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Senate

The Senate met at 10 a.m. and was called to order by the President pro tempore (Mr. LEAHY).

PRAYER

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

Let us pray.

Gracious God, we praise You that although we have merely a feeble hold on You, You have a mighty grasp on us. Use Your mighty hands to lead our lawmakers to Your desired destination, making them instruments of truth and justice. May the tirades of majorities and minorities be equally impotent to sway our lawmakers from doing what is best for America. May our Senators' daily choice be characterized by ethical congruence as they strive to match their words with deeds.

We pray in Your great Name. Amen.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The President pro tempore 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.

RECOGNITION OF THE MAJORITY LEADER

The PRESIDENT pro tempore. The majority leader is recognized.

SCHEDULE

Mr. REID. Mr. President, following leader remarks the Senate will be in a period of morning business for debate only until 12:30 today. During that period of time Senators will be permitted to speak for up to 10 minutes each. The Senate will then recess from 12:30 until 2:15 p.m. to allow for our weekly caucus meetings.

CONTINUING APPROPRIATIONS

Mr. REID. Mr. President, we are now entering the second week of a Republican government shutdown. The Speaker of the House of Representatives is still sitting on the one bill that can reopen the government. Speaker BOEHNER insists the Senate-passed bill to end the shutdown can't pass the House. Well, I am not the first to issue this challenge—it has been issued all weekend and yesterday—and that is, prove it. Bring it up for a vote. If the Speaker really believes the bill will not pass, he shouldn't be worried about bringing it up.

The House, though, if we look at what has happened, has wasted weeks voting—and I have really lost track of the number of times, but I think it is 44 times—the House alone has acted to repeal ObamaCare 44 times. What is the result every time they vote? The same. Truly what Einstein said: The real definition of ''insanity'' is someone who keeps doing the same thing over and over and expecting different results. If, in fact, Einstein is right, then that is insanity, what is going on over there—to vote more than 40 times on the same thing and lose every time. So let's talk about wasting time. Has that been a waste of time? Maybe after 5 or 6 times they should have maybe gotten the message, but how about 44 times? Talk about wasting time.

Could it be that the Speaker is really worried that reasonable Republicans will join Democrats to pass legislation to open the government? Sensible Republicans have grown increasingly fed up with the shutdown, and they are looking for a way out. Just yesterday PETER KING of New York, a Republican, said:

> Republicans should not have started this. Closing the government down was the wrong thing to do.

Republican Congressman KING called Speaker BOEHNER's unreasonable strategy to shut down the government unless Democrats agree to defund or end ObamaCare—a law that will help 25 million uninsured Americans gain access to affordable care—doomed to failure. That is what PETER KING said.

Again quoting Congressman KING:

> If we want to defund something, we should repeal it, and do it the same way the President got it signed—elect Republicans to both Houses of Congress, repeal it, and have a Republican President sign it.

Mr. President, it is pretty obvious what is going on. I have known it all the time. We have all known it all the time. When I say ''all the time,'' at least in these last many months. But it was made very clear to the world on Sunday in a front-page story in the New York Times. They worked a while on that story, but basically what the story said is that very rich people in America who don't believe in government have used ObamaCare as a conduit to shut down the government. That is what they wanted to do. That is what they have done, with huge amounts of money. We know this has been led by, according to the news article, a former Attorney General of the United States, Ed Meese, and the Koch brothers, who have been raising and spending hundreds of millions of dollars to get us where we are right now.

But what PETER KING suggested is that we follow the democratic process. That has been turned on its head. I know Republicans don't like ObamaCare, but the Affordable Care Act has been the law of the land for 4 years, been declared constitutional by the Supreme Court of the United States, and millions of Americans—multimillions of Americans—are already benefiting from this law.

There are rumors floating around. One of my rich friends from Nevada called me on Friday. He said: HARRY, I am down here in southern California getting a little cosmetic surgery. My anesthesiologist told me one of his friends, who is a general surgeon, took somebody's gallbladder out. Do you know how much money he got back for that?

I don't know if it was a he or a she.

I said: No, I don't know.

He said: Fifty-eight dollars. That is what ObamaCare is all about.

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

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I said: That is not possible because ObamaCare, that aspect of it, doesn't kick in until January 1.

He said: Are you sure you are right?

I said: Yes. All this signing up for exchanges and all that will take 3 months.

These are the rumors floating around out there about ObamaCare.

If Republicans want to propose a legislative way to make the law work better or more efficiently, PETER KING is right. We are willing to do that and do it the way our democratic process provides.

(Mr. MARKEY assumed the Chair.)

I see the Senator from Massachusetts has taken the Chair, and he served many years with PETER KING. I personally have watched his voting record. I don't like most of it, but at least he is speaking out, and I admire the man for doing that. By shutting down the government—and that is what has happened—we are satisfying the Koch brothers and Ed Meese, but millions of people in America are suffering.

ObamaCare is not going to disappear. It is here. The senior Senator from Arizona gave a speech here within the last week or so, and he said: I don't like ObamaCare. I campaigned against ObamaCare when I ran for President. I campaigned against it when Obama ran the next time. But, he said, we lost. It passed. He is President. Elections have consequences.

That is what the senior Senator from Arizona said, and he is right.

ObamaCare is not going to magically disappear.

Tom Friedman, a renowned journalist—his bipartisanship has been legendary. He is a brilliant writer. He was chief correspondent for the New York Times for many years in the Middle East. He has covered all parts of the world. He has won three Pulitzer prizes—maybe four—and he has had five or six best-selling books. But even Tom Friedman has given up trying to be bipartisan. He wrote in the New York Times, where he writes a column 3 days a week, that ObamaCare is not really at stake in this shutdown, it is democracy that is at stake.

Here is exactly what he said:

> When extremists feel that insulated from playing by the traditional rules of our system, if we do not defend those rules—namely majority rule and the fact that if you don't like a policy passed by Congress, signed by the president and affirmed by the Supreme Court, then you have to go out and win an election to overturn it; you can't just put a fiscal gun to the country's head—then our democracy is imperiled.

He went on to say more:

> President Obama is not defending health care. He's defending the health of our democracy. Every American who cherishes that should stand with him.

Mr. President, that is as true as anything could be. We stand with our President. We stand with a President who is President of everyone in America.

We believe deeply that ObamaCare is already saving lives and will save many more in the future, but we are willing to work with Republicans to change it if they think they can make it better. We want to do that.

I wrote a letter 1 week ago today to the Speaker of the House of Representatives—and he knows this—where I said: You know, we are in this position because you asked me to put you in this position to do this.

He said, going back as far as July and confirmed in the early part of September, I—the Speaker of the House of Representatives—want to have a clean CR, and the way we can do that is you agree to our number. He said this in July and early September.

I said: I hate your number. It is unfair. We passed a budget here—$70 billion more than that.

He said: But we have to avoid problems here. We can't have a government shutdown. Work with me, take that number, and we will have a clean CR and go on to other things.

I did that. It was hard. Senator MIKULSKI, chairman of the Appropriations Committee, hated it, and Senator MURRAY, chairman of the Budget Committee, hated it, but then they said: OK, we will go ahead and do it. We will work with you to help talk to the caucus.

We did that based on the assurances of the Speaker of the House of Representatives that we would get this out of the way in order to fund the government for 1 year. Well, he didn't live up to what he committed to doing. In our business that is not good.

In addition to that I said in the letter: OK, you have sent us a little piece of legislation over here saying you want to have a conference. We agree. We will talk to you about anything you want to talk about. You want to talk about discretionary spending, you want to talk about the farm bill, you want to talk about postal reform, you want to talk about health care, we will talk, but open the government and extend the debt ceiling.

He read the letter. I called him 45 minutes later. He said: No, can't do that.

He can't take yes for an answer on the number in the CR or what he wants to talk about. I don't know what else is left to talk about.

All we are asking is that government be reopened. Stop threatening a catastrophic default on the Nation's bills. We have to pay our bills. What kind of a country do we want?

As I do every 2 weeks, I met yesterday with someone who briefs me on what is going on around the world with our intelligence services. This person told me his counterpart from a relatively small European country is making fun of our country because of what is going on here. In today's press China is complaining. They are doing pretty well economically. They buy our securities and they need a place to invest their money that is secure. China is now complaining about the fiscal integrity of the United States of America because we are arriving at a point in a few days where we are not going to pay our bills.

This is America. We are not asking the Speaker to do something that is unreasonable. We want him to pass a bill that has his number in it, not ours. Ours is $70 billion higher than that. We are also not asking him to do anything unreasonable. He asked us to go to conference. We say let's do it. All we want is the government open first, and we will agree to conference.

Mr. LEAHY. Mr. President, would the Senator yield for a question?

Mr. REID. I would be happy to yield to my friend, the distinguished President pro tempore.

Mr. LEAHY. Mr. President, I was there, and I saw how hard the Senator worked to pass a continuing resolution—as a number of the Republican leadership of the House had asked and based on their assurances that we would use it.

I would ask my friend, the majority leader, is that sort of a classic bait-and-switch operation? If it is, I can think of another one where they asked us to pass a budget. Senator MURRAY led us in passing one where we finished the last vote at 5:30 or 6:00 on a Saturday morning, having gone around the clock. Then we wanted to go to conference after the Republicans demanded we pass one, and they then refused to let us go to conference with the Republican-led House. Is this bait and switch?

Mr. REID. Mr. President, through the Chair to my friend, the senior Senator from Vermont: We have a law in place. The Presiding Officer voted for it when he was a Member of the House of Representatives. We voted for it. There is a law that set spending levels for multiyear. We did that. It was part of a deal. It was a law that was passed. But in spite of us having passed a law that set the standards for 2 years, the Republicans kept coming to the floor many times saying Democrats need to pass a budget.

We didn't need to pass a budget. We already had those numbers in place. But after this haranguing that went on for so long, we said, OK, we want to get along. We don't want any problems. So Senator MURRAY, the chairman of the Budget Committee, worked very hard to pass a budget, and we did that. Lo and behold, after the Republicans kept talking about regular order, we wanted to go to regular order, and they said: No, thanks. And she has been waiting 6 months. So the President pro tempore's description is absolutely true.

Let me close by saying all we ask is for the Speaker to be reasonable. If he brings his bill, his resolution, to the floor, it will pass. And then everyone has my commitment: Open the government, raise the debt ceiling, and we will talk about anything you want to talk about. We are not afraid to go to conference. We are happy to go to conference. That is what we used to do

here all the time. But we have a little problem: The Republicans won't let us go to conference. Maybe they will in this instance because that is what he said he wants.

So open the government and get back to the so-called conversation, as he talks about it. We will get back to the negotiating table and work out our budget disagreements. We can even start talking about ways to make the Affordable Care Act better—not worse, but better. We can get back to the business of legislating. That is what our job has always been and should be.

I would ask the Chair to announce the business of the day.

RESERVATION OF LEADER TIME

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

MORNING BUSINESS

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the Senate will be in a period of morning business for debate only until 12:30 p.m., with Senators permitted to speak therein for up to 10 minutes each.

The Senator from Vermont.

CONTINUING APPROPRIATIONS

Mr. LEAHY. Mr. President, I appreciate the remarks of our distinguished majority leader. He has probably the most frustrating job there is because he has continuously brought up and passed bills to get us out of this and reopen the government, and he is blocked by the Republican leadership in the other body.

Today marks the 8th day of this unnecessary government shutdown, more than 192 hours since the world saw the doors to the United States Government closed for this embarrassing and needless shutdown. While the Republicans in the House have the ability to end this shutdown right now—before noon today—they refuse to pass the clean continuing resolution approved by the Senate.

I have joined other Senators in coming to the floor to speak about the pervasive impact of the shutdown, and there isn't a single family in Vermont or in America—Republican, Democratic, or Independent—that this shutdown hasn't affected. All these families have been affected, but now we face cascading worsening effects to come the longer this senseless shutdown continues. I have joined the chorus of voices urging the relatively few in the House of Representatives holding up this process to put an end to this political act of destruction. It might allow them to send out bumper stickers and raise money from their supporters, but it is not helping the country.

If the human toll of the impact—if a Vermonter is not able to buy a home, or children turned away from potentially life-saving clinical trials, or the parents of our fallen soldiers who won't receive death benefits to pay for their funerals—and that is not an exaggeration. We have always had a program, when one of our soldiers dies overseas in combat, there are benefits established so the family can at least be there when the casket returns at Dover Air Force Base and to provide for the funeral. Even that is cut out. We send our soldiers to war. We tell them we are there to take care of their families if something happens. Now, because of a small group of tea party Republicans, we say we can't even take care of their families when they die in the service of the country. For shame if that happens.

If all of these examples don't motivate them to do the right thing, maybe I can speak their language for a moment and point to the fiscal cost of this Republican shutdown. The estimated cost per hour of the Republican shutdown—that the government remains shut down—is $12.5 million. That is $300 million a day wasted or nearly $1.6 billion per week. And what do the American people get for that? They get to watch fake budget conferences, staged photo ops, and the very Members shutting down the government and running to every single TV camera they can find. Over the last 8 days we have spent more than $2 billion for the government to not work, not function, and not serve the American people.

Can you imagine the actual good that could have been done with that $2 billion that was just wasted? And that figure only covers the cost of work and services the government can't perform because 800,000 Federal workers are furloughed. It doesn't take into account the ripple effects throughout our overall economy.

Where are the deficit hawks who claim we don't have enough money to provide SNAP benefits to hungry Americans in the farm bill? Where are the Members who shamefully held up disaster relief after Tropical Storm Irene and Hurricane Sandy, while insisting that spending be offset? Surely, they would want to put a stop to the shutdown to end this wasteful government spending. Yet here we are, waiting for the Republican leadership in the House of Representatives to pass the clean continuing resolution and put an end to this shutdown.

Instead of passing a clean Senate-passed continuing resolution pending in the House—based on budget levels that, as the leader pointed out, Republicans themselves wanted—the proposals being offered by House Republicans would actually expand the deficit.

First, the House proposed we repeal the Affordable Care Act because of claims it is harmful to our economy. But if we repeal it, we would actually accelerate the health care cost spiral and boost the Federal deficit by $109 billion. They don't tell people they are voting to add another $109 billion to our deficit. Then they suggest we repeal just a portion of the Affordable Care Act, but add $30 billion to the deficit for which they don't want any offsets. Where were the Members in the House who attacked appropriations bills and insisted on cuts to funding for law enforcement officers, disaster preparedness, and medical research? Where were the Members who insisted the devastating costs of sequestration must remain in place because we simply can't afford to spend and must reduce the deficit, no matter what it does to law enforcement or medical research or disaster preparedness?

They ditched their principles, and now they have forced a government shutdown which is costing more than if we had stayed open because of the money wasted. It appears the only time the House is willing to compromise is when it comes to adding to the deficit in order to prevent access to affordable health insurance for millions of Americans.

We are here right now because the Republican leadership in the House refuses to act. They could end the shutdown right now and make this the last day we spend $300 million on nothing. Yet there is this faction within the majority of the House that has now brought the government of the United States to a halt, wasting hundreds of millions of dollars each day, day after day, and they will not relent. They talk about the Affordable Care Act, which, if we have children in college, allows them to be on our insurance policy. They want to do away with that, but they don't have any alternative. The Affordable Care Act allows a member of your family with a preexisting health condition—heart, cancer, whatever—to get insurance. They want to do away with that. They have no plan of their own.

I want to get back to work for Vermonters. I want help for the Vermont company who can't start their new business because the certificate is sitting on a desk at the Department of Treasury's Alcohol and Tobacco Tax and Trade Bureau but nobody is there to sign it—I want pregnant Vermonters and new moms going without meals and whose babies are going to go hungry because they are unable to get healthy food and baby formula without the WIC benefits they are supposed to have access to—I want to see them fed. I want to see our farmers have the ability to continue to work as they do every single day and know the farm bill has been passed.

Let's stop the sloganeering here. Let's stop rushing to the TV cameras. Let's actually do what is best for America. Wouldn't that be a wonderful step in the right direction?

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. THUNE. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for

the quorum call be rescinded and I be allowed to speak for up to 12 minutes.

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

The Senator is recognized.

Mr. THUNE. Mr. President, we are in the eighth day of a completely unnecessary partial government shutdown. Last week there was an official at the White House who said they were winning the shutdown debate and they were not concerned about how long the shutdown lasts. Well, there may be Democrats and folks at the White House who are content with the current situation, but Republicans remain focused on finding a solution to reopen the government.

The Republicans have offered multiple solutions to fund the government and will continue to work to find common ground while providing ObamaCare relief for middle-class Americans. Middle-class Americans deserve the same relief from ObamaCare the Democrats have already given themselves and big business. Senate Democrats even had the opportunity to give the same 1-year relief from ObamaCare to their constituents that President Obama has already given to big business.

We believe this is an issue of basic fairness. We believe this law should be delayed—not just for big businesses and not just for the favored constituencies but for all Americans because of the harmful impact it is having.

In fact, there is bipartisan support for giving individuals and families relief. A colleague of ours on the other side of the aisle—a Senate Democrat—recently said a delay for individuals would be very reasonable and sensible. There have been a number of votes in the House where Democrats have voted with Republicans in support of providing that delay to middle-class Americans.

With regard to where we are right now, we have a near-term issue and we have a slightly longer term issue. The near-term issue has an awful lot of folks increasingly concerned about the impact the government shutdown is having on people across this country. The House of Representatives has passed nine bills that have been sent to the Senate which are sitting here at the desk that would provide funding for some of these programs and services which impact people across this country that could be picked up today and passed by unanimous consent. And, by the way, many of those have passed with bipartisan support.

As recently as Saturday the House passed a bill that would provide back pay for Federal workers. There were 189 Democrats in the House of Representatives who voted in support of that bill. There have been up to 57 Democrats in the House of Representatives who have voted to give pay to our National Guard and Reserve, the same thing we have done for our active-duty military. They have also voted to provide relief to our national parks so they can open again. They have voted to provide funding for the National Institutes of Health so that those lifesaving medicines can continue to be provided. They have voted to provide funding for FEMA so FEMA can respond to the natural disasters that are occurring across the country.

There are nine bills sitting at the desk of the Senate that could be picked up and passed today by unanimous consent. There wouldn't be a single Republican that I know of who would object to any of those measures being passed that would provide funding and relief in support of the services and programs which impact people across the country.

The House will pick up a couple of more bills today. They will do one that funds Head Start and will then send it over here, so that will be the tenth bill that will be sitting at the Senate. They will pass a bill that funds Impact Aid, something which is very important to the people I represent in South Dakota. That will be the 11th bill that will be sitting at the desk in the Senate awaiting action. As I said, they could all be passed by unanimous consent. There would not be a single Republican that I know of who would be opposed to any of those being moved forward.

It is not a question of addressing the funding concerns and making sure the programs and services which impact people across this country are being funded; that can be done. It has been done by the House, and those items have moved over here to the Senate. All that is necessary is for the majority leader to come over, pick them up, ask for unanimous consent to pass them, and those items would pass.

I see the near-term issue as being one that is very easy to solve, and all that it entails is for the leadership in the Senate to pick up those bills and pass them.

The other issue I mentioned that is a little bit longer term, but not much, because it is about 9 days away, is we are going to hit the debt limit, which means the United States of America will no longer have borrowing authority. We will hit up against the amount we are able to borrow on our credit card to fund the services of our government. There is a request obviously to increase the debt limit to allow the Federal Government to borrow more money. I have had private conversations with members of the administration's team. They said they would like to see a debt limit increase that would take us through the next election—through November of 2014. To do that we would be looking somewhere in the trillion-dollar range. It strikes me that—and I think it is something supported by the American people—if we are going to have a debate about increasing the debt limit, we ought to do something about the debt. I think that is a sensible position to take. By a 2-to-1 margin, polls show the American people believe if we are going to raise the debt limit, we ought to do something to fix and address the debt.

What we are simply saying is: Let's sit down and have a discussion about things we can do that will put us on a different and sustainable fiscal trajectory for this country that won't saddle future generations of Americans with massive amounts—trillions and trillions of dollars—of additional debt. That issue is looming out there and it is not very far away. We don't have a lot of time to deal with that. It is not, as I said, as immediate as the government shutdown, which can be addressed by the majority of the Senate. I think the debt limit is going to require both parties here in Congress and the President and his team to get together and figure out what it is we can do that would not only raise the debt limit—the amount we can borrow—but address the underlying fundamental problem, and that is the fact that we have a $17 trillion debt.

There has been a lot said about things that various Senators have said in the past on the floor and in the course of these various debates we have had about debt limit increases, and I wanted to point out that the President of the United States, President Obama, when he was here in 2006, said raising the debt limit is a failure of leadership. He said it is a failure of leadership and described it as unpatriotic. Unpatriotic—failure of leadership to raise the debt limit.

Now he is saying he wants a clean debt limit increase—no negotiation, period. No negotiation on the debt limit. Well, at the time when he said that raising the debt limit was a leadership failure, the total Federal debt was $8.3 trillion. Today it is $16.8 trillion, $16.9 trillion. So the Federal debt, literally, is double what it was when the current President said back in 2006, as a Member of this Chamber in the Senate, that raising the debt limit would be a failure of leadership. Now it is twice that amount. It was $8.3 trillion in 2006, and now we are going on $17 trillion.

It seems to me the President of the United States—who described raising the debt limit in 2006 when the debt was half of what it is today as a leadership failure—ought to be willing to exercise some leadership and engage himself in a process that would allow us to sit down and talk about what we can do to get this debt under control.

There is a series of spending reforms that have been put forward by many of my colleagues on this side of the aisle that would deal with the out-of-control spending, particularly on what we call the mandatory spending part of the budget, those entitlement programs that currently are on an unsustainable path. We would like to try and get that spending under control. There are a number of other things that have been proposed that, frankly, would be good for the economy.

One of the best ways to get our fiscal house in order is to get the economy growing and expanding at a faster rate. When the economy is growing and expanding, more people are working,

more people are investing, more people are paying taxes, and government revenues go up. When we have an economy growing at 3 to 4 percent instead of an economy growing at 1 to 2 percent, which is what we have today, the result is a dramatic increase in the amount of tax revenue that comes into the Federal Treasury.

When they are talking about raising the debt limit, we should look at what we can do in association with that discussion to actually reduce the debt. One would be to put spending reforms in place, and the other would be growing and expanding the economy.

One of the things that has been proposed that would grow the economy is tax reform. I happen to believe, and I think a lot of us do, that the best thing we can do to get the economy growing at a faster rate is to reform our Tax Code in a way that makes us more competitive in the global marketplace. That would mean reducing the tax on business, which is the highest in the world. The United States has the highest corporate tax rate in the entire world.

Lowering marginal income tax rates, broadening the tax base, doing away with many of the loopholes, deductions, exemptions, and preferences that are in the Tax Code today that benefit particular constituencies and going to a broader based tax base, but one that has marginal rates that are significantly lower than where they are today—I think that would dramatically unleash economic growth in this country and get people back to work so they can pay taxes and get government revenues up.

In the context of raising the debt limit, we ought to do something about the debt, and as I said, that is fairly straightforward.

One of the ideas that has been put forward here is that we need a clean debt limit increase; we can't have any discussion or negotiation about this. If we look at history, it has been the case that many of the big accomplishments, if you will, when it comes to deficit reduction, when it comes to fiscal plans being put into place, occurred in the context of increasing the debt limit. In fact, throughout our history, going back to 1978, the debt limit has been raised 53 times in those 35 years. Of those 53 debt limit increases, 27, or more than half, were done around other policy considerations and policy discussions and legislation that was put forward to address issues—in many cases to address the out-of-control spending and debt we have in this country.

For 35 years now, with 53 debt limit increases, more than half have involved discussion of other matters. In fact, some of the biggest accomplishments we can point to in the history of the last 30 years occurred at a time when we had both sides trying to figure out a path forward for dealing with fiscal imbalances our country faced.

The Gramm-Rudman-Hollings legislation passed in 1985, the Budget Acts in 1990 and 1993 and 1997, and more recently in 2011. All occurred in the context of a debt limit increase. So there is ample precedent in history for doing big things that are good for the country and good for future generations around the debt limit increase. It defies history to suggest we cannot come to the table and cannot negotiate in the context of a debt limit increase.

As I look at these issues that are converging on us now and what they mean for our children and our grandchildren and for future generations, it seems to me that taking a position of we will not negotiate, period—which is essentially what the President has said and what has been echoed here by the Senate majority—is not only wrong in terms of what we need to do to fix the debt and to get our country on a more sustainable fiscal path, but it is also completely at odds with what we know to be the case throughout our history. We can do better by the American people. We should do better by the American people. It requires leadership.

The President of the United States, President Obama, as Senator Obama back in 2006, said at that time that raising the debt limit would be a leadership failure and described it as unpatriotic. Here we are these many years later, with double—double—the amount of debt we had back when he made that statement.

This situation we are in today cries out for leadership. It cries out for leadership from the President and from those of us in Congress. I hope we can find our way to get together, to sit down, to negotiate, to come up with solutions that are good for the future of this country that would deal not just with raising the borrowing limit so we can borrow more money to fund government, but to address the underlying problem, and that is the fact that we have a $17 trillion debt that continues to grow at $600 billion, $700 billion a year.

We continue to have a chronically high unemployment rate. We continue to have a labor force, a workforce that is at historically low levels; in other words, the number of people who are working today as a percentage of those who could work is at the lowest level it has been in 35 years. We have a sluggish economy that is growing in the 1- to 2-percent range. Take-home pay for most Americans has gone down since the President took office by about $3,700.

We need to get middle-class Americans back to work, middle-class Americans earning more, being able to provide for their families, increasing family household income and take-home pay in this country, and the way to do that is to get the economy growing and expanding.

The other way to do that, I would argue, is to get spending here in Washington under control so we are not out there borrowing more and more money all the time, so that more and more of our country's assets and resources can be deployed toward things that will yield a return, that will put more people to work, that will grow the economy, and expand the standard of living and the quality of life for people across this country. Time is short. The clock is running. Time is a-wasting. We need to get this done.

In the near term we need to bring up the nine bills sitting here in the Senate that were passed by the House. That would put funding for a lot of these services and programs that impact people—which has been expressed so many times by my colleagues on the other side of the aisle—back in place.

Secondly, let's get together—the President, Democrats, and Republicans here in Washington, DC—to talk about not only raising the debt limit but what we are going to do to address the underlying debt.

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

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. SCHATZ). The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

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

Ms. HAGAN. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent to speak for up to 10 minutes.

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

Mrs. HAGAN. Mr. President, I rise to address the negative impact this government shutdown is having on my home State of North Carolina. It is a shame that some in Congress are playing political games with the most basic function of keeping our government open. I did not get elected to shut down the government. With each minute that goes by, more and more North Carolinians are feeling the impact of this irresponsible shutdown.

North Carolina is proud to be home to almost 1 million veterans. But as of this spring, we are also home to one of the worst VA disability claims backlogs in the country. We have pushed to have senior VA personnel dispatched to North Carolina. More caseworkers have been added. After a lot of attention and work, we were finally beginning to see the needle move in the right direction.

Claims were being processed faster, which means veterans were getting the benefits they deserved faster. But as of today, the Winston-Salem regional office is closed to the public. With claim processors furloughed and just a skeleton staff operation inside, this government shutdown threatens to reverse the progress we have made in addressing that backlog. So I ask, is it worth shutting down the government over a political game when veterans get caught in this crossfire? No.

In my home State we are also proud of the 11 national parks that are not simply just beautiful places in our country and in our State but also important drivers of our tourism economy.

As families flock to enjoy these affordable destinations, they stop at our local small businesses, they eat at our restaurants, and they stay in our hotels. In 2011, out-of-State tourists to national parks in North Carolina spent $720 million during these trips, which supported nearly 12,000 jobs.

I do not know how many of my colleagues have been fortunate enough to visit western North Carolina at this time of the year. But right now the fall leaves are turning and western North Carolina is opening its arms to welcome tourists from around the country and from around the world who come to see this beautiful landscape.

On the other side of the State, in the east, we have Cape Hatteras National Seashore and Cape Lookout. They are both closed. October is the most popular surf-fishing month of the year. But with beach access closed our fishermen cannot get to the fishing areas.

With parks from out west all the way to down east closed, we fear too many families will decide to cancel their vacations. So I ask, is it worth shutting down the government over political games when our small business owners who support our economy will be the ones to shoulder this burden? No.

In my home State we are proud that our university system includes a number of distinguished research institutions that are on the cutting edge of new technologies and therapies that will make our world better. NIH supports roughly 20,000 jobs in North Carolina. But the NIH will not take any action on grant applications or awards or admit new patients to clinical trials while our government is shut down.

So I ask, is it worth putting medical advances and thousands of jobs at risk just to play a tired political game? No. I could go on and on. While new vaccines are still being delivered, the CDC is not able to track flu cases as usual. They cannot support State and local partners who help monitor infectious diseases.

The FDA is not able to support the majority of its food safety activities. Pell grants and direct student loans could be delayed for 14 million American students. School districts, colleges, and job training centers could face major cashflow problems without money for Federal programs and grants coming in the door.

Our research universities, in addition to doing this cutting-edge research that benefits our entire country, are huge employers. Some of them receive tens of millions of dollars a month in reimbursement for work already performed for the Federal Government. Without those funds coming in the door, these universities can be put in an incredibly difficult position with respect to managing their expenses—not to mention the time lost in Congress when we should be talking about how to continue repairing our economy; we should be talking about how to improve job training programs; we should be talking about growing manufacturing in our country. But instead, we are just manufacturing crisis after crisis after another. There is no reason we cannot end this shutdown.

Fortunately, there is a simple solution. The Senate has passed a responsible bill that keeps the government running at currently reduced spending levels. The House of Representatives could pass that bill today. This shutdown could end within a matter of hours. Then we could have the time and space to come together on a long-term, balanced, and bipartisan plan to finally put our fiscal house in order. Instead, the other side of the Capitol insists on sending us bills that they know have zero chance of passing or becoming law over here just to stage a political stunt.

But political stunts will not process VA claims. Political stunts will not help restaurant owners in western North Carolina make payroll while the national parks are closed. Political stunts will not get this government reopened for business. I urge my colleagues in the House of Representatives to stop playing this partisan game, take up the Senate-passed bill, end this government shutdown.

I yield the floor and 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. SCHUMER. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

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

EXTENSION OF MORNING BUSINESS

Mr. SCHUMER. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent to extend the period of morning business for debate only until 5 p.m., with Senators permitted to speak therein for up to 10 minutes each, and that the majority leader be recognized following morning business.

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

IMPACT OF DEFAULT

Mr. SCHUMER. Madam President, I rise today with just 9 days left until the United States hits the debt ceiling. Never before in our history have we failed to pay our bills, but in 9 days that possibility will reach our doorstep.

Even though defaulting on our debt could send our economy into a tailspin, even possibly another Great Depression, there are already those who are denying the impacts of default. The debt ceiling deniers try to claim that this won't be a big deal and that middle-class families won't be hurt. Well, these debt-ceiling deniers need a dose of debt-ceiling reality.

The truth is that failing to pay our bills on time would most probably be worse than in 2008 when Lehman Brothers and AIG went under and the economy went into a tailspin. We still haven't recovered from that debacle. To this day there are people out of work. There are middle-class families whose income is lower than it was then because of what happened in 2008.

Why could it be worse—in all likelihood would be worse? Because just as housing securities had to be marked down because of the Lehman crisis, if government bonds, which are much more widely held, have to be marked down in lower value, we could have a freeze where banks are not able to lend money.

What happened in 2008 was simple. Banks and other financial institutions had all these mortgage securities on their balance sheets. All of a sudden their value seemed to be a lot less, so the banks' balance sheets were in the red. That meant they couldn't lend money, and not just for long-term mortgages and car loans but also for overnight lines of credit. Businesses were shaken. Many businesses couldn't function. Wire transfers weren't allowed to be made, and the whole financial system came to a startling and devastating halt.

Now the effects would be worse, in all likelihood, and for this reason: Mortgage securities were widely held but not close to as widely held as U.S. Treasurys are. Imagine on the day of default or, God forbid, even a day or two before default, all of a sudden the markets determine—and they are mystical in some ways—that Treasurys should be written down significantly. There is a very real possibility that could—and not 5 percent but significantly higher than that; I would estimate a 30-, 40-, 50-percent chance—send us into a tailspin that might make the 2008 recession look like child's play.

How would that affect the average family? Well, if the United States defaults, middle-class family paychecks would be raided by higher interest rates on everyday expenses. Already interest rates on short-term Treasury bonds are creeping upward as the possibility of default looms over us. If we default, investors who always considered U.S. debt risk free will demand higher interest rates due to the heightened risk that they might not be paid. For the first time ever investors question whether the U.S. Government would honor its commitments.

The domino effect on interest rates that affect family budgets would be endless and cataclysmic. Credit card interest rates would go up, adding hundreds of dollars to monthly bills. Young families seeking to take out a mortgage on a new home would be faced with thousands of dollars in higher payments over the life of the mortgage. Many might not even buy that home, putting a crimp in one of the bright spots of our economy—the housing market. Someone wanting to take out a loan to buy a new car should prepare to pay hundreds or thousands of

dollars more in higher interest rates. That means car sales would decline and automobile manufacturers could lay off people. Do you have privately held student loans? Prepare for monthly payments to shoot upward. Innocent families, millions of them—tens of millions—would be hit with thousands of dollars in additional bills through no fault of their own if U.S. Treasurys were devalued.

The damage doesn't stop there. If we default on our debt, the dollar loses value, and a trip to the gas station or the grocery store gets more expensive. The dollar won't go as far. Americans will have to shell out more for gas and for milk to feed their kids.

Think of the effect of a default on 10,000 baby boomers who are retiring each day. In 2011 the stock market lost 2,000 points. How much more might it lose now? We gained that back by the beginning of 2012, but that is no comfort to the thousands of people retiring every day. And when you are dealing with U.S. Treasurys—and these are not certainties, but these are possibilities—it could be a lot worse. You can check your 401(k) and see that political brinkmanship took a huge bite out of your retirement savings. Imagine the pain of saving wisely, making smart choices, only to have your retirement account and family budget wrecked by dangerous brinkmanship from tea party Republicans in Washington. If there were ever a governmental action that merited the words ''playing with fire,'' this is it.

The devastation doesn't end there. If we don't raise the debt ceiling, the Federal Government will be faced with impossible choices. Do we pay foreign debts—because if we don't, those countries won't lend to us anymore—or do we pay veterans' benefits? Do we make sure Social Security benefits go out or Medicare? Do we pay our troops? Do we fund border security? What do we pay for education? These are all tough choices.

Make no mistake about it. If the debt ceiling is not lifted, we can't meet all our obligations.

So the chances of this are not 80 percent, but they are close enough to 50 percent that anyone who risks this, particularly for this forlorn goal: we won't raise the debt ceiling unless we repeal ObamaCare—which we know isn't happening—it is madness. Risk the economy of the United States, the possibility of going through worse than what we went through in 2008 because you demand ObamaCare be repealed when we know it won't happen? Wow. I have rarely seen such madness coming out of legislators, but it is coming out of a few.

So the consequences of failing to raise the debt ceiling are crystal clear: interest rates on the middle-class expenses such as home mortgages, car loans, and student loans will shoot up. Housing markets, automobile markets, and others decline as many are laid off, and then others are laid off in a cyclical cycle. The dollar will lose its value, making everyday purchases more expensive, and the Federal Government faces terrible choices about who we pay—seniors, veterans, military, creditors. To risk these consequences would be a terrible mistake.

In conclusion, I come here with a simple plea—not to our tea party activist colleagues but to mainstream conservative Republican friends. Please help us avoid the default crash. Please help us avoid an economic apocalypse. We are ready to talk. We are ready to negotiate on anything. But first open the government and pay our bills. Then we can sit down and debate our differences. The future of our financial system, the future of millions of Americans, is at stake. We don't play around with that. We don't hold that hostage.

To my mainstream conservative Republican colleagues, please do the right thing. Let us pay our bills and take the threat of severe economic collapse off the table now.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Maryland.

CONTINUING APPROPRIATIONS

Ms. MIKULSKI. Madam President, I rise to speak as the chair of the Senate Appropriations Committee, who would like to reopen government and have our committee get back to regular order to be able to move our appropriations bills, to be able to debate them on the floor, amend them on the floor, and go to conference to resolve either fiscal or other issues we might have with the House. But we can't do it because we are in lockdown politics.

There is much about where we find ourselves that is very frustrating to me. One of the main ones is the fact that the tea party Republicans are out there saying things that simply are not accurate. Tea party Republicans say President Obama won't negotiate. That is not true. Tea party Republicans are saying Democrats in the Senate won't negotiate. That is not true. Tea party Republicans say the Senate has not moved appropriations bills. That is not true. The Appropriation Committee has. Tea party Republicans say the House doesn't have the votes to reopen the government. That is not true. And tea party Republicans say the debt limit is not a big deal. That is not true. So let me elaborate on these point by point.

Tea party Republicans say President Obama won't negotiate. The President has negotiated time and time again. He had a framework for a grand bargain in his 2014 budget. Read it. Let the print speak for itself. He had $1.8 trillion of deficit reduction over 10 years, including $400 billion in health care savings, $200 billion in savings from mandatory programs, $200 billion in further discretionary cuts in strategic funding and discretionary spending. And, yes, he would even change the cost-of-living calculation for Social Security. But the Republicans couldn't take yes for an answer. Here was Obama, here was his budget, here is what he was offering—to reduce debt, to take on mandatory spending, to take on discretionary spending. They couldn't take yes for an answer. It included items in there I didn't agree with, but they were to be negotiated, to be discussed. Since he became President, the deficit has gone down by 50 percent, from $1.4 trillion in 2009 to an estimated $700 billion in 2013. High? Yes. But cut in half.

Now let's go to this President who they say won't negotiate. He negotiated in December of 2012 on a fiscal cliff deal. He wanted a 2-year delay in sequester, but we got 2 months. He wanted tax cuts for the wealthy to be eliminated above $250,000. He agreed to an estate tax exemption. He wanted a $3.5 million exemption, the Republicans wanted $5 million. He said OK. The 2-percent Social Security payroll tax was ending without offsetting stimulus provisions. He gave and we supported him. Now they say he won't negotiate.

Speaker BOEHNER says, we just want to have a conversation. That is what the President did. What were those summits at Andrews Air Force Base? I thought that was going to be kumbaya. The President has had private one-on-one meetings, and nothing has come from that. Then he did a larger charm offensive—he had dinner with Republicans both at the White House and at different restaurants around town. Nobody seems to be able to take yes for an answer. This is the President who has invited people to the White House, invited leadership to play golf with him to build relationships, he has had dinner there. But instead of having lunch with the President, they want to have his lunch—over and over again.

The President has expressed a willingness continually to negotiate. And where are we now? We need to reopen the government. The House needs to pass the Senate clean short-term CR and raise the debt limit. Once it is open for business, we can talk about other matters.

Now let's go to tea party Republicans saying Democrats won't negotiate. Senate Democrats have tried to negotiate on the budget since we passed it on March 23. We were here for a marathon session led by Senator MURRAY—vote after vote, amendment after amendment—and we passed a budget resolution.

The rules of engagement and the rules for dispute resolution in the Congress are, take what one body passes, like the Senate, and meet with the House in a conference. Senator MURRAY was ready to go. She asked permission—which she has to do under the rules of the Senate—to have her budget conference to hammer out the budget with PAUL RYAN and other House Members.

Nineteen times since March 23 Senator MURRAY has stood on this floor and asked for the ability to negotiate

with the House. Nineteen times she was blocked by six tea party Republicans. Nineteen times, using the rules to protect the voice of the minority—which I understand they used not only their voice but what was used to protect them to prohibit the Senate from meeting with their House counterparts.

So Senate Democrats want to negotiate. There is PAUL RYAN. There is PATTY MURRAY. Let's have the budget conference and hammer it out. The Democrats have been ready to negotiate on a budget since March 23, 2013.

Let's have a conversation? We have been trying to have that conversation since March. Who has stopped us? HARRY REID didn't stop PATTY MURRAY. CHUCK SCHUMER didn't stop the Budget Committee. BARBARA MIKULSKI is not stopping it. Six tea party Republicans have stopped the ability of the Senate from going to the House to negotiate a budget.

Free the Budget Committee. Why is that so important? Because they not only come up with an overall budget in discretionary spending, mandatory spending, and revenues, but they put a cap on us appropriators. One of the outcomes of a budget agreement is they set the total amount of money the Appropriations Committee can spend on discretionary spending. To the shock of everybody, there is actually a cap on discretionary spending established by the Budget Committee. That has been the rule of the Budget Act going back to the 1970s. I would accept a cap agreed upon in a duly constituted process established by the rules of the House and the Senate—which is, we pass a budget, we meet in conference, we come back and give the appropriators what they call the 302(a)—the total cap we can spend—we take a look at it, and we meet and we follow the law. It also says what revenue should be and then total mandatory spending.

So when we hear Democrats won't negotiate—the Democrats have negotiated.

Going to this situation where we know the fiscal year expires October 1, the Senate put forth a bill. It came out of the Appropriations Committee. It was really, as the Chair, at my suggestion we would have a short-term funding resolution so we could deal with issues such as debt limit, canceling sequester for 2 years, and what our funding as a cap should be for 2014—short term, no new money, but a goal of getting us to canceling the sequester, following what the Budget Committee would set as the cap on us.

In order to get there, I was willing to compromise. I didn't want to. I felt it was too harsh, too rough on important discretionary spending. But sometimes you have to negotiate and compromise. So I was willing to compromise in order to get to negotiations. What was the compromise? The House has a level of $986 billion. It follows fiscal 2013 at the sequester level, meaning reduced by over $100 billion. I thought that $986 billion was too low. The Senate bill was $1.058 trillion. That is over a $70 billion difference.

But that is what a conference is. That is what negotiation is. So in order to get us across the dome into negotiations, I was willing to compromise, particularly on very important domestic spending.

The liberals who want to fund Head Start, who want to fund NIH—well, maybe we are not liberals. Maybe we are just Americans and, I believe, friends on the other side of the aisle—we were ready to go. So in my mind, as an appropriator, I have already compromised just to get us into the room. But they won't even take up that bill. They won't take up the bill that Speaker BOEHNER said he would pass if we agreed to their number—$986 billion—to get us into the room to talk. If you tell the Senate: If you agree with us on this, just to get a short-term negotiation going, we will pass it, and then you don't, why should we believe it will be any different?

But as the chairman of the Appropriations Committee, I am ready to negotiate. I am ready to compromise. I have reached out to my House counterpart, the chair of Appropriations. We have a marvelous, civil, candid relationship. We are ready to go to work.

We differ on money. There is no doubt. The chairman of the House Appropriations Committee, Congressman HAL ROGERS, is a wonderful gentleman, but I will tell you he is a rock-ribbed, no-nonsense fiscal conservative. But that is OK by Senator BARB because that is what compromise is. That is doing what Colin Powell asked us to do: Let's talk things over. Let's find some sensible center. Let's make sure we run the U.S. Government in a smart, frugal, effective way. That is what it would take.

We are ready to do it, but we need—I need Speaker BOEHNER to pass the short-term CR so we can even get into the room to do this. So when you say Senate Democrats will not negotiate or will not compromise, it is not true.

Also, I heard the junior Senator from Kentucky say that the Senate has not approved appropriations bills. The Appropriations Committee, despite being hamstrung by not having a budget, reported 11 appropriations bills. Eight of them were supported by Republicans. By August 1, our Appropriations Committee had marked up every single bill except one, Interior. We had marked them up with bipartisan support. Eight of them had bipartisan support; three did not: Labor-HHS, Financial Services, and Legislative Branch.

Why did we not get that? Because the Labor-HHS bill and Financial Services play a role in funding ObamaCare. There we go again. Don't do anything that would fund ObamaCare. There we go again.

I am so fed up with those riders, those poison-pen riders. We could have done that to them. We chose not to. I would like to see the comprehensive immigration bill passed. I didn't put any riders on the appropriations bills coming out of the Senate. I would have liked to have seen a farm bill. That has been worked on so hard by Senator STABENOW, the Senator from Michigan, and Senator ROBERTS, the Senator from Kansas—they worked wonderfully on a bipartisan farm bill. It was something to be proud of in the Senate. I would have liked to have attached that to the continuing. But we decided no riders, nothing cute, nothing clever, no earmarks, nothing like that—straightforward money bills ready to go to conference.

We could not get it, but they are passed. They are passed in the Appropriations Committee and we are waiting to get to work.

The Republicans, the tea party Republicans say they do not have the votes in the House to reopen government. Give it a chance. Put the vote to the floor. If we win, government is reopened. If we lose, at least we offered a suggestion and we can go back to the drawing board. But the solution to reopening the government lies on Speaker BOEHNER's desk. He says he wants to have a conversation. We say pick it up, have the vote. That puts the conversation to work for a short-term funding resolution.

We say to our six Republican Senators who have blocked the Budget Committee, let the Budget Committee go to conference. Let Senator PATTY MURRAY and Congressman PAUL RYAN meet to resolve these issues. Let's follow the regular order. Let's get back to the way this government and this country should function.

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

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The bill clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

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

RECESS

Ms. MIKULSKI. Madam President, I ask that the Senate stand in recess until 2:15.

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

Thereupon, the Senate, at 12:26 p.m., recessed until 2:15 p.m. and reassembled when called to order by the President pro tempore (Mr. LEAHY).

CONTINUING APPROPRIATIONS

QUORUM CALL

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

The PRESIDENT pro tempore. The clerk will call the roll to ascertain the presence of a quorum.

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll and the following Senators

entered the Chamber and answered to their names:

[Quorum No. 3]

Baldwin	Heitkamp	Murphy
Baucus	Johnson (SD)	Murray
Begich	Kaine	Pryor
Blumenthal	King	Reed
Boxer	Landrieu	Reid
Brown	Leahy	Schatz
Cantwell	Levin	Tester
Cardin	Markey	Udall (CO)
Casey	McCain	Warner
Durbin	McCaskill	Wyden
Heinrich	Menendez	

The PRESIDENT pro tempore. A quorum is not present.

Mr. REID. Mr. President, I move that the Sergeant at Arms be directed to request the presence of all absent Senators, and I ask for the yeas and nays.

The PRESIDENT pro tempore. Is there a sufficient second?

There is a sufficient second.

The question is on agreeing to the motion. The yeas and nays have been ordered, and the clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk called the roll.

The PRESIDENT pro tempore. Are there any other Senators in the Chamber desiring to vote?

Mr. DURBIN. I announce that the Senator from New Mexico (Mr. UDALL) is necessarily absent.

Mr. CORNYN. The following Senator is necessarily absent: the Senator from Oklahoma (Mr. INHOFE).

The result was announced—yeas 84, nays 14, as follows:

[Rollcall Vote No. 214 Leg.]

YEAS—84

Ayotte	Flake	Merkley
Baldwin	Franken	Mikulski
Barrasso	Gillibrand	Moran
Baucus	Graham	Murkowski
Begich	Grassley	Murphy
Bennet	Hagan	Murray
Blumenthal	Harkin	Nelson
Blunt	Hatch	Portman
Boozman	Heinrich	Pryor
Boxer	Heitkamp	Reed
Brown	Hirono	Reid
Burr	Hoeven	Rockefeller
Cantwell	Isakson	Sanders
Cardin	Johanns	Schatz
Carper	Johnson (SD)	Schumer
Casey	Kaine	Sessions
Chambliss	King	Shaheen
Chiesa	Kirk	Shelby
Coats	Klobuchar	Stabenow
Cochran	Landrieu	Tester
Collins	Leahy	Thune
Coons	Levin	Toomey
Corker	Manchin	Udall (CO)
Donnelly	Markey	Warner
Durbin	McCain	Warren
Enzi	McCaskill	Whitehouse
Feinstein	McConnell	Wicker
Fischer	Menendez	Wyden

NAYS—14

Alexander	Heller	Roberts
Coburn	Johnson (WI)	Rubio
Cornyn	Lee	Scott
Crapo	Paul	Vitter
Cruz	Risch	

NOT VOTING—2

Inhofe	Udall (NM)

The motion was agreed to.

The PRESIDENT pro tempore. The majority leader is recognized.

Mr. REID. As soon as I finish my remarks, we will enter into an agreement on how the speakers will go forward.

The shutdown of the Federal Government is now affecting some families more than others. It is affecting families who are the most vulnerable, denying them the benefits to help with the funeral expenses of loved ones killed while serving our country.

This part of my presentation is not something I got from my staff; this is in the press right now:

The families of five U.S. servicemembers who were killed over the weekend in Afghanistan have been notified that they won't be receiving their benefit, normally wired to relatives within 36 hours of the death. The death gratuity is extended to help cover funeral costs and help with immediate living expenses until survivor benefits typically begin. The money also helps cover costs to fly families to Dover Air Force Base to witness a return of their loved ones in a flag-draped coffin.

''Washington may be shut down, but it's still asking people to go to war,'' says the head of the Council on Foreign Relations, Gayle Lemmon. ''When people realize that they can serve and fight for their country, but that their families will get an I.O.U. until the shutdown is over, I think they're just shocked.''

I know I am.

For example, LCpl Jeremiah Collins, 19 years old, was a marine who died Saturday while supporting combat operations in Afghanistan. He was one of the five killed, including four troop members who died Sunday by an improvised explosive device.

A law passed last week to continue paying civilian members of the military during the shutdown, but does not allow for payouts of the death benefit to the families of the fallen, officials told Andrea Mitchell of NBC.

One senior official said he was disgusted by the predicament.

That is where we are.

I have asked each Senator to come to the floor today because it is important that we have an opportunity to talk about the crisis facing this great Nation. This government shutdown is an embarrassment to our Nation—not only to the people of America but around the world. An economic conference in the Far East that President Obama was to attend—he couldn't because of the government shutdown. So who is there pontificating about how bad things are in America? The President of China. And that is what he is talking about—America can't pay its bills.

The families who lost five loved ones—it is an unbearable loss, but now they are being denied death benefits because of this senseless shutdown. It is shameful and embarrassing. There are no words to describe this situation that at least I am capable of expressing, that America could fail the families of our fallen heroes. Appalling, frightening—everyone can come up with their own description.

It is time for us, Members of this august body, to stand before the American people and publicly discuss the path forward. Democrats stand unified, asking the Speaker to reopen the government—the whole government, not bits and pieces of the government. It is bad enough with all of the sequestration that has cut, for example, the National Institutes of Health this year by $1.6 billion, and add to that the government shutdown, add to that the second year of sequestration, which will be another $2 billion for the National Institutes of Health. This premier search we have in America for cures for disease, there has never been anything like it in the world; the Library of Congress, there has never been anyplace like it in the world. The great library in Egypt didn't compare to the Library of Congress. But there has been nothing ever in the history of the world like the National Institutes of Health. We are mindlessly going forward and cutting these scientists by billions of dollars.

We need to reopen the whole government—not in some piecemeal fashion that further demonstrates to the world that we are unable to find real solutions. Open the whole government so we can get back to work. Allow the government to do its duty by our military families and by every American family.

Quickly—I have said it before—in July of this year the Speaker of the House of Representatives and I sat down in his office. I was there, my chief of staff was there, and his chief of staff was there—the four of us. The Speaker wanted to figure out a way to go forward. We talked about a number of things. The one thing he was firm in, he said, it has to be at 2013 levels. I said: I can't do that; it is $70 billion less than the budget we passed just a short time ago. So the conversation continued. In September we talked and talked.

I spoke to Chairman MURRAY and to Chairman MIKULSKI. It was really hard. They had worked so hard to get regular order back in the Senate. But, like the good soldiers they are, we decided to try to talk to the rest of the caucus and swallow really hard because we had the assurance—I had the assurance that we would have a clean CR now, in September. That didn't work. The Speaker didn't deliver on what he said he would deliver.

So the government closes and we have one thing after another coming over here and we send it right back.

The last thing they sent over a week ago was to say let's go to conference. So last Tuesday I sent him a letter, and in the first letter I talked about a very decisive time in my life when I voted for the Iraq war. Within weeks of that I felt I had been misled. But regardless of that, that is how I felt. So I became an opponent of that war, and I did everything I could to focus on that war, which was having our military subjected to violence, and that is an understatement. Thousands were being killed, tens of thousands wounded. The number of Iraqis who were being killed is really hard to demonstrate adequately.

There was a time that came in my life when we had an opportunity, under my direction, to shut the government down. How? By not funding the war. I made a decision—and that is in my letter to the Speaker—not to do that.

(Ms. BALDWIN assumed the Chair.)

I, frankly, received a lot of help from around the country. But that is what I did. And I do not look back at all. So I was trying to tell the Speaker: Do not do this. However, I said: You have done it, and you have asked for a conference. We will go to conference on anything you want to go to conference on. We don't care. But first you have to open the government and allow us to pay our bills. That is in the letter of last Tuesday.

Forty-five minutes after he got the letter, I called him. He said: No, I can't do that. So for someone to suggest we have not negotiated is just absolutely wrong.

Madam President, $70 billion—it is the biggest compromise I have ever made in my career as a Member of Congress—some 31 years. It may not sound like much to some people, but it was really big. My caucus remembers what I asked them to do. So for someone to suggest to any of my Senators that we have not negotiated is simply unfair, and to say that we will not negotiate is unfair. I put it in writing. We are happy to go to conference. But you have to open the government. This is unfair—just like these five soldiers killed. So open the government, let us pay our bills, and we will negotiate on anything you want to negotiate.

I have spoken to the President. I am certainly not name-dropping. I have told my caucus this several times over the last 2 days. He cannot, as President of the United States, negotiate on paying the bills of the country, the debt ceiling. I think there are Senators over here who he has sat down with and talked to individually and as groups to talk about a budget deal. There were many conversations in the Oval Office that I attended to talk about a budget deal. He has put in writing things that he would be willing to do that, quite frankly, our base is not excited about. But he put it in writing. He is still waiting for the first sentence from the people he invited to dinner and met with—the first sentence—as to what they were willing to do.

As said late last week by Haley Barbour and Ed Gillespie, former chairs of the national Republican Party, Republicans—now, they said this, not me—there is a time now when Republicans have to start being for something, not against everything.

So I do not come here to argue and badger people. I am happy to talk about anything. Senator MURRAY will deliver a presentation in just a little bit. We know how hard she has worked. She has the respect of both Democrats and Republicans. But I repeat, when the Speaker said he wanted to go to conference last week, we said: Good. We will do that. I am not a one-man show over here. I clear everything with my caucus, with rare exception, before I go marching off into the blue.

So I repeat, we are ready to go to conference as soon as the Speaker reopens the government and removes the threat of default. He has to take yes for an answer. You folks have to take yes for an answer. We are just as willing to sit down and talk today as we were in the spring and as we were this summer. In the meantime, let's open the government and live up to our obligations as a country.

To that end, I will introduce a bill to allow the United States to pay it bills with no preconditions or strings attached. I will do that later today and start the so-called rule XIV process.

We may have our differences, Democrats and Republicans, but we should not hold the full faith and credit of this great country hostage while we resolve it. At a later time Senator BAUCUS will talk, and I hope he repeats here on this Senate floor what he told us in our caucus that we just completed: Great nations are not guaranteed greatness. There have been books written about it, and he will talk about one author, a famous author, who recently wrote a book about how great nations have to meet expectations. We are great today. That does not mean we will be forever. How is this country going to look to the world community if we no longer have the full faith and credit of the United States meaning anything?

I hope we can get Republican cooperation to move this bill quickly; that is, the debt ceiling bill. If not, the process could take us right up to the deadline—one day before.

I am optimistic, however, that my Republican colleagues here in the Senate will not filibuster this bill. I am cynical by nature. That way I am not disappointed as much as those who are optimistic. My friend, Senator SCHUMER, and I have ongoing issues. He is optimistic about everything. I am cynical about everything. But I am optimistic, even though that is against my nature, that Republicans are not going to hold the full faith and credit of the United States hostage. I hope I am right.

We need to reopen the Federal Government now—not 10 minutes before the debt ceiling is gone. We need to get back to the business of protecting American families, back to the job of legislating. We are not doing anything in this body anymore. It is our job to legislate. That has always been our job; it always will be our job. Open the government, pay our bills, and let's negotiate.

It is my understanding that this consent request has been cleared. We will hear from the Republican leader. Then we will hear at that time from Senator MCCAIN for 15 minutes, followed by Senators DURBIN, SCHUMER, and MURRAY. I ask unanimous consent that be the case.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection?

Mr. REID. I ask unanimous consent that Senator MCCONNELL be recognized, which we really do not need consent for him. He has time under his leader time. Following his statement I ask unanimous consent that Senator MCCAIN be recognized for 15 minutes, then Senator DURBIN for 10, Senator SCHUMER for 10, Senator MURRAY for 10.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection?

The Republican whip.

Mr. CORNYN. Madam President, I would ask the distinguished majority leader if he would consider modifying his consent request so that we could alternate back and forth across the aisle. With that modification, I have no objection.

Mr. REID. Well, after we get this out of the way, you mean?

Mr. CORNYN. Madam President, the majority leader asked for a number of Democratic Senators to speak without any intervening speeches or remarks by Republicans. All I am suggesting is, after he and the Republican leader speak——

Mr. REID. Madam President, I say to my friend from Texas——

Mr. CORNYN. And after Senator MCCAIN speaks and a Democrat speaks, that a Republican gets to speak and so forth. That is all I am asking.

Mr. REID. I say, Madam President, through the Chair to my friend: three Democrats, two Republicans. It does not sound too outrageous to me. So would the Senator object to that?

Mr. CORNYN. I object.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Objection is heard.

Mr. REID. OK. So following Senator MCCONNELL, I will call upon Senator DURBIN.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Republican leader.

Mr. MCCONNELL. Madam President, I appreciate the comments of my good friend, the majority leader. I might say, however, that as much as I appreciate his comments to all of us, the real challenge is his relationship with the House and whether or not we can begin the discussion process to get to an outcome.

Nobody is happy with the government shutdown, certainly not anybody on this side, and not anybody on the other side. But I would remind everybody on both sides of the aisle that

Democratic Senators have said repeatedly ObamaCare is the law of the land and, basically, we should get used to it.

We have suggested various modifications, some of which enjoy bipartisan support. But, obviously, so far that is not something our friends on the other side are willing to do.

But let me also point out to all of you that the Budget Control Act is also the law of the land. It was negotiated on a bipartisan basis, signed by the President of the United States, and the Budget Control Act is the law of the land.

When my good friend the majority leader says he was negotiating with the House over the CR level, my view was that was not a negotiation, that was current law, in place, passed on a bipartisan basis, signed by the President of the United States—current law.

So I think I can pretty safely say that nobody on this side believes that we ought to revisit a law that has reduced government spending for 2 years in a row for the first time since the Korean War, at a time when we have a debt the size of our economy which makes it look a lot like a Western European country.

So as we go into whatever discussions we end up having to solve the shutdown problem, I would say to my friends on the other side, revisiting a law negotiated by the President, passed on a bipartisan basis, that is actually reducing government spending ought not to be a part of the final outcome.

But talk we should. The American people have given us divided government. And when you have divided government, it means you have to talk to each other. This is not 2009 and 2010 when our friends on the other side had a total hammerlock on all the government. We now have divided government. It means we have to talk to each other and get to an outcome.

I think it is far past time to get that done. I hope, given where we are today, there is adequate incentive to get those talks started, principally between the majority leader and the Speaker, to get us to the outcome we all want, and to get us there soon.

But let me just conclude by saying the Budget Control Act is the law of the land. If you believe in reducing government spending, it is working. My Members and the American people think reducing government spending is a good idea. So we have a law in place that is achieving those kinds of results. That is not something at a time when we have a debt the size of our economy that we ought to lightly walk away from.

So I hope my good friend, the majority leader, will, in addition to talking to us, which we appreciate, talk to the Speaker because that is how we resolve this crisis.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The assistant majority leader.

Mr. DURBIN. Madam President, since the beginning of this great Nation, 1,948 men and women have served in the U.S. Senate. That service is a singular honor and carries with it an important responsibility. James Madison said the ''use of the Senate is to consist in its proceeding with more coolness, with more system, and with more wisdom, than the popular branch.''

Throughout our history it was this Senate, many times in this very room, that took on the most difficult challenges facing America: the creation of the Federal judiciary, the abolition of slavery, decisions to go to war, and the advancement of civil rights.

At each of those moments, skeptics questioned whether there were Senators capable of resisting political pressure and whether there were Senators prepared to lead a divided nation.

My colleagues, this is our moment. This is our chance—our chance—to bring this Nation back from the precipice. We should agree to restore the functions of government, not in a piecemeal fashion but in an orderly process befitting a great nation. We should spare America's workers and businesses the tragic consequences of a first-ever default on our Nation's debt. And we should restore the time-honored process of legislating—legislating—by adopting a bipartisan budget with the House, by considering spending bills on the floor of this Chamber, and passing appropriations bills in an orderly process.

We can vote today, this afternoon, to go to conference on the budget and begin to resolve our differences with the House. If we fail, we know we will have diminished this great body and our great Nation—a nation which we have all taken a solemn oath to serve and protect.

So let's agree to restore the functions of government—all of it. I have spoken with many of my colleagues and friends—and they are my friends—on the Republican side of the aisle. We have shared our frustrations at the current situation. To a person, each one of you has said to me: We have to bring this impasse to an end.

Waiting for the House of Representatives to save us is beneath the U.S. Senate.

We have our own responsibility and our own opportunity. We can come up with bipartisan Senate solutions. We can show the House of Representatives the path to end this crisis. Why are we waiting for them to show us? Let's begin to restore the confidence of the American people in this institution, in the Senate. We can fund the government, we can go to conference on a budget, and we can extend our debt authority.

I see my friend Senator MCCAIN on the floor. I know he is going to speak in just a moment. Over the last year I have seen moments in the Senate where we have defied our cynics and our critics: our successful bipartisan effort to pass a comprehensive immigration bill, a historic farm bill with far-reaching reforms, and a bipartisan extension of the Student Loan Program.

We came together and we found common ground. We led as the Senate. Now we need to summon the political courage and purpose to find a bipartisan way to meet this challenge. I know it will not be easy, but I know we are up to the job. I know we have an opportunity that comes once perhaps in a political lifetime.

But I wish to say this: What we are dealing with in the Senate is not just another political dustup. This confrontation is of historic proportion. Let's not wait on the House to find a solution. It is our responsibility as elected Members of the Senate to find that solution.

The solution I think is clear. Summon the political courage and the sense of purpose that comes down to us in the Senate, and throughout our Nation's history it always has.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The majority leader.

Mr. REID. Madam President, the order now before the Senate is Senators be allowed to speak for up to 10 minutes each. I ask unanimous consent that Senator MCCAIN be recognized for 15 minutes. Everyone else will continue on the other order of 10 minutes.

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

The Senator from Arizona.

Mr. MCCAIN. I ask unanimous consent to return to the normal one side and then the other side as far as speakers are concerned.

Mr. REID. That is fine. That is our plan.

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

The Senator from Arizona.

Mr. MCCAIN. Madam President, I say to my colleagues, I bring to your attention two events today that I think deserve our attention. The first one is a story entitled, ''Grand Canyon food shortage turns dire.'' The St. Mary's Food Bank is set to deliver food boxes to Grand Canyon National Park today as a Federal shutdown strands thousands of employees inside the park without work and pay.

The Grand Canyon, thousands of people inside the park without food or pay. This great Nation, we are having to have charities deliver food to people who are trapped in the Grand Canyon.

Also today, ''Shutdown outrage: Military death benefits denied to families of fallen troops.''

> At least five families of U.S. military members killed . . . in Afghanistan over the weekend were given a double-whammy by federal officials. Not only have your loved ones died, but due to the government shutdown, you won't receive a death benefit.

The approval rating of Congress we joke about, about being 12 percent or 11 percent. I have a line I use all of the time: We are down to blood relatives and paid staffers. But should not we as a body, Republicans, Democrats, no

matter who we are, should we not be embarrassed about this? Should we not be ashamed?

What do the American people think when they see that for those who served and sacrificed in the most honorable way, their families are not even eligible for death benefits? I am ashamed. I am embarrassed. All of us should be. The list goes on and on of people, of innocent Americans who have fallen victim to the reality that we cannot sit down and talk as grownups and address this issue.

I am not going to take the full 15 minutes because I frankly get a little bit emotional. But we started with a false premise on this side of the aisle that somehow we were going to repeal ObamaCare. That is after 25 days of debate, including up until Christmas Eve morning fighting against ObamaCare, and that is after a 2012 election where I traveled this country with passion, the first thing saying that the first thing we are going to do when Mitt Romney is President of the United States is repeal and replace ObamaCare. The American people spoke.

So somehow to think we were going to repeal ObamaCare, which would have required 67 Republican votes, of course, was a false premise and I think did the American people a grave disservice by convincing them that somehow we could.

Now, 70 percent of the American people, according to a Washington Post poll this morning, disapprove of Republicans, but they disapprove of Democrats as well. They disapprove of the President of the United States as well. Meanwhile, the Chinese, great role models of democracy, are now criticizing us because of a looming failure by the American Government to pay its debts, both domestic and abroad.

I say to my friend the majority leader, and he is my friend—we use that word with great abandon around here, but he and I have known each other now for 30 years—let's find a way to allow the adversary—I ask my good friend from Utah who is a history major, the words of Abraham Lincoln, ''Charity toward all, malice toward none.''

Let's find a way out of this. Let's find a way that we can sit down. I do not care if it is appointing people. I do not care if it is the informal conversations that we have been having back and forth. But there should be a way out of both of these dead ends that we are in.

How is this going to end? We know how it is going to end. We know how it is going to end. Sooner or later the government will resume its functions. Sooner or later we will raise the debt limit.

The question is, How do we get there? If there is anybody who disagrees that we are not going to reach that point, I would like to hear from them. So why don't we do this sooner rather than later? Why doesn't the Senate lead? I have great respect for the other side of the Capitol, but I understand the contradictions that are there and the difficulties the Speaker has. I am in great sympathy there.

So why don't we get together? Why don't we sit down and—look, this body voted 70 to 29, I think it was, to repeal the medical device tax. Do my colleagues want to renounce that vote they took on the budget? Why don't we use that as one of the areas where we could reach agreement? What about the issue out there the American people believe that we are under a different health care system than they are and ours is a better deal than theirs?

There are a number of issues that we could sit down and negotiate within an hour if we will stop—stop attacking each other and impugning people's integrity and honor. So all I can say is let's start this afternoon. I do not care who it is or how it is shaped, but let's sit down and get out of this, so that these families whose loved ones just died—just died—will receive the benefits at least that would give them some comfort and solace in this terrible hour of tragedy.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. MANCHIN). The majority leader.

Mr. REID. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that those on the Democratic side be in this order: SCHUMER, MURRAY, BAUCUS, MIKULSKI, WARNER, CARDIN, KLOBUCHAR, WHITEHOUSE, STABENOW.

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

The Senator from New York.

Mr. SCHUMER. Mr. President, I rise because we are getting very close to a time of crisis, perhaps one of the greatest economic crises this country has known. I have many good friends on the other side of the aisle. I do not doubt for a moment their motivation, their desire, and their love of country. It is every bit as strong as those of us on this side of the aisle.

So I make a heartfelt plea: We must come together and avoid a default of the United States. Many have said, I heard some even say on the other side, that default does not matter or it does not mean much. Let me explain the danger. There is a very real chance that if we default, there will be a recession greater than what occurred in 2008 and all too real a possibility it could put us into a depression.

Let me explain why. What happened in 2008 was simple. Mortgage securities declined in value immediately—dramatically they declined in value after Lehman and AIG went down. Banks' balance sheets instantly flipped from black to red. Loans were frozen, not only long-term loans but even overnight loans, lines of credit. The economy came to a screeching halt. We had to offer huge rescues or bailouts to overcome that. But even so, interest rates climbed.

If that happened with mortgage securities, the likelihood of it happening with Treasurys is all the more frightening because Treasurys are more widely held, more internationally held, the currency of the land, of the world. If Treasurys were to dramatically drop in value the day we defaulted or, make no mistake about it, it could happen a day or two before, here is what would happen: The economy would decline dramatically. Things would freeze. Interest rates would go way up. The cost of a mortgage, the cost of a car loan, dramatically increasing, hurting every middle-class family. Home sales would decline. Auto sales would decline. Hundreds of thousands, millions would be laid off.

Why risk that? We all have political goals. They differ. That is reasonable. There is a time and a place, as the Scriptures say, ''A season for everything.'' There is a time and a place to debate these things. It is not while our government is shut down and while our debt hangs in the balance, risking default. There is a simple and logical solution which good men and good women on both sides of the aisle can come to.

Let's open the government. Let's pay our bills. Then let's debate every issue you wish to debate. Nothing should be off the table. We are happy to go to a committee, a conference committee. The Senator from Washington has asked, I believe it is 18 times—will ask again in a few minutes. Of course we want a conference committee where we can discuss things but not at the price of keeping the government closed, hurting millions of families in every way, not at the price, even worse, of defaulting on our debt.

I would say, with all due respect to my colleagues in the House, they have it backward: First, go to conference and then decide whether to open the government or default. No one—liberal, conservative, Democrat, Republican—could say that is a rational strategy if you care about the country and worry about the risk of doing these things.

I understand the frustration with ObamaCare. We would argue there was an election in 2012. We would argue that every Democratic incumbent had to debate that issue over and over, as did President Obama when Governor Romney made it a major issue. The electorate decided they didn't want to get rid of ObamaCare. But we understand how passionately people feel, and we understand you will continue to try and do that. But again, there is a time and a season, and now is not the time and it is not the season when the government is shut down or default hangs in the balance.

I plead with my colleagues to allow us to come together. We want to negotiate. We want to sit down and talk to you. We are eager to do it. But first let's open the government, pay our bills, and then let's negotiate.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Washington.

Mrs. MURRAY. Mr. President, my understanding is we were going to go

back and forth, and if the Senator from Texas wishes to go, I will yield to him.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Texas.

Mr. CRUZ. Mr. President, I thank the majority leader for his impassioned remarks today, and all of us weep for those service men and women who have lost their lives in defense of this great Nation.

I would note this Senate can right now, today, move to correct the problem the majority leader described. The House of Representatives has passed eight separate bills funding vital priorities of the government. All eight of those bills now sit on the majority leader's desk. This Senate has not voted on those bills. To date, the majority leader has not allowed the Senate to have even one vote on the bills that would fund vital government functions. One of those bills is a bill that funds the VA—funds the Department of Veterans Affairs.

It seems to me we are going to have political differences, and those political differences are not going away anytime soon, but we ought to be able to say, regardless of what happens in the battle over the shutdown, that our veterans should be beyond politics. We should have bipartisan agreement on standing for our veterans.

Right now veterans disability payments are not funded. The House has passed legislation to fund that. That was bipartisan legislation, with a number of Democrats in the House, and yet the majority leader has not allowed the Senate to vote on it. The only thing in the way of funding the VA today is the Senate voting to do so—is the objection the majority leader has raised to funding the VA.

Let me note that the bill the House passed funding the VA is a clean CR on the VA. It doesn't mention ObamaCare. It doesn't say a word about ObamaCare. It simply says our veterans should be beyond partisan politics, regardless of the shutdown.

Let me also note this body has already engaged in bipartisan cooperation. Earlier in the course of this debate, the House of Representatives passed a bill to fund the men and women of the military—to pay their paychecks. For weeks there had been politicians suggesting if there were a government shutdown the men and women of the military would not be paid. The House passed a bill, a clean CR, that said we will fund the men and women in the military. I commend my friends on the Democratic side of the aisle, and I commend the majority leader, because the 54 Democrats in this body made the right decision to act in a bipartisan way and cooperate with the Republicans in this body and with the House of Representatives, and in 24 hours the bill funding the men and women of our military became law, went to the President and was signed into law. That is the way we are supposed to operate.

So I would ask: If we could work together in a bipartisan manner to say we are not going to hold the men and women of the military hostage, why can't we work together in a bipartisan manner to say we are not going to hold our veterans hostage; that regardless of what happens in the shutdown, let's fund the VA now?

Likewise, the House of Representatives has passed a bill funding our parks and national memorials. We have seen day after day our World War II veterans coming to the World War II Memorial and facing barricades the administration has put up. The administration has expended money to keep them out. The House has passed a bill to fund our parks and our memorials. Let me suggest if the Senate would only vote, we could open every park and memorial in the country.

The House has passed a bill to fund FEMA. If the Senate would only vote, FEMA could be funded.

The House has passed a bill to fund the National Institutes of Health so we can provide vital cancer research. The majority leader spoke quite passionately just moments ago about the need to fund the National Institutes of Health. I agree with the majority leader, and I would ask the majority leader to withdraw the objection he has raised to funding the NIH.

Let me note, some have disparaged the House's approach as a piecemeal approach. Yet that is the traditional means of appropriating and legislating that for centuries this body has done. The VA is usually funded—just the VA—not connected to anything else. Why would the Senate want to hold veterans hostage because of disagreements over ObamaCare? I don't think we should. I think we should fund the VA right now.

Why would the Senate want to hold our parks and memorials hostage?

Why would the Senate want to hold the National Institutes of Health hostage?

Why would the Senate want to hold Federal workers hostage?

On Saturday, the House of Representatives unanimously passed a bill to provide back pay for Federal workers who had been furloughed. Every House Democrat who voted voted in favor of that. Yet the majority leader has not allowed this body to vote. I am going to say right now I agree with those House Democrats, and I urge that Senate Democrats stand with House Democrats who voted unanimously in favor of back pay for Federal workers.

We can work together with bipartisan compromise, but we can only do so if both sides come to the table. Right now the House of Representatives is working constructively to fund vital priorities and, unfortunately, President Obama, the majority leader, and Senate Democrats are refusing to negotiate, refusing to compromise. That is not a reasonable approach. It is not a path that will lead to resolving this.

I hope we come together, resolve this, fund our vital priorities and, at the same time, respond to the millions of people who are hurting because of ObamaCare—who are losing their jobs, who are pushed into part-time work, who are facing skyrocketing insurance premiums and who are losing their health insurance.

We need to answer the call of our constituents. We need to answer the call of Teamsters president James Hoffa who put in writing that ObamaCare right now is destroying the health care of millions of working men and women. ''Destroying'' is the word Mr. Hoffa used. I think the Senate should respond to the concern Mr. Hoffa raised, and we should stand with millions of working men and women and we should protect their health care so the hundreds of millions of Americans who have health care right now don't lose it.

People all across this country are getting letters in the mail telling them they are losing their health care because of ObamaCare. We need to listen to them. So let's fund our government, let's fund our vital priorities, and let's listen to the American people and stop the No. 1 job killer in this country that is ObamaCare.

I urge this body to work together in a bipartisan manner to listen to the American people.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Washington.

Mrs. MURRAY. Mr. President, I think there is one thing every one of us can agree on: There are innumerable problems across our country—families who have been challenged, sad stories that should be taken care of in every part of our country, in each of our States, with families we know who are hurting because of this government shutdown. There is one answer to that, and it is an easy one. It is for the House of Representatives to simply take up the bill that is in the House today and pass it. We know there are enough Members of Congress who can pass that today and every problem we have heard about or haven't heard about yet will be solved. Republicans simply need to end this government shutdown so Americans stop hurting.

Our families also need to know they are not going to be threatened by a catastrophic default. And when that happens, we will be waiting at the table, as we are today, to negotiate a long-term deal in the budget conference that the other side has spent months blocking.

We have been trying to work with Republicans toward a fair, long-term budget deal for years. Since 2011, Democrats from the Senate to the House to the administration have sat in rooms, we have negotiated, we have talked, we have discussed, and we have offered compromise after compromise. We have tried regular committees, we have tried supercommittees. If there was a room where Democrats and Republicans could sit and talk, we found it and we got to work. But no matter

what we did, no matter how much we offered, we were unable to come to a place that we could agree was a fair and balanced approach that the American people deserved.

So this year, our Republican friends on the other side of the aisle asked us to return to regular order. That was the most important thing they said—for us to get to a place where we could find a budget deal that could be agreeable and we could move forward. That is exactly what we did. In the Senate we passed our budget more than 6 months ago. The House of Representatives did the same. Since that time we have asked 19 times to go to conference to work out our differences. Nineteen times we have come to the floor to say let's have regular order, let's work out our differences in a conference committee.

We wanted to get in a room with the House Republicans to sit at a table and do everything possible to bridge the divide between our two budgets. We knew it would not be easy. There are significant differences between the House and Senate budget. But the American people expected us to try and we were committed to doing that. Importantly, we wanted to make sure we had enough time to bridge that divide and get to this difficult deal so we would not be here today where we have lurched into another manufactured crisis.

Republicans rejected our attempts to sit down and negotiate. Every time we asked to go to a budget conference, we were shot down. Democrats came to the floor again and again, along with, I would add, a number of responsible Republicans who agreed. Even though they did not support the budget that was passed here, they agreed we should go to conference with the House Republicans and work out our deals. But each time we asked, a handful of Republicans objected and said: No discussions. They refused to allow us to go to a table. They had no interest in any discussions or negotiations or talk, and they pushed us until they got exactly what those few Republicans here wanted, and that was an avoidable—completely avoidable—government shutdown.

After spending 6 months rejecting talks, causing this crisis, now all of a sudden some of our Republican friends seem desperate to make it look as though they are the ones interested in negotiating. They know it is clear to families across the country the only reason this crisis continues is the House Republicans' refusal to take up the bill and pass it right now—a bill that will get our government open and running again.

And, by the way, they are now trying to do everything they can to distract their constituents from that simple fact. But the American people are smarter than that. They know the world did not begin the day of the government shutdown. They know it is not possible for Republicans to have just discovered negotiations 20 minutes before a shutdown, when all they need to do is take up the bill and vote.

The latest gimmick the House seems to be considering is to start another supercommittee to debate this issue. Instead of simply taking a vote to end this crisis, they want a repeat of 2011. They want another supercommittee. Well, as everyone here knows, I cochaired that supercommittee, the Senator from Montana worked for hours and hours and days on end with me on that committee, and it failed. For reasons that we believe in and they believe in, which could be debated, the supercommitte did not come up with a resolution. I think House Republicans are going to have a lot of trouble explaining to those families who haven't seen a paycheck since this shutdown started that they should wait for another supercommittee to go to work.

Here is what should happen. House Republicans should end this crisis. They should simply allow a vote on our bill to end the shutdown, which would pass with bipartisan support.

They should stop threatening an economic catastrophe if they don't get their way, and we are happy to sit down and negotiate. We know on our side that negotiation on a budget deal is not going to make us happy. We know the House Republicans won't be happy. But that is how a democracy works—by working out our differences. Democrats are here today to say we are willing to negotiate and we are willing to work with our Republican counterparts to find a path forward. Of course we want to negotiate. We have tried to start a budget conference for 6 months.

I know the vast majority of my Republican colleagues came here to help our families and to help our communities. I know they came here to solve problems. The vast majority came here to work across the aisle to make the country better. So I urge our Republican colleagues here in the Senate today to support the unanimous consent we are about to offer to end this crisis, take the threats off the table, and sit down and work with us toward a balanced and bipartisan budget deal that I know so many of us in this room want.

UNANIMOUS CONSENT REQUESTS—H. CON. RES. 25

Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that when the Senate receives a message from the House that they have passed H.J. Res. 59, as amended by the Senate, the Senate then proceed to the consideration of Calendar No. 33, H. Con. Res. 25; that the amendment at the desk, which is the text of S. Con. Res. 8, the budget resolution passed by the Senate, be inserted in lieu thereof; that H. Con. Res. 25, as amended, be agreed to; that the motion to reconsider be considered made and laid upon the table; that the Senate proceed to vote on a motion to insist on its amendment, request a conference with the House on the disagreeing votes of the two Houses, and authorize the Chair to appoint conferees on the part of the Senate, with all of the above occurring with no intervening action or debate.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection?

The Senator from Alabama.

Mr. SESSIONS. Mr. President, reserving the right to object, I think we should all note that this unanimous consent agreement essentially asks the Senate to direct the House on what to pass and to pass the CR the Senate desires. There won't be any need to, in effect, deal in that fashion. That won't work.

I would also note in response that there is a unanimous consent request agreement I could agree to and I think Members of this side would agree to, and that is that the Senate proceed to Calendar No. 33, H. Con. Res. 25; that the amendment at the desk, which is the text of S. Con. Res. 8, the budget resolution passed by the Senate, be inserted in lieu thereof; that H. Con. Res. 25, as amended, be agreed to, the motion to reconsider be considered made and laid upon the table; that the Senate proceed to a vote on a motion to insist on its amendment, requests a conference with the House on the disagreeing votes of the two Houses, and authorize the Chair to appoint conferees on the part of the Senate, with all of the above occurring with no intervening action or debate. I further ask consent that it not be in order for the Senate to consider a conference report that includes reconciliation instructions to raise the debt limit.

That is the reason there has been an objection over here—because, under the way we believe we should proceed, raising the debt limit is a legislative act that should be subject to 60 votes. The concern from Members of our conference who have objected is that if we put the debt limit on the budget, then we would only have to have 51 votes. They have insisted they would approve going to the House and having conference on the budget, but they want an agreement that they are not going to attempt to slip that through. And if it is not a problem, why won't they agree?

So for these reasons, we are not able to agree, and I would object.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Objection is heard.

Mrs. MURRAY. Mr. President, responding to the unanimous consent request the Senator from Alabama propounded, I reserve the right to object. We may have just reached the heart of the matter. While we hear day after day that our House Republican friends want to negotiate on the debt limit, the Senator from Alabama asked us now to specifically preclude ourselves from talking about that very subject. I respectfully suggest that perhaps the real problem here isn't that Democrats aren't talking to Republicans; it is that Republicans aren't even talking to each other.

I also would note that this modification the Senator from Alabama is asking would leave us in a shutdown facing hundreds of thousands of families

who would wonder when their next paycheck would come while we do our work.

So I object to the Senator's request, and I renew my unanimous consent.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Alabama objected to the request from the Senator from Washington.

Mr. SESSIONS. And I believe I understood she has renewed it, and so I would renew my objection.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Objection is heard to all requests.

Mr. SESSIONS. Mr. President, just briefly, I appreciate Senator MURRAY having passed a budget this year in the Senate for the first time in 4 years. It is a budget that is far from the kind of budget we should have, but it was one they stood up and voted for. That is something of value to begin our process around here.

I would note that the reason it is such an unacceptable proposal from my Democratic colleagues—very similar to what President Obama asked for—is that it raises taxes $1 trillion over 10 years and raises spending $1 trillion over 10 years. That is above the lawful Budget Control Act levels we agreed to on a bipartisan basis in August of 2011.

If we remember, the President insisted we have a debt ceiling increase then. He said that we couldn't negotiate on it, that the country would sink into oblivion if we even got close to the debt limit, and we all had to back down and just agree to raise the debt limit without any limits.

Polling data showed the American people did not believe we should raise the debt limit of America without at least cutting spending and reducing our deficits; the credit card Congress was on was going to be pulled back. So Republicans stood firm. An agreement was reached, and the President approved it. It had no tax increases and raised the debt ceiling $2.1 trillion over 10 years. How much is that? We were projected to increase spending over 10 years by $10 trillion. This would reduce the increase in spending from $10 trillion to $8 trillion—not enough to throw the government into default, disaster, and confusion if properly executed. And it certainly wasn't the best way it was done. So that was the agreement. Before the ink is dry, with a year or so under it, now our colleagues have already abandoned ship, thrown in the towel, and want to raise spending by $1 trillion over what they agreed and raise taxes by another $1 trillion. That is why we have a big disagreement.

What do our colleagues want? They want to tax more, spend more, with more debt. It is not the way to run America, and the American people know it. So somehow, in this debt crisis, we all have to work together. And I respect my colleagues, but I cannot agree to doing something in this process that violates the solemn agreement. We told the American people: OK, we have raised the debt ceiling $2 trillion, but we reduced spending by $2 trillion. The debt ceiling has already eased up by $2.1 trillion, but we still made a promise we have to honor—that we will save $2.1 trillion of growth over the next 10 years. That is our responsibility and duty.

Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the next two Republican Senators to be recognized would be Senator COLLINS from Maine followed by Senator MURKOWSKI from Alaska and that we would continue to alternate between both sides.

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

Mr. SESSIONS. I ask unanimous consent that Senator COLLINS be recognized at this time.

Mr. BAUCUS. Reserving the right to object, would the Senator repeat his request.

Mr. SESSIONS. I ask unanimous consent that the two Republican speakers on this side be Senator COLLINS from Maine and Senator MURKOWSKI and that we continue to alternate between both sides. Since I just butted in as part of our budget debate, I did not intend or desire to take Senator COLLINS' time. She has been patiently waiting next in line.

Mr. BAUCUS. I certainly will not object to that.

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

The Senator from Montana.

Mr. BAUCUS. Mr. President, I wish to underline the gravity of the financial condition our country is headed to at this point. I think in the back-and-forth we tend to overlook just how serious this matter is. Here in the Capitol we walk in the footprints of our forefathers. Walking through these halls, their presence is felt at every turn. Just outside this Chamber are the likenesses of Washington, Jefferson, Lincoln, and dozens of statesmen cast in bronze and marble.

At the end of this month a new leader will be added to the halls of Congress—Winston Churchill. A bust of the late Prime Minister will be added to the Capitol collection in the National Statutory Hall later this month.

Churchill once said, ''The price of greatness is responsibility.'' We here in Congress have a great responsibility—a responsibility to conduct the business of this Nation, to represent and do what is right for our people and help the people we represent. That is our responsibility here. However, the inaction of a small group of Members in the House has crippled Congress and is now threatening to impede the ability of the United States to fulfill one of its greatest responsibilities—to pay the government's bills. It is completely irresponsible to threaten to default on the Nation's debt. Since 1789 this country has always honored its obligations. Even when the White House and Capitol were burned to the ground right here in 1814, America still honored its debts.

America is the greatest country on Earth. We are the leaders of the free world. Nations look to us as examples in democracy. We are supposed to be ''the shining city upon a hill,'' but unfortunately the shine risks being tarnished by a debt default.

I agree with many of my colleagues that more could be done to reduce the deficit and promote economic growth, but, as the President said, we cannot negotiate under the threat of default of the Nation's debt. It reminds me of what President Franklin Delano Roosevelt once said: Never fear to negotiate, but do not negotiate out of fear. Failing to raise the debt limit and shutting down the government are two fearful actions that should not be on the table as we attempt to negotiate other matters in our Nation's fiscal policy.

The path is clear. We need to open the government and raise the Nation's borrowing limit. Take away those two guns to our head as a country. Then and only then can we responsibly address the Nation's long-term budget challenges.

Right now we need to come together to ensure that we do not permit another self-inflicted wound to our Nation's economy, and that is what defaulting of the debt is—a self-inflicted wound with global consequences.

When is the X date? When is the date on which the U.S. Government can no longer pay its bills? We don't know exactly. It is uncertain, and that is part of the problem. Uncertainty creates unpredictability. Nobody knows for sure. The Treasury Secretary says it is October 17. That is as good a date as any. At that time we will have exhausted all ''extraordinary measures'' to stay under the debt limit. I reminded my colleagues that we have been over the debt limit since I think it is May. But we have been taking extraordinary measures; that is, not fulfilling other obligations; that is, not making the government contribution to, say, the government retirement system, for example—we are not doing that anymore. That is an extraordinary measure. We are not making that contribution so we can make other payments such as Medicare payments and other payments the government is obligated to make.

After October 17, after all extraordinary measures are exhausted, we would risk defaulting on payments. This is dangerous territory. As of next Thursday it is expected the Treasury Department will have only about $30 billion cash on hand, barely enough to support the government for 1 or 2 weeks. After that the government's wallet is empty. We are in uncharted waters.

Again, this country has never in its history defaulted on the national debt. If the debt ceiling is reached, government would immediately have to slash its spending by 20 or 30 percent, driving the Nation back into recession.

Make no mistake about it. Social Security payments and Medicare would have to be slashed, veterans' benefits

hit, farm payments, farm funding, Department of Defense, payments to the disabled—every program this government runs will be devastated by cuts.

The default would also have global consequences, not just here in America but worldwide. Christine Lagarde, the Managing Director of the International Monetary Fund, warned that a failure of the United States to raise the debt ceiling could damage the entire global economy. She is right. Look at how precarious the European economy is right now, and the great effort the European countries have been undertaking to try to stabilize the southern countries in Europe, along with the creditors of the northern nations of Europe. She said it is ''mission critical'' that the debt limit be resolved as soon as possible. Mission critical, says Christine Lagarde, Managing Director of the IMF.

We are the most important economy in the world. We are the reserve currency for the world. Our Treasury bonds are the very foundation of the global financial system. Default would put the global economy in chaos. The New York Times has an article today entitled ''Default Threat Generates Fear Around the Globe.''

Five years after the financial crisis in the United States helped spread a deep global recession—

Don't forget, Lehman Brothers collapsed 5 years ago in December.

—policy makers around the world again fear collateral damage, this time with their nations becoming victims not of Wall Street's excesses but of a political system in Washington that to many foreign eyes no longer seems to be able to function efficiently.

We have read the article. We know it is true. The plug has been pulled on negotiations between the United States and Europe on their trade agreements. Why? Because of the government shutdown, not so much the debt limit but the shutdown.

We also read articles, I am sure it is true, that President Obama had to cancel his trip to Southeast Asia because he had to stay here and try to work out this crisis. The United States is losing influence in Southeast Asia because he is not there. Who is there? President Xi, the President of China. President Xi is there, explaining to the Southeast Asian countries that China is their friend and he is making loans, an international development bank sponsored by China, tens and twenties of billions of dollars—not by the United States but China.

Those countries are trying to escape the gravitational pull of mainland China. President Xi's presence there helps increase their gravitational pull. The President of the United States is not there, not there to show to those other Southeast Asian countries that we care. He is not there because we are not doing our work. That is why he is not there.

His absence creates another almost deeper concern among countries, let's say in Southeast Asia. Where is the United States going to be militarily if there is some military difficulty in Southeast Asia? Where is the United States going to be? Can the United States be counted on? Can the United States be trusted?

It seems as though there is a question there because the President is not in Southeast Asia and the other question is there because there is a question whether the United States is going to pay its debts, going to pay its bills. I think we eventually will, as the Senator from Arizona Senator MCCAIN said. I think most Members of this body think we eventually will. But let's get there now, not later.

There is a real danger here, a big danger here. The danger is we are going to get close to the cliff and get so close to it that we will go over it. We know the cliff is out there. The cliff is default. We know it is not too far away. We know we do not want to go over the cliff. We do not know exactly where that cliff is. We don't know. It may be closer than we think. We do not know what payments we have to make, when they are due. We do not know what the revenue is going to be. That is why the X date is so uncertain.

In addition to that, something might happen that triggers a catastrophic economic global response. I don't want to overstate this point, but back in 1914, the Archduke of Austria was assassinated—Serbia. That spark started World War I, that spark caused it.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The time of the Senator has expired.

Mr. BAUCUS. Very briefly, in addition, there have been other instances when pressure was being built up, people did not heed warnings, they let fate tempt them, and the result was collapse. There have been financial bubbles. The tulip bubble, for example. Lehman Brothers is another example. We knew with the mortgages being written that a bubble was building in that market, but we let it. We would say, oh, nothing is going to happen, but it eventually did.

I plead with my colleagues here. Remember, we cannot control fate. We can't control it. We can do our best. We all know that we are going to raise the debt ceiling, we all know we are going to open the government, so let's do it early rather than late.

I know it was exceeding my time a little bit, but I think it is important to remind ourselves.

I know we are the greatest country in the world.

The leader asked me to refer to a book I mentioned a couple of hours ago in the Democratic luncheon by Paul Kennedy, a Princeton historian. He pointed out in the sweep of history, civilizations and countries rise and fall. There is no guarantee that any country or civilization continues forever—Greeks, Romans, Persians, Genghis Khan, the United Kingdom—they rise and they fall. We are No. 1 right now. How long can we continue to be No. 1?

He also pointed out, Paul Kennedy, in the sweep of history, countries are defeated not by external armies but by internal decay. So I am saying let's not decay here. Let's resolve this as adults and let's be responsible in the spirit of Winston Churchill.

I apologize to my good friend from Maine for speaking on her time.

Ms. COLLINS. Mr. President, the government shutdown represents a failure to govern and must be brought to an end. Disabled veterans who have sacrificed so much for our country are waiting for their claims to be handled. Pregnant women and small children are at risk of their WIC benefits not being funded. Crucial biomedical research is being disrupted and the sickest of children are being turned away from clinical trials at the National Institutes of Health.

The impact goes far beyond the direct consequences for Federal employees and the programs they administer. One has only to look at the impact of the closure of Acadia National Park in my State of Maine to see the ripple effects on shopkeepers, servers at restaurants, inn owners and others who depend on revenue from these disappointed tourists.

That is why I have worked hard to put together a three-point plan to bring this impasse to a speedy end. I am very delighted that my friend and colleague from Alaska Senator MURKOWSKI has joined me in shaping and supporting this plan. Let me quickly describe it and let me give credit to those who have talked about concepts that have been incorporated into this plan—people such as my colleagues Senator HATCH and Senator TOOMEY, and on the House side, Representative KIND and Representative DENT.

The first point of the plan would fund government for the next 6 months at the level of $986 billion, so that would allow government to immediately reopen.

Second, it would repeal the tax on medical devices and equipment such as x ray machines and pacemakers. This tax will only serve to drive up the cost of health care because it will be inevitably passed on to the consumer, it will stifle innovation, and industry estimates that it will lead to the loss of some 43,000 jobs. It is a tax that does not make sense.

The administration has pointed to the $30 billion that would be raised by this tax over the next 10 years. Fair enough. There is a way to replace that revenue and it is a way that has beneficial consequences to many employers who are struggling to make pension contributions in this difficult economy. It would do so without in any way weakening the pension obligation to their workers. It is a complicated issue. It is called pension smoothing. But it is one that this body has dealt with before in the transportation bill known as MAP 21. We would extend that pension smoothing on the contributions which have been produced

by the fact that the Federal Reserve has held interest rates at a very low level.

I will describe this in more detail in a written statement. It is in the statement that I made on the Senate floor on Saturday. But suffice it to say that by smoothing these pension contributions, we can replace the lost revenue that would result from the repeal of the 2.3-percent tax on medical devices and equipment.

The third point of our plan, the Collins-Murkowski plan, includes a bill that Senator MARK UDALL and I introduced earlier this year that would provide flexibility to Federal managers in dealing with sequestration, but it does so in a way that preserves the important congressional oversight. Sequestration is a flawed policy because it does not discriminate between essential programs and those that are duplicative and wasteful. But if we are to have sequestration, surely we should give Federal managers the ability to set priorities and apply common sense in its administration instead of having across-the-board, equal meat axe cuts for every line item in their budgets.

But to ensure that this flexibility is not abused, we would have the Appropriations Committee oversee this process and have the right to reject the plans. It is very similar to the reprogramming requests that the Appropriations Committee receives now and either accepts or rejects when agencies want to move money from one account to another.

This would represent a modest proposal that could bring this impasse to an end, allow government to reopen, give those on both sides of the aisle who have voted during the course of the budget resolution by 79 votes to 20-something votes to repeal this harmful tax on medical equipment and devices and yet replace the revenue. I don't see how the administration could object to that because the revenue would be replaced. Yet this harmful tax would be repealed and we would give Federal agencies the flexibility to deal with sequestration.

There is something in the Collins-Murkowski plan that everyone on both sides of the aisle can point to. Yet it would get us out of this impasse that is increasingly harmful to our country and its image in the world.

It is past time for us to come out of our partisan corners, it is past time for us to stop fighting, and it is past time for us to reopen government. We have all made crystal clear what our positions are on ObamaCare at this point. Let's proceed with governing rather than continuing to embrace a strategy that will lead us only to a dead-end and whose consequences will be increasingly felt by our economy and by the American people. We can do this.

I ask my Democratic colleagues to take a close look at the plan we are putting forward. It is a reasonable approach. I ask my Democratic and Republican colleagues to come together. Let's get this done. We can do it. We can legislate responsibly and in good faith.

I thank the Presiding Officer and yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Maryland.

Ms. MIKULSKI. Mr. President, I rise to respectfully say that we in the Senate and we in the Congress have to do what our constituents elected us to do and what the Constitution requires us to do: keep the United States Government open and make sure the United States of America pays its bills. To do that, we are open to negotiation and examining a variety of ideas, but the main idea is to go through the regular order in the committee process.

We can keep the government open and we can meet our responsibility on the public debt if we embark upon two solutions and they are in the hands of the other party. We call upon the House to pass the Senate continuing funding resolution that would reopen government and keep it going until November 15. It is not a long-term solution. If we get to it right now, we will fund it at 2013 levels, acknowledging the sequester level. That was a big compromise. I compromised, as the chair of the Appropriations Committee, to move that continuing funding resolution. It was $70 billion less than what I wanted, but in order to get us in a room and get the conversation going and the negotiations going, I was willing to compromise.

I call upon the House to pass that. I call upon the Senate Republicans who have objected to going to the Budget Committee to lift their objection so we can take the Senate-passed budget and go to conference so we can get a budget.

Why is this important? For those who say we have to control spending, there is nobody who disputes that, but the way we control spending is to go through the regular budget process. I say to many of my colleagues who might not understand the Budget Control Act and I say to the American people who are listening, the way to control discretionary spending is to pass a budget that sets a cap on what the appropriators can spend in domestic spending.

I heard the wonderful Senator and distinguished war hero from Arizona JOHN MCCAIN ask us to get to it today. I agree. Let's get to it today and lift the objection for Senator MURRAY, the chair of the Budget Committee, to take appointed conferees so they can negotiate on the budget.

I say to my colleagues—again, to explain the Budget Control Act—we appropriators are not wild spenders. We appropriators can't go rogue in terms of wild runaway spending. We have a budget cap imposed upon us through a budget process and something called a 302(a), but we can't get the cap on spending unless the Budget Committee is able to move. This is very serious.

I have the high honor of representing the State of Maryland, and I see my colleague from Maryland, Senator CARDIN, on the floor. We represent 5½ million people and a lot of civilian agencies. I note also on the floor are the distinguished Senators from Virginia, both of whom are former Governors of Virginia.

Between the four of us, we represent the largest concentration of Federal employees in the world. We represent Federal employees from the Department of Defense to the National Institutes of Health, to the National Institute of Standards and Technology. There is a rollcall of honor in service and duty that makes the United States a stronger country, a stronger economy, and so on.

When we speak about government, we know what we are talking about, and we know what is going on. Many have spoken about opening NIH. I want to open NIH. NIH, which is a clinical hospital, is not accepting new patients. This week 200 people have been turned away. Children in the United States of America were turned away. It is not just BARB MIKULSKI talking, the Washington Post reported on a lady who has cancer and wants to come to NIH, but she can't get into a clinical trial because it is closed down. They say: Senator BARB, open NIH. But we have to open the rest of the government.

Right now the Centers for Disease Control has a substantial number of its workforce furloughed. Having the CDC closed constitutes a danger to public health. Right this minute in 18 States, 278 people have been sickened by salmonella. Thank God there have been no deaths, but it is making people very sick. We don't have CDC on the job to track diseases and alert the public health departments around the United States of America so they can stand sentry to protect people against salmonella. Open the CDC. Open the whole government.

Just this week, in our own metropolitan area, a worker was killed trying to service the Metro. This should be under investigation. There was one death and several injuries. There was a bus crash in Tennessee, but right this very minute the National Transportation Safety Board has the majority of their people furloughed. They can't investigate the Metro accident, and they can't investigate the bus crash in Tennessee.

A few weeks ago Senator CARDIN and I were informed that a person had a terrible accident on the Bay Bridge in which a car went over the side of the bridge. We asked for an investigation to make sure our bridge is safe. That was under way, but now it is going to be delayed.

Let's take our FBI. Our FBI agents are on the job. They are being paid with IOUs. A group of FBI agents, called Voices from the Field, said to us, their U.S. Government: Guess what. We don't have gas for our cars. The FBI does not have gas for its cars. The agents' gas allowance is limited to 200 miles per week, and they can't even buy gas out of their own pocket.

Not only is the FBI running out of gas, I think we are running out of gas here. The way we fuel our tanks and get America running and rolling again is to reopen government. The way we reopen government is for Mr. BOEHNER, the Speaker of the House, in his job as Speaker, to bring up the vote on reopening the government and vote on the Senate-passed resolution.

We say to our colleagues on the other side of the aisle to lift their objection to the Budget Committee going to conference so the Budget Committee can come up with a budget with their caps on domestic discretionary spending. We will cap all discretionary spending. We appropriators will abide by the cap. We will not have runaway spending, and we will not go rogue. We will follow the rules, but I think we all need to follow the rules. Under the statutory requirement of the Budget Control Act, they were supposed to bring the budget back April 15. We passed one on March 23 and we have been waiting and waiting.

I wish to join with my colleague from Arizona. Let's get to it. Let's get the job done. Let's reopen government. Let's pay our bills. I am willing to negotiate. I am willing to compromise.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Alaska.

Ms. MURKOWSKI. Mr. President, from what I heard from those who have just spoken prior to me, it sounds as if we ought to be able to get something done. We listened to the chairman of the Appropriations Committee, with her commitment to advancing issues through the budget process. I think we too need to go to conference and get that moving.

We are sitting here in a kind of a rarefied world in the Senate Chamber. Some would suggest we live in a little bit of a bubble. Let me tell everyone about the folks who are not living in a bubble: the furloughed Federal employees and those who have been shut out of whatever it is that they had hoped they were going to be doing this past week and those in my State, for instance, who are looking to fill the family freezer.

It is moose season in my State, but now they were told they cannot access any of the refuge lands because Fish and Wildlife has said they cannot access the land regardless of what ANILCA provides and regardless of the full public access to these Federal lands. Those folks who are feeling the real impact of a government shutdown are not living in a bubble.

We just heard the chairman of the Finance Committee talk about the looming threat we are facing as we approach the debt limit, and he refers to a fiscal cliff. In fact, as a nation, we could lose our financial footing. We could go over that fiscal cliff.

For a lot of folks, they are already looking at their own fiscal cliff. They are not waiting for us to figure out what we are going to do or not do when it comes to dealing with the debt limit. They are not getting paid. They are perhaps a small business, such as Seong's Sushi Bar & Chinese, which is located across the street from the Federal Building in Juneau. They are sitting there losing revenues on a daily basis because they don't have the customers they anticipate every day. The folks who frequent Capital Brew, which is a drive-through coffee shop that is also in Juneau across from the Federal Building, Bill's Mini Cache, which is a snack shop inside the Anchorage Federal building, these are folks who are looking at it, and they are feeling their own fiscal cliff right now, with or without the threat of the debt limit.

So they are looking at us and they are saying: Wait a minute. You told us a couple weeks ago that we were going to avert this shutdown, that we would figure out how we were going to pass a continuing resolution.

We didn't pass a continuing resolution. Somehow, that all gets wrapped up in ObamaCare. They are trying to figure out where the nexus is here between funding the government and what is going on with the Affordable Care Act. They then find out: We are in a government shutdown. What does that mean for me? I am sitting here in Alaska, 4,000 miles from Washington, DC. But then they learn Fish and Wildlife is saying: No, you can't go out and get the moose to put in your freezer to make it through the winter. Or you are the crab fisherman who is waiting at the crab grounds beginning October 15, but the quotas have not yet been determined from within the National Marine Fisheries Service center yet, so you can't go out. The revenues the industry might be able to derive, about $7 million from the sale of great king crab that we would all love—a great market out there—but they are not going to be able to get out in the water because some Federal agency 4,000 miles from home hasn't delivered to them the quota.

So when we talk about these fiscal cliffs, it is not just waiting for us to hit a debt limit. It is what is happening with this government shutdown.

So what they are asking me—and I know each and every one of us is hearing from our constituents—is: So what is your plan? And oh, by the way, you better get on it pretty quick, because you have my attention now. What is the plan? So they see some of the things coming out of the House. The House has these mini efforts to fund a specific section, and it doesn't go anywhere here. We are told: Well, we want to open the whole thing. So if we can't open the whole thing and we can't open a portion of it, nothing happens. Nothing happens. So where is the plan? What are we going to do?

So I am pleased to stand with my friend from Maine Senator COLLINS as she has described a plan which I think is pretty reasonable. I think it is pretty sensible. When we think about those small, rational, reasonable steps that might get us to a place where we can stop the madness, if you will, break this impasse—a proposal that would pull back on the medical device tax, with an offset, so that we are not eroding, we are not undercutting the revenues that would come in for the Affordable Care Act, a 6-month extension of the continuing resolution, as well as a sequestration with a little bit of flexibility and, oh, let's add in some oversight, it sounds pretty rational.

Some suggest maybe the President doesn't want to do this because it is a small incursion in his signature bill. Do my colleagues know what. Right now, what we need to be thinking about is who we work for, whether it is the crab fisherman who wants to get out in the water and who is waiting for NMFS to step it up, whether it is the family out in Galena who is hoping they are going to be able to get their moose before moose season closes, whether it is the guy at Seong's Sushi Bar and Chinese there in Juneau, or whether it is the Alaska family. I got an e-mail a couple of days ago. This family has been planning for a year to bring all the kids together, including boyfriends and girlfriends. They are going to do a great hike out in the Moab National Park for a week, and they are stuck. Nothing is going on, and their family vacation is ruined.

What about what is going on—this is an amazing one—in the Kenai River, which happens to proceed through some refuge areas. People can still go fishing now, and there is good rainbow fishing out there. But when you move down river through that refuge park, you better bring your lines in because we are going to have enforcement action on the river.

There are so many stories we can all attest to, and some of them are horrible. Some of them, as Senator MCCAIN has indicated, are about families who are grieving the loss of their loved one—someone who has served this country with honor—being denied death benefits.

The country expects us to get our act together, and they expect us to do it without delay. They are not interested in knowing which side is going to gain more leverage the further we delay. Nobody is winning. I tell my friends the Democrats: You are not winning. And I tell my friends the Republicans: We are not winning. The administration is not winning. Everybody is losing when we cannot come together with a plan, with the resolve to do the job we are tasked to do, which is basic governing, and keeping the government open is basic governing.

So whether it is Senator COLLINS' plan, whether it is an effort that is yet to be created, as the Senator from Arizona challenged us, let's start this now. Let's not delay any further because real people—the people we care for, the people we are charged to help—are hurting right now. This goes beyond mere inconvenience. This is hurt.

So let's do what we have pledged to do. Let's do what we have signed up to

do, which is to work together. At the end of the day, this is not going to be a Republican plan or a Democratic plan or a Senate plan or a House plan. It is going to be a plan that allows us to govern.

With that, I thank the Chair and yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Virginia.

EXTENSION OF MORNING BUSINESS

Mr. WARNER. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent to extend the period of morning business for debate only until 7 p.m., and that all provisions of the previous order remain in effect.

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

CONTINUING APPROPRIATIONS

Mr. WARNER. Mr. President, I wish to follow up on the remarks of my colleagues and the Senators who have spoken before me.

It seems as though we have accepted this new normal, that shutting down the operations of the largest enterprise in America is acceptable. I concur with my colleague, the Senator from Alaska, about the real stories and real pain that is taking place because of this government shutdown. I commend some of my colleagues for their comments. When we read these tragic stories, whether it concerns NIH or it concerns our veterans or concerns our National Park Service, they say: Oh, but that part of the government we want to reopen. Does that mean that every other aspect of government remains closed until we can find that story?

I point out stories to my colleagues that were in both The Washington Post and The New York Times today—stories we should be celebrating about—three American Nobel Prize winners. Does that mean we should now reopen the NSF, because if the National Science Foundation isn't funded, there may not be a next generation of American Nobel Prize winners? Do we have to bring in a story about some child being hurt because their food or their meat or their fish wasn't inspected correctly?

I have to tell my colleagues, I spent a lot longer in business than I have in politics, and I have been involved in a lot of business negotiations. But I have never been involved in a negotiation that says during the negotiation we have to shut down the operations of our business and inflict pain not only upon our employees but upon the general economy across the board.

That is not the way to govern.

We have talked about stories about Federal workers. But I agree with the Senator from Alaska. It also hurts the hotel owners along the Skyline Drive in our State of Virginia and the government contractors who start and stop because they don't understand how government is going to operate. I heard a story this morning about a small business outside a government facility in St. Louis that is hurting as well.

This piecemeal approach to reopening government makes no sense. What might be better—as we hear from some folks who want to have this piecemeal effect—is to ask: What parts of the government should stay closed. This is not the way to operate. We ought to reopen this government, put our people back to work, get this economy going again, and continue the very real conversations we have to have about getting our fiscal house in order.

What makes this different to me, in the 4½ years I have been in the Senate, than previous discussions and debates is that we have this—the first in my tenure in the Senate—government shutdown which disproportionately is hurting Virginia and Maryland. But it is literally hurting every community across America. But we have this tragedy, this catastrophe merging now into a deadline that is going to hit us next week where there are certain Members of Congress who say: It is OK if America defaults.

I find that stunning.

When we look back, we find there has never been a major industrial country in modern history that has defaulted. As a matter of fact, the last major country to default was Argentina, back in December of 2001. In the aftermath of that default, they had over 100 percent per annum inflation. Every family in Argentina saw literally 60 percent of their net worth disappear within a few weeks. America is not Argentina, but why would we even get close to that kind of potential economic catastrophe?

It has been mentioned already that America holds a record as the reserve currency for the world. When crises happen, as have happened around the world recently in many countries, people and capital flow into the dollar. That is because the dollar and the full faith and credit of the United States has never been suspect. There has never been a question of whether we are going to honor our commitments. Next week, or very shortly after, that history is going to be put potentially in jeopardy.

I have heard those who say we can prioritize payments. There is no business group in America or no economist that I know of, from left to right, who believes that somehow America can partially default and prioritize payments. Are we going to pay interest? Are we going to pay our troops?

Those of us who served at State levels realize that sometimes our budgets are close to 50 percent passthroughs from the Federal Government.

The Presiding Officer was the governor of the great State of West Virginia. How long before West Virginia defaults if America starts prioritizing its payments? How many other Detroits will there be all across America if we were to take this type of irresponsible action? Even if there were some possibility that there might be some chance of some logic behind this partial payment scheme, it has never been tried before. No industrial country has ever gotten this close to a default. Why would we take the chance? Why would we play Russian roulette with only one bullet in two chambers? It is something that at this moment, for our national economy and the world economy, can be devastating.

I know we seem to all be repeating ourselves on both sides, but to me it seems very easy in a negotiation; we have differences. I would say to my colleagues I probably make folks on my side more angry than almost anyone else on these issues around getting our country's balance sheet in order. I am anxious to continue those discussions about tax reform, about entitlement reform, about bringing our debt-to-GDP ratio down. But that kind of negotiation hasn't happened while we have this government shutdown and the full faith and credit of the United States potentially in jeopardy.

So let's open the government, not just because we hear some tragic story about one component of the government, not just because we need to make the case about food inspectors, about the National Science Foundation, about NASA Langley where we do aeronautics research—3,500 people and 7 people were at work last week. China, India, other nations around the world are not stopping their research, not stopping their investments because we can't get our act together. Open this government. Take off the table the idea that America will default. Then I am anxious to join with colleagues on both sides of the aisle to get our country's balance sheet in order. But to continue to hold this economy and these stories of these Americans lives in this limbo is irresponsible beyond words.

So I hope we will go ahead and—agreeing with my colleagues who have spoken already, let's get this government open. Let's take and make sure we are going to honor and pay our debts, and let's get to the very real, important questions of how we get our Nation's balance sheet right.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Texas.

UNANIMOUS CONSENT REQUEST—H.J. RES. 72

Mr. CRUZ. Mr. President, I want to again thank the majority leader for bringing the attention of this body to the tragedy of those servicemen who lost their lives and the fact that, unfortunately, their families had been notified improperly, I believe, that they will not be paid the tax-free death gratuity they are entitled to under law. This is wrong. Every Member of this body agrees this is wrong. Every Republican agrees this is wrong, and I am confident every Democrat agrees it is wrong as well.

Indeed, the way this announcement that was made was highly troubling.

The Department of Defense notified our military families via Twitter that those servicemembers who die in battle will not be paid their tax-free death gratuities due to the partial Federal Government shutdown.

I think this is yet another pattern that we have seen distressingly from the Obama administration of politicizing this shutdown and playing partisan games to maximize the pain that is inflicted on Americans. It is part and parcel of the pattern we have seen, barricading the World War II memorial, barricading the parking lot at Mount Vernon, George Washington's home, even though Mount Vernon is privately operated, barricading the roads leaving Mount Rushmore, even though they are State roads and not Federal roads.

The actions by the Department of Defense are also contrary to the statute that this body just passed. The military death gratuity is by statute a pay and personnel benefit. Accordingly, it is clearly funded by Public Law 113–39, the Pay Our Military Act that was passed in a bipartisan manner this week. We already acted to prevent this and, unfortunately, the Defense Department is declining to follow that law that we passed.

The legislation this body already passed would immediately act to take the families of those soldiers and sailors and airmen and marines whose lives are tragically taken—to take them off the table and say: Regardless of what happens in a government shutdown, we are going to stand by the men and women fighting for America.

Indeed, the House of Representatives has introduced a bipartisan bill to immediately fund death gratuity payments. When that bill is passed, the Senate should pass that bill immediately. Indeed, the Pentagon should abandon this policy to begin with and simply follow the law that was already passed. But if they do not, I call upon all 100 Senators to come together, to listen to the majority leader, who spoke powerfully about the need to stand by our service men and women whose lives are tragically taken. When the House passes that bill, which I am confident it will do so with considerable speed, I would call upon every Senator to listen to the majority leader's call and to stand with our service men and women.

But there is something else we can do right here today to demonstrate that this body does not have to be locked in partisan gridlock, to demonstrate that bipartisan cooperation is possible, and to demonstrate that our veterans are truly not the subject of partisan dispute but are separate and deserve to be treated fairly, deserve to have the commitments, the promises we made to our veterans honored; that is, this body can stop blocking the legislation that the House of Representatives has already passed—bipartisan legislation to fund the VA, to fund disability payments—so we do not hold them hostage to what is happening in Washington.

Accordingly, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate proceed to the consideration of H.J. Res. 72, making continuing appropriations for veterans benefits for fiscal year 2014; that the measure be read three times and passed, and the motion to reconsider be considered made and laid upon the table.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. DURBIN). Is there objection?

Mr. REID. Mr. President, reserving the right to object.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The majority leader.

Mr. REID. Mr. President, the distinguished Senator from Texas has stated again what has already been talked about here a lot, and that is a piecemeal approach to funding our government.

As do most Americans, we Democrats support the purpose of this bill to fund the Veterans' Administration. But there is no reason for us to have to choose between this important government function and disease control, NIH, highway safety, FBI, poor children, workplace safety, or protecting the environment.

We could do all these things if the House Republican leadership would just allow the House to vote on the Senate-passed measure to end the shutdown. Everyone knows the votes are there.

Our position is simple: Open the government, pay our bills, and then we will be happy to negotiate about anything.

We need to end this government shutdown.

First of all, my friend talks about these five families who are in bereavement, and that is an understatement. Five sons, husbands, friends were killed over the weekend.

Providing the funding that my friend requests would not enable DOD to pay a death gratuity to the families of 17 servicemembers—five over the weekend. We have had others die who have given their lives to protect the Nation since the shutdown began on October 1. Seventeen.

This is but one example of how the efforts of the Senator from Texas to fund the government on a piecemeal basis does not work.

If the Speaker would allow the House to pass the Senate continuing resolution, the Department of Defense would have the authority it needs to bring families to Dover, DE, to receive the remains of their family members and to pay the death gratuity benefits.

The junior Senator from Texas expresses concern for America's veterans. But his consent request addresses only some of the ways in which the American people, through their government, have committed to help our veterans.

Let me quote from the remarks of the Senator from Connecticut, Mr. MURPHY. He gave these remarks on October 3. Here is exactly what he said:

I would note also that I believe the resolution the Senator is offering and suggested be passed provides only partial funding for the VA. There is no funding here to operate the national cemeteries. There is no funding for the Board of Veterans' Appeals. There is no funding for constructing VA hospitals and their clinics. There is no funding, actually, to operate the IT system that the entire VA needs in order to continue going forward.

So there could not be a better example of: Why we are involved in this? Why could not we just open the government? Let our former colleague, the former Senator from Georgia, Max Cleland, a decorated, disabled American veteran who runs the cemeteries, do his job. He cannot do that. Let's get it all over with. Let's have the NIH go forward, the Centers for Disease Control, the Park Service. We cannot have this piecemeal approach, because you wind up with the same situation in which we now find ourselves. We want to do something for the veterans, but it does not take care of much of what the veterans need.

So I ask unanimous consent that my friend's request be modified as follows: That an amendment, which is at the desk, be agreed to; that the joint resolution, as amended, then be read a third time and passed; and the motions to reconsider be considered made and laid upon the table, with no intervening action or debate. This amendment is the text that passed the Senate and is a clean continuing resolution for the entire government—everything; veterans, there are cemeteries, there are benefits, everything—and it is something that is already over in the House and reportedly has the support of a majority of the Members of the House of Representatives.

So I would ask my friend to really surprise the world, surprise the country, and say: I agree. Modify it. Let's fund the government.

And then, as we have said, as I have said—and everyone listen: We are happy, when the government is open, when we can pay our bills, to sit down and talk about anything they want to talk about. It does not matter. No restrictions.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. MANCHIN). Does the Senator so modify his request?

Mr. CRUZ. Mr. President, reserving the right to object, I ask unanimous consent that the majority leader and I be able to engage in a colloquy so that we may perhaps be able to, as the majority leader said, surprise the world by finding some avenues of bipartisan cooperation.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection?

The majority leader.

Mr. REID. Mr. President, I am happy to sit down and talk to the Senator—his office or my office. The point we have right here today is that we need the government open. With all due respect to my friend, the junior Senator from Texas—I want to say this in a most respectful way—he and I, with the dialog here on the Senate floor, we are not going to work this out. I have asked that the government be open so

that everyone can have benefits. The veterans measure he proposes leaves many veterans out in the cold—out in the cold—including the families of 17 of our servicemen who were killed since this came into effect, this shutdown.

So we will go as we have. I object to his proposal. I assume he will object to mine. And then we will go through the 10 minutes per person and see what happens later today. But I do—I am happy to sit down and talk to the Senator in my office, his office, any place he suggests, privately or publicly.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Objection is heard.

Mr. CRUZ. Mr. President, was there——

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Will the Senator so modify his request?

Mr. CRUZ. Mr. President, just a clarification: Was there objection to the request that we be able to engage in a colloquy? I was not clear as to what the majority leader was objecting to.

Mr. REID. Yes.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator is correct.

Is there objection to the modified request?

Mr. CRUZ. Mr. President, reserving the right to object, I will note with regret that the majority leader objected to engaging in a discussion, to engaging in negotiations here on the Senate floor. I think that is unfortunate.

So I will promulgate the questions I would have asked him directly, and he may choose whether he may wish to answer.

The majority leader read from comments that Senator MURPHY made on the Senate floor, suggesting that the House bill funding the VA was not broad enough. I would note, in my office we have drafted legislation that would fund the VA in its entirety. And if his objection is that it is not broad enough, I will readily offer that I would happily work with the majority leader to fund every bit of the VA as it is right now today, and we could introduce that bill. Indeed, I would be happy to have it labeled the Reid-Cruz bill and to give lead authorship to the majority leader.

Mr. DURBIN. Mr. President, will the Senator yield for a question?

Mr. CRUZ. I would be happy to yield for a question.

Mr. DURBIN. Would the Senator be willing to take care of the 560,000 veterans who are Federal employees, many of whom have now been furloughed?

Mr. CRUZ. I thank my friend from Illinois for that question. Indeed, I enthusiastically support the proposal that the House unanimously passed to give backpay to Federal workers. Indeed, I would ask a question of the assistant majority leader: whether the Senate will even vote on that proposal because there are eight bills funding the Federal Government that are sitting on the majority leader's desk. We have not been allowed to vote on any of them.

Mr. DURBIN. If the Senator from Texas is asking me a question, I would respond through the Chair that we have given the Senator from Texas ample opportunity to completely fund the government, including all of the veterans who work for the Federal Government, and all of the functions of the Federal Government so we do not run into the embarrassment of these poor families in their bereavement being denied the most basic benefits that our government gives.

He has had a chance to do that over and over. I believe he has declined that opportunity. So he bears some responsibility for the unfortunate circumstances we face.

Mr. CRUZ. Mr. President, I would note the fact that there are some issues on which we have partisan disagreements does not mean there are not other issues on which we can come together.

Ms. STABENOW. Would the Senator yield for a question?

Mr. CRUZ. I am happy to yield to my friend for a question.

Ms. STABENOW. Through the Chair to the Senator from Texas, I am wondering if his motion includes the full funding of the VA medical system, which is a completely government-run, government-controlled health care system?

Mr. CRUZ. I thank my friend for that question. As I said, I would readily support legislation fully funding the VA, because the VA is a vital government system. It is a promise we have made. It is unrelated to ObamaCare. My principal complaint this past week has been that the Democratic majority in this body is holding programs unrelated to ObamaCare hostage in order to force ObamaCare on everyone. We agreed for active-duty military.

Ms. STABENOW. Mr. President, if I might, just to clarify so that I understand, because the Senator from Texas has, in fact, made the ending of a private sector competitive health care system for up to 30 million Americans part of what he wants to stop, I wanted to be clear that the fully government-funded, government-run, with government doctors system through the Veterans' Administration is something the Senator is advocating that we continue to fund through the Federal Government?

Mr. CRUZ. I thank my friend from Michigan for that question. Yet again, the answer is yes. I believe we should fully fund the VA. The two questions I would promulgate——

Mr. REID. Regular order.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection to the modified request?

Mr. CRUZ. Mr. President, reserving the right to object——

Mr. REID. Regular order.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection to the modified request?

Mr. CRUZ. I would note the majority leader seems not to want to engage in debate. So I object. I hope the majority leader will start negotiating.

Mr. REID. Regular order.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Objection is heard to the modified request.

Is there objection to the original request?

Mr. REID. Yes, I object.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Objection is heard.

Mr. REID. Mr. President, using leader time, we have a number of people who are wishing to speak. They should be able to do that. But I say as nicely as I can, the problem we have here is what people are saying, like my friend from Texas, little bits and pieces of government. It will not work. We have to open the government. So until that happens—we have to open the government. We have to make sure we can pay our debts. Then we will negotiate.

I know he is fixed on ObamaCare. We know that. But the problem is that is not going to change. So I would hope we can do what needs to be done, open the government, make sure we pay our bills, and then we negotiate.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Maryland.

Mr. CARDIN. I want to join with most of my colleagues who have talked about the urgency of us getting the government open. It is causing great harm to our country. Make no mistake about it, it is hurting our economy. I could talk about my own State of Maryland. Our Governor has estimated that we are losing $15 million every day. So every day is precious.

I could talk about over 100,000 Federal workers in Maryland who are furloughed out of the 800,000 nationally, having a huge impact on our economy.

This morning Senator BOXER held a news briefing where we talked about the impact on the Environmental Protection Agency where 93 percent of its employees have been furloughed. We can talk about the direct impact of those employees not being there.

There was a representative from the Ding Darling Refuge in Florida saying not only did it hurt the local economy directly, but she talked about one of the contract services that provided the touring service to the refuge had to lay off 20-some employees.

There are private sector jobs that are directly being lost as a result of this furlough. It is going to be very difficult to get back that loss in our economy the longer the government shutdown lasts. It is wasteful to the taxpayer. The last shutdown cost the taxpayers $2 billion. Here we talk about conservatives who want to do something about the national debt and they are wasting taxpayer dollars by keeping government closed.

Yes, it is hurting our Federal workforce. I joined with Senator MIKULSKI in the comments she made a little bit earlier. Our Federal workforce has had to endure freezes in salaries, furloughs as a result of sequestration, freezes in the number of employees who can be hired, doing more work with less, and now furloughs again under a government shutdown. Those who are working do not know when they are going to get paid. It is not what we should be

doing to our Federal workforce. They have suffered. This is wrong. It is totally avoidable.

The furloughs at the Environmental Protection Agency are jeopardizing our public health. We had experts come in today and talk about the fact that we do not have the people on guard to protect our waters, to protect our air, to protect our environment. It is jeopardizing public health. It is jeopardizing our environment.

I mentioned this morning, and let me mention again, the Blackwater National Wildlife Refuge located on the Eastern Shore of Maryland, in Cambridge. This is a community in which that refuge is a huge part of their economy. This is a popular month for visitors to visit Blackwater. Well, the local businesses are hurting. The restaurants have less customers; the hotels, less rooms are being rented. It goes on and on and on, the damage to our economy.

Harbor Point is one of the most important economic developments in downtown Baltimore. It is an RCRA site, which means it is under court order requiring the Environmental Protection Agency to sign off on the development plan. Well, we have a development plan. The city council is acting. We are ready to move forward. But guess what. We cannot get EPA to sign off on it because the people responsible are now on furlough. That is holding up economic growth and economic development in Baltimore. That is what this is doing. It is harming us.

Maryland farmers on the Chesapeake Bay are doing what is right to try to help our bay. They depend upon the protections of the programs that are out there on soil conservation. The Senator from Michigan knows through how hard she has been working on the agriculture bill to provide the tools that are necessary to help our farmers be responsible farmers on land conservation.

I received a call from a farmer near Centerville, MD, on Monday that sums up pretty well how important the Natural Resources Conservation Service is to their work. This person is enrolled in the Conservation Stewardship Program, the CSP. That means he is planting bumper crops in an effort to help us deal with the runoff issues of pesticides and insecticides into the bay, helping us in helping the bay.

He receives certain payments as a result of participation in the program. He is no longer getting those payments. We are asking him to make sacrifices, but we are not giving him the Federal partnership. That is not right. He is hurt. He said: What am I supposed to do? Am I supposed to continue to do this? He told me he has a son with a medical condition that requires regular clinical eye treatment. He does not know whether he can afford that this month. He was helping us with the environment. Now what do we do? We back off of what is necessary.

I could give you many more examples. There is no piecemeal way you can correct each one of those.

On our foreign policy issues, I have the honor of chairing the East Asia and Pacific Subcommittee of the Foreign Relations Committee. President Obama was supposed to be the headliner at the East Asia Economic Summit this past week. Guess who stole the headline. President Xi of China rather than our President. Asia is wondering whether America is open for business. We were missing at the table. That is no way for America to be conducting its business. We need to be open. We need to get government open.

I hear my colleagues who want to negotiate budget deals. I am all for that. I think I have a reputation around here and people know I am interested in getting Democrats and Republicans together and getting a budget that makes sense for our country. But let me quote from the Baltimore Sun from this morning, because I think they say it better than I could say it. This is an exact quote from the Baltimore Sun about negotiations and how we have to go through negotiations.

> Passing a ''clean'' continuing resolution keeping government fully operating at funding levels that GOP has already endorsed is no compromise. It's status quo. Raising the debt ceiling isn't a concession either—it allows the nation to pay the bills Congress has already incurred and prevents the possibility of a government default, which would hurt the economy, raise borrowing costs and increase the Federal deficit.
>
> So when Speaker Boehner lashes out at President Obama for failing to negotiate, one has to ask, what is this thing he describes as negotiation? House Republicans are not merely leveraging their political position—as some dryly claim—they are threatening to do grievous harm to the global economy and the American public.
>
> The gun isn't raised to Mr. Obama's head or to the Senate's. The Democrats have no particular stake in passing a continuing resolution or in raising the debt ceiling other than keeping public order and doing what any reasonable person expects Congress to do. No, the gun is raised at the nation as a whole. That's why descriptions like ''ransom'' and ''hostage'' are not mere hyperbole, they are as close as the English language gets to accurately describing the GOP strategy.

The editorial ends by saying:

> It's time for Mr. Boehner to put down the gun and put more faith in the democratic process.

We need to negotiate a budget for next year. We absolutely need to do it. We tried to go to budget conference many times. The majority leader has repeated that request today. The formula of what is right for this country to do—and it is not one side getting advantage over another—the right thing to do is open government, pay our bills, and, yes, let's negotiate a budget that will not be what the Democrats want, will not be what the Republicans want. We are going to have to compromise as the Framers of our Constitution envisioned that we would do. That is what we should have done months ago. We passed our budget in March. We should have been negotiating months ago.

But what we need to do right now is open government, pay our bills, and, yes, then it is ripe for us to sit down and negotiate. I can tell you, we are ready to do that. But it is up to Speaker BOEHNER now to vote, to vote on the resolution that will keep government open, to vote on a way we can make sure that we will continue to pay our bills, and then accept our offer to sit down and negotiate a budget for the coming year. That would be the best thing we can do for the American people.

I urge my colleagues with a sense of urgency that we move this immediately because of the damage we are causing to our country.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Utah.

Mr. LEE. Mr. President, there can be no doubt that no one wants to be here. Not one Member of this body wants to be in shutdown. We all may have different reasons, different explanations as to why we are here. We might differ with regard to our own beliefs as to how best we should get out of this. But not one of us wants to be here. Every one of us recognizes how awful it is to be in a shutdown posture.

I would like to take a few moments and explain my thoughts on both of those two points. I believe perhaps the single most important reason, single most undisputable reason why we are in a shutdown posture has to do with the fact that for a variety of reasons we have been operating on the basis of continuing resolutions for several years in a row. A continuing resolution, of course, is a bill, a legislative vehicle through which Congress may choose to keep government programs funded at current levels. It is kind of a reset button. It propels us forward on the basis of our current spending pattern, rather than on the basis of an independently, freshly negotiated set of priorities.

This is a different way of running government. Normally this is reserved for unusual circumstances. It usually does not last as long as we have been going this time around, for about 4½ years this way. But this causes us to do things in a way that is different than one would otherwise choose to do them. It is certainly very different than the manner in which we would operate in any other aspect of our lives.

To use one familiar example, let's analogize Congress's spending pattern, its spending decisions, to a consumer going to the grocery store. Suppose you went to the grocery store having been informed by your spouse that you need to bring home bread, milk, and eggs. So you went to that grocery store, you put bread and milk and eggs in your basket. You go to the checkout counter. You place the bread, the milk, and the eggs on the counter. The cashier rings you up. The cashier at that point says: Okay, here is what you will owe us for these items, but we will not allow you to buy just bread, milk, and

eggs. In order to buy these items at this store, we will also require you to purchase a half ton of iron ore, a bucket of nails, a book about cowboy poetry, and a Barry Manilow album.

Of course, anyone being told that would be a little surprised. Anyone being told that would be reluctant to shop at that same store in the future. And if another store existed, another alternative, very few, if any, consumers would continue shopping at that institution.

Yet that in some ways is the way we are asked to spend money here in Congress when we are operating on the basis of back-to-back continuing resolutions, just pushing reset on our spending button, keeping a Federal Government that spends about $3.7 trillion a year operating sort of on economic autopilot.

It would actually be a little bit closer analogy if we changed the hypothetical to a circumstance in which the cashier said not just that you have to buy half a ton of iron ore, a bucket of nails, a book about cowboy poetry, and a Barry Manilow album, but you also have to buy one of every single item in the entire grocery store in order to buy anything—no bread, no milk, no eggs, nothing unless you buy one of everything in the entire store. That would bring us a little closer to the analogy we are dealing with here where we have to choose to fund everything or alternatively to fund nothing. Neither one of those, it seems to me, is a terribly good solution. Neither one of those fairly represents good decisionmaking practices.

We ought to be able to proceed, as past Congresses have historically, passing a dozen or so—sometimes more—appropriations bills and going through our Federal Government category by category debating and discussing each appropriations measure, discussing the contents of that measure to make sure there is sufficient agreement within this body and within the House of Representatives to continue funding the government function in question.

We have a new item in the store, so to speak, as we are shopping this year. This new item in the store is called ObamaCare, one that is about to take full effect on January 1, 2014. Yes, it is the law of the land, but we do have the final choice, the final option, the final authority to choose whether to fund that moving forward or, alternatively, to defund it. We can take that out of the grocery cart.

It is a new item that has caused a lot of people a lot of concern. A lot of people are fearing and experiencing job losses, cuts to their wages, having their hours slashed and losing their health care benefits as a result of this law, and they see more of these disturbing trends coming in the near future. So they are asking for Congress to help. They are asking for Congress to defund the implementation of this law.

A lot of people and many of my colleagues in this body have responded by saying: Yes, but it is the law. That is true. It was passed by Congress 3½ years ago and signed into law by President Obama. It is important to remember two facts about this, however.

First of all, the President himself has announced that he is not following the law. He himself says the law is not ready to implement as it is written. He himself has refused to follow it as it is written.

Secondly, it is not unusual, it is not unheard of by any means to have a law that puts in place one standard, one program, and then have a subsequent appropriations decision made by Congress that results in the defunding of that very program. Let me cite one of many examples I could point to. Under Federal law, currently there is designated something known as the Yucca Mountain nuclear waste repository. That is our official nuclear waste repository. Yet for many years it has been defunded by the Congress. That is Congress's prerogative. Congress holds the power of the purse. Congress may decide to do that.

It is also important to remember that this was by design that it would work this way. Our Founding Fathers understood and set up the system so that it would work this way, and they put the power of the purse in the hands of the House of Representatives, understanding the House of Representatives would act first when exercising the power of the purse.

James Madison acknowledged this fact in Federalist No. 58, and if I can quote from that in pertinent part, James Madison wrote:

> The House of Representatives can not only refuse, but they alone can propose the supplies requisite for the support of Government. They, in a word, hold the purse; that powerful instrument by which we behold, in the history of the British Constitution, an infant and humble representation of the People gradually enlarging the sphere of its activity and importance, and finally reducing, as far as it seems to have wished, all the overgrown prerogatives of the other branches of the Government. This power over the purse may, in fact, be regarded as the most complete and effectual weapon with which any Constitution can arm the immediate Representatives of the People, for obtaining a redress of every grievance, and for carrying into effect every just and salutary measure.

So we find ourselves now in a position in which the House of Representatives is wanting to get the government funded again and is acting to keep the government funded on a step-by-step basis, starting with those areas as to which there is the most broad-based bipartisan support, those areas of government that have nothing to do with the implementation and enforcement of ObamaCare. Moving step by step in this fashion, we can get the government funded again. We should be getting the government funded again.

In many respects, what we have seen over the last week—the conduct of the Obama administration during the first week of this shutdown—may well serve as the single best argument against ObamaCare. What we have seen is a willingness of this President and his administration to utilize the already vast resources of the Federal Government to make it hurt—to hurt families, to hurt businesses, to hurt those who depend on their access to Federal lands, to national monuments, national parks, and other Federal installations. This itself is evidence of the fact that when we give government too much power, that power may, and ultimately will, be abused.

I want to be clear that this is not a problem that is distinctively Democratic. It is not something that belongs uniquely to liberals. This is equally a Republican problem. Republican and Democratic administrations in the past and in the future will have chosen at times to abuse power when it suits their interests in order to get their way politically. We need to not give yet another source of power to the Federal Government—a source of power that intrudes into one of the most personal aspects of human existence.

When we give the Federal Government control of our health care system, we give them control of aspects of our lives that are intensely personal, very intimate, and, frankly, not the business of the Federal Government. We don't want to give that power to a government that may one day be used against us for someone's partisan political gain. It is for that reason we are having this discussion. It is for that reason we need to keep the government funded.

Madam President, I yield the floor.

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

Ms. KLOBUCHAR. Madam President, we are now in day 8 of the government shutdown, and the pain has been felt by all across the country—by the cancer patients being denied access to new clinical trials at NIH, by the mom whose son has muscular dystrophy. His name is Jackson. She told me that every day those researchers aren't working on a cure for her son's disease is a day lost. She said every day counts. Small businesses can't get affordable loans through the SBA. Farmers write me about not being able to get their conservation loans.

I have here a letter I read on the floor on Saturday:

> Please do whatever you can to stop the government shutdown. We have 14 acres of land enrolled in the Conservation Reserve Program. Our rental payment is made to us this first week of October. We depend on this money. It is not a small amount for our family.

Kathy, from Minnesota:

> I am an employee of the Social Security Administration, Office of Disability . . . I have seen you intervene on matters for claimants who have disability hearings pending. I am furloughed as part of the government shutdown. If you want your constituents' hearings addressed, I need to be at work in my office.

Alicia, from Hastings, MN:

> I am writing to express my extreme concern over the federal government shutdown.

I am a teacher, a mother of three boys, and the wife of a furloughed veteran who works for the Minnesota Air National Guard. I have never before written a letter to my representatives, but feel so utterly helpless and frustrated at this time; I needed to voice my concern. . . . At this point in time, my husband, who is a veteran . . . is out of work because he is a federal employee not deemed essential. I am afraid that not only are the other 800,000 laid-off federal employees deemed non-essential, but the rest of the American citizens are non-essential as well.

She goes on to say:

Our struggles are real-life struggles; not a game, not philosophical, not in theory, not distant, and not imaginary. My hope is that these struggles and hardships matter to you . . . That is your duty. That is your charge. That is your enormous task. Shutting down the government is not one of those responsible actions.

That is what we are hearing from the people in my State, the people all over the country.

It is time to end the shutdown, and I will continue to urge my colleagues in the House to do the right thing and pass the straightforward bill the Senate passed on September 27 that would get the government back to work and get those employees back to their jobs.

It is great that the House passed a bill to pay them. That is a good thing. But now they are paying them to stay home. They are paying them to not do their job. They want to come back to work.

As you know, Madam President, we are now facing another critical deadline—the deadline for paying our bills or facing default. Next Thursday, on October 17, our country will hit its legal borrowing limit, and when that happens we will be asked to do what Congress has routinely done 70 times over the past 50 years; that is, 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. Yet lately we have heard voices from the other side from a number of people who seem to think this is just no big deal.

Just the other day Republican Congressman JOE BARTON of Texas said:

Some bills have to be paid and some bills we can defer and only pay partially, but that doesn't mean that we have to pay every bill the day it comes in.

Then there was Dan Mitchell, a senior fellow at the conservative Cato Institute, who said:

There's no need to fret.

No need to fret? That is not what history teaches us.

As chair on the Senate side of the Joint Economic Committee, I had a hearing a few weeks ago about the cost of this brinkmanship, about what happens if we go over that cliff, if we let our bills go, if we don't pay them.

Let's turn back to 2011. We have a very clear lesson of what happens when the mere prospect of a default sent shock waves through our economy. I recently released a report examining the fallout of that brinkmanship. The results were ugly. The Dow Jones plummeted more than 2,000 points, our credit rating was downgraded, and $2.4 trillion in American household wealth was wiped away.

I think it is important for everyone to remember that in 2011 all of this happened before we averted default. The Treasury Secretary sent a letter to Congress about the looming debt ceiling starting on January 6, 2011. On May 2 he announced that the debt limit would be reached on August 2. That was the magic day. We now have people saying maybe it is not October 17. They were saying that back then. But do you know what happened in the lead-up to August 2? On July 14 Standard & Poor's warned that it may downgrade the U.S. credit rating. They followed through on that. They downgraded it after the magic day of August 2, but it was 2 weeks before that they warned they might do it. What happened then? Well, over late July and early August, leading up to the date, the Dow Jones dropped more than 2,000 points.

So the next time someone says there is no need to fret over playing games with the debt ceiling, tell them to talk to the families whose retirement plans took a hit.

Make no mistake. This brinkmanship has very real consequences for our economy. We can't afford to go down this path again because this time around the fall could be so much harder. Our Joint Economic Committee analysis indicates that rates could rise on everything from credit cards and home mortgages to borrowing costs for businesses. At a time when our economy is finally turning a corner, this would put a real strain on families and small business owners.

But don't take my word for it. Secretary Lew has said extraordinary measures will be exhausted by mid-October. Already our government is not matching the retirement fund that Federal workers put in. Already they are not issuing some of the municipal bonds. Already they are not making some of the typical investments they would normally make. The business community and my friends on the other side of the aisle know businesses are overwhelmingly opposed to the idea of America not paying its bills, including key leaders such as Randall Stephenson, CEO of AT&T, who said:

It is unthinkable that the US could default, and it would be the height of irresponsibility for a public official to consider such a course.

Our country cannot afford to keep lurching from crisis to crisis. It is time for both parties to focus on real solutions and get the government back to work in the short term so we can focus on responsibly reducing our deficit in the long term. I supported the work of the Gang of 6, the work of the Gang of 8, the work that was being done by the Domenici-Rivlin Commission, the work that was being done by the debt commission. I was one of 14 Senators who pushed for that work to be done, and I think it is a great basis. I don't agree with everything in it, but it is a good start for how we can negotiate a major deal. We cannot do that in the next few days. We need time to do it, and that is why the Senate proposal is 6 weeks—6 weeks to allow the government to open again so we can truly negotiate the kind of long-term debt reduction deal that we should.

We need to be forward-looking. We need to be forward-looking enough to recognize the decisions we make today go far beyond the next election cycle; they will be felt by generations to come. We have a responsibility to get things right. We can't allow our country to go over the brink. It is not the American way.

In a 1987 address to the American people when he was talking about the debt ceiling and the need to pay our country's bills, President Ronald Reagan said:

The United States has a special responsibility to itself and the world to meet its obligations. It means we have a well-earned reputation for reliability and credibility—two things that set us apart from much of the world.

I urge my colleagues to take these words seriously and to join me in ensuring that Congress acts responsibly and in the best interest of this country.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from New Hampshire.

Ms. AYOTTE. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent that 10 minutes be divided between myself and the senior Senator from Texas, Mr. CORNYN.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection?

Ms. STABENOW. Madam President, not to object, I wish to clarify and ask if we might expand that to indicate the order which I believe we agreed to on the floor; that I be allowed to speak after my two distinguished colleagues, then Senator WHITEHOUSE, and then Senator COBURN.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Will the Senator modify her request?

Ms. AYOTTE. Absolutely, I modify the request to reflect what the senior the Senator from Michigan said.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection?

Without objection, it is so ordered.

Ms. AYOTTE. Madam President, I think it is time for us to end this government shutdown. I said on the floor twice last week, and prior to that, that I didn't think the strategy of defunding ObamaCare was a strategy which would be successful. While I support repealing and replacing ObamaCare, because I have seen the negative impact in my own State of New Hampshire, we have already seen the government is shut down and yet the ObamaCare exchanges have opened—showing already many of the problems with those exchanges, with the computer system, what are called glitches but are major flaws at this point. So it is time for

both sides to come together and resolve this on behalf of the American people.

Let me say it is appalling that we have soldiers who have been killed in the line of duty and their families aren't receiving death benefits. It is wrong. It is outrageous. We need to solve this right away and we need to solve this overall government shutdown.

In New Hampshire, we have private campgrounds which contract with the White Mountain National Forest which are closed, despite the fact that they actually bring revenue into the Treasury. They are run privately and actually make money for the Federal Government. I think the administration is playing games with things like that, and they should open those campgrounds. But ultimately we have to get this government open.

I wish to praise my colleague, the senior Senator from Maine Senator COLLINS, who came to the floor earlier today with an idea she has drawn not only from Members in this Chamber but in the House of Representatives of a way we could resolve this impasse, and that is taking something we have already voted on in this Chamber on the budget resolution. There was a vote in this Chamber on the medical device tax repeal, and that vote got on the budget resolution 79 to 20. We voted on a bipartisan basis to repeal this tax. I have been against this tax since I campaigned, because in New Hampshire we see the impact on our companies. It is going to increase health care costs. Many companies in New Hampshire, such as Smiths Medical and Corflex, are negatively impacted by this tax. Their workers are put in a difficult place when these companies can't expand or they have to reduce their workforce because of this onerous tax—which, by the way, is a 2.3-percent tax on revenue, a tax on innovation and new ideas in health care, rather than a tax on profit. But ultimately we should repeal this tax. It is wrong.

I wish to support what my colleague from Maine came to the floor on today as something we should take up and discuss in this Chamber; that is, a repeal of the medical device tax with a pay-for, a CR proposed for a longer period of time within the Budget Control Act numbers. She has proposed 6 months, and flexibility for the agencies to address the sequester in a way that is best and most sensible for the American people.

I thank my colleague from Maine. We can come together and resolve this. I hope that along with Members on the other side of the aisle who voted for the repeal, we can work together with Members of the House of Representatives, we can work this out, get the government open, and also address concerns that we have with ObamaCare which is impacting an important industry, the medical device industry that provides innovation and important lifesaving devices for people in this country.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Texas.

Mr. CORNYN. Madam President, four times the House of Representatives has sent over continuing resolutions with various additions for consideration by the Senate. Each time Senator REID and the majority party have tabled those provisions, essentially shutting them down without giving them an opportunity for a vote on the merits.

The last time, though, I believe Senator REID led his colleagues down a very treacherous path, because the provisions of this otherwise clean CR would have repealed the provision that carves out Congress and members of our staff and gives us preferential treatment under ObamaCare. The second part of it has to do with delaying penalties on individuals, just as the President has unilaterally done in delaying penalties on employers.

There is no good reason for us not to pass both of those provisions. But instead of trying to deal constructively with the House of Representatives—which has sent four separate bills over here on the continuing resolution—the majority leader has chosen to stiff-arm each of those efforts.

So when the majority leader comes to the floor and bemoans the government shutdown—something we all agree we should try our best to avoid—he claims they are willing to negotiate and the President is willing to negotiate a change in the outcome. But we know that is not true. We know each time they have shut out Republican proposals from the House of Representatives which would open the Federal Government with reasonable bipartisan agreements.

But what really is beyond belief is when I hear our colleagues come to the floor and they say, Why can't we have cancer research for children at NIH continue? Yet we come to the floor and offer bills which would open funding at the National Institutes of Health, that very same cancer research, and they are objected to by the Democratic side of the aisle. I don't know any other word to describe it than hypocrisy.

This morning, the Washington Post talks about the case of Michelle Langbehn from California, who was diagnosed with sarcoma and is unable to have an opportunity to participate in a clinical trial at NIH. This is the very same sort of program which would have been funded by the bill we offered on this side of the aisle and was objected to by the majority leader and the Democratic side.

There is one bright spot of agreement, and that is we were able to agree unanimously to pass the House bill that funded our troops which passed the House 423 to 0. That is the good news. But the bad news is this has now all morphed into a debate not only on the continuing resolution but on the debt ceiling. What the majority leader and his side of the aisle are apparently proposing is that without making any arrangements whatsoever to pay for the $17 trillion in debt that has already been accumulated, they want another clean debt ceiling increase, and the President says he won't negotiate, but in all likelihood we will be voting later this week on another $1 trillion added to our maxed-out credit card without doing anything whatsoever to take care of the debt which has already been incurred.

That is fundamentally irresponsible. That is not me saying it. The American people have said this. The Congressional Budget Office has said this. The President's own bipartisan fiscal commission has said that.

In a recent poll from NBC-Wall Street Journal, when people were given the choice between raising the debt ceiling or not raising the debt ceiling, 44 percent said don't raise the debt ceiling, 22 percent said raise the debt ceiling. I realize we have more choices than that. There could be, coupled together with the raising of the debt ceiling, some real reforms of our broken entitlement programs to shore up Social Security and Medicare. But our colleagues and the President himself have said, No, I am not going to negotiate. No, I want a clean debt ceiling. No, I want the freedom to max out the credit card another $1 trillion, without doing anything to pay off the debt that threatens not only our future prosperity, but our national security.

I remember very clearly when ADM Mike Mullen, Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, was asked what the greatest national security threat to the United States was, and he said the national debt.

Why would our colleagues and the President of the United States ignore what the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff called the most significant national security threat to our country by saying, We are not interested in any reforms, we are not interested in anything that would actually pay down the debt and remove that threat to our national security and our future prosperity? Why would they say, No, we want to keep on spending money—money we don't actually have—and continue to borrow from our creditors like China and other foreign countries that hold a majority of our national debt? And when interest rates start to tick back up again as the Federal Reserve begins to taper its purchase of our own debt, we are going to see more and more of our national expenditures go to pay interest on that debt, crowding out not only national security but the safety net programs for the most vulnerable people in our country.

Madam President, I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Michigan.

Ms. STABENOW. Madam President, first I apologize for the hoarse voice. I have been recovering from a cold. But it is important for me to have the opportunity to speak on behalf of the people from Michigan about what is happening, as everyone at home is scratching their head trying to figure

out why, in the greatest country in the world, we have seen government services now shut down and why there are those who think it is all right for us not to pay our bills and default on the full faith and credit of the United States of America, and why folks aren't willing to just open the government, pay our bills, and then negotiate.

In fact, we have been negotiating. We have negotiated on a lot. I am proud to say we negotiated a successful bipartisan farm bill not that long ago, a real deficit reduction proposal which actually passed the Senate with over a two-thirds vote. So we certainly are willing to negotiate.

Our leader Senator REID was willing to negotiate and in fact did negotiate with the Speaker of the House. As we all know, the Speaker called him in September and indicated he would like to see a 6-week extension of the current funding levels for the government while we were negotiating something more broadly on a budget. It was at a funding level which we don't believe is the right one in terms of investing in education, innovation, and creating jobs, but it was 6 weeks. After talking with us, our leader said that in the interest of negotiating and compromising, we would be willing to do that.

As we know now from Republican colleagues in the House who said that was the intent, unfortunately the Speaker could not follow through on the agreement he had negotiated.

That is because a minority of the minority in the House that is extremely intent on—and in fact has successfully achieved one of the goals they ran on—shutting down the government. But we have negotiated.

We also have negotiated on the big picture. We know that a few years ago with the Bowles-Simpson Commission, with others, that $4 trillion in deficit reduction over 10 years was picked as an important goal to be able to rightsize and bring down our long-term debt. The good news is that not only have we cut the annual deficit in half, but of that $4 trillion we have already agreed to $2.5 trillion of that in deficit reduction over the next 10 years. So over half of that has already been achieved.

When my friends on the other side of the aisle act as if nothing is happening, I have to say the deficit has been cut in half and, second, over half of a long-term goal on the debt has been achieved. We need to keep going. We don't need to shut down the government to do that. We do not need to default on our debts as the greatest country in the world to do that. We just need to work together to do that. That is why we would say we need to open the government, pay our bills, and continue to negotiate. Let's negotiate, but it is a continuation of negotiating.

In fact, weakening the full faith and credit of the United States of America—think of that, the greatest country in the world, the full faith and credit of the United States of America, that has been the highest standard in the world, when you say the full faith and credit of the United States of America—right now there are folks playing Russian roulette with that who are willing to weaken that and undermine our recovery, if not take us over another horrible economic cliff and cost billions of dollars for American consumers.

Given the seriousness of it and the fact that we are very close to having that happen and the fact that we are the world's leader, 30 years ago President Ronald Reagan warned about the consequences of the richest, most powerful nation in the world suddenly running out of money to pay its bills. He said:

> The full consequences of a default—or even the serious prospect of a default—

As people are flippantly discussing these days—

> by the United States of America are impossible to predict and awesome to contemplate.
>
> Denigration of the full faith and credit of the United States of America [would cause] incalculable damage.

This is President Ronald Reagan.

President Reagan reminded Congress:

> Never before in our history has the Federal Government failed to honor its financial obligations. To fail to do so now would be an outrage.

His words.

> The Congress must understand this and bear full responsibility.

We know if the United States defaults on its obligations, if we don't pay our bills, the result will be a financial crisis worse than what we went through in 2008. Frankly, I don't want any part of that. I know what happened in Michigan in 2008, 2009. I know our Presiding Officer, the distinguished Senator from Massachusetts, understands that as well, what happened to families and businesses all across America. To even come close to that is irresponsible.

If that were to happen, 57.5 million Americans could very well not get their Social Security checks on time.

My mom called me the other night. She is 87 years old, doing great. She said I was at church on Sunday and my friends were asking: That couldn't really happen, could it?

I didn't know what to tell her. No, Mom, it should not happen. It has not happened before. But I can't promise, given the words of people on the other side of the aisle who believe it is no big deal or of what is being said by the Speaker and by the tea party Republicans in the House—I couldn't absolutely say to her don't worry about that.

Madam President, 3.4 million veterans might not get their disability benefits on time. We have just been debating whether we should make sure, as we must, that the VA is fully funded. Yet next week if we do not back up the full faith and credit of the United States of America, veterans could very easily be in a situation of not getting disability checks or seniors' Social Security, Medicare. Children, families, communities, businesses, farmers, that is who will pay the cost of this default. Middle-class families will pay the cost of this.

It will be catastrophic in terms of interest rate increases and loss of jobs if we do not stand together as Republicans and Democrats in the Congress of the United States and back up the full faith and credit of the United States of America.

According to Goldman Sachs, if we adopt the ''China first'' model of only paying the interest on our debt, which has been proposed by the House, where we pay some of our debts but not others, the drag on our economy would be massive. They estimate we would lose 4.2 percent of our gross domestic product. To put that in perspective, when the recession hit bottom in 2009 we lost 4.1 percent of GDP, from the peak in 2007. That was the worst recession in our lifetime.

This is not a game. This is serious.

Even more concerning to me is that this would drive up borrowing costs for families, for small businesses, for our manufacturers who are back on their feet now and roaring and bringing back our economy. For every 1-percent increase in interest rates, we are told Americans will pay $75 billion—$75 billion lost to the economy. When Republicans in the House took us to the brink of default 2 years ago, which resulted in the lowering of America's credit rating for the first time in history—even though we didn't default, just talk of default ended up lowering our credit rating for the first time in America's history—it cost the average family buying a home at the time about $100 every month for the life of their mortgage in higher interest rates; $100 a month for the life of the mortgage. That is outrageous and irresponsible.

That same default crisis in 2011 cost taxpayers $19 billion in additional interest when our credit rating fell and interest rates went up. Where did that $19 billion go? Right back on top of the national debt, not only adding to the national debt, it threatens to erase America's retirement savings. In 2011, over $800 billion was lost in retirement accounts after the House Republicans played politics with the full faith and credit of the United States of America.

If I might just take 1 more minute, I ask unanimous consent.

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

Ms. STABENOW. This time, if we actually default, the fall could be even worse and the damage could be permanent. This is the greatest, wealthiest, most powerful country in the world and it is outrageous that this would even be considered.

I ask unanimous consent to have printed in the RECORD a letter from the National Association of Manufacturers, expressing their deep concern about the possibility of default.

I will share, finally, remarks of the chairman of AT&T.

It is unthinkable that the United States could default on its financial commitments and it would be the height of irresponsibility for any public official to consider such a course.

Our country deserves better. The people of this country deserve better. We have to do better for them.

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

NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF MANUFACTURERS,
October 8, 2013.

THE PRESIDENT,
The White House,
Washington, DC.
Hon. JOHN BOEHNER,
Speaker of the House, House of Representatives, Washington, DC.
Hon. HARRY REID,
Majority Leader, U.S. Senate, Washington, DC.
Hon. NANCY PELOSI,
Minority Leader, House of Representatives, Washington, DC.
Hon. MITCH MCCONNELL,
Minority Leader, U.S. Senate, Washington, DC.

DEAR MR. PRESIDENT, SPEAKER BOEHNER AND LEADERS PELOSI, REID AND MCCONNELL: On behalf of the National Association of Manufacturers (NAM)—the largest manufacturing association in the United States, representing small and large manufacturers in every industrial sector and in all 50 states—I write to strongly urge you to act as soon as possible to raise the statutory debt limit.

The failure of policymakers to address this critical issue is injecting uncertainty in the U.S. economy, hampering the ability of manufacturers and the broader business community to compete, invest and create new jobs. In a recent survey of NAM members, almost two-thirds of respondents said it is extremely important for the President and Congress to make progress on funding the government for fiscal year 2014 and extending the nation's debt ceiling. More than 90 percent said that addressing the nation's fiscal challenges was important for their company.

Manufacturers believe the United States must meet our financial obligations to ensure global investors' continuing confidence in the nation's creditworthiness. Our nation has never defaulted in the past, and failing to raise the debt limit in a timely fashion will seriously disrupt our fragile economy and have a ripple effect throughout the world. In particular, a default would put upward pressure on interest rates, raising both the short- and long-term cost of capital and discouraging business investment and job creation. In addition, a default would create an uncertain fiscal environment that will discourage foreign direct investment in the United States that could harm our economy for years to come.

Our nation's economic future depends on your actions. Now is the time to rise above partisan differences and put the nation's best interests first by addressing the debt limit. Thank you in advance for the leadership that will be necessary to appropriately resolve this critical issue.

Sincerely,

JAY TIMMONS.

Ms. STABENOW. I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Rhode Island.

Mr. WHITEHOUSE. Madam President, I am glad to join this debate, which throughout the afternoon has been peppered with the assertion that either Majority Leader REID or the President or Democrats in general will not negotiate—that we will not negotiate. I remember when I was younger there was a radio commentator, a man named Paul Harvey, and his little motto in his radio bits was to surprise you with ''the rest of the story.''

On ''will not negotiate,'' we don't even have to go to the rest of the story. Go to the rest of the sentence. The rest of the sentence is that the President and the majority leader will not negotiate—while the other side is holding hostages, while the tea party is holding hostages.

Here is what our former colleague, my former ranking member on the Budget Committee, Senator Judd Gregg, has said about this:

A small group of Republican legislators led by the junior Senator from Texas, decided to take as hostages government operations and the raising of the debt ceiling.

Those are exactly the hostages, Federal employees who cannot work, people and businesses that want or need Federal services, those families we have heard so much about today who lost loved ones on the field of battle and cannot get their death benefits.

There is an even bigger hostage out there, which is the threat of a catastrophic default which would be the result of a failure to lift the debt limit. Our country has been through a lot, through Civil Wars and world wars, through depressions and calamities of various kinds. Through all of that we have never defaulted on our debt. But there is a group in Congress so desperate that they are willing to use that, that threat as a hostage for leverage in negotiations.

When colleagues on the other side invite us in the old phrase, ''Come, let us reason together,'' let us negotiate, they do not mean come let us reason together, let us negotiate; they mean let us negotiate, but we want a blackjack in our pocket. If the negotiations don't go just the way we want, we want to keep hundreds of thousands of Americans out of their jobs and we want to threaten the economic security of this country.

There is a difference that every American understands between negotiating and negotiating while threatening the hostages. I will say that sanctimoniously offering to release a hostage here or a hostage there when a program becomes too popular or there is too much scrutiny on the damage that one thing is doing, to say, oh, we will give up that hostage, we will let us vote on that hostage, doesn't change the principle. There is a difference between negotiating in good faith, negotiating on the merits, and negotiating with threats to hostages. That is no road to go down. That is a very dangerous threat.

As President Reagan warned us:

Congress must realize that by failing to act they are entering very dangerous territory if we don't raise the debt limit. Never before in our history has the Federal Government failed to honor its financial obligations. Too fail to do so now would be an outrage.

Ronald Reagan:

The Congress must understand this and bear full responsibility.

We have to address these problems in the traditional order of government with real negotiations because if we don't, if we yield to hostage-taking as the new way of governance in this country, where does it end? The continuing resolution that we proposed that the Speaker has refused to have a vote on—in all this time he has never had a vote on the continuing resolution that we passed that would open the government—it would only extend the operations of government for 6 weeks. We would be back at it again. What would the price be next time? After we defunded ObamaCare, would they want to privatize Social Security? They tried that before. Over and over, the popular will has to rule. That we do through our American procedures. The vaunted procedures of our American system of government would be lost in a devil's game of threats and hostage-taking on both sides because two can play at this game if those are the new rules. We don't want to go there.

America is a great country and in part we are a great country because our democracy is an example to the world. We are no example to anyone when we legislate by threats of default, disaster, and confusion, to use the felicitous phrase of our colleague from Alabama.

There is a condition that sometimes befalls pilots called target fixation. It happens when a pilot diving on a target becomes so fixated on hitting that target that they become disoriented with their surroundings. The worst thing that befalls somebody who has target fixation is that they crash the plane.

Right now we have Republican target fixation on repeal ObamaCare. Imagine passing it 40-some times in the House, which they have done. If that is not a sign of target fixation, I don't know what is. Not seeing the damage that is being done by closing down the government, not seeing the damage to families, not seeing the damage to employees, not seeing the damage to people who depend on government services and licenses and safety checks seems to me to be a sign of target fixation.

If they have target fixation this badly, they may not even see President Ronald Reagan's warnings of how dire and dangerous it is to play around with our debt limit. On the House side, they are already talking about playing around with our debt limit. They want to go into the danger zone, and who knows how close to the flame they are willing to fly. When they have target fixation, their judgment is not very good.

They are certainly not seeing the damage to American values and American procedure that an insistence on

legislating by holding hostages and threatening them does. It does damage to our values, and it does damage to our procedures.

A great observer of the American system of government once described procedure as its bone structure. We can throw it all out, the Constitution, the bicameralism, and we can go back to the basic animal state that whoever can make the worst threat wins the argument. That is not the American way. The American way isn't to win the argument by seeing how many people you can put at risk and how badly you can threaten them, but that is the stage we are in right now.

Let's negotiate, indeed, but let's negotiate as Americans. Let's negotiate under our proper procedures. Let's open the government. There is no reason for it to be closed other than bargaining leverage and hostage-taking. There is no other reason. That is exactly why the tea party has shut down the government, just for that purpose. They say it. They use nicer words. I think the word that was used earlier in debate today was to create adequate incentive. When somebody else is holding hostages, we have incentive, but it is not an appropriate incentive.

So open the government and stop threatening the debt limit. That is wildly irresponsible. If they don't believe us, believe Ronald Reagan, believe the Secretary of the Treasury, believe the National Association of Manufacturers, believe the CEO of AT&T, believe virtually every responsible, knowledgeable adult who has observed what the dangers are of blowing the debt limit and default.

Open the government, stop threatening the debt limit and, by all means, let's negotiate. We could set a date tomorrow. I am sure the President would have a meeting at the White House the next day. Anything people wanted could be on the table, but they would have to come in and negotiate like Americans. They would have to negotiate on the merits fairly and not with a blackjack in their back pocket, with threats that if they don't get what they want, they are going to start wrecking things such as our economy and our government. That is not the right way to proceed. If we go down that road, who knows what evil lurks at the end.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Oklahoma.

Mr. COBURN. Madam President, I have listened very carefully to the two previous speakers on the floor, and I understand a lot of their frustration. We are where we are.

I think we have two big problems. Actually, we have two major problems. One is our country is bankrupt. People don't like to hear that, but let me give the facts. The total unfunded liability of the United States of America is $126 trillion. If we add all the net worth of everybody in the country and all the assets of the Federal Government and all the assets of the States and combine them, we have $94 trillion worth of assets. We are already in the hole $30 trillion. That doesn't include the $17 trillion in debt we have.

So I would like to correct a couple of things. One, the Senator from Michigan mentioned that we were downgraded because of the impasse in Congress. No, we were downgraded because Congress has failed to address the real problems of our debt and deficits. Go read their statements. It had nothing to do with action here. It had to do with the fact that we will not address the biggest problems in front of us.

I ask unanimous consent to have some scissors on the floor because I wish to make a point in a minute.

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

Mr. COBURN. We have a credit card. I want you to think about your own personal life that if, in fact, you have a limit on your credit card and your financial situation worsens, you are still paying the payments, but you are not bringing down the principal on your credit cards and you are not earning significantly more money and you go to Citibank or American Express or Chase and say: I want you to raise my limit. The first thing they are going to ask you is: What have you done to improve your financial situation so we might consider raising your credit limit? That is what happens to every other American.

We have this big talk about a debt limit. There is no debt limit in this country. We have increased it every time it has come up. There is no limit right now in this country on the debt we have.

We hear all of these speeches about the risk. You know what the real risk is? The risk is continuing to do nothing to address the underlying problems of our country. The risk is continuing to add entitlement programs that have no way to pay for themselves and no reform of the entitlements we have today. That is the risk.

How does that play out? We have heard all of these dire warnings of what will happen. What is going to happen to your children and grandchildren is what has happened over the last 15 years in this country. Do you realize that the average median income in real dollars now is at the same level it was in 1989? We are going backward right now. We are not addressing the real problems.

Since I am a doctor, I will put it in medical terms. If, in fact, you treat symptoms of disease by raising the debt limit rather than treating the real disease, which is reforming the problems, reforming our spending, quit having 100 percent involvement by the Federal Government in everything Americans do, if you continue to borrow the money and treat that as the symptom, when there is a lack of oversight by Congress and lack of real work by the Members of this body to actually eliminate waste, which is over $250 billion a year as outlined by the Government Accountability Office, we ignore that for the political arena we have seen over the last couple of weeks in Washington.

The real disease is not fixing the real problem. All of the politicians—Republicans and Democrats alike—want to give you a soft answer. Here is the answer: If you are $30 trillion in debt that you cannot pay for, what you have to do is have everybody have some pain, but we refuse to do that. There is no leadership in Congress to address the real disease we are facing. This is a government that has totally ignored the enumerated powers, totally ignored the 10th Amendment. We have a Justice Department that ignores the rule of law in terms of how they decide what they will enforce and what they will not enforce on a political basis rather than on what the law says. Those are the real problems in front of us.

We have heard all the dire warnings about how we cannot raise the debt limit. What does default mean? They always say we can't raise the debt limit, but they will not talk about what default means. Default in the international financial community means you will not pay the interest and you will not pay back the principal on your bonds. That will never happen to us. It would require less than 6 percent of the cash we are taking in now to manage the debt we have right now—less than 6 percent.

So only somebody who wants to hurt us further would play the political game if we ever got there. I am not saying we should get there, but if we got there, it would only be to play the political game to not pay Social Security or not to pay Medicare. We have more than enough money to do that. But what we have is a bloated, oversized, inefficient, ineffective Federal Government that nobody wants to hold accountable except the American people.

So the question is, Who gets to decide? Congress obviously is not deciding very well. The President has not shown any leadership. Maybe it is time for the American people to decide. Maybe it is time to take some of the power away from Washington and restore it to where our Founders thought it should reside: by respecting the enumerated powers very specifically listed by our Founders with great commentary so it would not be distorted, but we have distorted it anyway. We need to reembrace the 10th Amendment which says: Everything that is not specifically enumerated in these powers is left to the power of the people and the States.

We find ourselves with a credit card. This happens to be our debt. The number I chose to put on here was our debt this morning: $16,747,458,528.90. We need to cut this up just like we would do for an adolescent or young adult kid when you are responsible for their credit

card. If they are not responsible, you cut up the credit card. You fix the real problem. You don't continue to ask for an increase in their propagate spending.

Members of Congress who will not do oversight and get rid of $250 trillion of fraud, waste, and abuse every year should not be rewarded, but that is what we will end up doing because we don't have the courage, nor the leadership, to address the real problem in front of our country. The real problem is cowardice. The real problem is to not recognize where we are and not act on making decisive decisions.

We heard how bad it will be if we don't raise the debt limit. I agree, it will be tough. There will be ramifications. How bad will it be if we do? What happens to your children? What happens to the declining family income in this country if we continue to let the Federal Government run uncontrolled and out of control? What happens if we continue to not hold Congress accountable for forcing efficiencies on the Federal Government.

I know what could be done. There was an agreement called the Budget Control Act, and what it did is it forced sequester. Sequester is a stupid way to cut funding in the Federal Government, but it is far better than not cutting it at all.

What has the sequester done? The sequester has forced agencies—because Congress will not force them because we are afraid we might offend somebody—to start making choices. They are still making tons of bad choices. For instance, on the last day of the State Department's budget, they spent all the remaining money. They just spent $5 million for new crystalware for all of our embassies. Do we have $5 million? What is wrong with the crystalware we have now? They had to spend the money because they couldn't come back to Congress and say we saved $5 million.

We are addressing the wrong problems. We are not holding people accountable. Consequently, maybe it is time for the States and the people to exert some common sense on us. I dare say there is not one Member of this body who would let their adolescent child run up a bill and then not eventually try to intercede on a credit card but just let them continue to run it up.

Congress and the U.S. Government is that adolescent child. We are the adolescents and the people and the States are the grownups. We are at an impasse, and it does kind of sound like a kid. I am not going to talk to you. I don't like the way you did that.

We had the majority leader the other day claim that the House was out of bounds because they got to pick and choose what we pay for. It just so happens that in the Constitution, that is what it says. The House of Representatives gets to pick and choose. All spending bills start in the House. They have to start in the House. They get to pick and choose. We don't have to accept it, but they get to pick and choose. So there is a lack of understanding on the basic concepts our Founders set up.

We know the history and they know the history of republics. Republics always die. There isn't one that has survived as long as we have. They decline and die over the same thing: They get in trouble financially.

We are in trouble financially. We are $30 trillion in the hole, plus another $17 trillion in debt. Wouldn't it be smart if we started addressing that problem before we blankly allow an increase in the level of the credit card? Actually, what we should do is cut this credit card up, which is what I am going to do because that is the way I vote. I think it is time we quit borrowing money—actually, I think I better tear it up—it is time we quit borrowing money for the future of our kids. It is time we quit mortgaging their future. It is time we start taking responsibility for the actions of the Federal Government rather than giving excuses on why we can't get together and address the real problems of this country. Congress fails to do the oversight.

We just had a hearing yesterday where we showed one of the problems inside the Social Security and disability system. It was a bipartisan hearing, with lots of work done. There are real problems. The trust fund for those people who are truly disabled in this country will run out of money within 18 to 24 months. The Finance Committee hasn't offered any bill to fix it. The House Committee on Ways and Means hasn't offered any programs to fix it. Yet it is going to be bankrupt. What does that mean for somebody who is truly disabled? It means their check is going to get cut. Now tell me whether we would rather spend $5 million on new glassware for our embassies—crystal—or $5 million for someone who is truly disabled. That is where the real decisions need to be made, but we won't make them.

If we talk about our national debt—when I came to the Senate in 2005 every American owed $24,000 on the national debt. It is now almost $53,000—in a little over 8½ years. So we now owe 2½ times what we used to owe. How did we get there? Why did we let that happen? Why don't we learn to live within our means? Is there always a political reason? Is there always a reason where we can game somebody and say they don't care if they don't want to do this? They certainly couldn't care about Americans if they want to spend money we don't have on things we don't need.

If we look at the $125.8 trillion, that works out to $1.1 million per family. Think about that. That is our unfunded liabilities, and that is going to come due over the next 50 years. If a person has children or grandchildren, as I do, I really don't want their opportunities to be totally limited by this debt load we have.

So we have all of this politicking and posturing and political expediency going on in both bodies, and nobody is talking about what the real problem is. The real problem is we are spending a lot of money we don't have, and we are borrowing from other countries for things we don't absolutely need.

The second part of the problem is we have programs that are designed to benefit people which are riddled with waste and fraud—$100 million in Medicaid and Medicare. Nobody really questions that number. It has been authenticated by four separate studies outside of the government, and inside the government we say it is $80 million. Why would we continue to let a system run that has that kind of fraud in it?

We are getting ready to crank up the Affordable Care Act—we are cranking it up—and we have now said we are not going to authenticate somebody's reliability as to their income? What do we think the fraud rate on that is going to be? We know what the fraud rate is with the child tax credit. It is well over 20 percent. In the earned-income tax credit, we know it is well over 20 percent. So $1 out of every $5 we pay out is to people who don't deserve it. We are going to see the same thing with this. Why would we do that when we have this kind of problem in front of us?

In the last 2 years our debt limit has increased twice what our economy has grown. For every dollar of new debt we take in, we are getting about 2 or 3 cents of economic growth out of that new debt. It used to be that when America borrowed a dollar, it would get 35 or 40 cents of growth out of that debt. So in the last 2 years we have increased the debt limit $2.405 trillion and the economy has grown less than $1.2 trillion over the last 2 years.

We are adding $26,000 to our national debt every second—every second. There is no question that our economy is growing some—some—far less than marginal. Why isn't it growing? It isn't growing because the American people don't have confidence in the future. How do we restore confidence in the future? We restore confidence by modeling a behavior that says we are going to act responsibly with our future, which means we are going to make the hard choices, even if it costs us our political career, to solve the problems in Washington so the generations that follow us will not suffer a lower standard of living but also so we can instill confidence in the American economy.

There is $3 trillion in cash sitting in this country right now—not Federal Government money, private money—$3 trillion. Why is it sitting there and why is it not being invested? That $3 trillion would create 700,000 or 800,000 new jobs a year—that $3 trillion. Why is it not being used? Because people don't have confidence in the future.

I want to tell a story about Virgil Jurgensmeyer. Virgil grows mushrooms and other vegetables in a business. This past August he told me he was thinking about expanding his business, a $5 million expansion, adding a

couple hundred jobs in a very small town in northeastern Oklahoma. He was afraid to do that. He has plenty of business. He is buying $50,000 to $100,000 of product from his competitor every month because he can't produce it. He says: I don't think it is worth the risk right now given where our country is. That is happening all across this country. There is no confidence.

It brings me to another point I wish to speak about. We are not just bankrupt as a nation. Our leadership is bankrupt. Leadership is about creating a vision and bringing people together, not creating controversy and dividing people. It is not about pointing out the worst flaws of somebody. It is about reinforcing the best flaws. It is about selling the confidence that we can do this together.

Do my colleagues realize we can do this together as a nation? There isn't a problem in front of us that we can't solve if we choose to solve it. Do my colleagues remember the debt commission? I was a member of that committee. We voted on some big plans that would have solved a lot of the problems we are facing this very week in this body. I didn't like every bit of it, but it was a chance to try to solve—bring together both sides and solve it. Not once was it taken up on the floor by the majority leader. The President never embraced it—his own commission, his own fiscal commission—never embraced it. It was the greatest failure of leadership I have ever seen. We had conservatives and liberals agreeing that here is a plan we can work out. Yet it was thrown away.

With the politics we see in Washington today, the only time we are going to solve these big problems is when both political parties take the pain evenly. Nobody wants to do that. Everybody wants to win. It is all short-term political expediency.

In the words of my friend Erskine Bowles, where we are today is the most easily predictable problem we ever would have seen. All we have to do is look at the path of the numbers. It is true that our deficits are down a little bit, that we raised $70 billion in taxes last year, and the economy is growing. It just shows what potential there is if we would put the economy on steam, where we had confidence. We could have had $500 billion, $600 billion a year in revenues to the Federal Government. But we won't do that.

Today we find ourselves in worse condition than we were in 2011, and in 2011 we were told we can't do big things. We have to wait.

So we had a debt limit increase. So tell me how we have gotten better since then. We have unfunded liabilities that are growing faster every year. Our true debt-to-GDP ratio is now over 100 percent, counting all debt, internal and external. We have not done it.

Hundreds of thousands of Federal workers right now are furloughed because Congress—not Republicans, Congress—has failed to do its job, has failed to compromise, has failed to reach a meaningful agreement that gives both groups something they can claim they actually worked on the real disease.

Madam President, how much time have I consumed?

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator has consumed 23 minutes.

Mr. COBURN. I will finish. Would the Chair let me know in about 28 minutes?

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

Mr. COBURN. Let me describe also what is going to happen in about 20 years, maybe 10. If we don't address these problems, it won't matter what the debt rating agencies say; we will have developed a pattern that says we think we can continue to borrow and continue to raise the debt limit and not make the structural changes that put us on a path to solvency. So what does that look like? What that looks like is borrowing costs going up.

My friends all say—and the President said today—maybe our borrowing costs will go up if we don't, in fact, raise the debt limit. Guess what. Our borrowing costs are going up every day we don't address these problems whether we address the debt limit or not because eventually the rest of the world is going to say: We don't think they are willing to cut up the credit card. They are not willing to make the sacrifices necessary to put their country on a path of prosperity.

We have all the capabilities in the world to address our problems. We do not have the leadership that will get us there. I am not just directing that at the President; I am directing that at my own party.

So what is the solution?

I am going to spend the next couple days outlining waste in the Federal Government, fraud in the Federal Government, duplication in the Federal Government. But the solution is called sacrificial leadership. It means modeling the behavior that says you are willing to give up something—maybe the prestige of being in office—to actually fix the long-term problems of our country. It is leadership that calls out the best in us instead of pointing out the worst in us. You do not see that very often here. You did when I first came. You certainly do not now, and that is a function of leadership in the Senate.

Majority Leader REID and I do not agree on much. That is obvious. But in a previous discussion on the Senate floor, Leader REID said: ''Meaningful deficit reduction requires shared sacrifice.'' We are never going to get there unless everybody shares in it.

The other point I would make is that we are living off the next generation right now. We are going to borrow $2,000 against the future of every man, woman, and child in this country this year alone. They are going to have to pay it back. Another way of putting it is that 1 out of every 4 hours you work, the Federal Government right now is confiscating—of everybody in our economy. It is soon going to be 2 out of every 4 hours you work.

Our country was founded on the idea of liberty and freedom. When the confiscatory rates that will have to be there to pay back our debt or to at least borrow more money come, half of your work is going to be for the Federal Government—not your State or local governments; it is going to be to pay the bills of the Federal Government. So money that is going to go for interest is money that is not going to be invested. It is money that is not going to improve education. It is not going to invent the new technology.

So I believe we can solve our problems, but I think it requires an informed public. Do you realize the Federal Government is twice the size it was in 1999? It is twice that size. It is two times as big as it was in 1999. Think about that for a minute. If you extrapolate that, that means in another 12, 13 years, it is going to be four times as big as it was in 1999. The question comes: Are you getting value? Is it efficient? It is productive? Is it what we want to do?

I think we can cheat history as a republic. As a constitutional republic, I think we can cheat history. I do not think we have to go down the path every other republic has gone down, but it is going to require real leadership and shared sacrifice on the part of everybody in this country. It is going to require that we take the spending out of the Tax Code for the well-heeled who have placed special benefits in the Tax Code for themselves. It is going to require that we reform Medicare.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator has consumed 28 minutes.

Mr. COBURN. I thank the Presiding Officer.

It is going to require that we reform Medicare, that we fix Medicaid, that we control how the Federal Government buys and uses things. It is going to require us to eliminate multitudes of duplicative programs that have no real benefit other than to benefit the politicians. It is going to require shared sacrifice.

So we can go down that path, unite our country, bring us together with a vision that through this, together we can all accomplish what is needed for our children and grandchildren or we can continue this petty little kindergarten game that is going on in Washington right now where everybody's nose gets bent out of shape, saying they are right or they are right, and playing off the American people.

None of us in Washington are right. The Founders were right. The enumerated powers were right. The 10th Amendment was right. We are dead wrong. It is time we grow up and start understanding the vision of our Founders that secures our liberty and preserves our future.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Colorado.

Mr. BENNET. Madam President, before he leaves the floor, I want to thank the Senator from Oklahoma for his commitment to this issue, for his candor. We do not necessarily agree on every single thing, but I do know he is a man of great conviction and we are lucky to have him in the Senate. It is my hope we can get to a place where we actually are together addressing these budget issues in a way that is not management by crisis or one across-the-board cut after another but actually is a thoughtful plan to relieve our children and our grandchildren of this burden we are threatening them with.

So, through the Chair, I thank my colleague.

Madam President, I come to the floor today, after the Senator from Oklahoma described today as a day of petty kindergarten political games, to talk about a place where they are not playing any of those right now, and that is a town in Colorado that I represent called Estes Park, which has been a beacon of resilience. It is in the mountains just northwest of Boulder. It is the gateway to Rocky Mountain National Park.

I can see from the Presiding Officer's reaction that she may have been there.

The town has several thousand residents and hosts close to 3 million visitors a year, including an average of over half a million visitors in the month of September.

This time of year is peak tourist season. The weather is beautiful. The aspens' leaves are even more beautiful than the weather, and the elk famously wander through the park and through the town. Whether you are coming to rest or recreate, Estes Park welcomes you, and it always has.

In 2011 visitors generated $196 million in tourism spending and supported more than 2,700 jobs. By some estimates tourism accounts for 43 percent of local employment. But when the floods hit in Colorado, Estes Park was almost entirely cut off from the outside world.

As shown in this picture, here is Route 34 going to Estes Park.

Two of the major roads into town were wiped out for miles at a stretch, leaving only one road into town. Many homes and businesses were destroyed. But the residents of Estes Park picked themselves up and began the recovery process. Limited access to the town has been restored. Folks had just started opening their businesses again. Visitors had just started to return to Rocky Mountain National Park. And then Congress stepped in and dealt an unbelievably cruel blow by shutting down this government.

Let me quote what Estes Park resident Tom Johnson said on the Tuesday of the shutdown:

> I think politicians are playing around, like they do, and it's the people who wind up—

> ''And it's the people who wind up''—

> with all the problems for it. Man, they did it to Estes Park, when they shut down that park.

Rocky Mountain National Park closed with the shutdown. Hundreds of campers have had to cancel their reservations, and likely thousands more canceled their plans to visit.

The Denver Post reported that if visitors to Estes Park decline by 70 percent, it could mean the loss of 1,100 jobs, $90 million in spending, $5.8 million in State sales tax revenue, and $4.4 million in local taxes. This is one community in Colorado, one community in the United States of America tonight, as we horse around here in the Congress.

The shutdown is a kick in the teeth to our local governments and small businesses in their efforts to recover from these floods.

One of the area's more famous businesses is the Stanley Hotel. John Cullen, the hotel's owner, told us that while it is booking visitors for long weekend trips, it has been slow to bring in the usual number of guests during the week. He says it is because locals cannot come to Rocky Mountain National Park for the fall foliage. He tells us they have done everything they can to keep the hotel open because it is a major employer in Estes Park, but he is losing money on a daily basis.

Diane Muno is a local business owner in Estes Park, with four retail shops. The Spruce House and the Christmas Shop are two local Christmas and holiday stores; the White Orchid and the White Orchid Bridal Shop sell clothing and other apparel.

Some of these businesses have been serving customers in Estes Park since 1969. They are institutions in this Colorado community.

The flooding damaged three of four of her businesses. One was seriously damaged and has not yet reopened. The other two rushed to reopen to recover, and they would have been fine except we closed Rocky Mountain National Park, and that has slowed foot traffic in a significant way. Diane's October revenue for these four stores is down 67 percent—two-thirds down—from this point in October last year. She typically has 12 to 15 employees, but she is working a skeleton crew of 6.

Another business damaged by the floods was Kind Coffee. Its owner, Amy Hamrick, has been relying on Internet sales while she is working to reopen the store. The community has rallied around the store, as our communities that have been struck by the floods have done. It bought coffee beans and mugs and T-shirts online and helped clean up floodwaters. But the same story holds: She took a huge hit when the government shut down. Making horrible things worse, Amy's husband David Hamrick, a firefighter with the U.S. Forest Service, has been furloughed.

This is what this inability of Washington's politicians to get done the most basic function we have—to keep the government running—has wrought in this one Colorado community.

Amy told National Public Radio:

> We carry on through the middle of October with tourism dollars and locals coming to see the elk rut and to go into the park and see the color. . . . And the national park is also our largest employer in town. So our community now has lost a lot of jobs in the interim.

This is exactly why it is the wrong moment for Colorado, for Estes Park, to have Washington's dysfunction come crashing down. They do not deserve it. They do not deserve it. But, as they are now saying in Estes Park, they are mountain strong and they will get through it. And I know they will.

Amy Hamrick took the time to remind us that 90 percent of the town is open, dry, and ready for customers. She said:

> The town . . . is beautiful and the golf courses have elk on them 24 hours a day.

Estes Park, like much of Colorado, has taken a hit, but it will not stay down. The community continues to pull together and recover. As expected, its neighbors are going the extra mile to help everybody out.

This quote from Jeannie Bier captures the spirit of Colorado. She said:

> We live down in Loveland and it is difficult for the people down there right now—

I know it is difficult down there because I was there last week with the mayor and county commissioners and others looking at devastation in Loveland—

> but we also knew it is just as difficult up here in Estes and they are our neighbors, so we took the roundabout way to get up here to support Estes as well.

The floods will not deter them, and neither will the outrageous stupidity of this shutdown.

Rocky Mountain National Park is closed, but there are still plenty of other reasons to come and enjoy Estes Park.

Earlier today somebody who works with me named James Thompson spoke with the town's mayor Bill Pinkham and asked him what is the one thing he would want me to say on this floor. The message was plain and simple. He said:

> Michael, tell them it's spectacularly beautiful up here. It's still a great experience. We're open for business!

This town has been through a lot and has risen to its challenges.

So I say to everybody, come to Estes Park. Enjoy the beauty. Shop at our businesses. Dine at our restaurants. And meet the folks who would not let a natural disaster or a manmade disaster stop them from succeeding. You can learn more about a trip to Estes Park at visitestespark.com.

To my colleagues, I urge you to come to Colorado for a different reason. Maybe we could all learn something from these incredible people about what it means to pull together in the face of a crisis.

For those of us playing politics with this shutdown and playing politics with this fiscal cliff, I would really encourage you to spend a single moment in one of our flood-ravaged towns. That

might bring some welcome clarity to the debate.

With that, I yield the floor.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

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

Mr. BENNET. Madam President, most of us here in the Senate have read at least something about our Nation's founding. Although it is striking, what is almost always overlooked is the Founders' use of the language of ''the republic.''

Asked by a citizen on the street which was being created behind closed doors in Philadelphia, ''a Republic or a monarchy,'' Benjamin Franklin famously said: ''A republic, if you can keep it.''

As with most foundational decisions, the Founders made this choice deliberately. The idea of democracy frightened Hamilton, Adams, and others, because they equated it with mobs in the street. They worried that mob rule would overcome rights bestowed not by their government but by their Creator. They studied the classics and their models were the Greek and Roman republics.

They set out to do something never done before, to create a republic of the scope and scale never before attempted, and one that could expand as the country grew.

Today we are the world's oldest and greatest democracy. During the last century, America has expanded the constitutional rights of women and people of color well beyond landowning White men, originally privileged. In our time, we have come to understand that democracies are about the rights of citizens, but a republic, the Founders understood, is about the duties of citizens, the obligations a citizen has to a society whose constitution guarantees his or her rights.

Basic duties are to pay taxes levied by a representative government, to defend our country when called upon, and to obey the law. Our Founders had something even greater in mind, qualities that would make a republic endure. Like republics from ancient Athens forward, they believed in popular sovereignty, based on citizen participation in government. They believed in the commonwealth, all those things we hold and value in common, such as our defense and our shared infrastructure, and the welfare of the next generation of Americans.

They believed in putting the common interest above personal or narrow interests, a sense of the national interest. How else could committed slaveowners and abolitionists form a country and a government?

They believed in resistance to corruption, those who would turn the national interest to personal gain. We were founded as a republic and we have become more democratic across time. We are democratic and republican. Interestingly enough, what came to be the semblance of the first political party in America called itself the Democratic Republicans. It was founded in 1791. Sounds pretty weird today, I know, but it simply meant those who believed in democratic equality and freedom, working to uphold the ideals of the Republic. One of our bedrock American principles is that we must protect our rights through performance of our duties. That is not some abstract political theory. This is a definition of who we are and how we must govern ourselves.

We have rights and responsibilities as citizens and as Senators. We have the right to free speech but the responsibility not to shout ''fire'' in a crowded theater. We have the right to assemble but the responsibility to do so peacefully. In this body we have the right to filibuster but the responsibility to govern on behalf of the American people.

But the fewer the Americans who exercise the most fundamental right, I would say duty, of voting, the more political influence extreme groups in our society have. This is where we find ourselves at the dawn of the 21st century, with a Senate that at times is dominated by a small faction that does not represent the mainstream of American political thought, and a House that is gerrymandered into dysfunction. This institutional paralysis has created a vacuum into which a million special interests happily roam.

Actually, I should call them narrow, not special, interests. From ancient Athens onward, narrow interests have been the enemy of every republic. That has never been truer than it is today. Keeping the Republic created by our Founders should concern every generation of Americans, including our own. The sovereign power belongs to all the people, not just a vocal few. It is our responsibility, it is our duty, as elected officials when that ideal is tested, to work together to restore a sense of the commonwealth and the common good that enabled us to prevail in world wars and to overcome depressions.

This is our cause, but we are stuck. We are stuck because we are fighting over yesterday's battles instead of seeking to anticipate, as our Founders did, how we will manage change. To one degree or another, all Senators and possibly all Americans are conservative. If conservative means to protect our Nation's principles and ideals, I am a conservative. If conservative means to preserve a culture of tolerance, justice, and equality, I am a conservative. If conservative means to respect the unique cultural heritage of America, I am a conservative. If conservative means to protect our natural heritage, I am very much a conservative.

But while we protect and preserve the best of what makes us who we are, we must adapt to change. Scarcely one of us in the Senate has ever sought office without advocating some kind of change: change of officeholder, change of party, change of policy. That is good, because the future is arriving faster and faster and we have gotten no better at anticipating it.

Even with the seemingly endless crawls of the words ''breaking news'' at the bottom of our screens, no one predicted the Arab spring before it sprung. That is the most closely watched region in the world.

There are great historic tides that demand that we change and adapt to them in order to preserve and protect and conserve our central values. We do not live in a stagnant world. Indeed, we are living in the midst of great revolution that makes the 21st century as different from the 20th as the 18th century was from the 17th. We are living through what may be the peak years of change on the scale of the Industrial Revolution. But even though we may come here oriented to change, the institutions of government, Congress included, are oriented to the past. Our committee structure and our regulatory agencies imagine an economy that existed deep in the last century. We are designed to support incumbent interests, not the innovators that will drive job growth and wage growth in the 21st century. This is a fatal flaw, if we are ever going to tackle the growing income inequality that our Nation faces, an inequality that has been unmatched since 1928.

We are regulating the telegraph when the world is wireless. Just one example: Almost a year ago I visited Apple out in Silicon Valley to learn something about their work in education. A little over 4 years ago, when I was superintendent of Denver Public Schools, I did not spend one second thinking about how to apply a tablet to the education of our kids, because there was no such thing as a tablet—a little over 4 years ago.

Today the tablet, combined with platforms such as the iTunes platform, presents an unbelievable opportunity for our children and children all over the world to learn and to teach each other. It was amazing to see.

In any case, Apple presented a slide showing that 75 percent of their last 12 months of revenue was derived from products they did not sell 5 years before—75 percent of their revenue came from things they did not sell 5 years before.

We have not updated our Tax Code since 1986. I was in college in 1986. What are the chances that our Tax Code is helping drive job and wage growth in 2013, 27 years later, more than a quarter of a century later?

In this Congress and in this government, we are desperately out of sync with the world as it is. It is, in fact, an irony that we must change and adapt to preserve the principles that we treasure. But we must.

Today, many flying the tea party banner resist all change. Indeed, they

want to go back, often to a past that never existed, or to a time that has no relation to our time. Too often, their politics embrace old interests that will not drive us forward to an economy that is creating jobs and raising wages.

Our founding principles should not change. I agree with that. But our practices and methods must change to become relevant. These two parties, or three with the tea party, have to escape their orthodoxies for this to be possible. Efforts to maintain the status quo or to return to some mythical past are doomed to fail. That is simply because time and the tides of human affairs will not stand still. We do not control history and cannot dictate to it. Change is the one constant. How we attempt to shape it to our purposes, by creative, imaginative public policies will determine whether we can preserve the best of our past, our principles, our heritage, and our values.

Those who seek to protect our Nation against change by sitting on the beach before a massive incoming tide with shovel in hand will be swept away as surely as King Canute. As I mentioned earlier, anyone who believes their orthodoxy or their ideological orientation prepared them for the Arab spring or made us safer is deluded. Our job must be to create a shared understanding of the facts when we work in a town that is arranged to obscure them.

Despite the desires of nostalgia, we are not going back to the laissez faire world of Herbert Hoover. Social safety nets are here to stay to protect children, the elderly, the poor, the disabled, and to protect our ability to call ourselves a civilized nation. But even they will have to be changed if they are going to survive for the next generation of Americans.

The revolution of globalization and information has transformed the world's economy and cultures and societies all across the globe, including here in the United States. These revolutions, like the Industrial Revolution before them, cannot be stopped. It is up to us to decide whether we can accept this new reality and position our country to lead, as it has since our founding, or whether we shrink into an imaginary conception of what the world once was and what the United States once was.

With all of this change and pace of globalization comes fear of the future and a sense of loss of what once was. That is human nature. I do not exempt myself from that. At a time of uncertainty, it has become fashionable in some political circles to capitalize on it politically. This kind of demagoguery is not unknown in American history. Anytime Americans become fearful or worried, there have always been those who saw personal advantage in fanning those flames. But they do not join an honor roll of history, an assembly of our greatest leaders. Media attention, which is easy and cheap, is not a measure of leadership. Division does not require moral authority.

If we are at another of history's turning points, as many believe, as I believe, one road leads to the worst of our past. The other leads to a new definition of our freedoms. We treasure the freedoms incorporated in the First Amendment to our Constitution.

We remember at the height of the Great Depression that Franklin Roosevelt declared four new freedoms: Freedom of speech and worship and freedom from want and fear. Today, in the middle of what one might characterize as a political depression, let's consider some new freedoms for the 21st century: Freedom from foreign oil; freedom from false patriotism; freedom from the politics of division; freedom to create a constructive future; and, yes, freedom from unconstitutional government surveillance.

We have duties to perform far greater than merely funding the government. Just ask any poor child or her teacher in a typical American school. The good news is that fear has never and will not now dictate the fate of our Republic. History's dustbin is filled with failed demagogues. And we are not going back. But we need to hurry. The world is not waiting for us.

Americans want us to move forward into the 21st century with the imagination, creativity, adaptability, and values that have made this country so great from its founding. The stakes are simply too high in our time to allow our institutions to be crippled by politicians who color far outside the lines of conventional American political thought and who react with angry and mock surprise when their policy objectives are not achieved.

It is time to close this sorry chapter in the history of the Congress, reopen our government, preserve the full faith and credit of the United States, and work together as Senators from the various States on the people's business. I suspect that is why most of us wanted to serve to begin with.

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

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

MORNING BUSINESS

Mr. REID. 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 during that period of time.

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

ADDITIONAL STATEMENTS

HONORING DR. PAUL R. RAO

• Mr. JOHNSON of South Dakota. Madam President, today I wish to honor an outstanding gentleman and friend, the man who guided me through years of speech recovery. Dr. Paul R. Rao, a recognized leader in his field of speech-language pathology, will retire from his work as vice president of Inpatient Operations at the National Rehabilitation Hospital, NRH, on October 17, 2013, his 67th birthday and 43rd wedding anniversary.

Dr. Rao began his professional career more than 32 years ago at MedStar Health and skillfully guided the development of the new speech and language department when MedStar opened the National Rehabilitation Hospital in Washington, DC, 27 years ago.

I met Dr. Rao when I entered NRH in February 2007, following an AVM and a month in intensive care. Over the months he became more than a therapist for me, he was a friend and a coach. When I returned to South Dakota in August of that year, Dr. Rao took his own time to join me as I greeted the people of South Dakota for the first time since the AVM. I continued to work with Dr. Rao in outpatient therapy, despite his demanding schedule as a vice-president for NRH, for another 3 years. I have been told that we were truly the odd couple, he the ebullient, loquacious Italian and I the stoic, reticent Norwegian.

He is widely recognized for his professional skills and is a sought after public speaker. Among his honors is the Clinical Achievement Award by the American Speech-Language Hearing Foundation that he received not once but twice, in 1989 and 2001. The DC Association for Healthcare Quality conferred on Dr. Rao the Janis Willis Annual Award for Educational Excellence in 2001 and the Beth Lang Award for Outstanding Leadership in 2003.

In addition, he is a national leader in medical rehabilitation, serving as president of the American Speech and Hearing Association, and as fellow of the American College of Healthcare Executives.

Dr. Rao is the editor of Managing Stroke: A Guide to Living Well After Stroke published in 2000 and the lead editor for the second edition of this text in 2009.

He has made invaluable contributions to MedStar's National Rehabilitation Network and was recognized for his leadership as steward of the patient safety journey when he was awarded the National Rehabilitation Hospital's John W. Goldschmidt Award for Excellence in Rehabilitation.

I am pleased to take this opportunity to thank Paul for sharing his talents with me. I wish him and Martina a wonderful retirement.•

MESSAGE FROM THE HOUSE

At 10:02 a.m., a message from the House of Representatives, delivered by Mr. Novotny, one of its reading clerks, announced that the House has passed the following joint resolution, in which it requests the concurrence of the Senate:

H.J. Res. 77. Joint resolution making continuing appropriations for the Food and Drug Administration for fiscal year 2014, and for other purposes.

MEASURES READ THE FIRST TIME

The following bill was read the first time:

S. 1569. A bill to ensure the complete and timely payment of the obligations of the United States Government until December 31, 2014.

The following joint resolution was read the first time:

H.J. Res. 77. Joint resolution making continuing appropriations for the Food and Drug Administration for fiscal year 2014, and for other purposes.

EXECUTIVE REPORTS OF COMMITTEE

The following executive reports of nominations were submitted:

By Mr. WYDEN for the Committee on Energy and Natural Resources.

*Michael L. Connor, of New Mexico, to be Deputy Secretary of the Interior.

*Elizabeth M. Robinson, of Washington, to be Under Secretary of Energy.

*Nomination was reported with recommendation that it be confirmed subject to the nominee's commitment to respond to requests to appear and testify before any duly constituted committee of the Senate.

INTRODUCTION OF BILLS AND JOINT RESOLUTIONS

The following bills and joint resolutions were introduced, read the first and second times by unanimous consent, and referred as indicated:

By Mr. REID (for himself and Mr. BAUCUS):

S. 1569. A bill to ensure the complete and timely payment of the obligations of the United States Government until December 31, 2014; read the first time.

ADDITIONAL COSPONSORS

S. 55

At the request of Mrs. BOXER, the name of the Senator from Maryland (Ms. MIKULSKI) was added as a cosponsor of S. 55, a bill to prohibit Members of Congress and the President from receiving pay during Government shutdowns.

S. 153

At the request of Ms. AYOTTE, the name of the Senator from Ohio (Mr. PORTMAN) was added as a cosponsor of S. 153, a bill to amend section 520J of the Public Health Service Act to authorize grants for mental health first aid training programs.

S. 541

At the request of Ms. LANDRIEU, the name of the Senator from Michigan (Mr. LEVIN) was added as a cosponsor of S. 541, a bill to prevent human health threats posed by the consumption of equines raised in the United States.

S. 554

At the request of Mr. ISAKSON, the names of the Senator from North Carolina (Mrs. HAGAN) and the Senator from New Mexico (Mr. HEINRICH) were added as cosponsors of S. 554, a bill to provide for a biennial budget process and a biennial appropriations process and to enhance oversight and the performance of the Federal Government.

S. 1056

At the request of Mr. CASEY, the name of the Senator from Michigan (Mr. LEVIN) was added as a cosponsor of S. 1056, a bill to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to provide for a refundable adoption tax credit.

S. 1318

At the request of Mr. SCHUMER, the names of the Senator from New Hampshire (Mrs. SHAHEEN) and the Senator from Iowa (Mr. HARKIN) were added as cosponsors of S. 1318, a bill to amend title XIX of the Social Security Act to cover physician services delivered by podiatric physicians to ensure access by Medicaid beneficiaries to appropriate quality foot and ankle care, to amend title XVIII of such Act to modify the requirements for diabetic shoes to be included under Medicare, and for other purposes.

S. 1349

At the request of Mr. MORAN, the name of the Senator from Kansas (Mr. ROBERTS) was added as a cosponsor 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. 1530

At the request of Ms. LANDRIEU, the names of the Senator from Missouri (Mrs. MCCASKILL) and the Senator from New York (Mr. SCHUMER) were added as cosponsors of S. 1530, a bill to realign structures and reallocate resources in the Federal Government, in keeping with the core American belief that families are the best protection for children and the bedrock of any society, to bolster United States diplomacy and assistance targeted at ensuring that every child can grow up in a permanent, safe, nurturing, and loving family, and to strengthen intercountry adoption to the United States and around the world and ensure that it becomes a viable and fully developed option for providing families for children in need, and for other purposes.

S. 1551

At the request of Mr. WYDEN, the name of the Senator from Massachusetts (Mr. MARKEY) was added as a cosponsor of S. 1551, a bill to reform the authorities of the Federal Government to require the production of certain business records, conduct electronic surveillance, use pen registers and trap and trace devices, and use other forms of information gathering for foreign intelligence, counterterrorism, and criminal purposes, and for other purposes.

S. 1557

At the request of Mr. CASEY, the name of the Senator from Kansas (Mr. MORAN) was added as a cosponsor of S. 1557, a bill to amend the Public Health Service Act to reauthorize support for graduate medical education programs in children's hospitals.

S.J. RES. 19

At the request of Mr. UDALL of New Mexico, the name of the Senator from North Carolina (Mrs. HAGAN) was added as a cosponsor of S.J. Res. 19, a joint resolution proposing an amendment to the Constitution of the United States relating to contributions and expenditures intended to affect elections.

S. RES. 254

At the request of Mr. ENZI, the name of the Senator from Oklahoma (Mr. INHOFE) was added as a cosponsor of S. Res. 254, a resolution designating November 2, 2013, as ''National Bison Day''.

STATEMENTS ON INTRODUCED BILLS AND JOINT RESOLUTIONS

By Mr. REID (for himself and Mr. BAUCUS):

S. 1569. A bill to ensure the complete and timely payment of the obligations of the United States Government until December 31, 2014; read the first time.

Mr. REID. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the text of the bill be printed in the RECORD.

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

S. 1569

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 ''Default Prevention Act of 2013''.

SEC. 2. ENSURING TIMELY PAYMENT.

Section 2 of the No Budget, No Pay Act of 2013 (31 U.S.C. 3101 note) is amended—

(1) by striking ''date of the enactment of this Act'' each place it appears and inserting ''date of enactment of the Default Prevention Act of 2013'';

(2) in subsection (a), by striking ''May 18, 2013'' and inserting ''December 31, 2014''; and

(3) in subsection (b), by striking ''May 19, 2013'' each place it appears and inserting ''January 1, 2015''.

AUTHORITY FOR COMMITTEES TO MEET

COMMITTEE ON ENERGY AND NATURAL RESOURCES

Mr. WARNER. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Committee on Energy and Natural Resources be authorized to meet during the session of the Senate on October 8, 2013, at 10 a.m., in room 366 of the Dirksen Senate Office Building.

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

COMMITTEE ON HOMELAND SECURITY AND GOVERNMENTAL AFFAIRS

Mr. WARNER. 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 October 8, 2013, at 2:30 p.m.

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

SUBCOMMITTEE ON AFRICAN AFFAIRS

Mr. WARNER. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Committee on Foreign Relations be authorized to meet during the session of the Senate on October 8, 2013, at 3 p.m., to hold an African Affairs subcommittee hearing entitled, ''Security And Governance In Somalia: Consolidating Gains, Confronting Challenges, And Charting The Path Forward.''

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

MEASURES READ THE FIRST TIME—S. 1569 AND H.J. RES. 77

Mr. REID. Madam President, I understand there are two measures at the desk, and I ask for their first reading en bloc.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will read the measures by title for the first time.

The legislative clerk read as follows:

A bill (S. 1569) to ensure the complete and timely payment of the obligations of the United States Government until December 31, 2014.

A joint resolution (H.J. Res. 77) making continuing appropriations for the Food and Drug Administration for fiscal year 2014, and for other purposes.

Mr. REID. I now ask for a second reading en bloc and ask that my objection appear in the RECORD on both measures.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Objection is heard. The measures will be read for the second time on the next legislative day.

ORDERS FOR WEDNESDAY, OCTOBER 9, 2013

Mr. REID. I ask unanimous consent that when the Senate completes its business today, it adjourn until 10:30 a.m. on Wednesday, October 9, 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 be in a period of morning business for debate only until 2 p.m. with Senators permitted to speak therein for up to 10 minutes each.

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

ADJOURNMENT UNTIL 10:30 A.M. TOMORROW

Mr. REID. Madam President, if there is no further business to come before the Senate, I ask unanimous consent that it adjourn under the previous order.

There being no objection, the Senate, at 6:55 p.m., adjourned until Wednesday, October 9, 2013, at 10:30 a.m.

DISCHARGED NOMINATION

The Senate Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs was discharged from further consideration of the following nomination under the authority of the order of the Senate of January 7, 2009 and the nomination was placed on the Executive Calendar:

*SCOTT S. DAHL, OF VIRGINIA, TO BE INSPECTOR GENERAL, DEPARTMENT OF LABOR.

*Nominee has committed to respond to requests to appear and testify before any duly constituted committee of the Senate.