Mr. TESTER. I object.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Objection is heard.

The Senator from Indiana.

Mr. COATS. Madam President, I thank my colleague from Pennsylvania for his efforts here. We very much share the same sentiment and the same concerns going forward here. We are going to vote sometime today, perhaps tomorrow, perhaps on Saturday. We have had a week-long effort here undertaking a very important issue, serious to the future of the American people's health and to the American economy.

I think it is pretty clear that there are a couple of hard truths that we have to recognize as we come to this vote. I am still hopeful that we will be able to see at least five of our colleagues from across the aisle come and join us.

For months we have heard about the impact of the health care act and the mess that it has created, the confusion, and the egregious taxes that are attached to it.

My colleague has talked about the medical device tax. In Indiana, it is one of our key industries which provides high wages and skilled positions for people. These are products that are exported around the world which in turn helps our balance of trade. These products are saving the lives of millions of people. Some of these innovations that come out of Warsaw or Bloomington or other parts of Indiana, and the companies that are in this medical device business, are truly extraordinary.

Yet they got socked as a ''pay for'' for ObamaCare by a 2.3 percent tax on their gross sales, not on their profits. As a company, say they are developing a new product and they come to a point where they know they are not going to make a profit for 2 or 3 years, but they know they have something that is really going to work, really going to provide life saving or life enhancing benefits.

Say they lose money, but they are selling their product. The sales have not yet caught up with all of the research costs. So they report a loss at the end of year, or maybe they break even. These companies are being taxed 2.3 percent on the total amount of money that they take in, even though that money does not reach a profit.

That is egregious, offensive, unbelievable. I mean, who could think up stuff like this, and who could vote for stuff like this? A repeal of this tax is one of three amendments my colleague from Pennsylvania has offered. I regret that it has been objected to. We will not even have a chance to debate it. We will not have a chance to vote on it. We will not have a chance to put down our yeas or our nays on where we stand.

The real tragedy of this is that a majority of Democrats voted to repeal this egregious tax in the budget.

Mr. TOOMEY. The Senator from Indiana pointed out exactly correctly the nature of this tax. It is extremely unusual that we choose to punish a company based on its sales, irrespective of whether it is making any money at all.

Senator COATS observed that this is a 2.3 percent tax on sales. I want to touch on some of the real world consequences that are happening right now in Pennsylvania because this tax went into effect on January 1. It is happening now. Here is what is happening in Pennsylvania: Fujirebio Diagnostics in Mahler, a world leader in the production of diagnostics that detect cancer, had to put on a hiring freeze. They had been hiring. They were planning on more hiring. They cannot do it now. So there is a hiring freeze there.

Cook Medical in Pittsburgh, PA. They manufacture pacemakers. They had plans to build five new plants over time in the United States. Those plants are all on hold. Everything has been put on the shelf; no new plants as long as they have to contend with this.

Boehringer Laboratories in Phoenixville, PA. They make surgical equipment. No new hires. Hiring freeze at a time when our unemployment is so unacceptably high, so many people looking for work.

B Braun. They make a wide range of medical equipment, located in the Lehigh Valley in Pennsylvania. They have a hiring freeze and immediate and drastic cuts in research spending. What else can they do? Such a huge new chunk of their revenue has being taken.

This is an ill-conceived tax. It is costing us jobs. It is costing us innovation. It is costing us in the quality of health care. Finally, everybody gets that, as evidenced by 79 Members of this body voting to repeal it. We are denied the opportunity to have a binding vote.

It is shocking to me.

Mr. COATS. I thank the Senator from Pennsylvania for listing those companies. Many of those same companies have facilities in Indiana. In fact, Cook International was founded by Bill Cook in Bloomington, IN, initially working out of his study in his home. Now it is an international company providing thousands of jobs across the country, in Pennsylvania, in Indiana and other places.

Unfortunately, Bill passed away this year. That company is going forward. But there were five new facilities hiring that are now put on hold as a result of this tax being imposed on their gross sales—not on their profits, but on their gross sales.

So you can take in $1 million, but it costs you $2 million because you are developing a new product. You lose the million and the government says: We are going to tax you on every penny that you took in regardless of whether you made a profit or not. It is just unthinkable.

Thankfully, a majority of Democrats have joined us in this effort. We got 79 votes out of 100 to repeal this. Yet we are not able to vote on it. Why are we not able to vote on it? Because the White House does not want to lose that money coming in that is so egregiously taxed to pay for some of the unaffordable care act.

That is one of many things that we would like to debate. We would like to vote on that. We think we can vote on some of the egregious stuff that is in this ObamaCare. The hard truth is this: Despite all of our best efforts—I want to make this point clear: Every one of 46 Republicans, our total here in the Senate, is fully 100 percent committed to the repeal, the defunding of ObamaCare.

Unfortunately, it takes 51 in order to achieve our goal, unless we get some help from the other side. There is no indication of that now. We have gone through several machinations this week. There will be some votes coming up. I want the vote to be clearly a yea or a nay. People go home and they say: ''You know, do not hide behind this procedural process of cloture. We do not even know what that means.'' This is a procedural move. Over time, politicians have figured out ways to go back and say: ''No, I am really not for that.'' Or to say: ''I am not really against that. We had a procedural move. I was for this or I was against that procedural move because it denied this amendment or it did this or did that.''

The real vote is when it comes down to it—it is as old as the Bible. Let your yea be yea and your nay be nay. Are you for ObamaCare or against ObamaCare? That is the vote we will have when the majority leader comes down here and offers a motion to strip the defunding of ObamaCare out of this bill.

I do not support a shutdown. I might support a shutdown if it would achieve the goal of actually defeating ObamaCare. But the truth that has not been told to a lot of the American people, by some outside groups promoting this, is the fact that a government shutdown won't stop ObamaCare because a majority of the funding is mandatory not discretionary. Our vote on this matter will not affect that mandatory funding.

All of the taxes will go forward. Much of the implementation of ObamaCare will go forward no matter how we vote on this. So that fact has to be recognized. It also has to be recognized that it does not appear that we have the votes. Certainly we do not have the votes to override a veto by the President.

He is not going to say: ''Hand me a pen. I am sorry, this is a terrible idea. I see what is happening here. Yes, we should cancel this program.'' I have not heard the White House giving the indication that is what is going to happen. So those who say the vote is on a procedural motion, essentially want to shut down the government, No. 1.

Maybe that would be worth it if it accomplished the goal. But to do it by not accomplishing the goal takes us nowhere. So what we are trying to do is basically say: ''Yes, let's vote to defund it. Let's vote to repeal it.'' But if that does not work, if that does not pass, then let's see if we can at least do something. I am not ready to give up. I am not ready to say: ''If we do not pass this vote on a cloture motion then that is it. We will never have a chance at this again.''

Are you kidding me? I mean, people are just learning about ObamaCare. The public sentiment is building. I commend Senator CRUZ for standing up and highlighting this issue. I could not have stood here for 21 hours. I would not have made it. More power to him. He has brought this issue to us. He has focused the attention of Americans on this particular issue.

But given that attention, that certainly does not mean we are going to give up. Senator TOOMEY and I are going to go forward. We have some provisions here that we think will make a difference. I have offered, and Senator TOOMEY has also offered, to delay the implementation of this. We delayed it for the employers, big business, but what about the individuals? What about the people in North Dakota, Louisiana, or Alaska, just to name a few? I know for sure Indiana and Pennsylvania.

Why should we impose a mandate on individuals when we do not impose it on the businesses? The President has said: ''We cannot get our act together here with the businesses so we will give you a 1-year waiver.'' In fairness, let's give that to the individuals. That is exactly what we are about here.

At this point, I would ask unanimous consent that the pending amendments be set aside, and it be in order to call up my amendment No. 1979. I further ask consent that the debate on the amendment be limited to up to 1 hour equally divided in the usual form, and I further ask consent that following the use or yielding back of time, the Senate proceed to a vote on that amendment with no intervening action or debate.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection?

Mr. TESTER. Madam President, I object.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Objection is heard.

Mr. COATS. Madam President, I want to yield back to my colleague here. I regret that we are not able to take this up. I regret that we are not able to have a debate or a vote on this matter. We are going to do all we can to continue to address, to work for, and to fight for the repeal and the defunding, however we accomplish it, of the piece of legislation that was jammed through the process without any bipartisan support, that is now unfolding before our very eyes. We see what a colossal mess it is making.

We are not giving up on this process. In fact, we are going forward. This first vote on cloture, that is not the end of this. This is the beginning. As this unfolds for the American people, I think we are going to gain the support on a bipartisan basis to get rid of this, to start over with more responsible, cost-effective, meaningful, worthwhile provisions that address our health care needs and not take this one-piece-fits-all bill and jam it down the throats of the American people.

I yield back.

Mr. TOOMEY. Madam President, I want to commend the Senator from Indiana. I agree entirely. I think this is really an outrageous process. Let's consider where we are and why. We have another manufactured fiscal crisis, manufactured because the majority party that controls this body refuses to bring out appropriations bills.

We had one appropriation reach the floor this entire year. If you do not do appropriations bills, you run into this cliff at the end of the process. So now where are we? We have this giant CR, this huge omnibus, whatever you want to call it, that is going to be here on the floor for a vote.

Senator REID has decided he would use his power to make sure that he gets to have an amendment. Actually, he gets to have a couple of amendments and gets to gut the language that would defund ObamaCare, which will be on a party line vote.

When I ask for unanimous consent to bring up amendments that have broad bipartisan support, including one which has been supported by two-thirds of all of the Democrats and every Republican, I am not allowed to offer that amendment.

We have a completely dysfunctional Senate. It is manifesting itself very clearly today. Frankly, given where this is leading, given the fact that one party here is not given an opportunity to weigh in and engage in this debate and offer amendments, I cannot support cloture on the underlying bill.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator's time has expired.

The Senator from Montana.

Mr. BAUCUS. For this hour of majority time, I ask unanimous consent that the following Senators have 20 minutes each: Senator BAUCUS, Senator FRANKEN, and Senator LEAHY.

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

Mr. BAUCUS. On September 26, 1987, 26 years ago this very day, President Reagan faced a Congress playing politics with the Nation's debt ceiling.

Knowing the catastrophic consequences a default would have on America's economy, President Reagan addressed the Nation. Speaking from the Oval Office he said:

> Congress consistently brings the government to the edge of default before facing its responsibility.

He warned:

> This brinksmanship threatens the holders of government bonds and those who rely on Social Security and veterans benefits. Interest rates would skyrocket, instability would occur in financial markets, and the Federal deficit would soar.
>
> The United States has a special responsibility to itself and the world to meet its obligations.

That was a pretty stern warning. While spoken more than a quarter of a century ago, President Reagan's words, sadly, still ring true today.

I hope my colleagues listen to those words of reason. I hope my colleagues in the House of Representatives heed the warning from President Reagan about using the debt ceiling for brinkmanship.

As we know, the Federal Government hits its debt limit on May 19. For the past 130 days, the Treasury Secretary has been using what are known as extraordinary measures to continue funding the government. We are running, therefore, on borrowed time. But those extraordinary measures will be used up by October 17. At that point we will have exhausted every measure. Default—that is the United States not paying its debts—will occur unless Congress acts to raise the debt limit.

There will be much debate in the coming days on how to deal with the debt limit. The House continuing resolution which we have before us today contains a proposal that some claim would avoid the default. What is it? What do they claim, what is the provision?

It is a dangerous plan that gives the Treasury Secretary the unprecedented power to prioritize payments; that is, the Treasury Secretary decides what obligations should be paid and not paid; that is, once the debt limit is surpassed—in short, the power to pick and choose which bills to pay.

The House CR does, however, identify two specific payments as priorities they have to pay first. What are they? Social Security and interest to holders of U.S. bonds. They are all first in line. Everyone else has to fight among themselves.

We are all familiar with Social Security and its importance. It is a given. But the American people may not be as familiar with the principal and interest on U.S. bonds. This is the payment Uncle Sam makes to various persons and countries that hold our debt. It can be U.S. citizens who hold our debt or it can be countries such as China, Japan, Russia, and Saudi Arabia. I might add that the foreign countries that hold most of the U.S. debt among the countries I listed are China and Japan. They hold the most foreign debt.

The continuing resolution categorizes the interest to these foreign bondholders as a must-pay bill—we must pay those first; that is, Social Security and interest. It leaves all other obligations of the Federal budget to be paid only by the revenue Treasury has on hand on any given day. Some days revenue comes in and some days revenue comes in more than others.

Critical programs will be left fighting for the remaining scraps of funding. In effect, the House proposal to prioritize payments would result in the interests of America's veterans, the unemployed, and students, among others, being left behind the interests of China, Russia, and Saudi Arabia. It is pay Russia first, pay U.S. veterans second—if there is money left over to pay U.S. veterans.

This proposal makes no sense. A few of the programs that would compete for funding under the House plan are veterans' benefits, child nutrition, military salaries, military operations and maintenance, Medicare payments to doctors and hospitals, student loans, highway funding, dollars for air traffic controllers, unemployment insurance, and tax refunds, to name a few. They are all going to have to compete with each other for what is left after interest on the debt and Social Security payments are made under the House measure.

Can you imagine the result? Medicare beneficiaries will be pitted against disabled vets, each fighting the other. Students receiving Pell grants will be up against patients receiving medical care; doctors conducting cancer research would be pitted against agents patrolling our borders. The chaos that would ensue would be unimaginable. We can't even begin to fathom the chaos. When this scheme was first proposed during the debt limit debate in January, it became obvious what it would be like. I compared it to the movie ''The Hunger Games,'' hunger games where individuals were out scrapping, trying to save their own lives and killing other people to save their own lives. The sequel ''The Hunger Games'' is not out until November, but we can now see the coming attractions of the House CR. Their plan for a debt prioritization would pit one program against another in a fight for survival.

Under this ill-conceived plan, the Secretary of Treasury would be given unprecedented power to decide which programs are funded and which are eliminated. It is in the Treasury Secretary's hands. He decides, the President decides: Do veterans get paid, do Medicare beneficiaries get paid, does the military get paid? That is up to the Treasury Secretary and the President.

No such power should ever be placed in the hands of any Treasury Secretary, regardless of party affiliation. No Member of Congress who believes in our system of checks and balances can honestly advocate for this idea to stand. In article I of the Constitution, Congress decides what appropriations should be paid, not the executive branch.

Finally, this House proposal is wrong for the country. Why? Because it ignores the progress we have made over the past 2 years to actually reduce America's deficits and debt.

With the adoption of the Budget Control Act in 2011 and the fiscal year cliff agreement earlier this year, debt has been stabilized. Together with interest savings, these actions will cut the deficit by about $2.8 trillion over the next 10 years. Add in the savings for winding down operations for Iraq and Afghanistan, and the total deficit reduction reaches almost $3.7 trillion over 10 years. These are real savings. All this progress must not be ignored.

I agree with many of my colleagues that even more can be done to reduce the deficit and promote economic growth. But those actions should be separate from the debt limit debate. It is a different subject.

We are in no position to play games with the economy. It is completely irresponsible to threaten default on the debt. Since 1789, this country has always honored its obligations. We paid our bills. We are known for that. Americans know and people around the world know that America, up to this date, anyway, has always paid its bills. Even when the Capitol burned to the ground in 1814, guess what, America still honored its debts. Yet I heard a Senator say a few weeks ago that failing to raise the debt limit is ''no big deal.''

No big deal.

I couldn't imagine when I heard those words. It is more than a big deal; it is more than a huge deal. It is a catastrophic deal. It is something that is so bad it is unimaginable.

People have forgotten the summer of 2011. Remember August of 2011? People have forgotten what happened when Congress failed to address the debt limit decisively. I remember what happened. The dysfunctional debt-ceiling debate led to the first ever downgrade of America's credit rating—the first ever downgrade of America's credit rating. I remember the stock market plunged 635 points the day after the S&P downgrade. I remember that 14-day trading period in the summer of 2011 when the Dow plummeted more than 2000 points, about 20 percent. Consumer confidence back then dropped even lower than it did in the heat of the 2008 financial crisis, and it took nearly a year to recover.

Worst was the impact on jobs. During the months Congress was fighting over the debt limit, job creation fell by nearly 50 percent.

Remember, Congress did still raise the debt ceiling without defaulting, but the political brinkmanship did all that damage to the economy. We did raise the debt, but look at what damage the brinkmanship caused to our economy. We cannot let that happen again.

Time is running short. We need to stop playing games. This will to fight is getting us nowhere. Enough with the threat of default; enough of the schemes to prioritize payments. As President Reagan said:

> The United States has a special responsibility to itself and to the world to meet its obligations.

It is time we accept our responsibility. It is time for us to work together. It is time for us to get the job done.

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

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The assistant bill clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. FRANKEN. I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

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

Mr. FRANKEN. Madam President, I wish to talk a little bit about health reform.

Soon over 1 million Minnesotans will have the opportunity to buy their health insurance on MNsure, Minnesota's health insurance marketplace. Minnesotans who buy their own insurance in the health insurance marketplace, including Franni and me, will have the opportunity to compare plans and choose the coverage that works best for their families.

Not only will MNsure make the options clearer and more accessible, but the health care reform law is also making sure that Minnesotans feel secure in their health care coverage. That is because insurers can no longer cap the amount of benefits you can get over the course of your lifetime, they can't drop you if you get sick, and they cannot discriminate against you based on a preexisting condition.

There is a lot in the health care reform law that a lot of Americans don't even know about yet. For example, I championed a couple of key provisions that are improving the quality and the value of health care coverage that we all rely on. I authored a provision requiring health insurers to provide a good value for your premium dollars, and I helped to establish a national fund for health care prevention.

Why is this especially important right now? Because the House of Representatives passed a continuing resolution to fund the budget that also defunds the health care reform law. So before we decide on that measure, I wish to make sure we remember what is in this important law.

First, we are requiring insurance companies to give their customers good value for their premium dollars. One thing many Americans don't know is that millions of Americans are getting rebates from their health insurance companies when those companies don't provide that value. I wrote the provision that does this. It has the catchy name ''medical loss ratio,'' which is sometimes called the slightly more catchy 80/20 rule. Because of my medical loss ratio provision, which is based on a Minnesota State law, health insurance companies must spend at least 80 percent of their premiums on actual health care—not on administrative costs, not on marketing, not on profits, not on CEO salaries. If insurance companies don't meet the 80 percent for individual and small group markets or the 85 percent for large group policies, then the insurance company has to rebate the difference.

The fact is my provision is working. Last year, nearly 13 million Americans benefited from checks from their insurers, and this year about 8½ million Americans benefited from rebates that were sent out in July of this year. That is a good thing—fewer people getting rebates. This year is a good thing because that means insurers were saving you money on the front end instead of rebating you the money on the back end.

That is part of why health care costs have risen in the last 3 years at a slower rate than at any time in the last 50 years. Is that entirely due to the Affordable Care Act? No. But in contrast with what is being put out here and there, we are not seeing the cost of health care spike. In fact, the opposite is true.

I will say it again: Health care costs have gone up less—have risen at a slower rate—in the last 3 years than at any other time in the last 50 years. The bottom line is that my provision is making insurance companies more efficient at helping keep health care costs in check for people, and I am very proud of that.

People also don't know how much we did to improve access to preventive health care in health care reform. Anyone who has ever gotten a flu shot knows an ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure. Along with former Republican Senator Dick Lugar of Indiana, I fought to get the National Diabetes Prevention Program included in the health care reform law, and it exemplifies the benefit of this kind of reform to our health care system.

This program, which was piloted in St. Paul, MN, by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, involves structured nutrition classes and exercise at community-based organizations such as the YMCA. It has been shown to reduce the likelihood that someone with prediabetes will be diagnosed with full-blown type 2 diabetes by nearly 60 percent. That is pretty good.

The program doesn't just make people healthier, it also saves everyone money. The Diabetes Prevention Program costs about $400 per participant, as compared to treating type 2 diabetes which costs more than $7,000 every single year. That is why United Health, the largest private insurer in the country—that also happens to be headquartered in Minnesota—is already providing the program to its beneficiaries. In fact, the CEO of United Health told me that for every $1 they invest in the Diabetes Prevention Program, they save $4 on health care costs later on.

This homegrown program is funded out of the Prevention and Public Health Fund, which is another program in the health care reform law that is designed to invest in evidence-based health care prevention in communities across the country. In Minnesota, the Prevention and Public Health Fund has supported tobacco cessation programs, it has helped to prevent infectious diseases, and it has expanded our desperately needed primary care workforce. Preventing disease while saving money—preventing disease while saving money—is smart reform.

We did a lot of other things in the health care law too. I worked with several of my colleagues to develop a value index which will change the way Medicare pays physicians to take into account the quality of the care the doctor provides—reward quality instead of quantity.

My home State of Minnesota is the leader in delivering high-value health care at a relatively low cost. Yet, traditionally, we have been woefully underreimbursed for it. For example, Texas gets reimbursed almost 50 percent more, on average, per Medicare patient than Minnesota.

This isn't about pitting Minnesota against Texas or Florida. It is about rewarding those States to become more like Minnesota. Imagine if we brought Medicare expenditures down by 30 percent around the country. It would bring enormous benefits not just to Minnesota but across the country because it will bring down the cost of health care delivery nationwide.

I am working very hard to make sure health care reform works for Minnesota. The implementation of any major reform is going to be a challenge, but I don't think Minnesotans or Americans want us to keep looking backward. They want us to move forward and to implement the law as best we can. They do not want the House of Representatives to waste precious time and vote to repeal the law—for the 42nd time.

The fact is, if the law is repealed, a lot of things Americans like will be taken away from them. Americans don't want seniors' prescription drugs to go back up. They do not want children with preexisting conditions to be kicked off their health plans. Those are just a couple of things that would happen if the law were repealed.

Last year, more than 54,000 seniors in Minnesota got a 50-percent discount on their covered brand-name prescription drugs when they hit the doughnut hole in Medicare Part D. This discount resulted in an average savings of $644 per person and a total savings of more than $34 million in Minnesota alone and we are not done. By 2020, the doughnut hole will be closed completely. But the closing of the doughnut hole would go away if we repealed the health care reform law.

Thanks to a provision that allows young adults up to the age of 26 to stay on their parents' health insurance, 35,000 young people in Minnesota and more than 3 million young people nationally were able to keep their health care coverage. Those young people would be kicked off of their coverage if we repealed the health care law.

Health care reform also ended insurance companies setting lifetime limits on the amount of care an individual can receive. So if you or a loved one gets sick, you can never be told by your health insurer: That is it, no more coverage for you. Go ahead and file for bankruptcy. Guess what. If Congress repealed the health care reform law, that would go away too.

I am not saying the law is perfect. But if there are problems, the American people want us to work together to fix them, not refight old fights. That is what I hope to do—move forward by implementing the law, making any changes we need to make along the way.

Millions of Americans across the country are already experiencing the benefits of this law. I urge my colleagues to join me in supporting the implementation of the important provisions I have outlined.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Ms. WARREN). The Senator from Vermont.

Mr. LEAHY. Madam President, what is the parliamentary situation?

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senate is currently considering H.J. Res. 59, the continuing budget resolution.

Mr. LEAHY. I thank the Chair.

Madam President, I listened this week to the distinguished chairwoman of the Appropriations Committee, Senator MIKULSKI, make a compelling case for passing a clean, short-term continuing resolution through November 15 of this year so we can get on with the business of debating and passing appropriations bills.

We have a lot of sound and fury here signifying nothing, to quote Shakespeare, but we ought to vote up or down on something. It is easy to give speeches or phony filibusters or whatever and say: Look what we are accomplishing. No. It is not accomplishing anything.

I agree with everything the chairwoman has said, particularly about the bipartisan way the committee has written and reported bills this year. Any one of those bills could be debated and voted on today. Vote yes, vote no—but vote. Conference them with the House, if they pass, and send them to the President.

Actually, there is some precedent for doing that—a precedent of over 200 years doing it that way.

Instead, we are repeating this all-too-familiar drama where we are again in a high-stakes stalemate over simply keeping the Federal Government functioning. What was once the regular business of Congress has again been replaced by political theater and another artificial made-in-Congress crisis that threatens the economy and, in ways large and small, threatens every single family in America.

Don't come on this floor and say you stand for family values when you are willing to destroy retirement plans of families, savings for their children to go to college, and possibly their jobs. Once again, grandstanding prevails over common sense, comity, and cooperation—three values that are vital to the effective functioning of a representative government.

Those who travel around our States—and I do all the time—and listen to our constituents, know the costs of a government shutdown and the devastating effects of sequestration.

Vermont is not unique in having fewer children in Head Start programs, medical researchers at our universities who cannot obtain research grants, seniors cut from Meals On Wheels, or young veterans back from Iraq or Afghanistan who can't find jobs, or families living in shelters or on the streets because there is no safety net housing assistance. But some members of the House and the Senate say we have to cut all of this. Is that who we have become as a country?

The decisions we make have real and serious consequences for our economy, for our children, and for our community—ranging from St. Johnsbury, VT, to Houston, TX.

As chairman of the Appropriations Subcommittee that funds the Department of State and foreign operations, I want to speak briefly about the consequences of shutting down the government and a full-year continuing resolution for U.S. national security. It should make every Senator think long and hard about the role they want the United States to play in an increasingly competitive and dangerous world.

We hear over and over again on this floor the saying, ''freedom isn't free.'' Well, it is not. And the corollary to that is, neither are U.S. security and U.S. influence.

That is what is at stake: U.S. leadership in the Middle East, at the United Nations, in Africa, in South and Central Asia, and in our own hemisphere. If the government shuts down, the impacts will be felt here at home and by our allies, and exploited by our adversaries.

It is the worst hypocrisy, because those same Senators who are toying with shutting down the government want the United States to respond when war breaks out in Syria, or famine in Ethiopia, or an outbreak of the Ebola virus, or a devastating earthquake in Haiti, a terrorist attack in Kenya, the false imprisonment of a constituent in Nicaragua, or the kidnapping of an American missionary in the Philippines.

They expect the United States to solve the problem or to rally others to help solve it, but they are willing to do away with paying the salaries of our diplomats, or our aid workers, or our dues to the United Nations, or emergency food aid, or our support for NATO or the World Health Organization, or the myriad of other programs and organizations that depend on us and that serve our interests around the world. They think that somehow this is going to be paid for with pixie dust. We are grown-ups and this is the real world. When we pull back, when we don't lead, others are only too happy to fill the vacuum.

A shutdown would mean that the Export-Import Bank, which provides financing to United States companies, would immediately stop processing new applications, and would lose $2 to $4 billion in monthly income for U.S. exporters, jeopardizing approximately 30,000 American jobs, reducing deposits to the U.S. Treasury by $15 to $20 million per month as a result of fees that go uncollected by the Bank.

The Overseas Private Investment Corporation, that provides financing and insurance to American companies that invest overseas, would lose its authority to function. No longer could it make disbursements, it would bring to a screeching halt the activities of hundreds of U.S. businesses that rely on OPIC financing.

The State, Foreign Operations bill that Senator LINDSEY GRAHAM and I wrote that was reported by the Appropriations Committee on July 25 by a lopsided bipartisan vote of 23–7, protects U.S. national security interests and responds to compelling humanitarian needs. Americans recognize that we have a moral responsibility as the wealthiest, most powerful nation on earth. This is who we are.

Senator GRAHAM's and my bill includes $8.5 billion for global health programs. A full-year continuing resolution means $389 million less to combat HIV/AIDS and other preventable diseases like malaria, tuberculosis, and pneumonia, and malnutrition. None of us have children or grandchildren that have to worry about these illnesses, but with the relatively small amounts that we spend we can save the lives of countless children in other countries.

A full year continuing resolution would mean tens of thousands of additional deaths from these diseases. It means tens of thousands of additional children orphaned by AIDS. It means millions fewer life-saving immunizations for children resulting in tens of thousands of preventable deaths.

For pennies we can vaccinate millions of children around the world. Are we going to say, instead, that we can't do that because we have a political point to make? We are grown ups. We are not sound-bite aficionados. We should be legislators.

The Senate bill includes $2.5 billion, which is $115 million above a full year continuing resolution, for programs in the poorest countries. These have bipartisan support, with Republicans and Democrats, supporting basic and higher education, food security, energy, and water and sanitation programs.

If you don't agree that we have a moral responsibility, then let's just be pragmatic about our own security. Because if we don't do this, the alternative to development and opportunity is poverty, religious extremism, transnational crime, and violent insurgencies. It is a growing reality across the globe, from Somalia to Mexico, and it threatens our economy, our security, and the security of our allies.

A government shutdown is a complete failure of our responsibility as legislators. We are sent here to make decisions—not slogans—to make government work for the American people and for the good of the Nation, including our national security and our interests around the globe.

Over and over again there are those who want to give speeches, but they don't want to make hard choices. They were elected to serve, yet they make a career of blaming the government.

Funding the government by continuing resolution is irresponsible and it is dangerous. It diminishes our standing in the world. It erodes our leadership. It is unworthy of the Congress. It is a betrayal of the people who sent us here.

Let's have, if not the courage, at least the honesty to bring up the appropriations bills and vote on them. Vote yes or vote no. Stand up and be counted. Stop hiding behind the delaying tactics and partisan sloganeering that have become such a tiresome refrain around here.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The majority leader.

Mr. REID. Madam President, I am reminded, when I hear the distinguished President pro tempore of the Senate talk, why the people of Vermont so love him.

Here is a man who has set all kinds of records in Vermont: the first Democrat elected, and on and on, with all the many accolades that he has. I have always admired and appreciated him. Each day that goes by, I understand better than I did the last why the people of Vermont revere this good man.

HELIUM STEWARDSHIP ACT OF 2013

Mr. REID. Madam President, I ask the Chair to lay before the Senate a message from the House with respect to H.R. 527.

The Presiding Officer laid before the Senate the following message from the House of Representatives:

Resolved, That the House agreed to the amendment of the Senate to the bill (H.R. 527) entitled ''An Act to amend the Helium Act to complete the privatization of the Federal helium reserve in a competitive market fashion that ensures stability in the helium markets while protecting the interests of American taxpayers, and for other purposes,'' with an amendment.

Mr. REID. I ask unanimous consent the Senate concur in the House amendment to the Senate amendment; and the motion to reconsider be laid upon the table, with no intervening action or debate.

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

Mr. WYDEN. Madam President, we know that in Washington, DC, it is almost as if there is an inexhaustible capacity to manufacture false crises. I am pleased to say that with today's vote Congress avoided a real crisis for scores of American manufacturing and technology companies employing millions of American workers. That is because without the legislation that the Senate just passed, those workers and companies would no longer have been able to get access to helium, which is a critical industrial gas without which these companies cannot operate.

In addition to avoiding an immediate crisis for these businesses and workers, the bipartisan legislation that passed the House of Representatives yesterday and the Senate today can be something of a model for how the Congress can act on must pass bills. Senator MURKOWSKI and I have worked for many months on this legislation in the Energy and Natural Resources Committee to achieve a number of goals that members on both sides of the aisle support.

First, our bipartisan legislation gets the Federal Government out of the helium business permanently—something that should have been done long ago. This bill also addresses the need to ensure helium supplies in the short term.

It does this by requiring the Federal Government to shift from selling helium at a government-set price to selling helium at a market-based priced. The bill does this over a 5-year period so that there is no panic, no sudden changes in supply, and American businesses can stop worrying about whether the helium supply truck is going to show up next month. The bill phases out commercial sales over the next 7 or 8 years and then gets the Federal Government out of the helium business entirely within 8 years by selling off the helium reserve. With prices for helium now reflecting their real value in the market place, the private sector will have the incentives it needs to invest in new helium supplies to replace the Federal reserve.

Second, our bipartisan bill ends the Federal helium program in a way that is not only fully paid for but would actually lower the deficit by $90 million. I particularly want to point out the contributions of two of the members of our committee, Senators RISCH and FLAKE who were instrumental in ensuring that while the helium program gets phased out some of the savings for taxpayers should go to contribute to deficit reduction. So I wanted to point out the Senators' role in shaping the legislation to ensure a significant contribution to deficit reduction.

Contributing to deficit reduction, getting a better deal for taxpayers by transitioning helium sales to market rates and completely ending a Federal program that has gone far longer than it should have are priorities that all senators can support. And today's vote reflects that.

But the benefits of this legislation are not limited to helium users and taxpayers. Our bipartisan legislation also provides one-year of funding for the Secure Rural School program that expired earlier this year. This program provides funding for schools, roads and law enforcement in hundreds of rural counties in 41 States where there are national forests.

The expiration of the Secure Rural Schools Program left rural America out in the cold. The program needed to be extended for a year while the Senate Energy and Natural Resources Committee works on a longer term approach to meet the needs of forest dependent communities around the country.

This is a more than 100-year-old commitment that the Federal Government made to these counties when the national forests were created and will have to be met one way or another. Our bill pays for a short-term extension of this program without raising taxes or increasing the debt.

The bill before the Senate also includes a public-private program to help address the needs of one of our national treasures—America's National Parks. The bill creates a matching fund to leverage a $50 million federal investment that must be matched dollar for dollar with non-Federal funding.

The Energy and Natural Resources Committee held a hearing earlier this year on the multi-billion funding backlog that our national parks are facing.

Senator COBURN in particular has been a leader in pointing out the need to address this funding shortfall. The legislation that the Senate passed today makes a down payment toward reducing that backlog and does it in a way that brings private resources to the table.

With legislation that passed today, the Senate and House have shown how they can act to accomplish a number of important goals on a bipartisan basis. The bill completely ends a Federal Government program that has outlived its useful life; it ensures a fair return for taxpayer and meets the needs of helium users; it contributes $90 million to the Treasury for debt reduction; and it fulfills the Federal government's obligations to rural America all without raising taxes or increasing the debt.

I also want to recognize the important contributions of the House Natural Resources Committee and Chairman DOC HASTINGS in shaping the legislation. The final bill was truly a bipartisan and bicameral effort. That is the way the legislative process is supposed to work.

I am pleased that the Senate and House have been able to find a way to achieve all these important goals in one bipartisan, bicameral bill and I hope as the Congress considers other must-pass bills to keep the government open and to raise the debt ceiling, members can work together in the same type of cooperative bipartisan way, that Senator MURKOWSKI and I and the other members of the Energy and Natural Resources Committee have done in passing the helium legislation.

Mr. REID. This is a very important piece of legislation. I wish we could do a lot more like this. This is the Helium Stewardship Act of 2013. It is something we have had in effect since World War II. It is so very, very important.

Today around America 750,000 people will have MRIs conducted to find out how sick they are or if they are hurt or sick. Without this bill passing, the big magnets they have in these machines, which are cooled only by one thing—helium—and the people who depend on this, the high-tech industry would have to go out on the spot market and buy this stuff, which would increase the price of health care delivery, and the making computer chips and lots of other things.

It is a shame it was held up for such a long time for no good reason. Now we have passed it, and I am very happy that everybody allowed this to happen.

MAKING CONTINUING APPROPRIATIONS FOR FISCAL YEAR 2014—Continued

Mr. REID. Madam President, I am trying to move this along as quickly as possible. I am going to come here a little later and ask consent that we move forward very quickly.

Each day that we don't complete the CR is a day closer to the government shutting down. I want no excuses from anyone about time. I don't want anyone to say that the majority controls the Senate and that we are doing anything to slow down this bill. I think we should move as quickly as we can. It is to everyone's advantage. If the House wants to take a look at what we have done, let them do that and get back to us as quickly as possible. We have to avoid this shutdown. The American people are afraid of what could happen.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Iowa.

Mr. GRASSLEY. Madam President, I know we have been involved in a very intense debate, long speeches, time consuming, with an opportunity to bring up issues that are very important, particularly as we see that the executive branch of government has made decisions to delay so many aspects of health care reform. It is very appropriate at this time that we delve into the shortcomings of that great change in health care that the health care reform bill exemplifies.

I was here yesterday, hoping to enter into the colloquies that were going on at that time led by Senator CRUZ and time ran out, so I am here to state some points I wanted to make at that particular time. I will start by quoting our second President, John Adams:

> Facts are stubborn things; and whatever may be our wishes, our inclinations, or the dictates of our passion, they cannot alter the state of facts and evidence.

The rhetoric surrounding this vote and the underlying issue has become all too hysterical. I would like us all to step back a little bit from the hysteria and focus on the facts.

We have all taken to calling this legislation ObamaCare. Sometimes even the President does. For some people, attaching the President's name to this issue prevents people from paying attention to the facts. But personalizing this issue should not deter us from looking at those facts.

I am not going to talk about shutting down the Government. So much time and effort is being devoted to discussing a government shutdown that people are not paying attention to the facts that we ought to be looking at. Instead, I would like to set aside the hyperbolic rhetoric for a few minutes and focus on those facts. Let's talk about the real-world effects of this Affordable Care Act.

I will start with a few comments directly from my constituents in Iowa. My colleagues yesterday referred to constituents in their respective States. I am only going to refer to three constituent letters.

The first one:

> I just want to share with you another downside caused by the Affordable Care Act. Besides teaching for my School District I also work as an adjunct instructor for various community colleges. Currently I am scheduled to teach four online classes at a community college in the summer. I just received notice that because of the Affordable Care Act I am only allowed to teach two classes because more than that would put me over the 75 percent load of a full-time instructor. So because of ObamaCare I will lose $4,200 of income this summer. It will also affect me at another school I teach at during the regular school year. I know there is not much you can do until the Republicans can regain control of the Senate but I just wanted you to be aware of another example of our current administration's lack of foresight of the impact of this law on the average hard-working American.

The second letter:

> As superintendent of schools, I would like to express to you the impact of the Affordable Care Act on our local schools. The increase in cost, due directly to the Affordable Care Act will be approximately $180,000 to offer single health insurance to our non-certified staff. We are a combined school district of 750 students. The affected staff members are essentially, part-time, hourly employees who work 6.5 hours each day, 180 days per year. The only other option is to reduce hours for employees working directly with our highest need students.
>
> Additionally, we are planning on being required to pay an additional $17,500 in additional fees and taxes associated with the Affordable Care Act in the first year.
>
> Schools in Iowa can't pass that increase cost on to consumers, like private industry. We are budget restricted, so any increase in employee cost means an equal dollar amount reduction in staff, classroom materials/supplies, curriculum materials, field trips, all areas that strike pretty close to the child.
>
> This cost increase associated with the Affordable Care Act will most definitely result in reduced educational opportunities and increased class size.

One final letter:

> I am a para-educator. I am writing in regards to President Obama's healthcare initiative.
>
> I've been told by my employer that next year my hours will be cut from full time to 29 hours a week because if I work more than 30 hours a week, they will be required by the new healthcare plan to provide me with insurance.
>
> This bothers me a great deal for a number of reasons: it causes stress, instability, and disruption to the special needs students I work with, I get a smaller paycheck, and it's very unfair. In addition, I'm bothered by the lack of foresight that went into making this law. It seems grossly unfair to me. I do my job well, I'm committed and invested in it, and I want to work, but am now being told that I can't work as much because of a law I didn't ask for and that won't benefit me. I'm sure my employer is not the only one that is cutting hours because of the insurance requirement. It seems that the people that this law was intended to help are being hurt instead.
>
> Please consider any actions you can to stop this law.

My constituents are feeling the impact of this law. This is real. It is not some made-up political stunt. It is happening all over this great country of ours.

Let's start with the grocery store chain, Trader Joe's.

After extending health care coverage to many of its part-time employees for years, Trader Joe's has told workers who log fewer than 30 hours a week that they will need to find insurance on the exchanges next year.

Then there is Five Guys, the national restaurant chain that started here in Washington, DC. The prices of burgers and hot dogs are going to rise to cover

the President's mandated insurance coverage.

Earlier this year, the medical device manufacturer Smith and Nephew announced they were laying off 100 employees. They cited a new Medical Device Tax, a provision of the Affordable Care Act, as the primary cause.

SeaWorld is reducing hours for thousands of part-time workers, a move that would allow the theme-park owner to avoid offering those employees medical insurance under the Federal Government's health-care overhaul. The company operates 11 theme parks across the United States and has about 22,000 employees—nearly 18,000 of whom are part-time or seasonal workers.

It has more than 4,000 part-time and seasonal workers in Central Florida. Under a new corporate policy, SeaWorld will schedule part-time workers for no more than 28 hours a week, down from a previous limit of 32 hours a week. The new cap is expected to go into effect by November.

With the reduced hours, those employees would not be classified as full-time workers under the Affordable Care Act.

Much has been said on the floor by different Members about the Cleveland Clinic. The Cleveland Clinic said it would cut jobs and slash five to six percent of its $6 billion annual budget to prepare for health reform.

The clinic is Cleveland's largest employer and the second largest in Ohio after Wal-Mart.

It is the largest provider in Ohio of Medicaid health coverage for the poor, the program that will expand to cover uninsured Americans under the Affordable Care Act. The cuts are necessitated by the lower reimbursement they are anticipating.

There is no doubt; the Affordable Care Act is affecting the way business look at their employees.

As one recent report notes, U.S. businesses are hiring at a robust rate. The only problem is that three out of four of the nearly 1 million hires this year are part-time and many of the jobs are low-paid.

Faltering economic growth at home and abroad and concern that the Affordable Care Act will drive up business costs are behind the wariness about taking on full-time staff, executives at staffing and payroll firms say.

Employers say part-timers offer them flexibility. If the economy picks up, they can quickly offer full-time work. If orders dry up, they know costs are under control. It also helps them to curb costs they might face under the Affordable Care Act.

It is not just employers. Let's look at the way major unions view the Affordable Care Act.

Let me quote from a letter from the heads of the Teamsters, Food and Commercial Workers, and UNITE-HERE. This letter was addressed to Representative PELOSI and Senator REID.

> When you and the President sought our support for the Affordable Care Act (ACA), you pledged that if we liked the health plans we have now, we could keep them. Sadly, that promise is under threat.
>
> Right now, unless you and the Obama Administration enact an equitable fix, the ACA will shatter not only our hard-earned health benefits, but destroy the foundation of the 40 hour work week that is the backbone of the American middle class.
>
> Like millions of other Americans, our members are front-line workers in the American economy. We have been strong supporters of the notion that all Americans should have access to quality, affordable health care. We have also been strong supporters of you. That means the President and the Senator and the Congresswoman. In campaign after campaign we have put boots on the ground, gone door-to-door to get out the vote, run phone banks and raised money to secure this vision.
>
> Now this vision has come back to haunt us.
>
> Time is running out: Congress wrote this law; we voted for you. We have a problem; you need to fix it. The unintended consequences of the ACA are severe. Perverse incentives are already creating nightmare scenarios.
>
> On behalf of the millions of working men and women we represent and the families they support, we can no longer stand silent in the face of elements of the Affordable Care Act that will destroy the very health and wellbeing of our members along with millions of other hardworking Americans.
>
> We continue to stand behind real health care reform, but the law as it stands will hurt millions of Americans including the members of our respective unions. We are looking to you to make sure that these changes are made.

That letter was sent to Senator REID and Representative PELOSI to explain why things very definitely need to be done to this legislation. Those are not people with known conservative credentials. They are known for their views of being progressives, liberals, and people looking out for the middle class. They find much fault with this Affordable Care Act, and then some wonder why there is so much concern being expressed by Members of the Senate about why this should be defunded. All of this adds up to what is being said by the people who supported the passage of the health care reform act, which is constituents, employers, and even unions.

Let's take this a step further. Let's look at the economic researchers. In March the Federal Reserve said the 2010 health care law is being cited as a reason for layoffs and slowdown in hiring.

> Employers in several districts cited unknown effects of the Affordable Care Act as reasons for planned layoffs and reluctance to hire more staff.

Here is another one: A recent National Bureau of Economic Research study examined the Affordable Care Act's taxes and its impact on labor. Basically, if we want employment to go back to prerecession levels, we must end the Affordable Care Act. The marginal rate increase due to the phaseout of premium subsidy and other implicit taxes in the Affordable Care Act result in a ''massive 17 percent reduction in the reward to working—akin to erasing a decade of labor productivity growth without the wealth effect—that would be expected to significantly depress the amounts of labor and consumer spending in the economy even if the elasticity of labor supply were small (but not literally zero). The large tax increases are the primary reason why it is unlikely that the labor market activity will return even near to its prerecession levels as long as the ACA's work disincentives remain in place.''

Isn't it something to have an organization as respected as this organization say that after all the work that went into the Affordable Care Act, its very existence is a disincentive to productivity and employment?

With all of these concerns from constituents, employers, unions, and even the Federal Reserve, we would think that would cause people to pause. But it is also a legitimate reason for all the discussion we have had this week on what is wrong with the Affordable Care Act and the defunding thereof.

On top of that, we keep hearing concerns about the readiness to move forward with the law at all.

In August the Government Accountability Office noted that testing of the government's ''data service hub'' to support new health insurance market places was more than a month behind schedule. The report said:

> Several critical tasks remain to be completed in a short period of time, such as final independent testing of the Hub's security controls, remediating security vulnerabilities identified during testing, and obtaining the security authorization decision for the Hub before opening the exchanges. CMS's current schedule is to complete all of its tasks by October 1, 2013, in time for the expected initial open enrollment period.

It is unclear whether national health insurance plans, which were supposed to give consumers choice and help drive down costs, will be available next year.

Under the health care law, the Office of Personnel Management is supposed to oversee the rates and contracts for at least two national plans in every State. According to news reports, the White House says there will be a national health plan in at least 31 States. Now, that is 31 States, that is not 50 States.

Perhaps the most telling sign that the Affordable Care Act as enacted isn't working is how much the administration has rewritten the law on its own—a highly dubious proposition. The Congressional Research Service recently noted that President Obama has already signed 14 laws that amend, rescind, or otherwise change parts of his health care. He has also taken five independent steps to delay, which he has been able to do on his own. So the Congress has passed or the President has signed into law 14 changes. I say that again for emphasis. Again, the CRS report noted that President Obama—totally separate of Congress—has delayed implementation of parts of the health care law five separate times.

Congress should be focusing our efforts on creating jobs and improving

the economy. Yet the Affordable Care Act is having the opposite effect. Our economy cannot handle any more job-killing regulations from Washington. It has been 4 years since the end of the recession. For a lot of Americans, it is as if the recession never ended.

While the unemployment rate now stands at 7.3 percent, which is bad enough, that only tells half the story. The fact is that this economy is so sluggish that only 63.2 percent of working-age Americans remain in the workforce. The labor force participation rate is at its lowest in 35 years. The unemployment rate is dropping primarily because people have simply given up finding work.

What we should be doing is supporting policies that lead to economic growth and job creation. We should be supporting things like the Keystone XL Pipeline. The initial permit for this job-creating energy project was submitted over 5 years ago. Despite overwhelming support in the Congress for the pipeline, the President has delayed the project for years to appease the extreme left. We have similar job-killing regulations coming out of the Environmental Protection Agency. We should be working to create an efficient progrowth Tax Code, one that rewards success rather than hinders it. We should be focusing on our long-term fiscal problems. We all know we are on an unsustainable path. Yet the longer we delay and kick the can down the road, the harder the job will become. All of the tax, health care, and fiscal uncertainty is acting like a headwind against our economy.

So I will support funding our government and avoiding a shutdown. I will support any effort to repeal the Affordable Care Act. I will support any effort to defund the same act. I will support any effort to delay implementation of that same act. I will support the Vitter amendment and any other amendment that puts 8,000 executive branch employees in the exchange. As I have said again and again, the people responsible for this law should have the opportunity to experience it just as the American people will. Perhaps then they, including this Senator, will then finally pay attention to the facts surrounding the implementation of the Affordable Care Act. I do so not out of personal animus for the President. I do so not to tear down the so-called signature achievement of the administration. I do so because I am looking at the facts. I do so because I am looking at what is happening in health care and with our economy.

Let's not stop thinking simply because someone uses the word ''ObamaCare.'' Let's not talk about shutting down the government. Let's turn down the hysteria and look at what is really happening with the health care and its impact upon the economy.

Just this week a Member of the Senate described our efforts to stop ObamaCare as ''insanity.'' I disagree. A vote to barrel ahead as though everything is just fine strikes me as far closer to the definition of ''insanity.'' A reasonable person can and should conclude that we should stop moving forward on ObamaCare, and that is how I will be voting this week.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Illinois.

Mr. DURBIN. Madam President, I see Senator SESSIONS is on the floor. It is my understanding Senator GRASSLEY used some Democratic time that was yielded to him for the beginning of his speech, and I ask that the Parliamentarian recapture that time for the Democratic side.

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

Mr. DURBIN. If Senator SESSIONS is prepared to speak now, I will wait.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Alabama.

Mr. SESSIONS. Madam President, I thank Senator DURBIN and appreciate his leadership and courtesy.

I want to speak for a few moments about the impact of the President's health care law, the Affordable Care Act. Although the law hasn't been fully implemented yet, this massive overhaul—Federal takeover, really—of the health care system is already proving to be anything but affordable.

My team on the Budget Committee, where I am the ranking member, did some research on this issue, and we want to know what the real costs would be and how it will play out in the end. So what I will share with everyone now are some very important facts that all of us need to know.

The President has repeatedly said we have a health-spending problem, but what he hasn't said is that this law will make that problem worse.

Last week actuaries from the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services—those are our top Federal health care people, CMS—issued a report, and its findings were unequivocal. This law will lead to higher health care costs. By 2022 the law is projected to increase cumulative health spending by $621 billion. That is the report from CMS. They basically work for the President of the United States.

Next year growth in the private health insurance premiums—the increases in our own private insurance premiums—is expected to accelerate to 6 percent from 3.2 percent this year, 2013. So the increase in premiums, CMS projects, will go up from 3.2 percent to 6 percent.

The Congressional Budget Office, CBO—they work for us here in the Congress—also released its annual long-term budget outlook last week. It concluded, 1, that Federal health care spending will ''grow considerably in 2014 because of changes made by the Affordable Care Act . . .'' They says the health care law is by far the single biggest factor driving the growth in Federal health care spending over the next decade—accounting for 53 percent of projected growth.

So our own government agencies are finding—which most Americans knew, despite promises to the contrary that were repeatedly made when it passed on Christmas Eve after it was rammed through this Senate—that this bill can't be done without increased costs, and government agencies are making that statement today. It is not my opinion, it is what our own agencies say.

Democrats have repeatedly complained that the law would bend the cost curve. The President said it would slow the growth of health care costs for our families, our businesses, and our government. That is what he promised. He said it would ''slow the growth of health care costs for our families, our businesses, and our government.'' Democrats—pushing the law, against the wishes of the American people, in 2009—claimed the law would not add to our deficit and would improve our Federal balance sheet, our budget situation. The President promised he would not sign a plan that ''adds one dime to our deficits now or any time in the future.'' That is an unequivocal promise. It sort of reminds me of the promise ''read my lips, no new taxes.'' Surely a colossal misrepresentation of the debt impact of a gargantuan government takeover of health care is a serious matter.

The nonpartisan actuaries at the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services, CMS, project that this law will increase health care spending as a share of our total economy. In other words, the law bends the cost curve in the wrong direction. It bends it alright, but in the wrong direction.

We need to understand how the Democrats were able to assert that their plan was financially sound, which they insisted on repeatedly, as we went through weeks of debate on this matter. This is how. This is very important, I say to my colleagues. Senators do not understand this fully and Congressmen do not understand this, and I don't think the American people fully understand it. The Democrats' claims about the fiscal impact of the health care law were based on monumental accounting maneuvers and multiple other gimmicks.

Before the law passed, the Congressional Budget Office warned that the law would ''maintain and put into effect a number of policies that might be difficult to sustain over a long period of time.''

That is careful language from our accountants at the Congressional Budget Office. I am sure they were pressured not to say that. At that time, both Houses of Congress were controlled by our Democratic colleagues, with 60 votes in the Senate. They warned us that the law would ''maintain and put into effect a number of policies that might be difficult to sustain over a long period of time.'' Isn't that true.

CBO and the CMS Actuary also highlighted that hundreds of billions of dollars in Medicare savings were double counted.

We need to understand this. This is a key point we need to understand. I made an inquiry to them. I made an inquiry to them late in December 2009. I got the letter from them the night before the Christmas Eve vote in the Senate to pass ObamaCare—on December 23—and I wanted and insisted that we get a clear answer on the question involving approximately $500 billion in Medicare savings, which I contended was double counted.

They were claiming they were going to use this money to strengthen Medicare and they were also claiming the money was available to fund ObamaCare. Can we do both with the same money? If we are confused about that issue, if we can't understand that issue, now we can begin to understand why this country is in such disastrous financial shape.

This is what the CBO responded by saying on the night of December 23:

The key point is that savings to the HI trust fund—

that is Medicare—

under PPACA—

that is the Affordable Care Act—

would be received by the government only once, so that they cannot be set aside for future Medicare spending and, at the same time, pay for current spending on other parts of the legislation or on other programs.''

How simple is that?

They go on:

To describe the full amount of HI trust fund savings as both improving the government's ability to pay future Medicare benefits and financing new spending outside of Medicare would essentially double-count a large share of those savings and thus overstate the improvement in the government's fiscal position.

Right before the vote, they said, in effect, you are double-counting this money and you can't use the money simultaneously to benefit Medicare, which is where the money is, as well as use the money to fund ObamaCare, or a new health care plan, or any other policy. This is so basic.

The next spring, in March of 2010, CBO estimated that without this double counting, the health care law increases the deficit over the first 10 years and the subsequent decade. Under the conventions of accounting, it would appear we could have this health care plan, at least for 10 years, and it would appear that it reduces the Federal deficit, but that is because of the conventions of a unified budget accounting. The money that comes into Medicare—the money that is saved by cutting Medicare providers—is Medicare money. It is not the Treasury's money to spend on a new health care program. It is Medicare's money.

So because it looks as though in the short run we have an advantage, they were able to count it and say, Well, money coming in is equal to the money going out, but they forget that all of the people paying into Medicare off their FICA and off their checks each week are going to draw that out in the long run from this trust fund. Everybody who is paying in is going to draw out all of that money, and more, because it is unsound actuarially.

If my colleagues want to see other gimmicks, look at the CLASS Act Program which they counted on to produce $70 billion in premium revenue over its first ten 10 years as enrollees began paying premiums into the system. The program was so actuarially unsound that the Secretary of HHS had to notify Congress, as she was required to do, that there was ''no viable path forward'' to implement the CLASS program. With that decision, and a lot of pressure from some of us in Congress, nearly 60 percent of the Democrats claimed deficit reduction in the first 10 years disappeared. We had to eliminate that. So that amounted to 60 percent of the so-called surplus that would be produced by the legislation. Those savings from the CLASS program were not real and should never have been counted in the first place.

The Wall Street Journal called the CLASS Program ''a special act of fiscal corruption.'' One of our Democratic Members—actually, the chairman of the Budget Committee at the time, Kent Conrad—said it was a Ponzi scheme. In the first 10 years, the numbers looked good, but over a period of time the money drawn out was going to be far greater than ever was put in. They claimed to produce $70 billion in assets for America when over the lifetime of the program it was a devastating, unsound program that if a private insurance company had tried to offer it and promote it in that fashion, I am sure someone would have gone to jail. Absolutely unsound financially.

Eventually, Congress had no choice but to repeal the CLASS Act, this bankrupt entitlement program, as part of the fiscal cliff bill at the end of last year. But the case of the CLASS program is but a sign of what is to come under the rest of the health care law.

While the American people always knew this health care bill would never pay for itself, they did not fully understand how the President and his supporters could insist otherwise. I wish I had been able to better explain at the time. I tried, but at the time I was not successful in penetrating the media and the administration's view that the bill would create a surplus for America. Maybe we could have stopped the legislation from being rammed through Congress if we had been more effective on that point. But the facts are crystal clear now.

A report issued by the Government Accountability Office—that is our independent GAO—in February of this year, at my request, revealed that under a realistic set of assumptions, the health care law is projected to increase the Federal deficit by 0.7 of the entire GDP over the next 75 years, an amount that is equivalent to $6.2 trillion in today's dollars. So it would add $6.2 trillion in unfunded liabilities to the United States of America over the lifetime of the program, over the next 75 years. This estimate excludes debt service or interest on the debt caused by the shortfall.

This is an enormous sum, $6.2 trillion. Let's put it into context. We all know Social Security is financially unsound. We are in a desperate effort now to figure out ways to find the money to make Social Security sound so retirees can know they are going to get their benefits in the future. We all know it must be fixed. At the time this health care law was enacted, the 75-year unfunded liability for Social Security was $7.7 trillion. In passing this bill, we add almost as much unfunded liabilities over the next 75 years to the U.S. Government as Social Security. Instead of putting Social Security on a sound path, this bill added another $6.2 trillion in unfunded liabilities to our debt that is almost as large as Social Security's liabilities.

It is a monumental problem we have created for ourselves. We have dug the hole deeper financially, which is the worst thing we could be doing. The first thing we should do is stop digging.

This finding seems to strike a nerve with some supporters of the law, so much so that they tried to attack me and argue with the GAO, but attacking the messenger doesn't change the facts. The GAO report is crucial. It clearly answers the question. It sank any validity to the President's claim that his plan would not ''add one dime to our deficits now or at any time in the future, period.''

Health care economist Christopher Conover at Duke University explained that the Government Accountability Office's report did not ''cook the books'' or use ''wacky assumptions.'' According to Professor Conover, GAO's assumptions in this more plausible scenario are a ''carbon copy of those used by the Congressional Budget Office, the Medicare trustees, the Treasury Department, and the Medicare Actuary in their own independently derived long-term budget projections.''

Independently derived long-term budget projections are the techniques that were used in the GAO report, and they found $6 trillion added to our debt.

So despite what we were told by the proponents of this law, the truth is that the President's health care law will further increase the cost of health care, it will add to our already unsustainable deficits and debt, and, if fully implemented, would forever alter the relationships not only between patients and their doctors but between the American people and their government. Period.

It has been 3½ years since its passage, and every day we learn more about how the law is harming Americans. Here are some of the important facts: Jobs. Part-time is the new normal. Seventy-seven percent of the jobs that have been created over the last year have been part-time.

The Investor's Business Daily has kept a running list of employers who

are cutting hours and staff levels because of ObamaCare. Currently, the IBD tally of businesses, including large firms, affected by ObamaCare is 313. This list includes the University of Alabama, which announced it was capping the number of hours students could work for the university because of ObamaCare.

Remember, I just indicated 77 percent of the jobs created this year, since January—and it hasn't been that large a number—are part-time jobs, and every economist tells us without any doubt that the President's health care law is driving those decisions by businesses. It is unprecedented. We have never seen this kind of trend.

The president of the United Food and Commercial Workers Union, Joseph Hansen, an original supporter of the law, recently said that ObamaCare would have a ''tremendous impact as workers have their hours reduced and their incomes reduced.''

ObamaCare penalizes hard work.

According to a new paper by Casey Mulligan, an economics professor at the University of Chicago—a premier economics department—the marginal tax hikes included in ObamaCare add up to a 17-percent reduction in the reward for working for median income families. This penalty American workers will take will essentially, he says, erase all gains in labor productivity made over the last decade.

This health care law has also led to the loss of health insurance coverage.

On Wednesday, the Wall Street Journal reported that the largest security guard provider in the United States—Securitas—will stop offering health insurance because of ObamaCare.

We hear that over and over again. This report is in addition to other major companies that employ millions of Americans. These companies include Darden Restaurants—owner of Olive Garden and Red Lobster—Home Depot, and Trader Joe's.

Small businesses and their workers will be penalized.

Democratic colleagues have claimed that most firms are not subject to ObamaCare tax penalties because they have less than 50 workers and are therefore not subject to the employer mandate penalty. But it is not an accurate statement. ObamaCare includes a nondeductible fee on insurance providers that the CBO has warned will get passed back to small business owners who pay for the health insurance of their employees. It is another tax on companies that provide health care to their employees.

I recently received a letter from a small business owner in Wetumpka, AL, Leesa Williams of Lee's Auto Repair, to let me know she is already being subjected to this tax even though her business has only 11 employees. She wrote to warn me that if the fee continues, she will be forced to reevaluate the offer of insurance to the small number of people at her repair company.

Costs are increasing, premiums are rising, and millions of Americans will lose the coverage they have today. Workers are having their hours—and their paychecks—reduced. Its countless regulations are stifling job creation and adding uncertainty to the already fragile economy.

The State director of NFIB/Alabama—a small business group in Alabama—says that Washington is doing a ''lousy job'' of keeping small businesses informed about the law and it will do real damage to them.

So where will it end? When will we save ordinary Americans and the American economy from this oncoming train wreck?

The administration has taken five steps already to delay the implementation of important parts of this law pertaining particularly to powerful interest groups that are pushing for delays and changes and relief. Many of them are getting it—but not John Q. Citizen. Big businesses unilaterally have been given a break from the law for at least 1 year. The Administration is considering a carve-out for Big Labor.

We need to be considering the overall impact of the law on our economy, on jobs, on the length of hours that Americans are working. We need to consider that.

The President's health care law will worsen, not improve, our fiscal outlook. That is clear. It is hurting our economy right now. It is clear. It is harming millions of Americans right now, and it is growing the size and scope of government in a huge leap forward.

Congress must permanently repeal this unworkable law and start over with health care reform that will actually reduce costs and not hurt everyday Americans in a way that is in the classical American tradition of responsibility and limited government.

I wish through this budget and continuing resolution process we could have forced a real debate on this health care law. It is absolutely clear that the leadership in this Senate is stonewalling and refusing to even acknowledge these problems, will not allow amendments or legislation to be brought up and voted on that would fix this law and make it better and help the American economy.

So this has been an effort by Senator CRUZ and others, and I think everybody on our side is committed to engage in this and to force changes because it will not be, it looks like, accepted voluntarily. There is no consensus that we should even talk about it. Indeed, it is the position of the majority that we will not allow a full and open debate about the way to fix the problems with this law.

So the American people, I hope, will continue to relay their views to the Members of this body, and as time goes by we are going to confront this legislation. We are going to be able to force the ability of the American people to have their voices heard in this body.

I thank the Chair and yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Ms. BALDWIN). The majority leader.

Mr. REID. Madam President, as I have indicated for the entire week, each day that goes by, each hour that goes by, each minute that goes by, we are that much closer to a government shutdown. I have been told that the House needs more time to work on this. They are saying that maybe what we need is an extension of the CR.

The stock market, the financial community, the Business Roundtable, the U.S. Chamber of Commerce—all of America—80 percent of the American people, including 75 percent of Republicans, think what is going on, not taking care of the finances of this country, is absolutely wrong. There is no reason to stall this.

So I ask unanimous consent that at 6:30 p.m. today there be 1 hour of debate, with the first 40 minutes equally divided between proponents and opponents of the motion to invoke cloture and the last 20 minutes reserved for the two leaders, with my having the final 10 minutes, and Senator MCCONNELL would speak before me, if he so chooses; that upon the use or yielding back of time, the Senate proceed to vote on the motion to invoke cloture on H.J. Res. 59; that if cloture is invoked, all postcloture time be yielded back; the pending Reid amendment No. 1975 be withdrawn; that no other amendments be in order; that the majority leader be recognized to make a motion to waive applicable budget points of order; that if a motion to waive is agreed to, the Senate proceed to vote in relation to the Reid amendment No. 1974; that upon disposition of the Reid amendment, the joint resolution be read a third time and the Senate proceed to vote on passage of the joint resolution, as amended, if amended; finally, that all after the first vote in this sequence of votes be 10-minute votes and there be 2 minutes equally divided between the votes.

I will alert everyone, if we get this agreement, it means we would have up to four votes starting around 7:30 this evening. The House would get the bill probably tonight or in the morning, as soon as it can be processed.

There would be a vote on cloture on H.J. Res. 59, a motion to waive budget points of order, the Mikulski-Reid amendment No. 1974, and passage of H.J. Res. 59, as amended, if amended.

That is my request.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection?

The Senator from Utah.

Mr. LEE. Madam President, reserving the right to object, if we were to vote tomorrow, if we were to have these votes tomorrow, that would represent the product of waiving two separate 30-hour periods—one in connection with the motion to proceed, the other in connection with the cloture vote on the bill.

The American people are paying attention to this. The American people

are watching this. A lot of them have expected this might occur Friday or Saturday.

So I ask the question, would the majority leader be willing to modify the request slightly, with the same provisions in place but with the votes to occur during tomorrow's session of the Senate?

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Does the majority leader so modify his request?

Mr. REID. Madam President, I appreciate my friend's request to modify my unanimous consent request. But my response to that—reserving the right to see if I would accept that—is this: Everyone in America—everyone—knows what the issues are before this body.

The Mikulski-Reid amendment we are going to be required to vote on is pretty simple. It says there will be nothing dealing with ObamaCare. We have changed the date to November 15 from December 15, and we have gotten rid of the ''pay China first.'' That is it. These so-called anomalies—I have met with the Republican leader. Staffs have gone over that—no problems with that.

So this is an effort to stall, and I do not know why—an effort to stall. It is absolutely unfortunate because, I repeat, every minute that goes by is 1 minute closer to a government shutdown. Because when we finish this, we then have to have the American people focus on whether we are going to have a debt ceiling, whether we are going to again crash the economy, as we did the last time that threat came.

Maybe someone thinks they can come with their great speaking ability tomorrow and change people's minds. Everybody in this body knows how the votes are going to go. This is going back to the House of Representatives. The House of Representatives has said—they have said publicly and they have said privately—they are going to send something back to us.

I want to make sure, if they do that, we have time to process it. Stalling until tomorrow means they are not going to get it until Sunday. We would try our utmost to get it to them tonight, Friday, rather than sometime late Saturday or even maybe—well, we could get it to them sometime Saturday. They need time. Is this some kind of a subterfuge to close the government, because that is what is going to happen. We are not the House of Representatives. We have rules here that take a while for us to get places. I understand my friend from Utah says that we have two 30 hours and now we are moving this more quickly than the rules require.

Madam President, what the American people see in the Senate—this new Senate—is everything is a big stall: Never do your work now. Wait until tomorrow. Maybe I will give this great speech that will turn the world around.

This is senseless. How many times do we get the American people—80 percent of them—agreeing on anything? They think what is going on in this big stall is bad for the country—and it is.

So I do not accept the modification. If there is an objection to this, if there is an objection to my request, I will work it out with the Republican leader as to what time we are going to do this.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection?

Mr. LEE. Madam President, reserving the right to object.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Utah.

Mr. LEE. Madam President, we have been willing to compromise. The offer that was made by my colleague, the junior Senator from Texas yesterday, from the floor represented a significant compromise. Significantly, I believe it was the Senator from Nevada, the majority leader, who objected to a unanimous consent request made yesterday by the Senator from Texas to proceed with having these votes tomorrow.

This still represents a significant compromise offer—a compromise offer that consolidates, collapses two separate 30-hour periods required by the rules. This is not an unreasonable request. Moreover, I am not understanding what it is about having a vote tomorrow morning instead of tonight that would make a difference between being able to get something to them tomorrow, if we pushed it out, versus Sunday.

Mr. REID. Madam President, I am not going to dwell on this because I want to yield to the Senator from Tennessee, but I do wish to say this. It is as obvious to me—and it is as obvious to me as it is to a kindergarten student—they did not want a vote yesterday. The big speeches we heard about how if you voted for cloture, you would vote to extend ObamaCare—they turned around and voted for it.

This is a big charade that is not getting them where they need to go. They want to stop ObamaCare. They want to do everything again. They did not even want a vote on cloture yesterday. Of course, they wanted to skip that and just go a couple days so they could talk longer.

People are tired of talking. They want us to get something done. The government is near the time that it will close. As I said this morning, a woman who works for the U.S. Park Service came to an event I had. She lives in Boulder City, NV. She and everybody who works there are afraid they are going to lose their jobs. They know what happened last time. They were laid off for 29 days and did not get paid for it.

So I yield to my friend from Tennessee.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Tennessee.

Mr. CORKER. Madam President, I wonder if it would be appropriate if I were to ask the Senator from Utah a question, if he would take a question.

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

Mr. CORKER. This has been a rather confusing week, I know. I do not think ever in the history of the Senate have we had a 21-hour filibuster and then the persons carrying out the filibuster voted for the issue that they were filibustering.

I do not think that has happened in the history of our country. I just want to make sure I understand. I was just over at the House. I talked to Members of leadership there. They would like to get the piece of legislation from the Senate over there as quickly as possible so they could respond.

I think all of us on this side would like to see some changes to the CR, changes that we believe to be good policy. Over on the House side, we have a majority of Republicans. I know they would like to send back to us some changes that I think many of us would support.

In talking earlier with the Senator from Texas, it is my understanding that the reason he does not want to send the bill over to the House, which could possibly put in place some very good policies for us here, is that he wants the American people and the outside groups that the Senator has been in contact with to be able to watch us tomorrow.

I am just asking the question: Is it more important to the Senator from Texas and the Senator from Utah that the people around the country watch this vote or is it more important to us that we have a good policy outcome from our standpoint and actually have a body that has a majority of Republicans to be able to react and send back something of good policy?

This is confusing to me because I know the leadership there wishes to be able to respond as quickly as possible. But I am understanding the reason we are waiting is the Senators have sent out press releases and e-mails and they want everybody to be able to watch. It does not seem to me that is in our Nation's interest, nor is it, candidly, in the interests of those who want to see good policy on the conservative side come out of the CR. I wondered if the Senator would respond to that.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Texas.

Mr. CRUZ. Since the Senator from Tennessee has made reference to me, I ask unanimous consent that I might engage in a colloquy with the Senator from Tennessee and the Senator from Utah.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection?

Mr. REID. We need a reasonable time. I would be happy to, but this is not going to be another long performance.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. How long do the Senators wish to engage in a colloquy?

Mr. CRUZ. I cannot imagine it would extend beyond 10 minutes.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection?

Without objection, it is so ordered.

Mr. CRUZ. Madam President, I appreciate the comments of the Senator

from Tennessee supporting the majority leader.

Mr. CORKER. I am supporting the House of Representatives.

Mr. CRUZ. I know the Senator from Tennessee is learned on Senate procedures. I know he must have made a misstatement when he, moments ago, suggested that those of us who participated in the filibuster the other day somehow changed our position in voting for the motion to proceed.

A reason I know the Senator from Tennessee is mistaken is because during the course of that filibuster, I explicitly stated I support the motion to proceed. I stated that 1 week before the filibuster, repeatedly. I have always stated that the vote on the motion to proceed, the vote on cloture to the motion to proceed was going to be unanimous. Indeed, I would note I offered a unanimous consent request during that filibuster that we vitiate the cloture and all agree to proceed because everyone in this Chamber—I said I expect the vote to be unanimous—everyone in this Chamber wants to proceed to this bill.

The Senator from Tennessee being learned in Senate procedure knows that there is a big difference between that vote on Wednesday, which I might note, when the vote tally was done there for Republicans, I put my—not only did I vote yes early, but I put my recommendation for every Republican to vote yes because, of course, we should get on the bill.

The vote tomorrow on cloture on the bill is a very different bill. I know the Senator from Tennessee is quite aware of that. The vote tomorrow is a vote to cut off debate on the bill. So as I said during the filibuster 2 days ago, as I have said for weeks, it is the vote tomorrow, cloture on the bill, that matters because anyone voting tomorrow in favor of cloture is voting in favor of granting the majority leader the ability to fund ObamaCare.

I know my friend from Tennessee understands that. So I am sure his statement suggesting that the vote on the motion to proceed meant anything other than what it obviously meant, I know that was a statement in error.

Mr. CORKER. Actually, I appreciate this opportunity. What we have before us is a bill that defunds ObamaCare. It is the bill the House has sent over. So the Senator is right. Tomorrow's vote is a vote to end debate in support of exactly what the House of Representatives has sent over. That is confusing to a lot of folks, but you are exactly right. The House has sent over here policy that I actually support; that is, defunding the health care bill because of the damage it is creating to our country.

I wish the CR number was a little number. I wish it was at 967 instead of at 988. But that is exactly right. So we are going to be cutting off debate on a bill that the House Republicans have sent over to us. So the Senator is exactly right. That is an important vote. That is a vote in support of the House. Something in addition. Supporting the House would be getting whatever we are going to do back over to them so they are not jammed. But it is my understanding again, relative to this vote tonight happening tomorrow instead, is that my two colleagues whom I respect have sent out e-mails around the world and turned this into a show, possibly, and, therefore, they want people around the world to watch maybe them and others on the Senate floor, and that is taking priority over getting legislation back to the House so they can take action before the country's government shuts down and, by the way, causing them possibly to put in place again some other good policy.

Mr. CRUZ. I appreciate the comments of my friend from Tennessee. I would note that he suggested this is confusing. I guess I do not think it is all that confusing. The Senator from Tennessee says a vote in favor of cloture is a vote in favor of the House bill and in favor of defunding ObamaCare. If that is the case, then the question I would pose to my friend from Tennessee: Why is majority leader HARRY REID going to vote the same way you are proposing to vote? Why is every Democrat in this Chamber going to vote the way you are proposing to vote? If this is a vote in favor of defunding ObamaCare, is it the suggestion of the Senator from Tennessee that the majority leader and the Senate Democrats are confused about this vote?

Mr. CORKER. I would respond that after a 21-hour filibuster yesterday, the Senator voted in favor of the thing he is filibustering and Senator HARRY REID joined the Senator in that too. So it seems to me they are very similar.

Mr. CRUZ. Does the Senator from Tennessee dispute that the vote Wednesday was a vote to take up the bill; whereas, the vote tomorrow will be a vote that will do two things—if there are 60 votes. If enough Republicans cross the aisle and join majority leader HARRY REID and the Democrats, it will, No. 1, cut off all debate, and it will—No. 2, what makes the vote tomorrow so significant is the majority leader has already filed an amendment.

That amendment guts the House continuing resolution and funds ObamaCare in its entirety. Given that that amendment is pending, and if cloture is invoked that amendment can be passed with 51 votes. Does the Senator from Tennessee disagree that once cloture is invoked, HARRY REID, the majority leader, will be able to fund ObamaCare with 51 votes?

Mr. CORKER. I agree the Senate rule that is in place allows postcloture votes. That 51-vote majority has been there for decades and generations. It is the same rule we have operated under for decades.

Let me just ask this question: We have a bill before us that I support, I think the Senator from Texas supports, the Senator from Utah supports, I think. So my question is: We have a bill that we support. The rules of the Senate have been here for decades, for generations, and for centuries, in many cases. Is the Senator thinking the House of Representatives would like for us to vote against cloture on their bill?

If you think that is what they wish for us to do, why is it that they are already developing language and legislation to send back over? It seems to me they have already indicated they view this strategy as a box canyon because they understand the Senate rules. It looks to me as if they are already developing language to send something back over because even though we are in the Senate—I know all three of us are relatively new—somehow or another they knew the Senate rules before they sent it over.

So I am a little confused. Tell me what happens if the Senate were not to invoke cloture on a bill that we support? What then happens? I would like to understand.

Mr. CRUZ. I appreciate that question from my friend from Tennessee. There are several pieces of it. One, he asked: Would the House Republicans like for us not to invoke cloture? I can tell the Senator this morning I spoke to over a dozen House Members who explicitly said: It would be fantastic if Senate Republicans could show the same unity we did and vote against cloture because Majority Leader REID has filed an amendment to gut our language.

I would also note the Senator from Tennessee keeps expressing confusion. I have to admit, I do not think the American people are confused. I would ask the Senator from Tennessee, you agreed a moment ago, if I understood you correctly, that if 60 Senators vote in favor of cloture, majority leader HARRY REID will be able to fund ObamaCare in its entirety.

Let me ask the counterpart. If 41 Republicans stood together and voted against cloture, because we said we do not support the amendment that Majority Leader REID has filed to fund ObamaCare—when we told our constituents we opposed ObamaCare we meant it. So we are not going to be complicit in giving HARRY REID the ability to fund ObamaCare.

Would majority leader HARRY REID be able to proceed and fund ObamaCare if 41 Republicans stood together against cloture?

Mr. CORKER. The thing is, I think the Senator from Texas may be confused. We are not going to be voting on the amendment. We have the chance to vote on the amendment after the vote on cloture. The vote on cloture tomorrow is a vote on ending debate on a bill we support. The amendment that the Senator is talking about——

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The time for the colloquy has expired.

Is there objection to the unanimous consent offered by the majority leader?

Mr. LEE. Madam President, reserving the right to object, I requested to

modify the request made by the majority leader and he turned that down. In light of the fact that he turned it down, I object.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Objection is heard.

The assistant majority leader.

Mr. DURBIN. Madam President, what we just witnessed was an effort by Senator HARRY REID to move the votes—the critical votes—on keeping the government open to this evening. What we have just heard from the Republican side of the aisle is they want to stall and delay this even more.

It is not just a matter of losing a legislative day in the Senate——

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The time is still under the control of the Republicans.

Mr. DURBIN. How much time—I know there was time yielded by Senator REID to the Republican side for Senator GRASSLEY. How much time is remaining at this point on the Republican side?

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The alternating time occurs at 4:30 p.m.

Mr. DURBIN. At 4:30, then the Democrats are recognized?

The PRESIDING OFFICER. That is correct.

Mr. DURBIN. What time is it now? Would the Chair take notice?

The PRESIDING OFFICER. It is 4:29. Senators are reminded to address each other in the third person, not by their first and last names.

The Senator from Tennessee.

Mr. CORKER. Madam President, if I could, I would just like to say in response to my good friend from Illinois, it is not the Republican side asking to stall. We only have two Republican Senators who are wanting to push this off.

So I do not want that to be mischaracterized. If I could, I wish to say it is my understanding that the reason we are putting this off is because they would like for people around the country whom they have notified to be able to watch. So it is that process of making sure everyone watches that I think is slowing this down. It is not the entire Republican side. I think most Republicans—I know all Republicans other than two would actually like to give the House the opportunity to respond in an appropriate way.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The next hour is controlled by the majority.

The assistant majority leader.

Mr. DURBIN. Let me start by acknowledging what the Senator from Tennessee just said.

I have worked with Senator CORKER on so many issues, bipartisan issues, and I salute him for his efforts to try to find bipartisan solutions. What he said is indicative of the problem we face now.

Two Senators—and it is their right under the Senate rules—the Senator from Utah and the junior Senator from Texas, have decided that they wish to delay this another day. They want to stall this another day. It isn't only losing a legislative day; it is more.

Look how long it took us to bring up the House continuing resolution. If I am not mistaken, they voted on it last Friday. We are thinking about voting on it tomorrow, 7 days later.

It tells you that the Senate rules, even at their best, with one Member objecting, can mean that measures take a long time. Ordinarily, it means we waste time, but this time it is critically more important because the government will not be funded.

Tuesday morning, all across America we will not fund the government because of the actions just taken on the floor of the Senate by Senator CRUZ of Texas and Senator LEE of Utah. They are trying to slow this down and create a political crisis.

They are playing high stakes poker with other people's money. The victims of this political crisis will not be the Senators and House Members. It will be a lot of innocent people, a lot of workers across America, who only want to get up and do their work for the government to make this the greatest nation on Earth.

Some of them are risking their lives in uniform. They will be paid, but their paychecks will be delayed. What it means is they have to contact their wives and spouses back home Tuesday—if this delay by Senator CRUZ and Senator LEE continues—they will have to contact them and say: Honey, it may be a little difficult this pay period. It doesn't look like we are going to get a paycheck because Congress has shut down the government.

There are others too, all across America, thousands of them, doing their work for this government at the FBI and at intelligence agencies that will go dark. Why have we reached this point? Why do these two Senators—two Senators—think this is in the best interests of the United States of America?

We have heard reports from economists, this cannot help our Nation, shutting down the government and failing to extend the debt ceiling. We are going to find ourselves in a position where this economy is going to start to stall.

People will start searching their savings accounts and notice their investments are going down in value. Why? Because two Republican Senators insisted that we couldn't speed up this vote and move this process forward to solve this problem.

The best explanation they can give us is they have notified their friends in the media and those on the e-mail to stay tuned for Friday. Friday is going to be the big day, their big day in the Sun. So they are delaying our actions here for a full day so that they can get adequate publicity for what they are about to do.

This is not in the best interests of the Senate and it is surely not in the best interests of the United States of America.

I listened to Senator REID. He made an effort to come forward and expedite this process. There are people outside this door who warned us not to do that. They said: If you send this back to the House, it gives them time to do something.

Senator REID has said from the start: We will not be party to delaying this critically important decision. There is too much at stake. We are going to move this through as quickly as we can, and we have.

At this point now, it is on the shoulders of those two Senators, those two tea party Republican Senators, who have decided that they want to close down the government or at least come closer to running the risk of closing down this government.

That isn't in the best interests of dealing with the issues that face America.

My job on the Senate Appropriations Committee is to be the chair of one of the most important subcommittees, the Defense Appropriations Subcommittee. I never dreamed I would have this responsibility. But with the passing of a genuine American hero, Daniel Inouye of Hawaii, this mantel fell on my shoulders. Almost 60 percent of all domestic discretionary funds spent by the Federal Government go through this one subcommittee.

There is a lot of hard work involved in putting the appropriation together. But when you consider the responsibility we have, it is even more substantial. This appropriation supports our men and women in uniform and the Nation's intelligence agencies that keep our country safe.

I wish to state what a government shutdown is going to mean to them. A government shutdown is going to mean a lot of hardship. I mentioned earlier uniformed troops calling their spouses to say: We are not going to get our paychecks on time this month. Try to make do if you need it.

This is something totally necessary and something brought on by an action on the floor of the Senate just minutes ago by Republican Senators.

There are more than 700,000 civilian employees in the Department of Defense, and half of them will be sent home immediately Tuesday morning—sent home.

Men and women who work at military installations and in the Pentagon will be sent home from work. Over 80 percent of Department of Defense civilians work outside of the Pentagon, including 12,000 of them who work in my State. They will be given notice on Tuesday morning: You have to go home. Why? Because there was a promise made for some publicity on Friday by a couple of Senators.

That is unacceptable.

A substantial number of these hardworking men and women are going to be furloughed. They already face furlough because of a sequester. If we allow this government to shut down, once again, they will have to figure out

how to make ends meet. Men and women who were trying to keep us safe in this country, many of them risking their lives, are now going to be pawns in this political game. It is an unconscionable breach of faith.

The risk to national security imposed by a shutdown is not confined to the military. It will cripple our intelligence community. These men and women serve as our country's first line of defense. We rely on these agencies to warn us of threats, to prevent terrorist attacks, and inform leaders making critical, national security decisions.

The intelligence community workforce, overwhelmingly made up of civilians, the greatest portion of them will be furloughed because of a government shutdown, a government shutdown that is totally unnecessary brought on by the House Republicans and two Senate Republicans. This shutdown will be quick, and the principal agencies will largely go dark within 4 to 8 hours of a shutdown order.

In America, these intelligence agencies that keep us safe are going to go dark because of this political strategy. If the government shuts down, all DOD work will stop on weapons and equipment maintenance not directly related to war. Bases will not be maintained, but you will see a degradation of facilities. We will see massive disruptions all across the country.

The Rock Island Arsenal in my State is a critical arsenal that supports more than 54,000 Active, Reserve, and retired military. The arsenal is the largest employer in the Illinois-Iowa region with more than 7,500 employees and more than 70 Federal and commercial tenants. The facility adds $1 billion to the local economy, supporting 14,000 jobs in the region.

A government shutdown will throw production schedules at Rock Island into chaos as orders get cut back and civilians sit at home under furlough. I cannot imagine going to these men and women and saying: The reason you have had this furlough and can't come to work is because two Senators decided they needed some publicity on Friday. Putting the arsenal's capabilities at risk degrades the defense industrial base. It jeopardizes our national and local economy.

The same thing is true at Scott Air Force Base. In a shutdown, its 5,000 civilian employees would experience the same loss of pay as everybody else. Scott's 5,500 active duty military personnel and their families would have to get by on savings and reserves while they wait for reimbursement with later paychecks.

When we go through these lists—and the lists are long—one thinks how totally unnecessary it is. Senator REID has come to the floor repeatedly to tell you what the American people think. Eighty percent of the American people think this is foolish and wasteful. Seventy-five percent of Republicans have given up on this strategy.

Yet a handful of willful Members of the House and Senate decided they are going to keep going down this road. I hope they will have some revelations in the next few minutes or hours, maybe overnight. I hope they will reconsider what they have done, the risk they are putting this country in.

It is not appropriate, it is not fair. I have listened to them try to explain how they can have a filibuster for 21 hours and then turn around and unanimously vote for the next item up on business. It may be an argument that the Senator from Texas thinks he understands clearly. Most Americans don't understand what he was saying for 21 hours and then turning around and voting overwhelmingly to move forward on the bill.

I wish to make one thing clear before we go any further. ObamaCare as we know it is already funded. Senator HARRY REID is not going to be funding ObamaCare; it is already funded, and it will be. It will be under appropriations bills that we pass in CRs. This notion that he is going to somehow do something sinister—let me remind critics that we brought this to a vote in the Senate, one of the most historic votes, painful votes.

Senator REID may remember when our colleague Senator Ted Kennedy was brought here on the floor of the Senate to vote for the Affordable Care Act. The man was literally dying of cancer, but this meant so much to him that he came down here for the vote at great personal risk and sacrifice. It was great to see his smiling face come through that door again, but we knew we would never see him again and we didn't.

That is the kind of sacrifice that was made. The votes were taken. Then in the next presidential election there was a referendum for ObamaCare. The American people were clear. They reelected President Obama. They rejected Governor Romney's promise to repeal ObamaCare.

These Members, at least two of them, can't accept the verdict of history. They continue to want to fight this battle. As I have said, they are fighting it at the expense of a lot of innocent people across America, at the expense of some of the best workers in the world. Those in military uniform and those in the civilian capacity do a great job for us every single day.

Picking on them, deciding to make them the object of this political exercise, is beneath us as a great institution.

Let me close by saying this. I will give credit to Senator CRUZ when he was doing his 21 hours. I asked him point blank: So you want to eliminate the protection in ObamaCare that says that health insurance companies can't discriminate against children and families that have preexisting conditions?

He said: Yes, I do. I want to eliminate all of them.

I said: You want to eliminate the provision that says you can't limit the coverage in health insurance policies so people will have enough money for serious illness, cancer therapy and surgery?

I want to eliminate it all, he said.

You want to eliminate that protection for families to keep their kids on their own health insurance policies up to age 26—young people looking for jobs who may not have health insurance—you want to eliminate that too?

I want to eliminate every bit of it.

He was consistent—consistently wrong—because he fails to understand what working families across America face every single day, what 50 million uninsured Americans face with no protection, no peace of mind.

God forbid he ever spends a moment as the parent of a sick child without health insurance. I have been there. You never want that experience in your life for yourself or anybody else.

I asked Senator CRUZ to tell us about his own personal health insurance since he decided he is going to be the arbiter on health insurance for the rest of America and for Congress. He won't give me a straight answer on how he has his own health insurance for his family. I think he owes that to us. He has told us a lot about his great family—and there are some wonderful stories—but when it comes to this issue, he ought to tell us.

Where does he get his health insurance? Who pays for it? What is the employer's contribution? What is the tax deduction taken by your employer, if any, for your health insurance? These are legitimate questions.

He has raised these questions about millions of families across America. He said: They are just fine. We can do without ObamaCare.

Let us hear his explanation of how he protects his family when it comes to health insurance. I don't think that is an unreasonable question. After all, he is the one who raised the issue.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Delaware.

Mr. COONS. I wish to speak for a moment about manufacturing. As you know, I am passionate about manufacturing, about the good-quality jobs manufacturing brings to our communities.

What I am also passionate about is that this body needs to stop manufacturing crisis.

What we just heard in the last few minutes was an exchange between my friend, the Senator from Tennessee, and two of his colleagues, the Senators from Texas and Utah, that summarized that what has happened in this Chamber today is the extension of a manufactured crisis, a purely artificial extension that is continuing, as the Senator from Illinois said in great detail and with great insight, to put at risk our recovering economy, our men- and women-at-arms, and our Nation's standing in the world. This is a wholly manufactured crisis without purpose.

It seems to me in the 3 years I have been here in the Senate—it feels an awful lot like Groundhog Day. I was

sitting in that very chair presiding over this body as we were closing in on a government shutdown when I had only been here for a few months.

I have never forgotten getting a message from a constituent at home. Her husband was at that very moment serving our Nation flying Medevac missions in Afghanistan. I got a simple note:

Is it possible that because you all can't do your jobs that my husband and I won't be getting a paycheck next week while he does his job for our Nation overseas?

We have, in the 3 years I have been here, seen needless fights, a near default on our Nation's debt, a near defunding of our Federal Government's operation. Today we see not a difference of meaning but a difference purely of substance and style—purely of superficial style.

As the Senator from Tennessee pointed out, the objection to the majority leader's request that we proceed now to a vote was purely for the convenience of two Senators who have sent out a lot of press releases and who want more attention. We can't continue to play chicken with the American people, the American economy, and continuing the services of the Federal Government.

I know my colleague, the Senator from Louisiana, who is one of the leaders from the Appropriations Committee, is here to offer some insight and comments about the value of appropriations, about the great work our chair Senator MIKULSKI has led us in this year.

There are so many other ways that this manufactured crisis is just the latest in a series of disappointing failures to lead by a few of our colleagues. The chair has allowed us to go through subcommittee markups and full committee markups on 11 appropriations subcommittee bills. If those bills could be taken up and passed on this floor, we could fix a lot of the things that challenge our Nation.

I yield the floor to the Senator from Louisiana so she might inform this body about some of the important work that she, in her subcommittee on the Appropriations Committee, on which I am honored to serve, has been able to do this year.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Louisiana.

Ms. LANDRIEU. I thank the Senator for yielding for a question. I appreciate his leadership as an appropriator.

Senator MIKULSKI was on the floor earlier today, the leader of our committee and the debate about how much to spend and what we should spend our money on. Does the Senator understand that that could be done and it is done in the appropriations process? And if we could just get past this manufactured crisis we could actually accomplish what many Senators want to do, which is to discuss the level of spending? We can't even get there because we are stuck in a manufactured crisis by the Senator from Texas.

Is that the sense of my colleague as to where we are?

Mr. COONS. That is absolutely my understanding. My friend the Senator from Louisiana knows better than anyone that the role of the Appropriations Committee and its subcommittees is to perform oversight, to weed through programs in the Federal Government, and to strengthen and support those that are effective and making a difference, but to narrow or shut down or trim those that aren't. If we continue to lurch from crisis to crisis, from short-term continuing resolution to continuing resolution, we will never get that good work done.

Madam President, I welcome any further comments my colleague would like to make about what the Subcommittee on Homeland Security of the Appropriations Committee has made possible, and why that matters, what difference that makes to the people of Louisiana and of our country.

Ms. LANDRIEU. I thank the Senator, and let me, if I could, Madam President, say a few words about the bill I have the privilege and the responsibility of chairing—the Homeland Security bill. This is a $42 billion appropriations bill. I am very proud to say I have worked with my Republican colleague, the Senator from Indiana DAN COATS over the last 6 months to draft and fashion a bill.

In many public meetings, in public forums at the appropriations subcommittee level and at the appropriations full committee level, our bill was negotiated in good faith—Republicans and Democrats compromising over important issues such as: How many border agents should we have, how many security agents should we have on our border, how many detention beds can taxpayers afford, how many do the Republicans want, how many do the Democrats want, what are some of the important aspects of immigration reform and how do we build a technologically superior border that allows trade and commerce but keeps out terrorists and people who are undocumented and who do not have the proper certification to come into the country.

That is what we, who ran for public office, wanted to get here to work on, not to sit in an empty Chamber with people who, because they can't get their way 100 percent of the time, all the time, want to shut down the process.

So as chair of the Subcommittee on Homeland Security, I most certainly can add my voice to the appropriators and to Members who say: It is time to move on. So let us do so.

But before I get into the specifics, I wanted to say a word about an issue that is critical to Louisiana and to States such as Texas—Senator CRUZ's home State. You would never know this, because I don't think he said a word about this issue in the 22 hours he was on the floor, but I know a little something about Texas, my neighboring State. I know a lot about Mississippi, Alabama, and Florida, from the gulf coast. I have represented my State for now almost 18 years in the Senate and grew up along the gulf coast.

I want to make sure everybody understands that in 14 days there are going to be over 1 million people in the United States—many in Texas, many in Louisiana, many in Florida, some in Massachusetts, et cetera, et cetera, et cetera—who are going to basically see the value of their home, the equity in their home, go poof—poof. Whether their equity might have been $200,000 this week or $400,000 or $600,000 or $2 million, this is an equal opportunity destroyer.

This is because last year Congress passed the Biggert-Waters bill, which was supposed to fix the National Flood Insurance Program. It was supposed to fix it—make it sustainable, make it go from the red to the black, make the deficit go away, help the program to be more sustainable. I understand that. The problem is the way the bill was passed it is going to, in a few days, literally go poof for people who thought they had equity in their home because of a provision in the Biggert-Waters flood insurance bill.

That provision basically says this: When you put your home up for sale—when you sell your home—the grandfathered rate that was attached to your home for flood insurance is immediately dispensed with. So anyone selling their home who happens to have a subsidized flood insurance rate, which is lower than the private market, for good reason—which I will explain in a minute—their house becomes valueless.

Let me repeat this. This is not about flood insurance going up, this is not about losing your job, it is not about not being able to show up for work because the government shuts down, which is a big problem. But this is a real big problem for 1 million families because the house they have paid for, that they have lived in and thought they had some equity in so they could retire on that equity or send their kids to college is, poof, gone.

I would like to focus on fixing that problem. I know there are many people in Texas who would like it fixed as well, because when I go over there, I hear from them. When I go to Louisiana, and Mississippi, and Florida, I hear from people. But we can't even get to a flood insurance bill because we are on the floor talking about an issue that is completely manufactured.

This is not manufactured, ladies and gentlemen. The flood insurance issue is real. The flood insurance bill is a bill that actually passed and we have only 14 days to fix a part of it.

At 5 o'clock, in 5 minutes, I am going to a meeting in Senator MERKLEY's office, who is chair of a subcommittee, and we are going to try and work on this. But to do this we need cooperation. We need cooperation from all of our Members to say: Well, that might not be a problem in my State, but I can understand what Senator LANDRIEU is

saying and I can understand what some of the Republicans are saying. Let's see what we can do to fix this so people's equity does not vanish into thin air and cause lots of pain and suffering.

But as I say, we can't even talk about real issues because we have to talk about a manufactured crisis.

I see some of my colleagues on the floor, and I know they understand the chairman asked us to come and talk for a few minutes about our appropriations bills, so I will try to do this in 4 minutes, because when Senator MIKULSKI asks you to do something, you need to go ahead and do it. So I need to put this in the RECORD for my Homeland Security bill.

As I understand it, this government shutdown could happen because, as has been explained, we have two or three or four or five—not many—Senators who have decided to manufacture a crisis about the continuing resolution and paying our bills, which we owe.

Every responsible, nondeadbeat person in the world pays their bills, and I don't know why we can't. But anyway, because of that, the Homeland Security bill we have worked on, which has been negotiated, may I say, without disagreement—I mean, this is kind of unheard of. Let me say, we had disagreements, but we worked them out. There were different views but we worked them out. We had big things to work out, such as this big new project being built in Kansas. I was not very supportive of it, but I had to listen a lot, I had to think, I had to negotiate, and I ended up putting a big project in this bill that I didn't 100 percent go along with, but I was convinced by colleagues for different reasons—and the White House weighed in, and others—to compromise.

The bottom line is I have a $42 billion bill that supports our borders, that keeps commerce going, and that keeps FEMA going. We have a terrible flood to deal with in Colorado, and I see the Senator from Colorado and the Senator from Minnesota are both here, and they absolutely know what floods are all about. FEMA is trying to operate there. What do we tell people there on Monday? Sorry, we can't come help you get back into your home, get your children in school, get this hospital built again?

We have phones to answer, we have people to serve, we have borders to secure, we have trade to move next week, and shutting down the government is simply not what we should be doing. We should be fixing it, making it more efficient, saving money where we can, and serving the 350 million people in this country and around the world who depend on the American government to function.

In conclusion, let me say this. I had Marriott Corporation tell me today—Marriott, an excellent company, but conservative leaning from their top—Senator, would you please say, when you can, that the government is our biggest customer? When people think of government, they think only of government jobs. The Federal Government is the largest customer of Marriott Corporation, one of the largest corporations in the country. We buy a lot of goods and services from them. When we shut down, when we hesitate, when we don't operate with confidence, it affects every business in the world. If Marriott is going to take a big hit, imagine the hit smaller companies take, that can't take that hit or that break?

So on behalf of Marriott and on behalf of other companies that are going to get hit, please realize the government has a lot of impact on the private sector, and it is not fair to hurt our economy or any business—large, small, conservative, liberal, or moderate.

Last week, Mark Zandi of Moody's testified that a 3–4 week shutdown would reduce real GDP by 1.4 percent. This would be a devastating step backwards. In the second quarter of 2013, our GDP grew by 2.5 percent, more than doubling the 1.1 percent growth in GDP in the first quarter of 2013. And numerous studies have reported that, based on past experience, ''turning out the Federal government's lights'' would cost us $100 million each day. The hostage-taking approach of the House majority threatens such a shutdown and puts our economic viability at risk. We must do better.

A government shutdown would have devastating consequences on hundreds of thousands of people in Louisiana. Of the 31,000 Federal employees in my State, 18,000 would be temporarily furloughed by a shutdown. That is 58% of the Federal employees in my State that would be out of the job. More than 24,000 active Louisiana military and civilian personnel and 320,000 Louisiana veterans could see much needed paychecks and benefits delayed.

Social Security services would also be significantly disrupted, which would have major implications for the 860,000 social security beneficiaries in Louisiana. New claims wouldn't be processed and the social security help line, which many of our seniors rely on, would not be able to take calls.

In just 4 days during the 1995 shutdown, 112,000 claims for Social Security retirement and disability benefits were not taken and 800,000 callers were denied service on the Social Security Administration's 800 number. Constituents of mine, like Susan Crandall, rely heavily on the Social Security Offices in Louisiana. Ms. Crandall uses the Social Security Office in Alexandria as a lifeline. A government shutdown would force her to search for help elsewhere. For her and others living in my State, this just isn't feasible.

A shutdown would also harm Louisiana students. More than 7,800 Louisiana students rely on work-study programs and 4,600 receive Federal loans to help pay for school. If there is a government shutdown, colleges and universities across Louisiana would not be able to disburse these funds to students.

The Small Business Administration would stop processing new loans, preventing nearly 420,000 small businesses in Louisiana from getting the credit they need.

The Federal Housing Administration has helped almost 10,000 mortgage holders in Louisiana thus far this year. If we allow a shutdown to happen, the FHA would not be able to process new loans, leaving aspiring homeowners out in the cold. Many potential homeowners in Louisiana are already hesitant to purchase because of the fear of flood insurance going up, and this will only add to their stress.

One of the core missions of the Appropriations Committee—and of Congress at large—is to make sure our Federal government continues to operate soundly. By adopting the continuing resolution that the House passed last week, with its poison pills that defund the Affordable Care Act and play favorites with which bills we pay, we would be failing the American people. We need to do our work to make sure the Federal government remains open and continue to fund implementation of the Affordable Care Act. It is the law of the land. Anything less is ill conceived.

And let me just say this. Operating the government on continuing resolutions is a failure in itself. I am disappointed, as I know Senator MIKULSKI is too, that we find ourselves in this position. When we pass CRs, we put the Nation on autopilot and fly blindly. Instead of passing the 12 appropriation bills that set priorities and invest in America's future, we fund yesterday's priorities instead.

As the chairman of the Homeland Security Appropriations Subcommittee, I hear every day * * * firsthand how important it is to keep our country safe and secure are at stake. Within the past year, our Nation has experienced a substantial rise in diverse attacks. If DHS continues to be funded at the 2013 post sequester level, we would not be able to adequately address or respond to these events. For example:

While we were all horrified by how simple, homemade explosives could wreak such havoc at the Boston marathon this year, we saw how critical it was that law enforcement and first responders have the proper training and equipment to respond to these incidents.

Years of robust grant funding for our first responders paid off in this instance. However, under sequester, grant funding would be at the lowest level since DHS was formed 10 years ago. If a government shutdown were to occur, all activity intended to help build State and local resiliency would cease.

Our cyber networks are under constant attack. There are 6 million probes or attacks on U.S. government networks each day, and among the attackers are 140 foreign spy organizations. Let me share some recent examples. Earlier this month the Syrian

Electronic Army defaced the Marine Corps website and hacked into numerous print media websites. We also heard news reports of large-scale espionage acts perpetrated by a group of highly sophisticated hackers for hire operating in China. Cyber attacks breach our government, military, and private networks to steal information, including valuable corporate secrets. All of our combined Federal resources are needed to strengthen safeguards on our data and detect these malicious efforts before they can disrupt critical government and financial networks. Without the $108 million increase requested in fiscal year 2014 for cybersecurity, DHS would defer implementation of the intrusion detection system for civilian Federal programs, known as Einstein, by 1 year; and delay expansion of cyber-attack information-sharing with States, leaving 19 without access to timely data. A shutdown or continued sequester will threaten progress in this area.

In the wake of serious chemical plant incidents in West, TX and in Ascension Parish, LA, this summer, we are reminded that chemical safety and security is imperative, for citizens and first responders. In the hands of terrorists, chemical attacks could cause widespread devastation and loss of life. The DHS inspection program to prevent wrongdoers from gaining access to harmful chemicals has reduced risk by 40 percent. But there are still 4,300 facilities for which DHS has the responsibility to ensure a security program is completed and maintained. We cannot afford to delay this important work by underinvesting in it, but that is exactly what would happen under a sequester level.

The existence of thousands of poorly secured commercial radioactive sources globally poses an ongoing challenge to our national security. We continue to face the threat of a weapon of mass destruction or dirty bomb being detonated in one of our cities or ports. A radiological attack would incite mass panic, shut down our major transportation systems, and cause severe economic damage. We cannot afford to stand meekly by. The Department of Homeland Security program called Securing the Cities, which is a partnership with State and local governments, is designed to detect and prevent a nuclear attack in our highest risk cities. New York has been the test bed for this program over the past few years; but it is now expanding to other major cities—Los Angeles being the next location. We need to ensure that this expansion is funded, not suspended.

For 4 years in a row, the Department of Homeland Security has had to tighten its belt and operate with reduced funding. The impacts of sequestration have made it worse. Let me highlight just a few examples of why sequestration has been harmful and why it will be particularly damaging to DHS under a long-term continuing resolution:

The Coast Guard has operated its surface and air assets 25 percent below planned levels under sequestration. This has resulted in 35 percent reduction in drug seizures and a 22 percent reduction in interdiction of undocumented migrants.

Customs and Border Protection would not be able to hire any of the new officers for our air, land, and sea ports of entry requested in the fiscal year 2014 budget. This is bad for travel and trade. Travel volume to the U.S. is up 12 percent since 2009, and is expected to grow 4–5 percent in each of the next 5 years. In 2011, international travelers to the U.S. generated a trade surplus of $43 billion—that set a U.S. travel and tourism record. Without these new officers, we could once again see spikes in wait times during the spring at gateway airports such as New York, Los Angeles, Houston, Chicago, Dallas, and Miami. In fiscal year 2013 under sequester, wait times for arriving passengers at these airports rose over 4 hours on multiple occasions. We must ensure the United States is open for business, or else travelers will take their business elsewhere.

Similarly, CBP would not be able to sustain current operations in fiscal year 2014 because the agency will not have access to $110 million in fees collected under the Colombia Free Trade agreement. Without these funds, CBP would have to, No. 1, rely on furloughs of up to 16 days per employee to close the gap; No. 2, likely be forced to commence an agency-wide hiring pause for front-line personnel; and No. 3, fall below the Congressionally mandated staffing levels for CBP officers and Border Patrol agents. This will have the negative impact of longer lines at our ports, slower processing and inspection of food and other products entering our country, and fewer illegal aliens being apprehended and removed at our borders.

DHS would not be able to implement safeguards to prevent unauthorized release of classified information. Vulnerabilities in the existing system were highlighted in the Wikileaks releases and the more recent disclosures by Edward Snowden. There was no funding in fiscal year 2013 for this type of activity so DHS's classified data will not be adequately protected without fiscal year 2014 funding.

Critical infrastructure protection efforts would be hindered. For example, without the $34 million above the fiscal year 2013 sequester level, inspections of chemical plants to prevent weaponization by terrorists will be delayed. Funding to better coordinate Federal chemical programs—in the wake of the West, Texas facility explosion—will not be provided. Increases to prevent catastrophic impacts to critical infrastructure during manmade or natural disasters will be eliminated.

And lastly, on the administrative side, just last week DHS Undersecretary for Management, Rafael Borras, testified in front of the House Homeland Security Subcommittee on Oversight and Management about the difficulties of managing multiyear acquisition programs under a never-ending string of continuing resolutions. While I agree that is challenging, what is worse than a short-term spending bill at sequester levels, would be a government shutdown. Even a short lapse in funding has the potential to drive up costs across the entire DHS acquisition portfolio.

Because of these impacts, it is critical that we conference our fiscal year 2014 Senate bills with our House counterparts that we can address the weaknesses that continuing to operate at sequestration levels would entail. A conference would also ensure a necessary delay to flood insurance rate increases since the House and Senate Homeland Security bills contain identical language on this issue. Time and time again, Senators have heard from their constituents about the skyrocketing increases in flood insurance rates. Many homeowners throughout the United States will see their rates rise to unaffordable levels. For example, up to 2.9 million policies nationwide could see their previously grandfathered rates become absolutely unaffordable. While data for each homeowner is still incomplete, one resident in my State of Louisiana could see rates increase from $633 to over $20,000 per year. That makes homeownership unachievable for many Americans and traps others in houses that they cannot sell.

Exacerbating the damage caused by irresponsible funding levels under the sequester is the looming threat of a politically-motivated Federal government shutdown. While most—about 84 percent—Department of Homeland Security employees are deemed mission-essential during a shutdown, because they are military or law enforcement personnel or deal with critical safety or security issues, DHS like all other Federal agencies would be operating at a greatly reduced capacity. For example:

The Department of Homeland Security would not be able to maintain and operate E-Verify, the Internet-based system that allows employers to voluntarily determine the eligibility of prospective employees to work legally in the United States.

Vital research and development would be delayed. For example, funding to develop next generation screening technology for TSA would dry up. This means funding for the development of technologies to improve detection, lower false alarms, and decrease wait times at airports would end. Funding would also end for the development of countermeasures to biological and nuclear threats.

Preventative measures and preemptive planning efforts with State and local governments for natural and man-made events with FEMA and critical infrastructure experts will cease. This leaves communities less able to respond to catastrophic events in the middle of hurricane season, not to mention for no-notice events like

earthquakes or bombings such as those at the Boston marathon. A lack of preparedness will cost the Federal government more money in recovery efforts and lead to unacceptable and unnecessary loss of life.

Under a shutdown, law enforcement training would cease, including training conducted through the Federal Law Enforcement Training Center and the Secret Service's J. Rowley Training Center. This would impact CBP, ICE, Secret Service, the Federal Air Marshal Service, and would delay their ability to bring new officers and agents into operational service.

And as I noted earlier, while the majority of the frontline law enforcement personnel such as CBP's Border Patrol, Immigration and Customs Enforcement's investigative and detention officers, Transportation Security Administration aviation passenger screeners, FEMA disaster response personnel, and the U.S. Coast Guard will continue working under a shutdown, many of these employees live paycheck-to-paycheck. Since their biweekly paychecks would be stopped during a Federal funding hiatus, these women and men may not be able to pay their rent or mortgage or may have to reduce purchases of food or medicine for their families. An unnecessary government shutdown breaks faith with our heroes on the front lines, adversely impacting their morale and distracting them from their important and often dangerous duties. No one wants that.

We need to get our work done. We need to pass a clean continuing resolution that keeps the Federal government open and fully funds the Affordable Care Act. After that is done, we need to move to the harder task at hand—agreeing on a budget for fiscal year 2014 and finalizing bills so that our agencies have the appropriate funding for their critical missions—instead of lurching from one funding crisis to the next.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Delaware.

Mr. COONS. Madam President, I want to thank the Senator from Louisiana for her leadership of the Appropriations Subcommittee on Homeland Security.

We just heard a detailed description of how the Senator has worked in a bipartisan, thoughtful, and in a detailed and decent way—in a way that crafted a bill where there was compromise, where there was give and take, and where ultimately the bill that has moved through that subcommittee and full committee and should be ready for action on this floor meets the real needs of our Nation, of our homeland.

That bill provides resources and support whether for the State of Colorado, the State of Minnesota, the State of Delaware, or all over this country. And shutting the government down over a needless manufactured crisis between now and Monday is the height of irresponsibility.

Madam President, if I might, I will now yield for the Senator from Colorado.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Colorado.

Mr. BENNET. Madam President, I will be brief. I want to thank the Senator from Louisiana while she is here, not just for her words and for reminding us this isn't about who can scream the loudest on cable television, it is about the work that actually needs to get done in the Senate on behalf of the American people, but I also want to thank her for all the work she has done over the years with FEMA. It has made a big difference in my State already. They are working well with our local and State officials. We have a long way to go, and the last thing we need to worry about is whether the government is going to shut down.

Fortunately, because of the work the Senator and others did around here, the emergency part of this is going to continue to carry through, even if there is a shutdown. But there is a lot of uncertainty that is related to that. So while Senator LANDRIEU was here, I wanted to thank her for that.

I am sorry the Senator from Delaware has left the floor for a moment, because he has been holding it down and I wanted to ask him a question about his previous work. He was a county executive in Delaware before he was here. I was a superintendent of schools. I worked for the mayor. Senator KLOBUCHAR, who is here from Minnesota, was a district attorney. I think every one of us is completely perplexed by the hostage taking that is going on around this place.

I ask the Senator from Delaware, he was the county executive of a county in Delaware?

Mr. COONS. I was.

Mr. BENNET. I say through the Chair, does the Senator think that any county executive or mayor or local official in the Senator's State wouldn't be run out of town if they threatened the credit rating of their community for politics?

Mr. COONS. Absolutely. I might say to my friend from Colorado, I had direct experience with this. In the State of Delaware, folks expect us to balance our budgets and pass them on time, to deliver good services, but also to defend our credit ratings. The city and county and State in which I lived and served all enjoyed triple-A credit ratings. The folks in my communities understood that meant we could borrow money for building sewers, building roads, and building schools less expensively and sustain the quality of our community. Our business leaders and civic leaders understood that to put that at risk was reckless and irresponsible.

Yet for a manufactured crisis by a few Senators, we are facing the shutdown of this Federal Government a few days from now—and, I am afraid, just a few weeks later the possible default on the sovereign debt of the United States. No responsible elected official where I am from would do that.

Mr. BENNET. That is my point. I think we are dealing with something that is so far outside of the mainstream of what political actors, at least in my State who are elected who are Republicans or Democrats, would support. I think it is important for us to call attention to that because that is what we are dealing with.

I see the Senator from Minnesota is here, so my last observation. If one of us represented a State government that opened and closed its doors or threatened to open and close its doors every single year, I can assure you that businesses would look to do business in some other State, not in the State in which we work.

That is what we are doing to the United States of America right now. We have so much going for us. The innovators are out in the economy innovating. Natural gas is cheaper than it has ever been. We could build this economy if only a few actors in Washington would get out of the way.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. MARKEY). The Senator from Minnesota.

Ms. KLOBUCHAR. Mr. President, I would first like to acknowledge Senator COONS of Delaware for his leadership, and Senator MIKULSKI, the powerful head of the Appropriations Committee, who has put together a group this hour to talk about public safety and infrastructure, and what a government shutdown would mean and what sequestration means when it comes to the progress of this country.

We heard from Senators from different parts of the country. Senator LANDRIEU from the great State of Louisiana talked about the importance of FEMA. No one knows better than she does after Katrina what a government shutdown would mean for Louisiana.

Senator BENNET of Colorado was here, where right now they are experiencing the horrible aftermath of these floods.

Then we look at what happened in the State of Massachusetts with the Boston Marathon. What would have happened there if we were in the middle of a government shutdown and didn't have the resources we needed?

Do we want the head of the FBI worried about who he can lay off and who he can't? Or the head of the Alcohol, Tobacco, and Firearms that investigated that bombing in Boston—do we want them off looking at what are we going to do if we have a shutdown in the middle of that bombing? That is not what we want happening. That is not how this country runs.

I sat and watched the last hour of this debate, and I saw Senator CORKER come to the floor and do a fine job of explaining that it is not every Republican in this Chamber who is trying to slow this vote down so we don't even have it today. He focused on two Republicans who were doing that, and I think it is very important for the

American people to know that the Senate has tended to work in a bipartisan way. We want to move forward, we want to get this bill voted on, and we want to give a chance for the House to come back. No more delays. We need to get this done.

Much of the focus has oftentimes been: I want to shut down Washington. But my job today is to talk about what it means in our States. As someone who spent 8 years as the chief prosecutor for Minnesota's largest county, I know the pain of this shutdown would be felt by State and local officials, by State and local people, right down the line, and, not least of all, by the first responders and law enforcement officers who rely on Federal funding for everything from crime prevention to community corrections programs to drug courts, and to simply keeping cops on the beat.

There are some who are willing to hold these first responders hostage, there are some who are willing to hold our country hostage, to score political points. The fact is a government shutdown would be painful and it would be expensive. These men and women go to work every day protecting the people. While most people may run away from disasters, calamities, and tragedies, they bravely run toward them, and they do it selflessly—not because they are looking for fame or glory but because they are simply doing their jobs.

We in Washington have a responsibility to do our jobs. We have a responsibility to ensure that our cops and firefighters and EMTs have the tools to protect the public safely and effectively. We have a responsibility to pass a resolution that prevents the government from shutting down.

We simply can't afford another self-inflicted wound to our economy, as Senator BENNET was pointing out, especially not at a time when things are finally turning around. At 7.3 percent, our national unemployment rate is at its lowest point since December of 2008. In my State, it is at 5.1 percent. The housing market is bouncing back. Retail sales are up. So far this year we have added 1.5 million private sector jobs. We are not where we need to be, but we are headed in the right direction and we need to keep moving forward and not move backward. Yet here we are again, facing another manufactured crisis that threatens to shut down the government.

Last week, House Republicans sent us a continuing resolution they knew had zero chance of passing the Senate. When House Republicans passed a budget tied to defunding the Affordable Care Act, they decided they were willing to risk shutting down the government just to relitigate a law that both the House and Senate passed, the President signed, and the Supreme Court upheld.

Will there be changes to that law going forward? I am sure there will. There always are with large bills. But the answer is not to defund it on a must-pass bill.

Even Members of their own party agree this is the wrong thing to do. Senator MCCAIN has called defunding the health care law as part of the CR the height of foolishness and not rational. Even a poll conducted by the conservative Crossroads GPS, headed by Karl Rove, found that Independents overwhelmingly oppose shutting the government down to defund ObamaCare on a margin of 58 percent in opposition to 30 percent. That is Independent voters in a poll conducted by Karl Rove's group.

In the short term, a government shutdown lasting more than 1 week would have an immediate effect on economic growth, as the Federal Government would suspend all nonessential spending. Shutting down the government for 3 or 4 weeks would reduce real GDP by 1.4 percentage points in the fourth quarter. And a shutdown longer than 2 months would likely precipitate another recession.

My colleagues in the House like to talk a big game about reducing the deficit and doing what is fiscally responsible. Yet they are willing to mortgage our economy on a political gamble? Pardon me, but that is not how we define fiscal responsibility in my State.

Here is something else Minnesotans don't call fiscally responsible: closing our national parks, which generate billions of dollars in tourism revenues every year. If the government shuts down, so will all 368 National Park Service sites.

And how about the visa processing centers? During the 1996 government shutdown, more than 500,000 visa applications and 200,000 passport applications were put on hold. We might say, why would that affect me? It does. It affects jobs in the United States of America. In a State such as Minnesota where tourism is our fifth largest industry and the source of 11 percent of our private sector jobs, we simply can't afford to let that happen. We simply can't afford for this critical industry to be hamstrung by political posturing on the other side of the aisle in Washington.

In addition to the impact on our tourism sector, a government shutdown would also have serious repercussions for industries such as medical technology, something that Minnesota and Massachusetts share.

Without funding to keep the lights on at the Food and Drug Administration, the process for approving medical devices and other biotech products would grind to a standstill.

These are just a few examples of the industries that would be hurt by a government shutdown.

If we use the 1996 impasse as a guide, we can also expect to see delays in the Small Business Administration financing, a suspension of Federal Housing Administration insurance for people buying new homes, new patients denied access into clinical research trials at the National Institutes of Health. You heard correctly. If we can't reach a compromise, we will all feel the negative results.

Now I want to get back to the focus of my earlier remarks, and that is law enforcement programs. We must be willing to do the right thing for the safety of our people. When it comes to homeland security, counterterrorism, and Federal law enforcement, rest assured those protections will continue. But in the event of a shutdown, the Federal officers who continue going to work protecting the public from violent crimes, gangs, and terrorists won't be getting a paycheck. Instead, they will be getting an IOU. Basically what we will be saying to these people is: Thanks for putting your lives on the line. We can't pay you right now. And if you are lucky, maybe you will get backpay when Congress sorts this all out. Is that what we want to say to the people who showed up first at that Boston Marathon bombing, We have an IOU for you? I don't think so.

The strain on a shutdown on law enforcement would come at a time when agencies are already struggling to make ends meet in the wake of sequestration.

The new head of the FBI just talked about how sequestration would put him in a position to lay off 3,000 FBI agents. I don't think that is where we want to be in this country. These are cuts to some of the most successful crime prevention and crime-fighting programs out there.

Even more frustrating is that Chairman MIKULSKI and the Senate Appropriations Committee worked across party lines to draft spending bills for 2014 that would provide additional resources for grant programs important to law enforcement.

Under sequestration, the COPS Program has been reduced by $22 million compared to the funding level the Senate approved. Funding for drug courts has also been slashed, despite the fact that drug courts actually save money to the tune of $6,000 per person. For every $1 spent on drug courts, more than $3 is saved on criminal justice costs alone. And when you factor in other things such as costs to victims and health care, they can save up to $27 per person.

Local law enforcement also relies on Byrne grants, which have been cut by $20 million due to sequestration.

As a former prosecutor, I have always believed that the No. 1 job of government is to protect people. It is to keep people safe. It is to have safe roads and bridges. If we continue to cut, to delay, and deny critical funding for programs such as COPS and Byrne grants, we will be failing in this most basic duty, and I refuse to let that happen.

Instead of threatening critical services and our economy with poison pill partisanship, we need to focus on real solutions. This means agreeing to go to conference committee on the budget. For many months Senator PATTY MURRAY, the head of the Budget Committee, has been asking permission to

simply bring our Senate-passed budget to conference committee, where it can meet up with the House budget and where we can at least try to work out a long-term solution. Senator MCCAIN and Senator COLLINS have joined us in this call to be allowed to bring a long-term budget to a conference committee, but we have been met every step of the way with opposition from the other side. That is where we should be working these things out. Instead, we are on the floor today to try to end the brinkmanship on simply keeping the government going.

Secondly, we have another problem, and that is that our country will hit its legal borrowing limit as soon as mid-October. When this happens, we will be asked to do what Congress has routinely done 70 times over the past 50 years, and that is to pay our country's bills.

Let me be clear. This is about making good on commitments we have already made. This is about doing what regular Americans do every month when they pay their credit card bills.

As vice chair of the Joint Economic Committee and the chair on the Senate side, last week I held a hearing and released a report examining the economic impact of this brinkmanship. The results aren't pretty and they are based on history. Let's remember what happened the last time when we had a showdown on the debt ceiling in the summer of 2011: The United States experienced the cost of protracted brinkmanship on the debt ceiling. As Congress struggled with this issue, the Dow Jones dropped more than 2,000 points, and Standard & Poors downgraded the U.S. credit rating. Consumer confidence fell, and we were out over $1 billion in borrowing costs. That is on the backs of the taxpayers of this country. That is what happened in 2011.

If we face another impasse this year, there could be very real ramifications for businesses and for people. Interest rates could rise on everything from credit cards and home mortgages to borrowing costs for businesses, putting a real strain on families and small business owners, and stalling the economy just as we are at a time when we can expand it, just when we are at a time when we are starting to see that stability grow to real growth.

Our country cannot afford to keep lurching from crisis to crisis. It is time for both parties to come together and focus on real solutions.

Do you know what I learned the last 24 hours, the last 2 days, watching what was going on on this floor? That there are a few of my colleagues who see this place as a battleground. I see it as a place to look for common ground, and that is what we are supposed to be doing on behalf of the American people. The battleground has to give way. We need to do the work for the American people, find that common ground, work together. We are going to pass a good, clean bill so that we can continue the U.S. Government and move on to work out the details of the budget. That is what we need to do for our first responders, for our police, for our firefighters, for those people who put their lives at risk every day. That is what we need to do for the American people.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from South Dakota.

Mr. JOHNSON of South Dakota. Mr. President, any discussion of the national security impacts of a long-term continuing resolution or a potential government shutdown would be incomplete without including the potential impact on America's 22.3 million veterans.

The good news is that under any scenario, veterans would still be able to receive health care thanks to advance funding for 2014. The bad news is that most other VA programs would be shortchanged under a CR and crippled by a government shutdown. The VA budget would be impacted by the funding shortfalls or stoppages, but America's veterans would be the victims.

VA advance funding does not extend to such important programs as disability claims processing, hospital and clinic construction, or VA cemetery operations, to name but a few examples. Given the gravity of backlogs in the VA claims processing program, the Senate CR includes a provision funding claims processing at the 2014 budget request level. But it does not include a package of reforms and initiatives in the 2014 Senate MilCon/VA bill intended to improve productivity, accuracy, and accountability. For claims processing, a CR is less than optimal. A government shutdown could be catastrophic.

The current backlog of VA disability claims stands at 435,000, an improvement over the high water mark of 632,000 just 6 months ago.

But the strides VA has made in addressing the backlog problem would suffer a severe setback under a government shutdown. Currently, the VA processes 5,500 to 6,000 claims a day, a massive improvement in productivity that would be stopped in its tracks by a government shutdown. The longer the shutdown, the more severe the impact.

Think of a fender-bender in the middle of a busy freeway. Traffic behind the accident backs up quickly, and the backup extends farther and farther as cars pile up behind it. Once the cars are towed away, the backup does not magically disappear. It takes time for traffic to return to normal.

The same holds true for an interruption in VA claims processing. The VA estimates that for every week that claims processing would be halted under a government shutdown, it would lose a month of progress in processing claims. Our Nation—our veterans—cannot afford this delay.

Claims processing would not be the only VA program imperiled by a government shutdown. If the government shuts down, funding for payment of mandatory VA compensation, pension, and education benefits would run out by the end of October, denying a lifeline of support to thousands of veterans.

For anyone who cares about America's veterans, the notion of forcing a government shutdown is unthinkable.

Passage of a clean CR through November 15 is imperative to give Congress time to negotiate a way forward to fund government operations, agency by agency, through 2014.

My subcommittee also funds the Defense Department's military construction program. A government shutdown would have serious consequences in this area. The furloughing of civilian personnel overseeing construction contracts could not only disrupt and delay ongoing projects, but could provoke contract interruption and increase project costs. A CR prevents new starts so regardless of the level of funding, no new MilCon projects could be undertaken in 2014 under a CR. A CR and government shutdown would bring DOD's MilCon program to a screeching halt.

The CR before the Senate today buys time, without any extraneous riders or political histrionics. There is a time and a place for everything. The place for political statements is elsewhere. The time for keeping the government operating until a comprehensive appropriations bill can be crafted is here. I urge my colleagues to support the clean CR pending before the Senate.

I yield the floor.

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

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

Mr. REID. Mr. President, I am sorry that we are going to have to vote tomorrow and not today. The House is waiting for us to do something, to finish this, but we have two Senators who will not allow us to do that. We established that an hour or two ago. That is unfortunate.

I ask unanimous consent that following leader remarks on Friday, September 27, the time until 12:10 p.m. be equally divided between the proponents and opponents of the motion to invoke cloture on H.J. Res. 59; that the time from 12:10 p.m. until 12:30 p.m. be reserved for the two leaders, with the final 10 minutes under the control of the majority leader; that at 12:30 p.m. the Senate proceed to vote on the motion to invoke closure on H.J. Res. 59; that if cloture is invoked, all time postcloture be yielded back; that the pending Reid amendment, No. 1975, be withdrawn; that no other amendments be in order; that the majority leader be recognized to make a motion to waive applicable budget points of order; that if a motion to waive is agreed to, the

Senate proceed to vote in relation to the Reid amendment, No. 1974; that upon disposition of the Reid amendment, the joint resolution be read a third time and the Senate proceed to vote on passage of the joint resolution, as amended, if amended; finally, that all after the first vote in this sequence be 10-minute votes and there be 2 minutes equal divided between the votes.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection? Without objection, it is so ordered.

Mr. REID. This agreement means we will have four votes tomorrow beginning about 12:30: cloture on H.J. Res 59; motion to waive budget points of order; amendment No. 1974; and passage of H.J. Res. 59, as amended, if amended. I think we will come in tomorrow about 9:30, and the time will be allocated from that time until 12:10.

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.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Nebraska.

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

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, so ordered.

Mrs. FISCHER. Mr. President, I rise on behalf of the millions of middle-class families across America who feel they have been left behind. Too many of these people are decent, hard-working folks who are unemployed or underemployed. Too many have adult children stuck living at home because, despite graduating from college, they are struggling to find work. And now, because of ObamaCare, these same young adults—many of whom are older than 26—will be forced to pay more taxes or purchase costly government-defined health insurance.

In spite of the administration's best salesmanship, the law remains extremely unpopular. A poll conducted by the Omaha World-Herald last fall showed 55 percent of registered voters still favored the full repeal of ObamaCare. Recent national polls indicate a similar disapproval rating for the law all across the country. Part of the reason for the public's continued opposition is the harm that ObamaCare is causing our economy.

Let me share a story of one woman, a small business owner named Eileen Marrison. I had the pleasure of meeting Eileen in August when I was traveling my State, and I visited with her in Papillion, NE. The Marrison family owns and operates Two Men and a Truck. Those are franchises in Omaha and Lincoln, NE. They have 30 employees in Lincoln and 76 in Omaha. The Marrisons provide paychecks for local families, and they have earned the respect of their communities.

Eileen Marrison, the matriarch of the family, presently offers health insurance to full-time employees—36 individuals working 35 to 45 hours per week. She foots more than half the cost of that coverage. Since ObamaCare changes the definition of a full-time employee, lowering the threshold to 30 hours per week from 40 hours, Eileen now employs 76 full-time equivalents, triggering the employer mandate. Now she must offer affordable coverage as defined by ObamaCare. She has to offer that to all of her employees working 30 hours or more.

Eileen has been taking care of her employees for years, and she wants to continue to do so. However, ObamaCare's mandate is now placing additional burdens on this family business which will require Eileen to make tough decisions or incur those harmful costs.

I received thousands of phone calls, e-mails, and letters echoing Eileen's concerns and urging me to repeal all or pieces of the law.

Another constituent, a 61-year-old retired schoolteacher from Beatrice, NE, recently wrote me to share that he had just received a letter from his insurance carrier. The news was that premiums were set to spike 60 percent, to $939 a month. That is half of his monthly pension check. He says, ''We are dismayed and disappointed.''

Another Nebraskan, Roger from Hartington, NE, wrote:

> I just wanted to let you know I got my letter from Blue Cross of Nebraska. My premium went up $160 per month and my total out-of-pocket risk increased from $5,000 to $12,700.

Roger continued:

> On the positive side, my menopausal wife and I now have maternity, drug, alcohol, pediatric, dental, and vision care!
>
> President Obama promised our costs would go down and we could keep our insurance if we liked it. I liked my old plan. I want it back!

We no longer have to rely on these testimonials to prove that ObamaCare is driving up the price of insurance premiums.

Yesterday, the Federal Department of Health and Human Services released its long-awaited report on ObamaCare premium prices offered on the exchanges. The numbers for Nebraska proved that premiums will rise dramatically. In its analysis of the data, Forbes magazine published an article noting there was a 279-percent increase when comparing the cheapest plans offered to Nebraska men. For Nebraska women, there was a 227-percent increase when comparing the cheapest plans. That is more than triple the current rate. Those numbers are absolutely staggering. The average premium for a 27-year-old for the most basic plan, the bronze plan, is $159 before tax credits. Currently, that same 27-year-old can find a premium for $68 in Nebraska. So we are looking at a significant increase in costs.

Based on a Manhattan Institute analysis of the report:

> ObamaCare will increase underlying insurance rates for younger men by an average of 97 to 99 percent, and for younger women by an average of 55 to 62 percent. Despite these rates, the plan includes fewer in network doctors and hospitals than current plans. And many of the lowest-cost plans will likely carry high deductibles.

One insurer found that ''for the cheapest bronze plans, the average deductible was $5,000.'' How is that possibly affordable?

In August the administration announced another major delay, this time to the part of the health care law limiting patients' out-of-pocket expenses. Rather than capping costs for individuals and families, as required by the law, the delay of this key provision guarantees ObamaCare will be anything but affordable.

Of course, there are many other problems with the law beyond the increases in premiums, which is why I have been promoting the complete repeal of the law, and I support defunding it.

For example, there are serious concerns about possible identity theft for those participating in the new health exchanges. Why? Because the administration failed to independently test the security for its Federal Data Services Hub, which will store huge amounts of people's private, personal information.

The report released by the Department of Health and Human Services inspector general stated:

> Several critical tasks remain to be completed in a short period of time, such as the final independent testing of the hub's security controls, remediating security vulnerabilities identified during testing, and obtaining the security authorization decision for the hub before opening the exchanges.

The administration has until this Tuesday to complete these critical tasks. I, for one, remain skeptical that these tasks will be completed in time, opening up security risks for individuals who do participate in the exchanges.

Today the administration tacitly admitted once again that ObamaCare is not ready for prime time when it announced another delay. This time they are postponing online enrollment in some of the small business exchanges scheduled to open on Tuesday.

The irony, of course, is that news of this latest delay broke as the President was delivering a speech criticizing Republicans for their effort to defund or delay the law altogether. It seems reasonable to ask: Where is the delay for the American people? Where is the delay for middle-class citizens such as the 61-year-old retired teacher from Beatrice, NE? Is that an extreme position? I certainly don't think so.

In short, this law remains fatally flawed. The American people deserve better than selective delays, unfair treatment, and broken promises.

For me, the fight over ObamaCare has nothing to do with politics or with ideology. It has to do with standing for small business owners such as Eileen Marrison. It is about standing for middle-class families who aren't asking government for a hand up, they are just asking that the government stop holding them down.

We are a country that looks to build a brighter future for our people. We are a country that looks to help and lift up people. That is what America is all about. It is about giving voice to millions of Americans—those middle-class families who are feeling left behind—who would rather have the Federal Government focusing on ways to create jobs so they can bring home a decent paycheck.

Let me be perfectly clear: I have no intention of standing down in this fight. It is why I was sent here, and it is what Nebraskans expect from me. It is the only way we will ever be able to turn our economy around and build that brighter future for all Americans.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Kansas.

Mr. MORAN. Mr. President, I come here this evening with no notes, so hopefully I will be able to communicate my feelings and concerns from the heart and from the brain about the tasks we are about. We have been focused so much on the Affordable Care Act, or ObamaCare, and rightfully so. I consider it one of the most damaging pieces of legislation ever to pass a Congress and be signed by a President.

I want to start by pointing out something that is receiving, in my view, inadequate attention. We are back on the Senate floor with a continuing resolution. It is almost as if passing a continuing resolution has become the norm, and has almost become a way of life.

I have the privilege of serving on the Appropriations Committee. Our task—and what I would consider a very basic task—is to pass a budget. This is the first time the Senate in 3—almost 4 years—has passed a budget. The House passed a budget. Yet there is no reconciliation and no success in the effort to conference that bill, and so we have no budget framework to go by. The other requirement—again, one that ought to be so basic—is to pass appropriations bills within that budgetary framework.

We are here—almost on September 30—and I would remind my colleagues that not 1 appropriations bill out of the 13 appropriations bills that should be passed by September 30 has passed the Senate. It seems to me that it is important to highlight the fact that this place, once again, is failing to do its job. There has not been 1 appropriations bill out of 13.

Why is passing a continuing resolution important? Without it—or if we just do it at will—the Appropriations Committee and the Senate, on behalf of the American people, are never required to prioritize our spending. Does anyone not think the priorities of this Congress should have changed from last year to this year? Have things not changed in our country, in which, if we were doing our work, we would decide how much money each program should receive based upon its effectiveness, its efficiency, whether it is a proper role for the Federal Government, the changing nature, the economic environment of our country? Yet, no, one more time we are here to pass a continuing resolution.

The thing that troubles me perhaps the most about this topic is that it is just a given. We are not complaining about the passage of a continuing resolution; we are focused on a very significant provision in that continuing resolution that very well may be removed tomorrow when the Senate acts.

The Appropriations Committee needs to work. Just as we always raise the debt ceiling every time the debt ceiling is met, if we always agree to raise the debt ceiling, what is the effect of a debt ceiling? If we always, every year, pass a continuing resolution, why have an appropriations process in which we are to establish priorities on behalf of the American people as far as how their tax dollars are spent? We are failing miserably, once again, the American people, and it is just happening as if it is of no consequence.

I want the appropriations process to work. I want to eliminate funding for some programs that aren't our business, that the Federal Government should never have been involved in in the first place. I want us to establish the amount of money we can afford to spend on programs within the Federal agencies and departments. It may be true that there are some things on which we might want to spend more money.

I would remind our colleagues that, in my view, the primary responsibility of the Federal Government is to defend our country, and what we do in regard to defense spending has a huge consequence upon our ability to fill that vital mission, that constitutional responsibility. We take on too much to deal with.

I have always believed the view that if the 10th Amendment to the U.S. Constitution had ever been enforced in the way I or most Kansans would consider its words to mean, our Federal Government and our lives—more importantly, our lives—would be so much different in the United States. The 10th Amendment says that all those powers not specifically granted to the Federal Government are hereby reserved to the States and people. Yet government continues to grow, and we have an appropriations process that has failed to do anything about curbing that spending.

The issue that is front and center is the President's health care reform measure that passed 3 years ago and is being implemented on October 1, when many of its provisions will kick in, become viable, and the American people will begin to feel the consequences even more so than they have to date. There is no question the Affordable Care Act, as I said earlier, is the most damaging piece of legislation passed, certainly in my time in Congress. Not a surprise: I voted against it. Perhaps not a surprise: I offered the first legislation to repeal the Affordable Care Act after it was passed.

The House is often criticized for time and time again passing legislation to repeal or to defund the Affordable Care Act. Yet, if one believes it is so damaging to the country, isn't it our responsibility to do everything within our power to change the policies of Washington, DC?

We have before us tomorrow the opportunity to defund the Affordable Care Act. Those who count votes around here say that is not going to happen, that it is a lost cause. But it is important for us to do everything we can to make certain the consequences that are so damaging to America and to Americans are avoided.

For most of my time in the House of Representatives and now the U.S. Senate, I have chaired the Rural Health Care Coalition. I care about the access to health care by citizens across our country who happen to live in rural areas and core centers of cities and urban centers of our country—high Medicare populations, high Medicaid populations. Yet I have no doubt that with the passage and implementation of the Affordable Care Act, hospitals who serve rural communities will be greatly damaged and we will lose many hospitals. When we lose a hospital, we lose the doctor, the pharmacy; we may lose the nursing home or the assisted living center—huge consequences to people who have paid taxes all of their lives through their employment to support Social Security and Medicare. Yet, because they choose to live in a rural community, the chances of them being able to access the health care that to a large degree they pay for disappears.

It seems to me that the stories being told on the Senate floor—and I listened to the Senator from Nebraska moments ago talk about examples within her State and her constituents, describing the problems created by the Affordable Care Act. We all have those examples. I have no doubt that Democrats hear the same stories Republicans hear. Yet we can't seem to be responsible enough to make the changes. We will have the opportunity to repeal—to defund, I guess is the better way of saying it—the Affordable Care Act, and we ought to do it.

The focus today and yesterday and the day before has been on Republicans and the strategy of how to defund the Affordable Care Act. It is pretty irrelevant in the overall scheme of things how we do it; it is whether we get it done. And we ought to be expecting Democratic Senators, my colleagues from the other side of the aisle, to be just as helpful in trying to change, defund, repeal, alter the Affordable Care Act on behalf of our country.

The focus ought not to just be on how we do it among Republicans; it ought to be on questioning my colleagues about whether they are willing to step forward and admit there are problems with legislation they supported. It is

not just a Democratic problem. I remember legislation that I voted against that was supported by Republicans overwhelmingly—in fact, broadly supported. After it passed—I was on the losing side, a very small minority—I spent my next few years trying to get it amended. No one likes to admit it when they vote for a bill and then it is a problem. But who would be surprised? What American would not think—Americans have great common sense and judgment. What American wouldn't think that the passage of a bill with thousands of pages late at night by the slimmest of margins, with no bipartisan support, wouldn't have some problems that need to be addressed?

I talked about how our process here is dysfunctional when it comes to the appropriations process. I heard colleagues earlier this afternoon saying we ought to work together and come to the floor and offer amendments. Here is the problem: There will be no opportunity for any amendment to be offered other than the amendment offered by the majority leader. So we are saying that we could maybe cooperate to find some solutions to the problems that come from the Affordable Care Act, but, oh, by the way, the only amendment that is really going to be made in order is changing the expiration date of the continuing resolution and removing the provision that provides for no funding for ObamaCare.

This is one of the most important votes I will ever face—or one of the most important issues, is probably a better way of saying it, I will ever deal with as a Member of the Senate. How we deal with the health care of millions of Americans has a huge consequence—economic, their health, their well-being, their family, their ability to get a job. Yet we are going to dispense with this issue in a matter of minutes tomorrow with one vote on an amendment to remove the defunding of the Affordable Care Act.

Wouldn't the Senate and wouldn't America be better served if we were given the opportunity—again, if there are Senators on the Democratic side who agree there are problems, aren't there issues we could raise that would allow us to have a debate and a vote and determine where we could find some way to get rid of the ominous, threatening nature of the Affordable Care Act?

The Senator from Nebraska talked about her examples. Time and time again we hear about the amount of money the Affordable Care Act is going to cost, about the premiums going up. We have seen the numbers that have just been released. For my State of Kansas, there will be significant increases in the premiums for anyone who is participating in the exchange.

I have talked to business folks. I am certainly a rural Kansan, and I care a lot about rural America. I have always tried to explain to my colleagues that where I come from, whether or not there is a grocery store in town determines in many ways the future of the community. Many of my urban colleagues have their issues and don't necessarily understand what happens in a rural community if we lose a grocery store. But the conversation with the grocer just within the last month or so was this: The neighboring town is losing its grocery store. They have asked me to come in and buy it. I have looked at it. I could make money. It would work. I could save the grocery store in the neighboring town, but I am not going to do that because that would put me over 50 employees and the Affordable Care Act would kick in.

A competitor who is across the street decided to in a sense quit competing—at least in one aspect of their business—and share employees so that people now work part-time at one business and work for the competitor the other half of the day to avoid the consequences of the Affordable Care Act.

Educators, our teachers, our school superintendents, our enterprises that come together and create co-ops for our schools to provide special education to our students, funding is very difficult in education across our country. State legislatures struggle with their budgets. Yet the amount of money necessary to comply with the Affordable Care Act means there are going to be fewer paraprofessionals in the classroom assisting students with disabilities because they no longer can afford to have an employee considered a full-time employee and provide their health care.

This legislation is damaging to the country. It is damaging to our country's future. It is damaging to the American people. It reduces the opportunity that I believe Americans always have had to get the best health care among countries in the world.

The Affordable Care Act, ObamaCare, needs to be defunded. I would say to my Republican colleagues, we then have a responsibility to have a solution, a plan. Our health care system is not perfect. We have the opportunity to present better ideas, but that can't happen in a Senate that doesn't allow an amendment to a bill that deals with health care because of the House amendment. We won't have the opportunity to present our ideas or offer amendments that will make a difference.

One could say: Well, this isn't the place. The continuing resolution is not the place to have a debate about health care and how to replace the Affordable Care Act.

OK. I ask my colleagues, the leaders of the Senate, when is? When is the last time we have had a bill on the floor that would give us the opportunity to offer an amendment, to have a debate, to offer ideas about how to fix health care? It hasn't happened. I predict, based upon the Senate's schedule in the time I have been here, we are not going to have that opportunity. We ought to as Republicans. We ought to as Senators. It doesn't have to be partisan. There ought to be commonsense solutions. There are. It is not that there ought to be; there are. We all have ideas about how to fix our health care system as it was before the passage of the Affordable Care Act, and we need to defund the Affordable Care Act to give us a chance to go back and do it right, do it better.

Again, I would encourage my colleagues, the next time we have the opportunity, and perhaps that will—I hope this is not true, but perhaps it is only true if we have Senators who are different from the Senators we have now. One would think that regardless of one's party affiliation, a U.S. Senator ought to be willing to deal with this most significant, important issue—the lives of Americans. It doesn't matter about one's party affiliation. If one cares about people—well, in this Senate, apparently, if the vote counters are right and no Democrat will vote to defund ObamaCare, then there will be no opportunity for us in the future to put our ideas, their ideas, all of our ideas on the floor for consideration by Senators and by the American people.

Common sense tells us that we would fix the health care system a piece at a time and do it with commonsense, free market principles that would create a greater opportunity for more Americans to be able to afford health care. Health care is expensive. Health care insurance is expensive in this country, no doubt about it. The issue of preexisting conditions needs to be addressed. It affects people in their lives and in their jobs on a daily basis. But, no, we are going to cast one vote that gives us no opportunity to solve, to address, to deal with piece by piece the broken system that now the Affordable Care Act provides us.

The implementation of this act has been a disaster. No one can objectively look at what has transpired and think this is the way it should be done. No one could look at the consequences of the Affordable Care Act and say: This is a great thing. It is perfect. We don't want to make any changes.

Every Republican will vote tomorrow to defund—at least if the prognosticators are true; I expect it to be the case—every Republican will vote to defund the Affordable Care Act. We are united in that. We need colleagues from the other side of the aisle to join us in the effort to make sure Americans have access to affordable health care and the Federal Government operates within the limits of the Constitution in providing the environment in which that occurs. These are serious issues. The Affordable Care Act needs to be defunded. And the Senate needs to operate in a way that then allows all of us to come together in a manner that allows us to help Americans better afford health care for themselves and their families.

This system is broken. The Senate does not function right. Mostly what I

knew about the Senate before I came here was what I read in history. This place does not work the way it has for centuries during the life of our country.

The issues we face are serious. It is not about politics. It is not about posturing. It is about whether every American is going to have the ability with the Affordable Care Act to take care of themselves and their families in the way they want to.

Promises that were made—easily forgotten, apparently; certainly not kept. You will be able to keep your health care insurance if you want. I have seen so much evidence to the contrary. Your premiums will not go up. We know that is not true. Time and time again, the promises that were made about the Affordable Care Act are broken. Yet there is no will on the part of the U.S. Senate to change course.

It is time to admit it was a mistake. It is time to admit the bill is significantly flawed. It is time to admit the Federal Government is involved in issues that are not well-handled by the Federal Government in one broad sweep. It is time to admit that not one sized solution fits all problems, that not everyone in the United States is the same, that my colleagues who come from other places are different and their constituents are different and their health care delivery system is different than it is in my home State of Kansas.

I would make the appeal on behalf of most Kansans to give us the chance to set the record straight, to do it right, to begin again. I ask my colleagues tomorrow to vote to defund the Affordable Care Act. It is time for ObamaCare to come to a conclusion.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. BEGICH). The Senator from Wisconsin.

Mr. JOHNSON of Wisconsin. Mr. President, I rise to speak to an amendment I filed on H.J. Res. 59, the continuing resolution. It is a pretty simple amendment. It simply prohibits that funds be used for a government contribution for the health insurance of Members of Congress and their staffs under ObamaCare.

Now, you might ask, well, why would I, as a former employer, want to prevent an employer from contributing to health plans for Members of Congress and their staffs?

Well, the simple reason is, because of the passage of ObamaCare, it expressly prohibited funds from being contributed by the Federal Government to Members of Congress and their staff's health care plans.

I do not believe the President has any legal authority and I certainly do not believe the Office of Personnel Management has the authority to circumvent the Affordable Care Act.

I am exactly on board with Senator MORAN in certainly wishing that we could repeal the health care law in its entirety, that we could defund it, that we could do anything we could to limit the damage. But the fact is, it is the law of the land, and we need to respect the law of the land.

I have looked through the legislative history of the passage of the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act. It seems very clear what the intent of Congress was.

Back on September 29, 2009, as this was being debated by the Senate Finance Committee, Senator GRASSLEY offered an amendment that was adopted without objection that would require Members of Congress and their staff to ''use their employer contribution . . . to purchase coverage through a state-based exchange, rather than using the traditional selection of plans offered through the Federal Employees Health Benefits Plan.''

Again, that amendment was adopted without objection. Apparently, Members of Congress at that point in time thought that the State-based exchanges were going to offer such fabulous health care that they wanted to make sure that Members of Congress and their staff could avail themselves of that opportunity.

So on October 19, 2009, that Grassley provision was incorporated into the Finance Committee's America's Healthy Future Act. But there was an addition to that amendment made that basically provided for an employer contribution. Section (B)(ii) says:

> the employer contributions may be made directly to an exchange for payment to an offerer.

So at that point in time it was the express will of Congress that the employer—the Federal Government—could actually contribute to the health care plan purchased through the exchange.

The problem arises, however, that when Senator REID actually offered the language for the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act on November 18, 2009, it specifically said:

> the only health plans that the Federal Government may make available to Members of Congress and congressional staff with respect to their service as a Member of Congress or congressional staff shall be health plans that are one—
>
> (l) created under this Act (or an amendment made by this Act); or
>
> (ll) offered through an Exchange established under this Act (or an amendment made by this Act).

There was absolutely no provision made whatsoever for an employer contribution to those health care plans.

On December 24, 2009, Christmas Eve, the Senate passed that bill making no provision for an employer contribution to those plans purchased through an exchange. It was passed on pure party lines, 60 to 40.

On March 21, 2010, the House passed the exact same legislation. But then there was a debate in terms of reconciliation, and Senator GRASSLEY once again offered an amendment that would have provided an employer contribution to those plans purchased through the exchange. It was explicitly stated that employer contribution could be made. But that amendment was voted down. It was voted down. The vote was 43 to 56. All but three Democratic Senators voted no. In the end, the health care law was passed. That reconciliation was passed on March 25, 2010.

Now, it happened recently—on July 31, 2013—that President Obama came over here to the Hill and met with Democratic Senators because, as NANCY PELOSI famously stated, we have to pass this health care law before we can figure out what is in it, before we know what is in it. Well, once Senators found out what was in it—that they were going to have to purchase their health care through an exchange and the Federal Government could not make any payment for those health care plans—they panicked and they asked President Obama to please correct that. So President Obama heard their plea and directed his Office of Personnel Management to propose a rule that would allow the Federal Government to pay or make a contribution to those State-based exchange plans.

Now, I would argue that the OPM—President Obama—has no legal authority whatsoever to make those contributions, which is the purpose of my amendment. There will be millions of Americans who will lose their employer-sponsored health insurance for various reasons but because of the passage of the health care law. Once they have lost that coverage, they—every other American—will have to purchase insurance either in the open market or through a State-based or Federal exchange. Their employers will be barred. They will not have the opportunity to make an employer-contribution to help pay for those health care plans.

The only way a normal American gets to have any subsidy in those exchanges is if their income qualifies them for a subsidy under the Affordable Care Act. The only Americans who now—because of this OPM ruling—will actually have their employer be able to make a contribution are Members of Congress and their staffs. That is simply wrong. That is special treatment. It really should not stand.

So my amendment basically acknowledges that this is the law of land; that President Obama—the Office of Personnel Management—has no legal authority to have that contribution take place. So it simply prohibits funds to be used for a government contribution for the health insurance of Members of Congress and their staffs under ObamaCare.

With that, I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Georgia.

Mr. CHAMBLISS. Mr. President, I rise today to discuss the House-passed continuing resolution now pending before the Senate.

Once again the Senate is considering a last-minute continuing resolution rather than regular-order appropriations bills. Handling the annual appropriations process in this way is a bad

deal for the American people, and it is a deal we have gone through for the last 4 years now without passing appropriations bills and having to deal with a continuing resolution or an omnibus, which is simply a terrible way to run this government.

Congress should be passing appropriations bills in regular order instead of waiting until the eleventh hour. I know the chairman of the Appropriations Committee and the ranking member are very much in favor of doing that and are ready to come to the floor to do that. But yet once again we are seeing the majority leader not let them come to the floor with those bills. This only creates uncertainty in the financial market and hampers America's economic recovery.

Unless we come to an agreement, the government is going to shut down Monday night because Congress failed to pass a bill that would fund the government for only a few months. And to what end? We will find ourselves back in this position in either November or December, when we will have to pass yet another continuing resolution. This is a foolish way to run the U.S. Government.

I was here in 1995 during the last government shutdown. It cast a pall on the American people, seeded distrust of government, and unnecessarily harmed our economy. It was not a pretty sight from either a political standpoint on either side of the aisle or from the standpoint of the American people or the government employees. No one wins when the government is shut down, least of all the American people.

We are all aware of the issues that have thus far slowed down the progress of this bill. While there may be differences of opinion on our side of the aisle about tactics, let me tell you—let there be no doubt—we are all unified in believing that ObamaCare should be stopped and should be defunded.

I was here on this floor a few years back when we fought tooth and nail to stop passage of ObamaCare. I believed it to be the worst piece of legislation I had seen in my now going on 19 years of serving in the U.S. Congress. And it still is the worst piece of legislation and the most damaging piece of legislation to the American people that I have seen in those 19 years.

As the October 1 enrollment date nears, President Obama's signature law continues to face several significant problems. Employers are cutting jobs and slashing employees' hours; businesses and labor unions are unhappy and want to be exempted from the law; families are confused, and insurance premiums for people who cannot afford them in the first place are now skyrocketing. In my home State of Georgia alone, our insurance commissioner has warned us that we could see premium increases as high as 198 percent on middle-income families. Other States have reported similar increases. So it is no surprise that a majority of Americans believe ObamaCare should be repealed and should be replaced.

I remain as committed as ever to dismantle and defund this law before it has a chance to further damage our economy and to replace it with a meaningful reform of our health care system.

The continuing resolution delivered by the House of Representatives to the Senate funds the government while defunding ObamaCare. It is what the American people want, and it is a bill I support. I will oppose any attempt by Majority Leader REID to strip defunding language from this bill.

However, while I believe ObamaCare is a serious threat to the future of our Nation's economy, allowing a prolonged government shutdown would be counterproductive. My priority has always been the well-being of Georgians, as well as the American people, and I cannot support a strategy that could cause Americans to suffer unnecessarily. Further harm to our already fragile economy is not a course we should pursue, nor should it be a price our friends on the other side of the aisle are willing to pay just to uphold the President's signature law.

This fight is long from over. It is something Republicans have been fighting since 2009, since we first tried to stop ObamaCare from becoming law. I am grateful that this debate has brought the problems with this law back into the spotlight and look forward to repealing and replacing this law at the end of the day.

I yield the floor.

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

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

Mr. BURR. Mr. President, a lot has been said in the last few days. I guess the issue is not everybody has said it. I am not sure that two people have been closer to the progress and the process of the Affordable Care Act than Dr. TOM COBURN and myself. We were in it in committee along with other Members.

The fact that I am not embracing a strategy to close down the government is real important. It is because at the end of the day and we open the government, the way the statute is, there is the Affordable Care Act. It is still there. I did not come to Washington to embrace strategies that do not achieve solutions. I came to find solutions to big issues so the next generation can benefit from them.

Do not misunderstand me. There is no bigger critic in Washington, DC, than the Senator from North Carolina. As a matter of fact, in the committee, I counted 58 votes on 58 amendments where we voted to kill the health care bill. I think my record stands for being opposed to this legislation.

Senator COBURN and I have introduced more health care proposals than the rest of the Congress combined—options, replacements. We have stood on this floor hour after hour on the Affordable Care Act and shared with the American people why this was a bad move. We have quoted individuals who lead the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services.

Their Chief Actuary told us, before we passed this bill in this body, that this will close community hospitals, it would increase premiums, it would deprive people of health care. But the Congress of the United States and the President of the United States signed this law into statute.

There is only one way to kill a law once a law is in statute; that is, to pass a bill that is signed by a President that reverses that. To some degree, this is civics 101. It is an understanding of the legislative process. It was not the first time I disagreed with something this body had done. Let me assure you, it will not be the last time. But I also understand the way that we change this. It is not the way we are attempting to do it right now.

So what have we seen in the short period that we have gone through this? As we move up to October 1 and these new exchanges are rolled out, we have seen premiums go up. We have seen doctors retire. We have seen health care professionals move from rural America to urban areas. We have seen the health care infrastructure scared to death of what is around the corner. We have seen premiums rise.

If there is anything that is wrong, it is the title of the bill, the Affordable Care Act. We have made health care less affordable for more Americans. Let me say that again. This act has made health care less affordable for more Americans. It has tripled, at a minimum, the cost of a health care premium for somebody 30 years or under—tripled, at a minimum.

This is a group who is targeted for enrollment. They would not enroll when the premium was one-third of the cost it is today. We have heard people say that Members of Congress are trying to protect their own subsidy. Members of Congress are not going to take the subsidy. We passed legislation, but at the end of the day, the public pressure will be such that no one up here will take the subsidy.

But if we are going to treat Federal workers one way, then treat all of them the same way. Do not pick and choose who—the ones who work on the Hill, the ones who work in our offices, not ones who are in committees, not ones who work at the FDA, the EPA or whatever. Let's include everybody.

If we want an exchange to work, then we have to enroll as many people and we have to have robust competition. The way this is set up we are going to have low enrollment. The way insurers have responded to the exchanges—in my State, we have one insurer that has

entered the exchange to insure the entire State and one insurer that is representing 10 counties out of 100. That is not competition. That is almost a monopoly. I do not blame the one that is in all by themselves. I blame what we designed, where we did not empower States to actually design things that fit their health care infrastructure and their State, where individuals could buy insurance based upon their age and their income and their health condition.

We said, no, if you do not buy this plan, then you are going to pay a penalty. We have heard a lot of debate about the process, but we have not heard as much debate about the specifics of this legislation. It is bad for the American people. Regardless of the outcome of tomorrow's votes, this legislation is still going to be in statute. It is still going to be implemented on October 1.

I hope all of the thousands and hundreds of thousands of people who have responded to the request to call—and they don't always know why, except they do not like this health care plan—when tomorrow's vote is over, do not go away. The pressure has to be on this institution to make the changes.

Most Americans do not know that we are going to start taxing—or we are already taxing the manufacturers of medical devices 1.5 percent. They pay a surcharge to fund ObamaCare. We are going to charge, in the exchanges, at 2.3 percent, I believe, a health insurance premium tax for every person who purchases health insurance.

We have to ask ourselves: If we are going to tax devices and we are going to tax the insurance premiums, how in the world can the price of health care go down? It cannot. This is common sense and math matched up. It has to force health care costs up. That is, in fact, what every American sees.

Even your employer's insurance, if you are lucky enough to still have an employer that is providing it, your health care premium is going up next year. If you are in an exchange, your premium cost is going up next year. Who does it benefit? It benefited maybe people who had preexisting conditions and they could not purchase insurance. You know what the first act of the Affordable Care Act was? It was to create a national pool of individuals with preexisting conditions and they would all be offered insurance.

What happened? When about 20-somepercent of them got enrolled, the fund ran out of money and the one population that this bill was sold to protect, almost 80 percent of them, were left out in the cold with no options. It has failed since the first step.

What I hope is that American people will not leave this debate and say we have done our best. We have not done our best. The Nation is betting on us to continue on this. Our children deserve whatever it takes for us to accomplish it.

But as I started, let me say to the body, our strategy to get here was flawed. I know it sounded good, but it does not work. The only way to eliminate a bill that is in statute is to pass a bill and have it signed by a President that reverses that statute.

I am glad we have had this debate. I am glad the American people are now engaged in it. I do not think this will be the last discussion we have on the Affordable Care Act. I will assure you that as I have been before, I will be again on this floor debating my colleagues as aggressively and fairly as I can about what is wrong with this bill and why it should be reversed and why it should be replaced.

I thank my colleague from Alaska.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. TESTER). The Senator from Alaska.

Mr. BEGICH. To my colleague from North Carolina, thank you for the part about explaining the process. Some people think by tomorrow if there is a vote on defunding, suddenly something happens. Thank you for pointing out the issue of the statute. We may not agree on the total picture, but I have presented lots of ideas on how to fix the health care act. I would be anxious to work on that as we pass by tomorrow. I thank the Senator for his comments.

I know in the last 48 hours or longer we have been talking about a lot of issues. We have been talking about health care, and I can read all kinds of stories about people who called me, such as the 50-year-old male from rural Alaska who was self-employed. He had lung cancer. Today, because of ACHIA and the ability to get into that high-risk pool, he now is living a good life, healthier, and running his business.

I can go through all kinds of stories, but I don't want us to forget the big issue that is facing us Tuesday; that is, the risk of a government shutdown and what that means. We can talk about health care for a long time. We will for generations, and they have done it for generations before I even got here. We need to focus on the big issue that faces us; that is, this shutdown that is potentially in front of us.

The inability of Congress to pass a budget, pass annual appropriations bills, address these harmful automatic budget cuts known around here as sequester, because of true political brinksmanship, is honestly shameful and not why I came to Congress. When the budget passed, I didn't vote for it, but it passed.

The House has a budget, it passed. Now for some reason we can't get people from the minority to sit down and let us move to a conference committee to figure this out. To me, it is amazing. It is a simple thing.

For the time I have been here, 3 years at minimum, we have been hearing there is no budget passed. There is one passed. I didn't vote for the one that passed—it had too many taxes—but it did pass.

Let's get on with the conference committee and figure it out. The Presiding Officer, my colleague from Montana, and I are on the Appropriations Committee. We passed bills out of the Appropriations Committee and most of them passed in some form of bipartisanship—not 100 percent but in some form. Bringing those forward would be helpful. It would help us to do the job we were sent to do on an annual basis; that is, to get our budget moving forward.

I came to get the job done. I came to Washington to represent Alaska. I didn't come to participate in this back-and-forth showmanship that has to go on in order for someone to get some highlight on TV or be able to get some byline on TV or whatever it might be. These games that are being played and played on the Senate floor are affecting our national homeland security.

Think about it. What is it like for a Federal employee today as they watch these shenanigans that go on. If you are one of the 5,000 dedicated Department of Defense employees in Alaska, you didn't get paid for 6 days already this year because of sequestration. Now you are wondering if you are going to get a paycheck on time or face more furloughs because this institution may not be able to pass a clean continuing resolution.

For those who are watching, the continuing resolution says the budget we have is going to continue for a short time while we try to get our appropriations bills to the floor so we can move those forward. It is not complicated. It keeps the government running, and it is the way we move this system forward, but it is not the right approach. We need to have regular order for our appropriations bills and get rid of the sequestration issue once and for all. Don't be confused about the issue. I know people like to complain about the Federal Government. We are the largest service provider in the country. We provide services.

We don't make widgets. We produce service. We build roads. We are out there taking care of forest fires when they are happening. We are taking care of our veterans. We are making sure we are protected in the homeland as well as across the world with our national defense. The list goes on and on. We are a service company.

As I stand here, I am honestly stunned we are on the verge again. I don't know how many times we have been on the edge, just hanging over the edge of what might happen. Will we close down the government?

I am not here to do that. As painful as these days are in going through the process, we need to move forward. We cannot delay military members' paychecks, leaving them wondering if they are going to get paid again or if they can pay their bills on time, knowing we will face the same situation again and again in a few months. We need to finish this so we can move on to the annual Department of Defense bill to continue to fund this Federal Government.

Many of our military members are also wondering if they will be training,

waiting for the missions we call them out to do. Commanders can't plan a training exercise now, such as the Red Flag-Alaska, which is a critical training program, not only for our military but our allies. They don't know how much money they will have in the next fiscal year to plan. They can't just decide on a Thursday, Friday, and the next week we are doing a massive military mission. It takes months of planning, but they can't plan if they don't have the resources.

Military leaders are not only losing sleep over the rogue nations such as Iran and North Korea, they are losing sleep over not having the funds to pay their workforce and breaking faith with their troops as we ask them to do so much. We are asking the one organization we rely on to be ready 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, 365 days a year, and to stay ready amidst uncertainty and potential shutdowns.

We are asking its members to carry on without expecting pay or money to train. It is unrealistic, it is unreasonable, and it is risky for our national security.

Our Nation's veterans—and we have 77,000 veterans in Alaska—are wondering what the shutdown means for the claims they are waiting for. They are wondering if the process will create even lengthier delays in an already unacceptably slow process. I know the Presiding Officer and I have worked to try to streamline this process to get these claims resolved after hundreds of days of delay.

Our Nation's homeless veterans are wondering if they will be able to get their housing vouchers or lose them in budget cuts or if they will have to sleep on the streets after serving our country because we can't pass a continuing resolution and a budget.

In Alaska, let me tell you what that is like in October, moving into November and into December. Sleeping on the streets is not a comfortable situation. Sleeping on the streets, period, is not a comfortable situation. But when you are in those cold situations, it is even worse.

We are hurting local economies and stifling potential job growth. We have $202 million of military construction that will be delayed in Alaska because we haven't passed an annual Military Construction and Veterans Affairs bill. We passed it in appropriations, we are ready, and we want to do it, but this back-and-forth of 1 week, 1 month, 2 months, continuing resolution again delays the regular order so we can create certainty—certainty with our ability to provide for businesses in this country but also for the business community, construction companies. In Alaska you cannot just start a project in December and say, well, we are going to start doing the foundation work. It is a little cold. The ground is a little frozen. You have to be doing this in the summer. You have to be planning for this in the winter and late spring.

For us to delay these projects, all we do is hurt the private sector jobs related to it, the families who depend on this, the veterans, and the military that depend on these important construction projects.

When the funding comes too late, the project is delayed, costs go up. It is not complicated.

For the Senate, I have learned over time it is almost irrelevant. Some people don't care about it. They don't care what it costs. They don't even want to know, because they know when they hear it, it will be an unbelievable cost that we have to bear because of this delay and these tactics.

I get it. We are not going to always agree on everything, but we have to compromise and solve these problems.

As an appropriator, that is what we do in appropriations. It is not always easy. Some things I want to have happen, we can't have. It is the same thing on the other side, but at the end of the day we find common ground.

Sequestration also has hurt the Coast Guard. In Alaska, the Coast Guard is the lifeblood of our oceans for the fishing industry, oil and gas industry, our recreational industry, our cruise ship industry. I can go through the list. They have lost $200 million from their operating expenses because of sequestration and an inability for some people to come to the table to solve this problem. That means about 30 percent fewer cutters and aircraft doing things such as enforcing fishing laws.

We have a reduced presence in the Arctic. They had to cut back on patrols to stop drugs coming from South America into this country.

When you think about it, the impact is significant. It spreads throughout this whole country. As the drugs come in and the jobs in the country go out, millions of Americans are watching to see what Congress does. We have created a situation where not only are we unable to budget for this country, but Americans can't budget for their future. They can't even budget for the holiday season. It is unbelievable.

We need to complete this work on this short-term continuing resolution, move right into our annual appropriations bills, address sequestration once and for all, and finish the budget. We owe it to the American people. We owe it to them to ensure they have certainty, and we owe to it our business community to make sure they know. Look at last week in the market. It wasn't a deep slide, but it was a slide.

If you read the Wall Street Journal today or last night, there is a commentary and some articles because they weren't sure what the House was doing. The House was playing these games back and forth: Let's tie this to it; let's tie that to it. They are playing with an economy that has come back from the depths of a great recession.

Is it a perfect economy? No. Is it better? Absolutely. Do we have a fragile moment that we need to continue to build on this? Yes.

I am not sure if those folks on the other side care about making sure our economy is strong. In some ways, I think they want it to falter so they can go into an election and say: See those guys, they caused the economy to go bad so vote them out. That is all this seems to be.

I was presiding earlier and one of my colleagues on the other side mentioned a story about Alaska. I was appreciative that he recognized Alaska and understood we had some issues in Alaska. Then he mentioned three other Senators and their States—all the ones, to be frank with you, who are being targeted by groups as the ones most at risk this election cycle.

I get it, but that is not what people are here to do. If you want to have that conversation, let's go outside this building. Run those ads. Do everything you need to do. Do whatever you want on the campaign trail. Do whatever you need to do.

To play these games and try to pretend you are doing the government's business is very irresponsible. That is not what is going on. What is going on is picking people and trying to pigeon hole them so they can run commercials against them in campaigns. I get that. I think the American people are fed up with it. They are outraged by it. I hear it every time I go back to Alaska. I hear it when I talk to people around the country.

We have to do the work we were sent to do. The work here is to get our business done. Setting policy is part of it and passing appropriations bills. We should be doing these on an annual basis, doing a budget. Again, we passed one out of the Senate. I didn't support it because it had too many taxes, but we passed it. The House passed it. Let's get on with doing the work.

Every day I know some sit around and they say: Well, we have to do it this way. This is the only way it works.

You don't understand. The Senate is complicated.

Hey, life is complicated, get on with it. The public expects us to do our job. Quit using process, rules, and gobbledygook to try to get away from your responsibility in the Senate. It is time we sit down and deal with it.

There will be some in my party, and there will be some in their party who—guess what—aren't going to get what they want. That is the way it works. Compromise, find your balance, and move forward.

I would love 100 percent of everything. I will try it every day, but that is not how it ends up all the time. Compromise and try to find a middle ground, that is what we should be doing.

As an appropriator, that is what I want to do. This is what I tried to do as a member of the Appropriations Committee, and that is what we should be doing on this floor.

I get it. There are a couple on each side. It happens. We saw one who stood out here for 21 hours or whatever the

heck it was. I get it. He is passionate. It is important to him to make his point, but I also see what else is going on.

Focus on your job. We are Senators. We are not candidates for some other office. We are Senators. We are here to do the job. It is time to get busy and do the job. The American people want it. Alaskans tell us every day they want us to do this.

Let's figure this out and get on with the show.

I yield the floor, and 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. TESTER. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

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

Mr. TESTER. Mr. President, as we inch closer and closer to potentially shutting down this government, I rise to remind my colleagues what a shutdown would mean for our constituents. I also want to remind my colleagues it doesn't have to be this way.

Budget battles and debt ceiling debates are the norm in Congress right now, but there was a time—there was a time—when both parties worked together and the American people benefited.

It hasn't always been rosy. The budget battles of the mid-1990s shut our government down for nearly 1 month. Personal insults here in the world's greatest deliberative body used to be common. And back in the 1850s, a Senator was beaten on the Senate floor. But through it all, Americans trusted their government to meet its constitutional responsibility and keep the lights on. After all, if we couldn't agree on anything else, at least we could agree on keeping the lights on.

Today, constant political brinkmanship and grandstanding replace commonsense compromise and actual governing. This is taking a toll on all Americans, and Montanans are no exception.

With a government shutdown once again a real possibility, America's frustration is reaching new heights. For some folks a shutdown is another opportunity to shake their heads and bemoan the state of affairs right here in Washington, DC. They are the lucky ones. For others, a shutdown will hurt their health, their wallets, and their bottom lines.

I am talking about a veteran—a veteran who could be anywhere in this country—whose disability case appeal could and probably will be delayed if we have a government shutdown; a senior citizen waiting for a Social Security check; a small business owner waiting to get a potential contract that could fix a decaying road infrastructure.

Hotels and other businesses around our national parks, which would be closed if we have a government shutdown, are also holding their breath to see what we are doing here these days. If the parks close because of a government shutdown, the money coming in and out of the wallets of those businesses and those folks who not only drove to the park in anticipation of being able to utilize it but the businesses around the park would be impacted very negatively.

Everybody knows about the Bakken oil plate that is driving the economic growth in North Dakota and eastern Montana. But if the government shuts down, the Bureau of Land Management's permitting office would be shut down too. That means wells would be delayed and the jobs that come with it.

Since the House Republicans have been unwilling to begin negotiations on a new farm bill, farmers and ranchers are going to have a lot of questions come October 1. On that day, not only will the government shut down but the farm bill will expire as well. So not only could some folks lose critical nutrition assistance, but farmers and ranchers would have no place to go to get their questions answered about the fact there is no more farm bill for a commodity type; no more ability to get questions answered about conservation, which needs to be planned far ahead of time. Why? Because their local farm service agency office will be closed. Like the other government offices, nobody is going to be there to answer the phone.

In Montana, Washington now is shorthand for uncertainty, Congress is shorthand for dysfunction, and faith in government is being eroded because some folks around here are more concerned about raising money on C–SPAN than the people of this great country and the American economy. It needs to stop.

The American people expect Members of Congress to make smart, responsible decisions based on the best information we have. That means advocating for issues that matter but compromising to get something done. That means giving a little and getting a whole lot in return. It is called governing. That is a lesson some folks around here need to learn.

I would have thought flirting with a government shutdown and costing taxpayers billions of dollars in 2011 would have been sufficient enough a lesson or maybe coming within a few hours of falling off the so-called fiscal cliff in 2012 would have been a sufficient lesson. I would have thought that causing an unprecedented credit downgrade 2 years ago by threatening not to raise the debt ceiling would have knocked some sense into some folks. And I would think the American people's overwhelming desire not to shut the government down come October 1 would cause my colleagues on the other side of the aisle to use common sense. But here we are, playing politics once again as regular Americans twist in the wind.

There is a way forward, and it doesn't have to start with political games at the eleventh hour. It starts with working through the regular budgets and appropriations process and not proposing amendments just to slow the process down.

But funding the government is the easy part. In less than 1 month, we will once again be reaching a debt ceiling—a much more serious issue. If we don't raise it before then, we will not be able to pay our bills and the economy will be devastated. Crashing into the debt ceiling will cause our credit rating to drop, increase the interest rates not only on our government debt but for anybody who has debt.

If you don't believe a farmer from Big Sandy, MT, maybe you will believe a guy by the name of Mark Zandi, an economist who has advised Presidents, Presidential candidates, and Fortune 500 companies. He said that failing to raise the debt ceiling will hurt consumer and business confidence, force businesses to stop hiring, and raise borrowing costs for average Americans.

He is far from alone. Former Republican Senator Judd Gregg says failing to pay our bills would ''lead to job losses and more debt.'' He calls failing to raise the debt ceiling a ''terrible policy that would produce difficult times for people on Main Street.''

Senator Gregg, whom I had the opportunity to serve with, spent 18 years here in the Senate. He knows as long as Congress fails to provide the American people with political and economic certainty by funding the government and raising the debt limit, we will not be able to tackle other important issues, such as replacing the sequester the Senator from Alaska talked about, and replacing it with smart budget cuts or striking a long-term budget agreement that will put this Nation on solid economic footing.

A government shutdown would be irresponsible and it would be unnecessary. Congress needs to do its job by finding a way to responsibly keep the government running. We cannot keep holding businesses, seniors, working families, veterans, students, and our military men and women hostage to the political whims and aspirations of a select few.

When I was a member of the Montana Senate, my colleagues and I knew what we had to get done every session. Passing a budget was at the top of the list. Even if we didn't agree where to cut or where to spend, we worked together to figure it out. And just like my former colleagues in Montana did this spring, we passed a budget and kept the State government running. Here in Washington there are a lot of pressures we don't face at the State level. There are news channels that give any Senator a chance to get on TV, and every issue has an advocacy group fighting for its share of the pie. But real leaders make tough decisions. Real leaders work together to find common ground and move our Nation forward. Real leaders put their constituents first.

It is not too late. It is not too late for us to regain the trust of the American people. But it is going to take some work. We won't be able to do it right away, but we ought to start this week, and we can start by responsibly funding the government, providing our economy and our Nation with the confidence they need. That is what we did in Montana, and that is what we need to do here in Washington.

The American people are calling for an end to the brinkmanship and an end to the gridlock, and it is time we start to listen to them.

I also want to thank Senator MIKULSKI, the chair of the Appropriations Committee, for agreeing to end a special-interest provision that was included by the House of Representatives in last year's government funding bill a few months ago and the one that was sent over here recently.

A few years ago the committee voluntarily agreed to match the House's earmark moratorium, and I think it is interesting our friends in the House make very serious statements about the need to get rid of earmarks, then stuffed a few items in the spending bill last year that directly benefited a couple of the biggest multinational businesses in this country. I spoke to Chairwoman MIKULSKI about this issue this spring and she was very gracious and listened to my concerns. I am pleased to see she and Senator REID have eliminated one of those corporate earmarks, and I want to thank them for that. It will make this bill a lot cleaner.

In closing, I know there are people in this body who want to work together to make this country all it can be. I also know there are people in this body who would love to see a government shutdown because they might be able to pad their own PACs or political coffers. And maybe it would take a government shutdown to make them understand how bad this would be for the American people, its businesses and its working families. But I certainly hope that doesn't happen. The American people don't deserve it. This country doesn't deserve it, as it comes out of one of the worst economic times since the 1930s. Quite frankly, being a businessman myself, I look at what goes on in Washington, DC, and all the challenges businesses have in this country, and the biggest challenge we have right now is Washington, DC.

Let's start moving the country forward by working together. Let's fund the government. Let's not shut it down. And let's do what is right when the debt limit debate comes around.

Mr. President, I yield the floor, and 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. TESTER. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

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

MORNING BUSINESS

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

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

RECOGNIZING THE EMPLEO PROGRAM

Mr. REID. Mr. President, I rise today to recognize the Southern Nevada Employment Education Outreach, EMPLEO, program for their decade of commitment to fair and just working conditions for all workers.

In 2003, EMPLEO piloted a toll-free hotline for immigrant workers to report alleged discrimination, and other wage, and workplace abuses in Nevada. The hotline number was created in partnership with the U.S. Department of Labor, Wage and Hour Division, OSHA, EEOC, the Mexican Consulate of Las Vegas, and other private and public agencies.

Today, EMPLEO partners with more than 17 different government agencies that share the same common goal of providing access and awareness to employers and employees. EMPLEO staff and volunteers are diligent in their outreach to help educate workers about their labor rights. Through its work, EMPLEO has grown the number of workers it services, and in some instances, has helped workers acquire back wages. As a trusted source in the community, EMPLEO is bridging the relationship between employees and employers.

I commend EMPLEO and its many community partners for their commitment to workers' rights and safety. I also extend my gratitude to Southern Nevada District Director, Mr. Gaspar Montanez, for his leadership and commitment to the mission of EMPLEO along with the Department of Labor, and staff at the Office of the Mexican and Salvadorian Consulate. I look forward to the continuation of EMPLEO's services and education to workers and those who employ them.

ADDITIONAL STATEMENTS

ARKANSAS DEPARTMENT OF EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT

• Mr. BOOZMAN. Mr. President, Arkansans are well aware of the damage that Mother Nature can cause. We have seen the devastating impact of tornadoes, flooding, ice storms, and other natural disasters.

This devastation can be overwhelming. Surveying the damage sometimes reveals the need to rebuild parts of the community, infrastructure, and neighborhoods. Oftentimes this causes difficulties for families who may be displaced from their homes or even their jobs.

Time and again when we are faced with these catastrophes, the Arkansas Department of Emergency Management has been there to activate the resources necessary to protect people and communities and provide them with the basic needs as rebuilding efforts occur.

This year we recognize the 60th anniversary of the agency tasked with responding to emergencies. No matter how big or small, the men and women of the Arkansas Department of Emergency Management are ready to respond at a moment's notice and support recovery efforts.

The agency has developed since 1953 from an office in the Arkansas State Capitol with one surplus military radio to today's state-of-the-art facility.

We appreciate the hard work, dedication and commitment of the Arkansas Department of Emergency Management as the agency continues to improve and seek new and innovative ways to prepare us all for the unexpected.•

MISSING IN AMERICA PROJECT

• Mr. HELLER. Mr. President, I wish to acknowledge the Missing in America Project's Veteran Recovery Program, which has coordinated a ceremony during which 18 Nevada veterans of the Vietnam and Korean wars will be laid to rest. On October 1, these fallen heroes who never received a military burial will finally be given full military honors at the Northern Nevada Veterans Memorial Cemetery in Fernley, NV.

These heroic Nevadans who will finally receive the honorable recognition they so rightly deserve, gave all that they could give in order to defend liberty and the American way of life. They were willing to put on a uniform, answer the call of duty, and sacrifice their very lives on the altar of freedom. There is no higher virtue than that which was displayed by these 18 brave Nevadans, and the thousands of others with whom they served. And although years have passed since these American warriors gave their lives, their selfless sacrifice is not forgotten, but lives on in the hearts of those whom they died to defend. The very least we can do is express our profound gratitude and appreciation for these heroes by giving them an honorable military burial.

We can never thank our veterans enough for the immeasurable sacrifices they and their families have made on our behalf. As a member of the Senate Veterans Affairs Committee, I can personally attest to the importance of providing every available resource and benefit to America's veterans. I applaud the Missing in America Project for helping to advance this effort by working diligently to ensure that lost veterans receive the honorable burial they deserve. I invite my colleagues to join me in thanking this organization for its efforts, and I join my fellow Nevadans in remembering the 18 heroes

who will be laid to rest in a manner consistent with our Nation's high esteem for their valiant service.●

TRIBUTE TO RYAN AND RHONDA KELLY

● Mr. THUNE. Mr. President today I wish to recognize Ryan and Rhonda Kelly of Rapid City, SD, as my nominees for the 2013 Angels in Adoption Award. Since 1999, the Angels in Adoption program, through the Congressional Coalition on Adoption Institute, has honored nearly 2,000 individuals, couples, and organizations nationwide for their work in providing children with loving, stable homes.

Since 2005, 6 girls from China have come to know the love and compassion of high school sweethearts Ryan and Rhonda Kelly. One morning in January 2005, Rhonda woke up and felt a calling to pursue an adoption of a baby girl in China.

That calling has since developed into a deep passion for providing a loving, Christian home to girls from China. Over the last 8 years, Rhonda and Ryan have joyfully welcomed 6 girls from China into their family: Jenna, Jocelyn, Jade, Jolise, Janelle, and Joy. They have adopted girls as young as 18 months to age 14. Each adoption has given the Kellys a new opportunity to meet the unique physical and emotional needs of each child, a task they have faced with grace, determination, and humility. These girls joined biological children Jacob, Joshua, Julia, and Jonah.

Ryan, Rhonda, and their 10 children, now ranging in age from 22 to 4, are shining examples of what it means to make the dream of a family a reality for every child. Adoption has given the girls the opportunity to receive the medical care they need, a family to love and care for them forever, and a chance for a bright future. Adoption has given the Kelly family an entirely different outlook on life: they look at the big picture and choose not to sweat the small things. This family clearly loves each other, supports each other, has empathy for each other, and gets to witness the miracle of adoption each and every day.

With National Adoption Day just around the corner on November 23, 2013, it is important that we recognize the compassionate families who fulfill the roles of foster and adoptive parents. Thus, it brings me great pride to honor South Dakotans Ryan and Rhonda Kelly as my nominees for the 2013 Angels in Adoption award, as they have bestowed a gift onto others in an immeasurable way and the impact their love has had is profound.●

MESSAGES FROM THE HOUSE

At 3:10 p.m., a message from the House of Representatives, delivered by Mr. Novotny, one of its reading clerks, announced that the House passed the following bill, in which it requests the concurrence of the Senate:

H.R. 1961. An act to amend title 46, United States Code, to extend the exemption from the fire-retardant materials construction requirement for vessels operating within the Boundary Line.

ENROLLED BILL SIGNED

At 3:45 p.m., a message from the House of Representatives, delivered by Mr. Novotny, one of its reading clerks, announced that the Speaker has signed the following enrolled bill:

S. 793. An act to support revitalization and reform of the Organization of American States, and for other purposes.

The enrolled bill was subsequently signed by the President pro tempore (Mr. LEAHY).

ENROLLED BILL SIGNED

At 5:11 p.m., a message from the House of Representatives, delivered by Mrs. Cole, one of its reading clerks, announced that the Speaker has signed the following enrolled bill:

H.R. 3092. An act to amend the Missing Children's Assistance Act, and for other purposes.

ENROLLED BILL SIGNED

At 6:26 p.m., a message from the House of Representatives, delivered by Mr. Novotny, one of its reading clerks, announced that the Speaker has signed the following enrolled bill:

H.R. 527. An act to amend the Helium Act to complete the privatization of the Federal helium reserve in a competitive market fashion that ensures stability in the helium markets while protecting the interests of American taxpayers, and for other purposes.

ENROLLED BILL PRESENTED

The Secretary of the Senate reported that on today, September 26, 2013, she had presented to the President of the United States the following enrolled bill:

S. 793. An act to support revitalization and reform of the Organization of American States, and for other purposes.

PETITIONS AND MEMORIALS

The following petitions and memorials were laid before the Senate and were referred or ordered to lie on the table as indicated:

POM–135. A memorial adopted by the Legislature of the State of Florida urging Congress to award the United States 65th Infantry Regiment, the Borinqueneers, the Congressional Gold Medal; to the Committee on Armed Services.

SENATE MEMORIAL 1266

Whereas, the Borinqueneers trace their lineage to the ''Puerto Rico Regiment of Volunteer Infantry,'' authorized by Congress on March 2, 1899, as the first body of native troops in Puerto Rico, the only Hispanic-segregated unit in the United States Armed Forces that played a prominent role in American military history; and

Whereas, during World War I, the Borinqueneers rallied a force of over 1,500 to defend the Panama Canal, and upon their return to Puerto Rico were renamed ''The 65th Infantry Regiment;'' and

Whereas, during World War II, the Borinqueneers served in North Africa and Europe, winning Naples-Foggia, Rome-Arne, Central Europe, and Rhineland battle campaign awards; and were assigned security, anti-sabotage, and other occupation missions around Kaiserslautern and Mannheim, Germany after the war; and

Whereas, during the Korean War, the Borinqueneers were the only all-Hispanic unit; joined the United States 3rd Infantry Division to be among the first infantry to engage in battle with North Korean troops; served with distinction to earn 4 Distinguished Service Crosses, 124 Silver Stars, 9 Korean battle campaign awards, the Presidential and Meritorious Unit Commendations, 2 Korean Presidential Unit Citations, and the Greek Gold Medal for Bravery; and are credited with launching the last recorded battalion-sized bayonet assault in United States Army history; and

Whereas, legendary United States Army General Douglas MacArthur lauded the Borinqueneers, crediting them with a resolute will to victory and loyalty to the United States, saying, ''They are writing a brilliant record of heroism in battle and I am indeed proud to have them under my command. I wish that we could count on many more like them;'' and

Whereas, in 1959, the Borinqueneers passed their colors to the National Guard of the United States Territory of Puerto Rico, withdrawing from the Regular Army, the only time in United States Army history that active unit colors were not retired, but, instead, turned over to a National Guard unit; and

Whereas, today, the legacy of the Borinqueneers lives on in the National Guard in Puerto Rico, which continues to defend the United States in the ongoing War on Terrorism; and

Whereas, the Borinqueneers served and sacrificed, shedding blood for our democracy and helping to ensure our prosperity as they faced segregation and discrimination, protecting our nation and fighting for the good of all; and

Whereas, these warriors, the Borinqueneers, deserve a place with all American heroes, and should be honored, commended, and never forgotten for their feats; and

Whereas, the Congressional Gold Medal is the highest civilian award given by the United States Congress, awarded as an expression of public gratitude on behalf of the nation for distinguished contributions: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved by the Legislature of the State of Florida, That, in recognition of the bravery and sacrifice of the United States 65th Infantry Regiment, the Borinqueneers, the President and the Congress of the United States are urged to award the Congressional Gold Medal to these true heroes and defenders of our great nation; and be it further

Resolved, That copies of this memorial be dispatched to the President of the United States, to the President of the United States Senate, to the Speaker of the United States House of Representatives, to each member of the Florida delegation to the United States Congress, to the Puerto Rico Resident Commissioner, to the President of the United States 65th Infantry Regiment Association, the chairman of the Hispanic Achievers Grant Council, the chairman of the Borinqueneers Congressional Gold Medal Alliance, and the National Association for Uniformed Services.

POM–136. A resolution adopted by the York County Commissioners, Maine, urging Congress to recognize the importance of the F–35 Lightning II to Maine, the United States and our allies around the world by supporting full funding and full production for the F–35 program; to the Committee on Armed Services.

POM–137. A concurrent resolution adopted by the General Assembly of the State of Ohio urging Congress to reconsider the statute and appropriations creating FirstNet; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

SENATE CONCURRENT RESOLUTION NO. 15

Whereas, Ohio's first responders require mission critical communications infrastructure to effectively do their jobs; and

Whereas, Ohio has invested over $500,000,000 in system assets that include over 200 tower sites, shelters, generators, mobile towers, microwave backhaul consoles, and mobile and portable radios; and

Whereas, Over 55,000 first responders and public service users at the federal, state, and local government levels rely on the assets that Ohio has invested in; and

Whereas, The federal Middle Class Tax Relief and Job Creation Act of 2012 created the First Responder Network Authority (FirstNet) within the United States Department of Commerce National Telecommunications and Information Administration and tasked FirstNet with building and maintaining a single, nationwide, interoperable broadband public safety network; and

Whereas, FirstNet is requiring states to inventory their assets and develop statewide plans to allow federal use or takeover of those assets for the undetermine nationwide broadband public safety network; and

Whereas, FirstNet is requiring states to opt into, and provide an undetermined level of financial support to, the nationwide broadband public safety network; and

Whereas, FirstNet appears to lack sufficient funding for the nationwide broadband public safety network, but is requiring a self-sustaining model; and

Whereas, FirstNet lacks planning and did not seek input from Ohio as evidenced by the witnesses who testified before, and submitted testimony to, the United States House of Representatives Committee on Energy and Commerce Subcommittee on Communications and Technology in a March 2013, hearing entitled ''Oversight of FirstNet and Emergency Communications'': Now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That we, the members of the 130th General Assembly of the State of Ohio, respectfully urge the Subcommittee on Communications and Technology to hold regular hearings regarding the nationwide broadband public safety network and require that FirstNet create a publicly vetted business plan that identifies the exact costs that Ohio will be mandated to appropriate or obligate for the nationwide broadband public safety network; and be it further

Resolved, That we, the members of the 130th General Assembly of the State of Ohio, respectfully urge the Subcommittee on Communications and Technology to include amendments to the law that would allow Ohio to opt-out of the nationwide broadband public safety network with no net costs; and be it further

Resolved, That we, the members of the 130th General Assembly of the State of Ohio, respectfully urge the Subcommittee on Communications and Technology to include amendments to the law that require FirstNet to provide full written assurances that communications provided by the nationwide broadband public safety network will meet and exceed the current level of service for Ohio's state and local public safety officers in the areas of reliability, redundancy, and state-based system control; and be it further

Resolved, That we, the members of the 130th General Assembly of the State of Ohio, respectfully urge the Subcommittee on Communications and Technology to include amendments to the law that require FirstNet to provide fair market compensation to Ohio for access and utilization of state-owned assets in support of the network's deployment; and be it further

Resolved, That we, the members of the 130th General Assembly of the State of Ohio, respectfully urge the United States Congress to reconsider the statute and appropriations creating FirstNet; and be if further

Resolved, That the Clerk of the Senate transmit duly authenticated copies of this resolution to the Speaker and Clerk of the United States House of Representatives, the President Pro Tempore and Secretary of the United States Senate, all members of the United States House of Representatives Energy and Commerce Committee, the members of the Ohio Congressional delegation, and the news media of Ohio.

POM–138. A concurrent resolution adopted by the Legislature of the State of Utah urging Congress to pass legislation that would reduce the federal tax on fuels by the amount of any increase in the rate of the tax on fuels by the states; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

SENATE CONCURRENT RESOLUTION NO. 6

Whereas, federal fuel taxes associated with the Federal Aid Highway Act of 1956 were implemented to construct a 41,250-mile National System of Interstate and Defense Highways, commonly called the Interstate System;

Whereas, the Interstate System, with more than 46,000 miles open to traffic, has been completed for more than 20 years;

Whereas, federal highway user fees are increasingly used for nonhighway purposes;

Whereas, states are required to adopt federal labor regulations, such as Davis-Bacon rules, that can substantially increase project costs; and to the members of Utah's congressional delegation.

POM–139. A resolution adopted by the House of Representatives of the State of Michigan urging Congress to enact amendments to the federal Electronic Communications Privacy Act to require law enforcement authorities to have a warrant to access e-mail, no matter the age or location of the email; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

HOUSE RESOLUTION NO. 30

Whereas, More and more citizens rely on electronic mail communication to conduct both private and professional business. Our ability to store communications at locations other than where the communication originated, such as ''in the cloud,'' has contributed to new challenges in protecting individual's privacy. ECPA fails to adequately protect Americans from unreasonable searches of their private information stored with cloud and mobile providers; and

Whereas, The 6th U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals has ruled that law enforcement must have a valid warrant to access e-mail stored on a provider's server, no matter the age of the e-mail. However, rulings in the lower courts have limited jurisdiction. E-mail providers and storage location can be anywhere in the United States and possibly the world; and

Whereas, Google, Inc. has stated that it will not release any e-mails, regardless of age, without a warrant. Google officials note that the U.S. Constitution's Fourth Amendment protects against unreasonable searches and seizures and that Amendment takes priority over ECPA;

Whereas, The United States Senate had before it an amendment last November that would have required warrants for all e-mail seizures. However, that amendment was stripped from the vehicle bill before passage; and

Whereas, The legislature finds that, in an era where technology dominates communication and increasingly more business-related and sensitive information is being stored via cloud-based email, more than ever, it is important for government to protect the rights of privacy and due process afforded to all of our state's residents: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved by the House of Representatives, That we urge Congress to enact amendments to the federal Electronic Communications Privacy Act to require law enforcement authorities to have a warrant to access email, no matter the age or location of the e-mail; and be it further

Resolved, That copies of this resolution be transmitted to the President of the United States Senate, the Speaker of the United States House of Representatives, and the members of the Michigan congressional delegation.

POM–140. A concurrent resolution adopted by the Legislature of the State of Louisiana memorializing the Congress of the United States to enact legislation that promotes growth of domestic alternative fuel sources, such as natural gas, and reduces dependence on foreign oil; to the Committee on Energy and Natural Resources.

HOUSE CONCURRENT RESOLUTION NO. 132

Whereas, the United States needs a balanced and sensible domestic energy policy; and

Whereas, the Renewable Fuel Standard, established by the Energy Policy Act of 2005 and expanded and extended by the Energy Independence and Security Act of 2007, requires the blending of increasing volumes of designated renewable fuels into the total transportation fuel supply, in a large part, as a way to reduce our country's dependence on foreign petroleum; and

Whereas, reducing dependence on foreign oil is not only a matter of national security but a significant opportunity to enhance economic prosperity and job growth in Louisiana; and

Whereas, currently there are multiple routes to ethanol, including several from traditional fossil fuels such as natural gas, which is plentiful in Louisiana and several other states in the country; and

Whereas, Louisiana is committed to being a leader in development of a sustainable national energy policy: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the Legislature of Louisiana does hereby memorialize the United States Congress to take such actions as are necessary to enact legislation that promotes growth of domestic alternative fuel sources, such as natural gas, and reduces dependence on foreign oil; and be it further

Resolved, That a copy of this Resolution be transmitted to the presiding officers of the Senate and the House of Representatives of the Congress of the United States of America and to each member of the Louisiana congressional delegation.

POM–141. A resolution adopted by the California State Lands Commission memorializing support for the Federal Land Transaction Facilitation Act Reauthorization of 2013; to the Committee on Energy and Natural Resources.

POM–142. A resolution adopted by the California State Lands Commission urging Congress to ensure that the entire Harbor Maintenance and Trust Fund receipts and interest is for the intended purpose of maintaining navigation channels; to the Committee on Environment and Public Works.

POM–143. A resolution adopted by the Lancaster City Council, California urging Congress to enact comprehensive immigration

reform; to the Committee on Foreign Relations.

POM–144. A communication from citizens of California memorializing their support for the President's plan to increase investments for preschool and early childhood education; to the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions.

POM–145. A resolution adopted by the House of Representatives of the General Assembly of the State of Delaware memorializing a commitment to the strong and deepening relationship between Taiwan and Delaware; to the Committee on Foreign Relations.

HOUSE RESOLUTION NO. 12

Whereas, Taiwan and the United States are long-standing friends with a shared historical relationship and dearly cherished values of freedom, democracy, and human rights; and

Whereas, 2013 will mark the 13th anniversary of the sister-state relationship between Delaware and Taiwan; and

Whereas, for the past 12 years, the sister-state relationship with Taiwan has been strengthened through the efforts of the Taipei Economic and Cultural Representative Office (TECRO) resulting in better mutual understanding; and

Whereas, Taiwan is the world's eighteenth largest economy, one of the key trading partners of the United States, and the two-way trade volume between the United States and Taiwan reached sixty-three billion dollars in 2012; and

Whereas, Taiwan is now a member of the U.S. Visa Waiver program (effective November 1st, 2012); reflecting our friendship, trust, and cooperation, and making travel between Taiwan and the United States for business and tourism even more convenient; and

Whereas, negotiations for a Bilateral Investment Agreement (BIA) between Taiwan and the United States are ongoing and are an important step towards strengthening bilateral trade and paving the way for a Free Trade Agreement (FTA); and

Whereas, President Barack Obama and the leaders of eight Trans-Pacific Partnership (TPP) countries announced the achievement of the broad outlines for a 21st century TPP agreement on November 12, 2011, and Taiwan has expressed a keen interest to participate, so as to forge close linkages among economics, enhance competitiveness, and benefit consumers: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved by the House of Representatives of the 147th General Assembly of the State of Delaware, that we hereby reaffirm our commitment to the strong and deepening relationship between Taiwan and Delaware; and be it further

Resolved, that a copy of this resolution be sent to the President of the United States, the President of the United States Senate, and the Speaker of the United States House of Representatives.

POM–146. A resolution adopted by the Senate of the Legislature of the State of West Virginia urging the United States Congress to begin the process of amending the Constitution to provide that corporations are not entitled to the entirety of protections or rights of natural persons, specifically so that the expenditure of corporate money to influence the electoral process is no longer a form of constitutionally protected speech; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

SENATE RESOLUTION NO. 24

Calling upon the United States Congress to propose a constitutional amendment addressing the Supreme Court decision in Citizens United v. Federal Elections Commission.

Whereas, in 2010, the United States Supreme Court issued its ruling in Citizens United v. Federal Election Commission that enabled corporations and unions to spend unlimited amounts of money in support of or in opposition to candidates for election; and

Whereas, the people of West Virginia and all other states should have the power to limit by law the extent to which money can be spent in their political systems: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved by the Senate: That the Senate hereby calls upon the United States Congress to propose a constitutional amendment addressing the Supreme Court decision in Citizens United v. Federal Elections Commission; and be it further

Resolved, that the West Virginia Senate supports an amendment to the United States Constitution to establish that corporations and unions are not entitled to the same rights and protections as natural persons under the Constitution; and be it further

Resolved, that such an amendment should assure the power of the federal, state and local governments to limit, regulate and require disclosure of sources of all money spent in the course of political elections; and be it further

Resolved, that the West Virginia Senate requests that the West Virginia Congressional Delegation support such an the United States had the opportunity to vote on state and local ballot measures, including the states of Montana and Colorado, calling for a constitutional amendment to limit money in politics, including the entire states of Montana and Colorado, and all proposed resolutions passed with overwhelming and bipartisan support, averaging seventy-five percent of voters in favor: Now therefore, be it

Resolved by the Senate: That the Senate calls upon the United States Congress to propose a constitutional amendment overturning the United States Supreme Court's Citizens United v. Federal Election Commission ruling and related cases; and be it further

Resolved, that the West Virginia Senate supports an amendment to the United States Constitution to establish that corporations and unions are not entitled to the same rights and protections as natural persons under the Constitution; and, be it

Resolved, that such an amendment should assure the power of the federal, state and local governments to limit, regulate and require disclosure of sources of all money spent to influence elections; and, be it

Resolved, that the West Virginia Senate requests that the West Virginia Congressional Delegation support such an amendment, work diligently towards its passage and vote at all stages to advance such legislation in the Congress; and, be it

Further Resolved, that the Clerk is hereby directed to forward a copy of this resolution to the Vice President of the United States and the President pro Tempore of the United States Senate, to the Speaker of the House of Representatives, to the majority and minority leaders of both houses of Congress and to each United States Senator and Member of the House of Representatives from West Virginia.

Opposing the United States Supreme Court's interpretation of the Constitution in Citizens United v. Federal Election Commission regarding the constitutional rights of corporations; supporting an amendment to the Constitution to provide that corporations are not entitled to the entirety of protections or rights of natural persons, specifically so that the expenditure of corporate money to influence the electoral process is no longer a form of constitutionally protected speech; and calling on Congress to begin the process of amending the Constitution.

Whereas, in 2010 the United States Supreme Court issued its decision in Citizens United v. Federal Election Commission, holding that independent spending on elections by corporations and other groups could not be limited by government regulations; and

Whereas, this decision rolled back the legal restrictions on corporate spending in the electoral process, allowing for the unlimited corporate spending to influence elections, candidate selection and policy decisions; and

Whereas, in reaching this decision, a narrow majority of the Supreme Court, relying on and expanding prior decisions, interpreted the First Amendment of the Constitution to afford corporations the same free speech protections as natural persons; and

Whereas, the Supreme Court relied on other prior decisions which afforded the spending of money to influence elections the full protection of the First Amendment and disregarded the distorting and corrupting effects of unlimited money in elections; and

Whereas, in his eloquent dissent, Justice John Paul Stevens rightly recognized that, ''corporations have no consciences, no beliefs, no feelings, no thoughts, no desires. Corporations help structure and facilitate the activities of human beings, to be sure, and their 'personhood' often serves as a useful legal fiction. But they are not themselves members of 'We the People' by whom and for whom our Constitution was established''; and

Whereas, the court's decision in Citizens United severely hampers the ability of federal, state and local governments to enact reasonable campaign finance reforms and regulations regarding corporate political activity; and

Whereas, corporations should not be afforded the entirety of protections or rights of natural persons, such that the expenditure of corporate money to influence the electoral process is a form of constitutionally protected speech; and

Whereas, in 2012 the same narrow majority of the Supreme Court voted to strike down longstanding campaign finance laws in the State of Montana without hearing any evidence or argument on that state's own history and experience with corporate spending and corruption; and

Whereas, several proposed amendments to the Constitution have been introduced in Congress that would allow government to regulate the raising and spending of money by corporations to influence elections; and

Whereas, on Election Day, 2012, over six million voters across the United States, including the states of Colorado and Montana, had the opportunity to vote on state and local ballot measures calling for a constitutional amendment to limit money in politics, and all proposed initiatives passed overwhelmingly, averaging seventy-five percent support: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved by the Senate, That the Senate opposes the United States Supreme Court's interpretation of the Constitution in Citizens United V. Federal Election Commission regarding the constitutional rights of corporations; supports an amendment to the Constitution to provide that corporations are not entitled to the entirety of protections or rights of natural persons, specifically so that the expenditure of corporate money to influence the electoral process is no longer a form of constitutionally protected speech; and calls on Congress to begin the process of amending the Constitution; and be it further

Resolved, that the Senate respectfully opposes the United States Supreme Court's interpretation of the Constitution in Citizens United v. Federal Election Commission and related cases allowing unlimited corporate election spending; and be it further

Resolved, that the Senate supports an amendment to the United States Constitution to establish that corporations are not entitled to the same rights and protection as natural persons under the Constitution; and, be it

Further Resolved, that such an amendment should assure the power of the federal, state and local governments to limit, regulate and require disclosure of sources of all money spent to influence elections; and be it further

Resolved, that the Senate charges the West Virginia Congressional Delegation with the duty to support such an amendment, to work diligently towards its passage and to vote at all stages to advance such legislation in the Congress; and be it further

Resolved, that the Senate declares its intention to ratify such an amendment if and when the Congress shall submit it to the states; and be it further

Resolved, that the Clerk is hereby directed to deliver a copy of this resolution to the Vice President of the United States and the President pro tempore of the United States Senate, to the Speaker of the House of Representatives, to the Majority and Minority Leaders of both houses of Congress and to each United States Senator and Member of the House of Representatives from West Virginia.

POM–147. A resolution adopted by the Municipal Legislature of Catano, Puerto Rico petitioning for the release of a Puerto Rican political prisoner; to the Committee on the Judiciary; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

POM–148. A resolution adopted by the Alabama Town Board, New York memorializing opposition to any legislation which infringes upon the right of the people to keep and bear arms; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

POM–149. A concurrent resolution adopted by the Legislature of the State of Louisiana memorializing the United States Congress to take such actions as are necessary to operate the fleet of the United States Postal Service vehicles on natural gas; to the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs.

HOUSE CONCURRENT RESOLUTION NO. 180

Whereas, since its founding in 1775, the United States Postal Service has been an indispensable part of the country's communication network; and

Whereas, the modern United States Postal Office has struggled to compete with the package delivery services of the Federal Express and the United Parcel Service; and

Whereas, with the decline in first class mail volume and increased competition in package delivery, the United States Postal Office loses billions every year; and

Whereas, in attempts to stay solvent the United States Postal Office has delivered more junk mail, closed smaller postal offices, and considered ending mail deliveries on Saturdays; and

Whereas, one avenue that the United States Postal Office has not explored is the operation of the Postal Service motor vehicle fleet on natural gas; and

Whereas, on average natural gas costs one-third less than gasoline at the pump and natural gas is convenient and abundant; and

Whereas, natural gas prices have exhibited significant stability compared to oil prices and this stability makes it easier to plan accurately for long-term costs; and

Whereas, natural gas vehicles have lower maintenance costs because the gas burns cleanly resulting in less wear and tear on engines; and

Whereas, the operation of the fleet of the United States Postal Service vehicles on natural gas would be an excellent way to save the United States Postal Service millions of dollars each year while making their vehicles safer and more efficient: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved, that the Legislature of Louisiana does hereby memorialize the United States Congress to take such actions as are necessary to operate the fleet of the United States Postal Service vehicles on natural gas; and be it further

Resolved, that a copy of this Resolution be transmitted to the presiding officers of the Senate and the House of Representatives of the Congress of the United States of America and to each member of the Louisiana congressional delegation.

EXECUTIVE REPORTS OF COMMITTEE

The following executive reports of nominations were submitted:

By Mr. LEAHY for the Committee on the Judiciary.

Zachary Thomas Fardon, of Illinois, to be United States Attorney for the Northern District of Illinois for the term of four years.

Patricia M. Wald, of the District of Columbia, to be a Member of the Privacy and Civil Liberties Oversight Board for a term expiring January 29, 2019.

(Nominations without an asterisk were reported with the recommendation that they be confirmed.)

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 Ms. BALDWIN:

S. 1552. A bill to demonstrate a commitment to our nation's scientists by increasing opportunities for the development of our next generation of teachers; to the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions.

By Ms. AYOTTE:

S. 1553. A bill to amend title 23, United States Code, to reauthorize the State infrastructure bank program; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

By Mr. HEINRICH:

S. 1554. A bill to direct the heads of Federal public land management agencies to prepare reports on the availability of public access and egress to Federal public land for hunting, fishing, and other recreational purposes, to amend the Land and Water Conservation Fund Act of 1965 to provide funding for recreational public access to Federal land, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Energy and Natural Resources.

By Mr. WICKER:

S. 1555. A bill to amend titles XVIII and XIX of the Social Security Act to provide for a delay in the implementation schedule of the reductions in disproportionate share hospital payments, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Finance.

SUBMISSION OF CONCURRENT AND SENATE RESOLUTIONS

The following concurrent resolutions and Senate resolutions were read, and referred (or acted upon), as indicated:

By Mr. GRAHAM (for himself, Mrs. HAGAN, Mr. COONS, Mr. COCHRAN, Mr. ISAKSON, Ms. LANDRIEU, Mr. CASEY, Mr. PRYOR, Ms. MIKULSKI, Mr. DURBIN, Mr. BLUNT, Mrs. MURRAY, Mr. ALEXANDER, Mr. BURR, Mr. BOOZMAN, Mr. NELSON, Mr. MURPHY, Mr. KAINE, Mr. CARDIN, Mrs. FEINSTEIN, Mr. COBURN, Mr. GRASSLEY, and Mr. SESSIONS):

S. Res. 261. A resolution designating the week beginning September 23, 2013, as ''National Historically Black Colleges and Universities Week''; considered and agreed to.

By Mr. DONNELLY (for himself, Mr. ISAKSON, Mr. BEGICH, Mr. BOOZMAN, Mr. CHAMBLISS, Ms. HIRONO, and Mr. TESTER):

S. Res. 262. A resolution supporting the goals and ideals of suicide prevention awareness; considered and agreed to.

By Mr. WHITEHOUSE (for himself, Mr. BLUMENTHAL, Mrs. FEINSTEIN, Mr. NELSON, Mr. WARNER, Ms. COLLINS, Mr. REED, Mr. SCHUMER, Mr. COCHRAN, Mr. COONS, Mrs. BOXER, Mr. KING, Mr. DURBIN, Mr. BEGICH, Mr. SCHATZ, Mrs. SHAHEEN, Mr. MARKEY, Mr. CARDIN, Mrs. MURRAY, Ms. LANDRIEU, Ms. HIRONO, Ms. MIKULSKI, Ms. CANTWELL, Mr. MENENDEZ, Mrs. GILLIBRAND, and Ms. WARREN):

S. Res. 263. A resolution designating the week of September 23 through September 29, 2013, as ''National Estuaries Week''; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

ADDITIONAL COSPONSORS

S. 252

At the request of Mr. BENNET, the name of the Senator from Vermont (Mr. LEAHY) was added as a cosponsor of S. 252, a bill to reduce preterm labor and delivery and the risk of pregnancy-related deaths and complications due to pregnancy, and to reduce infant mortality caused by prematurity.

S. 313

At the request of Mr. CASEY, the name of the Senator from Illinois (Mr. KIRK) was added as a cosponsor of S. 313, a bill to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to provide for the tax treatment of ABLE accounts established under State programs for the care of family members with disabilities, and for other purposes.

S. 338

At the request of Mr. BAUCUS, the name of the Senator from Maryland (Mr. CARDIN) was added as a cosponsor 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. 348

At the request of Mr. ROCKEFELLER, the name of the Senator from Pennsylvania (Mr. CASEY) was added as a cosponsor of S. 348, a bill to provide for increased Federal oversight of prescription opioid treatment and assistance to States in reducing opioid abuse, diversion, and deaths.

S. 357

At the request of Mr. CARDIN, the name of the Senator from Texas (Mr. CORNYN) was added as a cosponsor of S.

357, a bill to encourage, enhance, and integrate Blue Alert plans throughout the United States in order to disseminate information when a law enforcement officer is seriously injured or killed in the line of duty.

S. 381

At the request of Mr. BROWN, the name of the Senator from Wisconsin (Ms. BALDWIN) was added as a cosponsor of S. 381, a bill to award a Congressional Gold Medal to the World War II members of the ''Doolittle Tokyo Raiders'', for outstanding heroism, valor, skill, and service to the United States in conducting the bombings of Tokyo.

S. 557

At the request of Mrs. HAGAN, the name of the Senator from North Dakota (Ms. HEITKAMP) was added as a cosponsor of S. 557, a bill to amend title XVIII of the Social Security Act to improve access to medication therapy management under part D of the Medicare program.

S. 635

At the request of Mr. BROWN, the name of the Senator from Massachusetts (Ms. WARREN) was added as a cosponsor of S. 635, a bill to amend the Gramm-Leach-Bliley Act to provide an exception to the annual written privacy notice requirement.

S. 641

At the request of Mr. WYDEN, the name of the Senator from Massachusetts (Ms. WARREN) was added as a cosponsor of S. 641, a bill to amend the Public Health Service Act to increase the number of permanent faculty in palliative care at accredited allopathic and osteopathic medical schools, nursing schools, and other programs, to promote education in palliative care and hospice, and to support the development of faculty careers in academic palliative medicine.

S. 734

At the request of Mr. NELSON, the name of the Senator from Florida (Mr. RUBIO) was added as a cosponsor of S. 734, a bill to amend title 10, United States Code, to repeal the requirement for reduction of survivor annuities under the Survivor Benefit Plan by veterans' dependency and indemnity compensation.

S. 822

At the request of Mr. LEAHY, the name of the Senator from Minnesota (Mr. FRANKEN) was added as a cosponsor of S. 822, a bill to protect crime victims' rights, to eliminate the substantial backlog of DNA samples collected from crime scenes and convicted offenders, to improve and expand the DNA testing capacity of Federal, State, and local crime laboratories, to increase research and development of new DNA testing technologies, to develop new training programs regarding the collection and use of DNA evidence, to provide post conviction testing of DNA evidence to exonerate the innocent, to improve the performance of counsel in State capital cases, and for other purposes.

S. 1158

At the request of Mr. WARNER, the name of the Senator from Alaska (Ms. MURKOWSKI) was added as a cosponsor of S. 1158, a bill to require the Secretary of the Treasury to mint coins commemorating the 100th anniversary of the establishment of the National Park Service, and for other purposes.

S. 1302

At the request of Mr. HARKIN, the name of the Senator from Mississippi (Mr. WICKER) was added as a cosponsor of S. 1302, a bill to amend the Employee Retirement Income Security Act of 1974 and the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to provide for cooperative and small employer charity pension plans.

S. 1349

At the request of Mr. MORAN, the names of the Senator from North Dakota (Ms. HEITKAMP) and the Senator from Arkansas (Mr. PRYOR) were added as cosponsors of S. 1349, a bill to enhance the ability of community financial institutions to foster economic growth and serve their communities, boost small businesses, increase individual savings, and for other purposes.

S. 1381

At the request of Mr. BLUMENTHAL, the name of the Senator from Rhode Island (Mr. WHITEHOUSE) was added as a cosponsor of S. 1381, a bill to amend the Lacey Act Amendments of 1981 to clarify provisions enacted by the Captive Wildlife Safety Act, to further the conservation of certain wildlife species, and for other purposes.

S. 1405

At the request of Mr. SCHUMER, the name of the Senator from Montana (Mr. TESTER) was added as a cosponsor of S. 1405, a bill to amend title XVIII of the Social Security Act to provide for an extension of certain ambulance add-on payments under the Medicare program.

S. 1417

At the request of Mrs. HAGAN, the names of the Senator from Maine (Ms. COLLINS) and the Senator from New York (Mr. SCHUMER) were added as cosponsors of S. 1417, a bill to amend the Public Health Service Act to reauthorize programs under part A of title XI of such Act.

S. 1488

At the request of Mr. COATS, the name of the Senator from Nevada (Mr. HELLER) was added as a cosponsor of S. 1488, a bill to delay the application of the individual health insurance mandate, to delay the application of the employer health insurance mandate, and for other purposes.

S. 1537

At the request of Mr. BLUNT, the names of the Senator from Minnesota (Ms. KLOBUCHAR), the Senator from Missouri (Mrs. MCCASKILL), the Senator from Louisiana (Mr. VITTER), the Senator from New Hampshire (Ms. AYOTTE), and the Senator from Indiana (Mr. COATS) were added as cosponsors of S. 1537, a bill to ensure that any new or revised requirement providing for the screening, testing, or treatment of individuals operating commercial motor vehicles for sleep disorders is adopted through a rulemaking proceeding, and for other purposes.

S. 1541

At the request of Mr. UDALL of Colorado, the names of the Senator from Michigan (Ms. STABENOW) and the Senator from Alabama (Mr. SESSIONS) were added as cosponsors of S. 1541, a bill to appropriate such funds as may be necessary to ensure that members of the Armed Forces, including reserve components thereof, and supporting civilian and contractor personnel continue to receive pay and allowances for active service performed when a Governmentwide shutdown occurs, and for other purposes.

S. 1548

At the request of Mr. DURBIN, the name of the Senator from Florida (Mr. NELSON) was added as a cosponsor of S. 1548, a bill to authorize the President to provide assistance to the Governments of Haiti and Armenia to reverse the effects of deforestation and restore within 20 years the extent of forest levels in Haiti and Armenia in existence during the year 1990, and for other purposes.

S. CON. RES. 21

At the request of Ms. LANDRIEU, the name of the Senator from Missouri (Mrs. MCCASKILL) was added as a cosponsor of S. Con. Res. 21, a concurrent resolution expressing the sense of Congress that construction of the Keystone XL pipeline and the Federal approvals required for the construction of the Keystone XL pipeline are in the national interest of the United States.

AMENDMENT NO. 1980

At the request of Mr. JOHANNS, his name was added as a cosponsor of amendment No. 1980 intended to be proposed to H.J. Res. 59, a joint resolution making continuing appropriations for fiscal year 2014, and for other purposes.

SUBMITTED RESOLUTIONS

SENATE RESOLUTION 261—DESIGNATING THE WEEK BEGINNING SEPTEMBER 23, 2013, AS ''NATIONAL HISTORICALLY BLACK COLLEGES AND UNIVERSITIES WEEK''

Mr. GRAHAM (for himself, Mrs. HAGAN, Mr. COONS, Mr. COCHRAN, Mr. ISAKSON, Ms. LANDRIEU, Mr. CASEY, Mr. PRYOR, Ms. MIKULSKI, Mr. DURBIN, Mr. BLUNT, Mrs. MURRAY, Mr. ALEXANDER, Mr. BURR, Mr. BOOZMAN, Mr. NELSON, Mr. MURPHY, Mr. KAINE, Mr. CARDIN, Mrs. FEINSTEIN, Mr. COBURN, Mr. GRASSLEY, and Mr. SESSIONS) submitted the following resolution; which was considered and agreed to:

S. RES. 261

Whereas, there are 106 historically Black colleges and universities in the United States;

Whereas, historically Black colleges and universities provide the quality education essential to full participation in a complex, highly technological society;

Whereas, historically Black colleges and universities have a rich heritage and have played a prominent role in the history of the United States;

Whereas, historically Black colleges and universities allow talented and diverse students, many of whom represent underserved populations, to attain their full potential through higher education; and

Whereas, the achievements and goals of historically Black colleges and universities are deserving of national recognition: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the Senate—

(1) designates the week beginning September 23, 2013, as ''National Historically Black Colleges and Universities Week''; and

(2) calls on the people of the United States and interested groups to observe the week with appropriate ceremonies, activities, and programs to demonstrate support for historically Black colleges and universities in the United States.

SENATE RESOLUTION 262—SUPPORTING THE GOALS AND IDEALS OF SUICIDE PREVENTION AWARENESS

Mr. DONNELLY (for himself, Mr. ISAKSON, Mr. BEGICH, Mr. BOOZMAN, Mr. CHAMBLISS, Ms. HIRONO, and Mr. TESTER) submitted the following resolution; which was considered and agreed to:

S. RES. 262

Whereas, suicide is the tenth leading cause of all deaths in the United States and the second leading cause of death among individuals between the ages of 10 and 34;

Whereas, on average, there is a death by suicide in the United States every 13.7 minutes;

Whereas, an estimated 6,000,000 individuals in the United States are survivors of suicide, meaning they have lost a loved one to suicide;

Whereas, suicide is a leading noncombat cause of death among members of the Armed Forces;

Whereas, on average, 22 veterans are lost to suicide in the United States each day;

Whereas, the Joshua Omvig Veterans Suicide Prevention Act (Public Law 110–110; 121 Stat. 1031) was enacted in 2007 to establish a comprehensive program for suicide prevention among veterans;

Whereas, the Veterans Crisis Line, which was established under the Joshua Omvig Veteran Suicide Prevention Act, has received more than 890,000 telephone calls and facilitated more than 30,000 life-saving rescues;

Whereas, the stigma associated with mental illness and suicidality works against suicide prevention by discouraging individuals at risk of suicide from seeking life-saving help and further traumatizes survivors of suicide;

Whereas, 90 percent of the individuals who die by suicide have a diagnosable psychiatric disorder at the time of death;

Whereas, many suicides are preventable; and

Whereas, September is National Suicide Prevention Awareness Month: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the Senate—

(1) supports the goals and ideals of National Suicide Prevention Awareness Month;

(2) supports efforts during National Suicide Prevention Awareness Month to raise awareness and improve outreach to individuals at risk for suicide, especially such efforts addressed to veterans and members of the Armed Forces; and

(3) encourages the people of the United States to learn more about the warning signs of suicide and how each person can help prevent suicide and promote mental health.

SENATE RESOLUTION 263—DESIGNATING THE WEEK OF SEPTEMBER 23 THROUGH SEPTEMBER 29, 2013, AS ''NATIONAL ESTUARIES WEEK''

Mr. WHITEHOUSE (for himself, Mr. BLUMENTHAL, Mrs. FEINSTEIN, Mr. NELSON, Mr. WARNER, Ms. COLLINS, Mr. REED of Rhode Island, Mr. SCHUMER, Mr. COCHRAN, Mr. COONS, Mrs. BOXER, Mr. KING, Mr. DURBIN, Mr. BEGICH, Mr. SCHATZ, Mrs. SHAHEEN, Mr. MARKEY, Mr. CARDIN, Mrs. MURRAY, Ms. LANDRIEU, Ms. HIRONO, Ms. MIKULSKI, Ms. CANTWELL, Mr. MENENDEZ, Mrs. GILLIBRAND, and Ms. WARREN) submitted the following resolution; which was referred to the Committee on the Judiciary:

S. RES. 263

Whereas, the estuary regions of the United States constitute a significant share of the economy of the United States, with as much as 41 percent of the gross domestic product of the United States generated in coastal shoreline counties;

Whereas, the population of coastal shoreline counties in the United States increased by 39 percent from 1970 to 2010 and is projected to continue to increase;

Whereas, not less than 1,900,000 jobs in the United States are supported by marine tourism and recreation and other coastal industries that rely on healthy estuaries;

Whereas, the commercial and recreational fishing industries rely on healthy estuaries and directly support 1,700,000 jobs in the United States;

Whereas, in 2011, commercial fish landings generated $5,300,000,000 and recreational anglers spent $26,780,000,000;

Whereas, estuaries provide vital habitats for countless species of fish and wildlife, including many species that are listed as threatened or endangered species;

Whereas, estuaries provide critical ecosystem services that protect human health and public safety, including water filtration, flood control, shoreline stabilization, erosion prevention, and the protection of coastal communities during extreme weather events;

Whereas, the United States has lost more than 110,000,000 acres of wetland, or 50 percent of the wetland of the United States, since the first European settlers arrived;

Whereas, bays in the United States that were once filled with fish and oysters have become dead zones filled with excess nutrients, chemical wastes, harmful algae, and marine debris;

Whereas, changes in sea level can affect estuarine water quality and estuarine habitats;

Whereas, the Coastal Zone Management Act of 1972 (16 U.S.C. 1451 et seq.) provides that it is the policy of the United States to preserve, protect, develop, and, if possible, restore or enhance the resources of the coastal zone of the United States, including estuaries, for current and future generations;

Whereas, 24 coastal and Great Lakes States and territories of the United States operate a National Estuary Program or contain a National Estuarine Research Reserve;

Whereas, scientific study leads to better understanding of the benefits of estuaries to human and ecological communities;

Whereas, the Federal Government, State, local, and tribal governments, national and community organizations, and individuals work together to effectively manage the estuaries of the United States;

Whereas, estuary restoration efforts restore natural infrastructure in local communities in a cost-effective manner, helping to create jobs and reestablish the natural functions of estuaries that yield countless benefits; and

Whereas, the week of September 23 through September 29, 2013, has been recognized as ''National Estuaries Week'' to increase awareness among all people of the United States, including Federal Government and State and local government officials, about the importance of healthy estuaries and the need to protect and restore estuaries: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the Senate—

(1) designates the week of September 23 through September 29, 2013, as ''National Estuaries Week'';

(2) supports the goals and ideals of National Estuaries Week;

(3) acknowledges the importance of estuaries to sustaining employment in the United States and the economic well-being and prosperity of the United States;

(4) recognizes that persistent threats undermine the health of the estuaries of the United States;

(5) applauds the work of national and community organizations and public partners that promote public awareness, understanding, protection, and restoration of estuaries;

(6) reaffirms the support of the Senate for estuaries, including the scientific study, preservation, protection, and restoration of estuaries; and

(7) expresses the intent of the Senate to continue working to understand, protect, and restore the estuaries of the United States.

AMENDMENTS SUBMITTED AND PROPOSED

SA 1982. Mr. JOHNSON of Wisconsin submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by him to the joint resolution H.J. Res. 59, making continuing appropriations for fiscal year 2014, and for other purposes; which was ordered to lie on the table.

SA 1983. Mr. VITTER submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by him to the joint resolution H.J. Res. 59, supra; which was ordered to lie on the table.

SA 1984. Mr. ENZI submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by him to the joint resolution H.J. Res. 59, supra; which was ordered to lie on the table.

SA 1985. Mr. ENZI (for himself, Mr. PAUL, Mr. BARRASSO, Mr. ISAKSON, Mr. RISCH, Mr. RUBIO, and Mr. VITTER) submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by him to the joint resolution H.J. Res. 59, supra; which was ordered to lie on the table.

SA 1986. Mr. ENZI submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by him to the joint resolution H.J. Res. 59, supra; which was ordered to lie on the table.

SA 1987. Mr. PORTMAN submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by him to the joint resolution H.J. Res. 59, supra; which was ordered to lie on the table.

SA 1988. Mr. ISAKSON submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by him to the joint resolution H.J. Res. 59, supra; which was ordered to lie on the table.

SA 1989. Mr. COBURN submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by him to the joint resolution H.J. Res. 59, supra; which was ordered to lie on the table.

SA 1990. Mr. UDALL of Colorado (for himself and Mr. BENNET) submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by him to the joint resolution H.J. Res. 59, supra; which was ordered to lie on the table.

SA 1991. Mr. MCCAIN submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by him to the joint resolution H.J. Res. 59, supra; which was ordered to lie on the table.

SA 1992. Mr. PAUL (for himself, Mr. CORNYN, Mr. COBURN, and Mr. BURR) submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by him to the joint resolution H.J. Res. 59, supra; which was ordered to lie on the table.

SA 1993. Mrs. SHAHEEN (for herself, Mr. MCCAIN, Mr. LEAHY, and Mr. GRAHAM) submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by her to the joint resolution H.J. Res. 59, supra; which was ordered to lie on the table.

SA 1994. Mrs. SHAHEEN (for herself, Mr. MCCAIN, Mr. LEAHY, and Mr. GRAHAM) submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by her to the joint resolution H.J. Res. 59, supra; which was ordered to lie on the table.

SA 1995. Mrs. SHAHEEN submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by her to the joint resolution H.J. Res. 59, supra; which was ordered to lie on the table.

SA 1996. Mr. INHOFE submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by him to the joint resolution H.J. Res. 59, supra; which was ordered to lie on the table.

SA 1997. Mr. INHOFE (for himself, Mr. MCCONNELL, and Mr. VITTER) submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by him to the joint resolution H.J. Res. 59, supra; which was ordered to lie on the table.

SA 1998. Mr. TESTER (for Mr. CARPER) proposed an amendment to the bill S. 1348, to reauthorize the Congressional Award Act.

TEXT OF AMENDMENTS

SA 1982. Mr. JOHNSON of Wisconsin submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by him to the joint resolution H.J. Res. 59, making continuing appropriations for fiscal year 2014, and for other purposes; which was ordered to lie on the table; as follows:

At the appropriate place, insert the following:

SEC. _____. NO GOVERNMENT CONTRIBUTION TO THE HEALTH BENEFITS OF MEMBERS OF CONGRESS AND THEIR STAFFS.

None of the funds made available under this joint resolution may be used to make a Government contribution relating to enrollment in a health plan pursuant to section 1312(d)(3)(D) of the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act (42 U.S.C. 18032(d)(3)(D)), as such Government contributions are not authorized under that Act.

SA 1983. Mr. VITTER submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by him to the joint resolution H.J. Res. 59, making continuing appropriations for fiscal year 2014, and for other purposes; which was ordered to lie on the table; as follows:

At the appropriate place, insert the following:

SEC. _____. PROHIBITION ON USE OF FUNDS FOR CERTAIN GOVERNMENT HEALTH INSURANCE CONTRIBUTIONS.

(a) IN GENERAL.—No Federal funds in this resolution shall be made available for any government contribution provided for under section 8906 of title 5, United States Code, with respect to—

(1) a Member of Congress;

(2) Congressional staff (including all full-time and part-time employees employed by the official office of a Member of Congress (whether in Washington, DC or outside of Washington, DC), a standing, select or joint committee of Congress, or a leadership office of the House of Representatives or the Senate;

(3) the President;

(4) the Vice President; or

(5) a political appointee.

(b) POLITICAL APPOINTEE.—In this section, the term ''political appointee'' means any individual who—

(1) is employed in a position described under sections 5312 through 5316 of title 5, United States Code, (relating to the Executive Schedule);

(2) is a limited term appointee, limited emergency appointee, or noncareer appointee in the Senior Executive Service, as defined under paragraphs (5), (6), and (7), respectively, of section 3132(a) of title 5, United States Code; or

(3) is employed in a position in the executive branch of the Government of a confidential or policy-determining character under schedule C of subpart C of part 213 of title 5 of the Code of Federal Regulations.

SA 1984. Mr. ENZI submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by him to the joint resolution H.J. Res. 59, making continuing appropriations for fiscal year 2014, and for other purposes; which was ordered to lie on the table; as follows:

At the appropriate place, insert the following:

TITLE ____—BIENNIAL APPROPRIATIONS

SEC. __01. SHORT TITLE.

This title may be cited as the ''Biennial Appropriations Act''.

SEC. __02. REVISION OF TIMETABLE.

Section 300 of the Congressional Budget Act of 1974 (2 U.S.C. 631) is amended to read as follows:

''TIMETABLE

''SEC. 300. (a) TIMETABLE.—

''(1) IN GENERAL.—The timetable with respect to the congressional budget process for any fiscal year is as follows:

''On or before:	**Action to be completed:**
First Monday in February	President submits his budget.
February 15	Congressional Budget Office submits report to Budget Committees.
Not later than 6 weeks after President submits budget	Committees submit views and estimates to Budget Committees.
April 1	Budget Committees report concurrent resolution on the budget.
April 15	Congress completes action on concurrent resolution on the budget.
May 15	Biennial appropriation bills and the defense appropriation bill may be considered in the House as provided in subsection (b).
June 10	House Appropriations Committee reports last appropriation bill.
June 15	Congress completes action on reconciliation legislation.
June 30	House completes action on appropriation bills.
August 1	Congress completes action on appropriation bills.
October 1	Fiscal year begins.

''(2) SPECIAL RULE.—In the case of any first session of Congress that begins in any year immediately following a leap year and during which the term of a President (except a President who succeeds himself or herself) begins, the following dates shall supersede those set forth in subsection (a):

''First Session

''On or before:	**Action to be completed:**
First Monday in April	President submits his budget.
April 15	Congressional Budget Office submits report to Budget Committees.
April 20	Committees submit views and estimates to Budget Committees.
May 15	Budget Committees report concurrent resolution on the biennial budget.
June 1	Congress completes action on concurrent resolution on the biennial budget.
July 1	Biennial appropriation bills may be considered in the House.
July 20	Biennial appropriation bills and the defense appropriation bill may be considered in the House as provided in subsection (b).
August 1	Congress completes action on biennial appropriations bills and reconciliation legislation.
October 1	Biennium begins.

''(b) BIENNIAL APPROPRIATION BILLS AND DEFENSE APPROPRIATION BILL.—Appropriation bills shall be enacted as follows:

''(1) ODD-NUMBERED YEARS.—In odd-numbered years Congress shall consider pursuant to the budget process in this title and enact—

''(A) an annual defense appropriation bill; and

''(B) biennial appropriation bills for—

''(i) Agriculture;

''(ii) Transportation, HUD;

''(iii) Interior, Environment;

''(iv) Labor, HHS, Education; and

''(v) Military Construction, Veterans Affairs.

''(2) EVEN-NUMBERED YEARS.—In even-numbered years Congress shall consider pursuant to the budget process in this title and enact—

''(A) an annual defense appropriation bill; and

''(B) biennial appropriation bills for—

''(i) Commerce, Justice, Science;

''(ii) Energy and Water;

''(iii) Homeland Security;

''(iv) Financial Services;

''(v) Legislative Branch; and

''(vi) State–Foreign Operations.''.

SEC. __03. AMENDMENTS TO THE CONGRESSIONAL BUDGET AND IMPOUNDMENT CONTROL ACT OF 1974.

(a) DEFINITIONS.—Section 3 of such Act (2 U.S.C. 622) is further amended by adding at the end the following new paragraph:

''(11) The term 'biennium' means the period of 2 consecutive fiscal years beginning on October 1.''.

(b) COMMITTEE ALLOCATIONS.—Section 302 of such Act (2 U.S.C. 633) is amended—

(1) in subsection (a)(1), by—

(A) inserting after ''for the first fiscal year of the resolution,'' the following: ''and for appropriations for each fiscal year in the biennium and for the first fiscal year of the resolution for defense,'';

(B) striking ''for that period of fiscal years'' and inserting ''for all fiscal years covered by the resolution''; and

(C) inserting after ''for the fiscal year of that resolution'' the following: ''for defense and for each fiscal year in the biennium'';

(2) in subsection (b), by inserting after ''budget year'' the following: ''for defense and the biennium''; and

(3) in subsection (f)(2)(A), by—

(A) inserting after ''the first fiscal year'' and inserting ''or each fiscal year of the biennium''; and

(B) striking ''the total of fiscal years'' and inserting ''the total of all fiscal years covered by the resolution''.

SEC. __04. AMENDMENTS TO TITLE 31, UNITED STATES CODE.

(a) DEFINITION.—Section 1101 of title 31, United States Code, is amended by adding at the end thereof the following new paragraph:

''(3) 'biennium' has the meaning given to such term in paragraph (11) of section 3 of the Congressional Budget and Impoundment Control Act of 1974 (2 U.S.C. 622(11)).''.

(b) BUDGET CONTENTS AND SUBMISSION TO THE CONGRESS.—

(1) EXPENDITURES.—Section 1105(a)(5) of title 31, United States Code, is amended by striking ''the fiscal year for which the budget is submitted and the 4 fiscal years after that year'' and inserting ''each fiscal year in the biennium for which the budget is submitted and in the succeeding 4 fiscal years''.

(2) RECEIPTS.—Section 1105(a)(6) of title 31, United States Code, is amended by striking ''the fiscal year for which the budget is submitted and the 4 fiscal years after that year'' and inserting ''each fiscal year in the biennium for which the budget is submitted and in the succeeding 4 years''.

(3) BALANCE STATEMENTS.—Section 1105(a)(9)(C) of title 31, United States Code, is amended by striking ''the fiscal year'' and inserting ''each fiscal year in the biennium''.

(4) FUNCTIONS AND ACTIVITIES.—Section 1105(a)(12) of title 31, United States Code, is amended in subparagraph (A), by striking ''the fiscal year'' and inserting ''each fiscal year in the biennium''.

(5) ALLOWANCES.—Section 1105(a)(13) of title 31, United States Code, is amended by striking ''the fiscal year'' and inserting ''each fiscal year in the biennium''.

(6) ALLOWANCES FOR UNCONTROLLED EXPENDITURES.—Section 1105(a)(14) of title 31, United States Code, is amended by striking ''that year'' and inserting ''each fiscal year in the biennium for which the budget is submitted''.

(7) TAX EXPENDITURES.—Section 1105(a)(16) of title 31, United States Code, is amended by striking ''the fiscal year'' and inserting ''each fiscal year in the biennium''.

(8) FUTURE YEARS.—Section 1105(a)(17) of title 31, United States Code, is amended—

(A) by striking ''the fiscal year following the fiscal year'' and inserting ''each fiscal year in the biennium following the biennium'';

(B) by striking ''that following fiscal year'' and inserting ''each such fiscal year''; and

(C) by striking ''fiscal year before the fiscal year'' and inserting ''biennium before the biennium''.

(9) PRIOR YEAR OUTLAYS.—Section 1105(a)(18) of title 31, United States Code, is amended—

(A) by striking ''the prior fiscal year'' and inserting ''each of the 2 most recently completed fiscal years,'';

(B) by striking ''for that year'' and inserting ''with respect to those fiscal years''; and

(C) by striking ''in that year'' and inserting ''in those fiscal years''.

(10) PRIOR YEAR RECEIPTS.—Section 1105(a)(19) of title 31, United States Code, is amended—

(A) by striking ''the prior fiscal year'' and inserting ''each of the 2 most recently completed fiscal years'';

(B) by striking ''for that year'' and inserting ''with respect to those fiscal years''; and

(C) by striking ''in that year'' each place it appears and inserting ''in those fiscal years''.

(c) ESTIMATED EXPENDITURES OF LEGISLATIVE AND JUDICIAL BRANCHES.—Section 1105(b) of title 31, United States Code, is amended by striking ''each year'' and inserting ''each even-numbered year''.

(d) RECOMMENDATIONS TO MEET ESTIMATED DEFICIENCIES.—Section 1105(c) of title 31, United States Code, is amended—

(1) by striking ''the fiscal year for'' the first place it appears and inserting ''each fiscal year in the biennium for'';

(2) by striking ''the fiscal year for'' the second place it appears and inserting ''each fiscal year of the biennium, as the case may be, for''; and

(3) by striking ''for that year'' and inserting ''for each fiscal year of the biennium''.

(e) CAPITAL INVESTMENT ANALYSIS.—Section 1105(e)(1) of title 31, United States Code, is amended by striking ''ensuing fiscal year'' and inserting ''biennium to which such budget relates''.

SEC. __05. TWO-YEAR APPROPRIATIONS; TITLE AND STYLE OF APPROPRIATIONS ACTS.

Section 105 of title 1, United States Code, is amended to read as follows:

''§ 105. Title and style of appropriations Acts

''(a) IN GENERAL.—

''(1) NONDEFENSE.—Except as provided in paragraph (2), the style and title of all Acts making appropriations for the support of the Government shall be as follows: 'An Act making appropriations (here insert the object) for each fiscal year in the biennium of fiscal years (here insert the fiscal years of the biennium).'.

''(2) DEFENSE.—The style and title of Acts making appropriations for the support of defense shall be as follows: 'An Act making appropriations for defense for fiscal year (here insert the fiscal year).'.

''(3) AMOUNTS.—All Acts making regular appropriations for the support of the Government shall specify the amount of appropriations provided for each fiscal year in such period.

''(b) DEFINITIONS.—In this section—

''(1) the term 'biennium' has the same meaning as in section 3(11) of the Congressional Budget and Impoundment Control Act of 1974 (2 U.S.C. 622(11)); and

''(2) Acts described in subsection (a)(1) shall be considered as provided in section 300(b) of the Congressional Budget Act of 1974 (2 U.S.C. 631(b)).''.

SEC. __06. MULTIYEAR AUTHORIZATIONS.

(a) IN GENERAL.—Title III of the Congressional Budget Act of 1974 is amended by adding at the end the following new section:

''AUTHORIZATIONS OF APPROPRIATIONS

''SEC. 316. (a) POINT OF ORDER.—It shall not be in order in the House of Representatives or the Senate to consider—

''(1) any bill, joint resolution, amendment, motion, or conference report that authorizes appropriations for a period of less than 2 fiscal years, unless the program, project, or activity for which the appropriations are authorized will require no further appropriations and will be completed or terminated after the appropriations have been expended; and

''(2) in any odd-numbered year, any authorization or revenue bill or joint resolution until Congress completes action on the biennial budget resolution, all regular biennial appropriations bills, and all reconciliation bills.

''(b) APPLICABILITY.—In the Senate, subsection (a) shall not apply to—

''(1) defense;

''(2) any measure that is privileged for consideration pursuant to a rule or statute;

''(3) any matter considered in Executive Session; or

''(4) an appropriations measure or reconciliation bill.''.

(b) AMENDMENT TO TABLE OF CONTENTS.—The table of contents set forth in section 1(b) of the Congressional Budget and Impoundment Control Act of 1974 is amended by adding after the item relating to section 315 the following new item:

''Sec. 316. Authorizations of appropriations.''.

SEC. __07. CONGRESSIONAL OVERSIGHT.

(a) IN GENERAL.—In each year that the activities of an agency are not required to be funded pursuant to section 300(b) of the Congressional Budget Act of 1974, the committee of the House and the Senate with legislative jurisdiction over that agency shall hold a joint oversight hearing with the corresponding subcommittee of the Committee on Appropriations of their respective House with jurisdiction over the agency.

(b) HEARING.—The hearing required by subsection (a) shall review—

(1) the mission of the agency;

(2) the impact of biennial budgeting on agency efficiency;

(3) the cost savings associated with biennial budgeting;

(4) new programs created in the off year of the agency budget; and

(5) programs that were terminated in the off year of the agency budget.

SEC. __08. REPORT ON TWO-YEAR FISCAL PERIOD.

Not later than 180 days after the date of enactment of this title, the Director of OMB shall—

(1) determine the impact and feasibility of changing the definition of a fiscal year and the budget process based on that definition to a 2-year fiscal period with a biennial budget process based on the 2-year period; and

(2) report the findings of the study to the Committees on the Budget of the House of Representatives and the Senate.

SEC. __09. EFFECTIVE DATE.

Except as provided in section 7, this title and the amendments made by this title shall take effect on January 1, 2015, and shall apply to budget resolutions and appropriations for the biennium beginning with fiscal year 2016.

SA 1985. Mr. ENZI (for himself, Mr. PAUL, Mr. BARRASSO, Mr. ISAKSON, Mr.

RISCH, Mr. RUBIO, and Mr. VITTER) submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by him to the joint resolution H.J. Res. 59, making continuing appropriations for fiscal year 2014, and for other purposes; which was ordered to lie on the table; as follows:

At the appropriate place, insert the following:

TITLE ____—ONE PERCENT SPENDING REDUCTION

SEC. __01. SHORT TITLE.

This title may be cited as the ''One Percent Spending Reduction Act of 2013''.

SEC. __02. CONGRESSIONAL FINDINGS AND PURPOSE.

(a) FINDINGS.—The Congress finds the following:

(1) The fiscal crisis faced by the Federal Government demands immediate action.

(2) The dramatic growth in spending and debt in recent years threatens our economic and national security:

(A) Federal spending has grown from 18 percent of GDP in 2001 to nearly 23 percent of GDP in 2012.

(B) Total Federal debt exceeds $16,000,000,000,000 and is projected to increase each year over the next 10 years.

(C) Without action, the Federal Government will continue to run massive deficits in the next decade and total Federal debt will rise to approximately $25,000,000,000,000 by 2023.

(D) Interest payments on this debt will soon rise to the point where balancing the budget as a matter of policy is beyond the reach of Congress.

(3) Due to recent tax hikes, Federal revenues are scheduled to rise to approximately 19 percent of GDP, a full percentage point above the average of about 18 percent of GDP over the past 40 years.

(4) Absent reform, the growth of Social Security, Medicare, Medicaid, and other health-related spending will overwhelm all other Federal programs and consume all projected tax revenues.

(b) PURPOSE.—The purpose of this title is to address the fiscal crisis by—

(1) acting quickly to balance the Federal budget and eliminate the parade of deficits and ballooning interest payments;

(2) achieving balance by reducing spending one percent per year until spending equals projected long-term revenues; and

(3) reforming entitlement programs to ensure long-term fiscal stability and balance.

SEC. __03. ESTABLISHMENT AND ENFORCEMENT OF SPENDING CAPS.

(a) OUTLAY CAPS.—The Balanced Budget and Emergency Deficit Control Act of 1985 is amended by inserting after section 253 the following new section:

''SEC. 253A. ESTABLISHING OUTLAY CAPS.

''(a) OUTLAY CAPS.—In this section, the term 'outlay cap' means:

''(1) FISCAL YEAR 2014.—For fiscal year 2014, the aggregate outlays (less net interest payments) for fiscal year 2014 shall be $3,233,000,000,000, less one percent.

''(2) FISCAL YEAR 2015.—For fiscal year 2015, the aggregate outlays (less net interest payments) for fiscal year 2015 shall be the amount computed under paragraph (1), less one percent.

''(3) FISCAL YEAR 2016 AND SUBSEQUENT FISCAL YEARS.—(A) For fiscal year 2016 and each subsequent fiscal year, the aggregate outlays shall be 19 percent of the gross domestic product for that fiscal year as estimated by OMB prior to March of the previous fiscal year.

''(B) Notwithstanding paragraph (A), for any fiscal year beginning with fiscal year 2017, the aggregate projected outlays may not be less than the aggregate projected outlays for the preceding fiscal year.

''(b) SEQUESTRATION.—

''(1) IN GENERAL.—

''(A) EXCESS SPENDING.—Not later than 45 calendar days after the beginning of a fiscal year, OMB shall conduct a sequestration to eliminate the excess outlay amount.

''(B) DEFINITIONS.—

''(i) For fiscal years 2014 and 2015 and for purposes of this subsection, the term 'excess outlay amount' means the amount by which total projected Federal outlays (less net interest payments) for a fiscal year exceeds the outlay cap for that fiscal year.

''(ii) For fiscal year 2016 and in subsequent fiscal years and for purposes of this subsection, the term 'excess outlay amount' means the amount by which total projected Federal outlays for a fiscal year exceeds the outlay cap for that fiscal year.

''(2) SEQUESTRATION.—

''(A) On August 15 of each year, CBO shall issue a sequestration preview report as described in section 254(c)(4).

''(B) On August 20 of each year, OMB shall issue a sequestration preview report as described in section 254(c)(4).

''(C) On October 31 of each year, OMB shall issue its final sequestration report as described in section 254(f)(3). It shall be accompanied by a Presidential order detailing uniform spending reductions equal to the excess outlay amount as defined in this section.

''(D) The reductions shall generally follow the process set forth in sections 253 and 254, except as provided in this section.

''(3) CONGRESSIONAL ACTION.—If the August 20 OMB report projects a sequestration, the Committees on Budget of the Senate and House of Representatives may report a resolution directing their committees to change the existing law to achieve the spending reductions outlined in the August 20 report necessary to meet the outlay limits.

''(c) NO EXEMPT PROGRAMS.—Section 255 and section 256 shall not apply to this section, except that payments for net interest (budget function 900) shall be exempt from the spending reductions under sequestration.

''(d) LOOK BACK.—If, after November 14, a bill resulting in outlays for the fiscal year in progress is enacted that causes excess outlays, the excess outlay amount for the next fiscal year shall be increased by the amount or amounts of that breach.''.

(b) CONFORMING AMENDMENTS TO BBEDCA.—

(1) SEQUESTRATION PREVIEW REPORTS.—Section 254(c)(4) of the Balanced Budget and Emergency Deficit Control Act of 1985 is amended to read as follows:

''(4) OUTLAY CAP SEQUESTRATION REPORTS.—The preview reports shall set forth for the budget year estimates for the following:

''(A)(i) For each of budget years 2014 and 2015: the aggregate projected outlays (less net interest payments), less one percent.

''(ii) For budget year 2016 and each subsequent budget year: the estimated gross domestic product (GDP) for that budget year.

''(B) The amount of reductions required under section 253A.

''(C) The sequestration percentage necessary to achieve the required reduction under section 253A.''.

(2) FINAL SEQUESTRATION REPORTS.—Section 254(f) of the Balanced Budget and Emergency Deficit Control Act of 1985 is amended by inserting at the end the following:

''(6) OUTLAY CAPS SEQUESTRATION REPORTS.—The final reports shall contain all the information required in the outlay cap sequestration preview reports. In addition, these reports shall contain, for the budget year, for each account to be sequestered, estimates of the baseline level of sequestrable budgetary resources and resulting outlays and the amount of budgetary sources to be sequestered and result in outlay reductions. The reports shall also contain estimates of the effects on outlays on the sequestration of each outyear for direct spending programs.''.

(c) ENFORCEMENT.—Title III of the Congressional Budget Act of 1974 is amended by adding after section 315 the following:

''SEC. 316. ENFORCEMENT PROCEDURES.

''(a) OUTLAY CAPS.—It shall not be in order in the House of Representatives or the Senate to consider any bill, joint resolution, amendment, or conference report that includes any provision that would cause the most recently reported, current outlay cap set forth in section 253A of the Balanced Budget and Emergency Deficit Control Act of 1985 to be breached.

''(b) WAIVER OR SUSPENSION.—

''(1) IN THE SENATE.—The provisions of this section may be waived or suspended in the Senate only by the affirmative vote of two-thirds of the Members, duly chosen and sworn.

''(2) IN THE HOUSE.—The provisions of this section may be waived or suspended in the House of Representatives only by a rule or order proposing only to waive such provisions by an affirmative vote of two-thirds of the Members, duly chosen and sworn.

''(c) POINT OF ORDER PROTECTION.—In the House, it shall not be in order to consider a rule or order that waives the application of paragraph (2) of subsection (b).

''(d) MOTION TO SUSPEND.—It shall not be in order for the Speaker to entertain a motion to suspend the application of this section under clause 1 of rule XV.''.

SEC. __04. CONFORMING AMENDMENTS.

The table of contents set forth in—

(1) section 1(b) of the Congressional Budget and Impoundment Control Act of 1974 is amended by inserting after the item relating to section 315 the following new item:

''Sec. 316. Enforcement procedures.'';

and

(2) section 250(a) of the Balanced Budget and Emergency Deficit Control Act of 1985 is amended by inserting after the item relating to section 253 the following new item:

''Sec. 253A. Establishing outlay caps.''.

SEC. __05. EFFECTIVE DATE.

This title and the amendments made by it shall apply to fiscal year 2014 and subsequent fiscal years, including any reports and calculations required for implementation in fiscal year 2014.

SA 1986. Mr. ENZI submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by him to the joint resolution H.J. Res. 59, making continuing appropriations for fiscal year 2014, and for other purposes; which was ordered to lie on the table; as follows:

At the appropriate place, insert the following:

SEC. _____. EFFECT OF OMB REPORT WITH RESPECT TO THE STANDARD SETTING BODY.

The Office of Management and Budget determination with respect to the Standard Setting Body (527-00-5377) pursuant to section 302 of Public Law 112-25 shall have no force or effect.

SA 1987. Mr. PORTMAN submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by him to the joint resolution H.J. Res. 59, making continuing appropriations for fiscal year 2014, and for other purposes; which was ordered to lie on the table; as follows:

At the appropriate place, insert the following:

SEC. _____. END GOVERNMENT SHUTDOWNS ACT.

(a) SHORT TITLE.—This section may be cited as the ''End Government Shutdowns Act''.

(b) AUTOMATIC CONTINUING APPROPRIATIONS.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—Chapter 13 of title 31, United States Code, is amended by inserting after section 1310 the following new section:

''§ 1311. Continuing appropriations

''(a)(1) If any appropriation measure for a fiscal year is not enacted before the beginning of such fiscal year or a joint resolution making continuing appropriations is not in effect, there are appropriated such sums as may be necessary to continue any program, project, or activity for which funds were provided in the preceding fiscal year—

''(A) in the corresponding appropriation Act for such preceding fiscal year, taking into account any sequestration that was implemented; or

''(B) if the corresponding appropriation bill for such preceding fiscal year did not become law, then in a joint resolution making continuing appropriations for such preceding fiscal year, taking into account any sequestration that was implemented.

''(2) Appropriations and funds made available, and authority granted, for a program, project, or activity for any fiscal year pursuant to this section shall be at a rate of operations not in excess of the lower of—

''(A) 100 percent of the rate of operations provided for in the regular appropriation Act providing for such program, project, or activity for the preceding fiscal year, taking into account any sequestration that was implemented;

''(B) in the absence of such an Act, 100 percent of the rate of operations provided for such program, project, or activity pursuant to a joint resolution making continuing appropriations for such preceding fiscal year, taking into account any sequestration that was implemented; or

''(C) 100 percent of the annualized rate of operations provided for in the most recently enacted joint resolution making continuing appropriations for part of that fiscal year or any funding levels established under the provisions of this Act;

for the period of 120 days. After the first 120 day period during which this subsection is in effect for that fiscal year, the applicable rate of operations shall be reduced by 1 percentage point. For each subsequent 90 day period during which this subsection is in effect for that fiscal year, the applicable rate of operations shall be reduced by 1 percentage point. The 90-day period reductions shall continue beyond the last day of that fiscal year until the new appropriation has been enacted.

''(3) Appropriations and funds made available, and authority granted, for any fiscal year pursuant to this section for a program, project, or activity shall be available for the period beginning with the first day of a lapse in appropriations and ending with the date on which the applicable regular appropriation bill for such fiscal year becomes law (whether or not such law provides for such program, project, or activity) or a continuing resolution making appropriations becomes law, as the case may be.

''(b) An appropriation or funds made available, or authority granted, for a program, project, or activity for any fiscal year pursuant to this section shall be subject to the terms and conditions imposed with respect to the appropriation made or funds made available for the preceding fiscal year, or authority granted for such program, project, or activity under current law.

''(c) Expenditures made for a program, project, or activity for any fiscal year pursuant to this section shall be charged to the applicable appropriation, fund, or authorization whenever a regular appropriation bill or a joint resolution making continuing appropriations until the end of a fiscal year providing for such program, project, or activity for such period becomes law.

''(d) This section shall not apply to a program, project, or activity during a fiscal year if any other provision of law (other than an authorization of appropriations)—

''(1) makes an appropriation, makes funds available, or grants authority for such program, project, or activity to continue for such period; or

''(2) specifically provides that no appropriation shall be made, no funds shall be made available, or no authority shall be granted for such program, project, or activity to continue for such period.''.

(2) CLERICAL AMENDMENT.—The table of sections of chapter 13 of title 31, United States Code, is amended by inserting after the item relating to section 1310 the following new item:

''1311. Continuing appropriations.''.

(c) CONSTRUCTION.—Nothing in this section or an amendment made by this section shall be construed to replace any directions in statute relating to sequestration that are in effect on the date of enactment of this Act.

SA 1988. Mr. ISAKSON submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by him to the joint resolution H.J. Res. 59, making continuing appropriations for fiscal year 2014, and for other purposes; which was ordered to lie on the table; as follows:

At the end, add the following:

SEC. _____. HIGHLY QUALIFIED TEACHERS.

Section 163 of the Continuing Appropriations Act, 2011 (Public Law 111–242), as amended by Public Law 111–322 and Public Law 112–175, is further amended in subsection (b), by striking ''2013–2014'' and inserting ''2015–2016''.

SA 1989. Mr. COBURN submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by him to the joint resolution H.J. Res. 59, making continuing appropriations for fiscal year 2014, and for other purposes; which was ordered to lie on the table; as follows:

At the appropriate place, insert the following:

SEC. ____. CONDITIONING PROVISION OF PREMIUM AND COST-SHARING SUBSIDIES UNDER THE PATIENT PROTECTION AND AFFORDABLE CARE ACT UPON CERTIFICATION THAT A PROGRAM TO VERIFY HOUSEHOLD INCOME AND OTHER QUALIFICATIONS FOR THOSE SUBSIDIES IS OPERATIONAL.

Notwithstanding any other provision of law, no premium tax credits shall be permitted under section 36B of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 and no reductions in cost-sharing shall be permitted under section 1402 of the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act (42 U.S.C. 18071) prior to the date on which the Inspector General of the Department of Health and Human Services certifies to Congress that there is in place a program that successfully and consistently verifies, consistent with section 1411 of such Act (42 U.S.C. 18081), the household income and coverage requirements of individuals applying for such credits and cost-sharing reduction reductions.

SA 1990. Mr. UDALL of Colorado (for himself and Mr. BENNET) submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by him to the joint resolution H.J. Res. 59, making continuing appropriations for fiscal year 2014, and for other purposes; which was ordered to lie on the table; as follows:

At the appropriate place, insert the following:

SEC. _____. Chapter 9 of title X of division A of the Disaster Relief Appropriations Act, 2013 (Public Law 113–2; 127 Stat. 34) is amended in the second proviso of the matter under the heading ''EMERGENCY RELIEF PROGRAM'' under the heading ''FEDERAL-AID HIGHWAYS'' under the heading ''FEDERAL HIGHWAY ADMINISTRATION'' by inserting ''or in calendar year 2013 in the State of Colorado by flooding: *Provided further*, That such amount is designated by Congress as being for emergency requirements pursuant to section 251(b)(2)(A)(i) of the Balanced Budget and Emergency Deficit Control Act of 1985 (2 U.S.C. 901(b)(2)(A)(i))'' after ''Sandy''.

SA 1991. Mr. MCCAIN submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by him to the joint resolution H.J. Res. 59, making continuing appropriations for fiscal year 2014, and for other purposes; which was ordered to lie on the table; as follows:

At the appropriate place, insert the following:

SEC. ____. (a) Chapter 32 of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 is amended by striking subchapter E.

(b) Subsection (a) of section 4221 of such Code is amended by striking the last sentence.

(c) Paragraph (2) of section 6416(b) of such Code is amended by striking the last sentence.

(d) The table of subchapters for chapter 32 of such Code is amended by striking the item relating to subchapter E.

(e) The amendments made by this section shall apply to sales after December 31, 2013.

SA 1992. Mr. PAUL (for himself, Mr. CORNYN, Mr. COBURN, and Mr. BURR) submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by him to the joint resolution H.J. Res. 59, making continuing appropriations for fiscal year 2014, and for other purposes; which was ordered to lie on the table; as follows:

At the appropriate place, add the following:

SEC. ——. PARTICIPATION OF FEDERAL EMPLOYEES IN QUALIFIED HEALTH PLANS OFFERED THROUGH EXCHANGES.

(a) IN GENERAL.—Section 1312(d)(3)(D) of the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act (42 U.S.C. 18032(d)(3)(D)) is amended to read as follows:

''(D) NO FEHBP ELIGIBILITY FOR FEDERAL EMPLOYEES.—

''(i) DEFINITIONS.—In this subparagraph—

''(I) the terms 'annuitant', 'member of family', and 'former spouse' have the meanings given those terms under section 8901 of title 5, United States Code; and

''(II) the term 'Federal employee'—

''(aa) has the meaning given the term 'employee' under section 8901 of title 5, United States Code; and

''(bb) includes an officer or employee of the United States Postal Service or the Postal Regulatory Commission.

''(ii) PARTICIPATION IN QUALIFIED HEALTH PLANS.—Notwithstanding chapter 89 of title 5, United States Code, or any other provision of this title, on and after January 1, 2014—

''(I) a Federal employee shall be treated as a qualified individual eligible to enroll in a

qualified health plan offered through an Exchange in the State in which the Federal employee resides; and

''(II) a Federal employee and a member of the family or former spouse of a Federal employee shall not be eligible to be enrolled (other than as an annuitant or a member of the family or former spouse of an annuitant) in a health benefits plan under chapter 89 of title 5, United States Code.

''(iii) ADMINISTRATION.—

''(I) IN GENERAL.—The Director of the Office of Personnel Management, in cooperation with the Secretary, other appropriate Federal officials, Exchanges, and health plans, shall establish procedures to carry out this subparagraph.

''(II) NO GOVERNMENT CONTRIBUTION.—For an individual enrolled in a qualified health plan under this subparagraph, the Government may not make a contribution under chapter 89 of title 5, United States Code, with respect to such enrollment.''.

(b) TECHNICAL AND CONFORMING AMENDMENTS.—Chapter 89 of title 5, United States Code, is amended—

(1) in section 8905—

(A) in subsection (a), by striking ''An employee'' and inserting ''Except as provided in section 8915, an employee'';

(B) in subsection (b)—

(i) by striking ''(b) An annuitant'' and all that follows through the end of paragraph (2) and inserting the following:

''(b) An annuitant—

''(1) who—

''(A) at the time he becomes an annuitant was enrolled in a health benefits plan under this chapter as an employee or enrolled in a qualified health plan under section 1312(d)(3)(D) of the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act (42 U.S.C. 18032(d)(3)(D)) for a total period of not less than—

''(i) the 5 years of service immediately before retirement;

''(ii) the full period or periods of service between the last day of the first period, as prescribed by regulations of the Office of Personnel Management, in which he is eligible to enroll in the plan and the date on which he becomes an annuitant; or

''(iii) the full period or periods of service beginning with the enrollment which became effective before January 1, 1965, and ending with the date on which he becomes an annuitant;

whichever is shortest; and

''(B) if the annuitant becomes an annuitant on or after January 1, 2014, was enrolled in a health benefits plan under this chapter on December 31, 2013;

''(2) who is a member of the family of an employee who—

''(A) is enrolled in a qualified health plan under section 1312(d)(3)(D) of the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act (42 U.S.C. 18032(d)(3)(D)); and

''(B) was enrolled in a health benefits plan under this chapter on December 31, 2013; or

''(3) who at the time he becomes an annuitant was enrolled in a health benefits plan under this chapter as a member of the family of an employee or an annuitant;''; and

(ii) in the matter following paragraph (2), by striking ''may continue his enrollment'' and inserting ''may enroll in a health benefits plan under this chapter'';

(C) in subsection (c)(1), in the matter preceding subparagraph (A), by inserting ''of an individual who is entitled, on the date of the dissolution of the marriage, to enroll in a health benefits plan under this chapter'' after ''A former spouse''; and

(D) in subsection (h)(1), by inserting ''who is otherwise eligible to enroll in a health benefits plan under this chapter and'' after ''An unenrolled employee'';

(2) in section 8905a(b)(1)—

(A) in subparagraph (A), by striking ''and'' at the end;

(B) by redesignating subparagraph (B) as subparagraph (C); and

(C) by inserting after subparagraph (A) the following:

''(B) on the date on which the employee is separated from service, is eligible to enroll in a health benefits plan under this chapter; and'';

(3) by adding at the end the following:

''§ 8915. Termination of employee eligibility

''Notwithstanding any other provision of this chapter, on and after January 1 2014—

''(1) an employee and a member of the family and a former spouse of an employee shall not be eligible to enroll in a health benefits plan under this chapter based on the status of the employee as an employee; and

''(2) no Government contribution for health benefits under this chapter shall be made on behalf of an employee or a member of the family or a former spouse of an employee.''; and

(4) in the table of sections, by adding at the end the following:

''8915. Termination of employee eligibility.''.

(c) RULES OF CONSTRUCTION.—Nothing in this Act or an amendment made by this Act shall be construed to limit the eligibility of an individual for the Medicare program under title XVIII of the Social Security Act (42 U.S.C. 1395 et seq.) or the TRICARE program under chapter 55 of title 10, United States Code.

SA 1993. Mrs. SHAHEEN (for herself, Mr. MCCAIN, Mr. LEAHY, and Mr. GRAHAM) submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by her to the joint resolution H.J. Res. 59, making continuing appropriations for fiscal year 2014, and for other purposes; which was ordered to lie on the table; as follows:

At the appropriate place, insert the following:

SEC. ____. Section 1244(c)(3) of the National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2008 (8 U.S.C. 1157 note) is amended by adding at the end the following:

''(C) FISCAL YEAR 2014.—

''(i) IN GENERAL.—Except as provided in clauses (ii) through (iv), the total number of principal aliens who may be provided special immigrant status under this section during the first 3 months of fiscal year 2014 shall be 2,000.

''(ii) EMPLOYMENT PERIOD.—The 1-year period during which the principal alien is required to have been employed by or on behalf of the United States Government in Iraq under subsection (b)(1)(B) shall begin on or after March 20, 2003, and end on or before September 30, 2013.

''(iii) APPLICATION DEADLINE.—The principal alien seeking special immigrant status under this subparagraph shall apply to the Chief of Mission in accordance with subsection (b)(4) not later than December 31, 2013.

''(iv) APPLICATION DATE.—For purposes of this subparagraph, the date on which a principal alien is provided special immigrant status under this section is deemed to be the date on which the alien applied for such status.''.

SA 1994. Mrs. SHAHEEN (for herself, Mr. MCCAIN, Mr. LEAHY, and Mr. GRAHAM) submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by her to the joint resolution H.J. Res. 59, making continuing appropriations for fiscal year 2014, and for other purposes; which was ordered to lie on the table; as follows:

At the appropriate place, insert the following:

SEC. ____. Section 1244(c)(3) of the National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2008 (8 U.S.C. 1157 note) is amended by adding at the end the following:

''(C) FISCAL YEAR 2014.—

''(i) IN GENERAL.—Except as provided in clauses (ii) and (iii), the total number of principal aliens who may be provided special immigrant status under this section during the first 3 months of fiscal year 2014 shall be the sum of—

''(I) the number of aliens described in subsection (b) whose application for special immigrant status under this section is pending on September 30, 2013; and

''(II) 2,000.

''(ii) EMPLOYMENT PERIOD.—The 1-year period during which the principal alien is required to have been employed by or on behalf of the United States Government in Iraq under subsection (b)(1)(B) shall begin on or after March 20, 2003, and end on or before September 30, 2013.

''(iii) APPLICATION DEADLINE.—The principal alien seeking special immigrant status under this subparagraph shall apply to the Chief of Mission in accordance with subsection (b)(4) not later than December 31, 2013.''.

SA 1995. Mrs. SHAHEEN submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by her to the joint resolution H.J. Res. 59, making continuing appropriations for fiscal year 2014, and for other purposes; which was ordered to lie on the table; as follows:

In lieu of the matter proposed to be inserted, insert the following:

SEC. ____. Section 1244(c)(3) of the National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2008 (8 U.S.C. 1157 note) is amended by adding at the end the following:

''(C) FISCAL YEAR 2014.—

''(i) IN GENERAL.—Except as provided in clauses (ii) and (iii), the total number of principal aliens who may be provided special immigrant status under this section during the first 3 months of fiscal year 2014 shall be the sum of—

''(I) the number of aliens described in subsection (b) whose application for special immigrant status under this section is pending on September 30, 2013; and

''(II) 2,000.

''(ii) EMPLOYMENT PERIOD.—The 1-year period during which the principal alien is required to have been employed by or on behalf of the United States Government in Iraq under subsection (b)(1)(B) shall begin on or after March 20, 2003, and end on or before September 30, 2013.

''(iii) APPLICATION DEADLINE.—The principal alien seeking special immigrant status under this subparagraph shall apply to the Chief of Mission in accordance with subsection (b)(4) not later than December 31, 2013.''.

SA 1996. Mr. INHOFE submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by him to the joint resolution H.J. Res. 59, making continuing appropriations for fiscal year 2014, and for other purposes; which was ordered to lie on the table; as follows:

At the appropriate place, insert the following:

SEC. 1_____. None of the funds made available by this Act shall be used for Federal participation in international climate

change events unless the United States offers an addendum to the Fifth Assessment Report of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change stating that anthropogenic climate change is a scientifically unproven theory.

SA 1997. Mr. INHOFE (for himself, Mr. MCCONNELL, and Mr. VITTER) submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by him to the joint resolution H.J. Res. 59, making continuing appropriations for fiscal year 2014, and for other purposes; which was ordered to lie on the table; as follows:

At the appropriate place, insert the following:

SEC. 1_____. None of the funds made available by this Act shall be used to promulgate or enforce regulations relating to greenhouse gas emissions from electric generating units.

SA 1998. Mr. TESTER (for Mr. CARPER) proposed an amendment to the bill S. 1348, to reauthorize the Congressional Award Act; as follows:

At the end, add the following:

SEC. 3. EFFECTIVE DATE.

This Act shall take effect as of October 1, 2013.

AUTHORITY FOR COMMITTEES TO MEET

COMMITTEE ON FOREIGN RELATIONS

Mr. UDALL of New Mexico. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Committee on Foreign Relations be authorized to meet during the session of the Senate on September 26, 2013, at 10 a.m.

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

COMMITTEE ON FOREIGN RELATIONS

Mr. UDALL of New Mexico. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Committee on Foreign Relations be authorized to meet during the session of the Senate on September 26, 2013, at 2 p.m.

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

COMMITTEE ON HEALTH, EDUCATION, LABOR, AND PENSIONS

Mr. UDALL of New Mexico. 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 ''Newborn Screening Saves Lives: The Past, Present, and Future of the Newborn Screening System'' on September 26, 2013, at 10 a.m. in room 430 of the Dirksen Senate Office Building.

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

COMMITTEE ON HOMELAND SECURITY AND GOVERNMENTAL AFFAIRS

Mr. UDALL of New Mexico. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs be authorized to meet during the session of the Senate on September 26, 2013, at 10 a.m. to conduct a hearing entitled ''Outside the Box: Reforming and Renewing the Postal Service, Part II—Promoting a 21st Century Workforce.''

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

COMMITTEE ON THE JUDICIARY

Mr. UDALL of New Mexico. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Committee on the Judiciary be authorized to meet during the session of the Senate, on September 26, 2013, at 10 a.m., in SD–226 of the Dirksen Senate Office Building, to conduct an executive business meeting.

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

SELECT COMMITTEE ON INTELLIGENCE

Mr. UDALL of New Mexico. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Select Committee on Intelligence be authorized to meet during the session of the Senate on September 26, 2013, at 2 p.m.

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

PRIVILEGES OF THE FLOOR

Mr. PRYOR. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that Bob Ross, a detailee from the Department of Agriculture to the Committee on Appropriations, and Mike Hallinan, a fellow in my personal office, be granted the privilege of the floor for the remainder of the 113th Congress.

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

Mr. REED. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that Rita Culp, a detailee from the Environmental Protection Agency to the Committee on Appropriations, be granted floor privileges for the remainder of the 113th Congress, and Tiffany Taylor, a detailee from the Department of the Interior to the Committee on Appropriations, be granted floor privileges for the remainder of the first session of the 113th Congress.

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

CONGRESSIONAL AWARD PROGRAM REAUTHORIZATION ACT OF 2013

Mr. TESTER. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate proceed to Calendar No. 196, S. 1348.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report the bill by title.

The legislative clerk read as follows:

A bill (S. 1348) to reauthorize the Congressional Award Act.

There being no objection, the Senate proceeded to consider the bill.

Mr. TESTER. I ask unanimous consent that the Carper amendment, which is at the desk, be agreed to, the bill, as amended, be read a third time and passed, and a motion to reconsider be laid upon the table, with no intervening action or debate.

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

The amendment (No. 1998) was agreed to, as follows:

At the end, add the following:

SEC. 3. EFFECTIVE DATE.

This Act shall take effect as of October 1, 2013.

The bill (S. 1348), as amended, was ordered to be engrossed for a third reading, was read the third time, and passed, as follows:

S. 1348

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 ''Congressional Award Program Reauthorization Act of 2013''.

SEC. 2. TERMINATION.

Section 108 of the Congressional Award Act (2 U.S.C. 808) is amended by striking ''October 1, 2013'' and inserting ''October 1, 2018''.

SEC. 3. EFFECTIVE DATE.

This Act shall take effect as of October 1, 2013.

NATIONAL HISTORICALLY BLACK COLLEGES AND UNIVERSITIES WEEK

Mr. TESTER. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate proceed to the consideration of S. Res. 261, submitted earlier today.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report the resolution by title.

The legislative clerk read as follows:

A resolution (S. Res. 261) designating the week beginning September 23, 2013, as ''National Historically Black Colleges and Universities Week.''

There being no objection, the Senate proceeded to the resolution.

Mr. TESTER. I ask unanimous consent that the resolution be agreed to, the preamble be agreed to, and the motion to reconsider be laid upon the table, with no intervening action or debate.

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

The resolution (S. Res. 261) was agreed to.

The preamble was agreed to.

(The resolution, with its preamble, is printed in today's RECORD under ''Resolutions Submitted.'')

SUICIDE PREVENTION AWARENESS

Mr. TESTER. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate proceed to the immediate consideration of S. Res. 262, submitted earlier today by Senators DONNELLY and ISAKSON.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report the resolution by title.

The legislative clerk read as follows:

A resolution (S. Res. 262) supporting the goals and ideals of suicide prevention awareness.

There being no objection, the Senate proceeded to consider the resolution.

SUICIDE PREVENTION MONTH

Mr. SANDERS. Mr. President, September is Suicide Prevention Month.

As chairman of the Senate Committee on Veteran's Affairs, I would like to take a moment to discuss the importance of suicide prevention and ways in which we can all help our Nation's veterans cope with the invisible wounds of war.

Serving in defense of our Nation, particularly during a time of war, can place tremendous strains on servicemen and women, sometimes leading to mental health conditions ranging from mild depression to severe post-traumatic stress disorder. These conditions are reasonable reactions to very abnormal situations.

While behavioral health conditions rarely lead to suicide, it is clear the consequences of failing to properly address and treat these conditions are dire. According to a report released earlier this year by the Department of Veterans Affairs, 22 veterans take their own lives each day. This is tragic and unacceptable.

For veterans and their families struggling with mental health conditions, there is hope. Help is available through VA and dozens of non-profit organizations who have made it their mission to serve those who have served our Nation.

VA has made great strides to improve its suicide prevention efforts. As of June, the Department has hired over 1,600 new mental health professionals to provide care and treatment to our veterans. These added positions are essential as VA works to meet the requirements established by Congress to provide initial mental health evaluations within 24 hours and comprehensive evaluations within 14 days of a veteran's request. Moreover, VA has put a priority on patient-centered care, which includes mental health as part of primary care and involves family members in the treatment process.

Additionally, VA operates the Veterans Crisis Line, a critical resource for veterans and their loved ones. The Veterans Crisis Line is a toll-free, confidential resource that connects veterans in distress with qualified, caring VA responders. Family members and friends can also use this resource to learn how to recognize the signs of suicide, speak to a suicide prevention coordinator, and receive information regarding the services available in their area.

The Veterans Crisis Line has a history of success. Approximately 93 percent of all Veterans Crisis Line referrals are made to callers with a history of using VA health care facilities in the past 12 months. Veterans who call the hotline are more likely to access intervention and treatment services following a rescue through the hotline. More importantly, those who have been rescued or received a referral for follow up care have a reduced rate of repeated suicide attempts over a 12-month period.

In addition to VA, veteran service organizations, non-profit organizations, and local health care providers can also help. In my home State of Vermont, the Vermont Veterans Outreach Program, operated by the Vermont National Guard, has played a critical role in supporting the needs of Guard members and veterans, and helping to prevent suicide. I am proud to have secured the initial funding to establish this program in 2007 and am thankful for their efforts. Aside from working directly with veterans and their families to determine their needs, the outreach program provides a liaison to help these individuals better navigate the VA system. Team members meet frequently with VA officials to ensure they are aware of any new VA initiatives in order to better inform veterans and their families of the options for care and support available. The Vermont Veterans Outreach Program has helped countless veterans return from war to become successful contributing members of their communities. I am tremendously proud of the outreach programs' work and am pleased other States have begun similar programs.

Just as these organizations provide assistance, friends and family can also ensure veterans receive the help they need. We must each be aware of the signs, symptoms, and risk factors of suicide. We must not be afraid to take action to assist friends and neighbors in crisis. Suicide is preventable and we all have a role to play. Providing support can mean lending a compassionate ear, listening for concerning answers, and guiding veterans to resources that can help.

Even one veteran taking his or her life is too many. As a long standing advocate for veterans, I will continue to work to counter issues that prevent veterans and their families from seeking care, such as the stigma surrounding mental illness, negative perceptions of treatment and other barriers that may result in prematurely dropping out of treatment.

I ask that my colleagues join me in committing themselves to ensuring that the brave men and women who have worn our Nation's uniform receive timely access to high quality mental health care. Our veterans have already sacrificed so much in defense of our country. They should not be left to fend for themselves when coping with the invisible wounds of war.

Mr. TESTER. I ask unanimous consent that the resolution be agreed to, the preamble be agreed to, and the motions to reconsider be considered made and laid upon the table, with no intervening action or debate.

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

The resolution (S. Res. 262) was agreed to.

The preamble was agreed to.

(The resolution, with its preamble, is printed in today's RECORD under ''Submitted Resolutions.'')

ORDERS FOR FRIDAY, SEPTEMBER 27, 2013

Mr. TESTER. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that when the Senate completes its business today, it adjourn until 9:30 a.m. on Friday, September 27, 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; that following any leader remarks, the Senate resume consideration of H.J. Res. 59, the continuing resolution, under the previous order.

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

Mr. TESTER. And that the filing deadline for all second-degree amendments to the joint resolution be 10:30 a.m. tomorrow.

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

PROGRAM

Mr. TESTER. There will be up to four rollcall votes at 12:30 p.m. tomorrow.

ADJOURNMENT UNTIL 9:30 A.M. TOMORROW

Mr. TESTER. Mr. President, 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 7:01 p.m., adjourned until Friday, September 27, 2013, at 9:30 a.m.