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Senate

The Senate met at 10:30 a.m. and was called to order by the Honorable ANGUS S. KING, JR., a Senator from the State of Maine.

PRAYER

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

Let us pray.

Almighty God, we desperately need Your steadfast love to sustain us during this difficult time. Lord, give our lawmakers the wisdom to distinguish between truth and error and the courage to act upon those insights. Help them to avoid the shortcuts that lead away from Your will, as You make them Your eyes, ears, feet, and hands to bring solace to those who suffer. Give them a hatred of all hypocrisy, deceit, and shame, as they seek to replace them with gentleness, patience, and truth.

We pray in Your great Name. Amen.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The PRESIDING OFFICER led the Pledge of Allegiance, as follows:

I pledge allegiance to the Flag of the United States of America, and to the Republic for which it stands, one nation under God, indivisible, with liberty and justice for all.

APPOINTMENT OF ACTING PRESIDENT PRO TEMPORE

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will please read a communication to the Senate from the President pro tempore (Mr. LEAHY).

The assistant bill clerk read the following letter:

U.S. SENATE,
PRESIDENT PRO TEMPORE,
Washington, DC, October 11, 2013.

To the Senate:

Under the provisions of rule I, paragraph 3, of the Standing Rules of the Senate, I hereby appoint the Honorable ANGUS S. KING., JR., a Senator from the State of Maine, to perform the duties of the Chair.

PATRICK J. LEAHY,
President pro tempore.

Mr. KING thereupon assumed the Chair as Acting President pro tempore.

RECOGNITION OF THE MAJORITY LEADER

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

DEFAULT PREVENTION ACT OF 2013—MOTION TO PROCEED

Mr. REID. I move to proceed to Calendar No. 211, S. 1569, the debt limit bill.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The clerk will report the motion.

The legislative clerk read as follows:

Motion to proceed to Calendar No. 211, S. 1569, a bill to ensure the complete and timely payment of the obligations of the United States Government until December 31, 2014.

SCHEDULE

Mr. REID. Mr. President, following leader remarks, the Senate will recess subject to the call of the Chair to allow for a Republican special caucus meeting with President Obama.

RECOGNITION OF THE MAJORITY LEADER

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

Mr. REID. Mr. President, this is my opinion. If we allow the United States to default on its debt for the first time in our glorious history, it will be a black mark on our reputation, and that is a gross understatement. There will be a financial disaster, and it will spark a global recession.

As I indicated when I began, this is my opinion, but this is not my opinion alone. If we listen to the economic leaders of this country, respected economists, bankers, and business leaders, this is what they say.

For example, yesterday the chief executive officer of the American Express, whose company is valued at almost $80 billion, said this about default:

What's important to understand is if the United States hits the debt ceiling and is unable to pay its debts, the consequences will be immediate and dramatic. . . . If the U.S. defaults, the [global financial] system literally unwinds.

So no one misinterprets what he said, I will read it again.

What's important to understand is if the United States hits the debt ceiling and is unable to pay its debts, the consequences will be immediate and dramatic. . . . If the U.S. defaults, the [global financial] system literally unwinds.

His dire warning has been accepted and echoed by reasonable Members of Congress, including many Republicans. Even Speaker BOEHNER admitted in 2011, the last time Republicans forced this country to the brink of default, that failing to pay the bills would be catastrophic. He said:

Not raising the debt limit would have serious—very serious—implications for the worldwide economy and jobs here in America.

But this year Speaker BOEHNER seemed willing to risk default day after day, holding the full faith and credit of the United States hostage to extract extreme political concessions.

Yesterday it was very good to see my Republican colleagues, some at least, come around to the idea of a clean bill to avert default. Think about that. They are talking about extending the debt ceiling for 2 months—for 6 weeks. Please.

But some have admitted the clean bill to avoid default should be the standard. I certainly agree with that.

I repeat, we do not believe a 6-week delay of a catastrophic default is enough to give the economy the confidence it needs to continue growing and recovering. Using their theory, we would have another one of these periods of bedlam in Washington before the most important purchasing season at any time during the year, Christmas, right before Christmas, when people are beginning to buy things for Christmas.

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

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We will vote tomorrow on a 15-month measure to ensure the United States lives up to its obligations, giving the economy certainty and stability over the long term. But Congress's work to restore faith in government won't end with avoiding default.

The Federal Government is still closed for business, causing hardship and heartbreak for millions of American families, such as the Trowbridge family in Reno, NV. They have a 17-year-old son Austin who was scheduled to receive an experimental bone marrow transplant at NIH in Washington. Without the transplant, he could die, just as his brother did 5 years ago from the same disease.

But the National Institutes of Health are shuttered, along with the rest of the government and the Centers for Disease Control. The assistant Democratic leader has laid out 79 different programs that would need to be reinstated to open the government, and we are getting them piecemeal—piecemeal.

In the meantime, people are suffering, not only Federal employees but the people who depend on them. We have four States that are trying to work something out with Secretary Jewell to have the States pay for opening national parks.

It is time for Republicans to give the Trowbridge family and others some relief. Reopen the government, the whole government, so kids such as Austin can get the treatment they need. Families of law enforcement officers killed in the line of duty can't get the death benefits they deserve. Why? Because the government is closed. Every American family who relies on the Federal Government can't get the help and services they need.

Reopen the Federal Government, let's pay our bills, and then let's negotiate a sensible budget solution that secures our country's long-term fiscal leads.

RECOGNITION OF THE MINORITY LEADER

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

THE DEBT CEILING

Mr. McCONNELL. Shortly I will join my Republican colleagues at the White House. It will be a good time to engage in a frank exchange of ideas with the President, if that is what he is looking for. But if all the President wants is to drag us over there to say he won't negotiate, that won't be particularly productive.

Throughout this crisis, the President has taken what you might call an unorthodox approach to governing. His basic position could be summed up in basically three words: He won't negotiate.

I think that has left many Americans scratching their heads. I know the President and the Democratic leaders in Congress want to borrow more money without any strings attached. But the rest of us actually want to enact some commonsense reforms to get our debt under control, and we want to keep our commitments to the American people.

A key point is: Nobody wants a default. That is why, in 50 years of negotiations over multiple debt ceiling increases, we haven't had a single default, not a one. We have negotiated over debt ceilings for 50 years and never had a default. Let's put this hysterical talk of default behind us and instead start talking about finding solutions to the problems.

There are a variety of ways to get debt and spending under control, a lot of innovative reforms we should consider. But we need to talk to each other if we are going to make any of that happen.

I will bet that some of my Democratic friends have spending-cut ideas as well, and we would like to hear them. Let's sit down and talk this out. Members on both sides of the aisle in Congress are discussing solutions, and these discussions will continue as soon as we get back from the White House.

RECESS SUBJECT TO THE CALL OF THE CHAIR

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Under the previous order, the Senate stands in recess subject to the call of the Chair.

Thereupon, the Senate, at 10:40 a.m., recessed subject to the call of the Chair and reassembled at 1:15 p.m., when called to order by the Presiding Officer (Mr. KAINE).

DEFAULT PREVENTION ACT OF 2013—MOTION TO PROCEED—Continued

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Maryland.

Mr. CARDIN. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that Senators be permitted to speak for up to 10 minutes each.

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

Mr. CARDIN. Mr. President, we are in the 11th day of the government shutdown. We have caused great harm to the people of this country. We have already caused harm. We have hurt the United States on the international front. The President, as I mentioned previously, was absent at the Asian economic summit. The Asian economic summit was the opportunity for America, the President of the United States, to be the headliner. Instead, the President of China, President Xi, became the headliner. There were questions asked about whether America is ''open for business'' with our trading partners. We have been hurt by this shutdown, make no mistake about it.

Our economy has suffered. Just the threat of defaulting—of not paying our bills—has hurt consumer confidence. Consumer confidence measures whether consumers are ready to go out and buy that car, buy that home, go on vacation. After the terrorist attacks on the country on September 11, 2001, consumer confidence dropped by about 8.8 percent. I could go over other calamitous moments in history, but the debt ceiling debate today is about twice as damaging to consumer confidence as the 9/11 attack. We are talking about paying our bills when we talk about raising the debt ceiling—bills that have already been incurred. We are just paying the bills.

Mr. President, we are hurting our country. We are hurting our economy. We are wasting taxpayer dollars. We all talk about dealing with the debt. But in the government shutdown, we have wasted over $2 billion of taxpayer money as a result of it.

As the Presiding Officer knows, in this region—Maryland, Virginia, the District—we have over 300,000 Federal workers who are on furlough of the 800,000 who are furloughed nationwide. That has a direct impact on families as well as our economy. These Federal workers are not buying in their local shops, they are not eating in the local restaurants. I stopped into a restaurant for a sandwich over the last weekend. I said: How are things going? The shopowner said: Terrible. Social Security employees are not here. I cannot keep my business open without their business.

We have seen the direct impact. I have tried to put faces on these numbers. We could talk about the statistics and the numbers. Let's talk about people, the individual people I hear from—I know the Presiding Officer has received calls from constituents in Virginia. It is the same story.

Over a week ago we brought in Amy Fritz who works at the National Oceanic & Atmospheric Adminstration (NOAA). She is a Federal worker who is furloughed. She tracks weather conditions and works on the computer models to predict how storms will behave. It is a pretty important position she has. She was telling of the hardship to her family. The Baltimore Sun reported today that at NOAA it is not just the Federal workers, it is the contract workers who are suffering. The Sun cited the example of Tiffany House, a person who lives in Hyattsville, MD. She is a single mom, a contract employee of NOAA, who has been laid off as a result of the shutdown. It is more than just 800,000 Federal workers; we have the contract workers who have been laid off as a result of the shutdown.

She said, ''Even though we're furloughed and we are not getting paid, the bills keep coming.''

There are a lot of hard-working families who live paycheck to paycheck. We are 11 days into this government shutdown. Families are wondering what they are going to do when it comes to paying their bills.

The Sun reported about Keith Tate from Hyattsville. He works for FM Talent Source in Silver Spring. Almost 30 percent of their contract employees, 92 people in total, have been laid off. He

was starting work on October 1—his luck. He was looking forward to it. He went to work on October 1 but then was furloughed as a result of the government shutdown.

The effect goes well beyond individual people that you would expect, like Federal employees and contractors. I have a friend, Hugh Sisson, who started Heavy Seas Brewery in Baltimore. It is one of America's great craft breweries. He is doing a great job and hiring people. You may say, ''How does this affect him? He sells beer.'' Well, beer sales are affected by furloughs and a drop in consumer confidence, but it's worse than that. The Alcohol and Tobacco Tax and Trade Bureau (TTB) employees at the Department of the Treasury have been furloughed. They're the people who review and approve new breweries, recipes, and labels. Hugh told me, ''We have eight labels waiting for approval and 10 formulas we would like to start the process on but can't at this time.''

Craft brewers like Hugh Sisson are innovators, constantly introducing new beers and seasonal beers, fresh products. They are being hurt all over the Nation as a result of the TTB staff being furloughed. They don't just hire their own staff; they support jobs in agriculture for barley and hops and other ingredients; in manufacturing for stainless steel kettles and fermenters and bottling and canning lines; and in distribution and retail. These are blue collar jobs and white collar jobs. All across America. These are jobs that won't be outsourced overseas. And this shutdown is hurting America's craft brewers.

This shutdown is hurting our economy, hurting our country, hurting individuals, hurting taxpayers, hurting businesses. We can do much better. In my State of Maryland 10 percent of our workforce works for the Federal Government. The dedicated employees at these agencies do work that's important to all Americans, not just Marylanders.

As I pointed out previously, Harbor Point is one of the most important economic developments in downtown Baltimore, but it's RCRA site—that stands for the Resource Conservation & Recovery Act—which means it requires the consent of government, the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), before this enormous economic development project can move forward. The people at EPA who would approve this project have been furloughed. This economic project now is on hold.

I could mention other examples of agencies that are critically important. I could also talk a lot more about private employment. It is not just government employment, it is private employment. Convergence Technology Consulting, located in Glen Burnie, MD, does cloud computing services for the Department of Defense. Twenty percent of the firm's 65 employees have been laid off.

TW Corporation in Hanover does cyber security work, and one-third of its 700 employees were furloughed. The list of the damages caused by the government shutdown goes on and on.

My message is pretty simple. We have to make sure government is open. We have to make sure we open government, and we have to pay our bills.

I understand we would like to have an agreement on a budget. I would like to have an agreement on the budget. For 6 months we have been trying to go to conference. The Senate passed a budget, the House passed a budget. They are different. The Senate budget, one that I supported, the Presiding Officer supported, would provide more resources for job growth by investing in infrastructure, by investing in education, by investing in research. Yes, we do provide more revenues by closing tax loopholes. We also start to rein in government spending and continue to do that. The House-passed budget has fewer of those investments. It does not close the loopholes in our Tax Code. That is what we have to negotiate between Democrats and Republicans. That is what we need to do. But the first order of business is to reopen government—all of it—and pay our bills, and then let's sit down and negotiate. We cannot wait. We must have government open.

I quoted before from the Baltimore Sun and the paper's analogy of negotiations. It is difficult when this is all one-sided. As Sunpapers said:

> 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.

Our message is clear to House Speaker BOEHNER: Put down the gun. Put it down. Open government. Allow us to pay our bills. And, yes, we want to sit down and work out our differences. Let the democratic process proceed. Open government, pay our bills, and then let's negotiate a fair and comprehensive agreement on the budget.

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

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Ms. LANDRIEU. 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. LANDRIEU. Mr. President, I would like to speak for about 10 minutes. I understand there may be other Senators coming to the floor. I wanted to express my concerns about a few issues that are really important to the people of Louisiana.

I understand that the meeting with the President and the Republicans in the Senate—our friends—has just concluded. I am hoping there will be some positive steps forward from that meeting so we can open this government, remove the threat of an economic collapse, and get to the bargaining table to which we have literally been trying to achieve for 6 months. We voted 21 times in the Senate to get to the negotiating table in the budget conference, which is the first starting point to agree on numbers and revenues and spending limits.

As an appropriator—I would know this as chair of the Appropriations Committee—the next step in regular order is for each individual committee to negotiate with our Republican counterparts about how we allocate the money given to us through that budget process.

None of that has been able to happen—none. It is not because Democrats have been unwilling to go to the negotiating table, but because some friends on the other side have taken hostage innocents—Federal employees, the economy generally—and demanded things that are way beyond their ability to use their political leverage. So instead of using it correctly, they have held innocent hostages. It is very troubling, and I think it is very wrong. Hopefully, we are going to find a way forward.

FLOOD INSURANCE

I wanted to spend my time this afternoon talking about what I am hearing from the people in Louisiana, such as: Could you all get back to work because we have some serious problems that need to be solved. One of the problems—Mr. President, maybe your State is affected by this because the Presiding Officer has a coastal area, as do we—is fixing this very broken flood insurance system. In our State it is referred to as Biggert-Waters. It was named after the two Members of Congress who led this ''reform effort.''

MAXINE WATERS has subsequently completely disassociated herself with the legislation and said it was not the right thing to do. She has made several public statements. She has urged, as the leader in the House, with Republicans and Democrats, to get this fixed.

For the people of Louisiana, this is our No. 1 problem and challenge right now because a year and a half ago the Federal Government passed a law that was supposed to cure something. But the cure is worse than the disease. The disease was we had a flood insurance program that spent more money than it had taken in. And, yes, premiums were probably too low to sustain the program, but it was giving people at least some option and hope when they had a flood, so they could get some of the equity in their home protected and recovered.

This bill came along and was never debated on the Senate floor. It was

stuck in a conference committee report, and now it is being implemented, and it is a disaster. We have 400,000 flood insurance policies in Louisiana, Texas has 700,000, Florida has over 2 million, Pennsylvania has over 75,000, and Virginia probably has between 40,000 and 50,000. I don't have the list in front of me.

The problem is that the law that passed had stated one goal: to make the program sustainable. But it left out an equally important aspect: to make it affordable. You can sustain a program all day long, but if nobody can afford to be in it, A, how long will it sustain itself? Not long at all. And, B, we are hurting the people we are trying to help the most.

A group of us have been working for quite some time on fixing this. These new regulations went into effect on October 1. We are going on 11 or 12 days—I forget the date, but we are past October 1. These new rates have gone into effect, and some people are seeing rates quadruple—or tenfold. Some of these rates are going up from $300 a year to $3,000. In some cases we have heard $1,500 to $30,000. I am not exaggerating or making this up. This is all in the record.

We have a way to fix it. The good news I wanted to share on the floor today is that we had 24 Senators, Republicans and Democrats, come together this week and send a ''dear colleague'' letter to our leadership—to the Republican leadership and the House leadership—to say that we are very close to a compromise that will do two things: It will give us time to get the affordability study that was supposed to be done actually done. It will allow FEMA to potentially—with some oversight from Congress—set rates that would keep the program functioning but not jeopardize people's equity in their homes.

It would, of course, remove the automatic trigger provision that has been very detrimental in the law, which basically says: The rates will stay low, but the minute people put a house up for sale or sell a house, whatever grandfathered rate they had is gone. And it doesn't go up 25 percent a year, it goes up to where it should be. In some cases that is a move from $1,000 a year to $30,000 a year. It makes their house worthless, and that is what is happening to thousands of people. They have lost equity in their home. It is one of many problems this Congress has to fix. We can't fix any of them if we can't get back to work. We need the officials that have been laid off at FEMA to go back to work.

One point I want to make today is let's find a way forward to negotiate. I hope part of the negotiation could potentially be a fix to Biggert-Waters. I want to thank Senator MERKLEY from Oregon, Senator MENENDEZ from New Jersey, Senator WICKER from Mississippi, and Senator VITTER from Louisiana. Senator ISAKSON has been giving us some good input. I want to thank the realtors and the bankers because they realized that we made a mistake and that the law we passed was not a good one. Sometimes that happens.

We have to fix it. We don't have to fix the whole of it, but we are working on some pieces that must be amended so that it accomplishes the goal of having a program and so that taxpayers do not have to pick up a big tab every year. It will allow real estate markets to function, people to be able to retain equity in their home, and to pay their fair share. It will also encourage smart growth and development.

Also—and very importantly, which is part of the problem with Biggert-Waters—the bill we are trying to fix didn't even recognize levees. I don't know if the Presiding Officer has a lot of levees in Virginia, but we have to have them in Louisiana because we are below sea level. We have been that way for 300 years. We moved there below sea level. We had to be there to create the Port of New Orleans.

Thomas Jefferson leveraged the whole Federal Treasury to buy us for 3 cents an acre, if I remember correctly—the bulk of 19 States. It was the greatest real estate purchase in the history of our country. Alaska may argue, but we think the Louisiana Territory is equally as valuable, if not more so, and our State is proud to carry that name. People understand the history of this.

Why would Thomas Jefferson leverage the whole Treasury of the United States to buy something that was not worthwhile. Of course it is worthwhile. It was worthwhile then, and it is worthwhile now.

People live there because we run the biggest port system in the world, and we need to continue to live there with all of the industries—oil and gas, and fisheries, et cetera.

This Biggert-Waters bill undermines our region's ability to function. We produce 17 percent of the GDP for the country, so this is not a small parochial issue to the Southern States: Texas, Louisiana, Alabama, Mississippi, et cetera—but it also affects interior states. We have seen what happened in Colorado. We have seen what happened to the east coast States, with New Jersey, New York, Massachusetts, et cetera.

Let's get to the negotiating table. Let's work together, as we know we can, and let's put on the top of that agenda a potential fix for Biggert-Waters.

Again, I thank my colleagues for working so cordially together even in this difficult time.

Let me move to another subject for a minute and put into the RECORD, in the event that my colleagues—do I have to ask for an additional 3 minutes?

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

Ms. LANDRIEU. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent to have printed in the RECORD this letter that I received. I think all of the Members received this letter that was addressed to Senator REID, Senator MCCONNELL, Speaker BOEHNER, and Representative PELOSI from the National Governors Association that came yesterday.

Governor Mary Fallin and Governor John Hickenlooper signed the letter on behalf of all the Governors, and it says:

> The nation's governors urge Congress and the Administration to quickly reopen the federal government.
>
> The fiscal health of states is inextricably linked to the fiscal stability of the federal government, and while state economies have improved, a failure by our national government to secure a solution to the current government budget issues undermines our states' recovery and endangers the U.S. economy.

It goes on to say:

> States have thus far managed to avoid closing or suspending most programs and services by using carry-over funds or, in some cases, by using state spending to fill in missing federal dollars. However, states are not in the position to be the bank for the federal government.

As a former Governor, the Presiding Officer understands this. I was a former Treasurer. I most certainly understand that the budget of Louisiana is almost 70 percent Federal funding. So when the Federal Government cuts off that funding, it starts to affect the way States—and the 300-plus cities in my State—operate, and it affects our private sector partners that work with us to provide State-level and community services. It affects nonprofits such as Catholic Charities, who are running some of our low-income housing, our justice programs in some of our neighborhoods and communities.

This shutdown is just bad. It is bad all around. It should not have happened. We need to get this government open and operating, which will help our States and their economic recovery plans to start focusing on fixing things. We need to fix things like Biggert-Waters and repeal that old insurance reform bill so we can find a better way forward.

I might also mention two other things quickly. What is also happening in our State today—I got news this morning—is that permitting in the Gulf of Mexico for offshore oil and gas drilling is now shut down. Right at the time when America is about to overtake Russia as the largest domestic producer of gas and oil, right when we are about to take first place, the Republican tea party has shut the government down and shut down permitting in the gulf.

Ever since the Deepwater Horizon, we have been fighting to get that back up and going. Now we find it has been shut down again. The people I represent cannot take another shutdown of permitting.

We have levees to build. We have a big problem in our river parishes, as we call them, along Lake Pontchartrain. We have Morganza to the gulf, which is an important levee project for Houma, which is one of the centers for oil and

gas production. This not only helps the people of Houma and Terrebonne Parish, but it helps the whole region and the whole country. It is sort of like a little Houston, if you will. Houma is like a little Houston. We don't have all of the corporate structures, but we have all of the know-how, the goods and services, the providers, the boats, the planes, the ships, and the helicopters. They might have the gleaming office towers in Houston, but we have a lot of the hard workers in Houma.

The levee that protects them and their homes is now basically—the plans for it are shut down along with this tea party shutdown.

NATIONAL GOVERNORS ASSOCIATION,
Washington, DC, October 10, 2013.

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

DEAR MAJORITY LEADER REID, SENATOR MCCONNELL, SPEAKER BOEHNER, AND REPRESENTATIVE PELOSI: The nation's governors urge Congress and the Administration to quickly reopen the federal government.

The fiscal health of states is inextricably linked to the fiscal stability of the federal government, and while state economies have improved, a failure by our national government to secure a solution to the current budget issues undermines our states' recovery and endangers the U.S. economy.

States have thus far managed to avoid closing or suspending most programs and services by using carryover funds or, in some cases, by using state spending to fill in for missing federal dollars. However, states are not in a position to be the bank for the federal government. As this impasse continues, we call on Congress and the Administration to commit to fully reimbursing states and territories for the federal expenses they absorb during the shutdown. These expenses include funding for programs, state employees who are paid through federal funds and any other outlays that would normally have been supported by federal funds.

As governors, our citizens expect us to work together to balance our budgets and make government work. We will do whatever we can to serve our citizens and deliver the core services they need and expect during this uncertain time. In return, we ask our federal partners to quickly find a path forward that reimburses states for incurred federal expenses; restores certainty in the federal budget process; creates long-term stability; and strengthens the fiscal condition of the nation for the benefit of all citizens.

Sincerely,

Governor MARY FALLIN.
Governor JOHN HICKENLOOPER.

It is time to open our government. It is time to get back to work, solve real problems, and negotiate in good faith without taking innocent hostages. There are too many innocents being harmed, whether it is children with cancer, whether it is businesspeople who have put everything on the line for their business and through no fault of their own now have no customers coming in the front door and can't pay their note—and the banks aren't going to wait until we get our act together.

I thank the Presiding Officer. I wanted to, if I could, take 1 more minute to speak on behalf of the people who don't have a Senator here; that is, the District of Columbia.

The District of Columbia is technically not a part of the Federal Government. They are not an agency of the Federal Government. They are not a department of the Federal Government. The District of Columbia is the district in which the Federal Government resides. Contrary to popular belief, they raise most of their money through their own tax revenue generated—about 75 percent local. Twenty-five percent of the budget of the District of Columbia—which has about 750,000 people, which is a pretty big city as cities go—comes from the people who live here. They have been caught up as if they were an agency of the Federal Government.

Let me argue on their behalf to my colleagues and suggest that they are a group of innocents—a city. Baltimore's budget is not shut down, Richmond's budget is not shut down, New Orleans' budget is not shut down, Chicago's budget is not shut down, New York's budget is not shut down, San Francisco's budget is not shut down, but the DC government is shut down because of this threat. They have gotten caught up. They should be let go, and we can then negotiate on all other things.

I think the President understands this. I know majority leader HARRY REID understands this. I am hoping minority leader MITCH MCCONNELL will give his support so this can be done in a bipartisan way, recognizing this is the Nation's Capital—not asking for any special preference for them, just allowing them to use their own money and operate their own city while we try to figure out how to get the rest of the government open and operating. I hope we can do that today. We have been working across the aisle.

I thank Congresswoman ELEANOR HOLMES NORTON for her leadership. The District of Columbia does not have Senators, so a few of us have to stand and speak for the people of the District, and I am happy to try to do that on occasion when I, of course, believe strongly in what they are asking.

I thank the Chair.

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.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. DONNELLY). The Senator from Vermont.

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

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

Mr. SANDERS. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent to speak for up to 20 minutes.

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

Mr. SANDERS. Mr. President, it is no secret to anybody that the American people are frustrated and they are disgusted with what is going on in Washington.

The Presiding Officer may have seen The Onion magazine, the satirical magazine that ran a story which says that at a time when 5 percent of the American people approve of what is going on in Congress, The Onion reported psychiatrists are deeply worried about the mental health of 5 percent of the American public. In other words, all over this country, regardless of political persuasion, people literally cannot understand what is going on, and they have every reason to be outraged and frustrated because so many people today are being hurt.

We can disagree about the Affordable Care Act. We as a nation can disagree about how we address Social Security, Medicare, Medicaid, global warming, or any other issue out there. But what should not be happening is that this government and the American people should not be held hostage by an extreme right wing of the Republican Party saying: Well, yeah, we lost the election by 5 million votes, we lost two seats in the Senate, we lost seats in the House, but nonetheless, unless we get the agenda we campaigned on and lost, we are going to shut down the Federal Government. We are going to punish millions of Federal employees and tens of millions of taxpayers who paid for Federal services. Also, for the first time in the history of the United States of America, we are not going to pay our bills and as a result perhaps thrust the American financial system and the world's financial system into a horrendous recession.

What the American people are saying over and over, regardless of political persuasion, is, yes, we can disagree on issues; no, we cannot bring the U.S. Government to a halt and default on our payments because a particular faction disagrees on certain legislation.

Interestingly enough, a couple of days ago I gathered that we had to bring the government to a halt and that we had to not pay our bills and bring the world's financial system into crisis because of the horrors of ObamaCare, the Affordable Care Act. That was the reason. Well, 2 days have come and gone and guess what. It is not the Affordable Care Act. That is no longer being discussed. Today, I gather—I haven't seen the news in the last 15 minutes, but the last I heard the reason we are shutting down the government and threatening not to pay our bills is that we are spending too much money and the deficit is too high. I gather that is the latest reason.

Clearly, a deficit of $700 billion and a debt of $16.7 trillion is too much, but let's make a couple of points about that issue.

First, in the last 3 years we have cut the deficit in half. A few years ago it

was $1.4 trillion, and today it is $700 billion. That is not an insignificant effort.

Second, and perhaps most important, we have to understand how we got to where we are in terms of the debt and in terms of the deficit. Do we have a large deficit because we are spending too much on Social Security? Well, actually not because Social Security is independently funded through the payroll tax and hasn't added one nickel to the deficit. So it is not Social Security. We will talk about Medicare and Medicaid in a moment. But the reason we have seen a spike in the deficit in recent years has to do with the fact that many of my deficit hawk Republican friends—and some Democrats—voted for the war in Iraq and Afghanistan, but they forgot to pay for that war—just a slip; they just forgot about it—and those wars are going to cost between $3 trillion and $6 trillion. So I want everyone to remember that the great deficit hawks who are busy trying to cut every program that working families in this country need forgot to pay for wars in Iraq and Afghanistan that will cost between $3 trillion and $6 trillion.

The third issue is that our great deficit hawks had no problem during the Bush era giving huge tax breaks to the wealthiest people in this country.

Fourth, of course, is that as a result of deregulation and greed and recklessness and illegal behavior, Wall Street brought us to a financial collapse and a recession, with the result that revenue substantially declined.

I raise those issues, giving a little bit of history about how we got into the deficit today, because now, I guess, Congressman RYAN and others have decided that the reason we shut down the government is not because of ObamaCare, it is because there is too much spending, and that translates into their desire to cut Social Security, Medicare, Medicaid, and to cut other vitally important programs for the middle-class and working families of this country.

Before we talk about the pain that would be caused by making savage cuts in Social Security, Medicare, and Medicaid, it is important to put this discussion in a broader context. If we go out to the American people and ask people in Virginia and people in Vermont and people all over this country and if we look at virtually every single poll that has been done in recent years asking the American people what they consider to be the most important issues facing them, do we know what they say? They say the deficit is important, but what is much more important is the issue of high unemployment and the economy in general. That is what every single poll shows. And the American people are right.

The deficit is important. What is even more important is addressing the reality that almost 14 percent of our workforce—if we count those people who have given up looking for work and are working part time, almost 14 percent of our workforce today is unemployed. What the American people are saying to Congress is create jobs, deal with unemployment.

The other issue out there that all across this country people are deeply worried about is that most of the new jobs being created—and this has been the case for a number of years now—most of the jobs being created are part-time, low-wage jobs.

How is somebody supposed to survive working for $10 an hour and getting 25 hours of work a week? You cannot do it, and we are seeing more and more of those types of jobs in the economy—by the way, jobs that provide little or no benefits.

What the American people are saying is raise the minimum wage. I cannot remember what the last poll was, but surely more than 70 percent of the American people have said: A minimum wage of $7.25 an hour is a starvation wage. We need to raise the minimum wage.

Anybody who has kids in college today understands it is harder and harder for working-class and middle-class families to send their kids to college. The American people are saying to us: Do something. You tell us what is true—that it is hard to make it into the middle class unless kids have a college education. Well, do something to make college affordable. Do not have my kid leaving college or graduate school $50,000 in debt or $80,000 in debt. Do something about that.

Anybody who drives anywhere in America, in Vermont or in Indiana or anyplace else, understands that our infrastructure—our roads, our bridges, wastewater plants, water plants, our rail system—is deteriorating rapidly, and they say: Do something about the infrastructure.

As global warming is perceived as more and more of a crisis, people are telling us: Do something about energy efficiency. Why are we emitting greenhouse gas emissions into the air when we can be a much more energy-efficient country?

On and on it goes. The American people are hurting, and they want us to address their problems.

The other point that needs to be made is that when we talk about the financial and economic problems facing this country, it is terribly important to take an overview of what is going on in the economy in general. There is no debate about this: The middle class in America today is disappearing. Median family income today is less than it was 24 years ago. Despite all of the increase in productivity and technology, median family income is less today than it was 24 years ago. That is rather extraordinary.

We have 46.5 million people in this country living in poverty—more than at any time in the history of this country; 22.5 percent of our kids live in poverty. That is the highest rate of childhood poverty in the industrialized world. Poverty among senior citizens is increasing. So we have major economic challenges that we face.

Our Republican friends, who a few days ago were telling us they had to shut down the government and threaten not to pay our bills because of the horrors of ObamaCare, now apparently are no longer concerned about ObamaCare, and they are now concerned about the national debt and they are concerned about our spending.

Well, this is what I want to say: If we want to have a conversation or a conference or a discussion or a special committee—call it whatever you want—we cannot just look at cutting Social Security, Medicare, and Medicaid, as Congressman RYAN and many others want. We have to put into that discussion how it happens that one out of four major corporations in this country does not pay a nickel in Federal income taxes.

Do you think that should be part of the discussion? I think it should be. We have to put into that discussion how it happens that corporate America is putting their money in the Cayman Islands and in other tax havens and avoiding paying tens and tens of billions of dollars in Federal taxes. Do we need that in the discussion? I think we do. If you are going to talk about a conference on the economy, the conference must include the need to create millions of jobs, it must include the need to raise the minimum wage, it must include pay equity so that women get the same wages men get for the work they are doing, and it must include rebuilding our infrastructure.

This discussion on the economy cannot simply happen on Republican terms. We live in a country in which the middle class is in rapid decline while the wealthiest people and the largest corporations are doing phenomenally well. Any discussion we have—after we reopen the government, after we pay our bills—has to include that important reality. We cannot and we must not—for moral and economic reasons—balance the budget on the backs of the elderly, the children, the sick, and low-income people. The wealthiest people and the largest corporations have to get involved, have to pay their fair share of taxes, and we have to create the millions of jobs this country desperately needs.

As I see the constantly changing agenda on the part of my Republican colleagues as to why they have shut down the government, I want to make it clear that the first thing that has to happen is they have to understand this government has to be reopened, and it has to be reopened with a strong budget that lasts for the rest of this fiscal year. And we have to pay our debts so this country and the entire global economy does not descend into financial chaos. We have to do that, and if Mr. BOEHNER were to give the Members of the House of Representatives a vote on that issue today, I expect it would win.

But as we go forward and we discuss broader issues, as we should, the agenda cannot simply be the agenda of the Republican candidates for President and Vice President who lost by 5 million votes. The agenda has to be what the American people want, and that is expanding the middle class, creating jobs, raising wages, rebuilding our infrastructure, pay equity, and making college affordable. Those are the issues that have to be on the agenda as well.

With that, I yield the floor.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The bill clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

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

THE FARM BILL

Mr. LEAHY. Mr. President, my friends in Vermont watch what is going on, and it is hard to explain it to them—especially people who are hard working, who rely one way or the other on government programs and they do not come through.

It was in the press today about the polls, saying how angry people are at the small group in the other body who has held things up. And I understand that. It is probably difficult for those people, who work hard every single day, pay their bills, trust in their government, and then see what is happening.

I appreciated the meeting with the President yesterday. The distinguished Presiding Officer was there. I know how much President Obama wants to have the shutdown end, have people go back to work, have the United States pay its bills. And I agree with him. I think the vast majority of Americans agree with him. Now he has to get a tiny minority in the Congress to agree with him. It is unfortunate—it is unfortunate—that they do not because ultimately we should be serving the best interests of our country, not what might work at a tea party rally or a fundraiser to get one's face on television.

I will give an example. When September 30 came and went, it was not just the Federal Government that shut down. The farm bill extension also expired. I can speak to this with some sense of knowledge of how that works. I have been able to serve on the Senate Agriculture Committee for 38 years. I have served as the chair of it. We have a superb chair now in DEBBIE STABENOW. But I have seen both Republicans and Democrats in that committee traditionally over the years come together, work closely together.

I think of two people who were nominees of their parties for President who were miles apart in political philosophy—Senator George McGovern, a Democrat, and Senator Bob Dole, a Republican; one a liberal Democrat, the other a conservative Republican—but on the farm bill, on the nutrition programs, they worked closely together for what was best for America, what was best for the country.

We passed an excellent farm bill, a bipartisan farm bill in this body, in the Senate. But because the other body would not take it up and either pass it or vote to improve it, the farm bill extension expired. This one-two punch of political reality is needlessly harming our Nation. It is leaving farmers with great uncertainty about the future of vital farm programs, all the while with no staff at USDA to answer farmers' questions.

I know the distinguished Presiding Officer has a lot of agriculture in his State. His State is much larger than mine. But we also have a lot of agriculture in the State of Vermont.

There is a basic essential responsibility of Congress to fund the government. Why has that been ignored? Regular business is replaced by bumper-sticker politics. This shutdown is and was entirely avoidable. It is perpetuated by the reckless leadership of the House that is willing to imperil the economy and negatively impact every single American family.

They are not asking for compromise. Compromise has already happened here in the Senate. We conceded to the House terms. We adopted and leader HARRY REID had to fight to get the votes to give the House what they had asked for by adopting an appropriations bill at the funding level the House wanted, which maintains sequestration.

But even though he had been told by the House leadership that would get us back, that would have the government stay open, after we did it they said: Oops, we changed our mind. They moved the goalposts again.

You cannot run government like that. That is by whim. That is not by commitment. That is by changing your views by the moment. It is not by keeping your word. Anyone claiming that the Senate has been unwilling to compromise has conveniently ignored the fact that the Senate came forward and passed a continuing resolution at the level the House requested.

So I, like the American people, certainly like my fellow Vermonters, am tired of having a political process obstructed. It is time to reopen the government for business. Stop the silly season. Stop the games. Stop rushing to the TV cameras to get your face on there and say: I am the only person serving America, as I try to destroy America.

Let's reopen. For the farmers in Vermont who have found their local USDA office dark, they know the shutdown is even more troubling, because it has diverted attention from the now-expired farm bill. This manufactured crisis is making it next to impossible to reach compromise on this important agriculture, rural development, and nutrition legislation.

The bipartisan Senate farm bill would provide $25 billion in savings. This is a bill both Republicans and Democrats voted for in the Agriculture Committee and on this floor—$25 billion in savings that could be applied toward reducing the federal deficit.

But no; instead, the House forced us into the shutdown, which is costing the Federal Government hundreds of millions of dollars a day, $1.6 billion a week, for nothing. So they can go on television and say: Look at us. Rally to us because we are standing up for America.

No, you are costing American taxpayers $1.6 billion a week. That is straight to the taxpayers. But more and more of the damage of the government shutdown is spreading across the Nation. In every city and every community, with each passing day, the State governments, local governments feel the pinch and may go bankrupt.

We heard last week that the CME Group, the world's largest futures exchange, informed their customers that the shutdown and USDA furloughs could affect dairy and livestock contracts. While much of Wall Street is worried they will not have the Bureau of Labor Statistics employment numbers this month, on Main Street and our Nation's farms, our agriculture businesses, the concerns are growing about missing agriculture pricing information that impacts dairy and livestock futures contracts and options for milk, cheese, butter, and other dairy products. That may sound esoteric to some, but if you are one of those farmers who gets up before dawn, works hard all day long, until after dark, 7 days a week, paying your bills, paying your mortgage, being an integral part of the community, this is real. The farmers are doing their work and their job. We ought to do ours.

Let me give you an example of the uncertainty the shutdown is imposing on farmers and businesses from coast to coast. Vermont's own Cabot Creamery Cooperative, which makes some of Vermont's award-winning cheeses, could be hit by the missing pricing information. In recent years, Cabot, being good business people, has increased the use of futures contracts as an active part of its risk management effort. It makes sense. We have seen many farmers and food companies and dairy cooperatives across the country do the same after the disastrous collapse in milk prices in 2009.

But the USDA staff is furloughed, and farmers and businesses like Cabot can no longer have a daily or weekly report of cash prices for agriculture products. These are the benchmarks of these futures contracts that are used to hedge against risk and big price swings.

To make matters worse, the entire USDA Web site is shut down, keeping farmers from seeing and using previous agriculture reports from the agency. These are the same people who are working long hours. They are obeying the rules. They are doing what is expected of them. But suddenly they are

having their legs taken out from under them.

I have heard from the Vermont Economic Development Authority. We call it VEDA. It is Vermont's statewide economic development finance lender. They are focused on supporting Vermont industrial, commercial, and agriculture enterprises. Nearly their entire agricultural portfolio, $70 million—probably not much in some States, but a lot in my little State—intersects in some way with USDA. Their ability to service current loans and work on new agriculture loans is quickly freezing up. The list is growing for the number of customers that are going to be locked out in the cold because the shutdown is quickly causing the whole agricultural lending scene to seize up.

I am hearing from our apple growers in Vermont. We have a very short harvest this time of the year in Vermont. Fall harvest, and then it snows. They are in the middle of a fantastic, long-awaited harvest. They have to keep one eye on the weather forecast on how their crops are doing, and the other on the Department of Labor to ensure that their apple harvest workforce, which is a seasonal workforce, will actually be there.

Many of our farms use the Federal H–2A temporary worker program. I am starting to hear a litany of problems due to the tea party shutdown of the Federal Government. Farmers are unable to get their workers required Social Security numbers, because the Social Security Administration is not issuing new numbers and cards during the shutdown—during the tea party shutdown.

These farmers are Republicans, Democrats, Independents. They do not want to play politics. They want to play by the rules. They cannot understand why the tea party is playing politics with their business. It is resulting in farmers needing to pay huge amounts of backup withholding taxes, which they otherwise would not need to do if their workers would be able to acquire Social Security numbers.

Farmers needing new H–2A workers are being stymied in the application process since the Department of Labor is not administering the necessary parts of that process thanks to the artificial, made-in-Congress, tea party shutdown. The ripple effects of the shutdown are spreading ominously outward across Vermont and every other State.

I spoke about one aspect of agriculture. My colleagues represent all parts of this country and could talk about a whole lot of other aspects of agriculture. That is just one multi-multi-multibillion dollar industry across this country that is being hurt and ultimately being devastated. Some will go out of business, all because of the tea party shutdown.

All these problems could be solved right now. They can be solved this afternoon. So let's stop this shameful politicking. The House should end the shutdown. Vote on the Senate-passed continuing resolution. After all, it has the numbers the House asked for. All they have to do is keep their word. We in the Senate did. Now it is time for them to.

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. STABENOW. 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. STABENOW. Mr. President, there are two issues wrapped together right now that are causing dire consequences for people all across the country. The first, as we know and as we have been debating, is the government shutdown and all that has happened in terms of people being hurt, jobs being lost, small businesses not being able to get the loans they need, people not being able to complete their mortgage requirements to get the homes they want, the concerns about health and safety and all of the other issues, children, what is happening to so many people, senior citizens, veterans, and so on—very, very serious.

This is the 11th day of the government shutdown that is costing us jobs, slowing the economy, and hurting families all across the country. It is an absolute drag on the economy, on our markets and on, frankly, America's standing in the world, which we should all be concerned about right now.

It is, frankly, an embarrassment that in the greatest, wealthiest country in the world our government is shut down while a small minority tries to score political points. Unfortunately, that is what has been happening.

The second issue is also very important; that is, the lapse of a farm bill, the agriculture and food policy bill in this country. The farm bill has been actually expired for 376 days—376 days—because it ended on September 30 of 2012.

Last January there was a partial extension that extended subsidies that we all said should be eliminated as it did not include reforms and did not include deficit reduction, but there was a partial extension until September 30 and that has also lapsed.

I know the distinguished Presiding Officer from Indiana, who is a member of my committee, fights very hard for Indiana. I am grateful he is a member of our committee. I know the Senator understands and shares my tremendous concern and urgency, both about the government shutdown and that we are seeing agricultural programs and rural economic development shut down because we don't have a farm bill.

Nowhere is this felt more strongly now than in South Dakota. The Presiding Officer and I are not from South Dakota, but we have colleagues in the Senate who have been speaking on the floor. I have talked to the Senators from South Dakota who are deeply concerned, as well as the Senators from North Dakota.

In South Dakota last Friday, October 4, an early autumn blizzard killed an estimated 75,000 head of cattle. This is one of the many pictures of what is happening as a result of this blizzard. Many producers lost half of their entire herd. Keep in mind that many thousands of these cows would have produced calves in the spring. These losses are huge for ranchers and families and will be felt for many years to come. These cattle ranchers and their families have no safety net, zero safety net. They don't receive direct payment subsidies. They now have zero safety net. They only had livestock disaster plans which expired on October 1, 2011, 741 days ago. Their losses are expected to reach into the tens of millions of dollars.

Our Senate farm bill, which we passed with strong bipartisan majorities last year and this year—we have actually done it twice—includes permanent livestock disaster assistance for these ranchers' families to make sure ranchers, such as those in South Dakota, don't go bankrupt, which is what is going to happen if we don't get this farm bill in place as soon as possible.

But there is no farm bill. Even if there were, those farmers wouldn't be able to get help because the farmers can't document their losses or get the answers they need from the Farm Service Agency offices because they are closed due to the shutdown.

These ranchers, such as many other ranchers across the country, are getting a one-two punch by not being able to go to their local FSA office to get the help they need, while at the same time not having the long-term certainty of agricultural policy and a safety net when there is a catastrophe.

Three things have come together to make this a major disaster for ranchers, such as the need for a farm bill with livestock disaster assistance, which we have. We have a great livestock disaster assistance program in our bill.

The good news is the House has one as well. If we can get a farm bill done, which could be done any day—we are willing to be a part of any agreement anyone does—and we will be able to help those South Dakota ranchers. Of the three items, one is that we don't yet have the final farm bill, even though the Senate, on a bipartisan basis, has done its job twice.

Secondly, we have a government shutdown that is not allowing these ranchers to get the help they need.

Thirdly, we have a blizzard.

Two out of three of these are self-inflicted. Think about it. Because there is no farm bill, because there is a government shutdown, somewhere ranchers are going to lose everything—their homes, their land, everything—because

of the freak blizzard in early October. We can debate the larger issues around that as well.

The irony is those ranchers in South Dakota have 3 days under the law to dispose of their dead cattle. They were just hit by blizzard, suffered unbelievable losses, and they have 3 days to clean it up. They don't get an extension. They can't kick the can down the road. They can't wait forever either. They can't wait any longer for us to get a farm bill done. This needs to be done right now. If there is the political will to do it and there is support from the Speaker to do it, we can get this done quickly.

Those cattle ranchers aren't alone. Producers in the Midwest, the Northwest, the West, and much of the South went through one of the worst droughts in a generation last summer. Many producers sold off most of their herds because there wasn't the grass for the cattle to graze on. Feed was scarce and expensive. As a result, cattle inventories dropped to their lowest levels in five decades, 50 years. For all of us who enjoy eating meat, we are seeing the consequences of the lowest level in five decades. Farmers all across the country suffered from this drought. In addition, fruit growers from my State suffered heavy losses last year from an early spring followed by a late frost, and our cherry growers were some of the hardest hit. In fact, they were virtually wiped out. Their crop was wiped out last year. They also don't have a safety net. Similar to ranchers, they aren't eligible for direct payment subsidies and they weren't able to get any crop insurance either.

We worked hard in this farm bill to make sure there were risk management tools, not only subsidies because a farmer grows something. As taxpayers, we can't afford to do that. It is not the right thing to do. We have a deficit we have to address, and it makes no sense. We work hard to make sure the risk management tools are available to help farmers and ranchers manage their risk when there is a disaster such as South Dakota, but there is no help until we get the farm bill signed into law.

For all the men and women, all the families—and the vast majority we are talking about are middle-class families—small farmers, medium-sized farmers who are working hard from sunrise to sunset, day-in and day-out with the riskiest business in the world, they can't kick the can down the road. When the crop is ready to be harvested, they have to do it.

They are looking at us and saying: Get the job done. Get the farm bill done now.

All of those middle-class families and 16 million people in this country have jobs because of agriculture. They are saying we have waited long enough. How many disasters have to happen without the right tools before this gets done? With 16 million people, the biggest bill we are going to pass this year is the farm bill. This is for rural economic development, energy, food-related industries, conservation efforts, our help for people who are caught up in their own personal economic disasters, which is so critical, and they are all counting on us.

The men and women who are working hard to bring in the harvest are counting on us to get this done. We did a farm bill. I am grateful to leaders on both sides of the aisle who came together. That is how I know we can stop this shutdown and pay our bills because we have done things together in the Senate. We need our colleagues in the House to be willing to step in and do the same.

People have waited long enough. It is time to get it done, and it is time to get it done now.

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

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The bill clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

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

Mr. COATS. Mr. President, I have been on this floor many times over the past 2½ years, and here we are again, talking about yet another fiscal cliff, another drama, another soap opera playing out before us.

The American people are wondering what in the world is going on down there in Washington? How come we can't get resolution to some of these problems? Why can't we remove the dark cloud of uncertainty about the fiscal future of this country? It is stifling economic growth.

We are growing at an anemic 4-to-5-year rate of less than 1 percent. That does not put people back to work. That does not solve our unemployment problem. It only makes it worse. That does not revive an economy. Even with all the new discoveries in energy and the lower cost of manufacturing and more competitiveness, we have not revived the economy for the American people—whether they have just graduated from school with a degree and can't find a job except at maybe a fast-food restaurant, or whether they are a middle-aged man or woman who had their hours cut back, or they have been laid off; whether it is a family trying to save for their children's education—people are hurting all the way up and down the line and it is frustrating. It is frustrating for all of us.

It is particularly frustrating for the people I represent in Indiana, and I think for all Americans, to watch the dysfunction taking place in Washington, this inability to come together to find a solution to our problems, and this careening from cliff to cliff, debt crisis to debt crisis; with people on edge and markets on edge, up 300 1 day and down 250 the next, waiting for any glimmer of hope for some solution—or, reacting with gloom and doom if we fail to come forward with a solution.

Now we have a government shutdown; now the clock is ticking toward the debt limit expiration, and we have not yet come to any resolution or solution to these problems. People are sick and tired of this broken process here in Washington, DC. I am sick and tired of it. My colleagues are sick and tired of it. Yet we have not been able to find a solution that addresses the problem.

Republicans just came from a constructive 2-hour meeting at the White House with the President, the Vice President, and the Secretary of Treasury. It is a step forward. It is not a Neil Armstrong step forward because it is not a giant leap for mankind. It is a baby step forward. And it is an important first step forward because unless you come to the table to negotiate, unless you are willing to open up where you are in the same room together sharing your concepts, your thoughts, and your concerns, you can't even begin to find a solution. So this was a step in the right direction.

The President met with House Republican Members yesterday and Senate Republican Members today. Our meeting was candid and transparent. Most everybody was able to say what was on their mind and talk about possible solutions.

I wish I could say we walked out and stood together, as has been done before in solving these types of problems between Presidents and Members of the leadership in both the House and the Senate. I wish I could say we were able to do that, but we weren't. But going from ''I will not negotiate, period, don't even bother to even think about it,'' to, ''Let's sit down and at least talk this through and see if we can come to a resolution'' is a step forward. So I take some hope from that.

I made the decision in early 2010 to come back to the Senate to try and solve what I thought were some of the most fundamental issues affecting the future of this country that perhaps we faced in a long time; namely, this continued deficit spending and plunge into debt, this accumulation of a debt that is so jeopardizing our future and our children's future and the future of America.

The passage of ObamaCare by one party without any bipartisan support, jammed through the Congress by a waiver of the rules, has turned into a nightmare—a nightmare of implementation. It is part of the fiscal problem. I didn't come here today to necessarily talk about that. I have been here before talking many times about what I think we need to do to address our health care problems—clearly in a different way than the Affordable Care Act.

We see unfolding before our eyes yet another dysfunctional piece of legislation that can't even be implemented, even though the party that passed this law has had 3½ years to implement it.

We hit the October 1 date when people can start to enroll, and the systems aren't even up and ready. Now if this law had been in effect for 3 or 6 months, we could say they rushed it. It has been 3½ years—actually 3¾ years, and they still don't have it right. There still are major questions. This is an issue we must continue to deal with. We haven't been successful so far because we have not gotten any bipartisan support to make any significant reforms. That is part of our fiscal issue, and that fiscal issue is eating up the promise of America which has been given to every generation in the history of this country, and stands ready to be denied to the next generation and succeeding generations because of our inability to summon the political will to do what we all know we need to do.

We cannot keep spending more than we take in. We cannot keep borrowing money to cover that difference. We have seen in just the last 4½ years of this administration a staggering increase in the amount of debt we have accumulated—from just a little over $10 trillion to now $17 trillion in the space of one administration, with 3 more years to go. It is unsustainable. I doubt there is a Member of this body—Republican or Democrat, liberal or conservative—who could simply ignore it and say this is not a problem. It is a huge problem. Every day, every week, every month, every year we postpone it, the problem becomes worse.

We have made effort after effort—bipartisan effort, Simpson-Bowles, Domenici-Rivlin, laying out plans as to how to address this over a period of time to put us on a path to solvency, the Gang of 6, all the efforts of a Republican, SAXBY CHAMBLISS, and a Democrat, MARK WARNER, and those of us who supported those efforts to try to find a way to solve this problem, the supercommittee, the dinner group which I was part of, substantive discussions with the White House, with the Chief of Staff, with the President himself over a 7-month period of time—we have been unable to reach a resolution, unable to even come to the conclusion that this problem is so great it needs to be dealt with now, not pushed down later for some other administration. It has been too many Congresses and too many administrations simply saying, We can't get it done.'' We will have to push it off for yet another term, yet another election, yet another President.

Well, time is running out. So despite all these efforts, we have failed. In my opinion, and I think in the opinion of most, the reason why we have failed is because we have not had Presidential leadership. The kinds of changes that are needed to address a problem this large, to bring parties together, to put us in the position where we are willing to risk our careers, willing to stand up and do what is right for America regardless of the political consequences, willing to stand together—Republican and Democrat—to basically say this problem transcends politics, and not use it against each other, but stand together and say this problem is of such magnitude that we have to stand together and have the will to go forward—that can only be accomplished, and only has been accomplished if you look to past history, by Presidential leadership.

I was privileged to be here as a Member of the House of Representatives when we faced not as great a problem, but still a significant a problem with entitlement spending—in this case Social Security. The trust fund was running dry. The case was made to the American people. A Republican President reached out to a Democrat Speaker of the House of Representatives—a divided government, Democrats in one House, Republicans in the other—reached out and said, We have a problem and it can only be solved if the two of us stand together in a bipartisan way. And that they did. It wasn't easy, but it was successful, and through it we made a substantial, meaningful change to our Social Security system, which bought about 35 years from insolvency.

Now we face an even more dire crisis than that, but the solution will be the same—and that is, we need to have Presidential leadership.

I have proposed a number of things. It looks as though we are going to be limited. I did not get any indication from the President that he is willing to take these kinds of risks to so-called go big.

Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent to speak for 3 more minutes.

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

Mr. NELSON. Mr. President, I am not going to wait to speak, but if I might ask the distinguished Senator from Indiana a question, and then certainly agree to however much time he wants.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Would the Senator yield for a question?

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

Mr. NELSON. The Senator from Indiana is very sincere as he has worked diligently and in a bipartisan way to tackle this budget problem. It is this Senator's hope we can continue those kinds of discussions we had a couple of years ago.

Would the Senator agree that the shutdown situation we find ourselves in, however—which started for a different reason than the budget questions. It started for the reason of people wanting to defund ObamaCare—that the shutdown creates a crisis atmosphere in which it is very difficult to have those budgetary discussions the Senator yearns to have, as does his colleague from Florida?

Mr. COATS. Mr. President, I answer to my friend from Florida, who did work with a group of us, Democrats and Republicans, in past efforts to address the larger question which I am addressing, I know he is as disappointed as I am that we were not able to come to a resolution.

Republicans do not want a shutdown. We want a solution. We have found in the past that the leverage of a financial situation often gives us the opportunity to raise the issues and hopefully reach at least a partial solution. That has happened in the past.

I stand with those who simply say: I want to find a solution to the larger problem, including the shutdown of the government. I was focusing my efforts on the debt limit we are reaching because it is very hard to make a case for asking the American people for yet another trillion dollars of debt loaded on their shoulders without some efforts to address why this debt is being accumulated and why it continues to go forward. Why has the Congress not stepped up to address this spending?

It is like having a credit card and the bank calls and says you have hit your limit. You have asked us several times in the past to raise that limit, and we have done so, but you keep reaching the limit and you keep asking for more credit. At what point are you going to amend your reckless spending so you do not have to keep coming in here and so we do not have to keep giving you more credit? How do we know you are ever going to pay this back? How do we know you are not just going to declare bankruptcy and insolvency because you have simply hit the point where you do not have the means to pay this back? We might be willing to give you some increase in your credit, but first you have to give us something back; that is, you have to get off your addition to spending that keeps driving you into this situation.

What I was trying to address here is, yes, a solution to get this government back to work combined, hopefully, with a renewed effort—by the Senator from Florida, myself, and others—to strip out the unnecessary spending, the duplication, the egregious misuse of taxpayers' dollars for nonessential functions of this Federal Government.

There is no disagreement between us that we need to fund our national security. There is no disagreement about some of the essential cancer research and a number of other things this government engages in that cannot be handled at the State level, cannot be handled at a private level, substantially. But there is a lot of concern about excessive spending that continues to push us more and more into debt.

In answer to the question from my friend, Republicans do not like this shutdown any more than Democrats. We want to have some solution to the underlying problem. The underlying problem is the merger of not only excessive spending but the debt limit that is the result of that spending.

I know my time is rapidly running out, down to zero here. Let me conclude by saying I believe we have a duty—a duty to the American taxpayer but beyond that a duty to the future of this country, which is not just our children and grandchildren but everybody's

children and grandchildren, all the generations to come. We have a duty and a moral responsibility not to so laden them with debt that they will not have the opportunities many of us enjoyed, simple opportunities of owning a home, saving money for our kids so we can give them a good education, getting the bills paid on time, and living the American dream. That is not to become a millionaire or billionaire—maybe for some, but for most, to live just a quiet, normal, peaceful life, passing on those values and giving our children those opportunities we have found for ourselves.

I suggest that until we summon the political will to do so and until, frankly, we have a President who has that same will, we will not solve that problem.

I will conclude with this. It is a story—maybe you heard it before. A man walks into the doctor's office and says: I don't feel well at all.

The doctor gives him all the tests and all the exams and calls him back in and says: The disease you have is terminal. It is going to kill you. There are two ways to address this. There is a cure. It has some pain attached to it. You cannot just ignore it. But if you will agree to this medicine we are going to give you and these procedures, we can save your life. If you are not willing to do that, if you do not have the will to go through that process to get yourself back to health, there is another alternative. The alternative is that we can transplant that disease into your children and into your grandchildren and then let them deal with it.

That is exactly what we are doing here by not having the will, summoning the will to do the things we all know need to be done to prevent this country from becoming insolvent, from denying and destroying the American dream. The future of this country rests with our decisions. To date we have not made those decisions.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Florida.

Mr. NELSON. Mr. President, I see the great junior Senator from Virginia waiting to speak. I would like to make a quick statement.

I again want to remind the Senate and anybody who is listening what brought about the shutdown. It has been going on now for a week and a half, and we do not see any relief in sight. What started the whole thing on the shutdown is this: Shut down the government unless you agree to reverse a law that was passed and declared constitutional by the Supreme Court. By reversing that law, by taking the funding away from the Affordable Care Act—that is what started this a week and a half ago.

I have just come from the commerce committee, where Senator ROCKEFELLER had a hearing on everything from consumer finance and the consumer federation on how consumers are not being protected; everything from the National Transportation Safety Board and how all of these accidents that have occurred within the last week and a half of the shutdown cannot be investigated because all of their staff is on furlough; to the aerospace industry—they cannot deliver airplanes that are ready for delivery because they have to have their final FAA certificate; to, of course, the space program in NASA, and 97 percent furloughed; to over 60 percent of NOAA furloughed and all of the weather satellites we are trying to get going. Then you take all these government employees who are furloughed, and what about all the contractors to the government who are now laying off all the contractors?

We had an Alaskan captain talking about how he needs the government certificates so he can go to sea on the Alaskan crab catch. He cannot get that. Guess who is lurking out there. Russian captains, to come in and start supplying the world market, including the domestic U.S. market, with crab. You can go through the whole thing.

Then, of course, the other side says, in the midst of the shutdown, with the default of the credit rating of the government facing us, you are not negotiating.

That reminds me of a story. Two people are talking.

One says: Can I burn your House down?

No.

Can I burn your second floor down?

No.

Garage?

No.

How about your utility room?

No.

Oh, you won't compromise.

You cannot compromise over something that is hurting so many people's lives and is threatening the security and safety of people's lives. You cannot compromise on that. You cannot compromise on this Nation going into financial default.

Come on. Let's use a little common sense and get back into government functioning again and stop the nonsense about threatening a default of this country. Then let's do what the very sincere Senator from Indiana said. Let's continue those discussions about what we can do for the long-term financial integrity of this country.

I yield. I thank the Senator from Virginia for his indulgence.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Virginia.

Mr. KAINE. Mr. President, I rise to deliver a status report on what the government shutdown has meant to Virginia this week. I gave one last week, and I am back on the floor to share some additional news.

I associate myself with the comments of the Senator from Florida. I will talk about some similar effects. These effects are felt everywhere. It is not just furloughed employees; it is contractors, it is local communities and nonprofits, and it is the housing market.

Let me talk a bit about Virginia. Some of the pages might have been on the floor last week when I talked about a tiny community in Virginia, Chincoteague, which is a barrier island off the eastern shore of Virginia. It is not the place you might think of when you think about where Federal shutdown effects would be felt in a very specific way. But Chincoteague's economy is oriented around tourism. There is a national seashore and national wildlife refuge there, adjacent to Chincoteague Island, and so these few thousand people over the years have built up an economy that is hotels, motels, restaurants, grocery stores, drive-ins, and other shops for visitors. The fall is a very busy time. The island gets about 1.5 million visitors a year, and they are coming to the National Wildlife Refuge and the National Seashore.

On October 1, when government closed down the seashore and wildlife refuge closed down, the visitors have stopped coming. All those businesses, all those small mom-and-pops—I can see the faces of Tommy and Donna, and Jack Tarr, who is the mayor, and Glenn and Jane, my friends over there—they have called me to say: We are hit so hard because this is a busy time for us and we are closed down.

Last weekend there was a huge festival. There is a historic lighthouse on the island, and they have been working for 6 years to restore it. The opening was last week, and they were expecting hundreds or even thousands of visitors. They had to cancel it because it is on the wildlife refuge.

This weekend there was another big festival. Some of you might have read the book ''Misty of Chincoteague,'' which is about the Chincoteague Island ponies. Children read this book about ponies, probably ponies that came there from Spain, swim across the sound twice a year to Chincoteague, get shots, get inoculated. In the spring, some are sold for population control so they do not overrun the island. This weekend was the fall pony roundup. They had to cancel it because the wildlife refuge is closed.

It is not just a tourism event. It hurts all the businesses, but it is more than that. It is a fundraiser for the volunteer fire department that keeps every home and business on Chincoteague Island safe. They do not have a fire department other than the Chincoteague Volunteer Fire Department. They have two fundraisers a year. This weekend was one of them. They have canceled it. The volunteer fire department put up on their Web site: ''The fall pony roundup is closed because of the childish and idiotic antics of our Government.''

The other main economy in Chincoteague is NASA. There is a facility at Wallops Island, 5 miles away, and over 80 percent of the thousand employees and contractors who work at NASA, 5 miles from Chincoteague Island, are furloughed.

So you pull the guts out of the tourism economy, which this community

relies on, and you pull the guts out of NASA, which the community relies on—this community has been devastated by the government shutdown, and why? Why?

Mark Wright is a retired lieutenant colonel from the U.S. Army who served in the Army for 23 years, including service tours in Iraq—a very solid veteran. We are so proud. One out of eight Virginians is a veteran—an amazing number of people. When he retired, he got a job at the Pentagon as a civilian, a DOD civilian. He got that job earlier this year. Mark Wright was furloughed earlier this year because of the sequester. He has a wife and two kids in elementary school. He was furloughed, days off work, less pay, he got through that furlough. Then October 1, furloughed again. So this veteran who served his country, put himself in harm's way, and fought in theaters of battle more than once has been furloughed twice this year.

Mark Wright and his wife and children live in an apartment in Stafford County—south of DC. They wanted to buy a home for the first time in their lives. They are in the housing market. They decided they can't buy a home now because he doesn't know if he will have a paycheck to make a mortgage payment. He will be lucky enough to keep making the rent payment every month. It hurts their family, but it also hurts the real estate market in Stafford County.

Just this week it was reported that foreclosures in Virginia are up 52 percent from August to September, the biggest jump since the start of the recession because of the effect of sequester and these kinds of foolish antics, as the volunteer fire department described. So what Mark Wright and his family are asking is why; why are we doing this?

I had an employee roundtable with about seven furloughed employees and contractors on Wednesday afternoon in my office. They shared their anxieties about their own finances. They shared their own anxieties about having kids at home and getting a paycheck and what it would mean to them. I said to one participant: Tell me about your family. He said: I am lucky. I don't have a family. Then he caught himself and he said: I wish I was married and had a family, but for now when I am not getting a paycheck and I don't know whether I will get a paycheck, I am lucky I don't have a family. This was a DOD civilian who was a West Point grad who served as an Active-Duty Army officer for 10 years and fought overseas.

Others talked about how it felt to be kicked around just because they are trying to serve their country. One said: I have gone on unemployment. I never wanted to go on unemployment, but I have to for my family. Even those who were financially secure said: I am looking elsewhere for a job. Why would I put myself and my family through this? I have other skills. Maybe I can't serve the public anymore if the Congress is not going to back me.

Why are we doing this to these people?

A Virginia business that I am going to leave nameless called me the other day. They have thousands of employees in Virginia. The shutdown caused their weekly revenue to fall by 85 percent immediately. They are still doing work, and they are still being told—because they are contractors—that they will get paid, they are just not told when they will get pay. But they are paying for office rent and they are paying for utilities and they are paying salaries of employees and they are paying monthly health insurance premiums. They don't know when they are going to get paid, but they are having to write checks to others every day.

The owner of the business said: A few more weeks of this, and we will be bankrupt and hundreds of people will lose their jobs.

Why are we doing this to these businesses?

Yesterday the Presiding Officer was with me in a hearing before the Armed Services Committee, and a woman by the name of Jo Ann Rooney was nominated to be Under Secretary of the Navy. I asked her a question about morale in the Navy and the Pentagon now. Her answer was interesting.

Jo Ann Rooney had been working in the Pentagon for quite a while and then left 1 year ago to be president of a women's college. So she has been away from the Pentagon for 1 year. Now she is back in the Pentagon as a nominee to be Under Secretary of the Navy. Her name is pretty important in Virginia.

She said the difference in the Pentagon and with the Navy folks she was working with from when she left 1 year ago to today is completely stark. In the year that she has been gone, the furloughs hit and now the shutdown has hit. She said she is walking around the halls and looking at how people are responding. They feel like they are not supported when they are doing this important mission. She had one question: Why are we doing this to people who are working for the U.S. Navy whom we count on to protect us every day. Why?

We know, as the Senator from Florida said, that the House pushed this shutdown through unwillingness to have a budget conference. We passed a budget in March. We wanted to sit down and find a budget compromise with a very different House budget. We were going to have to compromise and do that, but Senators and House Members have blocked a conference. With no conference, we don't get a compromise. With no compromise, we don't get a budget. With no budget, the government shuts down. They pushed this through a shutdown and only after the shutdown have they said: All right. Let's talk.

Yesterday they revealed a new plan in the House. Their plan was we need to make sure we don't default on our debt, but after 11 days of shutdown, we just want to keep the government shut down. We will make sure we pay our foreign creditors, but we want to keep the government shut down.

Why? Why cause this pain? Why hurt the economy? Why push businesses to the brink of bankruptcy? Why harm the housing market? Why degrade and devalue public servants, especially those who are veterans? Why jeopardize cities and towns such as Chincoteague? Why hurt nonprofits such as the Chincoteague Island Volunteer Fire Department? Why leave families vulnerable to unemployment and force them to go on unemployment for the first time in their lives? Why cause all this pain?

No one in this country is benefiting from the U.S. government being shut down. So why is the House continuing to insist that this government remain closed?

I am continually reminded of the words by the Founder of the Republican Party 150 years ago at Gettysburg—Abraham Lincoln. At the end of that amazing speech, he resolved, and we resolved, that government of, by, and for the people shall not perish from the Earth, not for a year, not for a month, not for a week, not for a day, not for an hour, not for a minute, and not for a second.

Why can't the House agree to open the government and stop all this unnecessary pain?

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Republican whip.

Mr. CORNYN. Mr. President, tomorrow morning—unless it has otherwise changed—we will be voting on the request from the majority leader and the President to raise the debt ceiling by more than $1 trillion. It will not actually be a dollar figure. It will be suspended for roughly 1 year—the debt ceiling, that is. So everybody understands what the majority leader and the President are asking us to do: America has maxed out its credit card. It is about $16.7 trillion.

I know we talk about millions and billions and trillions as if we could actually conceptualize what that means, but here is an interesting comparison: Under President Obama—he has been in office for about 5 years now—our national debt has gone up $6.1 trillion. The debt accrued by all 43 previous Presidents was $10.6 trillion.

Our national debt is $16.7 trillion, and President Obama has asked to raise that credit limit another $1 trillion. Here is the catch: If he had a plan to actually deal with how we are going to pay down this $16.7 trillion, then maybe there would be a discussion. What he wants is what he called a clean debt ceiling, which is a blank check. President Obama wants a blank check to continue to borrow more and more money—not so we, the present generation, can live up to our responsibilities and make sure we are fiscally

responsible but, rather, to foist that debt off onto the next generation and beyond with absolutely no plan in place to repay it.

We have heard discussions about grand bargains. We were with the President this morning. He was kind enough to invite Republicans in the Senate over to the White House. He sort of chuckled about the grand bargain that he and Speaker BOEHNER and others have been pursuing over the last few years. He likened it to a unicorn. In other words, he likened it to a mythical creature no one has actually ever seen. That is what the grand bargain is, at least under this administration.

We reminded the President this morning that none of us wanted a government shutdown. This is not what we actually want, and we are all eager to end it. We also told the President that now is the time—and divided government is perhaps the best time—to end our fiscal crisis and to be responsible for the $16.7 trillion and come up with a payment plan.

If you went to the credit card company and said: I want to raise my credit card limit another $10,000, they would say what is your plan to actually pay down the debt you already accumulated? If you come back to us with a plan, then maybe we can talk about raising the limit on your credit card.

As I said, for the 220 years between the start of George Washington's Presidency and the end of George W. Bush's Presidency, the Federal Government accumulated $10.1 trillion in debt. During the Obama Presidency alone, it has been $6.1 trillion. If the President gets his way tomorrow in the vote, we are going to have to get a blank check to raise it another $1 trillion-plus. It won't be $6.1 trillion; it will be $7.1 or $7.2 trillion with no plan to pay down the debt and deal with the impact of this growing indebtedness on our economy and on our next generation.

It is important to remember what the President has said about the debt. In 2008, when he was a Member of the Senate, he said adding $4 trillion to the national debt was, in his words, ''irresponsible'' and ''unpatriotic.'' That was President Obama back in 2008, and here he is again asking for a higher debt limit with no plan to repay the $16.7 trillion or any portion of it.

President Obama is also the same person who said in 2009: ''I refuse to leave our children with a debt they cannot repay.'' He is the same person who said in 2010 that America's massive debt ''keeps [him] awake at night.'' I can't imagine he is getting much sleep these days if that is true.

This is the same person who in 2011 echoed the comments of the former Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff ADM Mike Mullen when he was asked what his biggest concern was as Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff. Admiral Mullen said the greatest long-term threat to America's national security is America's debt. President Obama said he agreed with that.

Finally, President Obama is the same person who in 2012 said he was running for reelection ''to pay down the debt in a way that's balanced and responsible.''

The most amazing thing I thought about the meeting we had with the President this morning is that he was actually taking credit for a reduction in the deficit. Of course, the deficit is different from the debt. The deficit is how we measure the amount of money coming into the Treasury and how much goes out in a given year. We are now spending roughly 16 cents on the dollar of borrowed money; in other words, more money than what is coming in.

The President was actually taking credit for the annual deficit's decrease. The deficit can be zero this year, and we would still have $16.7 trillion in debt. Those are related but different issues because the debt accumulates over many years when you spend more money than you have actually coming in.

In fact, if we look back, the two reasons the deficit has gone down this year is because, No. 1, one of the largest tax increases in American history that the President demanded in January of this last year—that was the fiscal cliff negotiation—and, secondly, it was the Budget Control Act and the sequester, which has actually capped discretionary spending for the last 2 years. That is what has caused a reduction in the deficit, not anything else.

So now the President said it is no big deal, this debt—$16.7 trillion is no big deal. And $17 plus trillion is no big deal, either, to hear the President say it today.

Now the President has changed his tune. Earlier he told ''ABC News'': We don't have an immediate crisis in terms of debt. In fact, for the next 10 years, it is going to be in a sustainable place.

Well, besides being completely irresponsible and not making decisions today but, rather, kicking the can down the road to the next generation and beyond, this high debt is having a present-day impact on slow economic growth. All we have to do is read the Congressional Budget Office reports, which say when the Federal Government borrows this much money from foreign governments such as China and elsewhere, that is money—the Federal Government is actually competing in the marketplace against the private sector for credit and it actually drives down private sector investment. With the debt this high, people know something is going to happen. Either the Federal Government is going to have to cut spending to deal with this debt or the President is going to want to raise taxes again, and that is exactly what he has requested year after year.

Speaking of the next 10 years, the President's latest budget proposal, which he unveiled in April, would increase our debt by $7.4 trillion as well as raise taxes by another $1.1 trillion, even though the President has raised taxes by $1.7 trillion already.

There is a reason why our economy is growing so slowly, why the private sector is sitting on the sidelines rather than investing and creating new jobs. There is a reason why the percentage of people active in the workforce is at a 30-year low. That is called the labor participation rate. All we have to do is Google the Bureau of Labor Statistics and it will tell us what the labor participation rate is. It is at a 30-year low.

Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent for an additional 2 minutes.

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

Mr. CORNYN. So not only is the unemployment rate unacceptably high, those are people still looking for work. We know more and more people are simply giving up because they have quit looking, and they are reflected in that smaller percentage of people actually in the workforce.

As we all know, the President has had multiple opportunities to make that grand bargain for long-term debt reduction. He has endorsed a grand bargain but walked away from his own bipartisan fiscal commission, the so-called Simpson-Bowles Commission, in December of 2010. He might have also endorsed a grand bargain put forward by the Bipartisan Policy Center's Domenici-Rivlin Commission, but he walked away from that one too.

President Reagan negotiated with Tip O'Neill. President Bush 41 negotiated with George Mitchell. President Clinton negotiated with Newt Gingrich. President Bush 43 negotiated with Ted Kennedy. That is what Presidential leadership requires, and which is so obviously missing in this context.

I hope the President will follow up on this meeting we had this morning and begin the kind of negotiations that would provide a payment plan to pay off the debt America already owes—by the way, it is not just America, it is every man, woman, and child in this country—before he comes back here and asks us to raise the credit card limit by another $1 trillion.

Mr. President, I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from North Dakota.

Ms. HEITKAMP. Mr. President, yesterday I came to the Senate floor to talk about how the government shutdown is affecting North Dakota ranchers and farmers, particularly my ranchers who were hit by last weekend's storm and lost a vast number of cattle, jeopardizing their livelihood for years to come, and aren't getting the help they need from the USDA and the Farm Service Agency.

Today I wish to talk about another devastating consequence of this shutdown, and that is the consequence of this shutdown on Indian Country in my State, and undoubtedly Indian Country all across this Nation.

In North Dakota we have five Indian reservations which are home to many Native-American families. These are communities where economic development and many times employment

have been trying to get a foothold, trying to catch up, and where many of my State's most vulnerable individuals live. We have heard a lot and much has been made about the United States living up to its obligations, its contract obligations, its obligations to the entities that hold our debt, but we haven't talked about the United States living up to its treaty obligations to Indian tribes in this country. This shutdown poses a serious—and I am not exaggerating—a serious threat to the basic services the Federal Government provides to Native-American families as part of its trust, its contract, its obligation to Native Americans and Native-American nations.

I recently had a discussion with tribal chairs all across North Dakota. I was hearing more and more of the kind of horror stories we hear when all of a sudden weather is coming and food assistance is needed and fuel assistance is needed. I wish to share with this body today the stories I heard, because they are telling stories about how foolish and how dangerous this government shutdown is to many very vulnerable families, particularly vulnerable Native-American families.

By way of introduction, most of the five tribes in North Dakota are direct service tribes, which means BIA itself performs critical functions to help Native-American families. So BIA is the place where people go to get assistance. With the shutdown, there are few or no BIA employees in each reservation to carry out this very important work. That means BIA's general assistance programs are no longer able to serve, for example, the 600 families on the Turtle Mountain Reservation who would otherwise receive an average of $97 per person to meet essential needs of food, shelter, and utilities. The food banks and the food pantries are overrun. It is not an exaggeration to say this shutdown has caused people in the Turtle Mountain Reservation to go hungry.

At the Spirit Lake Nation, something we have heard a lot about in the last year is that social services are stretched to the max, where we have problems in even a fully funded government; but today the vast majority of BIA child social service agencies have stopped, leaving children stuck in limbo in the court system, waiting for someone to find them a safe and decent home. Some examples: A woman wishing to report a sexual abuse of her son has been attempting to contact Child Protective Services for over a week now. When she went to the office, the doors were shut and the 24-hour on-call person didn't answer the phone.

At the same time, BIA law enforcement is limited—and there is a lot of acreage out there that they have to cover—to one officer per shift. They are patrolling 252,000 acres with one officer.

At the Sisseton-Wahpeton Reservation, almost 50 percent of the tribe's ongoing budget consists of Federal funds. The tribe is preparing to furlough more than 200 employees. Right now, the tribe is able to pay them out of carryover funds, but unless the government reopens soon, it won't be able to afford to pay these employees and they will be furloughed.

In a couple examples of great tragedy, the Sisseton-Wahpeton community recently lost a 3-month-old baby and, because of the shutdown, the mother has been turned away for burial assistance for her child.

Gerald Thompson, an elder at Sisseton-Wahpeton and a Vietnam vet—and I know on the floor with me is our Senator from South Dakota and he can attest to the great number of Native Americans who serve in our military, at a much higher rate than almost any other group. Gerald is a proud Vietnam vet. He receives a small Federal stipend which is not even enough to cover the basic essentials. His stipend is no longer available because of the shutdown. His wife is suffering from diabetes and stage 3 kidney disease. He worries about not being able to afford the gas to drive her to Fargo once a week, and he wonders how he is going to buy propane for heat for his family and his home.

At Indian Health Service facilities, health care workers such as those at Standing Rock recognize people still need medical attention, so they are still coming to work with no promise of a paycheck and probably, some people would argue here, doing so illegally.

The Mandan Hidatsa and Arikara Nation, which is at the epicenter of oil and gas development in the Bakken oil shale in North Dakota, will see that development slowed. There is always competition for rigs in North Dakota. Where are those going to move? Everybody is waiting for the rig to show up and begin to drill their wells. The tribes have had a tremendous opportunity not only to develop the resource that will help them economically, but to develop this resource which is moving us in the right direction for energy independence. But because of the shutdown, MHA Nation is losing a substantial amount of Federal oil and gas revenue. Right now, the tribes aren't able to get energy development agreements. They can't get drilling permits approved or have environmental impact assessments completed because BLM and EPA are shut down and not available. Those rigs will move someplace else. The tribe has hundreds of drilling permits awaiting approval and this is only going to delay them further.

The situation is also dire in urban Indian communities. U-Tech, United Tribes Technical College, is one of several tribal colleges that serves over 600 students trying to better themselves and another 300 children who attend their K-through-8 elementary school on the college campus. But because of the shutdown, they are reducing those education services to both the college students and to children.

The list goes on and on and on. It will only get worse. If we continue to not address this problem, we are turning our back on these very real needs. But I think also, importantly, we are turning our back on an obligation this country undertook when it signed treaties with the tribal people of my State.

All across North Dakota, families, workers, children, people who are disabled, are losing access to services and assistance and are losing their paycheck. Why? Why is this happening? Because Congress, arguably the greatest democratic body ever envisioned, is bickering and plagued with inaction. House Republicans continue to bring up individual bills that only address the issues of the day and programs that have only been written about in headlines. Whenever there is a headline, we can fund that because we want to say we are responding to those needs. Well, I think I need a headline for our Native-American families who are in dire straits, and for the Bureau of Indian Education as well as BIA. So I ask: What about Native-American families who are unable to get critical social services to afford food or housing because BIA is closed during the shutdown? Where is the bill for them? Also, equally important, where is the public safety for them? Where is the public safety for those tribal members?

What about the ranchers who lost a huge percentage of their herd not only in my State in the southwest corner, but also all across West River and South Dakota, who can't get assistance from the Department of Agriculture? Where is the bill for them?

What about our young farmers who are trying to build the farms of tomorrow and feed our country, who aren't able to receive their income checks because the Farm Service Agency is shut down? They can't even get their money. Where is the bill for them?

What about North Dakotans trying to start a small business or get a home mortgage and aren't able to access those Federal programs? Where is the bill for them?

It is time we stop this. It is time we respond to the very real hurt in America.

We hear a lot about who is winning and who is losing politically. That is a sad day when that is the deliberation we have, because it is the American people whom we are here to serve. It is the American people to whom we have an obligation. We need to end this impasse and to open the government.

My people in Indian Country in North Dakota need and want and believe they have earned that respect and a commitment to their treaty rights.

Thank you so much, Mr. President. I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Ms. HEITKAMP). The Senator from South Dakota.

LIVESTOCK DISASTER ASSISTANCE

Mr. THUNE. Madam President, a week ago today western South Dakota was preparing for a coming storm, but

no one had any idea it would be one of the worst and most devastating snowstorms in that area's history.

I grew up in western South Dakota. I was born and raised there. We saw a lot of nasty blizzards over the years—storms that swept through the middle of our State and all across our State, with the destructive impact that can have, the way it would close down roads, the difficulty it would create for people and, obviously, the loss of livestock that comes with that. We have seen over the years blizzards that have taken their toll on one of our State's most important industries.

But the storm damage I saw yesterday when I toured western South Dakota was epic, looking at the mountains of branches that were piled high waiting for disposal, or the gut-wrenching scenes of fence lines, draws, and pastures that were scattered with dead livestock.

This snowstorm started out as heavy rain—and I know the distinguished Presiding Officer had much of this in her State of North Dakota as well—but that soaked the livestock. Then it turned into a raging blizzard, with heavy snow and sustaining winds of 60 to 70 miles an hour. These winds drove livestock for miles—some more than 12 miles from their pastures. The fortunate ones lasted through the storm, miles from their origination, but still alive.

As I speak, South Dakota ranchers are still assessing their losses, trying to determine ownership of those that survived but are miles away from home, and hauling away or burying the tens of thousands of dead livestock. To add even more challenges to an already devastating situation, this area is now experiencing heavy rains. Flash-flood warnings have been issued this morning for areas of the Black Hills, with an additional 2 or more inches of rain in the forecast.

This storm-damaged area of 17 counties in western South Dakota contains more than 6,000 ranches and more than a million cattle and sheep. For most of these ranchers, their livestock is their sole source of livelihood. These ranchers have a 365-day-a-year obligation to care for their livestock, which they have done for generation after generation.

Madam President, I want to show you the impact of this storm and what it did to some of these livestock. As shown in this picture, this is an area we saw from a helicopter yesterday—a low-lying area where there was some water. As you can see, there are upwards of 40, 50 head of livestock that are lying there dead in that area.

We saw numerous examples like that yesterday.

This is another photo we took yesterday of trucks, rendering trucks that were coming to pick up some of the dead livestock. As you can see, not only are the trucks filled, but there are livestock along this road. We saw that situation, that image, over and over yesterday, as well, along highways in western South Dakota.

The point I am simply making is, this was an incredibly powerful impact—this storm—that created an enormous amount of damage to the No. 1 industry in western South Dakota. The people who work the land, the people who raise these animals, they are independent, they are hard working. These ranchers are the best friends and neighbors anybody could have, all willing to lend a helping hand. They are first to provide assistance and the last to seek it.

The best thing we can do right now, the most effective assistance we can offer them right now is found in the livestock disaster section of the farm bill, which has passed here in the Senate, is now passed in the House of Representatives, and is awaiting action by a conference committee.

The Livestock Indemnity Program, known as LIP, was something Senator BAUCUS and I authored as part of the 2008 farm bill. It provides much-needed financial assistance to these livestock producers. But in order to get this assistance to them, a new farm bill has to be passed.

This program, the Livestock Indemnity Program, or the LIP program, in the farm bill is fully paid for with cuts in other farm programs, and it has eliminated the need for ad hoc disaster assistance that was the standard emergency assistance in past years.

I remember past years, when I was a Member of the House of Representatives, something like this would happen, and we would have to come to Congress for ad hoc disaster assistance, emergency assistance. The whole point of getting a disaster title in the farm bill was to eliminate the need for that ad hoc disaster assistance on an annual basis sometimes.

So this title was put in the farm bill back in 2008. It created a permanent program, paid for. As I said, the one in the farm bill that is being considered now is offset by cuts in other areas of the farm bill.

What we are waiting for is for the conferees to get together in a conference to work out the differences between the two bills and to report them back to the House and to the Senate, where they can be voted on, hopefully, passed and put on the President's desk. That is what it is going to take to get assistance back to these livestock producers, because the existing disaster title, as I said—the Livestock Indemnity Program in the disaster title of the farm bill—expired. It expired at the end of 2011.

When we passed a bill in the Senate in 2012, it reauthorized it, and in the farm bill that passed this year it has been reauthorized. But until we get the farm bill passed, that authority that can help producers in circumstances like this no longer exists. That is why we have to get conferees together in a conference committee and, ultimately, a bill on the President's desk that can be signed into law that would allow the Department of Agriculture to issue the regulations that are necessary to put this program back into effect.

I have been encouraged by reports I have heard that they are going to soon name conferees to move a farm bill forward in the House. I wrote a letter earlier this week to Speaker BOEHNER asking him to name conferees so the conference committee could begin its work and make this assistance available to livestock producers.

I have also sent a letter to Secretary Vilsack asking him to determine that the Farm Service Agency personnel in the impacted counties are essential so they can open these offices and begin the process of preparing damage assessment reports that are going to be needed for Federal disaster declarations. The distinguished Presiding Officer mentioned in her remarks the impact this is having in western South Dakota. In western North Dakota, the Farm Service Agency personnel are not working, and in this circumstance they are the ones to whom the producers would go and the States and affected parties would look to to do the damage assessments.

So I am hoping Secretary Vilsack, who has that authority, particularly in this sort of a situation where you have an emergency, will declare these people as essential and get them back on the job so they can begin those damage assessments and prepare the way for, hopefully, when a farm bill passes and the disaster title is authorized again.

So those are a couple of things that have to happen, in my view, fairly quickly. And I will be the first to say that I have had concerns about the farm bill as it worked its way through the process here. There were some things in the commodity title that I thought could have been done differently—perhaps a better policy approach and, arguably, something that is more compliant with our World Trade Organization obligations and less market distorting. There were a number of things in the commodity title, there were some things in other titles of the bill that we had some concerns with, but there were a number of things in the farm bill that we worked very hard to have included, and the disaster title was one of those.

I am hoping as this farm bill works its way through the process, and hopefully as conferees get named by the House of Representatives, they can begin their work, work out some of those differences, and I will continue to be a strong proponent of the livestock disaster assistance that was created in the 2008 farm bill and was included in both versions of the 2013 farm bill—both the one that passed the House and the one that passed the Senate.

I appreciate the work Chairman STABENOW has done, and our ranking member Senator COCHRAN. I thank them for their tireless efforts to try and get a new farm bill enacted as soon as possible.

This past week's snowstorm is only one example of the urgency behind that to get it done so the programs can once again support our farmers and ranchers and the millions of others whose jobs rely on agriculture. Again, in my State of South Dakota, it is our No. 1 industry. It always has been and it probably always will be. We have so many farm and ranch families who look to their leadership here in Washington, DC, to provide some certainty with regard to the rules they are going to play by. When we do extensions such as the one we are in the middle of right now—we did a 1-year extension last year of the old farm bill—but we do not make the reforms, some of the changes that are necessary to update farm policy, then we do not give producers the certainty they need as they make their planning decisions for the future. So getting a 5-year, a multiyear reauthorization in place is important, and it is timely.

My hope would be that in the very near future the conferees can sit down, they can work out the differences between the two bills—reconcile those differences—and get this thing moving again. I say that not only because it is critically important to these livestock producers in western South Dakota but because it is critically important to all producers across South Dakota.

The farmers in the eastern part of my State, the people in the entire farm belt and the regions of this county who depend upon agriculture for their existence need to know what the policies are going to be, what the results are going to be, so they can plan and plan effectively, and so we have the mechanisms in place, so when something like this happens—like happened in western South Dakota this past week—there is a mechanism in place, there is a way in which we can respond and provide support for the hard-working farmers and ranchers and the millions of people whose jobs rely on agriculture.

Looking at those images yesterday was very gripping, in many ways very disturbing. As you fly over these areas and you see these massive losses of livestock, you realize what that means for the people who are out there every single day, who for generations have made their living on the land by raising these cattle, and it has contributed in such an enormous and significant way to the economy not only of western South Dakota but of this entire economy—people who literally every single day are out there feeding not only America but feeding the world. Agriculture has a tremendous impact domestically, obviously, but it has a profound impact around the world, and it is something that from an economic standpoint creates thousands and thousands and millions of jobs here in this country.

I hope we can get the farm bill done. I hope the conferees will get named soon by the House, and that we will be on our way toward passage of a farm bill and, hopefully, the certainty that producers across this country need and the ability to respond to this type of emergency.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from New Hampshire.

Mrs. SHAHEEN. Madam President, we are now in the 11th day of this unnecessary government shutdown. Just as my colleague from South Dakota, Senator THUNE, pointed out, there are some impacts in South Dakota as a result of this shutdown. We are seeing those very real consequences in New Hampshire as well, and I am sure the Presiding Officer is seeing those in North Dakota.

It has become clear to me by talking to people in New Hampshire that the longer the shutdown goes, the worse the impact on families, on small businesses, on people who need the services from this government.

But as difficult as the shutdown is, there is actually another crisis that looms on the horizon that would have even more disastrous consequences for our economy, and that is the possibility of a first-ever default on this country's debt.

For the first time ever, if we default, the country would not pay the bills it has incurred—the bills it has incurred because of decisions made by this Congress or previous Congresses.

As economists across the ideological spectrum have warned, the consequences of a default would be severe. We could see businesses stop hiring. That would have an impact, as we are already seeing as a result of this shutdown, on the economic recovery we are experiencing. Retirement accounts and families' nest eggs would lose much of their value in a very short time. Interest rates would rise, which would mean higher costs for consumers, for small businesses, and for the Federal Government, as we need to borrow. And consumer confidence, which is so important for small businesses and for the economy, would drop sharply.

Some people have suggested that these are scare tactics. But these consequences are very real, and we know that because we have been here before. In 2011, which was the last time we came close to defaulting on our debt, the mere prospect of that default was enough to have significant impact on our economy.

In late July and early August of 2011, the period that led up to the debt deal in 2011, the Dow Jones Industrial Average dropped 2,000 points. As a result American families saw their household wealth plummet by $2.4 trillion. We saw a sharp drop in consumer confidence, and by the way the current circumstances that we are in have seen a similar drop in consumer confidence over the concerns about the shutdown and the default.

In the last few weeks we have seen the biggest drop in consumer confidence since Lehman Brothers collapsed in 2008. Then in 2011 our credit rating was downgraded for the first time in America's history. The crisis in 2011 resulted in $1.3 billion in additional borrowing costs for the Federal Government, thereby increasing the Nation's debt.

So for all of those people who said we are not going to raise the debt ceiling, we are not going to pay the bills this country has incurred because we are worried about the debt and deficits we face, the fact is that action alone increased our debt by $1.3 billion.

There is no question that we need to get this country's debt and deficits under control. I think all of us who are here believe that. But the best way to do that is to reach a comprehensive long-term bipartisan agreement that looks at all areas of spending, that looks at the domestic side of the budget, at the defense side of the budget, at mandatory programs and at revenue.

Despite the partisanship that we have seen too much of here, I still think that kind of an agreement is possible and that is critical. Senator THUNE talked about certainty for farmers who are not sure what is going to happen with the farm bill. But that kind of uncertainty is going across the economy for businesses, from whatever sector they are in, because people do not know what we are going to do here in Washington about dealing with this country's long-term budget.

As some of my colleagues have noted, the response to the financial crisis and the great recession led to a higher deficit. There is no question the country was in trouble. One of the ways we helped to address that was to increase spending on vital safety net programs, while revenues declined—to try to stimulate the economy, to put people back to work.

Those policies as well as the fiscal policies that were enacted over the past decade, including two wars, tax breaks for the wealthiest Americans, all of those things made the country's debt and deficits increase. Actually in the last few years we have seen significant progress to reduce spending and to narrow our deficit.

We put in place discretionary spending caps that have reduced spending by the Federal Government, and we let the tax cuts for wealthiest Americans expire which raised additional revenue. All told, we put in place approximately $2.4 trillion in deficit reduction. This has not been easy. There has been a lot that has been affected that I would not have chosen, but the fact is we are on a more sustainable budget path.

One of the best ways we can improve our budget outlook is by growing the economy, by focusing on jobs that boost revenue and decrease the need for social programs. While we certainly have more work to do on that front, consistent job growth has helped increase revenue and reduce our deficit.

Since this President took office, we have seen this country's deficit fall by over 50 percent. That represents a remarkable improvement, and all that is coming with the financial crisis and the recession that began in 2008. So

just think about that. We have reduced this country's deficit by over 50 percent.

The Congressional Budget Office projects that our deficit will drop to 2.1 percent of GDP by 2023 from its current level of 4.2 percent. We have made great progress, and we are on a path to make even better progress. The budget that the Senate passed is a very good place to look at how we achieved additional savings and how we continue to grow our economy.

That budget would give us an additional $1.8 trillion in deficit reduction over the next 10 years. It would also make very important investments in our economy, in families in this country, in infrastructure, in business, in education. That is a conversation we need to have. I think we should go to a conference committee on the budget. It has been unfortunate that we have not been able to get agreement in this body to do that because we have a small group of people who keep preventing that.

But that is not really what I wanted to talk about this afternoon. What we need to do is, we need to get this government back up and running. We need to agree that we should pay the bills this country has incurred and not default. We are continuing to see, as I said when I started, the very real impact of this government shutdown on families and small businesses across New Hampshire and the country.

I talked earlier on the floor about some of the small businesses that have been affected in New Hampshire. But today I want to talk about some of the Federal employees who are affected. I heard from an employee at the Federal Correctional Institution in Berlin, NH. This is a medium-security prison. It is new. It has not even been completely staffed, and it does not have all of the inmates there yet. This is from one of the employees who is currently working there—without pay as she points out.

She told me that her husband had already seen his hours cut at his job. Now she says:

> I sit in fear that I will not receive a pay check at all. I will not be able to pay my mortgage payment, my student loan payments, our vehicle payments, or any other debts. I also assume that my daughter's daycare is not going to accept an IOU. I also will not have the money to buy pellets for my stove or fuel for my furnace for the upcoming winter.

She is worried about the long-term mental and physical well-being of those who are working without paychecks at the prison because many of her colleagues are living paycheck to paycheck.

We have talked a lot about the courage and dedication that many of our Capitol Police officers showed on October 3 during the shooting incident here. It was extraordinary to see people put their lives on the line without getting paid. The same is true of people who are working at our Federal prisons. They are putting their lives on the line every day they go into work in a dangerous environment.

I heard from another furloughed employee of the prison. She said:

> I am a single parent with two sons . . . My sons depend on me and only me. I have to pay for my sons' lunch and extracurricular activities, which keep him out of trouble and gives him something to do. I also have medication that my son and I need on a monthly basis which we cannot go without . . . The oil here in Berlin, NH, is absolutely high.

Berlin is in the north country of New Hampshire so it gets cold there in the winter. She concluded:

> What are we going to say to the bill collectors? Can anyone answer that?

What kind of answers can we give to these people who are putting their lives on the line every day working for the government to protect all of us? Yet we are not giving them the paycheck that they earned.

I also heard from a furloughed employee with the Department of Agriculture in New Hampshire who is on furlough. She said:

> It is an understatement to say I am a bit anxious and scared. I live from paycheck to paycheck.

She told me she is worried about going into debt as a result of this shutdown. She said, ''I love my job at USDA and feel I make a difference every day to make this a better world.'' She urged me to work with my colleagues here to get her back to work.

Those are just a few examples of the stories that we are hearing every day from people in New Hampshire who are affected by this shutdown. The consequences are very real and they get worse with every day that it goes on.

As bad as that is, the consequences of a default of this country refusing to pay its debt are even worse. While Social Security and Medicare have not been affected by the shutdown, that would change if we default. A default could delay or disrupt Social Security checks that are due to go out at the beginning of November. Medicare, Medicaid, veterans benefits, and military salaries, all of those could be affected by a default. According to the Treasury, delayed or disrupted payments would prevent 57.5 million Americans from receiving Social Security benefits in a timely manner and interfere with payments to 3.4 million veterans.

This could put the most vulnerable in jeopardy and prevent them from receiving the benefits they have earned. That is why the majority in both parties, in both Chambers in Congress, recognizes that defaulting on this country's obligations is not an option.

My former colleague and fellow Senator Judd Gregg, who is a Republican—and while we do not agree on everything, this is one issue we certainly agree on. In an op-ed published by The Hill newspaper he said that brinkmanship on default is:

> The political equivalent of playing Russian roulette with all of the chambers of the gun loaded. It is the ultimate no-win strategy . . . A default would lead to some level of chaos in the debt markets, which would lead to a significant contraction in economic activity, which would lead to job losses, which would lead to higher spending by the federal government and lower tax revenues, which would lead to more debt.

In other words, as Senator Gregg said it so well: It is short-sighted and irresponsible. There is no doubt we need to keep working on a long-term budget for this country. But we have to do it in a way that is responsible. That is why I certainly hope that the Senate will be able to agree on the legislation that is currently before this body. I hope the House will come to the table. I hope we can all agree that allowing this country to default on our debt, to not pay our bills, would have disastrous consequences.

We are not going to be that irresponsible. We still have some time to get this done. Not long. So far the financial markets and the American people have been more than patient. Everybody is frustrated. Everybody understands that it is time for us to act and to act now.

I yield the floor.

Madam President, I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

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

Mrs. BOXER. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent that I may speak for such time as I may consume.

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

Mrs. BOXER. Madam President, as we know, this is the 11th day of a completely manufactured crisis, a self-inflicted wound that came about because our colleagues on the other side of the aisle are obsessed with repealing a law that is called the Affordable Care Act—a law that passed almost 4 years ago, and the benefits have taken root. I will go over those benefits for all Americans and a group of Americans who have had a very hard time getting insurance. We are only now being able to see them enroll for health insurance, and for some of them, this is the first time.

Because our colleagues are so obsessed with repealing this law, which passed almost 4 years ago and was upheld by the Supreme Court as being totally constitutional and about which there was a Presidential election and a Senate election in which the people who wanted to keep this law and make it better won, of course—the Republicans can't accept it. As a result, they have shut down the government.

We wouldn't know it if we listened to the speeches now because they have somewhat changed. Now they are saying they want cuts in Medicare and Social Security. That is what they want.

But when we go back 11 days, before the government shutdown, Speaker BOEHNER was crystal clear. He said: The American people don't want a government shutdown, but they don't want ObamaCare either.

The government shut down. They didn't listen to us. We explained to them that if the government shuts down, that won't stop the Affordable Care Act because those funds come from a different part of the government; they don't come from the appropriated moneys. At least 85 percent of the Affordable Care Act comes from another part of the government. We begged them and told them: If you shut down the government, health care is going to go forward anyway. Why on Earth would you shut down the government? They didn't listen. Now people in the country are saying: What are you guys doing?

I am prayerfully hopeful they will turn around and let us reopen this government—the government of the greatest country on Earth—and that they will also allow us to pay our bills and stop the possibility of default. If default happens, it will be first time in our history.

Yes, we are in the middle of a crisis, but it is manufactured and it is made up. If you think about deficits, look at what has happened since President Obama took office. Deficits have been cut in half. It can't be about deficits. The Affordable Care Act is not going to be stopped. What is this all about? A temper tantrum? A childish way to handle a situation about which they are not happy?

So Republicans who are listening to me know, I have served five Presidents since I came to Washington, first as a House Member and then as a Senator representing the largest State in the Union, the most fantastic State in the Union—but that is only my personal view—California. There have been five Presidents—three Republicans and two Democrats. Obviously, I didn't agree with these Presidents all the time. Sometimes I really disagreed with them, such as over the Iraq war and tax breaks for billionaires. Both of those added mightily to the deficit. I opposed those, but I accepted the fact that all I could do was work to change things in a democratic way, try to pass legislation on those issues to bring the troops home and to make sure everyone pays their fair share. I didn't win those issues.

We all know that, yes, there are many times one votes against the debt ceiling as a show of displeasure, but we have never brought down the full faith and credit of the United States. The last time the Republicans tried this a couple of years ago, the Dow Jones average plunged and it cost us $19 billion. You would think they would have learned a lesson from that, but they didn't. You would think they would have learned a lesson from the Newt Gingrich shutdown that made their poll numbers plunge then.

We need to behave like grownups. I am prayerful and hopeful that we can see the talks that are starting in the Senate continue across party lines to resolve this.

Let's be clear. It is easy to solve this problem. This is the great news: It is easy to solve the problem. Allow our bill that passed here about 12 days ago to be voted on in the House—it will allow this government to reopen—and do not attach any riders to it, such as cutting Medicare, Social Security, or whatever your pet idea is. Then let's sit down and negotiate through the Appropriations Committee chairman, BARBARA MIKULSKI, and through the Budget Committee chairman, PATTY MURRAY. Then they can sit down with their counterparts and resolve our differences on spending, the deficit, and deficit reduction. It is very easy.

What Senator REID is saying is absolutely the right thing to say. Pay our bills, and don't allow us to default. Pay our bills, open the government, and then we can talk about anything and everything that has to do with the budget.

Last week when we were in the middle of this, I went home to see how the Affordable Care Act was working in California. We are a State that has fully embraced the Affordable Care Act. We are 38 million strong, and we have millions of uninsured—millions of uninsured. I am getting daily reports from constituents. They are talking about the Affordable Care Act and what it means to them. These are constituents such as Janice Brown, a semiretired travel agent from Prather, CA. She called the help line and downloaded an application to buy a plan for $1,500 a month for herself and her husband. She said to the Associated Press that was $1,000 less than her current private plan. She said:

> I'm thrilled. The coverage is better. It's fantastic.

Why do my friends want to shut down the government and stop Janice Brown, a semiretired travel agent from my State, from getting affordable health care? Why? Does it make them feel better to do that? I would hope not.

Dr. Travis Sanchez runs a chiropractic clinic in Salinas. It is one of the small businesses buying coverage under Covered California. Under the Affordable Care Act, Sanchez plans to offer his full-time employees the health care coverage which they currently lack. Do you know what he says? The Affordable Care Act is going to be life-changing for many of the people whom I see as a clinician every day.

Then Covered California told us about Paul Torrigino of Sacramento. He enrolled in a bronze plan. In California, you can get a gold plan, a silver plan and a bronze plan and the higher the plan—the gold plan—the less of a copay. The bronze plan is less costly. So he said he enrolled in a bronze plan that was extremely affordable. He said:

> Oh my gosh, the insurance has been going up for the last few years like crazy. All our money was going to pay for medical insurance.

Now he has this very affordable plan.

Leslie Foster, a 28-year-old freelance filmmaker in Hollywood, told the Wall Street Journal he found a plan that will cost him $62 a month. Because Leslie earns $20,000 a year, Federal assistance will pick up three-quarters of the cost of his premium. Leslie says he hasn't had comprehensive health insurance since 2006.

Why are my colleagues on the other side of the aisle trying to stop Leslie from getting comprehensive affordable health insurance? Because they didn't like the results of the election? Because they were mad the Supreme Court said the bill was constitutional?

I am at a loss to understand it.

Then I have San Franciscan Paul Cello. He told KQED that he selected a plan that would save him more than $300 a month. He said:

> It's like a whole 'nother world. The coverage is better . . . a lower premium, no preexisting condition exclusions, I get mental health coverage, so there's way more coverage than I had and I'm going to be saving.

These are real people with a heart and a pulse and a life and hopes and dreams and they are finally getting health insurance. Yet my friends on the other side of the aisle are stamping their feet and having a tantrum because they don't like it. I don't know why they don't like it. They ought to come to meet these people.

I have Rachel Mansfield of La Quinta. Nothing could dissuade her. She sent in an application for Covered California on Tuesday. She has been waiting for the exchange to start so she and her husband could get health insurance. She got it. Her new premium will be around $400 for both of them, with higher quality coverage than she currently has.

Melissa Harris, a communications student at Fresno State, stopped at a Covered California tent on campus Tuesday. She is paying $600 a month—with help from family members—for insurance through her former employer. She has diabetes, hypertension and other medical issues and lives on disability payments. Under the Affordable Care Act, which prevents insurance companies from denying coverage for pre-existing conditions, Harris said she can afford health insurance on her own. ''It's a godsend for me—a blessing,'' Harris, 33, said.

At the Fresno County Department of Social Services, people were signing up for Medicaid. ''I came in for food stamps,'' Kevin Burke, 51, told the Fresno Bee. An assembly worker, Burke said he has been out of work for two years. He had Medi-Cal previously, but was disenrolled when his daughter turned 18, he said. Under the Affordable Care Act, Americans under 133% of the federal poverty level are now eligible for Medicaid, regardless of how older their children are, or if they have children at all.

At Vista Health Center, Rufina Arango, who is diabetic, filled out an

application for coverage through a significant expansion of Medi-Cal, the state's Medicaid program. Rufina and her family lost their health insurance several years ago, when her husband was laid off after 22 years working for a wood products manufacturer in Windsor. ''It's great, because it is going to help many of us. If not for Obamacare, many of us would not qualify for health insurance,'' Rufina told the Press Democrat.

I have to point out an op-ed piece that appeared in the Washington Post this week about the experience of one of my constituents with the Affordable Care Act. This constituent of mine and her son were also on the Lawrence O'Donnell show last night. Anyone who watched that show—anyone with heart and a soul—would understand how amazing it is for her that the Affordable Care Act passed. Let me tell you the story.

Janine Reid is a writer from the San Francisco Bay area. This is the title of her opinion piece that ran in the Washington Post. ''ObamaCare saved my family from financial ruin.'' Let me repeat the title. ''ObamaCare saved my family from financial ruin.''

She relates her experience with her loving son, Mason. He had brain cancer and he had to undergo major surgeries and multiple surgeries. He would have hit his lifetime limit and the family would have been driven into, in her words, the ''financial abyss'' without the Affordable Care Act. Do you know what she says? She writes that the family thanks ''God and whoever else would listen for our good fortune to have coverage.'' She ends her piece with this line: If I could get those who are trying to repeal this law:

> . . . on a conference call, I would explain this to them. I would tell them that while they were busy trying to derail the Affordable Care Act over the past two years, Mason has again learned to walk, talk, eat and shoot a three-point basket.''

Why would anyone—anyone in the Senate, in the House, in the country—want to hurt a family like that? I am just saying, I don't get it. Because a law is a law is a law. We don't decide that one day we are going to undermine a law. You don't do that. You live by the law. If you want to change it, of course, you have a chance. They tried 43 times to repeal it. It didn't get repealed. They shut down the government over it and it didn't get repealed and it will not get repealed. My constituents are not going back. No one is going to take away their benefits.

Most Americans may not even realize the benefits they are already getting under the Affordable Care Act. Wherever they live, whether in the State of the Presiding Officer or my State, 3 million young adults are now covered through their parents' plan. Three million young adults are now insured through their parents' plan, and 71 million Americans are getting preventive care, such as checkups, birth control, and immunizations. Let me say it again. Millions of Americans are benefiting from the Affordable Care Act. Seventy-one million Americans are getting free preventive care, such as checkups, birth control, and immunizations. Three million young adults are now insured through their parents' plans.

Why do my colleagues want to take that away from Americans? Why do my colleagues want to shut down the government? Because they don't like it. What is it they don't like about this; that some young person doesn't have to fret or his parents don't have to be worried sick that their kid doesn't have health insurance. Now 17 million kids with preexisting conditions, such as asthma and diabetes, can no longer be denied coverage. Why do my friends want to take that away from the families in the United States of America? Why? Why did they shut down the government to take that away? What are they thinking?

Insurers can no longer cancel your health insurance because you get sick. The Chair knows as do I that you could be going along 100 miles an hour and all of a sudden get an illness and be shocked and all of a sudden imagine getting a note from your insurer saying: Sorry you just got sick, Senator BOXER, but we are canceling your health insurance. That happened every day of the week, but it can't happen anymore. Why do my Republican friends want to cancel out that benefit? No lifetime limits on coverage.

I just told the story about the woman who lives in the San Francisco Bay area whose son was born with a brain tumor and who needed constant operations. They hit up against the lifetime limit. But when ObamaCare went into effect, otherwise known as the Affordable Care Act, guess what, no more lifetime limits and the child was saved and the family was saved from financial ruin.

These are just some of the benefits that are going into effect and now are in effect.

Then the Republicans said: Oh, the Affordable Care Act is going to make everything cost so much. No, health care costs are growing at the slowest rate in over 50 years, and insurance companies have to justify premium hikes, so we are getting back checks if they overcharge us. Listen, 8.5 million Americans have received rebate checks from their insurance companies because of the Affordable Care Act. Do my friends want to get that money back, take it away from the people? They shut down the government. They must think that is a very bad idea.

I can't answer the question as to why they want to take away these benefits, but I can guess at their motivation. They are throwing a temper tantrum. They don't like the way the election turned out. They don't like what the Supreme Court did. A law is a law.

I don't get it. Speaker BOEHNER said he is shutting down the government, punishing people, because of ObamaCare. We told him you can't stop it. He tried and failed 43 times to repeal it. He stamped his foot and he shut down the government. Now that we have proven to him he can't stop the Affordable Care Act, now that he sees how many people are benefiting from it, he should open the government. Eleven days the greatest country in the world has been shut down.

I have to tell you, in my great State—and we could all talk about our States, I know the Chair did this—we have a magnificent national park called Yosemite. Honest to God, the first time I stepped on that valley floor I thought I was in Heaven. I had never seen anything like it. There are 3,500 Park Service employees who have been furloughed, with 600 of them at Yosemite.

Here is the thing people don't seem to understand. It is not only the pain of the people who have saved to get to a place such as Yosemite and saved for their families and are looking forward to this opportunity, it is also the small businesses that surround the park.

Douglas Shaw, co-owner of Yosemite Bug Rustic Mountain Resort, may have to lay off 30 percent of his staff. He said:

> We're a good example of a business that could die if this continues. This is all we've got, and I'm scared, honestly. I don't think a lot of people realize how important this issue is for a great many people whose livelihoods are at stake.

Derek Arakelian and his wife Marielle Debree were laid off from their jobs at Yosemite. They held a yard sale to raise money. They held a yard sale to raise money. They said:

> We've got a new little boy and a lot of expenses. We need to make money to pay our bills.

Why are they shutting down the government? The Affordable Care Act is moving forward. A law is a law is a law is a law. We all have our issues. Serving here for a long time, as I said, I have opposed wars, opposed tax cuts for the wealthiest among us, I have opposed rollbacks in environmental regulations that I thought were critical, and I saw us turn away from sensible ways to protect our people. I wasn't happy. I have a right not to be happy, and they have a right not to be happy. But I don't have a right to decide which laws I am going to say should be enforced. I have an obligation, if I don't like the law, to work my heart out in the next election and change things. That is what you do in a democracy. You don't pick and choose.

Then they have their little bills coming over here. I call it governing by press release. Something gets hot, they hear a story I am going to tell, and they say: Oh, well, we will open that little segment.

We don't run a country that way. We don't run a country by press release. We don't run a country in order to get political cover. We have an obligation to keep the doors open, to make sure things work better, to negotiate over

budgets. You don't negotiate by taking hostages. This time the hostages are the American people—people such as Doug Shaw, co-owner of Yosemite Mountain Resort, and people who are laid off—firefighters at the Forest Service. They are working without pay. Lovely. We are getting our pay. One of these firefighters says:

Most people here live paycheck to paycheck.

It is a disgrace. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention will stop its seasonal flu tracking program, and furloughed 9,000 employees. My understanding is they have brought back some of their employees, but they are not getting paid, and they are standing sentry.

David Johnson of San Francisco is the CEO of GigaGen, which does immune system research to help organ transplant succeed. The NIH awarded him a small business grant of over $1 million. He has already hired staff, but he can't get the funds until this shutdown ends. How many of us have read about people who get into trouble because their body rejects the organ? Here is a guy getting $1 million from the NIH, and he can't get the funds. It is shocking.

Why do they shut down the government? They don't like the health care bill that is helping so many people. Now they don't even talk about it. Now they talk about cutting Social Security and Medicare. That is their new dream. That is what they want now. I don't know how that makes us a better country. They can explain it for themselves. Open the government, pay our bills, stop the default, and then we can negotiate. The President has been clear. There is nothing he won't talk about.

Speaking as the chairman of the Environment and Public Works Committee and as a member of the commerce committee, 93 percent of the EPA have been furloughed. The Environmental Protection Agency has the support of about 75 percent of the American people, if not more. They are under attack constantly. That is one reason we never saw a mini-bill to restore the Environmental Protection Agency. They don't care over there. But what do these employees do? They guard our landmark environmental laws. They ensure our drinking water is safe, our rivers are safe to swim in, and our air is safe to breathe. They make sure that Superfund sites are cleaned up. Five hundred Superfund sites, and they have stopped the cleanup. And look at what a Superfund site is: It is a toxic brew of toxins that can hurt you, such as arsenic, benzine—you name it, the worst things. My Republican friends shut down the government because they want to stop the Affordable Care Act. They are also now stopping cleanup of Superfund sites in their own communities where they are a threat to children, to pregnant women, and to our families and our seniors. How does that make us a better country when we have no inspectors on the ground, not one in California, to make sure the air is safe and the water is safe?

Then, if we care about farming—and I know most of us do—EPA is responsible for the inventory of pesticides imported from abroad. This means that millions of dollars of imported agricultural chemicals have been stuck at U.S. ports because EPA personnel are not on hand to approve them for entry. This could be devastating for our agricultural economy, and it could further raise food prices for consumers.

Somebody explain to me how a government shutdown helps the farmers who are waiting for these pesticides to be cleared by the EPA. Somebody explain to me how a government shutdown helps when we have many road projects that are just getting ready to go forward, but we don't have any of the agencies ready to complete the studies to make sure they are safe enough to go forward. There are hundreds of thousands of jobs at stake, and most of them, when it comes to the highway bill, are in the private sector.

We just learned yesterday that 92 percent of the workers at the Nuclear Regulatory Commission have been furloughed. The Nuclear Regulatory Commission fulfills a critical mission. The NRC was created ''to ensure the safe use of radioactive materials.'' Anyone who has been alive the last year or so knows about Fukushima and what happened to the people there and understands when you are dealing with radioactive materials you are dealing with danger. The NRC had to furlough 92 percent of the workers because the Republicans don't like the Affordable Care Act, and they shut down the government.

Open it up. Enough is enough. Give the people back the government they asked for in this last election.

I understand. I didn't like it many times in my life, but I dealt with it. Grow up. Curling up in a corner and having a temper tantrum with a blanket and your teddy bear is not the right way to deal with it. Open the government, sit down with us, and tell us what you want to fix.

We have already agreed to a low number in the continuing resolution, a number we don't like at all and think is too low. We think it is a hardship. We agreed to the lower number because we wanted to have a chance to negotiate. Senator MIKULSKI is ready. Senator MURRAY is ready. We tried 21 times to get to conference with them and negotiate a budget, and 21 times they objected. And then they have—I have to use the word now—the chutzpah to say we won't negotiate when we tried 21 times to go to conference. There are no inspectors on the job to make sure the air is clean, to make sure the water is safe, and to make sure the nuclear powerplants are safe.

The Republicans talk about the parks, and I appreciate it. But they fail to mention that the Army Corps manages 12 million acres of public lands and waters nationwide, and the recreation areas host 370 million visits annually. These recreation areas support local businesses like resorts, marinas outfitters, grocery stores, gas stations, and hotels which provide goods and services to visitors as well as boost our Nation's economy. Because of this Republican shutdown the Corps closed Lake Mendocino located north of San Francisco. Lake Mendocino hosts half a million visitors annually, and in 2010 visitors spent $12.7 million at businesses within 30 miles of Lake Mendocino, supporting 106 jobs and $2.8 million in labor income.

So we get a little mini-bill over there, open the parks. No, open the government. Open all our recreation areas. Don't do this government by piecemeal, government by press release, government by your favorite agency. It is ridiculous. No party, Republican or Democratic, has the right to say to a community: You will thrive, but you will die. No party has the right.

I have a community near Los Angeles called University Park. The L.A. Times did a big story. The children there are suffering illness and everyone believes it is from an oil and gas site nearby. It is an environmental issue. The kids are suffering, and we don't know what is wrong with them. We called the EPA. They said: Senator we will be right on it. The government shut down. We don't have any inspectors in California.

Those kids are sick. So we get a small bill. Let's help the kids with cancer. Of course we want to. What about these kids? We don't know what they have. No party, Republican or Democratic, should say this child lives, and we are not sure about this child.

That is not America. This is one nation under God, indivisible, with liberty and justice for all. It is not for the Republicans to decide what they want to fund. It is for all of us to decide. Open the government. You shut it down because of the Affordable Care Act; I appreciate it. Fight that. We were with the President for a couple of hours yesterday. Republican Senators were with him today. He said he would look at everything. But don't keep this government closed and don't bring us to the first default we have ever had.

The National Transportation Safety Board furloughed 380 of its 400 employees. In my State we had an investigation going on into the Asiana Airlines Flight 214 crash. This crucial hearing was to include the testimony of foreign officials from Asia. Its postponement and the ongoing shutdown will delay the entire investigation. We need to know what went wrong, but this shutdown has shut down that investigation. Two weeks ago there was a small plane crash at the Santa Monica Airport that killed four people, and the NTSB is unable to investigate the crash. They had to take their materials, stick them in a file, and hopefully, some day they will come back to it.

Open this government. Don't say this community will thrive and that one will die, this family will get help and this one won't, this Federal worker will get paid, but we are not sure about that Federal worker, while they take their checks. This is stunning.

It is no wonder the American people are expressing their views, and I hope they will continue to put pressure on those who have this government shut down. There is no winner in a shutdown. It is devastating. And my friends keep saying they don't want it.

So open the government. It is easy. We did it here. It is waiting over there for JOHN BOEHNER to call it up. Don't add your pet peeves to it. I have a lot of pet peeves I would like to add to it, too. This shutdown is devastating for our workers, our businesses, our contractors, for our economy.

Speaker BOEHNER, put that bill on the floor. Let's open this government. Let's not default for the first time.

I was here in the House when Ronald Reagan was the President. Here is what he said about default:

> The full consequences of a default—or even the serious prospect of default—by the United States are impossible to predict and awesome to contemplate. Denigration of the full faith and credit of the United States would have substantial effects on the domestic financial markets and the value of the dollar.

We named an airport after him, a building after him. Let's pass this debt ceiling in his honor. He warned us. What has gone wrong with the party of Ronald Reagan? Where have they gone? What are they thinking—shut down the government? The last time they did, it cost a fortune. The last time they played with the debt, it cost a fortune. We hear about people dumping American bonds. Is that what they want?

Open up the government. Let the people have their government. It is a self-inflicted mess.

It is as though you wake up in the morning, it is a pretty nice day, you feel pretty good and, all of a sudden, you decide you are going to hit yourself with a brick. Oh my God.

These little mini bills—how ridiculous.

That reminds me, one of my friends gave me this analogy, which I think is right on, which is you see a woman drowning and you grab her and you take her halfway to the shore and you leave her and she drowns anyway. That is what these mini ''press release'' bills are. You find someone bleeding to death but you only sew them up halfway. It is a self-inflicted mess. That is the bad news.

The good news is, because it is self-inflicted, it is easy to get out of it. All you have to do there is take up the Senate bill and pass it. The Presiding Officer knows, she served there proudly. It has the Republican budget numbers in it, which we think are way too low, but we agreed to them as a compromise because we did not want to see the government shut down.

Take up the bill and pass it. Then we can talk about all these issues. Don't allow the greatest Nation in the world to default.

> Denigration of the full faith and credit of the United States would have substantial effects on the domestic financial markets and the value of the dollar.

I used to work on Wall Street—a very long time ago. We saw what happened when the markets thought we were not going to get together and resolve this default situation. The markets started to go down, 300 points, 200 points, and then at the mere hope that we could fix this problem, the markets shot up. The markets are watching. They know what is happening here. We are going to have a vote to lift the debt ceiling, to make sure we do not default on bills that were already incurred.

Let me be clear on that. We are talking about paying the bills we already incurred. You have to do that when you are a homeowner. You pay your mortgage. You pay your bills.

Then they started to say, what is a default? That was unbelievable. I looked it up in Black's Law Dictionary. If you don't pay your bills, that is a default. Don't tell me you pay the interest on the debt but you cannot pay the other bills—no, no, that is not the Black's Law Dictionary definition. Pay your bills. Don't make this Nation a deadbeat. If you want to treat your family that way, that is your choice, but this is the USA family. We do not default and we do not threaten default. Ronald Reagan warned us:

> Open up the Government, pay your bills.

It is basic stuff. It is not complicated. Majority Leader REID has been clear. He is a guy who can compromise, negotiate, talk—he has been around a long time. But he just said it: Open the government, pay our bills, and we will negotiate.

We are going to hear a lot of words, but I want people to understand why the government is shut down. The government is shut down because the House, Republican House under the leadership of JOHN BOEHNER or ERIC CANTOR or PAUL RYAN—we are never sure. Every day it is someone new but it is supposed to be JOHN BOEHNER—fine. I like him. That doesn't change where we are. They refuse to take up the bill that opens up the government—let's be clear—just until November. And it takes the numbers the Republicans like and we do not like and we say OK, we will give you that, let's keep the government open. We did it over here. I thank my Republican friends who voted to allow us to vote on that bill. That was a hard vote for them and I am very appreciative of that.

All BOEHNER has to do is take up that bill and pass it. That is all. Then we are out of the shutdown mess and that self-inflicted wound is gone. We can negotiate over the budget as we should. Then all they have to do is join us and make sure we do not default for the first time in history and make this country a deadbeat nation. How horrible. How embarrassing.

I will close with this. This self-inflicted wound mattered so much that President Obama had to cancel a trip to the Asian countries. That trip was important for our economy and for jobs and to get foreign investment. They did not care. We did our best, we sent the best face we could, Senator Kerry, Secretary of State. He did his best, but I know that was not a good thing to do because it gave China the upper hand. China made some cracks about the dysfunction here in the West. We are dysfunctional here, self-inflicted dysfunction, self-inflicted crisis.

This is not Hurricane Sandy. This is not the horrible blizzard that happened in South Dakota. I want to send my best to our colleagues there who are suffering because of what happened from that blizzard. Someday we will talk a little bit about climate change—maybe we can move forward—and the extreme weather that is happening. But I am not going to talk about that now. I have enough problems.

What we need to do today is the right thing for the country: Open up the government that belongs to the American people. It is easy. That is our job. Make sure we do not default. Then we sit down as friends, as colleagues across the aisle, and we negotiate all the important issues that Republicans care about and Democrats care about. I look forward to those negotiations.

I hope as they are going on around now in little back rooms around us that we are finding a way out of this mess. But we cannot forget what brought us here and the reason I wanted to be here today is to make it known in this CONGRESSIONAL RECORD the harm that has been done. There is a reason why there has not been a shutdown since I think it was 1996. There is a reason—because the people who lived through it recognized it was devastating. I guess the memory faded. People say: Oh, there have been 19 shutdowns. Yes, but there has not been one in all those years, since 1996. It is a lot of years. The reason is, it was devastating.

I want to put in the RECORD, first of all, how the Affordable Care Act is benefiting the people of this country already. Yes, it has had its major problems on getting on its webpage and the rest. We had that the first day in California, but we had millions of visits to the site, millions. We didn't expect it. It is going to be smoothed out. Yes, there will be ways to fix it. But I wanted to put in the RECORD the individual stories of my people and how they will benefit and how, it seems to me, so counterintuitive to stop a bill that was passed almost 4 years ago, upheld by the Supreme Court, and now finally is going into place. It is wrong to shut down the government because of such a law that is bringing peace of mind to so many—tens of thousands already in California signed up. I had to make that point.

I also want to reiterate what Ronald Reagan said, President Reagan, about playing with the full faith and credit of the United States. I want the American people to think about why we are in this place and how they can stop this from ever happening again, because I think it is a disgrace and it is wrong.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from South Carolina.

Mr. SCOTT. Madam President, I have enjoyed—well, not really, but I listened to my colleagues from the left talk about just reopening the government. I think to myself as she used the analogy of saving someone's life, dragging them halfway to the shore and stopping—I think to myself, think about the veterans. The House of Representatives passed a bill to fund the Department of Veterans Affairs.

I think about all those veterans who served our Nation, put their lives on the line. The House of Representatives sent over a bill to fund the very crucial needs of our veterans. Yet the Senate has failed to take it up. I think about the national parks and all the opportunities we have to see our parks reopen, see our veterans from World War II not denied. But, no, the Senate refuses to take it up.

I think of NIH and the critical funding that is necessary to continue the research. Yet our friends on the left refuse to take up this critical piece of legislation.

I enjoy being lectured to. I call it ''the Democrat lecture series,'' but at the end of the day we ought to have action and not simply words. I understand it is important for us to figure out who to blame.

In politics, the lowest common denominator is always fear. Our friends on the left do a very good job of assigning blame to someone, someplace, somehow, all the time, but what we need is leadership, not more information about polls but leadership. We need people committed to a cause. In a town that seems to be the epicenter of activity for the economy, we have two-thirds of this legislative process, the White House and the Senate, being run by our Democratic friends. Yet they want to blame the Republicans for the shutdown.

I call this, no question, undeniably the Democratic shutdown. I hope we find ourselves in a position to tell our veterans we were not kidding when we made the promise. Promises made should be promises kept. There ought to be no question of our commitment. We have seen that commitment demonstrated by our friends in the House, Republicans and Democrats, working together to pass legislation to take care of our veterans. We need more of that. That is leadership, working together, finding common ground to take care of those who have made America possible. But not today, not in this Senate, not when those bills sit idle. But the men and women who served our country cannot sit idle. They go without their benefits. I wonder why. I wonder why we are not seeing the sense of urgency to take care of those areas where there is full agreement. Why are we not taking advantage of the opportunities presented to us on a consistent basis by our friends in the House of Representatives? I do not understand that. I simply do not understand that.

I will say I do find it very difficult to find common ground in the Senate at times. It is going to be very difficult for Republicans and Democrats to find something we have in common. I believe we strive to work in a bipartisan fashion on a consistent basis, and I will tell you that on the most important issues it is very difficult. But I have been encouraged in my research in the last few days of looking for common ground—I have been encouraged that I have found some friends on the left who actually seem to agree with my position on some of the most important issues facing the Nation today. I will even quote some of my friends to the left as I think through the debt ceiling debate.

As a matter of fact, the first quote I will start with from my friends on the left:

> The fact that we are here today to debate raising America's debt limit is a sign of leadership failure.

I concur with my friend on the left. Another quote:

> Interest payments are a significant tax on all Americans. A debt tax Washington did not want to talk about.

I concur and agree with my friend to the left. Another quote:

> Increasing America's debt weakens us domestically and internationally. Leadership means that the buck stops here.

I agree with my friend on the left. My colleague on the left is now the President of the United States. These are quotes from Senator Barack Obama.

Our President of the United States and our Vice President, combined, voted approximately I think it was 10 or 11 times not to raise the debt ceiling of our country. They called it a failure of leadership. I think it is interesting. As a small business owner for the last 15 years I have had the opportunity to borrow what I considered at the time real money. Now that I am in Washington, I have to redefine the definition of real money. But at the time I was trying to get my business started. I went to a bank to borrow some money. The banker had some very interesting questions for me. He wanted to know how I was going to pay it back. He wanted to know what assets I was willing to put up in order to receive the resources I needed to fund my business.

I see the debt ceiling debate as a debate over how we explain to our investors, the American taxpayers, that we are handling responsibly the underlying causes for the need to increase our debt. I cannot tell our investors that we are handling our debt—our spending responsibly. I cannot tell our investors that we have a plan to balance our budgets. I cannot tell our investors, the taxpayers of America, that we are even thinking about controlling our spending. No. As a matter of fact, over the last 5 years we have spent nearly $5 trillion more than we brought in. And our friends on the left want to have a serious conversation about the spending of this country.

I cannot tell our investors, the American taxpayers, what I want to tell them, but I can tell them that we do not deserve an increase in the debt ceiling unless we produce a plan. I can tell our investors here at home that we do not deserve an increase without balancing our budgets. I can tell them, the taxpayers of America, that until we are willing to cut our spending at the same rate that we increase our credit card limit, we don't deserve their confidence in raising the debt ceiling.

Some would ask: Senator SCOTT, where, pray tell, would you find the revenue when our friends in the House of Representatives say that there is just no more money for us to cut? We can't find any place to cut anything in this $4 trillion spending plan. Really? Well, there are many options on how to cut spending here in America.

Senator TOM COBURN regularly shares reports on government waste. Last year he showed how the Market Access Program provided $20 million to the Cotton Council International. They used that money to create reality TV shows in India intended to promote the use of cotton. India, for the record, is an exporter of cotton and produces twice the amount the U.S. does.

The OMB released a report that improper payments for Medicare amounted to $47.9 billion in 2010, or 9 percent of Medicare's budget. The Chamber of Commerce looked at the Davis-Bacon requirements and found that it inflates the costs of Federal construction projects by as much as 15 percent and costs the taxpayers over $1 billion annually.

There are over 1,500 programs in the U.S. Government that are in duplication and costing the taxpayers more than $400 billion.

I would like to be able to share with the investors of America, the taxpayers, that we have a plan. I would love to share with the taxpayers of America that one day we will balance our budget. I would love to tell the taxpayers of America, our investors, that they can have confidence in our ability to lead us in such a way that future debt increases will be less likely to happen. I have not seen such a plan. I have not heard conversations about controlling our debt, only conversations about increasing the limit to create more debt.

I am concerned that as we wrestle with the problems of today we have no focus on tomorrow. I hope that this body will work diligently not only to have a conversation about the debt limit of America but to have a conversation about how we take care of the underlying problem.

I yield the floor.

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

The Senator from California.

MORNING BUSINESS

Mrs. BOXER. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate proceed to a period of morning business with Senators permitted to speak for up to 10 minutes each.

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

WORLD BANK REFORM EFFORTS

Mr. LEAHY. Madam President, the World Bank-IMF Annual Meetings are this week, and President Kim is expected to propose and seek approval for significant changes to the Bank's strategy, organization, and budget. After years of promised but undelivered change, serious and lasting reform at the World Bank is long overdue.

An October 9th Washington Post article, entitled ''Wider Impact Eludes World Bank,'' describes the limited impact of billions of dollars spent by the Bank on some 700 projects in 100 countries since the global financial crisis because of delays, poor oversight, cost overruns, and projects that did not deliver promised economic benefits.

This track record raises serious questions about the World Bank's relevance as developing countries struggle with growing demands for energy, water, food, education, health care, and jobs.

There are many capable, dedicated people at the World Bank who chose to work there because of their belief in its development mission. But for too long the Bank has been an insular, inflexible, arrogant, and risk-adverse institution, more responsive to government elites than the needs of the poor.

Beyond that, an October 7th New York Times article entitled ''World Bank, Rooted in Bureaucracy, Proposes a Sweeping Reorganization,'' describes a recent survey of the Bank's 10,000 employees. The survey revealed a ''culture of fear'' and a ''terrible environment for collaboration.''

I have voiced concerns about this culture myself. Fiefdoms are jealously guarded by Bank managers. Staff has been retaliated against, ostracized, and had their careers destroyed because they had the audacity to complain about incompetence, corruption, waste, or instances of sexual harassment and abuse.

For literally decades, I have heard promises of reform from one president of the Bank after another, yet the Bank's bureaucracy has defended the status quo. The Bank has become expert at appearing open to reform while fiercely resisting change.

So it is refreshing to hear a World Bank president openly acknowledge that the Bank has drifted away from its core mission of fighting poverty, and that its bureaucracy has become ''concretized.'' President Kim has denounced the culture of fear that leads to risk avoidance, and he has shown a willingness to challenge the conventional wisdom.

He has said that the employees of the World Bank's multiple components must work together if they are to have any hope of meeting the goals of eliminating extreme poverty by 2030 and increasing the incomes of the poorest 40 percent. He has also said that the World Bank must become more efficient and responsive to balance the increasing influence of countries like China. And to get there, he is proposing the first major strategic realignment in 17 years.

How does President Kim propose to change the Bank?

He has already shaken up senior management and brought in new people from outside. And he is proposing changes to the way the World Bank is organized and does its work. He wants to take down the bureaucratic silos that are inefficient, promote rivalries, and keep people from working together.

President Kim wants the technical staff to have greater influence within the Bank and he wants them to share their knowledge with countries. He thinks the Bank should be a better partner, helping governments make sound education, health, and job training investments for their people.

President Kim recognizes that the Bank requires increased resources to achieve its goals but that the Bank's long-term financial health is ultimately dependent on its ability to become more self-reliant. He wants to leverage private sector funding, increase revenue, and seek new financial tools to support country development.

He proposes to cut the World Bank's operating costs by $400 million over 3 years. He estimates that for every $100 million reduced in the Bank's operating budget an additional $1 billion would be available for new loans.

I am encouraged by President Kim's energy, focus, and willingness to address long-standing entrenched problems at the World Bank. He and the Bank's many employees should know that those of us in Congress who are responsible for appropriating the funds for the U.S. share of payments to the World Bank will be strongly supporting his efforts, and basing future appropriations on the results.

NATIONAL CYBER SECURITY AWARENESS MONTH

Mr. LEAHY. Madam President, this month, our Nation commemorates the 10th anniversary of National Cyber Security Awareness Month—a time to raise awareness about the need to ensure a safe and secure environment for all Americans in cyber space.

All of us have a stake in improving the Nation's cyber security. That is why I join with stakeholders in the government, academia and the private sector in calling attention to the need to address new cyber threats.

In today's digital age, we face new challenges in securing our computer networks from cyber threats and cyber crime. Even as the Internet and other rapidly advancing technologies spur economic growth and expand opportunity, there is growing uncertainty and unease about how Americans' sensitive personal information is collected, shared and stored. National Cyber security Awareness Month provides an important reminder about the need to update our Federal laws to keep pace with this new reality.

As chairman of the Senate Judiciary Committee, I continue to work to update our outdated Federal privacy laws. Earlier this year, I reintroduced bipartisan legislation to update the Electronic Communications Privacy Act, ECPA. The bill requires that the government obtain a search warrant—based upon probable cause—before gaining access to the content of our email and other electronic communications, when those communications are stored with a service provider. This common sense legislation, which I have cosponsored with Republican Senator MIKE LEE, enjoys broad support from a diverse coalition of organizations including the American Civil Liberties Union, Americans for Tax Reform, the Center for Democracy and Technology, and the Heritage Foundation.

I remain disappointed that a Republican Senator has objected to the unanimous consent request to pass this bipartisan bill, which overwhelmingly passed the Judiciary Committee in April. These privacy reforms are too important to delay. I hope that the Senate will consider and pass my bipartisan privacy bill without further delay.

I will also continue to work to better protect Americans from the growing threats of data breaches and cyber crime. For several years, I have sought to enact comprehensive data privacy legislation that would establish a single nationwide standard for data breach notification and also clarify and strengthen the criminal penalties for violations of the Computer Fraud and Abuse Act. These critical privacy proposals will help make all of us safer and more secure in cyber space and I will continue to push for enactment of these privacy reforms.

I commend the many citizens from Vermont and across the country who are holding events to recognize National Cyber Security Awareness Month. I look forward to working with these stakeholders and with Members of Congress on both sides of the aisle to help ensure that our right to privacy is protected in cyber space.

GILLESPIE RESPONSE

Mr. CORNYN. Mr. President, earlier this week the majority leader quoted from a speech delivered on September 30 by Ed Gillespie, the former chairman of the Republican National Committee and the current chairman of the Republican State Leadership Committee.

The majority leader used this quotation to attack Congressional Republicans and defend the hardline strategy embraced by Democrats. Unfortunately, he took Mr. Gillespie's words out of context and failed to mention some of the other remarks Mr. Gillespie made in that very same speech.

Not surprisingly, Mr. Gillespie has responded with a letter. He ends his letter by saying: ''Republican governors and legislators work across the aisle daily to solve the most critical issues in their states. It's an example of executive and legislative leadership you and President Obama would do well to emulate.''

Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent to have printed in the RECORD Mr. Gillespie's entire letter, along with his entire speech to the 2013 Republican State Leadership Committee Annual Meeting.

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

RSLC CHAIRMAN ED GILLESPIE LETTER TO SENATOR HARRY REID

WASHINGTON, D.C. (October 9, 2013).—Today the Republican State Leadership Committee released the following letter from Chairman Ed Gillespie:

DEAR SENATOR REID, Yesterday on the Senate Floor you cited remarks by me at the Republican State Leadership Committee National Meeting to bolster your own flawed policies. I'm sending you a copy of the remarks as they were released so you can see that they explicitly criticize your position and support Republicans in Congress.

Specifically, at the beginning of my remarks you'll see that I said: ''It's hard to see how President Obama could oppose a legislative extension of the individual mandate when he's issued an extension for big businesses by executive fiat, and it's hard to see how Harry Reid could oppose funding the rest of the government just to protect a carve-out for himself and his colleagues.''

You neglected to mention this in your floor statement yesterday.

Nor did you quote the full context of my RSLC remarks, which were: ''On top of that, Republicans in the House majority and Senate minority, are nearly always in the position of talking about what they're against—what they want to block or repeal or defund.

''And we join them in staunch opposition to the President's harmful policies—but our party might be better off if we spent more time speaking in positive terms about WHY we're against those policies and, more importantly, why we're FOR the policies we're for—as our state Republican leaders do so consistently.''

To be clear, I agree with House Speaker John Boehner when he said, ''The way to resolve this is to sit down and have a conversation to resolve our differences.''

Republican governors and legislators work across the aisle daily to solve the most critical issues in their states. It's an example of executive and legislative leadership you and President Obama would do well to emulate.

Sincerely,

ED GILLESPIE,
Chairman,
Republican State Leadership Committee.

CHAIRMAN ED GILLESPIE REMARKS AT 2013 RSLC ANNUAL RETREAT, AS PREPARED FOR DELIVERY, SEPTEMBER 30, 2013

As we're meeting here today, things are pretty messy in Washington, D.C.

And Americans are growing increasingly frustrated with President Obama and Congress. The approval ratings for everyone in Washington are dropping, but sadly Republicans in Congress are the ones in the basement, with approval ratings below President Obama and Democrats in Congress.

I'm hopeful today's decision by the House leadership to pass a Continuing Resolution which funds the government while delaying the individual mandate in Obamacare for a year, and eliminating its subsidies for Members of Congress and staff will change that.

It's hard to see how President Obama could oppose a legislative extension of the individual mandate when he's issued an extension for big businesses by executive fiat, and it's hard to see how Harry Reid could oppose funding the rest of the government just to protect a carve-out for himself and his colleagues.

So while there has been some very positive developments in this debate, I also think our Republican friends at the Federal level could benefit from sounding more like state leaders like those here today—lieutenant governors, attorneys general, house speakers and senate leaders—who talk all the time about improving the quality of life for the people you serve, in tangible terms.

When it comes to improving schools, growing jobs, creating opportunities, making communities safer, helping families in need, providing affordable housing for the working poor, fixing roads, and effectively responding to natural disasters—Republicans at the state level practice what they preach.

And the majority of Americans—53 percent to be exact—who live in states with a Republican governor and Republican majorities in their state legislatures, like what they hear and, more importantly, what they see.

Our caucuses continue to grow, expand and set records because of the positive leadership people like the elected officials we're honored to have with us here today are providing back home.

Now, I worked on Capitol Hill for more than a decade, and I've served in the White House as Counselor to the President. I was there for the confrontations between Speaker Gingrich and President Clinton, and President Bush and Speaker Pelosi. So I understand the dynamics when one party has control of congress and the other the presidency, from both ends of Pennsylvania Avenue—and the advantage of the ''bully pulpit'' over often competing voices.

On top of that, Republicans in the House majority and Senate minority, are nearly always in the position of talking about what they're against—what they want to block or repeal or defund.

And we join them in staunch opposition to the President's harmful policies—but our party might be better off if we spent more time speaking in positive terms about WHY we're against those policies and, more importantly, why we're FOR the policies we're for—as our state Republican leaders do so consistently.

I mean . . . when it comes to health care, Republican policies would protect people with pre-existing conditions, hold down premiums which are skyrocketing today, let people truly keep the health insurance they have if they like it, and allow workers to earn wages for 40 hours per week instead of 29.

Republican energy policies mean lower gas prices at the pump, lower home heating bills in winter, high-paying American jobs and less reliance on foreign sources of oil.

Republican economic policies mean more working families enjoying a better quality of life, and more people knowing the difference between holding a job as opposed to building a career.

We want American companies to expand jobs here rather than invest profits abroad by eliminating loopholes and tax breaks to bring the tax on business down from the highest in the world, so 401(k)s and pensions get bigger for those wanting to retire and young people graduating from high school and college are able to start a life on their own instead of living with their parents.

A friend once told me, ''The American dream is not just owning your own home, it's getting your children out of it.''

Those are some of the positive impacts of Republican policies in people's lives, and voters of every kind would welcome hearing about them—and they could lead more minorities, women and young people to think about voting Republican.

Unfortunately, all they too often hear from us is, ''Repeal Obamacare. Approve the Keystone XL pipeline. Pass tax reform.''

Repeal. Approve. Pass.

Short-hand process arguments that resonate strongly with people who already agree with us, but not really music to independent ears. We need to break out of a speech pattern that dwells on process, and discipline ourselves to talk about the benefits of Republican policies.

Democrats talk more than we do about lifting people out of poverty, expanding the middle class, and addressing income inequality.

And yet it's our policies that actually do those things and their policies that make them worse.

Most Americans realize that the constant stream of taxes, mandates, regulations and programs coming from the Obama Administration are not making our lives better, and certainly not helping our economy.

And I think deep down, many worry that these policies are not only killing U.S. jobs, but—worse—they run the risk of destroying the American work ethic.

They're worried about themselves and their families, and are pessimistic about our country's future.

Now, I sometimes find myself feeling angry and frustrated that more of my fellow Americans aren't more angry and frustrated. But while expressing anger and frustration gives voice to our core voters, it doesn't do much for all those worried and pessimistic voters.

They want hope and optimism.

They want to know how Republican policies will make things better, and it's our job in the states to explain that in relatable terms and demonstrate it with tangible solutions based on our conservative principles of freedom, liberty and equal opportunity.

Republicans understand that prosperity results from an economy based on creating wealth, not just redistributing it; and that if you truly care about helping the least among us and lifting millions of people out of poverty and expanding the middle class, history proves you should favor a system of democratic capitalism over a government managed economy.

We need to start measuring compassion not by how many of our fellow Americans are living off government programs, on food stamps, or in public housing but by how . . . many have become able to provide for themselves and their families through good jobs, like we're seeing more and more in Republican-led states.

It is no coincidence that the boom in natural gas occurring across our country is taking place in the one sector of the energy industry regulated by the states rather than the Federal government—and no coincidence that so much of that is taking place in states with Republican governors and legislatures who know how to protect our environment and property rights while also unleashing a transformative source of abundant domestic energy.

Republican policies promote equal opportunity. We know that eliminating discrimination is a moral imperative, but it does not alone guarantee the equal opportunity we all believe in.

So Republican attorneys general not only enforce anti-discrimination laws, Republican state legislators fight to improve our schools, empower parents and give children in poor neighborhoods a quality education that enables them to get into college or qualify for a good paying job.

The quality of a child's school should not be decided by the zip code in which she lives, and state legislators like the ones in this room are the ones who consistently stand up for those children against entrenched education establishments.

Another issue that's being resolved in the states is a very sensitive one, and it's being worked out in a more respectful way than it would be at the Federal level. I'm talking, of course, of same sex marriage.

As with, I'm sure, many of you, I have friends and family who are gay. And according to the tenets of my Faith, I accept them for who they are and love them. But the tenets of my Faith also hold that marriage is between one man and one woman. Indeed, in the Catholic Church, marriage is one of seven holy sacraments.

You see, for me, this is not a matter of opinion, or even really a choice. But I understand that what is a sacred rite to tens of millions of Americans is also in our civil law the means by which couples garner survivorship benefits, hospital visitation rights, insurance coverage and other benefits. So while I don't support same sex marriage, I do not begrudge its advocates their position on the issue.

And, I don't believe that everyone who supports same sex marriage is anti-Catholic, or a religious bigot. But in the same vein, it would be nice if so many of them would stop accusing everyone who doesn't share their views of being anti-gay or homophobic. Freedom of Religion is still in the very first Amendment to the Constitution.

We may not all agree on whether we should redefine what constitutes marriage, but hopefully we can agree not to redefine what constitutes tolerance.

So on the state level, and in particular in states with Republican leadership, we're seeing the benefits of respectful dialogue, problem solving policies and fiscal responsibility. Republicans are balancing budgets, reducing tax burdens, improving schools and making families safer and better off.

I know you're all familiar with our Future Majority Project at the RSLC, where we are recruiting hundreds of candidates for state legislatures who more fully reflect the growing diversity of our nation. So in addition to a positive message, we'll have fresh-faced messengers as well.

The RSLC's sole purpose is to help elect Republicans. Doing that means getting a majority of votes in thousands of different districts, and dozens of states.

We understand that Republican legislators here in Hawaii will not pass legislation identical to those in Texas or Ohio or North Carolina; and that attorneys general in North Dakota, Georgia, or Idaho won't have the same list of priorities.

But their shared beliefs, principles and values take each of their states in a much better direction than their Democratic opponents would.

Republicans don't seek to win elections to gain power, but to translate our principles into policies that make our country stronger and make lives better for our fellow citizens. And that means winning majorities in legislative chambers, electing governors and other statewide officeholders, and—ultimately—winning a majority of the Electoral College again.

If Republicans can have unified state government where a majority of Americans live, we can win back the White House. But to do so, we'll have to learn valuable lessons at the national level, and those lessons are being taught at the state level.

The United States of America is a great nation, but we can see how President Obama's policies are making us weaker—here at home and in the world. The Republican Party is a great Party. But we have not won the national popular vote in five of the last six presidential elections.

For our country to be stronger, our party must be stronger.

And that begins with all of us.

RECOGNIZING NIH RESEARCH

Mr. BLUNT. Madam President, today I wish to honor Dr. Tara Palmore and Dr. Julie Segre, 2013 Federal Employees of the Year, for their ground-breaking research to stop the spread of deadly hospital-acquired infections. Each year approximately 100,000 patients die from hospital-acquired infections. These deadly infections affect patients who are in the course of receiving healthcare treatment for other conditions; therefore, the patients often already have compromised immune systems. These two doctors created a revolutionary model to identify and halt the spread of infection for the rest of the health care industry to follow.

Over the course of a 12-month period in 2011 and 2012, a rare and deadly ''superbug'' was spreading from patient to patient at one of the Nation's premier research hospitals, the National Institutes of Health's Clinical Center. This two-woman team—Dr. Tara Palmore, a deputy hospital epidemiologist, and Dr. Julie Segre, a senior investigator—partnered with a talented team of doctors to accomplish an extraordinary achievement. For the first time ever, they were able to sequence the bacteria's DNA to decipher how the pathogen spread from patient to patient. This allowed doctors to detect the origins of the infections, trace the transmission, and implement measures to put an end to the outbreak.

Tragically, 18 seriously ill patients acquired the bacteria and seven ultimately died from the infection, but this use of genomics could profoundly change the way hospital-acquired infections are identified and halted, leading to quicker response times and saving tens of thousands of lives. Dr. Francis Collins, the Director of the NIH said,

> ''It is a groundbreaking advance in one hospital that will now have an impact across the world and will become the standard. It is a fantastic example of taking a challenging medical problem and applying technologies in a new way to come up with a remarkable result. We now have a new weapon in the battle to stop the spread of drug-resistant organisms.''

Dr. John Gallin, the Director of the NIH's Clinical Center, said the breakthrough by the NIH team is ''a magnificent demonstration of how a hospital can contain these infections when they occur.''

There are a limited number of antibiotics available to fight these types of highly resistant bacteria, so this new discovery provides a new approach for hospital infection control that will benefit numerous patients in the future. I congratulate Drs. Palmore and Segre for their hard work and critical contributions to the health care community and to all of their colleagues for the great work at the National Institutes of Health.

ADDITIONAL STATEMENTS

TRIBUTE TO ORTHEIA BARNES

• Mr. LEVIN. Madam President, on November 3, the many friends and admirers of Ortheia Barnes will gather in Detroit to pay tribute to her remarkable life and career. ''Careers'' would actually be more appropriate in Ortheia's case, because this extraordinary lifelong Detroiter has excelled in multiple fields.

Some Detroiters know Ortheia as an entertainer. They have heard her voice accompanying Motown legends and recording stars such as Aretha Franklin, heard her powerful renditions of gospel songs or watched her sing during the annual Thanksgiving parade downtown or they have seen her in stage productions or local television programs.

Other Detroiters know Ortheia from her civic involvement. She is active in a host of charitable endeavors, from the American Cancer Society to Focus: HOPE, to programs that help people recover from addiction.

Some may know Ortheia from her political activism. She has long been active in Michigan elections, from city council to Senate, and she is an energetic advocate for the idea that every American, regardless of race or creed or color, is welcome and needs to be active in the political process.

If you do not know Ortheia as an entertainer or supporter of worthy causes, you know her for her faith. She has ministered around the world, not only sharing her faith but doing the good works that are so fundamental to it.

I am fortunate to know Ortheia for all the gifts she has given our community and in one more way: My wife Barbara and I have known her as a longtime family friend. Her family and ours have been linked through three generations, beginning with Barbara's and Ortheia's mothers. Ortheia herself briefly babysat our kids while she was in high school. We know how proud Ortheia's warm and wise mom Belle was of her daughter back then and of her growing pride as the multigifted adult Ortheia emerged.

When Detroit gathers on November 3 to celebrate Ortheia's birthday, the dress will be sharp, the music will be proud, and the stories will be many. Whether we know Ortheia from the

pulpit or the stage, from campaign strategy sessions or gatherings of family and friends, Detroiters admire her spirit, her energy, her dedication and her talent, and we thank her for all she has done and all she will do for our community and its people.●

MESSAGE FROM THE HOUSE

At 11 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. 79. Joint resolution making continuing appropriations for certain components of the Department of Homeland Security for fiscal year 2014, and for other purposes.

The message also announced that pursuant to 46 U.S.C. 51312(b), and the order of the House of January 3, 2013, the Speaker appoints the following Member on the part of the House of Representatives to the Board of Visitors to the United States Merchant Marine Academy: Mrs. McCarthy of New York.

The message further announced that pursuant to section 803(a) of the Congressional Recognition for Excellence in Arts Education Act (2 U.S.C. 803(a)), the Minority Leader appoints the following member on the part of the House of Representatives to the Congressional Award Board: Mr. Mitchell Draizin of New York, New York.

MEASURES READ THE FIRST TIME

The following joint resolutions were read the first time:

H.J. Res. 79. Joint resolution making continuing appropriations for certain components of the Department of Homeland Security for fiscal year 2014, and for other purposes.

REPORTS OF COMMITTEES

The following reports of committees were submitted:

By Mr. HARKIN, from the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions, with an amendment in the nature of a substitute:

S. 1094. A bill to amend the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965, and for other purposes (Rept. No. 113–113).

INTRODUCTION OF BILLS AND JOINT RESOLUTION

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

By Mr. PAUL:

S.J. Res. 25. A joint resolution proposing an amendment to the Constitution of the United States relative to applying laws equally to the citizens of the United States; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

SUBMISSION OF CONCURRENT AND SENATE RESOLUTIONS

The following concurrent and Senate resolutions were read, and referred (or acted upon), as indicated:

By Mr. COONS (for himself and Mr. FLAKE):

S. Res. 268. A resolution condemning the September 2013 terrorist attack at the Westgate Mall in Nairobi, Kenya, and Reaffirming United States support for the people and Government of Kenya, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Foreign Relations.

ADDITIONAL COSPONSORS

(This section will be printed in a future edition of the RECORD.)

SUBMITTED RESOLUTIONS

SENATE RESOLUTION 268—CONDEMNING THE SEPTEMBER 2013 TERRORIST ATTACK AT THE WESTGATE MALL IN NAIROBI, KENYA, AND REAFFIRMING UNITED STATES SUPPORT FOR THE PEOPLE AND GOVERNMENT OF KENYA, AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES

Mr. COONS (for himself and Mr. FLAKE) submitted the following resolution; which was referred to the Committee on Foreign Relations:

S. RES. 268

Whereas, on September 21, 2013, armed terrorists attacked the Westgate Mall in Nairobi, Kenya, killing more than 60 people and injuring at least 175 from at least 12 different countries during a four-day siege;

Whereas the attack was the most deadly terrorist incident in Kenya since the 1998 al Qaeda bombing of the United States Embassy in Nairobi;

Whereas al Shabaab, a Somali Islamist extremist group with ties to al Qaeda, has claimed responsibility for the attack, declaring that it was in retaliation for the Government of Kenya's participation in the African Union Mission in Somalia (AMISOM);

Whereas al Shabaab was designated a Foreign Terrorist Organization by the United States Government in 2008 and a Specially Designated Global Terrorist entity in 2012;

Whereas the investigation to identify those responsible for the attack and efforts to bring them to justice are ongoing;

Whereas Kenya is an important ally and regional security partner, playing a vital role in breaking al Shabaab's recent stranglehold on Somalia through its participation in AMISOM;

Whereas the Republic of Kenya and the United States have a strong and enduring partnership based on a shared commitment to promoting peace and prosperity in East Africa and around the world; and

Whereas Kenya is a culturally rich and ethnically diverse country: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the Senate—

(1) condemns, in the strongest possible terms, the heinous atrocities and terrorist attack that occurred at the Westgate Mall in Nairobi, Kenya, from September 21 through 24, 2013;

(2) offers its condolences to the families, friends, and loved ones of those who were killed in the attack and expresses its hope for the recovery of the wounded, including United States citizens;

(3) recognizes the many heroic and selfless act by Kenyan citizens, first responders, and the Kenya Red Cross to rescue those caught in the Westgate Mall during the attack;

(4) reaffirms United States support for the efforts of the Government and people of Kenya to combat terrorism, counter extremism, promote tolerance, and bring the perpetrators of the Westgate Mall attack to justice;

(5) commends the Government of Kenya's continued participation in the African Union Mission in Somalia; and

(6) recognizes Kenya as an important regional ally and partner of the United States.

AUTHORITY FOR COMMITTEES TO MEET

COMMITTEE ON COMMERCE, SCIENCE, AND TRANSPORTATION

Ms. LANDRIEU. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation be authorized to meet during the session of the Senate on October 11, 2013, at 1 p.m. in room 253 of the Russell Senate Office Building. The Committee will conduct a hearing entitled, ''The Impacts of the Government Shutdown on Our Economic Security.''

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

MEASURE READ FOR THE FIRST TIME—H.J. RES. 79

Mrs. BOXER. Madam President, I understand that H.J. Res. 79 has been received from the House and it is at the desk.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will read the joint resolution by title for the first time.

The assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

A joint resolution (H.J. Res. 79) making continuing appropriations for certain components of the Department of Homeland Security for fiscal year 2014, and for other purposes.

Mrs. BOXER. Madam President, I ask for its second reading and object to my own request.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Objection having been heard, the joint resolution will be read for a second time on the next legislative day.

ORDERS FOR SATURDAY, OCTOBER 12, 2013

Mrs. BOXER. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent that when the Senate completes its business today, it adjourn until 11 a.m. on Saturday, October 12, 2013, and 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; and that the time until 12 p.m. be equally divided and controlled between the two leaders or their designees.

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

PROGRAM

Mrs. BOXER. Madam President, at noon tomorrow there will be a cloture

vote on the motion to proceed to S. 1569, the debt limit legislation.

ORDER FOR ADJOURNMENT

Mrs. BOXER. Madam President, if there is no further business to come before the Senate, I ask unanimous consent that it adjourn under the previous order, following the remarks of Senators SESSIONS and BLUNT.

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

The Senator from Alabama.

THE DEBT INCREASE

Mr. SESSIONS. Madam President, the Republican Senators met with President Obama earlier today and discussed many of the financial issues facing America and the difficulties we are having in achieving an agreement that puts us on a sound financial path. There surely are actions we can take together to improve our situation. I believe there was some progress made, and there are some avenues for progress that could be opened in the hours to come. I hope we can do that.

But now it is well to recognize that our Medicare and Medicaid programs are surging in costs, and—as the President rightly noted to us at our meeting earlier today and has done so for a number of years—that government health care costs are the biggest drivers of our debt. In other words, it is increasing at a faster rate than other programs, and we project it will continue to increase at those rates.

I think that is true. It is true. We have a huge challenge there. But importantly to this whole discussion, I recall during a formal address to a joint session of Congress in September 2009, the President promoted his Affordable Care Act and stated that he would help fix this problem of growing costs of health care and then flatly and unequivocally promised, ''I will not sign a plan that adds one dime to our deficits either now or any time in the future, period.'' That is astoundingly inaccurate, and we have to know this. We are voting and wrestling on what to do about our health care bill and other spending programs. But one thing that has been overlooked is this promise that the health care bill—the Affordable Care Act, ObamaCare—is not paid for as it was promised, and it is astoundingly over budget.

Let me talk for a few minutes about this issue and its importance. As we work together to try to reach a compromise, we have to understand that fact. As we work to deal with some of our long-term financial challenges, we need to focus on that matter.

Indeed, it appears, according to the Government Accountability Office, that over the long-term accounting period used to evaluate the unfunded liabilities of the United States, that the Affordable Care Act will add $6.2 trillion to the unfunded liabilities of America. That does not count the interest on that over this long period of time which may well double that figure. It puts it almost equal to the liability of Social Security—and maybe even more. So this is a big deal.

I want to share with my colleagues some thoughts as good faith negotiations are going on by Members. Republicans and Democrats are talking, the White House staff people are talking, and House Members and the Speaker are talking. There are some principles they need to be aware of as we go forward. I have a budget warning, and will make this point: Trust fund improvements—Social Security and Medicare primarily—are produced by savings or increased revenues in these programs. A number of ideas have been floated that could do that, and they need to be done. But those savings through revenue or new cutting of expenses cannot be used to justify or pay for breaking Budget Control Act caps, and that is very important.

It is essential in these hours of financial debate that all Members of Congress and the American people understand that the savings gained from much-needed reforms of our financially unsound Social Security and Medicare trust funds can only be used to strengthen those funds and not be used simultaneously to support spending for a new program, such as the Affordable Care Act. We can't use the money twice.

Our vital Social Security and Medicare programs are not solvent at this time. We know they are going into deficit right now. Our revenues will increase for those programs or costs to those programs will be brought down—as many ideas are being floated, and indeed, a number of them are in the President's budget and have some merit—and the resulting funds can only be spent once. The Budget Control Act restricts discretionary spending. It says: We are not going to increase spending over a certain rate. We are going to reduce the rate of increase in government spending.

The Budget Control Act is in the law. It was negotiated by the President, Senator REID—the majority leader here—the Speaker, and Senator MCCONNELL, and they agreed on certain limits on spending over the next 10 years. At that time we were projected to increase spending over 10 years by $10 trillion. If it was flat spending, we would spend $37 trillion; under projected growth it would go to $47 trillion.

Under the Budget Control Act we said: OK, we are going to cut spending. It really wasn't a cut in spending. But we would reduce the growth of spending from $10 trillion to $8 trillion, and that is why we are hearing so much today.

In the 2 years-plus since that agreement, Congress—except for a few budget gimmicks that my staff members bring up—has largely stuck to those limits. The President and the Democratic Senate have openly and directly opposed those limits. The President—6 months after signing the Budget Control Act—submitted a budget to this Senate that would increase spending $1 trillion over the limits agreed to in the Budget Control Act. Can you imagine that? There was a bipartisan meeting. As we worked on the debt ceiling to raise the debt ceiling $2 trillion, we agreed that over 10 years we would cut spending by $2.1 trillion.

Six months later, the President submits a budget to the Senate and to the House that calls for spending $1 trillion over that amount. So I think that was a breach—a serious act of the President to move away from the promises he had made and the act he signed into law.

To be more specific about it, one of the proposals in the President's budget that received a lot of discussion is an alteration of the way we calculate the inflation index for Social Security. It has been referred to as chained CPI. It is projected to save a certain amount of money—maybe $128 billion or maybe more. Let's just say it is going to save $100 billion—chained CPI—and it would, in fact, increase the revenue into Social Security, and it would reduce the amount of money that is paid out of Social Security. It would save, let's say, $100 billion. So this would strengthen Social Security, there is no doubt about that. It would strengthen Social Security because the Social Security liabilities are going down and the revenue is going up.

What I wish to say to our colleagues as they wrestle with how to bring our numbers into better balance is that those savings cannot benefit Social Security and simultaneously justify increased Treasury spending over the Budget Control Act levels.

We can't use the money twice. This is so basic. We are talking about hundreds of billions of dollars.

CBO, our Congressional Budget Office, has analyzed this kind of maneuver, and they have clearly affirmed that even though the budget score over 10 years, using the unified budget accounting methods, would suggest otherwise, we cannot spend the money in both places.

So if we know how to ask a question of CBO, over the 10-year budget window, it can give the appearance that we have this money because it creates more money coming into the government that we can spend over here. But the money is dedicated to Social Security. It is Social Security money. It can't be spent twice. If it is going to strengthen Social Security, it can't be spent over here.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator has consumed 10 minutes.

Mr. SESSIONS. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent for 5 additional minutes.

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

Mr. SESSIONS. I thank the Presiding Officer most graciously.

CBO has flatly called this in a letter, at my request, double-counting. Can

my colleagues imagine the Congressional Budget Office saying that the U.S. Congress is double-counting? Actually, in that case, in dealing with the Affordable Care Act, $500 billion of money extracted out of Medicare was being used to claim it would pay for the Affordable Care Act when it was Medicare's money.

So I am talking at this point and just sharing an example from Social Security and the chained CPI, but the principles are the same because both are trust funds. So it is double-counting.

In fact, any Social Security or Medicare trust fund savings so produced are legally assets of the trust fund, and debt instruments of the U.S. Treasury are issued and interest paid from the U.S. Treasury to Social Security and to the Medicare trust funds on the monies that are borrowed in that way. If the savings, as is likely, do not result in a trust fund surplus, then there is really no surplus that they can borrow. It simply tends to show more income to the U.S. Treasury—falsely showing that because, again, the money is committed off-budget to Social Security.

The critical fact is that all of those moneys are already obligated to Social Security and Medicare and will be needed by those programs, and more money, actually, is going to be needed by those programs to meet the future obligations of those trust funds, which are insolvent. They don't have enough money coming in to pay the obligations they will be required to pay in the years to come.

So the scope of this abuse of our accounting system is truly enormous and threatens our Nation's very financial future. For example, it has allowed the President to falsely assert that the Affordable Care Act would not add one dime to the debt when, absent double-counting, the act would increase our debt by over $500 billion over the next 10 years—$500 billion. It is going to adversely impact the financial condition of America.

The same accounting manipulations enabled many supporters of the Gang of 8 immigration bill to assert that their legislation was paid for. They were going to spend all of this money and they were going to make us safe from illegal immigration and it was all paid for—every dime of it—and wouldn't add to the debt. Do my colleagues know how they did that? Well, they were going to give Social Security cards to millions—11 million or however many would come forward—and they would pay Social Security, and they would have more Social Security money coming into the U.S. Treasury, and therefore that would pay for the extra border patrol and other expenses they said they have to spend money on.

But I ask my colleagues to think about it. The money paid by the people who have been given legal status, the Social Security they have paid for is their money. It is their money. They are going to draw out every penny of it when they get older. We can't say it is available to pay another expense today. If we do, it is not going to be there, to pay for their Social Security when they retire. How simple is this? This was the message here on the floor. They steadfastly insisted that the bill was paid for, double-counting Social Security money.

So we have to get straight about this, I have to say. Legislation must be adopted to stop this double-counting. It is open to abuse and manipulation and has been done, really, by both parties in the past but not as much as we have seen lately. It is enabling the Nation's dangerous financial trajectory.

Finally, as we work to end the Nation's financial impasse, another warning is needed. All should understand that consent to passage of a continuing resolution or debt ceiling bill cannot be achieved until we have sufficient time to have a complete CBO score of it so we know what kind of maneuvers are being used in the bill. So I am going to object. We are not going to wake up one day and say we have to run to the floor and pass a bill with 30 minutes' notice or 3 hours' notice. That would be a mistake.

Madam President, I thank the Chair and yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Missouri.

SETTING PRIORITIES

Mr. BLUNT. Madam President, first of all, I wish to follow up on a comment my friend from Alabama just made on Social Security and Medicare. I think it is very important that we listen carefully to what he had to say, that if we do things that are so-called reforms—and I think there are many places where we could reform those programs—we should use those savings to save those programs. We shouldn't say we are going to have reforms in Medicare, more likely, perhaps, right away, then Social Security, and then not use those reforms to extend the life of these important programs.

These are programs, we have told Americans—in the case of Social Security since the mid-1930s, and in the case of Medicare since the mid 1960s—that people would be able to rely on. We see that those programs can be extended and adjusted and reformed, but I think our leader on our side of the budget effort who spends so much time trying to make the case for the right kind of budget decisions is clearly pointing out that if we make savings in these programs and then use that money to fund other discretionary spending, is that the fair thing to do with Social Security or Medicare? I don't think so, and I think the Senator from Alabama has raised a very good point.

As we try to figure out how to move forward this year, we need to be sure that savings are real savings, that they are not double-counted, that we are not saving money in one program that clearly should go toward the priority of that program rather than the other priorities we haven't yet set.

This brings me to the topic of setting priorities. We had the opportunity to go to the White House—the Democrats yesterday, Republicans today—to talk to the President about how we move forward with the budget year, the spending year that has already started. When we were there, the President made it clear once again that we shouldn't negotiate, but on more than one occasion in the morning when we were there, the President said we shouldn't be allowed to negotiate for things we couldn't get or didn't get in the regular process.

My view of that is there is no regular process. As the President said that, I thought, this is like pouring gas on a fire of frustration for Members of the Senate and particularly in the House who are frustrated that there is no process. There is no place earlier than a crisis to say: Let's debate these issues, let's debate these priorities.

How many of the 12 spending bills for the year that began 11 days ago have we had on the floor of the Senate? One. One of the bills that should have been done starting in about last March and April and that should have been completed over the summer. That money would have been spent beginning October 1. Not one of the 12 was on the floor, and, frankly, it was a bill the majority leader had every reason to believe wouldn't pass if it was brought to the floor. Let's assume it would have passed. It still would have just been one of the 12 bills we need to run the government.

So when the President or anybody else says we shouldn't use these crisis moments to try to get our priorities discussed, they are the only moments we have. They are the only time we have.

I don't like government by crisis. I think it is very unfortunate for this Presidency that if we really look at how the government has worked in the last 5 years, it is from one crisis to another. If I could do anything to help President Obama pull away from this crisis management, I would be inclined to want to try to do that, particularly if pulling away from crisis management meant we were going to come back and have a fair debate between a divided Congress that leads to some way forward that can actually accomplish something.

The idea that we won't negotiate at this moment—or the President, feeling that somehow he won't be held hostage to the debt limit—I am certainly going to vote tomorrow not to even move forward with this discussion for a $1 trillion debt ceiling increase with no discussion of what we are going to do to change our behavior.

President Obama, to his credit, entered into a negotiation just 2 years ago, in August of 2011, and in return for $2.5 trillion worth of spending cuts over a decade, he got $2.1 trillion in additional debt ceiling. Now, the President

agreed to that in August of 2011 and then in October of 2013 says nobody should ever negotiate on the debt ceiling.

Fifty-three times since 1978 we have had a change in the debt ceiling, and since 1978 more than half of those debt limits included legislation dealing with either spending or other matters.

The President says: I will not put this on future Presidents, to be the President who goes forward with increasing the debt ceiling under some—with a negotiation.

Well, every President since 1978 has had the same situation the President had in August of 2011, the same situation the Presiding Officer and I would have if we were going to get our line of credit extended and we had exceeded our line of credit. Whoever is going to extend that line of credit is going to say: What are you going to do to change the behavior that allowed you to blow through your last line of credit?

The President and others will say: This is about America paying its bills. This is about wanting the current Congress to pay the bills it has incurred.

Well, most of the bills that have been incurred weren't incurred by this Congress; they were incurred by past legislation. Sixty-two percent of the spending is now in last year—it will probably be higher in the year we are in at this moment—62 percent of the spending was mandatory spending. It was spending put in place by Congresses beginning in the 1930s, through the health care bill. That is mostly mandatory spending. The current Congress didn't get to vote on the health care bill, but more importantly, most of the current Congress wasn't alive when the Social Security Act passed. Many of the Members of the Congress and even some of the Members of the Senate were not alive when Medicare passed.

This is the time for this Congress to look at those pieces of legislation and say: What do we need to do to adjust them to the future needs of the country? What do we need to do to adjust them to the current and future demographic realities of society? People live longer. People need these services longer. What do we do to make this work in a way that these programs can last?

These are not programs put in place by this Congress. These are not bills incurred by this Congress. These are bills, in fact, for which this Congress and this President can decide we are going to look for these programs and be sure they last and look at these programs and be sure they can be paid for.

That is exactly the kind of discussion we should be having when we ask the American people, through their Congress, to extend the line of credit.

The idea that we will not negotiate on the debt ceiling or we will not negotiate on how to spend the money—if we do not negotiate on how to spend the money by bringing the appropriations bills to the floor, how are we supposed to negotiate and set priorities and let democracy work? I do not like democracy by crisis. Whatever we do in the next few weeks or months that it takes to finish out the year we have already started, what we should all do is commit ourselves for the year that begins next October 1 to be prepared for that like the Congresses until just 6 or 7 years ago generally were prepared at or near that date.

When there was a government shutdown in 1995, six of the appropriations bills had been passed, signed into law, and all those parts of the government were working after a debate that provided funding.

So I would just say, as I conclude, we need to move away from management by crisis, but we also need to understand that if we do not do the work the regular way, there is no other place to take a stand, there is no other place to have this debate. As to the President's sense that you could get this at some other point, there is no other point if the Congress and the President are not doing their job.

I will just say, we should do our job, we should do it in a way people can see. We should do it in the small bites that the budget process is set up to allow us to look at and debate. We have not done that over the last 12 months. We have started this year in about the worst possible way. Hopefully, we will get through this and then resolve to do the work the right way for what begins 1 year from now. But at this moment, the President thinking we can just go ahead and move forward without negotiating is a wrong decision on the President's part.

I yield the floor.

ADJOURNMENT UNTIL 11 A.M. TOMORROW

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the Senate stands adjourned until 11 a.m. tomorrow.

Thereupon, the Senate, at 6:04 p.m., adjourned until Saturday, October 12, 2013, at 11 a.m.