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House of Representatives

The House met at 10 a.m. and was called to order by the Speaker pro tempore (Mr. HUIZENGA of Michigan).

DESIGNATION OF SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

The SPEAKER pro tempore laid before the House the following communication from the Speaker:

WASHINGTON, DC,
October 15, 2013.

I hereby appoint the Honorable BILL HUIZENGA to act as Speaker pro tempore on this day.

JOHN A. BOEHNER,
Speaker of the House of Representatives.

MORNING-HOUR DEBATE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the order of the House of January 3, 2013, the Chair will now recognize Members from lists submitted by the majority and minority leaders for morning-hour debate.

The Chair will alternate recognition between the parties, with each party limited to 1 hour and each Member other than the majority and minority leaders and the minority whip limited to 5 minutes each, but in no event shall debate continue beyond 11:50 a.m.

LOOK FOR AREAS OF POTENTIAL AGREEMENT

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Oregon (Mr. BLUMENAUER) for 5 minutes.

Mr. BLUMENAUER. Mr. Speaker, it is slowly dawning on some of my Republican colleagues, who were so gleeful about shutting down the government 2 weeks ago, that there will be no reward for not ruining the economy. Some think they should get a prize when they stop the senseless punishment of the American people, paying our employees not to work, and inflicting needless disruption on the lives and costs to the taxpayers—billions of dollars.

It appears that the public has had a hard time figuring all of this out, but has understandably concluded that most of the blame is due to the Republican crusade against health care reform and their reckless choice of tactics.

Is it possible that something constructive can come from the Tea Party debacle? Absolutely. Maybe we can do our job and look for areas of potential agreement.

Last week, PAUL RYAN and I continued a long-standing partnership on agricultural reform. We led a debate showing the will of the House to limit subsidy for the terribly flawed and expensive crop insurance program by slightly reducing the lavish subsidies to the largest agribusinesses. It is not the final answer by any means. There is no guarantee the Ag conferees will pay attention to the will of the House, but it is a clear area in that we can reduce spending and improve programs for most farmers and ranchers.

Maybe we could find bipartisan agreement that we should not slash infrastructure spending even further. Let's have a hearing before the House Ways and Means Committee and explore how to fund the transportation bill that expires in 348 days and creates a devastating infrastructure cliff.

If people are concerned about the deficit and government spending, maybe the House could finish work on its own spending bills. My Republican friends shut down the appropriations process more than 2 months ago. It might be instructive, before demanding more reductions in funding services, to see if they can actually pass their own version of the budget. If they can't, maybe they would reconsider taking government spending down to the levels of 1962, which is what their budget program requires, when America had 140 million fewer people, when there was one-third the number of senior citizens.

Regardless, their pleas to negotiate ought to mean that they stop refusing to negotiate with the Senate about the budget. If they are serious and not cynical, they will appoint their conference committees and stop 6 months of stalling.

Let's debate whether, at a time of retrenchment at the Pentagon, we really need to spend two-thirds of a trillion dollars over the next 10 years on nuclear weapons we don't need and cannot use for American security. Ninety percent of the expensive, dangerous stockpile is unnecessary for even the most ardent believer in nuclear deterrence. It has just morphed into a grotesque jobs program.

Should America sign away its mineral wealth to foreign companies for free? Before we cut investments in our people and our future, maybe we should reexamine the Mining Act of 1872, which remains on the books exactly as it was signed into law by President Ulysses S. Grant.

These are areas worthy not just of debate but of real, honest negotiation and compromise and action. We can agree on areas to get more value for the taxpayer, help those who need it most, not those who need it least, and allow the process of government to work. If you try in good faith, the American system of government is not as bad as it looks.

THE TIME FOR SOLUTIONS IS NOW

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentlewoman from North Carolina (Ms. FOXX) for 5 minutes.

Ms. FOXX. Mr. Speaker, the time for solutions is now. The American people expect their elected leaders to come to the table, work together, and put people above politics.

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Today is the 15th day the Federal Government has been shut down, the 15th day national parks and memorials have been closed to the American people, the 15th day the NIH, WIC, and Head Start have not had the funding they were counting on.

Today is also 2 days shy of the deadline when America might reach its $16.7 trillion debt limit. House Republicans, as we have for weeks, will continue to offer bipartisan common ground to reopen government and protect America's credit rating.

More than 70 Senators are on record as opposing ObamaCare's medical device tax. Let's put that tax on hold and reopen government.

It is not very fair that Members of Congress receive special help to pay for ObamaCare that isn't available to others. Let's remove the special treatment and reopen government.

It is not right that the American people are on the hook to provide health care subsidies to individuals whose incomes might not even qualify. Let's demand accountability for taxpayer dollars and reopen government.

Since the shutdown began, bipartisan majorities in the House of Representatives have voted to reopen government services and spare North Carolinians from Washington's dysfunction. We voted to open our parks and memorials because their closures are punitive, and they should never be disrespected by a theater of barricades.

We agree National Institutes of Health clinical trials should continue, so we voted to fund NIH. Similarly, we voted to ensure pay for all veterans and to restore FEMA, the FDA, Head Start, and the WIC program, among others; but most of our proposals to get government functioning again face Senate inaction and White House veto threats.

The our-way-or-the-highway mindset must stop. The challenges we face as a Nation require bipartisan solutions. Both parties need to work together to reopen government and manage our debt.

House Republicans remain committed to responsible, bipartisan solutions to end the shutdown and defend our credit rating. We hope our counterparts in the Senate are as well.

THE GOVERNMENT SHUTDOWN'S HUMAN CONSEQUENCES

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentlewoman from Illinois (Mrs. BUSTOS) for 5 minutes.

Mrs. BUSTOS. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to again speak about the human consequences of this reckless and irrational government shutdown. We have now reached day 15 of this foolishness.

Each day, I spend time speaking with people from my congressional district who are suffering through this through no fault of their own. Dorothy Lara, from Rockford, Illinois, shared the story of her family's history and their truly deep connection and commitment to this country. Dating back to the early 1600s, her family has literally given their blood, sweat, and tears for America's freedom and democracy.

Nine generations ago, her family helped build the Mayflower, and not only that, they then helped coordinate its voyage. Her family's ancestors have served in nearly every war in this country—in the Revolutionary War, the War of 1812, the Civil War, both World Wars—and just recently, she welcomed home her son from Iraq.

Dorothy said it better than I ever could myself. She said—and these are her exact words—''All of my forefathers would be ashamed of what has been going on in this country today.'' She went on to say, ''What happened to a government by the people, for the people?'' and then said, ''What I want to see is what my forebearers have fought for: equality, job creation, honor, and respect. They are owed that much.''

We have the votes right now—right here—to reopen our government. We can end this madness and go back to governing our country the way we should be governing our country. Dorothy's family and so many other families throughout our country are, indeed, owed that much.

DEFICIT SPENDING AND THE AFFORDABLE CARE ACT

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentlewoman from Tennessee (Mrs. BLACKBURN) for 5 minutes.

Mrs. BLACKBURN. Mr. Speaker, I appreciate being recognized for the time, and I appreciate the recognition that this Chamber and my colleagues are putting on the issues before us.

As we look at Federal spending, what we have to do is say: What is causing us to be in a position where we are borrowing $2 billion a day? And if we are borrowing $2 billion a day, we have to ask: Is that a sustainable practice and something that we as a Nation can continue? Of course the answer to that is, no, it is not sustainable. Therefore, we have to look at what is causing us to spend more money than we are taking in, and one of the things that is at the top of that list that is too expensive to afford is the ObamaCare program, the Affordable Care Act.

What I would like to do today is focus my comments on what we are seeing from the Affordable Care Act and what has happened with the cost of this program and why it has become too expensive to afford and why we have to talk about it and focus on it and put it on the table as we talk about what our Nation spends.

Now, we all remember supposedly ObamaCare, the Affordable Care Act, was going to be a $900 billion program, roughly, that was to give access to affordable health insurance for those who didn't have access to health insurance, but let's look at what has happened.

This was the estimate: under a trillion dollars, $900 billion, when the program was passed. But, oh, remember, we had to pass it in order to read it to find out what was in it. After we read it the first time, $1.4 trillion. My source on this is the Congressional Budget Office, the CBO. Every time it has been reviewed, with some of the nearly 13,000 pages of rules and regulations, guess what has happened? The cost estimate has gone up. Now ObamaCare is a $2.6 trillion program. So what we are looking at is a near tripling in cost before the program goes into effect. This is why we continue to say, as we look at fiscal health, fiscal restraint, you have to look at what is happening with the cost projections on ObamaCare.

Now, for those of us from my State of Tennessee, this is something that is not new to us. We had the test case for HillaryCare in our State. It is called TennCare. What happened with the TennCare program was it ended up quadrupling in cost in a period of 5 years.

Now, this causes us a little bit of concern because we look at what has happened with the cost of government-managed and -delivered health care services. Well, let's take a look at Medicare and where it was supposed to be in 1968 and then what has happened with its costs. You can look at these lines, the red line.

These are on my Web site for our colleagues that would like to go and look at the Web site.

You can see what happened in 1968, and the red line shows where it has grown to today. For something that was to end up being about $12 billion a year, we are now spending over $400 billion a year on. You can see what were to be the projections here on this bottom line, and you see how far it has exceeded its projections. So because of this, we are quite concerned with the growth and the projections of growth for ObamaCare.

Look at the track record of government spending. Do programs generally come in below their estimates? No. They generally exceed those estimates. So we continue to be very concerned about what will happen with the cost of ObamaCare and the impact this is going to have on our $3.5-trillion-a-year budget, and we continue to say: We have to review this; it is too expensive to afford; and does it fit into what the American taxpayer is willing to pay for?

Because every penny we spend here in Washington, D.C., comes out of the taxpayers' pockets from money that they have earned and then have paid in taxes, sent to Washington, they expect us to be very careful stewards of those dollars.

Before my time expires, Mr. Speaker, I just want to point out one other concern that we have with the exchanges and the way they are going to handle information. Six hundred million dollars to build a computer system that doesn't work and doesn't protect the

identity and the information of enrollees in the health care exchange is another of the problems there that is worthy of discussion of this program.

THE GOVERNMENT SHUTDOWN AND HEAD START

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentlewoman from Texas (Ms. JACKSON LEE) for 5 minutes.

Ms. JACKSON LEE. Mr. Speaker, I place a loving picture of a little one and the excitement that comes from a Head Start program to emphasize my story this morning and the discussion I want to raise this morning for a brief amount of time.

All of us have seen those western movies where the train is rushing down the track and coming to a point where the tracks are no more. Black-and-white television, we used to sit on the edge of our seats, wondering what would happen. For the aesthetics of the movie, we would see that train fall into a deep abyss, people screaming out of the window or some takeaway that doesn't see the final crash, or maybe it does.

So as I listen to my friends on the other side this morning, it seems as if I were watching that same movie. Today is October 15, the 15th day of a government shutdown.

Mr. Speaker, we are in crisis, and there are those who are rising to the floor of the House to misrepresent to the American people some discussion about ObamaCare, which is working every day in this Nation. Albeit as Medicare and Medicare part D, we all need to sit down and knuckle down and look at ways that we can make it work better for the American people.

But we are in crisis today, and I think it is important to know that there are thousands of Head Start teachers and Head Start positions for little ones like my good friend here, the son of Marlon. He is Hector, who is not able to be in a Head Start program right now today.

For my friends, let me say that we have reason to be able to engage in a reasonable solution, a responsible solution. Where are they in coming together to make sure that we don't default in the next 24 hours? Maybe I should educate them with a little graph that shows that, in actuality, the debt-to-GNP under President Obama has actually gone down, meaning the debt has gone down.

The sizable increase in the debt was in the past administration, of President Bush, under Afghanistan and Iraq—everyone knows that—with a Republican-dominated Congress, a Republican President, a war that many did not like, but no one saw the Democrats try to shut the government down. Why don't they acknowledge where this original debt has accelerated itself?

So now we want to move forward and invest in American infrastructure, and they are crying about giving Americans affordable health care. Where is the reason?

So our friends in the Senate, Senate Democrats, are leading on a proposal to which many of us yesterday would have said that we wanted a long extension of the debt ceiling.

Mr. Speaker, I have come here to be responsible on behalf of the American people. Let me read one sentence. On November 16, 1983, ''Dear Howard.'' Howard was the majority leader, Howard Baker. ''This letter is to ask for your help and support and that of your colleagues on the passage of an increase in the limit on the public debt.'' Signed, Ronald Reagan.

It is a misrepresentation to suggest that this is a political stunt. Raising the debt ceiling has been done year after year to pay the Nation's bills. While countries like our friends like China are pushing forward by saying maybe you don't need to rely upon America, which the world does because their currency is not flowing in the world cycle, we are watching while Rome is burning. So I am asking my colleagues to be responsible.

First, they could have put the Senate proposal of a short-term CR on the floor days ago, weeks ago. So now we have a proposal that many of us will probably find challenging to vote for, but I am ready to listen; and I am disappointed that our friends are not realizing the devastation that is happening with the government shutdown.

As a member of the House Judiciary Committee, it troubles me to hear that James Comey, the Director of the FBI, has said that he has laid off 3,000 people—3,000 FBI agents who are in the midst of law enforcement for America. What kind of country are we?

Judges—the Federal courts are saying they don't know if they are going to be able to go past October 15.

The greatest insult is the payments that are due the American people on Social Security and veterans' benefits that may be in jeopardy on November 1 if we don't do the work that we are sent here to do.

So I would ask my friends to lower the discord. Let's not wave Confederate flags in front of the White House, something that burns in my heart—individuals that want to divide America. Let's not call the President what is a faith that we should be respecting. Let's not denigrate ourselves by suggesting that our President worships Allah, but it is not denigrating the President as much as it is denigrating millions of Americans who are Muslims. I am outraged that we would raise it to this temperature.

So, Mr. Speaker, all I can say is let us be in the spirit of Abraham Lincoln, who wanted to bring America together, and let us pass a reasonable response to the government shutdown. Let's not be talking about imploding or tearing this country down.

A BATTLE FOR THE ECONOMIC SURVIVAL OF THIS NATION

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Tennessee (Mr. DUNCAN) for 5 minutes.

Mr. DUNCAN of Tennessee. Mr. Speaker, you can never satisfy government's appetite for money and land; they always want more. Now we are $17 trillion in debt and are headed to $25 trillion in less than a decade under the best case scenario. Those are figures that are humanly incomprehensible; yet our estimates of our future unfunded pension liabilities are much, much higher. They are, probably, at least $75 trillion or more.

The nonpartisan Congressional Budget Office is the one that has put out these estimates, and they estimated recently that interest on the national debt will quadruple in less than 10 years to an astounding $857 billion in just 1 year. If we allow that to happen, the Federal Government could then pay only for Social Security, Medicare, Medicaid, and interest on the debt—nothing for defense, national parks, interstate highways, and so forth. Obviously, future Congresses cannot or would not allow that to happen, so they will then come in with a combination of huge tax increases and a tremendous inflation of the currency.

The fight we are in now is over a lot more than the ''Unaffordable Care Act.'' It is a battle for the economic survival of this Nation. Anyone who wants their Social Security or their Federal or military pensions in order to be able to buy anything—or buy much at all in the very near future—should be demanding much more fiscal conservatism now. We either bite some very painful bullets now or we face much more difficult times in the very near future that will make our present problems look small in comparison. We could end up with problems like Detroit has now, but multiplied all across this Nation.

President Obama, when he was in the Senate, opposed raising the debt ceiling and said we shouldn't do it to our children and our grandchildren; and when we are in this war now over this spending, this battle for the economic survival of our Nation, Mr. Speaker, surely we do not want to ruin the future of our children and our grandchildren.

THE GOVERNMENT SHUTDOWN AND POTENTIAL DEFAULT

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Connecticut (Mr. HIMES) for 5 minutes.

Mr. HIMES. Mr. Speaker, I rise on this 15th day of the government shutdown, a shutdown which has put hundreds of thousands of Americans out of work, that will have untold damage on what is already a hesitant economic recovery; and I rise as we contemplate the last maybe 24, 36 hours before an event unprecedented in American history: the possibility that, for the first

time in this great Nation's history, we may not pay our bills—we may default on our obligations—with a plea for sanity and a last-minute plea that we set aside the irresponsibility and recklessness that has consumed this Congress for years now, culminating in this moment.

What has it profited anybody? Seventy-four percent of Americans disapprove of the way the Republican majority has handled this. Democrats could not have dreamed of a better plan to cut the ground out from under the Republicans.

This week, the International Monetary Fund met here in Washington, and global leader after global leader stood up and basically said: What has become of the United States? How can you be so irresponsible? How can this one indispensable Nation now be a laughingstock?

My constituents are certainly disturbed. I had a conversation with one of them, a guy I have known for probably 25 years now, and he said: Explain to me what is going on in Washington. The Republicans, Senator CRUZ, the House majority are demanding a negotiation.

I said: Yes, they are demanding a negotiation. They are using the shutdown and the debt ceiling as leverage to achieve their goals.

He said: What are those goals?

It started out with a repeal of the Affordable Care Act—that is where Senator CRUZ started a couple of weeks ago—and then it moved on to we want Congress to not have its employer contribution; and then it moved on to simply talk to us; and then there was a long list of things—we want the XL pipeline approved; we want the Affordable Care Act delayed for 2 years—a long, long list of policy wishes that the Republicans have said they want in this negotiation.

And my friend says: So what do you get? What do the Democrats get? If you build the XL pipeline—whatever it is—and if you give them five of the things they want, what do you get? Do you get investment in roads and railways and networks?

I said: No, we don't get that.

Do you get a commitment to improve the education of America's children?

No, no, we don't get that.

Do you get something that pretty much most Americans think is a good idea, which is some kind of comprehensive immigration reform?

I said: No, we don't get that.

He said: Well, what do you get? What do you get in this negotiation?

□ 1030

I said: All we get is that the government runs.

Really? The government runs. That is what Democrats get in this negotiation?

Yes.

He said: That is not a negotiation.

I said: That is exactly right. That is not a negotiation. That is something more akin to extortion.

And here we sit, where it is not just the government shutdown which is causing pain to Head Start kids in Bridgeport or fear amongst workers at Sikorsky who are building the Black Hawks that ferry our troops in and out of danger. Here we stand on the cusp of saying to the world that you can no longer rely on the full faith and credit of the United States Government.

Folks, I used to work in finance, and there is nothing in finance—there is no share of stock, there is no bond, there is no income-producing property, there is no asset out there—whose value doesn't rest on the unalterable proposition that the United States Treasury is risk free. But the House majority is saying, first of all, that that may not be true, that maybe a default is not a big problem. Maybe it can be managed. It never happened before, but maybe it can be managed. This bedrock, I like to say in doing finance without the concept of a risk-free rate, is like trying to do physics without gravity. Nobody knows what it means, and we are putting this at risk.

So I plead for sanity, and I point out the fact that there are very real costs. The Macroeconomic Advisers, a research firm, has said that the last couple of years have resulted in 900,000 jobs not being created because of this constant hostage taking, this idea that we are going to run the country by crisis. Almost 1 million American jobs are not there because this Congress has done that.

Colleagues, the American people deserve better. It is time at this moment to come together, to be responsible, and to do right by the country.

REOPEN THE GOVERNMENT AND PAY OUR COUNTRY'S DEBTS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Minnesota (Mr. ELLISON) for 5 minutes.

Mr. ELLISON. Mr. Speaker, I think it is so important as we come here today to take us back where this whole shutdown-debt ceiling crisis began, and that is when my colleagues on the other side of the aisle said that we will not open and fund the government, we will not pass a continuing resolution unless you repeal, defund, delay the Affordable Care Act.

That was their mantra. They were standing at those microphones right over there. They were gleeful; they were pounding the table; and they were really thinking that—you know what?—the Democrats are willing to go back to a day when Americans were filing for bankruptcy because they got sick or got injured. They really believed we were going to allow America to go back to a day when you couldn't get insurance if you had a preexisting condition. They thought we were going to return to a time when we weren't trying to address this big doughnut hole that they created with Medicare part D.

We told them, it is not because we spent so much time on it, that it is not because you tried to repeal it 45 times and you failed, that it is not because the Supreme Court said it was constitutional, and that it is not because in the last election the Presidential candidate who said I am going to implement health care reform in the Affordable Care Act won and beat the one who said he would repeal it by 5 million votes. Those are not the reasons we stand here.

We stand here because we have little kids and seniors and hardworking Americans who go bankrupt when they get sick, who sometimes are denied access to care which results in loss of life. That is why we said no. We said we can talk about a lot of things—we can negotiate on anything you want—but we are not going to say, if we repeal, delay, defund the Affordable Care Act, then you will do what it is your duty to do, which is to open the government.

So my friends in the Republican caucus knew that—you know what?—the American public is on to our game. We are trying to do everything we can to trick people into thinking it is not really us who are being obstructionists, extortionists, hostage takers. We don't want people to believe that is really us doing it. So, you know what? We have got to say something else. We have got to do something else.

Many of you, Mr. Speaker, who were listening heard a very interesting dialogue that occurred—and you can look it up on YouTube—between Senator RAND PAUL and Senator MITCH MCCONNELL, in which they were sort of gaming out what words they should use and how they should sort of reposition themselves to look reasonable, to say, oh, let's negotiate, let's negotiate, when, in fact, they knew that their position was to defund the Affordable Care Act. They started saying things like, Negotiate. Let's negotiate. They even came up with this hash tag, Let's talk.

The bottom line is it was 6 months ago when we wanted to talk—and we still do—but we are not going to say we are going to get rid of the Affordable Care Act and put millions of Americans back in jeopardy, and then as a condition of doing that you will reopen the government.

What they are trying to do, Mr. Speaker, is to say, in exchange for throwing people off health care, they will then do their job. In exchange for putting people back at the tender mercies of an insurance company, they will do their job.

Now, Mr. Speaker, things have gotten really bad because the fact is we are only a few days—we are two days—away from when the Treasury has said they cannot engage in extraordinary measures anymore, that they cannot negotiate America's bills anymore, and on October 17 it is D-day. We have got to do something or bad things are going to happen.

As Mr. HIMES pointed out, no one really knows everything that is going to happen because no Congress in the

history of the United States has ever failed to pay its bills. It will be the Republican House majority that has failed America for the first time in American history by refusing to pay our bills, not because we don't have the money, not because we are not good for it, but because their political ideology dictates that, so they are sacrificing our Nation.

Here is what is going to happen. We don't know all, but we do know a few things. We know there will be higher interest rates and less access to business loans needed to finance payrolls. We know the businesses that want to build inventories and invest in equipment and in construction are going to face higher interest rates. It is going to cost more to do that. We know it is estimated that there are about 3.4 million veterans who may see their disability benefits in jeopardy. We will see catastrophic economic effects to our economy. We could see the average home buyer pay an extra $100 a month.

Mr. Speaker, I will just close by saying this: we have to get our business in order, and I urge Republican moderates to join with us to reopen the government and to pay this country's debts.

LET US VOTE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from California (Mr. HUFFMAN) for 5 minutes.

Mr. HUFFMAN. Mr. Speaker, this is a critical moment for the 113th Congress of the United States. We have an opportunity to let this House work its will, to end the government shutdown, to protect the full faith and credit of our country, to show the whole world that after a 3-week bout with insanity, the duly elected Representatives of the people in this Congress finally came to their senses.

But I am concerned that that is not where we are heading here in the 11th hour of this crisis as we approach the precipice of the debt ceiling and the prospect of default. Instead of working together to develop a budget that would work for Americans, my colleagues across the aisle in the Republican Party continue to let reckless ideologues drive their agenda and drive all of us further into a national crisis.

I have the honor of serving on the Budget Committee; and along with Ranking Member VAN HOLLEN, the Democratic members of that committee have been calling since the spring for a conference committee so that we could actually work out a budget that could work for both parties and for the American people, but the GOP leadership in this House has refused to appoint conferees, has refused to go into that negotiation. Why did they do that? Because they preferred the strategy of taking us to this point, into this crisis with the government shutdown, up to the edge of the cliff with the possibility of default because they wanted to maximize their leverage.

Why have they shut down the government? Why have they put us in this position? Well, we heard for months that it was their obsession with the Affordable Care Act, with repealing, delaying, defunding ObamaCare. Yet all of a sudden, 3 weeks into this crisis, the goalposts are moving. It is not so much about ObamaCare. Sometimes it is in, and sometimes it is out on their list of demands. What about the deficit and the debt? Sometimes that is part of the stated reason for this manufactured crisis.

Back to ObamaCare. There is no question about it that the CBO says that moving forward with the Affordable Care Act will actually improve our deficit, will actually help us better manage our long-term debt. We know that there are all sorts of things that we could do together if reducing the deficit and managing our debt was the goal. For example, we could pass bipartisan comprehensive immigration reform, which again the CBO tells us would lower our deficits, lower our national debt, but that doesn't seem to really be what this Republican-manufactured crisis is all about.

It calls to mind the farewell address of our first President—the Founder of our country, George Washington—who warned about political parties who were at war with their own government. He warned about factions that were driven to defeat other factions by the spirit of revenge and dissension and how that itself would become a frightful form of despotism.

Mr. Speaker, it seems to me that we are walking very close to that awful scenario that our first President dreaded. Now we are hearing a bit of good news from the other House that Senator REID and Senator MCCONNELL are close to a bipartisan agreement to help resolve this crisis. I have no doubt there would be enough votes in this House to pass that kind of agreement.

So to my Republican friends, let us vote on that deal or, even better, let us vote on the clean CR that has been pending in this House for weeks that could get us out of this crisis. It would temporarily fund the government at Republican funding levels while we work on a longer-term budget solution. Let us vote.

It seems to me that the GOP needs to simply take ''yes'' for an answer, allow this House to work its will and get out of this crisis. Unfortunately, we have heard from Senator REID that there were deals reached weeks ago. When Speaker BOEHNER brought those deals back to this House, he found that the Tea Party faction in his caucus wouldn't support him, and, instead, they chose to shut this government down and take us into this crisis. They did something worse than that. They rigged the rules of this House with the so-called martial law that has prevented Democrats from offering any alternatives, any off-ramps for this crisis. They shut down the government, and they hardwired it to stay shut down, and now, like the dog that finally catches the car, my Republican friends don't know what to do with the situation they have created.

I have a suggestion. Instead of continuing to grope for overreaching concessions and fig leafs, cut your losses. Admit that this scorched-Earth politics of obstruction—this war against the very government that you were sent here to govern—is a bad idea. Let us vote on solutions to end this crisis.

We don't even need an apology for all of the damage you have caused—for the $160 million a day that has undermined our economic recovery and economic losses from this shutdown. We don't even need an apology for the thousands of Federal employees indefinitely furloughed, for the national parks and forests that have been shuttered, for the loans to farmers and families, who are trying to purchase homes, that have been held up. We don't need you to apologize for halting lifesaving research, for any of that.

Just let us vote to end this crisis. If you don't, don't bother apologizing, because the American people will never forgive the damage you have done to this country and to our standing in the world.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Members are reminded to direct their remarks to the Chair.

RECESS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 12(a) of rule I, the Chair declares the House in recess until noon today.

Accordingly (at 10 o'clock and 42 minutes a.m.), the House stood in recess.

□ 1200

AFTER RECESS

The recess having expired, the House was called to order by the Speaker at noon.

PRAYER

Reverend Andrew Hofer, OP, Dominican House of Studies, Washington, D.C., offered the following prayer:

All powerful and merciful God, we ask You to put forth Your spirit of blessings upon the world which You have freely made, this Nation, which trusts in You, and upon all here on Capitol Hill who turn to You.

We have been wrong and we have sinned. Give us all a share of Your wisdom and Your mercy. Enlighten us so that we can turn from our error and live by the power of Your truth. Strengthened by You, may we stand united in necessary matters, acknowledge liberty in doubtful matters, and be charitable in all matters.

We ask this of You, the source of all unity, liberty, and charity, to whom be glory and honor now and forever.

Amen.

THE JOURNAL

The SPEAKER. The Chair has examined the Journal of the last day's proceedings and announces to the House his approval thereof.

Pursuant to clause 1, rule I, the Journal stands approved.

Mr. HULTGREN. Mr. Speaker, pursuant to clause 1, rule I, I demand a vote on agreeing to the Speaker's approval of the Journal.

The SPEAKER. The question is on the Speaker's approval of the Journal.

The question was taken; and the Speaker announced that the ayes appeared to have it.

Mr. HULTGREN. Mr. Speaker, I object to the vote on the ground that a quorum is not present and make the point of order that a quorum is not present.

The SPEAKER. Pursuant to clause 8, rule XX, further proceedings on this question will be postponed.

The point of no quorum is considered withdrawn.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The SPEAKER. Will the gentleman from California (Mr. SWALWELL) come forward and lead the House in the Pledge of Allegiance.

Mr. SWALWELL of California 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.

ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE SPEAKER

The SPEAKER. The Chair will entertain up to 15 requests for 1-minute speeches on each side of the aisle.

LEGISLATIVE PROCESS IS CRUCIAL TO REOPEN GOVERNMENT'S DOORS

(Mr. WILSON of South Carolina asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. WILSON of South Carolina. Mr. Speaker, the Federal Government has been shut down for 15 days. For 15 days, the President and Senate Democrats have made very few attempts to work with the House to reopen the government's doors. Washington Democrats have not been willing to meaningfully negotiate with House Republicans who voted four times to avoid the fiscal crisis.

Time is ticking. The people of South Carolina's Second Congressional District are hurting due to Washington Democrats' inability to engage in the legislative process. On behalf of the Savannah River Site employee in Aiken who is at risk of additional cuts to his hardworking paycheck, and the young family in Columbia who has been denied access to a medical trial that could potentially save their daughter's life, we should reopen the government, which promotes jobs.

House Republicans understand the risk at stake. That is why we support commonsense proposals that will avoid national default and reopen the government's doors.

In conclusion, God bless our troops, and we will never forget September the 11th in the global war on terrorism.

STAND UP TO THE EXTREMISTS

(Mr. PASCRELL asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mr. PASCRELL. Mr. Speaker, I rise personally ashamed at the political sideshow in front of the White House perpetrated by Ms. Palin and Senator CRUZ and his congressional allies. For Members to protest against the consequences of a shutdown they, themselves, caused is the height of hypocrisy. The truth is we could pass a clean continuing resolution today and get our government back to work.

I was outraged by some of the imagery we saw from the Tea Partiers who were rallying in front of the White House. Calling for the President's impeachment not a year after his reelection by a large majority of the American people and continued lies about the President's religion, including one participant saying, Put the Quran down, have no place in civil discourse.

But I was especially disturbed by the waving of the Confederate flag, a symbol of racial oppression, being waved at our first African-American President.

I call on my colleagues to condemn this hateful rhetoric and to renounce these fringe voices within their coalition.

This is a shameful display of Members on the other side of the aisle, and they ought to stand up—the majority—to the extremists in their own party, as we have with our own party, and stop trying to hold the government and full faith and credit of the United States Government hostage.

CONFEDERATE FLAG RALLY

(Mr. SWALWELL of California asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. SWALWELL of California. Mr. Speaker, this shutdown is shining a light and showing the world some of the extreme members of the Tea Party. This weekend, Tea Party Senators TED CRUZ and MIKE LEE led a rally on the National Mall where one of their speakers, Freedom Watch founder Larry Klayman, called on President Obama to ''leave town, put the Quran down, and come out with your hands up.''

The rally moved to the White House where Tea Partyers waved the Confederate flag in front of the President's home. The picture is unnerving; it is despicable; and it is not the same flag that we just pledged allegiance to in this House. It does not depict an America whose seal reads: ''E Pluribus Unum''—''Out of many, one.''

To date, neither Senator nor any member of the Tea Party Caucus in this House has publicly denounced these ugly, disgusting comments toward our President. I respectfully ask my friends across the aisle to do so.

We may disagree on many things in this Chamber, but I sincerely believe that no one in the Tea Party Caucus believes that this display outside the President's house is acceptable. Condemn this behavior. If you don't and you let it go, you are condoning it.

''Out of many, one''—''E Pluribus Unum.'' As one America, let's denounce this. It is time to come together.

LET'S DEAL WITH OUR DEBT AND OUR DEFICIT

(Mr. BERA of California asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mr. BERA of California. Mr. Speaker, day No. 15.

Today is day No. 15 of the government shutdown. We are less than 48 hours away from defaulting on our bills. We have never done that in the history of the United States of America.

Mr. Speaker, if we don't pay our bills, that would be reckless behavior and that would be irresponsible.

But we are seeing some progress.

First, it seems like both the House and the Senate have agreed to open up government until January 15. Let's make that happen.

Second, it seems like both the House and the Senate agree to lift the debt ceiling until February 7. Let's make that happen.

But let's do step number three, which says, let's set a budget process in place that negotiates a budget that starts to deal with our debt and our deficit so we can get out of this crisis mode and start getting about the business of creating jobs.

Mr. Speaker, now is the time for leadership.

Mr. Speaker, we are close. Let's get this done for the American people.

LET'S OPEN THE GOVERNMENT

(Ms. JACKSON LEE asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Ms. JACKSON LEE. Mr. Speaker, Abraham Lincoln offered these words:

The rule of a minority as a permanent arrangement is wholly inadmissible so that rejecting the minority principle, anarchy or despotism in some form is all that is left.

I think we have come to the point of recognizing that it is important to represent the majority of Americans, the majority of veterans, who in some short order may be questioning whether or not their veterans or their disability check or their family's SSI or their mother's Social Security will come in an appropriate time.

The Secretary of the Veterans Administration already said that he has

had to discontinue overtime, slowing our review of benefit claims. This has led to delays for an average of 1,400 veterans a day.

I say to my colleagues, rather than coddling those who wish to wave a Confederate flag in front of the White House, let us respect veterans whose lives are in cemeteries or whose lives have been recognized by being buried in America's cemeteries. Let us stop the foolishness and put on the floor of the House the reasonable response to opening the government now so that men who are mourning, those who have flags that are truly the American flag, are being respected, not those who wish to be in front of the White House. Open the government now.

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. HULTGREN). The time of the gentlewoman has expired. Members are reminded to heed the gavel.

LET'S COME TOGETHER TO RESOLVE THE DEBT

(Mr. MICA asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. MICA. Here we are, folks, my colleagues, fellow Americans. In just a few days, the United States may not be able to pay its debts. That would be horrible for the country and for leadership as we know it.

Mr. Speaker, how did we get here? The other side—and you are hearing from them—took control of the place. In 4 years, the spending went unchecked. The debt rose from $9 billion to now $17 trillion. They are asking for another trillion dollars to continue the spending unchecked to continue the indebtedness.

We can and we should come together to resolve this; but at some point, you have to be responsible as a parent, as a Member of Congress, as citizens to hold the line, to stop the spending, and to put a check on indebtedness to the future.

Barack Obama voted against raising the debt limit when he was a Senator and said that not addressing the debt was a lack of leadership.

PUT THE BEST INTERESTS OF THE AMERICAN PEOPLE FIRST

(Mr. HIGGINS asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mr. HIGGINS. Mr. Speaker, the deadline for preventing the United States from defaulting on our debt is growing closer, and the need to act is more critical.

The truth is, Mr. Speaker, we don't know the full extent of the damage that our Nation's economy would suffer.

But here is what we do know: a default would mean higher interest rates for over 278,000 New Yorkers with mortgages, a loss of disability benefits for over 100,000 New York veterans, and the threat of being unable to pay Social Security and Medicare drug reimbursements to over 3,000 New Yorkers.

Mr. Speaker, the argument by some in this Chamber that defaulting on our debt wouldn't be a big deal is outrageous. Putting the full faith and credit of our Nation—not to mention the strength of the world economy—on the line simply to prove a political point is both reckless and irresponsible. This House must put the best interests of the American people first and avert this disaster so we can get back to rebuilding this economy and nation-building right here at home.

DEBT CEILING

(Mr. PAYNE asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mr. PAYNE. Mr. Speaker, this madness has got to stop. Yesterday, I heard from a local homeless shelter in Irvington, New Jersey, that is struggling to provide for the overwhelming number of homeless new mothers. These are new mothers who can't feed their babies now that their WIC benefits have been cut off.

Because of the government shutdown, homeless shelters across New Jersey are running low on baby formula, diapers, and the food they need to feed these mothers and their newborn babies. This kind of story is shameful, and it is happening all over New Jersey.

The pain I see in my district is very real, and it could get a whole lot worse. If we choose not to pay our bills on time, 1½ million people in New Jersey may not get their Social Security checks; 50,000 disabled veterans in New Jersey may not get their medical bills paid.

Congress has two simple jobs right now: one, to open the government; and, two, to pay our bills on time.

These are nonnegotiable. The Republican Tea Party shouldn't hold this country hostage.

Let's get to fixing America's problems again instead of creating them.

□ 1215

BAN THE BOMB

(Mrs. CAROLYN B. MALONEY of New York asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mrs. CAROLYN B. MALONEY of New York. Mr. Speaker, it is incomprehensible to reasonable men and women everywhere that our colleagues across the aisle are threatening to nuke the American economy by refusing to raise the debt ceiling unless their demands are met. This is irresponsible and reckless behavior. ''Nuke'' is the right word to use here. As Warren Buffett noted recently, even the threat of default should be likened to nuclear weapons too terrible to ever use.

Allowing the U.S. to default on its obligations, whether it be an interest payment on a Treasury bond, a check due to a Social Security recipient, or money due to a Federal contractor so they can pay their workers, would have a cataclysmic effect on our economy and would be felt around the world. It would be a mistake that would impoverish a generation and haunt us for a decade, and there could be no second opportunity to get it right.

Anyone who dismisses how great a disaster a default would be should not be taken seriously. They should not be listened to or given a seat at the table where responsible decisions are made. Let's open up the government now.

TIME FOR SOLUTIONS

(Mr. HARRIS asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. HARRIS. Mr. Speaker, America simply has a spending problem. That much is clear. Our national debt stands at nearly $17 trillion; $17 trillion. Let that number sink in for a moment.

Is it that kind of legacy that we want to pass on to our children and grandchildren?

This year alone our national deficit is projected to be around $700 billion, and that is despite the President's $600 billion tax increase this year. In fact, the government is going to collect more revenue this year than it has ever taken in before. How much sense does that make?

What is being done to address the real driver of our debt—runaway Washington spending? House Republicans want commonsense spending cuts and reforms. We want everyone treated fairly under ObamaCare, no special treatment, especially for big corporations or for Members of Congress. We want a secure economic future for all Americans. It is time to act. It is time for real solutions.

TRANSPORTATION SAFETY ISSUES

(Ms. EDDIE BERNICE JOHNSON of Texas asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Ms. EDDIE BERNICE JOHNSON of Texas. Mr. Speaker, as a senior Texan on the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure, I am very concerned about the transportation safety issues created by the Republican government shutdown. For example, aviation safety is in peril as the Federal Aviation Administration has furloughed approximately 1,700 safety inspectors and drastically limited aircraft maintenance. These types of safety risks created by the Republican government shutdown are intolerable.

Further, the National Transportation Safety Board has been forced to furlough more than 90 percent of its staff. As a result, it has not been able to continue investigating deadly transportation incidents nor initiate new investigations of accidents that have occurred since the Republican government shutdown began.

Mr. Speaker, the political games being played by the Republican leadership are causing serious harm to transportation safety for all Americans, and it is totally unacceptable. We do have a spending problem created by the two Republican wars.

GOVERNMENT SHUTDOWN

(Mr. LAMALFA asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. LAMALFA Mr. Speaker, over the weekend, many of us were still stuck in Washington, waiting for a resolution, but one of the highlights was the opportunity to be with our veterans as we helped them to gain entrance to their national monuments, their memorials, here in Washington, D.C. It is just sad that they even have to wonder if they are breaking the law or need assistance to get into open air monuments and memorials that are theirs.

It is even sadder to hear the rhetoric on this floor today that all that would be boiled down and impugned to one guy at random bringing a flag that some people don't like.

Why don't we talk about those veterans and the great service they have made for this country and about the meanness of the Park Service's arbitrarily renting barriers to shut them out. Why aren't we talking about that as much? This shutdown situation is made much worse by the attitude of those in the White House—by exerting pain on people, by shutting down the things they do care about in order to play this political game.

So this isn't a Republican House shutdown. This is a U.S. Senate shutdown as we have sent, time after time, bill after bill over there. Let's get together and get this done right for the people in California, including for the students I met with from Lyman Gilmore Middle School, who are here with us today.

IMPACT OF SHUTDOWN ON EVERYDAY LIVES

(Mrs. DAVIS of California asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mrs. DAVIS of California. Mr. Speaker, it pains me to see the shutdown's impact on everyday lives. While ordering coffee the other day, I asked Diona, the hardworking woman behind the counter, how she was doing that day. She confided that she had been up all night taking care of her 3-year-old son, who was suffering from stomach pains. She was exhausted. She wanted to buy the Lactaid milk that settles her boy's stomach, but because of the shutdown, her WIC office was not open. Her WIC card was out of money, and she was a long way from payday.

There are probably tens of thousands of Dionas out there—women working hard and worried about their kids and not sure how they will make ends meet. The media may be focusing on the rancor, the talking points of politics, but this shutdown is really about a little boy with stomach pains and a mother who cannot afford to give him relief. The Women, Infants, and Children program helps low-income women buy formula and other healthy foods, and it is one of our most successful nutrition programs. It is just one of the shutdown's many casualties.

Let us end this shutdown right now. Let us vote on a clean bill to fund the whole government. Let us restore vital problems like WIC, and let us stop this lunacy and get back to work for the American people.

REPUBLICAN GOVERNMENT SHUTDOWN

(Ms. KAPTUR asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Ms. KAPTUR. Mr. Speaker, the Republican shutdown of government and their move to default on our debt are like forcing the wrong medicine on a sick patient—you might get them to take it, but it could kill them.

The only way America can pay back our Nation's debt is through economic growth and job creation, not bad medicine.

Let's not forget that we are still digging our way out from the Wall Street-induced Great Recession. Where did the $17 trillion of national debt come from? The Wall Street recession cost American households $19.2 trillion in lost wealth and the country 8.8 million jobs.

Under President Obama, we have had 42 consecutive months of job growth, leading to 7.5 million jobs being created, unlike in the Bush years when there wasn't a single job created. In fact, we lost over a half a million jobs. In the last 12 months of the Bush years, the country lost 4.6 million jobs. Let's not forget that America has accumulated an $8.4 trillion trade deficit since 1975 and that we have racked up $4 trillion in unpaid-for war spending.

So what is the Republican solution? Shut down the government. Don't pay the bills. The latest idea is to govern by supercommittee.

Mr. Speaker, we need to restore regular order, to move bills, to create jobs, and keep America's promises to our debtors. Let's nurse our Nation back to health, and stop continuing the economic pain with bad medicine.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The time of the gentlewoman has expired. Members are reminded to please heed the gavel.

RECKLESS GOVERNMENT SHUTDOWN MUST END

(Mr. BARBER asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mr. BARBER. Mr. Speaker, it is time for us to come together. This reckless government shutdown must end. Southern Arizonans and Americans all across our country are hurting, and our economy has been seriously harmed. The Senate is working on a bipartisan solution to reopen the government and to avoid putting America into default. I am very hopeful that we can find a reasonable and responsible plan and immediately bring it to the House floor for a vote.

Mr. Speaker, we must end this blame game. We must put the American people first. Let us come together and act responsibly now. Let this government shutdown end, and let us ensure that we pay our bills now. It is important, and the American people are calling on us to act, to act now.

END GOVERNMENT SHUTDOWN

(Mr. JOHNSON of Georgia asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. JOHNSON of Georgia. Mr. Speaker, Republicans have again recklessly threatened America's future by allowing the Nation, already in a Republican shutdown, to default on its debt unless the Congress votes to stop ObamaCare. The government has been shut down for 2 weeks, and the United States will default on its debt in 2 days. All respected economists say a default means devastating and definitely unnecessary damage to our economy and to the global marketplace. Yet Republicans radically and irresponsibly push us toward the precipice of default. Their disconnect from financial reality is certainly breathtaking. Their actions are reckless, radical, and irresponsible.

Mr. Speaker, there is power in numbers. If reasonable Republicans would stand up to their radical right wing, we could end this shutdown and avoid a default today.

A LETTER FROM A CONSTITUENT

(Mr. SHIMKUS asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mr. SHIMKUS. Mr. Speaker, a recent letter I received:

> I am writing this letter in regards to the new ''affordable'' healthcare. My husband and I are small business owners with two other employees. We purchase our insurance as individual insurance, and we received a letter this past week that our rates are changing. We currently have a $5,000 deductible with a monthly premium of $415, and on the new plan, if we stay with the current company, it is going to be $4,000 with a monthly premium of $1,093.78. I have tried to access the www.healthcare.gov Web site, and have been able to register an account but have not been able to get any type of pricing. I have contacted both of my Illinois Senators and my House Representative and have been told that they are not in favor of a government shutdown, but I am here to say if a shutdown is what it takes to get people to listen, then shut down. The reason I am contacting you is because my Congressmen are not willing to stand up to the President, and I just want to say good job for standing your ground.

DOING THE RIGHT THING

(Mrs. KIRKPATRICK asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend her remarks.)

Mrs. KIRKPATRICK. Mr. Speaker, as we enter the third week of this reckless, irresponsible shutdown, it is no wonder that folks in my Arizona district and across the Nation are disgusted. They see Washington treating this shutdown as a political game. I have got news for them. How far will the House majority push our Nation just to score political points? No one wins. Everybody loses, and here is what an editorial in the Arizona Republic says today about this shutdown:

> When it is all over, the huge costs will be tallied, and the hard work Congress has avoided will remain undone. America will join the world in wondering: Is that all there is? The only heroes in this tragedy are the Americans who still believe their government can eventually do the right thing.

Mr. Speaker, let's show the American people that this House is still capable of doing the right thing.

DOING WHAT IS IN THE BEST INTERESTS OF THIS GREAT COUNTRY

(Ms. TITUS asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend her remarks.)

Ms. TITUS. Mr. Speaker, 15 days ago, an extreme faction of the Republican Party, supported by its leader and empowered by its more complacent members, brought about a shutdown of the entire Federal Government. It has since brought us to the brink of an unprecedented default, and now it refuses to accept a compromise that will open up the government, put people back to work, and lift the debt ceiling so the United States can pay its bills.

Americans are fed up with the political obstructionism and dysfunction that has caused this unnecessary crisis. With the clock running out, we cannot afford to waste any more time. We need to act now. So I say to my colleagues across the aisle, stop your guerilla tactics; stop playing games with the good faith and credit of the United States; stop putting radical ideology ahead of the welfare of the American people; and stop sabotaging our economy and our democracy.

We have got to bring common sense, integrity, and honor back to the House of Representatives and do what is in the best interests of this great country.

□ 1230

GOVERNMENT SHUTDOWN

(Ms. HAHN asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Ms. HAHN. Mr. Speaker, today marks the 15th day of the government shutdown. I am finally encouraged that we are seeing a bipartisan agreement in our Senate that will reopen the government and avert a credit default.

There is a lot of bashing of both sides going on down here, but I want to take this time to actually applaud our leaders in the United States Senate, HARRY REID and MITCH MCCONNELL, for their coming together to turn this ship around for the American people. Mr. Speaker, I also want to give a shout-out to Senator COLLINS and Senator MANCHIN for breaking the logjam.

This past Friday, the shutdown became a harsh reality for many American families as tens of thousands of workers did not receive a paycheck. These are hardships everyday working families can't afford.

This shutdown is deeply unfair to the American people. The clock is ticking, but we are seeing the framework of a commonsense solution to put an end to the recklessness and irresponsibility of this shutdown.

I hope that this House has an opportunity to vote on the Senate proposal soon and put this whole mess behind us for the sake of the country and the American people.

RECESS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 12(a) of rule I, the Chair declares the House in recess subject to the call of the Chair.

Accordingly (at 12 o'clock and 30 minutes p.m.), the House stood in recess.

□ 1933

AFTER RECESS

The recess having expired, the House was called to order by the Speaker pro tempore (Mr. REED) at 7 o'clock and 33 minutes p.m.

RESIGNATION AS MEMBER OF COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION AND THE WORKFORCE

The SPEAKER pro tempore laid before the House the following resignation as a member of the Committee on Education and the Workforce:

CONGRESS OF THE UNITED STATES,
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES,
Washington, DC, October 15, 2013.

Hon. JOHN BOEHNER,
Speaker of the House of Representatives, Washington, DC.

MR. SPEAKER: Due to my appointment to the Energy and Commerce Committee, I hereby resign my position on the Education and Workforce Committee.

Thank you.

Sincerely,

JOHN YARMUTH,
Member of Congress.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Without objection, the resignation is accepted.

There was no objection.

THE JOURNAL

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 8 of rule XX, the unfinished business is the question on agreeing to the Speaker's approval of the Journal, which the Chair will put de novo.

The question is on the Speaker's approval of the Journal.

Pursuant to clause 1, rule I, the Journal stands approved.

LEAVE OF ABSENCE

By unanimous consent, leave of absence was granted to:

Mr. RUSH (at the request of Ms. PELOSI) for October 14 and the balance of the week on account of attending to family acute medical care and hospitalization.

ADJOURNMENT

Mr. GARCIA. Mr. Speaker, I move that the House do now adjourn.

The motion was agreed to; accordingly (at 7 o'clock and 35 minutes p.m.), under its previous order, the House adjourned until tomorrow, Wednesday, October 16, 2013, at 10 a.m. for morning-hour debate.

EXECUTIVE COMMUNICATIONS, ETC.

Under clause 2 of rule XIV, executive communications were taken from the Speaker's table and referred as follows:

3301. A letter from the Acting Under Secretary, Department of Defense, transmitting a letter on the approved retirement of Vice Admiral Richard W. Hunt, United States Navy, and his advancement to the grade of vice admiral on the retired list; to the Committee on Armed Services.

3302. A letter from the Acting Under Secretary, Department of Defense, transmitting a letter on the approved retirement of General Claude R. Kehler, United States Air Force, and his advancement on the retired list in the grade of general; to the Committee on Armed Services.

3303. A letter from the Acting Under Secretary, Department of Defense, transmitting a letter on the approved retirement of General Edward A. Rice, Jr., United States Air Force, and his advancement on the retired list in the grade of general; to the Committee on Armed Services.

3304. A letter from the Assistant Administrator, Bureau for Legislative and Public Affairs, Agency for International Development, transmitting a formal response to the GAO report ''Haiti Reconstruction: USAID Infrastructure Projects Have Had Mixed Results and Face Sustainability Challenges'' (GAO-13-558); to the Committee on Foreign Affairs.

3305. A letter from the Acting Deputy Secretary, Department of the Treasury, transmitting as required by section 401(c) of the National Emergency Act, 50 U.S.C. 1641(c), and section 204(c) of the International Emergency Economic Powers Act, 50 U.S.C. 1703(c), a six-month periodic report on the national emergency with respect to the situation in or in relation to the Democratic Republic of the Congo that was declared in Executive Order 13413 of October 27, 2006; to the Committee on Foreign Affairs.

3306. A letter from the Attorney Advisor, Department of Homeland Security, transmitting the Department's final rule — Safety Zone; Delaware River, Wilmington, DE [Docket Number: USCG-2013-0827] (RIN: 1625-

AA00) received September 25, 2013, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); to the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure.

3307. A letter from the Attorney Advisor, Department of Homeland Security, transmitting the Department's final rule — Safety Zone; Catawba Island Club Wedding Event, Catawba Island Club, Catawba Island, OH [Docket No.: USCG-2013-0840] (RIN: 1625-AA00) received September 25, 2013, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); to the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure.

3308. A letter from the Attorney Advisor, Department of Homeland Security, transmitting the Department's final rule — Special Local Regulation; Frogtown Race Regatta; Maumee River, Toledo, OH [Docket No.: USCG-2013-0839] (RIN: 1625-AA08) received September 25, 2013, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); to the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure.

3309. A letter from the Attorney Advisor, Department of Homeland Security, transmitting the Department's final rule — Regulated Navigation Area-Tappan Zee Bridge Consturction Project, Hudson River; South Nyack and Tarrytown, NY [Docket Number: USCG-2013-0705] (RIN: 1625-AA11) received September 25, 2013, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); to the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure.

3310. A letter from the Attorney Advisor, Department of Homeland Security, transmitting the Department's final rule — Safety Zone; Pro Hydro-X Tour, Atlantic Ocean, Islamorada, FL [Docket Number: USCG-2013-0762] (RIN: 1625-AA00) received September 25, 2013, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); to the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure.

PUBLIC BILLS AND RESOLUTIONS

Under clause 2 of rule XII, public bills and resolutions of the following titles were introduced and severally referred, as follows:

By Mr. FRANKS of Arizona (for himself, Mr. CONAWAY, Mr. LAMBORN, Mr. KING of Iowa, Mr. STOCKMAN, Mr. HULTGREN, Mr. GOHMERT, Mr. AUSTIN SCOTT of Georgia, Mr. WEBER of Texas, Mr. PERRY, Mr. ROKITA, Mr. PEARCE, Mr. HARRIS, Mr. LAMALFA, Mrs. BLACKBURN, and Mr. WILLIAMS):

H.R. 3292. A bill to prevent the Government of Iran from gaining a nuclear weapons capability and to maximize the United States' diplomatic influence to achieve, consistent with the national security interest of the United States and its allies and partners, a negotiated settlement with the Government of Iran regarding Iran's nuclear weapons program; to the Committee on Foreign Affairs, and in addition to the Committees on Oversight and Government Reform, and Financial Services, for a period to be subsequently determined by the Speaker, in each case for consideration of such provisions as fall within the jurisdiction of the committee concerned.

By Mr. HASTINGS of Florida:

H.R. 3293. A bill to reform the public debt limit; to the Committee on Ways and Means.

By Mr. YOUNG of Alaska:

H.R. 3294. A bill to establish a streamlined process through which a State may claim authority over and responsibility for management of Federal lands located in the State without claiming ownership of the land, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Natural Resources, and in addition to the Committee on Agriculture, for a period to be subsequently determined by the Speaker, in each case for consideration of such provisions as fall within the jurisdiction of the committee concerned.

By Mr. BROOKS of Alabama (for himself, Mr. ROGERS of Alabama, Mr. ROHRABACHER, Mr. PALAZZO, Mr. STOCKMAN, Mr. BRIDENSTINE, Mr. HALL, Mr. MCCAUL, Mr. WEBER of Texas, Mr. STEWART, Mr. BISHOP of Utah, Mr. POE of Texas, Mr. MCKINLEY, Mr. MCCARTHY of California, and Mr. BACHUS):

H.J. Res. 94. A joint resolution making continuing appropriations for the National Aeronautics and Space Administration for fiscal year 2014, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Appropriations.

By Mr. KINZINGER of Illinois:

H.J. Res. 95. A joint resolution making continuing appropriations for the Nuclear Regulatory Commission for fiscal year 2014, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Appropriations.

By Mr. MCKINLEY (for himself, Mr. RAHALL, Mrs. CAPITO, and Mr. JOHNSON of Ohio):

H.J. Res. 96. A joint resolution making continuing appropriations for fossil energy research and development of the Department of Energy for fiscal year 2014, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Appropriations.

CONSTITUTIONAL AUTHORITY STATEMENT

Pursuant to clause 7 of rule XII of the Rules of the House of Representatives, the following statements are submitted regarding the specific powers granted to Congress in the Constitution to enact the accompanying bill or joint resolution.

By Mr. FRANKS of Arizona:

H.R. 3292.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Article 1, Section 8, Clause 1 of the Constitution, which states the Congress shall have power to provide for the common defense and general welfare of the United States, and;

Article 1, Section 8, Clause 3 of the Constitution, which states the Congress shall have power to regulate commerce with foreign Nations

By Mr. HASTINGS of Florida:

H.R. 3293.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Article I, Section 8 and other relevant provisions

By Mr. YOUNG of Alaska:

H.R. 3294.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Article IV, Section III, Clause II

By Mr. BROOKS of Alabama:

H.J. Res. 94.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Clause 7 of section 9 of article I of the Constitution of the United States states: ''No Money shall be drawn from the Treasury, but in Consequence of Appropriations made by Law . . .''

Clause 1 of section 8 of article I of the Constitution provides: ''The Congress shall have the Power . . . to pay the Debts and provide for the common Defence and general Welfare of the United States . . .''

By Mr. KINZINGER of Illinois:

H.J. Res. 95.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Article I, Section 9, Clause 7—No money shall be drawn from the Treasury, but in consequence of appropriations made by law

By Mr. MCKINLEY:

H.J. Res. 96.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

According to Article I, Section 9, Clause 7 of the Constitution: No money shall be drawn from the Treasury but in Consequence of Appropriations made by Law; and a regular Statement and Account of the Receipts and Expenditures of all public Money shall be published from time to time.

ADDITIONAL SPONSORS

Under clause 7 of rule XII, sponsors were added to public bills and resolutions as follows:

H.R. 7: Mr. COLE.

H.R. 15: Mr. BERA of California and Mr. RYAN of Ohio.

H.R. 60: Mr. HONDA, Ms. BORDALLO, Mr. HASTINGS of Florida, and Ms. FRANKEL of Florida.

H.R. 233: Mr. HUFFMAN, Mr. LOWENTHAL, Mr. HINOJOSA, Mr. CICILLINE, and Ms. LEE of California.

H.R. 366: Mr. VARGAS, Mr. NEAL, Ms. HANABUSA, and Ms. SPEIER.

H.R. 411: Mr. BARBER.

H.R. 456: Mr. LOWENTHAL.

H.R. 501: Mr. POCAN.

H.R. 523: Ms. HERRERA BEUTLER.

H.R. 525: Ms. DELBENE.

H.R. 708: Ms. BONAMICI.

H.R. 713: Mrs. WALORSKI.

H.R. 805: Mr. RANGEL.

H.R. 920: Mr. DAINES and Ms. BONAMICI.

H.R. 984: Mr. RUIZ.

H.R. 1010: Mr. FOSTER.

H.R. 1154: Mrs. DAVIS of California.

H.R. 1164: Mr. GRIFFITH of Virginia.

H.R. 1173: Mr. O'ROURKE and Ms. MCCOLLUM.

H.R. 1362: Mr. TIERNEY.

H.R. 1428: Mr. BLUMENAUER, Ms. LEE of California, Mr. RANGEL, and Mr. MCKINLEY.

H.R. 1666: Mr. HONDA.

H.R. 1726: Mr. LIPINSKI, Mr. DEFAZIO, Ms. EDDIE BERNICE JOHNSON of Texas, Ms. WATERS, and Mr. TIERNEY.

H.R. 1851: Mr. DOYLE.

H.R. 1920: Mr. RICE of South Carolina and Mr. HUFFMAN.

H.R. 1921: Ms. SHEA-PORTER.

H.R. 2101: Ms. ESHOO.

H.R. 2144: Ms. TITUS.

H.R. 2203: Mr. CONAWAY, Mr. YARMUTH, Ms. FUDGE, Mr. DENT, Mr. MEEHAN, Mr. FITZPATRICK, Mr. DENHAM, Mrs. CAPITO, Mr. GIBSON, Mrs. BROOKS of Indiana, and Mr. HANNA.

H.R. 2213: Mr. WILLIAMS.

H.R. 2247: Mr. POSEY.

H.R. 2283: Ms. JACKSON LEE, Mr. MCCAUL, and Mr. CARTWRIGHT.

H.R. 2288: Mr. HUFFMAN.

H.R. 2482: Mr. CARTWRIGHT.

H.R. 2502: Mr. CARTWRIGHT.

H.R. 2598: Mr. NEAL.

H.R. 2619: Mrs. BEATTY.

H.R. 2807: Mr. SANFORD.

H.R. 2810: Mr. RICE of South Carolina.

H.R. 2932: Mr. MCGOVERN, Mr. WILSON of South Carolina, and Ms. HANABUSA.

H.R. 2957: Mr. LOWENTHAL, Mr. MICHAUD, Mr. KILDEE, and Ms. SHEA-PORTER.

H.R. 3043: Mr. KLINE and Mr. HUFFMAN.

H.R. 3050: Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN.

H.R. 3077: Mr. GRIFFIN of Arkansas and Mr. MCCAUL.

H.R. 3143: Mr. WOLF.

H.R. 3212: Mr. LOWENTHAL, Mr. POE of Texas, Mr. CHABOT, and Mr. YOHO.

H.R. 3213: Mr. CONYERS.

H.R. 3275: Mrs. BLACK and Mrs. BROOKS of Indiana.

H.R. 3279: Mr. PALAZZO.

H.R. 3286: Mr. POLIS, Mrs. KIRKPATRICK, and Mr. BARBER.

H.R. 3287: Mr. HUNTER.

H.J. Res. 50: Mr. KING of Iowa, Mrs. HARTZLER, and Mr. ROKITA.

H.J. Res. 56: Mr. HOYER, Mrs. KIRKPATRICK, Mr. CASTRO of Texas, and Mr. MICHAUD.

H. Con. Res. 59: Mr. BUCSHON, Mr. ROTHFUS, and Mr. DUFFY.

H. Res. 109: Mr. RICE of South Carolina.

H. Res. 381: Mr. GRIJALVA, Mr. HINOJOSA, Ms. NORTON, Mr. VARGAS, Mr. RANGEL, Ms. EDWARDS, Mr. CÁRDENAS, Mr. SERRANO, Ms. MCCOLLUM, Mrs. NEGRETE MCLEOD, Ms. JACKSON LEE, Mr. CARSON of Indiana, Mr. SMITH of Washington, Mr. LOWENTHAL, and Mr. HONDA.

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PROCEEDINGS AND DEBATES OF THE 113th CONGRESS, FIRST SESSION

Vol. 159 WASHINGTON, TUESDAY, OCTOBER 15, 2013 No. 146

Senate

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

PRAYER

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

Let us pray.

Sovereign God, creator and sustainer of us all, You have been our dwelling place in all generations. Thank You for Your faithfulness, even when we are unfaithful.

Lead our lawmakers this day so they may work in a way that Your Name is honored. Lord, point out to them the road they should follow, as You give them the wisdom and courage to do their duty. Help them not to be dominated by what they have been, rather than by what they could become. May they never forget their accountability to You as servants and stewards of Your purposes.

We pray in Your great Name. Amen.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The President pro tempore led the Pledge of Allegiance, as follows:

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

RECOGNITION OF THE MAJORITY LEADER

The PRESIDENT pro tempore. The majority leader is recognized.

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 PRESIDENT pro tempore. The clerk will report the motion.

The bill 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, the Senate will recess from 12:30 to 2:15 to allow for weekly caucus meetings.

There are productive negotiations going on with the Republican leader. I am confident we will be able to reach a compromise agreement this week in time to avert a catastrophic default on the Nation's bills. The Republican leader and I will keep our Members informed as to how negotiations are going.

I express my appreciation to everyone for their patience.

RESERVATION OF LEADERSHIP TIME

The PRESIDENT pro tempore. Under the previous order, the leadership time is reserved. Under the previous order, Senators are permitted to speak for up to 10 minutes each.

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

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

The legislative 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 (Mr. MARKEY). Without objection, it is so ordered.

Mr. LEAHY. Mr. President, the distinguished Presiding Officer is, like myself, a New Englander and knows what fall is like in our part of the country. Late last month, I was fortunate to enjoy the most lovely settings I think can be found anywhere at any time, as Vermont's hillsides are painted orange, yellow, and red by peak fall colors set against powder blue skies. Vermonters love these sublime few weeks. We happily welcome visitors around the United States. Actually, we welcome visitors from around the world. It is interesting to walk down the streets in some of our cities and hear several different languages being spoken as visitors come here. They share the experience, and they hike and bike and fish, and they hunt in our extensive preserved natural areas.

But these best of times have become the worst of times, as Vermonters and visitors alike have found closed signs on their favorite natural areas due to the tea party shutdown of the Federal Government. The window is quickly closing in Vermont for the Fish and Wildlife biologists and national forest rangers who have work that must be done before the first snow falls. We know how Washington can close down for an inch or two of snow. In Vermont, we are talking about 10, 15, or 20 inches of snow. These Fish and Wildlife biologists and national forest rangers' schedules are dictated by the changing seasons and the biological clocks of nature. The House Republican leadership has been no more able to undo the law of the land—which is the Affordable Care Act—than they would be able to slow or stop Vermont's changing seasons.

Insisting on tying a repeal or a defunding of the Affordable Care Act to reopening the government is doing real and lasting damage to Vermont's economy and natural resources as fall quickly becomes winter.

The 26,000-acre Nulhegan national wildlife refuge in Vermont's Northeast Kingdom is among the best upland bird hunting areas in New England. There is plenty of room for everyone, but just days after the opening of grouse season, the refuge has been forced to hang up a closed sign and lock its gates. This has dealt a blow to the tourism economy of the small towns around the refuge that depend on these annual visitors and hunters.

The Missisquoi National Wildlife Refuge on the shores of Lake Champlain is, without a doubt, the best and most extensive freshwater duck habitat in New England. Huge meadows of wild rice attract thousands of migrating waterfowl and legions of bird watchers

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

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and hunters. Even with the fall migrations in full swing, the Missisquoi National Wildlife Refuge has hung up a closed sign and locked its gates for the start of the fall hunting season.

Hikers looking for the best panoramic views of Vermont's fall colors flock to the Appalachian Trail and Vermont's Long Trail which run together up the spine of the Green Mountains, through the 400,000-acre Green Mountain National Forest. Throughhikers, weekenders, and day trippers spread out to enjoy hundreds of miles of trails. But only a skeleton crew of forest rangers and fire crew remain on the job. Visitors centers and restrooms are closed; even volunteer workers have been pulled from the trail and forced to stop shelter work and trash collection at trailheads because of the tea party shutdown.

These may not seem like huge matters in the national scheme of things, but in a State of 600,000 people they are major. Not only are the livelihoods of Vermonters being devastated, but the things that we cherish the most about our State are being denied to people who want to come and see them.

Woodstock, VT, is the quintessential New England village and host to the Marsh-Billings-Rockefeller National Historical Park. The centerpiece of the park is the oldest sustainably managed forest in the United States. It is a beautiful forest. But visitors are denied access to this forest in all of its fall glory. Long-planned events at the park have been canceled and the gates have been locked.

Certainly there are many more places for visitors to enjoy—this has been a wonderful picture-perfect season. I am told by my friends and neighbors who live near our home in Vermont that it has been absolutely gorgeous. As much as I love all my colleagues and enjoy being with them, I would much rather be up there seeing the same view as Vermonters are. But the closing of our Federal lands, just as hunting seasons begin and the hillsides shine, is depriving Americans from experiencing the country's natural heritage and causing serious economic damage to the small towns, and the innkeepers and guides who depend upon these areas for their living. Foreign tourists, increasingly important to our economy, and their tour operators, are confused and disappointed by these outcomes. They say: this sort of thing has never happened in our country and yet you are the wealthiest and most powerful country on the earth; why are you doing this?

Other conservation work is being curtailed, as well, in ways likely to do lasting damage. Control of parasitic sea lamprey in Lake Champlain has to be accomplished each fall to protect the game fish and threatened species. There is a very short window when the sea lamprey treatments can be applied before these parasites migrate from the rivers to the lake. That window is fast closing. It is going to be missed if U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service biologists remain on furlough. If these fall treatments do not take place, thousands of young sea lamprey will be allowed to reach the lake, where they are immune to treatment, live for years, and devastate the fishery. This will undo years of work, and taxpayer dollars invested in this program will be wasted by a small group of radical obstructionists who jump in front of the cameras and say things that make no sense at all.

In Vermont and across the country, there is a lot of work that needs to take place on Federal lands before winter snows sweep in. Snowmobiling is very popular among my constituents. It is a mainstay of our winter economy. But fall is the time the trails are graded and bridges repaired. Our most important trail networks are on Federal lands, and important maintenance is being delayed—deferred in some cases—due to the tea party shutdown. If trails are not opened before the snow flies, the devastating impact on tourism and local communities is going to last all winter long and impact people who want to go to work every day, who are hard-working, honest, good people who can't understand what is happening here in Washington.

Fall in Vermont is the most glorious season. It is my favorite one. We welcome visitors. We get outdoors more ourselves, and are busy preparing for the long winter to come. Our hard-working Federal partners are proud of the work they do on these Federal lands, and they know this manufactured tea party crisis is causing real and lasting damage to our natural resources and the Vermont economy.

National parks and refuges in Vermont are not the only places closed for business. According to the Coalition of National Park Service Retirees, every day the Federal Government is shuttered costs the National Park Service nearly $½ million in lost fee collections nationwide. And the impacts are even greater for the surrounding communities that are losing $76 million per day in visitor spending. While some in the tea party actually have the arrogance to go on television and argue that shutting down the Federal Government is saving us money, the truth is just the opposite. It is costing every one of us taxpayers money, and it is costing everybody in the private sector huge amounts of money. And now, as we reach day 15 of the tea party shutdown, the National Park Service has been denied over $6 million in lost revenues, and local communities—not government workers, but local communities—honest, hard-working men and women have lost over $1 billion. This is why several States have chosen to foot the bill to reopen a handful of national parks to stop further losses to local economies. The cost of shutting down the government, paying the lost revenue—that is what is keeping us in the red.

So I say to the small group of obstructionists, stop wasting time. Put our government back to work. Show the rest of the world that we really are the great country we know we are. I want to get back to work for Vermonters; we owe it to our constituents to resolve this now and start making real decisions about our future.

Speaker BOEHNER should call up the Senate continuing resolution for a vote. It would receive bipartisan support, and we could put an end to this pointless tea party shutdown. We would reopen our Federal lands. We would be supporting our local economy.

There is more I can say, Mr. President, and I will, but I applaud Majority Leader REID for working with the Republican leader, Senator MCCONNELL. I applaud them for being what grownups should be, trying to bring us back and trying to bring our government back, showing what a great country we are so we do not have countries such as China saying: Oh, we should not rely on American currency. They are not reliable people.

We are getting this all over the world—Americans are not reliable. What damage these tea party obstructionists are doing to our great country. We ask our military to serve around the world and protect us—and maybe they will get paid, but a lot of the support for them, the VA and whatnot, is being closed down. It is shameful. The same people who shut down the government are saying it is terrible that the government is shut down. I think the American people can see through this.

I don't care what party you belong to or who you are, with the exemption of a small group, people know this country has to be open so it can work—can work for all of us—and can project an image of strength and stability throughout the world, can do the things that made us great in the past and that will keep making us great in the future, not this shabby exercise.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. DURBIN. 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. DURBIN. Mr. President, for 2 weeks the government has been shut down. It is hard to imagine. It seems a lot longer if you have been sitting here in the midst of this maelstrom—2 weeks since the junior Senator from Texas took the floor and for 21 hours held the floor, giving a speech calling for the end of ObamaCare as we know it.

In that period of time we have learned a lot about ourselves. We learned a lot about this country. I think about the 800,000 Federal employees furloughed, many of whom struggle to get by and now have no paycheck coming in. It is a hardship that is totally unnecessary, a hardship that was

imposed on them because there was a strategy, a political strategy, political gamesmanship that said: We can sacrifice the well-being of those Federal employees and their families to make our political point.

It turns out they went further. They went further in suggesting they were going to cut off the benefits these government agencies offered. At this point in time, we have come to learn what that means. People who were turned away from the National Institutes of Health, children—some 30 children with cancer were turned away because that agency is closed. Families who were notified they had lost a loved one in battle were denied the basic benefits we provide to all families facing that terrible grief. There was a lack of food safety inspections when salmonella outbreaks were being reported around the country. The list goes on and on.

John F. Kennedy wrote a book called ''Profiles in Courage'' that talked about those in public service who showed extraordinary courage. I suggest it takes no courage whatsoever to hurt 800,000 innocent Federal employees. It takes no courage whatsoever to deny the basic benefits of government to thousands, maybe even millions, of American people. I think it is political cowardice.

Sadly, it has gone on for 2 straight weeks. The House did some curious thing there, where they voted to say: But we will pay these employees.

A friend of mine back in Edwardsville, IL, sent me an e-mail.

> Let me get this straight. They closed down the Government, they turned the employees away, they said they don't have to come to work but they promised they were going to pay them? What is going on in Washington? What are you people thinking?

I couldn't defend it. I wouldn't even try. It is evidence of the kind of abandonment of reason which has become the hallmark of some Members of Congress.

What do the American people think? They are not happy with any of us, let's get it straight, but when it comes to the responsibility for this madness, they have said it is on the other side of the aisle. It is their idea—not just the tea party but many who were complicit in this strategy.

As if this were not enough, now in just 2 days, for the first time in the history of the United States of America, we face a default on our debt.

You might say: So what. Who cares. What difference would it make.

Listen to what Christine Lagarde, chief of the International Monetary Fund, said:

> The failure to raise the debt ceiling would cause not only serious damage to the U.S. economy but also to the global economy as a result of spillover effects. . . .

In response to a question about debt prioritization proposals, she said:

> When you are the largest economy in the world, when you are the safe haven in all circumstances, as has been the case, you can't go into that creative accounting business.

Christine Lagarde, chief of the International Monetary Fund.

It is an interesting thing in politics: you can always find somebody who is going to agree with almost any point of view. Tea party Republicans have rounded up some flat Earth economists who say default on the debt is really not a big deal. In fact, I have heard some of my colleagues on the floor argue that we just have to pick and choose who is going to get paid, that everything will work out and you really will not even notice.

It reminds me of the time—Mr. President, you were in the House when I was—when there was the Gingrich shutdown, Rush Limbaugh and others announced they would shut down the government and no one would notice. You don't really need a government. They noticed in a hurry. In less than 2 weeks they opened the government.

This, sadly, is much more grievous and will have terrible consequences for innocent people. If we default on our debt in 2 days, for first time in history we will destroy a global confidence in the U.S. dollar that we built up since World War II, since 1945. Right now the U.S. dollar is the most respected and strongest economy in the world, period, bar none. Countries far and wide that want to invest in the safest possible investment invest in U.S. Treasurys because they trust our government and its word that it will pay its debts. Those who are toying with this possibility of default are putting that at risk.

It is not just a matter of the views of the world. It is bad enough that we are being lectured to by Vladimir Putin about responsible governance—Vladimir Putin lectures to us about being a responsible government. That is bad. What is even worse is the impact on ordinary people and their lives. We know what happened when we went through the last recession. People who had carefully saved for their futures saw the bottom fall out of their savings accounts and their retirement accounts. We run that very same risk if we default on this debt again. We run that very same risk. And many hard-working families, people who have scrimped and saved for college education for their kids, for their own retirement, for their next home, will find that they are devastated by this default on our national debt. That is the most reckless and irresponsible single act we could undertake.

They asked a Member of the House, a Republican Member of the House, if yours was the deciding vote on extending the debt ceiling—if it was up to you, one person, to decide to extend the debt ceiling, would you vote for it? He said: Not unless there were some strings attached. You think to yourself: Still bargaining, right up to the edge of the cliff. Sadly, if we go over, the pain will be felt as much by that Congressman as it will by working families in Massachusetts and Illinois. That is what this is all about.

Paul Schott Stevens is president and CEO of the Investment Company Institute. At a banking committee hearing on October 10, he said:

> I also will avoid parsing the differences among ''technical default, ''selective default,'' and ''actual default,'' or whether missing a Social Security payment is equivalent to missing an interest payment or failing to redeem a maturing Treasury bill. All such discussion misses the point. The United States, like any other major debtor, must maintain the confidence of its creditors—or risk the consequences. . . .
>
> Once Treasury has exercised the option to delay payments, investors will learn a lesson that cannot and will not be unlearned—even after all missed or delayed payments have been made good. That lesson is simple: Treasury securities are no longer as good as cash—they carry a future risk of further missed payments.

That future risk is a political creation. It is a bargaining tool by the Republicans, and it goes too far.

At a banking committee hearing, Gary Thomas, president of the National Association of Realtors, said:

> [A]n increase in U.S. Treasury rates would result in higher mortgage rates. In the event of a default, U.S. Treasury prices would fall and yields, which move inversely to prices, would rise. . . . Historically, an increase in mortgage rates of 1 percentage point reduces home sales by roughly 350,000 to 450,000 units . . . [and] roughly 700,000 to 900,000 fewer jobs would be created. . . .

This is a job-killing strategy. Default on our national debt is a job-killing strategy.

Kenneth E. Bentsen, Jr., president of the Securities Industry and Financial Markets Association, said:

> It is important to note that Treasury securities are a key factor in the daily financing of market operations, with the U.S. Treasury repo market totaling between $1.2 and $1.9 trillion daily. Undermining that market could have a deleterious effect on every major market participant.

If that were not bad enough, I have received some e-mails from some friends. The one that sticks in my mind is from a friend who does not live in my State. He is a man I have come to know. I am not going to use his name on the floor—I didn't ask his permission to—but I can certainly tell his story.

He sent his son off to war in Iraq. He and his wife took care of his son's wife and little baby while his son went off to fight in a war. Sadly, his son was the victim of an IED. As a result of that terrible incident, his son is quadriplegic and cannot speak.

People had given up on the son in his midtwenties; they recommended putting him in a nursing home. And his father said: I just won't let it happen. His father took him to a hospital in Chicago, a renowned hospital, the Rehabilitation Institute of Chicago. His son made dramatic progress. Eventually, he was able to return home with some limited function but was able to enjoy the things in life that make a difference to him. He loves to go hunting. His father picked up a mechanism whereby his son could actually go out,

sit in a blind, and fire at those ducks and feel as if he was back where he was before he went to war.

I cannot tell you the love that the mother and father have given to their son, daughter-in-law, and now their two children. They basically gave up their life and their business and, with the help of a lot of good people in the community, built a special home for their son so that he could get around in his motorized wheelchair. I have been down there. The outpouring of generosity and charity in North Carolina for this family is just amazing, and they continue to give their entire lives to their son and his wife and kids.

He wrote me an email and said:

> I hope you are doing well. We see you on C–SPAN. Thank you for taking a moment to read about our concern. This concern is about my son. It affects him and thousands of other wounded veterans. We are quite concerned about what we are hearing coming out of the VA. The thought of the VA check not arriving in November has all of us nervous. We are sure this is a feeling in households across the country. We are praying that all the parties in Washington will soon come to terms. After years of war, a sagging economy, and now the shutdown, nerves are stretched. I am writing to you to see if there is a light at the end of this dark tunnel. My son and wife, after years of working to establish a near-normal life, have to start worrying about losing what they worked to return to and enjoy as a near-normal life.

In writing he said:

> My mood does not mean to be so down, but as a parent of a family that has been through so much, the thought of this threat is very heart-wrenching.
>
> Thank you for listening to me.

I think of that letter, and I think of that family worried about that VA check.

I received an e-mail yesterday from a family that is worried about whether they will receive their Social Security check. Why do we put the American people through this? Why do we put families through this? This is totally unnecessary.

We need to open this government. We should do it tomorrow morning, period. Just open it. We need to bring these people back to work to perform the services they need to perform for this great Nation, and we need to make certain we don't default come Thursday. The default would have a negative impact that would have far-reaching consequences beyond this political battle.

In years to come nobody may remember the names of the people involved in this political fight that goes on day after day on Capitol Hill, but they will remember the failure of the Congress to pay the Nation's debts, to stand for the full faith and credit of the United States, and to maintain our reputation as a leader in the world.

That is what is at stake. There is no political victory worth that. I hope Members on both sides will come to their senses.

I wish to salute our leader, Senator HARRY REID of Nevada. I have been standing by him through this. He has been stalwart and courageous. I know he has been exhausted at times, but he keeps on fighting.

I also wish to salute Senator MITCH MCCONNELL of Kentucky, the Republican leader, who, over the last several days, has played a very active and positive role in trying to resolve this issue.

It is time for the Senate to show leadership. It is time for the Senate to come together on a bipartisan basis and show the path that takes us out of this political crisis.

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

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

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

Mr. HEINRICH. Mr. President, in the midst of the current crisis there have been some who have questioned the relevance of the Federal Government to our overall economy. Some have even called the current shutdown just a slimdown. But in my home State of New Mexico, there is no question that this government shutdown has been irresponsible, it has been reckless, and it has been absolutely devastating to our economy.

New Mexico serves the Nation in many ways, through our national labs and our military bases, with Federal lands and monuments that host Americans from every corner of the Nation. As a result, Federal dollars in 2010 were nearly 36 percent of our State's gross domestic product. This figure includes veterans' benefits, Social Security, and student financial aid.

Federal dollars go toward grants to help fund State and local health care, transportation, education, and housing. Many of us who have served as either city councilors or mayors, legislators or Governors realize the role Federal passthrough dollars play in keeping our States and municipalities solvent.

In New Mexico, Federal contracts are also critical for our small business community. Defense purchases account for almost two-thirds of total procurement spending. We are home to nearly 27,000 Federal workers—workers who want to go back to work, workers who just want to do their job.

Sandia National Laboratories and Los Alamos National Laboratory employ an additional 18,000 New Mexicans as contractors, and the U.S. Department of Energy's Waste Isolation Pilot Plant in Carlsbad employs 1,000 more. That is out of 2 million people. So it is an understatement to say that shutting down the Federal Government strikes at the heart of my State's economy.

Between sequestration furloughs, the shutdown, and the current impasse over averting a catastrophic default on the Nation's's debt, hard-working, middle-class families across New Mexico are the ones who are saddled with uncertainty and hardship. These manufactured crises have very real consequences for these families.

Since the shutdown began, I have heard time and again from constituents who are paying the price for this reckless debacle. They say they feel like the collateral damage in the ongoing ideological battles in Washington, DC. Hard-working civil servants dedicated to their jobs and their country have been sent home without pay, while many others have to work through the shutdown without a paycheck.

Yesterday I spoke with a Rio Rancho resident named Chad Didier, a former marine who is now an air traffic controller in Albuquerque. During the shutdown he has been reporting to work every day to help keep our airspace safe, but he does not know when he will start getting a paycheck again. This comes on the heels of forgoing pay earlier this year due to sequestration.

As the father of four young children and the sole breadwinner in his family, he is worried about making rent next month and making his car payments on time. He is frustrated because he is doing everything he has been asked of him, everything he is supposed to do to take care of his family, to serve his country, but he feels his government has failed him.

Last week, because of the shutdown, the National Nuclear Security Administration ordered that Los Alamos and Sandia National Labs should be ready to shut down by October 21.

Katy Korkos with the Los Alamos Chamber of Commerce told the Los Alamos Monitor that the impact of the shutdown at LANL could hit subcontractors twice as hard as other entities because they will never be able to recover the income they are currently losing.

EnergySolutions, a subcontractor that processes and ships transuranic waste to the Waste Isolation Pilot Plant in Carlsbad, has already had to lay off 154 workers.

The general manager at a department store in Los Alamos was quoted in the newspaper as saying: ''Anytime the lab sneezes, we catch cold.''

In southern New Mexico, Crysta Quintero told the Las Cruces Sun-News that she was immediately worried for her 3-year-old son after hearing about the Federal Government shutdown. That is because she relies on the Federal WIC Program to supply a prescription baby formula for her son who has a disability. Unfortunately, Crysta is not alone. Tens of thousands of women and children in New Mexico who receive assistance from this program every month could be left without vital nutritional support if the shutdown continues to drag on.

What is also at stake is the incredible work being done at New Mexico's colleges and universities. These first-rate research institutions rely heavily

on Federal grants to fund staff, training, and projects, including clinical trials for cancer treatment. I am told those trials—and years of hard work—will have to pause or even stop if the government stays closed. Scientists will see their salaries reduced, and research students who want to dedicate their lives to finding the next cure will have to wait even longer just to earn their degree.

Because of the shutdown, important job-creating investments in small business—the very engine of our economy—are delayed. On average, over $300,000 in Federal loans are approved for small businesses in New Mexico each and every day—but not today. Because of this reckless and irresponsible shutdown, those small businesses are not getting the loans to grow their business. They are not hiring new workers.

New Mexico is home to many of the Nation's most treasured public conservation lands, including national parks such as Carlsbad Caverns, BLM monuments such as the newly created Rio Grande del Norte, and national forests such as the Gila and Carson that are unstaffed during the fall hunting seasons. More than 4,000 men and women work on these public lands, and they are being forced to stay home.

Andrew Graves is an entomologist with the U.S. Forest Service in Albuquerque. Specifically, Andrew is in a program called Forest Health Protection that works across agency lines providing expertise and assistance to Federal and tribal land managers, foresters throughout New Mexico so they can deal with outbreaks of disease or insect infestations. Andrew says they have already canceled or postponed meetings and training because of the shutdown.

Each day the government remains closed, thousands of people who planned to visit our national parks and our wildlife refuges will be turned away. That does not just hurt the government. Restaurants and hotels, tire shops, and grocery stores feel this pain in towns such as Socorro, Taos, Grants, Alamogordo, and Las Cruces.

Because of the shutdown, the Bureau of Land Management has stopped processing energy leases on Federal land. A lengthy delay in the permitting process will not only take its toll on New Mexico's oil and gas industry but also on the revenues generated for New Mexico's public schools. The 8,000 New Mexican children enrolled in Head Start are feeling the impact of the shutdown on top of the cuts sequestration has already imposed on that critical program.

The shutdown also endangers the benefits that we owe over 170,000 veterans in New Mexico, people who served this country with distinction. The VA will run out of money to pay mandatory benefits by the end of October if we do not act.

Americans are fed up. Other debates in recent years have been just as heated, just as partisan, but this crisis is far more dangerous for our country. The American people—my constituents in New Mexico—want their Federal Government to function again. The Federal workers in my State want to go back to work. Our constituents want us to move past the gridlock and actually govern. They want economic security and to be able to take care of their families.

It is time to reopen the government, it is time to take the threat of default off the table, and it is time to stop playing games with the livelihoods of hard-working Americans.

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

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. MURPHY. 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. MURPHY. We are now going into week three of a government shutdown, a totally unnecessary, totally avoidable, totally manufactured government shutdown that is now morphing together with a potential failure on behalf of the U.S. Government to pay its debts, the first time we have ever intentionally done that in our entire country's history.

This is not theoretical any longer. This is now right on top of us. On Thursday of this week we will no longer have enough money to pay all of the bills that come in to the government. We only have about 65 percent of the funds necessary to pay out all of the bills that come due to us, whether it is to our creditors or to the thousands of small businesses that rely on contracts with the Federal Government every week to pay their bills as well.

I appreciate all of my colleagues coming down here and talking about the real-world consequences of what this shutdown has meant and what a failure to pay our debts will mean. I come down and want to share a handful of stories from my State of Connecticut to tell you what is going on out there beyond the talking heads on the cable news networks. They are simple stories, but they are impactful because for hundreds of thousands of people in my State of Connecticut, there was no margin with which to operate when this shutdown hit and the consequential economic impact that has come to so many families. There was not any money stuffed under their mattress they could pull out and try to pay the bills they could not, now that their paycheck or their business had been lost.

This is a big deal to people in Connecticut, and in Hawaii, and to States all across our land because there was so much economic hurt that had already piled up for months and years that people had no wiggle room when the tea party decided to stick a knife into the backs of already hurting families.

That is why this makes no sense. It is not as though we had the cushion as an economy, it is not as though families had the ability to take on a little extra hurt when the tea party decided to shut down our government—not that it would make sense even if we were living in heady economic times. But today, right now, for families who are getting killed by an economy that has recovered for the top 5 or 10 percent of America but certainly has not recovered for the bottom 80 percent, this is no time to be playing around with people's lives.

Every single year at the start of the home heating season, I go to a nonprofit in Waterbury, CT, which dispenses home heating assistance to the thousands of families in the Greater Waterbury, CT, area who know that without a little bit of help from this agency they will literally not be able to heat their home, that their children will go cold that winter, because even though they are making money, they cannot keep up with the mounting bills.

Every single year, as I watch the sort of macroeconomic numbers get better for the economy, I keep on thinking that when I go to that agency in August or September or October, they are going to tell me: Guess what, CHRIS. Less people are coming in this year than last year to ask for home heating assistance.

We are in year five of this recession now. Every single year of those five, the number has gotten bigger—every single year. Even as unemployment goes down, demand for home heating assistance in Connecticut goes up. Why? Because the top echelon of our country has recovered but nobody else has. So that is why when this shutdown hit, it hurt so badly for someone such as Rich Martin in New London, CT. Rich did something heroic during this recession. He started a new business. Frankly, even more heroic, he started a bookstore and a record store in New London, CT called the Telegraph.

He said that business has been growing for the last 12 months. Every month he has been doing a little bit better. Then guess what. The shutdown. Rich wrote me and said: After growth in my business over the last 12 months, people have stopped coming in these last weeks. Because in New London, CT, where we make submarines for the U.S. Navy, where we have submariners at our base there, we have a whole lot of people who depend on the Federal Government or contracts from the Federal Government to be able to pay their employees. Nobody is coming into the Telegraph any more. His business is getting hurt. A business, a small businessman who did something great, is now wondering whether he can make it through the next couple of days and weeks.

Here is how the trickledown of this happens: Kathi Sanborn in Hartford is

paying the bills right now by babysitting. She is babysitting for a couple. But the husband is a defense contractor. Guess what. He has been furloughed, so he cannot pay her to babysit. Frankly, he is home anyway, so he can look after the kids. So she does not have her babysitting gig any longer. He is out of work and she is out of work. Guess what. That is not where it ends. Because now that Kathi does not have her babysitting job, she is going to stop buying what she used to buy. She is going to have her groceries. She is not going to go to the store down the street for a purchase for herself. It just keeps on going.

Don Spaeth in Putnam, small business owner, runs a little restaurant there. Small town, Putnam. He says his business has dried up the last couple of weeks. People are not coming in.

Rich from Fairfield has a severely autistic son. He is an adult, so he was on Social Security disability. But he had his disability benefits cut off because they wanted to review his eligibility. Well, guess what. The reviewer has been furloughed for 2 weeks. So his son, who was hoping to be able to have his benefits turned back on, or at least have resolution so the family would know what to do, now cannot get a resolution to his disability claim. His son cannot pay the bills to the provider who gives him housing. He is potentially going to be out on the streets because he does not have a reviewer in the Social Security office. That hurts economically, but that hurts psychologically as well.

Interfaith Volunteer Caregivers in New Haven gets Federal money to do something really simple: Provide frail seniors with rides to their doctors' appointments. They lost their Federal funding for 2 weeks, so they cannot give rides any longer. So seniors are sitting home not able to get to their doctors' appointments. Think about that. You have an 85-year-old widow who has to worry every day if she is going to get sick because she lost her ride to the doctor's office.

Then let me read you this quote from Michael in Hartford. I do not even have to embellish it:

> I am an attorney and work for the IRS.
>
> I have 3 children, a 16 year old girl and 8 year old twins. My wife is pregnant with my fourth child. My 16 year old is taking driver's education and wants her license. I cannot now pay for the insurance necessary for her. She also wanted to take a PSAT prep course, another $1,200 that I don't have. She needs to start visiting college campuses. More money that I don't have. One of my twins, Sofia, had some learning disabilities and had private tutors and other professionals to assist her in staying on grade level in reading and math. I will soon run out of savings to pay for Sofia's support system because November 1st means that there is a mortgage payment, car payment, car insurance payments and the other dozen or so monthly bills that keep our household up and running. I do hope that the shutdown ends soon so that I can get back to work.

These stories can be repeated, frankly, hundreds of thousands of times over all across this country. While to some people they may sound like small stories—a babysitter losing a job, the inability to get your disabled daughter a little bit of help for a couple months—they add up to $1.6 billion in economic activity coming out of our country every single week.

They add up to unemployment claims jumping to their highest level last week in 6 months. They add up to consumer confidence being the lowest in this country since the Lehman Brothers collapse in 2008.

This doesn't happen in a vacuum. It is not as if we can tread water or move backwards economically while the rest of the world waits for us to resume our mantle of economic leadership.

China says they are looking to take their $1.3 trillion in U.S. Treasurys and find someplace else for it.

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

Mr. MURPHY. I ask unanimous consent for 5 more minutes.

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

Mr. MURPHY. Last month Japan announced its machinery sales were the best since 2008. The rest of the world is moving on.

If we are doing this much damage to the economy, why are we here? We are here mainly because tea party Republicans in the House see this misery as a bargaining chip. They couldn't get their way any other way. They couldn't win the legislative argument on the health care bill, a bill that passed the House and the Senate and was signed by the President. They couldn't win the judicial argument. It came before the Supreme Court, and the Supreme Court upheld the health care law. It couldn't win the electoral argument.

The health care bill was on the ballot in 2012. The President who ran on it and signed it was reelected by a wide margin. Every single Senator in this Chamber who supported it was returned to their seat.

Tea party Republicans have lost the argument on health care in all three of the traditional forums by which one would get their way in the legislative process—the legislative forum, judicial forum, and the electoral forum.

Just as a criminal fleeing the scene of a crime, they have been confronted with a last desperate option, which is to grab hold of the economy, put a gun to its head, and hope then that Democrats and President Obama will relent simply because of our compassion for people like Rich in New London, Kathi in New Hartford, Don in Putnam, the seniors who rely on Interfaith Caregivers in New Haven, and the young IRS attorney with a disabled daughter. They hope it will be our passion for those people which will cause us to do something other than what the people sent us to do and repeal, delay, or displace the health care law.

The good news is cooler heads are prevailing, that people do see—in this Chamber at least—the need to let go of the hostage. Two weeks into the shutdown, the cumulative economic effects on the economy are real. Those stories I told from Connecticut can now be multiplied thousands of times, tens of thousands of times.

The House looks as if they are going to try to pass another partisan political bill loaded with add-ons as conditions to restart the government and pay our bills. The Senate is working on a different solution, a solution that could bring together Republicans and Democrats to at least temporarily end this crisis. On behalf of my constituents in Connecticut, we certainly hope that is the result.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Connecticut.

Mr. BLUMENTHAL. I am very pleased to follow my colleague from Connecticut in recounting to this body some of the voices we have been hearing from across our State, some of the individuals whose stories make very compelling evidence for the need of this body to heed the bipartisan spirit—indeed, nonpartisan spirit that so animates and moves this country—to demand that we get the job done yesterday. I used exactly that expression to tell this body how important action is to move forward.

I am on the floor today with thanks to our majority leader Senator REID, who has come to the floor and has so ably and courageously led us, not only on the Democratic side but also on the minority side as well. I hope we will demonstrate in this body the profile in courage the country expects and needs from us at this time.

I yield to the majority leader at this time if he has a message to bring to us.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The majority leader.

Mr. REID. I appreciate my friend's always courteous attitude. I appreciate it very much.

The House Republican leadership plan that is now out—and people may look at it—is a plan to advance an extreme piece of legislation and is nothing more than a blatant attack on bipartisanship.

The past several days we have been engaged in productive bipartisan negotiations in the Senate. Everyone knows this. We have been working across party lines and making steady progress to achieve an agreement that reopens the government, protects the full faith and credit of our country, and opens talks to put this country on a firm fiscal footing. Everyone needs to know that the measure under discussion in the House is no part of what we have negotiated in the Senate.

The debt is here. The deadline is looming. Rating agencies are talking about downgrading us as early as tonight, again.

I know I speak for many of us. We have been working in good faith when I say that we felt blindsided by news from the House, but this isn't the first

time. Extremist Republicans in the House of Representatives are attempting to torpedo the Senate's bipartisan progress with a bill that can't pass the Senate—can't pass the Senate and won't pass the Senate.

The House measure would take away the President's fundamental authority that has been in existence for as long as political science can remember. It has been in place for decade after decade after decade to prevent a catastrophic default on the Nation's bills. Out of spite, tea party Republicans are trying to take authority away from President Obama. They would never, ever consider doing this if it were President Romney, President Bush, President Bush, or President Reagan. Never.

As they have said—and they have cheered on the other side—the government is closed. We don't mind defaulting on the debt. It is good for the country. That is what they have said.

Their legislation would also make unacceptable major changes to ObamaCare. The House legislation doesn't even include a process for bipartisan negotiation on a sensible long-term budget. They throw out these numbers, think magic is going to happen, and somehow when January 15 arrives, everything will be hunky-dory. There are still processes we have to follow. They set no pattern, no schedule, no routine to do that.

For weeks Republicans have claimed they want to negotiate, but their legislation completely ignores the need to work together, craft a budget, and put our country on a fiscally sustainable path.

For years they have complained about why don't we have regular order here. They complained about lack of a budget. Now they don't even want us to negotiate a budget. It is hard to comprehend this logic, but the tea-party-driven part of the Republican Party doesn't follow logic. Why would they want to close the government for 15 days, have us default on our debt?

Introduction of this measure by House Republican leadership is unproductive and a waste of time. Let us be clear: The House legislation will not pass the Senate.

This is what the White House said only a few minutes ago:

> The President has said repeatedly that members of Congress don't get to demand ransom for fulfilling their basic responsibilities to pass a budget and pay the nation's bills. Unfortunately, the latest proposal from House Republicans does just that in a partisan attempt to appease a small group of Tea Party Republicans who forced the government shutdown in the first place.

I am very disappointed with JOHN BOEHNER, who once again would try to preserve his role at the expense of the country.

I have worked hard to rise above bipartisanship and find common ground in the Senate. We have done that together for the good of the Nation. This is much bigger than the presiding Senator, who is from the State of Hawaii, or the assistant leader, who is at my side. This is much bigger than that. It is much bigger than me, it is much bigger than the two Senators on the floor who are from Connecticut. We have Senator MURRAY, who is chairman of the Budget Committee. It is bigger than her. It is bigger than the senior Senator from New York, Senator SCHUMER, who is on the floor.

We have to start working together as a country. This is what we have been trying to do. This is so disappointing. On the eve of financial destruction for this great country, this is what it is—to appease a small group of people over there. I am so disappointed.

Mr. DURBIN. Would the Senator yield for a question?

Mr. REID. I yield to the Senator.

Mr. DURBIN. I ask the majority leader, through the Chair, one of the key elements in this new proposal from Speaker BOEHNER is to diminish this President's authority to deal with a default on our national debt. This authority, so-called extraordinary measures or emergency measures, gives to Presidents, going back to President Kennedy, the wherewithal through the Treasury Department to try to avoid an economic disaster which could impact families, businesses, jobs, and the reputation of the United States in the world.

I ask of the majority leader, through the Chair, now that we have seen the Republican Party bring us so close to the precipice on a default, it is unimaginable to me that any President, including President Obama, would surrender this authority to keep America safe in light of this type of threat. Is this one of the key elements in terms of the problems associated with the Boehner proposal?

Mr. REID. Mr. President, to my friend, the senior Senator from Illinois, we have seen what has gone on these last few months, through this whole year, with a group of people who are giving press conferences, holding demonstrations. They want the government to stay closed. They wanted it closed in the first place.

The hardship we have over this country is awful. If that is not good enough, they are boasting they want the country to fail its obligations to pay its bills.

These are not new programs. These are obligations we have. That is one of the problems. The proposal they have would not allow—for example, my friend is the chair of what some say is the most important part of the Federal Government, to protect the safety and security of the United States, the subcommittee dealing with defense that was led many decades by Senator Dan Inouye. The proposal they have sent gives the President of the United States, the Chairman of the Chiefs of Staff, no flexibility whatsoever when sequestration kicks in on the 15th.

We are not asking to change those numbers. We agreed to those numbers. We voted to approve those numbers, but they won't even allow flexibility to allow the Department of Defense to shift that money around. I do not know how the defense of this country can go forward if they don't have flexibility with losing $22 billion beginning January 15. They don't even give authority for that.

The bill they are sending over is doomed to failure. It is doomed to failure legislatively and it is so awful for our country.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from New York.

Mr. SCHUMER. Mr. President, I would like to underscore for a brief moment what our leader has said: Default would be devastating to this country. Closing the government is awful for our country. Yesterday we all saw for the first time, after the government has been closed for too many days, when we are on the eve of default, some real progress—Leader REID and Leader MCCONNELL coming together on the outlines of a plan which made a great deal of sense, where each side had to give but could accept. And all of a sudden at the last minute, as the locomotive to avoid default is heading down the tracks and getting some steam, Speaker BOEHNER throws a log on the path. This is wrong.

He knows his proposal—we don't even know what it is yet. They have to tweak it probably to try to appease the hard right. But he knows his proposal with the measures in it already that have leaked out would not be signed by the President or pass the Senate. So instead of doing the right thing, looking at the Senate bipartisan proposal and moving forward on that, Speaker BOEHNER decides to light a match and throw it on the gasoline that is already all over the place. I hope he will desist.

We all have seen that the House can't lead in this regard. They can pass a lot of one-House bills, but they can't get anything done. Let him desist. Let him defer to the Democratic and Republican leaders here in this body so we can avoid default, open the government, and get back to America's business.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Connecticut.

Mr. BLUMENTHAL. Mr. President, let me add my voice to the eloquent and powerful remarks made by our majority leader and the Senator from New York, who have rightly deemed this House proposal an obstacle—indeed, an obstructionist move—designed to perpetuate and not end the shutdown, and to block and not enable our efforts to reach a bipartisan compromise which would allow America to continue paying its bills on time.

Those two goals—ending the shutdown and enabling America to pay its bills on time—are the predominant objectives we must have as a bipartisan effort goes forward here in the Senate. This House proposal is doomed to failure. It would be a failure not just for

the legislative process, not for the political actors here, but a failure for America.

I am reminded of the remarks so well made more than 10 days ago by the majority leader about one aspect of the effects of this shutdown on an industry very important to his State of Nevada and very important to the Presiding Officer's State of Hawaii—the tourism, lodging, and hotel industry. That impact is devastating.

As their Senator, I have heard this morning from staff and employees of the Starwood Hotels based in Stamford, CT, who have written to Members of Congress about the effects they see to their company and to others like theirs in this industry—hotel and tourism—which is vital to the State of Connecticut. In fact, we invest constructively and positively in promoting our State's tourism industry.

I will read from a letter from Amy Kilbury, associate director of IT finance at Starwood Hotels & Resorts Worldwide:

The current impasse, now in its third week, is having a negative impact both on the economy in general, and specifically on the travel and tourism industry, which depends on the confidence of business and individuals on the future stability of the economy. The shutdown is having ripple effects; as federal agencies have reduced their operations so have private government contractors, and in turn, this is affecting both business and leisure travel.

I ask unanimous consent to have printed in the RECORD this letter, and a letter written by the American Hotel and Lodging Association.

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

STARWOOD HOTELS & RESORTS WORLDWIDE, INC.,
Stamford, CT.

DEAR REPRESENTATIVE HIMES, SENATOR MURPHY, AND SENATOR BLUMENTHAL: I am the Associate Director of IT Finance at Starwood Hotels & Resorts, which has its headquarters in Stamford, CT. I wish to express my concern over the impasse in government funding and the impending risk that the United States could default on its obligations, and to urge you to work with your colleagues to forge a bipartisan compromise to reopen the government and raise the debt ceiling.

The current impasse, now in its third week, is having a negative impact both on the economy in general, and specifically on the travel and tourism industry, which depends on the confidence of business and individuals on the future stability of the economy. The shutdown is having ripple effects; as federal agencies have reduced their operations so have private government contractors, and in turn, this is affecting both business and leisure travel.

There is no question that the future health of the American economy depends on policies that will restore robust economic growth and job creation while gradually reducing debt, and I know that you are committed to those objectives. The government shutdown, however, and even the threat of default, will only slow the economy down and jeopardize efforts to achieve a lasting economic recovery.

The next few days are very important and I hope that you will make a major contribution towards reaching a positive compromise that will move this Nation forward. You have my best wishes as you deal with the awesome challenges ahead.

Regards,

AMY KILBURY,
Assoc. Director, IT Finance.

AMERICAN HOTEL & LODGING ASSOCIATION,
Washington, DC, October 10, 2013.

President BARACK OBAMA,
Members of the U.S. HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES,
Members of the U.S. SENATE.

The American Hotel & Lodging Association (AH&LA) and our members in every state and congressional district respectfully urge Congress and the President to reach an immediate agreement to fund the government and establish a degree of economic certainty to allow for continued growth.

Equally important is the looming breach of the debt limit and the need to come together on a plan to address our long-term fiscal challenges. Current fiscal uncertainty and the increasing lack of consumer confidence are disrupting recent economic progress and job creation, in which the lodging industry has played a significant role.

Analysts say that for each day the federal government is shut down, collective American income is reduced approximately $200 million, and our nation's hotels are losing more than $8 million in economic activity—putting jobs at risk and causing repercussions across many other related sectors. Communities near national parks are expected to lose $76 million a day in visitor spending. In Yosemite National Park, for example, lodges and cabins scheduled to be filled to near capacity are instead giving thousands of visitors 48 hours to leave. Additionally, thousands who had planned to visit national parks are cancelling their trips and hotel reservations. Stories continue to pour in from AH&LA members about how their businesses are being negatively affected.

The impacts extend far beyond our national treasures. Hoteliers with international travelers have experienced a significant increase in cancellations because these visitors are confused on whether they will be able to enter and leave normally. Our members in northern states receive calls daily from Canadians checking to see if the border is open.

Current fiscal conditions are leading to increased consumer uncertainty, all to the detriment of economic growth. In short, the government shutdown is increasingly impairing the lodging industry's ability to hire, grow, and contribute to the economy.

It is imperative that Congress and the President act now to address the fast-approaching deadline to raise the U.S. debt limit, or else risk default and further economic damage. Acting to put the debt on a downward path into the future and addressing our long-term fiscal challenges are imperative to stronger consumer confidence, future job growth, and our nation's standing throughout the world. The lodging industry will continue to be a leader in U.S. economic growth if our leaders can provide fiscal certainty.

AH&LA and our members thank you for your efforts to address these critically important issues.

American Hotel & Lodging Association; America's Best Franchising, Inc.; Arizona Lodging & Tourism Association; Asian American Hotel Owners Association (AAHOA); Association of Starwood Franchisees & Owners—North America (ASFONA); Best Western International; Bev Kaftan, American Payment Solutions, Mesa, AZ; Brian Latture, The Hotel Group, Franklin, TN; California Hotel & Lodging Association; Carlson Rezidor Hotel Group; Catherine DeVane, The Hotel Group, Franklin, TN; Chandler Wiens-Thayer, RHW Management, Overland Park, KS; Choice Hotels International; Chuck Donnelly, The Lodge at Mountaineer Square and The Grand Lodge, Gunnison County, CO; Colette Wear, Country Inn & Suites By Carlson, Lincoln, NE; Colorado Hotel & Lodging Association; Cortney Damiano, Best Western Plus, Olive Branch, MS; Delaware Hotel & Lodging Association; Douglas Dreher, The Hotel Group, Edmonds, WA; Florida Restaurant and Lodging Association; Georgia Hotel & Lodging Association; Hilton Worldwide; Host Hotels & Resorts.

Hotel Association of Washington, D.C.; Hyatt Hotels and Resorts; IHG Owners Association; InterContinental Hotels Group; Jeff Gouge, The Arctic Club Seattle, Seattle, WA 98104; Jeffrey T. Kmiec, The Greenbrier, White Sulphur Springs, WV; Jim Abrahamson, Interstate Hotels & Resorts, Arlington, VA; Joe Martin, Stillwater Hospitality, Stillwater, OK; John Shingler, President, Association of Starwood Franchisees & Owners; Josh Messer, Hilton Garden Inn—Eugene / Springfield, Springfield, OR; La Quinta Inns & Suites; Lara Latture, The Hotel Group, Franklin, TN; LaSalle Hotel Properties; Laurel Gaylor, La Quinta Inn & Suites Red Rock/Summerlin, Las Vegas, NV; Liban Abdi, Holiday Inn Express on the River, Corvallis, OR; Loews Hotels; Maine Innkeepers Association; Mark G. Carrier, B.F. Saul Company Hospitality Group, Bethesda, MD; Marriott International, Inc.; Massachusetts Lodging Association; Michigan Lodging and Tourism Association; Montana Lodging & Hospitality Association; New York State Hospitality & Tourism Association.

NewcrestImage; Ohio Hotel & Lodging Association; Oklahoma Hotel & Lodging Association; Opal Wedgewood, The Hotel Group, Franklin, TN; Paresh (Perry) Patel, MRPC Hotels, Newark, DE; Pedro Mandoki, Mandoki Hospitality Group, Gulf Shores, AL; Pennsylvania Restaurant & Lodging Association; Rhode Island Hospitality Association; Robert A. Alter, Seaview Investors, Corona Del Mar, CA; Ruby Goodwin, Pacific Palms Resort, City of Industry, CA; Sam Patel, Best Western Mountain View Inn, Springville, Utah; Shannon E. Johnson, Plaza Inn and Suites at Ashland Creek, Ashland, OR; Sonny Sailesh Babu, Atlantic Hotels Management, Carrollton, TX; South Carolina Restaurant & Lodging Association; Starwood Hotels & Resorts Worldwide; Steven Cooke, American Public University, Charles Town, WV; Tabitha Caldwell, The Hotel Group, Edmonds, WA; Tennessee Hospitality Association; Texas Hotel & Lodging Association; Toma G Brashear, Lanier Parking Solutions, Atlanta, GA; Warren Klug, Aspen Square Hotel, Aspen, CO; William Folkerts, Quality Inn & Suites, Watertown, SD; Wisconsin Hotel & Lodging Association.

Mr. BLUMENTHAL. These Starwood employees are writing to their Senators and Members of Congress because they see firsthand the effects on their livelihood and their lives. The stories recounted earlier by my colleague from Connecticut and those I recited yesterday on the floor are real effects in the lives of real people, negative and painful—indeed, devastating effects on people who depend on the economic flow of certain and stable work by the government, contractors, and small and large businesses like Starwood that are affected.

There is no question the future health of the American economy depends on the policies we need to adopt

and advance to sustain economic growth—indeed, to make it more robust to preserve job creation and, in fact, heighten and enhance it, and to make sure that these employees of Starwood are well served, not impeded, by the government they supported with their taxes and they elected with their votes. We have an obligation to them to do better than we have.

I was deeply moved by the story recounted by Senator DURBIN a short time ago on the floor about a young Iraq veteran more severely wounded than the ones I recounted yesterday. But he is a veteran like the individuals whose stories I told yesterday. They deserve better from our government. Indeed, they deserve an end to the kind of obstructionism we saw just a short time ago on the other side of this Congress, in the other branch of this legislative body, from Members of the House of Representatives who know the proposal they are making has no chance of adoption by the deadline we need to meet to make sure that the greatest Nation in the history of the world avoids default and continues to pay its bills on time.

The CEO of the American Hotel and Lodging Association, which represents Starwood, Katherine Lugar, said: Hotels are a major economic driver and job creator across the country, and the industry's ability to continue its growth is hamstrung by inaction from our policy members. The administration, the House of Representatives, and the Senate need to act swiftly in the best interests of the entire Nation and end this shutdown. Pay our bills on time.

That has been the objective of my colleagues on this side of the aisle and on the other side, like Senator MCCAIN who has just come to the floor. That bipartisan effort has to be our objective. We need to do better for the American people and meet the obligations we now have.

As chairman of the subcommittee which has jurisdiction over the hotel and lodging industry, the commerce committee, we are hearing about how States such as Arizona, Hawaii, and Nevada, as well as Connecticut, are losing millions of dollars every day in economic activity. In fact, the Weir Farm National Historic Site in Connecticut is harmed, along with the Grand Canyon, and all the communities and industries associated with it. These issues are real and tangible. The harm is now and urgent.

I urge my colleagues to come together and resist the pressures and demonstrate the kinds of profiles of courage we have seen on both sides of the aisle—standing strong, speaking out, resisting partisanship—and coming together for the good of the country.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Arizona.

Mr. MCCAIN. Mr. President, I thank my friend from Connecticut.

In the last 24 hours a lot has been taking place. A tentative agreement has been reached between both Republican and Democratic leaders. The Speaker of the House has come forward with what we believe is a plan which would reopen the government, extend the debt limit, and has several other provisions in it.

The reaction to that has been immediate automatic condemnation by the majority leader, by the White House, and by Democrats in the House, absolutely rejecting this proposal.

I don't understand that. I don't understand that visceral reaction in a most negative fashion. Why don't we try something like we used to do around this place? Why don't we say: You have a proposal to open the government; we have a proposal to open the government. Let's both pass; let's go to conference—which we could do in 24 hours—and resolve our differences.

I understand what the polling data says, that 74 percent of the American people disapprove of the Republican handling of this issue. And I agree. Some of us at the beginning said we are going on a fool's errand to believe we will be able to defund ObamaCare. We got ourselves in a ditch, and we have to stop digging. That is well understood here by certainly the overwhelming majority of my Republican colleagues. But for the majority leader and the Democrats in the House and the White House to say absolutely, categorically, we will not consider what the Republicans in the House of Representatives are doing, in my view is piling on. It is piling on and it is not right.

I urge my Democrat colleagues: Let's sit down and work this out. We have a proposal from the House. We have a proposal between the two leaders. Let's get this resolved. To categorically reject what the House of Representatives and the Speaker is doing—and I think he is pretty courageous in what he is doing—in my view is not serving the American people.

So let's stop this. Let's stop it, sit down, consider the Speaker's proposal, get our proposal done, and then get this resolved, which we could do in the next 24 hours.

I came to the floor to express my disappointment in the categorical rejection of a good-faith effort by the Speaker of the House—which doesn't contain all the provisions I want. I am sure the agreement made by both the Senate majority and Republican leaders will not be everything I want. Let's stop the condemnation. Let's consider the Republican House proposal as a serious proposal, as a way to end this gridlock, and then let's sit down together and get this thing done.

I again urge my Democratic colleagues. We know you have the upper hand. Isn't it time we help find a way out of this—which is what the American people want—rather than who won and who lost. The only people losing right now are the people of this country. As I have mentioned a couple times before, Al Qaeda is not in shutdown.

I urge my Democratic colleagues and the White House to reconsider their categorical rejection of any proposal from the House of Representatives.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Ms. HEITKAMP). The Senator from Florida.

IRAN

Mr. RUBIO. Madam President, clearly the issue we are facing with regard to the budget, ObamaCare, the debt ceiling is a very important issue. In the hours and days to come I will have a lot more to say about it. I waited over the last few days, because of the urgency that confronts us domestically, to reserve my comments on the issue of Iran. At this point I believed I could no longer wait to speak out on it, so if my colleagues can indulge me for a few moments, I wish to talk about it because, as serious as the domestic challenge may be with regard to the budget, the spending, the debt limit, ObamaCare, we have another crisis brewing, one that goes to our national security interests, one that quite frankly for the most part unites us across the aisle; that is, the issue and the threat Iran's nuclear ambitions pose to the world.

The reason I believed I could no longer wait to address this is because I believe, as many of you do, that the world is entering a crucial time in the international efforts to stop Iran's nuclear program. On September 24 of this year, I, along with a group of other Senators, wrote to the President and we expressed our concerns about reports that the administration was contemplating making a fresh, new offer, fresh new series of offers to Iran. In that letter, we said Iran must not be allowed to develop a nuclear weapon; that is, if, God forbid, it becomes necessary, we could support the use of military force to prevent an Iranian bomb and that Iran must not be allowed to maintain any indigenous enrichment capability; and that now is not the time to suspend sanctions but to increase them on the Iranian regime.

All of us would like to wake tomorrow to the news that the Ayatollah has decided to abandon his nuclear weapons ambitions, but it is especially imperative on matters of national security that we not be guided simply by our hopes. We must be guided by reality. This is true in life in general, but it is especially true and important on issues of national security that we be guided by reality. That reality is that no matter how much Iran's political leaders say they do not have plans for a nuclear weapon, their actions say something else. They have dramatically increased their ability to enrich uranium and they continue to spend millions of dollars to expand their nuclear program and to develop long-range missiles which threaten not just Israel and Europe but eventually the United States.

The only reason you put so much money and time into developing long-range missiles is to put a nuclear weapon on them. That is what they have been doing. They have been developing this missile capability.

Recently, we heard all this new talk about there is a new President in Iran and he might be a reformer. We hope so. But this is also the same person who in the past has bragged about how he has fooled the world before and bought time for Iran's enrichment capacity to increase. In the end, by the way, even if he is a reformer, he is not the ultimate decisionmaker, nor is the Foreign Minister or any of these other civilians in their government. The ultimate decisionmaker is Iran's so-called Supreme Leader Ali Khamenei. So far no one has accused him of being a reformer.

Iran's leaders are making noises about negotiating with the world now because over the last few years the United States and the European Union have imposed very significant sanctions on Iran and these sanctions are starting to hurt the Iranian regime. It is hurting, although it has not stopped, their ability to export terrorism around the world. It is hurting, although it has not stopped, their ability to buy parts for their nuclear program and for their missile program.

Do you want to understand why they are doing all this now, what their plan is? It is not that hard to understand. What they are trying to do, they are trying to get us and the world to agree to weaken the sanctions without them having to agree to any concessions that are irreversible, to any concessions that irreversibly block their ability to one day build that weapon. This ambition of theirs, this plan they have is clear as day. They are trying to figure out if they can get these sanctions suspended or lifted without giving up too much. Then at some point in the future, when the world has moved on, when we are focused on other things, they can then make their move to build their bomb.

By the way, this is the model North Korea employed over a decade ago. They used a combination of belligerence and pretended negotiations to buy the time and the space. Now they are a nuclear power and they continue to develop their rocket technology—which does not just threaten South Korea and Japan but the west coast of the United States and potentially one day the entire country, our entire country.

This is why, as these talks between the so-called P5+1 group of nations and Iran restarted, we are at a critical juncture. We should talk to Iran. We should see if they are serious. But we cannot, under any circumstances, put at risk the hard-earned leverage that took so long to put in place and assemble.

First, we need to remember whom we are dealing with. We are talking about a regime that has earned the distrust of the entire world through its secret nuclear program, a regime that admits foul play only when they are caught red-handed, a regime that supports terrorism, killing of Americans, and has an active hand in fueling conflicts that destabilize its neighbors. This is a regime that brutalizes its own people and denies them their basic freedoms. This is the regime, by the way, that plotted to assassinate the Saudi Ambassador in this city, in Washington DC.

Given this record, the erosion of trust in Tehran is simply too great, so the United States must look long and hard at what Iranian actions could qualify as what the administration likes to call credible confidence-building measures.

I say this because of whom we are dealing with. Sanctions on Iran should not be lifted or suspended until they agree to completely abandon any capability for enrichment or reprocessing. Iran has a right to a peaceful civilian nuclear energy program. But they do not have the right to enrich or reprocess. Holding this line is especially important in light of Iran's repeated and blatant disregard for international obligations in the past and even to this day.

Even a limited enrichment program and possession of sensitive reprocessing technologies is unacceptable because of the risk that such a program would once again be abused by Iran in the future for nefarious and dangerous purposes. Suspending sanctions before Iran not just suspends but abandons enrichment would give the Iranian regime exactly what they want, an eventual path to a nuclear weapon. Sanctions relief at this time would allow them to make advances on their broader strategic objectives in their region such as propping up the Assad regime in Syria, such as continuing to destabilize Iraq, such as supporting terrorist groups such as Hezbollah in Lebanon.

We cannot allow the No. 1 exporter of terrorism in the world this opportunity. Until Iran agrees to abandon enrichment and reprocessing, not only should we keep the current sanctions but the Congress should move to implement a new round of additional sanctions without delay. I would say that at some point Congress should consider making it very clear that if it becomes necessary, the President of the United States should reserve the right to take military action to prevent Iran from continuing to advance its nuclear weapons program.

The United States and the international community have succeeded in bringing Iran to the negotiating table through firm action, not through half measures. Personally, I hope, as do all of my colleagues, that there is a diplomatic solution to this problem. But Iran does not have forever to prove they are serious. We cannot allow them to use these talks to continue to buy time and space as they have for the last decade, as North Korea did before them, to buy time and space so they can continue to develop their nuclear weapons capability. We cannot allow them to use these talks to continue to spread terror, to undermine their neighbors, and to threaten our country or our allies in Israel and around the world.

We cannot fall into their trap. Yes, we should be willing to talk. But talk alone should not slow down our actions. Until they act, we should continue to increase pressure and speak forcefully about what these people sitting across from us have done internationally and to their own people; otherwise, I truly believe at some point in the future we are going to awake to the news that Iran has tested a nuclear weapon and we may find ourselves stuck with the reality that they have the ability to put that weapon on a missile that can reach the United States. If that day should ever come, God help us all.

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

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

Mr. NELSON. Madam President, you know when you are driving along and your children keep asking you, are we there yet? Are we there yet? That is an appropriate question. I would have thought we were there—until now. We heard about the agreement that was hammered out between the two leaders in the Senate and now all kinds of changes wanting to be made in the House of Representatives. The countdown clock is ticking. The ominous sounds of default are being heard. The stock market, the New York Exchange, has reacted accordingly. Up on Friday, up again a little bit yesterday on the hopes, but today with the new news, down—not a huge amount but a significant amount.

It is reflective of this emotional roller coaster of what is at stake, which is the financial integrity of this country.

Enough is enough. The ridiculousness ought to stop. Let's go back and look where we have been over the course of the last 2 weeks.

All of this started with a shutdown of the Federal Government, of which there are untold stories of hardship and deprivation that are going on. That ought to be enough to spur people to action to stop the shutdown. What did the shutdown start with? It started because a small group in the House, maybe folks who would affiliate with the tea party, decided they want to take away the funding for the health care reform act, the Affordable Care Act. As a result, they forced this shutdown.

In the course of the last 2 weeks, about 1 week goes by and that crowd sees this is not working and so they

shift then their attacks to one of overall spending. But still today, with the two leaders in the Senate having basically come to an agreement, the House of Representatives is going back to the Affordable Care Act and wanting to extract additional things. And all the time the clock is ticking toward not only not being able to bring government back so it can function—stopping the shutdown—but also the potential default that is looming.

I really believe and I understand what the people in my State of Florida feel. They are fed up with this. It is so ridiculous. Yet that is what our politics has come to. The small group in the House of Representatives better start understanding that.

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.

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

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection and so ordered.

RECESS

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

Thereupon, the Senate, at 12:29 p.m., recessed until 2:15 p.m., and reassembled when called to order by the Presiding Officer (Ms. BALDWIN.)

DEFAULT PREVENTION ACT OF 2013—MOTION TO PROCEED—Continued

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Louisiana.

Mr. VITTER. Madam President, I rise to concur with the House of Representatives to consider and pass what they seem to be focused on, which is a compromise resolution to the crisis before us which includes ''no Washington exemption'' language regarding ObamaCare. I strongly support, of course, that language, and I strongly support that discussion and that effort in the House, and I really encourage all of our House colleagues to look hard at that and act on it. In particular, I would encourage my Louisiana colleagues to do that.

I have pushed this issue ever since we got back from the August recess. As the Presiding Officer knows, as we went into that August recess the Obama administration issued a rule—an illegal rule, in my opinion—without statutory authority, contrary to the ObamaCare statute, that gives Members of Congress and congressional staff special status, special exemption, or special subsidy, if you will, not in the law, and one not enjoyed in that way by any other American. This ''no Washington exemption'' language, which I have been an advocate of with many others here in the Senate and with many House colleagues, would end that special elite status. That is what we need to do.

I think we need to do it for two crucial reasons—first of all, just on principle. I believe it should be the first rule of our democracy that Washington is treated as the rest of America is treated. What is good for America and what Congress and the administration—what Washington passes on America, it lives with itself with no special status, no special rules, no special exemption or subsidy. That should be true across the board. It should certainly be true regarding ObamaCare. That should be the first rule of American democracy.

Washington doesn't want that. It wants to impose these new rules on the rest of America; it doesn't want to live by them itself. It is sort of like when a person walks into a restaurant and hears that the chef never, ever eats at that restaurant, never, ever has a meal out of that kitchen, it makes a person wonder. The same thing is true here on a number of fronts, including ObamaCare.

So the first point is based on pure principle. Washington should live under the same rules it imposes on America across the board, including under ObamaCare. So Washington—Congress, all congressional staff, the President, the Vice President, their political appointees—should have to go to the same fallback option under ObamaCare that is there for all America—the so-called exchanges—and it should do that with no special rules or special deal or special subsidy or special exception. It should do that the same way ordinary Americans do, who in many cases—8 million-plus—are forced out of good health care coverage they have now through their employment and forced onto the ObamaCare exchanges.

The second reason this language is so important is a very practical one, because the sooner we make Washington live by the same ObamaCare rules as the rest of America, the quicker Washington will change ObamaCare in substantial ways, will fix it not just for Washington, as it did through the special illegal Obama administration rule on this subject, but for America. We need to align policymakers' personal interests in Washington along with the interests of the American people. The way we do that is to make them live by exactly the same rules, make them walk the walk of those Americans who have to go to the ObamaCare exchanges, in many cases against their will—8 million-plus—who were satisfied with the health coverage they had prior to ObamaCare and then who realized that under this law the promise by President Obama that ''if you like the health care coverage you have now, you can keep it''—they realized the hard way that promise was a lie.

So there are two crucial reasons we must pass this language into law: first, the principle, and second, the practicality—first, the principle that Washington should live under the same rules the same way as America and, second, the practicality that we need to visit upon Washington all of the burdens and challenges that face America under ObamaCare, including those 8 million-plus Americans going to the exchanges against their will.

Again, I encourage the House to include this ''no Washington exemption'' language in any compromise they put together with regard to these fiscal issues we are dealing with now. That would be enormously important. It would show leadership. I think it will resonate with the American people. The American people get this issue, and they resent—rightly so—Washington getting a special exemption or a special subsidy under ObamaCare that no other American in that situation gets.

Again, I urge the House to act on that important language. That would show leadership. That would align our personal interests with the folks we represent. That would honor what should be the first principle of American democracy: Washington lives under the same rules as the rest of America on ObamaCare and on everything else.

Thank you, Madam President. I yield the floor and suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

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

Mr. BROWN. Madam President, we still remain hopeful as the hours, unfortunately, click down towards what could happen in this country if we do not pay our debts. It has never happened in American history. I know when we woke up this morning, when America woke up, they saw Leader REID, the Democratic leader, the majority leader, and Leader MCCONNELL, the Republican leader from Kentucky, coming together in discussion, coming together on a plan, and they are pretty close to agreement.

We know there are still problems in the House of Representatives. I think some of us in this body are fans of Abraham Lincoln, and many of us have studied a lot of things Lincoln said and did. Lincoln used to talk about—when his staff wanted him to stay at the White House to win the war and free the slaves and preserve the Union—he said: I have to go out and get my public opinion bath.

I think some of my colleagues in the House could learn something from going out and listening to real people, not just going on talk radio, not just going to their country clubs, but to listen to people talk about their lives and what this government shutdown has meant.

It has meant more than 50,000 jobs in my State—people who are furloughed. Madam President, 97 percent of NASA employees in Cleveland and Sandusky in northern Ohio have been furloughed. We know what it has meant to Battelle Memorial Institute, one of the great research facilities in the country. They run the energy labs. We know what it has meant to people who depend on Meals On Wheels and food stamps and depend on food safety and meat inspections and all that government does.

We know long term what this shutdown or repeated shutdowns in the future do. That is why these negotiations are so important that Majority Leader REID is insisting that every time somebody says: I am going to shut the government down, you do not repeal a law for them because then that is what becomes a matter of course.

If you are a research scientist and you are funded by an NIH grant at Case Western Reserve University in Cleveland or you are at Wright State University and are a medical researcher or you are doing aeronautics research at Wright-Patterson Air Force Base or at NASA Glenn, if you see these interruptions, if you are furloughed for 3 weeks in October 2013 and then again some time next year, and again, you—some of the most talented researchers—are going to walk away, and we are going to lose so much of the edge we have in this country.

We are still the leading economy in the world. We are the greatest country in the world because, as the Presiding Officer knows in Wisconsin, we have built the kind of intellectual and physical infrastructure the world has never seen—whether it is the University of Wisconsin, which is a great university, not quite as great as a slightly larger one in Columbus, but whether it is a great university, whether it is medical research, whether it is building highways and public transit and aeronautics and all that we do as a nation and we have done together, we cannot lose that edge. These government shutdowns and threats are damaging not just to the economy today but to our long-term future as a nation.

That is why I am hopeful, as Senator MCCONNELL and Senator REID have worked together and come close to an agreement, that the House of Representatives will understand how important this is to the future of our Nation. All we are asking is—once we get this agreement in the Senate—that Speaker BOEHNER simply go along; otherwise, it really is a betrayal of our values and our future and us as a great country.

I yield the floor.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Ms. MIKULSKI. I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

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

Ms. MIKULSKI. What is the pending status of the Senate floor?

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senate is on the motion to proceed to S. 1569.

Ms. MIKULSKI. I rise to speak for approximately 10 minutes.

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

Ms. MIKULSKI. We are 33 hours away from the possible default of the United States of America on its debt obligations. We are 33 hours away from the possibility of the United States of America becoming a deadbeat nation, not paying its bills to its own people and other creditors.

We are 33 hours away from our T-bills becoming a junk bond. It is unacceptable that our T-bills, our Treasury bills, should move to a junk-bond status. We have to get rid of that and we have to get rid of the junk talk that is going on around here.

The Congress of the United States must have a sense of urgency and come together on a program that ensures the United States of America pays its bills and opens its government to serve its own people and to serve the role we play around the world.

I say to my colleagues on both sides of the aisle, let us pass the framework that was originally suggested yesterday by the Democratic leader Senator REID and by Senator MCCONNELL, our Republican leader. Maybe it is not something all of us would have written, but it is something we could all do. It means the President would sign it, the government would reopen, we could extend the debt ceiling, and we could be working on both our budget and our Senate appropriations.

I say, as the chair of the Appropriations Committee, I am eager to go to work. I am eager to fashion that bipartisan compromise within the Senate in terms of what our spending should be, how we could make sure it is affordable, frugal, makes good investments in the American framework, makes sure we have national security physical infrastructure, meets compelling human need, and conducts research and development.

We can do this. I spoke with my House counterparts. We are eager to go to work, but in order to negotiate we must have this agreement.

I am very adamant that before we can get to appropriations and our budget, we have to raise the debt ceiling. If we fail or falter to address the crisis, the United States of America will irrevocably be affected. This is a manufactured crisis. It is a manufactured crisis because it is a self-inflicted crisis. This is not what our global competitors are doing to us. This is not what Russia is doing to us. This is not what China is doing to us. This is what the House of Representatives is doing to us.

I thought we had an agreement arrived at by two mature leaders willing to do statesmanship rather than brinkmanship. That became the mantra of the day, statesmanship over gamesmanship. We felt very good about it last night when we went home. It was going to take give. Certainly, it was going to take give from we appropriators, but that is OK. That is the American way.

Now we are on the verge of being a deadbeat nation. How humiliating is this, that the Federal Government, already shut down for 2 weeks, could be heading for default. The full faith and credit of the United States has always been the international standard for investment in the world and now it is a question mark.

There is a lot of confusion about debt ceiling and what it means. Debt ceiling doesn't mean permission to acquire new spending, it means to acquire funds to pay bills we have acquired in the past. The debt ceiling determines how much the government can borrow to pay for the programs it has already enacted. I wish to repeat it allows the United States to pay the bills it has already incurred.

Opponents of raising the debt ceiling say that by blocking an increase, it is going to save the United States money. That is simply not true. We don't save money by not paying our bills. Do you know what happens when someone doesn't pay their bills? They get a lousy credit rating. When someone gets a lousy credit rating, he or she has to pay more for what they want to buy if they have a terrible credit rating. It is as if we are moving into payday loans.

This is the United States of America. We don't just erase the debt by not paying our bills. In fact, we end up owing more money, as I said, because our interest rates go up. The consequences of a default are significant and severe. For the House of Representatives to say no, to want to give up and say no to what we are working on in the Senate is the height of dangerous behavior.

The Treasury Department warns that default could create a worse economic crisis than 2008 and could cause more damage that might last over more than a generation. A generation is 20 years. I don't want children who are now 6, 7, and 8 years old to grow up in a country that is viewed as an international deadbeat. I don't want to derail our economic recovery. Economists predict we could lose over 600,000 jobs and 401(k)s would be hit hard.

The President would also have to decide who gets limited government money. We will operate only over existing limited government revenue. Should we pay our troops, continue Social Security checks? What should we do?

This isn't only about let's squeeze government programs. This is going to put the squeeze on Medicare and Social Security. I went through this in the 1995 government shutdown. The consequences are very severe to Social Security. Each month Social Security

pays about $70 billion in benefits to 63 million Americans. Most benefits are made to retirees and people with disabilities. October 16, tomorrow, we have a bill due of $13 billion. On October 23, the next round of Social Security checks go out, which is $13 billion. November 1 is another $27 billion with another $4 billion in SSI benefits.

If we have default, we might have to delay benefits. They could be delayed until there is enough revenue in the Treasury to cover the payments due that day. Let me paint the picture. Within the next 4 weeks, we have $70 billion worth of benefits due in Social Security. Jack Lew, the Secretary of the Treasury, says that on October 17 it will be $30 billion. In Social Security alone, we have a $40 billion decline and a gap. The Bipartisan Policy Center estimates that not raising the debt ceiling could delay the November 1 payment by 2 weeks. We are talking about delaying Social Security. That is an earned benefit.

I would like to say what it also means to Medicare. On Medicare, if the government fails to pay, Medicare payments would be delayed. Medicare pays providers and also covers the prescription drug benefit. Let us go to the prescription drug benefit, which means a lot to many people. If someone needs prescription drugs to control blood pressure, to control blood sugar, to take an anticoagulant to prevent heart attack or stroke, he or she needs Medicare. About $5.2 billion worth of Medicare payments to private insurance companies for the drug coverage is due on November 1.

On November 1, the U.S. Government is supposed to pay its share to private insurance companies to cover the prescription drug benefit. If it doesn't do that, what is a private insurance company going to do? They are supposed to help administer this Medicare Part D benefit. Will the insurance companies continue to provide prescription drugs if they don't get paid by us?

What happens to the seniors? I don't know.

Let us go to providers. Medicare pays doctors and hospitals that treat Medicare patients. Under the law, they are supposed to be paid within 14 days. Every day, 5 million claims worth about $1 billion are paid to either hospitals or doctors. If we don't have money to pay that hospital or to repay that doctor for services rendered, will they continue to treat Medicare patients? Will hospitals continue to admit them? I am sure they would do it in an emergency, but the whole idea of being able to see your doctor is to avoid an emergency. Doctors are already hesitant about Medicare because of the Spartan reimbursement, but now we are talking about maybe no reimbursement at all for weeks at a time. Why? Not because of a natural disaster but because of politics, politics, politics, politics.

The other side, particularly the other side of the dome in the House, might not like ObamaCare. There are those on the other side of the aisle who don't like ObamaCare. I think everybody likes Medicare. No matter what one thinks about ObamaCare—and I do believe President Obama does care and that is a good thing to call that health care program—but I do believe everyone likes Medicare. I know no Senator, no Member of the House of Representatives, who would like to end the Medicare Program.

If we default, we could be ending Medicare as we know it. We will shake the very confidence in the provider system. We will shake the very confidence that we have in a partnership between Medicare, private insurance, and the people who need health care. What is it that we are doing? Again, this is a self-inflicted manufactured crisis.

I say to the House of Representatives, listen to the framework of the Senate bill. Let's not add a lot of other issues the House might like to bring up. Let us pass the framework that was discussed by Senators REID and MCCONNELL yesterday.

There was a lot of give-and-take, that we would reopen government. By December 15, the Budget Committee will have met. By January 15 we would have produced our spending bill for 2014, and we would lift the debt ceiling until February 7. I think that would be a good way to go.

One might say shouldn't the Budget Committee meet anyway? You betcha. Senator MURRAY passed her budget bill on May 23 by almost 70 votes in the Senate, but she could not go negotiate with PAUL RYAN because six Senators on the other side of the aisle objected. Now we have to pass legislation mandating following the law.

We are now passing a law to tell them to follow the law. I am willing to pass a law to tell them to follow the law, because in order for me as the chair of the committee, working with my vice chairman Senator SHELBY, a really rock-ribbed fiscal conservative—we have a lot of negotiating back and forth, but we have an atmosphere of civility, candor, and an interest in the good of the country. We can get it done. We know we have to give and take. I know as a Democrat I have to, and I am willing to do it. I called him this morning and reaffirmed my commitment to work in the spirit of compromise.

So let's get on with it. Thirty-three hours to go—now it is 32 hours and 45 minutes to go. The clock is ticking on the United States of America and its standing in the world. I urge us to come together, that the Senate be able to move the framework discussed by our leadership; that the House take it up, pass it, and we get on to doing the governance we were elected to do.

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

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. BARRASSO. 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. BARRASSO. Mr. President, I ask consent to speak in morning business.

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

Mr. BARRASSO. Mr. President, it has now been 2 weeks since the launch of the insurance exchanges that were created by President Obama's health care law. After 2 weeks of delays, error messages, things the President calls glitches, the American people are united in saying that this is what a train wreck looks like. A recent poll by the Associated Press found that only 7 percent of Americans say this rollout has gone either very well or extremely well. The Obama administration continues to say the problems were just because of too many people trying to check out the Web site the first day.

I bring to the floor the front page of Sunday's New York Times, Sunday, October 13, now 13 days into the exchange, with the headline above the fold, front page on Sunday: ''From the Start, Signs of Trouble at Health Portal. Many Deadlines Missed. Web Site Problems May Imperil Finances of Insurance Market.'' This is a front-page story. It continues inside the paper. It says:

> In March, Henry Chao, the chief digital architect for the Obama administration's new online insurance marketplace, told industry executives that he was deeply worried about the Web site's debut. ''Let's just make sure it's not a third-world experience,'' he told them.
>
> Two weeks after the rollout, few would say his hopes were realized.
>
> For the past 12 days, a system costing more than $400 million and billed as a one-stop click-and-go hub for citizens seeking health insurance has thwarted the efforts of millions to simply log in. The growing national outcry has deeply embarrassed the White House, which has refused to say how many people have enrolled through the federal exchange.
>
> Even some supporters of the Affordable Care Act worry that the flaws in the system, if not quickly fixed, could threaten the fiscal health of the insurance initiative, which depends on throngs of customers to spread the risk and keep prices low.
>
> ''These are not glitches,'' said an insurance executive who has participated in many conference calls on the federal exchange. Like many people interviewed for this article, the executive spoke on the condition of anonymity, saying he did not wish to alienate the federal officials with whom he works. ''The extent of the problems is pretty enormous. At the end of our calls, people say, 'It's awful, just awful.' ''

At the time, the President of the United States—he and I talked about this directly face to face on Friday at the White House. He said we just have a problem with the cash register. I would say this is a Web site with major flaws. It goes way beyond the cash register.

One online database programmer told CBS News:

> It wasn't designed well, it wasn't implemented well, and it looks like nobody tested it.

That is from a computer expert who says he supports the law but the Web site needs a complete overhaul.

I would be ashamed and embarrassed if my organization delivered something like that.

Remember, they spent $400 million of hard-earned taxpayer dollars. This guy says he would be ashamed and embarrassed to deliver something as bad as the Obama health care exchange.

I think the Obama administration should be embarrassed about the whole law. The law wasn't designed well, hasn't been implemented well, and it looks as if nobody tested it. The problems we have seen are not just first-day glitches. The problems have continued. People still cannot sign up easily. It is still not as easy to use as Amazon. Remember the President of the United States promised it would be as easy to use as amazon.com. Why are there problems 2 weeks later?

The CEO of Aetna Insurance said yesterday—this is 2 weeks into it. He said:

There's so much wrong, you just don't know what's broken until you get a lot more of it fixed.

We still have no idea how many people have been able to enroll successfully. What is the Obama administration continuing to hide?

Wolf Blitzer came out last week on CNN and said:

If they weren't fully ready, they should accept the advice the Republicans are giving them, delay it for a year, get it ready, and make sure it works.

Even Jon Stewart was asking why the Obama administration gave a 1-year delay to big businesses but not to the American people. Mr. President, if you are the Obama White House, when you have lost Jon Stewart, you know things are not going well.

The problems do not end with the media or professional comedians. A Democratic Member of the House who actually voted for the health care law called the launch of the exchanges ''excruciatingly frustrating.'' Robert Gibbs, President Obama's former Press Secretary, said yesterday:

I hope they fire some people who were in charge of making sure that this thing was supposed to work.

The biggest cheerleaders for the President's health care law are now turning against it, the American people do not like it, and people are not buying the administration's excuses for why it has failed. This is, of course, bad for the President, but the American people have even bigger problems, and that is what we should be really focused on.

The White House is worried about how this looks from a PR standpoint. We should also be talking about the real harm this health care law is doing to hard-working Americans and their families and their jobs and their paychecks. Many of them are going to lose their doctors—doctors who are not included in the insurance plans sold in the exchanges. Many are already seeing that their premiums are going up because of all the Washington mandates.

Remember the President and his promises in passing this health care law? That is not what the people are seeing today. One mother told a TV station in Allentown, PA, that when she went to sign up on the Web site, she was told her premium would be almost $950 for her family. That is $765 more than she pays now. She told the station, ''It would take food out of our mouths to be able to afford this coverage.'' This is what the President of the United States and Democrats in this body have foisted on the American people.

People are finding that not just the premiums are going up, but many of their other health care costs are also higher.

The Chicago Tribune had this headline on Sunday:

Obamacare deductibles may cause sticker shock. Insurance companies are requiring higher out-of-pocket expenses to pay for complying with new rules.

Expenses to pay for complying with rules—not expenses to give you health care, not expenses to keep you healthy, not expenses to prevent injury or illness, but expenses to pay for complying with the rules. That is the Chicago Tribune, the President's hometown newspaper.

As if all that weren't bad enough, the administration is still insisting it is going to fine people who don't have insurance, even though people can't sign up on the ObamaCare Web site successfully. The administration was saying that this is a long process and people have until the end of March of next year to enroll in the exchanges, but even that changed last week. Now it turns out people will actually have to sign up 6 weeks earlier than that—by Valentine's Day—or pay the tax penalty. What we are looking at is a tax penalty at 1 percent of income or $95, whichever is greater that first year. That could be a sizable amount of money for some families who thought they were going to get affordable insurance under the President's health care law because that's what the President promised them. He stood in Congress and told the American people that. He stood in front of groups all around the country, and the American people feel misled and deceived. All of this frustration, expense, stress, and pain was all avoidable.

Democrats in Congress and President Obama need to swallow their pride. They need to admit that the problems with the health care law are not limited to a bad Web site. The problems with the health care law run much deeper, and they are only going to get much worse. We must do something to stop this terrible law from doing more damage to people's jobs, their care, and our country.

The President will be held to the promises he made as recently as 2½ weeks ago: If people like their doctors, they can keep their doctor, the cost will be less than a cell phone bill, and that it will be easier to use than amazon.com.

This health care law has failed miserably. We needed health care reform so people could get the care they need from a doctor they choose at lower costs. They have not gotten it. It is time to repeal and replace this terrible health care law.

I thank the Presiding Officer and yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from New Hampshire.

Ms. AYOTTE. Mr. President, I ask that the senior Senator from South Carolina, the senior Senator from Georgia, if he comes to the floor, as well, and I be permitted to enter into a colloquy for up to 20 minutes.

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

TERRORIST PRISONERS

Ms. AYOTTE. Mr. President, I come to the floor today to talk about something that is fundamental to all of us, and that is the safety and security of our country.

On October 5, our special forces did an excellent job in conjunction with our intelligence community, and I commend the administration for ordering the raid that captured a key Al Qaeda terrorist whose name is Abu Anas al-Libi. When they captured him, they put him on a ship.

About a week ago, my colleague from South Carolina and my colleague from Georgia, who is the ranking member of the Intelligence Committee, stood up and we said: After successfully capturing one of the most important Al Qaeda members—which is a result of the great work done by our special forces and our intelligence agents—why are we putting him on a ship for purposes of interrogation instead of bringing him to Guantanamo Bay detention facility, which is a top-rated detention facility? At Guantanamo Bay we could do a lengthy interrogation of this person who has been associated with Osama bin Laden and the current head of Al Qaeda, Anwar al-Awlaki.

He is also charged with participating and being involved in the 1998 Kenya and Tanzania bombings at the embassies that killed 224 people, including 12 Americans. He has been described as a potential treasure trove of information about the activities of Al Qaeda and their plans. The information we have, which has been released publicly, is that he is someone Anwar al-Awlaki may have sent to Libya to try to make sure that they could have the Al Qaeda network in Libya.

Let's not forget what happened on September 11, a year ago, in Libya where our ambassador and three brave Americans were murdered. Does Mr. al-Libi know anything about that?

We will never fully know what Mr. al-Libi knows because after a week on the ship where our intelligence officials were given an opportunity to speak to him, he was transferred to a Federal district court, and today in Federal district court he pled not guilty to the 1998 bombings at the embassy. He was given a lawyer. We know

that when these terrorists are given a lawyer, it gives them an opportunity to say: I will not talk to anyone anymore because I have a lawyer. They are told they have the right to remain silent.

It is irresponsible for our Nation to capture a top Al Qaeda terrorist and tell them a week later: Here is your lawyer and your right to remain silent because the most important piece we have to protect our country is information to prevent future attacks and information that our intelligence officials can use about the Al Qaeda network to protect Americans and our allies. That information was given up because this administration is so worried and concerned about political points and closing Guantanamo Bay that they would rather transfer someone who is a key Al Qaeda operative to the Federal district court in New York and give him a lawyer a week later, instead of a lengthy interrogation designed to find out everything he knows.

It took years to get the information that led to the bin Laden raid that captured and killed Osama bin Laden. Yet we only had a week of interrogation with a key Al Qaeda operative because they are so worried about adding more people to those who are present at Guantanamo Bay that they would rather put that political goal above gathering information to make sure America is protected. It is wrong, and we will never know what information we lost that could have protected Americans by only allowing this interrogation to go a week in military custody instead of a lengthy interrogation in a top-rated detention facility.

One of the reasons that the administration has given is that he had medical issues. If he did have medical issues, guess what. Guantanamo Bay actually has top-rated medical facilities. Had we captured him and brought him right there—in fact, these are the same types of medical services that our own men and women in uniform are able to receive. He could have been treated there, and we also could have kept him there and made sure that we prioritized getting information about Al Qaeda from him to prevent future attacks against America and to stop the terrorists with this information. The more information we have, the better we can protect our country.

Since I have been a member of the Armed Services Committee, I have been repeatedly asking the administration: What is your detention and interrogation policy? What if you capture the head of Al Qaeda tomorrow? And you know what I get from the top military leaders? I have gotten answers such as this: I would need lawyerly help on that one. We are still working on our detention and interrogation policy.

While they have had years to work on this, we are left where we are: A top Al Qaeda terrorist who was captured in Libya and after only a week of interrogation was given a lawyer so they can accomplish their political goals instead of prioritizing and gathering information from someone who has known and been involved with Osama bin Laden and knows the current head of Al Qaeda, and finding out what that individual knows so we can keep America safe.

I hope that the administration will stop doing this. We can't put politics above intelligence gathering to protect our country.

I ask the Senator from South Carolina, through the Chair, if he still believes we are still at war with Al Qaeda? Also, how important is it that we gather information from terrorists who are captured, and that those interrogations be done on a lengthy basis instead of a short period such as a week?

Mr. GRAHAM. Mr. President, I want to thank my colleague from New Hampshire who has been one of the strongest voices since the day she got here in the Senate to talk about the difference between fighting a war and fighting a crime. The Senator has been the attorney general of New Hampshire, and I have been a military lawyer for over 30 years. The legal systems to fight a war are different than the legal systems to solve a domestic crime.

Here is the problem: Do I believe Al Qaeda is at war with the United States and our values and our friends? Would they kill us all if they could? Yes.

Why did 3,000 Americans die on 9/11/2001? They couldn't kill 3 million of us. If they could, they would have. If you believe that, then the goal of our generation is to marginalize this movement, and when we capture one of them, we need to find out what they are up to.

Dying for their cause is not a deterrent. It is like first prize. So when you tell somebody who has joined Al Qaeda that you may die in the course of this attack, they say good. The goal is to prevent them from hitting us, and the best way to do that is through intelligence gathering.

When you capture someone who is determined by our military and intelligence community to be a member of Al Qaeda, then under the law of war—the authorization to use military force passed by Congress over a decade ago—you can hold that person under the law of war to gather intelligence.

Why is that the case? War is about winning the war. Enemy prisoners are valuable captured alive because they can provide information about what the enemy is up to.

When you charge someone with a crime, you cannot spend a long time with them without their lawyer trying figure out if they committed the crime because of the right against self-incrimination in our criminal justice system. The military legal system, and the law of war, is completely different when it comes to asking questions of an enemy prisoner about future military activity or what they know about past operations.

The most dangerous thing we could do as a nation is to treat a captured Al Qaeda terrorist as a common criminal, read them their Miranda rights, and put them in civilian court before we have a chance to gather intelligence. That is exactly what the Obama administration did here. To their credit, they captured al-Libi. Here is what breaks my heart the most: The special forces units that go into Libya, Somalia, and Pakistan risk their lives to capture these people alive, if possible, so we can gather intelligence.

It really does bother me that after completing this operation, which was very successful, we only had control of this enemy prisoner for about 10 or 11 days. I will never be convinced that in that short period of time we were able to gather the intelligence he possessed. He has been associated with Al Qaeda at the highest level for 20 years. He was a treasure trove of information.

This was a political decision by the Obama administration, not a legal decision based on the law of war. This is not what our military advises or our intelligence community advises. This is what the President chose to do because he does not want to use Guantanamo Bay.

Why was he placed on a ship? Because there is no prison available in the United States, other than a naval vessel, to hold someone as an enemy combatant under the law of war. Why? Because the President refuses to use Guantanamo Bay.

If we can close Guantanamo Bay and create a new prison to allow people to be held as enemy combatants, sign me up. But the idea of not having a jail available to the United States on land at a time of great stress, and during a very pivotal moment in the war on terror, is an ill-conceived and dangerous policy.

I applaud the Senator from New Hampshire for bringing up this issue.

Here is what we need to understand as Members of Congress: This policy cannot be sustained. When we capture high-value targets, such as a 20-year veteran of Al Qaeda, we are crazy as a nation not to use the law of war to gather intelligence.

I am not for torturing anyone. I have been a military lawyer for 31 years. I believe in the Geneva Conventions. I believe my country is special. I believe in the international regimes about how we interrogate prisoners we hold. I know what Al Qaeda does to their prisoners. I do not want to be like them. I want to be the United States. But the United States has a right, under the law of war, to gather intelligence.

The last thing a member of Al Qaeda should hear when they are captured is: You have a right to remain silent. Here is your lawyer. I don't want them to remain silent. I want them, over time, to provide us with whatever intelligence is available.

Why was he moved off the ship? Apparently, he had a medical condition that could not be treated on the naval

vessel. I believe in providing quality health care to prisoners of war simply because I want that standard to be available to our soldiers in future wars. The standard we set today will follow us into the next war and, unfortunately, there will be. But having to take him off the ship because he was sick is no excuse to stop his interrogation to gather intelligence. Putting him on the ship because we don't want to use Guantanamo Bay is an ill-conceived and ill-designed strategy that, if it is not changed or replaced, is going to come back to haunt this country.

This man possesses an enormous amount of intelligence potential. He is now in Federal court. He will be given a lawyer. Once he is charged with a crime, he should be given a lawyer. But before that, we have the right under the law of war to hold him to gather intelligence—treat him humanely but question him about what he knows about Al Qaeda, because they are still out there, lurking.

I will end with this. I wish to work with the Senator from New Hampshire and anybody on the other side who would like to try to find a detention and interrogation policy that is more rationally based. Guantanamo Bay, in its early years, did hurt the image of this country. Some of our interrogation techniques right after 9/11 hurt us as a nation.

Guantanamo Bay has been reformed. It is Geneva Convention compliant. The Detainee Treatment Act that I helped author with Senator LEVIN and Senator MCCAIN is the gold standard of how we treat people under the law of war. I am proud of the system we have created over the last several years in a bipartisan manner, and I urge this administration to create a vehicle to interrogate under the law of war people such as al-Libi so we can be prepared for the next attack. The policy they have in place today is going to deny this country the ability to gather valuable intelligence.

When it comes to defeating Al Qaeda, the more we know about how they behave and what they are up to the safer we will be, because they will not be deterred by the threat of death. We cannot deter them; we have to stop them. We have to hit them before they hit us, and the best way to do that is to gather intelligence when we find someone such as al-Libi.

I am very disappointed that we have blown it when it comes to intelligence gathering with this high-value target. I am very sad to report to the military members and their families that the bravery they have demonstrated and shown just a few weeks ago has been undermined, in my view, by an irrational political decision that denies our country the ability to learn from a high-value target they risked their life to capture.

I don't know how to fix this in the current political environment, but I know as a military lawyer it needs to be fixed, and I know we are not elevating our country by diminishing our ability to use legal systems that have been around for hundreds of years at a time when we need them the most. So I look forward to working with the Senator from New Hampshire who has become one of the leading voices when it comes to detention and interrogation under the law of war.

Ms. AYOTTE. Mr. President, I thank the Senator from South Carolina.

Let me make a correction for the RECORD. I used the name al-Maliki. It is Ayman al-Zawahiri who is the current head of Al Qaeda, and that is whose name I meant to say.

The point is this: If we capture al-Zawahiri tomorrow, are we going to put him on the ship, and is he only going to be on the ship for a week when we gather information from him to ask him what future attacks he is planning against America and our allies? Does that make any sense? And then we are going to give him a lawyer and tell him he has the right to remain silent? No. What makes the most sense is that we have a detention and interrogation policy so that with people such as al-Libi, we take as much time as we need to make sure we find out everything they know about Al Qaeda to protect America, and if we capture Zawahiri tomorrow, we make sure we protect America by finding out everything he knows. That is what we are worried about and that is what we need to do for our country.

Mr. GRAHAM. Will the Senator yield for a question?

Ms. AYOTTE. Yes, I will.

Mr. GRAHAM. We are throwing around names. I think Zawahiri is the person who took bin Laden's place. If we captured him tomorrow, that would be the ultimate treasure trove.

Ms. AYOTTE. Right.

Mr. GRAHAM. Can the Senator from New Hampshire tell us a little bit about this individual called al-Libi? Why do we believe he would be such a treasure trove? What is his background? How long has he been involved in Al Qaeda? And what have we missed here? What opportunities have we lost by only holding him as an enemy combatant for less than 2 weeks?

Ms. AYOTTE. Mr. al-Libi is someone who is alleged to have been involved in Al Qaeda for decades. He is someone who as early as the 1990s was working with Osama bin Laden. He is alleged to have been involved with—and that is what he is charged with in Federal court, as I mentioned—the 1998 bombings of the Kenya and Tanzania Embassies that killed 224 people, including 12 Americans.

He reportedly played a critical role as the intermediary between al-Zawahiri, whom we just discussed, who took over for Osama bin Laden as the head of Al Qaeda in an effort to establish an Al Qaeda-affiliated operation network in Libya where our Ambassador, of course, was murdered, along with three brave Americans, last September 11. He has been reported to be an Al Qaeda computer intelligence and operations security expert, and he is alleged to have been involved in Al Qaeda strategic planning.

This is one of the most important captures we have had in years of Al Qaeda.

Mr. GRAHAM. Mr. President, if the Senator from New Hampshire will yield for one more inquiry. He was captured in Tripoli, Libya; is that right?

Ms. AYOTTE. Yes.

Mr. GRAHAM. We believe he was in Libya before the attack on our consulate in Benghazi, right?

Ms. AYOTTE. Right.

Mr. GRAHAM. We also know him to be one of the higher level Al Qaeda operatives roaming the planet. He was involved in bombing our Embassies in 1998 in Kenya and Tanzania; is that correct?

Ms. AYOTTE. That is right.

Mr. GRAHAM. What are the odds that he was in Tripoli before the Benghazi attack, had a record of bombing embassies in the 1990s, and had nothing to do with the consulate attack in Benghazi? The Senator from New Hampshire is a prosecutor. What does my colleague think the odds are of this guy not having any knowledge or involvement in killing our Ambassador in Benghazi and being involved in the attack on our consulate that was organized by Al Qaeda affiliates? And what have we learned, if anything, about his potential involvement in Benghazi? How can we learn everything this man has done in 11 or 12 days before we give him a lawyer? I would argue we can't.

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

Mr. GRAHAM. I ask unanimous consent for 1 more minute.

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

Ms. AYOTTE. I thank the Chair.

Mr. GRAHAM. Thank you. I would argue we can't possibly understand all he knows about Benghazi in the last 20 years of terrorism by holding him on a ship for less than 2 weeks. He should be held at Gitmo as long as it takes to find out what he knows and then he should be tried. Does the Senator from New Hampshire agree with that?

Ms. AYOTTE. I agree. We need to protect our country. That means a lot longer than a week interrogation.

Thank you, Mr. President.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Vermont.

Mr. LEAHY. Mr. President, if I might for a moment, we have had dozens and dozens of terrorists who have been arrested. We had the so-called Underwear Bomber, a member of Osama bin Laden's family, and many others. They were all given their Miranda warning and they wouldn't shut up. They kept talking day after day after day. It has been my experience that if they are going to talk, they are going to talk, whether they are given a Miranda warning or not. Wouldn't it be nice if we demonstrated to the rest of the world that we are not afraid of these

people, and that we have the best system of justice in the world and we are going to use it? We have only had three or four convictions by military commissions in terrorism cases; we have had several hundred convictions in our Federal courts.

It is not responsible for Senators to talk about: Oh, my gosh, if we just sent them to Guantanamo. Guantanamo by itself is damaging to the United States and harms the image of the United States.

The fact of the matter is that the people we have arrested and who went through our court system will usually talk ad nauseam, whether they have been given the Miranda warning or not. So let's be realistic. It might be a nice talking point to scare people, but the people who are actually involved in prosecutions know it works.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Rhode Island.

Mr. WHITEHOUSE. Mr. President, yesterday we heard very optimistic news about steering away from the brink of American default before it became too late. Majority leader HARRY REID came to the floor and gave very optimistic reports. Minority leader MITCH MCCONNELL came to the floor and gave very optimistic reports. They hinted very strongly that a deal was close, and time was scheduled with the caucuses, presumably to make a presentation of the deal. And then what?

We have had some very interesting speeches and colloquies from our Republican colleagues on the floor. I found the debate as to whether our defense and law enforcement experts had kept an Al Qaeda captive in the right location to be interesting. I found the earlier discussion about the insurance exchange Web sites to be a very interesting discussion. I found the discussion earlier this morning about Iran to be a very interesting discussion. What is even more interesting is what they are not talking about. What they are not talking about is that today the Republican leader pulled out of those very productive negotiations and very optimistic negotiations—pulled out of those negotiations that promised an end to this crisis. I find that absolutely stunning. I am amazed, while we are in a situation where we are that close to resolving this crisis and avoiding the catastrophes that have been predicted, that one side would simply walk away. I don't blame the minority leader. The information I have is that he was asked to do so, that the message came from the other side, from the Speaker; that Speaker BOEHNER torpedoed the productive bipartisan Senate negotiations that were at the brink of resolving this crisis.

Instead of the bipartisan successful process, Speaker BOEHNER has wanted to interrupt and bring in the same partisan House process that has been a disaster for us over and over—100-percent partisan, 100-percent politics.

We have sent bills over to the House. Those bills have never been brought up for a vote. They have been monkeyed with before they have brought them up, but House Members have never had the chance to vote on a Senate-approved measure, which would have ended this. That is the Speaker's choice. It is the so-called Hastert rule, which means that unless a strong majority of the Republicans are for something, he won't give Democrats a chance to even vote, let alone to be a part of the negotiations.

Here in the Senate we have bipartisan negotiations, with the leaders from both sides still with optimism and hope. On the other side, we have a leadership that won't talk to the Democrats, has purely made partisan decisions about whether something should come to the floor, and has not yet brought a Senate bill to the floor for a clean vote. It is a nightmare over there. And the strategy has not worked, in case they did not get the memo.

Holding the economy hostage was a terrible choice for the Speaker. Causing the shutdown was a terrible choice. Holding the credit of the U.S. Government hostage has been a terrible choice. To use words that were used on the floor this morning by one of our Republican friends, it was a ''fool's errand''—it was a ''fool's errand''—that put the party ''in a ditch.''

Well, unfortunately, because he is the Speaker, it is not just the Republican Party that is in the ditch. The whole country is in the ditch as this default looms. Some of them are trying to get out of the difficulty they find themselves in by pretending that the default is not real. We have default deniers now side by side, I guess, with the climate deniers and the other deniers. They deny that October 17 is the real date when anything might go wrong. They deny that anything bad will actually really happen if the U.S. Government defaults. They deny—if we just pay the Treasury bills and leave other things unpaid—anything really bad will happen.

Treasury bills get sold in an auction, in a market. If you are going to that auction to buy Treasury bills and you see a government that is not paying Social Security recipients on time, that has massive liquidity and cashflow problems as a result of the debt limit failure, we may say: Yes, we will pay you first, but are you really going to pay the same rate for that security of that country while that country is facing all of these other problems? It is a preposterous notion. It is the type of notion that you can only believe when you absolutely need to believe it for your ideological purposes. Reality simply does not support a notion like that. If you are living in a cocoon world of extremist ideology, you can come up with thoughts like that. And if you are only talking to other people who think the same way, you can kind of agree that thought makes sense. But there is a little problem. Reality wins. Reality always wins.

They are playing with dynamite over there, and they are pretending that it is not even dangerous. It would be one thing if we understood that they respected how very dangerous the stunts are that they are pulling in the House Republican leadership. It is even more dangerous when they do not appear to know the danger they are causing for our economy.

I hope we will get back to work here in the Senate right away with a bipartisan solution to this rather than allowing the House and the Speaker to wreck the opportunity we had as late as yesterday in order to play dangerous partisan games. We do not have the time for that, and it is the wrong thing. It is the wrong thing in a very immediate way in terms of the damage it will do to our economy, to the world economy, to people across this country whose interest rates are pegged to Treasury bills, to anybody who depends on an economy where people have confidence that the United States is a solid investment and have confidence that our economy is going to grow. The default puts all that at risk. It creates real economic hazards for our country. But the method of getting us here has additional hazards, and I would like to close by talking about them.

From the very founding of this Republic, we have prided ourselves on our distinct American system of government. We have fought for it. We have protected it. It has seen us through world wars, civil wars, great depressions, great recessions, all types of calamity. What it fundamentally is—the phrase we use probably as much as any other about our country is that it is a government of laws. It risks being turned into—by a very small faction in one party in one House in one branch of government—a government not of laws but of threats, a government where the person who can make the scariest threat wins.

It does not matter that what they are objecting to was passed in the regular order, passed by both Houses of Congress, signed into law by the President, approved by the Supreme Court. It does not matter that it was the center of the last Presidential election and that their point of view lost convincingly. What matters to them is if they can make dangerous enough threats, they may be able to try to get their way anyway—anyway. That is not the way a government of laws behaves. That is the way a government of threats behaves.

If we go down the road of a government of threats, we will be taking a very big step away from our American heritage, away from the procedures of our American Constitution, and away from the values that have seen us through hundreds of years of growth and pride. It is a dangerous point, and the fact that they are willing to do that, the fact that they are willing to not only wreck the economy but to wreck the status of this country as one that is run by a government of laws

and turn it instead into a government of threats, shows how shallowly they wear their patriotism on their sleeves. It is bunkum patriotism to put the real values of this country into the hopper and turn us into a government of threats instead of a government of laws.

A great judge, a Supreme Court Justice, once said: Procedure is the bone structure of a democratic society. Breaking those bones to make your point is no way to enhance our democratic society.

So I hope the majority leader and the minority leader will resume their negotiations right away. I hope, frankly, they have begun already and I just do not know about it yet. But we have to get going. And if the minority leader is unwilling to tell Speaker BOEHNER: No. Knock it off. You have done enough damage already. We are going to solve this in the Senate, and we are going to sit down and have a bipartisan compromise—if he is unwilling to say that, then we need to come back to the floor and we need to bring up the bill the Republicans filibustered on Saturday that would have gotten us out of this pickle. Time is short. We have to get moving. If our colleagues on the other side then want to filibuster—to filibuster—the solution to this debt limit crisis, they will have shown their hand in a very dangerous way.

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. VITTER. 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. VITTER. Mr. President, a couple of hours ago I was on the Senate floor urging and encouraging the House to act on a compromise proposal to deal with the current fiscal issues before us that included the ''no Washington exemption'' from the ObamaCare language.

As I said, I think that is very important for two reasons; one, the principle. I think the first rule of American democracy should be that Washington lives by the same rules as it imposes on America under ObamaCare, under everything; secondly, a very practical consideration. I think the quicker we do that, the quicker we start getting things right. The quicker we start understanding in a gut, personal way the real challenges and burdens of ObamaCare, the quicker we start changing that.

I return just a couple of hours later to congratulate the House because they are apparently moving in exactly that direction. All indications are that they will be going to the Rules Committee very soon with a package that features—that has as its centerpiece that ''no Washington exemption'' from ObamaCare language.

Again, I think it is important for all the reasons I said. I also want to point out that assuming the House passes that—I think they are going to tonight—that ''no Washington exemption'' language will be the only thing—the only substantial thing in that proposal that has not been essentially agreed to by Senate Democrats. Everything else is detail, a date here, minor provisions. The only major difference between what the House is hopefully passing tonight and what has been agreed to in discussions by Senate Democrats is that ''no Washington exemption'' language.

So the question will be is this perceived crisis, is this standoff going to continue over that, over Members protecting their wallets, their special elite status, demanding that they are treated differently than other Americans under ObamaCare? Is it going to continue and not be resolved over that?

I think that is what it will all be about, again assuming, as I hope it does, the House passes this proposal tonight. Again, the ObamaCare language, the statute itself does not allow for this special exemption or special subsidy. That is nowhere in the statue. Because of that, it was sort of an example of what NANCY PELOSI said about the ObamaCare statute in general: We have to pass it to figure out what is in it. It passed with language in it that said clearly, Members of Congress and their staff would have to go to the ObamaCare exchanges for their health care—no provisions for any special subsidy.

Then, after it passed, many folks on Capitol Hill read it to figure out what was in it. When they got to that section, they said: Oh, you know what. We cannot live under this. We cannot stand for this.

So then a fierce lobbying campaign started to get the administration to fix ObamaCare—but not to fix it for America, to fix it for Congress. That resulted in a special Obama administration rule that was conveniently issued right as Congress was leaving Washington for the August recess, right as Congress was fleeing the scene of the crime.

That rule did two things, neither of which is in the statute. That is why it is a completely illegal rule, contrary to the statute, in my opinion. First of all, the rule said: When the statute says that Members of Congress and their staff have to go to the exchanges for their health care, we do not know who official staff are. We cannot figure that out, the administrative agency said. So we are going to leave that up to each individual Member of Congress.

That is absurd. The language is clear. All official staff are covered. The administration should have demanded in the rule that all official staff are covered and not leave it up to individual Members. But under this cozy relationship, an individual Member can exempt any staffer he or she likes. In fact, in theory, that Member can exempt all of his staff and say: It is up to me. They are not official staff for purposes of this provision of ObamaCare. That is absurd on its face.

Then the second thing this special rule only did for Congress is say: For those who go to the exchanges, including Members, they get to take a huge taxpayer-funded subsidy with them, a subsidy available to no other American at that income level—no other American. That is not in the ObamaCare statute. That is made up out of thin air in terms of this rule.

So we need to correct that situation. We need to make sure Washington is treated like America; first, because it is the right thing to do. It should be the first guiding principle of American democracy; second, for the practical reasons I stated. The quicker we do that on ObamaCare and across the board, the quicker Washington, the Congress, the President, will start getting important matters, including the impact of ObamaCare, right.

Mr. DURBIN. Will the Senator yield for a question?

Mr. VITTER. I will in a second. Again, I congratulate the House for doing exactly that, for doing exactly that. Again, I would point out, assuming the House does that and passes that tonight, the only significant difference between their package and what Senate Democrats have agreed to in discussions will be this ''no Washington exemption'' language from ObamaCare.

There will be other very minor differences: a date here, language regarding how income verification is handled, very minor compared to this central issue. So that is what it is coming down to. That will be what Senate action on that House proposal is about.

I will be happy to yield to my distinguished colleague from Illinois.

Mr. DURBIN. Mr. President, through the Chair, since the Senator from Louisiana has raised on the floor many times the issue of the health insurance of Members of Congress, I would volunteer that I am under the Federal Employees Health Benefit Program, some 8 million Federal employees, including Members of Congress and their staff, are currently under the same health insurance program across the Nation.

I have the same health insurance policy as the park ranger at the Lincoln home in Springfield, IL. I would ask the Senator from Louisiana: What is your health insurance policy?

Mr. VITTER. I am under exactly the same program. What I am suggesting is merely that we follow the law. The distinguished Senator and many of his Democratic colleagues constantly make the point that ObamaCare is the law of the land. He is right. I want to change that, largely; the Senator does not. It is the law of the land as we speak. That law of the land is crystal clear. It has a specific provision about this. It says every Member of Congress, all of their official staff can no longer stay in that plan and have to go to the ObamaCare exchanges, the so-called

fallback provision for the American people.

I think there was a reason for that. I think there was thinking behind that. It is simple; that we should live under that same scenario that millions of Americans have to live under, 8 million-plus, who do not want to have to go to the exchanges, who like the insurance plan they have now, who heard the President say: If you like the plan you have now, you can keep it. They found out after the fact that was not true for them.

There are 8 million-plus who are being forced off coverage they like to go to the ObamaCare exchanges. They do not get any subsidy. They do not get this special treatment. I am suggesting we should not as well.

Mr. DURBIN. Would the Senator yield for a further question?

Mr. VITTER. Yes.

Mr. DURBIN. I hope the Senator will concede that Members of Congress and their staff are going into the insurance exchanges because of an express provision requiring that to happen in the law, offered by Republican Senators COBURN and GRASSLEY.

Secondly, what we are dealing with is a strange situation. ObamaCare does not force anybody into the insurance exchanges. It is available for those who have no health insurance or those who are on individual health insurance plans and want to buy something different.

Mr. VITTER. If I can respond and reclaim my time, I do not think that is true at all. I think ObamaCare absolutely forces millions of other Americans into the exchanges. It is not the same mechanism that it is for Members of Congress. It is not an express provision. But it is forcing 8 million-plus Americans into the exchanges against their will nonetheless because there are many Americans who want to keep the coverage they have. They heard over and over from President Obama: If you like the coverage you have, you can keep it. Then they found out that for them that was a lie. They did like the coverage they had. They are losing it against their will. I do not think that is by accident. I think that is by design because the ObamaCare statute creates clear incentives for many employers to get out of the health insurance provision business and to just let their workers go to the exchanges.

So I completely disagree with the statement from the Senator from Illinois that no other American was forced onto the exchanges. Millions of other Americans were forced onto the exchanges, in a different way, but absolutely millions of Americans were forced onto the exchanges against their will.

Mr. DURBIN. Would the Senator yield for a question?

Mr. VITTER. Yes.

Mr. DURBIN. Since the Senator is under the Federal Employees Health Benefit Program, his monthly premiums for his health insurance and my health insurance receive an employer contribution. That is how most Americans who work get their health insurance. The employer contribution the Senator receives and I receive is about 72 percent of the premium.

The Senator from Louisiana has characterized an employer contribution as a government subsidy. I would like to ask the Senator from Louisiana, is he prepared to disclose the government subsidy, as he calls it, that he has personally received for his health insurance as a Member of the Senate?

Mr. VITTER. Absolutely. Reclaiming my time and reclaiming the floor, that is absolutely public information. That is true. What I am merely suggesting is that ObamaCare mandates the change. That is the law of the land, as the Senator and his Democratic colleagues make the point many times, and we should live by the law of the land.

As the distinguished Senator from Illinois absolutely knows, there is no provision in the ObamaCare statute for that subsidy to transfer to the exchanges for Members or congressional staff, no provision whatsoever. In fact, having that happen is inconsistent with the law because the requirements of exchange policies are different than the requirements for FEHBP policies, so it is completely inconsistent with the law for that subsidy to follow Members of Congress to the exchanges. It is nowhere mentioned in the statute. It was made up out of thin air under this illegal Obama administration rule with no sufficient statutory basis in the law.

Mr. DURBIN. Would the Senator yield for a question?

Mr. VITTER. I yield to the Senator.

Mr. DURBIN. If the Senator is stating that no one under an insurance exchange, no one, can receive an employer contribution for their health insurance, he is wrong, flat wrong.

Mr. VITTER. Reclaiming my time and reclaiming the floor, I did not state that and I will not state that.

What I did say is there is no subsidy available to Members of Congress and congressional staff under the ObamaCare statute. There is no provision in the statute for that old FEHBP subsidy to magically redo itself as an exchange subsidy. There is absolutely no provision of that whatsoever.

Folks, these 8 million Americans who are forced out of the plans they like, they are not getting a subsidy. They are going to the individual exchange, and they are getting no comparable subsidy. If they have low enough income they get a subsidy for being at a certain income level.

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

Mr. VITTER. Thank you. I urge again that the Senate stand tall and stand with the American people, not stand for Washington elites.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The assistant majority leader.

Mr. DURBIN. I am pleased to have this exchange with my colleague because he comes to the floor repeatedly and says things which aren't altogether accurate. This is why I wanted to speak to him today. He yielded for a question and I thank him. I am sorry he has left because I would like to further engage in dialog. There is a reason he left. There are questions he can't answer. If he tries to answer them, his whole case explodes in front of him.

We created these insurance exchanges for 40 or 50 million Americans who have no health insurance or have rotten insurance. They were paying a fortune for bad health insurance policies.

When the Senator says 8 million people were forced into these exchanges, this is what the Senator was saying—8 million people had health insurance policies that were so bad that those policies, frankly, had to be rewritten.

This is what we said and is the law under ObamaCare. Offer health insurance to my family or the family of the Senator from Connecticut. They cannot discriminate against a person applying for health insurance because of preexisting conditions of anybody in your family. Does anybody in your family have preexisting conditions? We all do.

We decided that was fundamentally unfair. If one has a child with asthma, wife with diabetes, mental illness in your family, for goodness' sake, people shouldn't be discriminated against. That is one of the provisions of ObamaCare which many on the other side of the aisle want to repeal.

Secondly, we said there can be no lifetime limits on your health insurance policy. What does that mean? In the old days people would buy a policy that said they would give up to $100,000 and then the policyholder is on his own—$100,000. That ought to be great until one ends up in the doctor's office the next day or someone in your family has a serious cancer diagnosis. With surgery, chemo, and radiation going on for a long period of time, it can be way over $100,000. It can happen.

I had a routine surgery 3 years ago, and it turned out well. It cost over $100,000. If I had one of those limited policies, I would have had to start paying out of my pocket. We eliminated that and said there can't be a cap on insurance policies. They want to repeal that. They want caps on insurance policies.

It turns out that 60 percent of insurance policies in America did not cover maternity benefits. How about that? Do we love families and love children? How about making sure health insurance covers them? That is in ObamaCare and they want to repeal it.

The list goes on. This is a point I wish to get to. Members of Congress are now going to be covered by the same insurance policies offered by ObamaCare and our staff will too. That is acceptable to me. I have taken a look at what is available. It is as good

as anything Members of Congress receive today. I am not worried about the quality of coverage for myself or my wife. It will be fine. I can live with that.

Currently, the Senator from Louisiana and every other Senator, when it comes to health insurance, has the same health insurance as Federal employees, 8 million Federal employees and their families. It is the same basic coverage. I think it is pretty darn good. I have said that on the floor. People have corrected me, saying: Senator, you may have a policy worth $15,000 a year. There are people with policies worth $40,000 a year.

I will leave it at this. I think I have good coverage for myself and my wife. I can match that coverage in terms of the quality of coverage on the insurance exchanges without fear of interruption in service and protection for my wife and me, and I feel good about that.

This is what the Senator from Louisiana is upset about. When I go on the insurance exchange, which is required by law—not voluntary, required by law—the Senator doesn't want the employer to make any contributions for myself or my family and says our staff should be under the same restriction. People who get their health insurance through their employer across America, virtually all of them have employer contributions. This is common. There is nothing sinister or sneaky about it.

The Senator calls it a government subsidy, the employer contribution. All I ask is this: I will go on the government health insurance exchange and happily do so. Treat me the same way when it comes to employer contribution for my health insurance and my staff health insurance as every other Federal employee. It is that simple. The Senator says: No, that is special treatment for Members of Congress. The Senator from Louisiana is just plain wrong, stands on the floor, and talks about special privileges for Members of Congress.

I will tell what you I am prepared to do. I am prepared to put a specific provision in the law which says no Member of Congress or Member of any congressional staff shall receive any special privileges or additional rights not available to every other person under the SHOP or insurance exchange program.

How is that? I could live with that because, as the Senator almost acknowledged, currently employer contributions can be made for those who run the insurance exchanges. It is there. We are not getting anything too unusual. It is already there. This argument about some special treatment for Members of Congress—no way. I will state what bothers me the most about this is it doesn't take an act of political courage to take money away from somebody else, in this case away from our staff people.

I started out here as an intern a long time ago when I was in college. I worked around the Hill all of my life. There are some extraordinary people here. People go to work every day to make me look darn good, to answer the phone, try to satisfy the needs of the people of Illinois, and to deal with some pretty serious cases that involve life and death sometimes or Federal benefits. They work long hours and do great work. Because of their great work they cover me in glory with regularity. I can't thank them enough.

What a thanks this is to say to them: We are going to eliminate your employer's contribution for your health insurance. You are on your own. That is what the Senator from Louisiana wants to do. If the Senator thinks an employer's contribution for health insurance is something that is sinister and shouldn't be allowed for Members of Congress and their staff, hang on tight because we have 150 million people in America who have health insurance through their work with an employer contribution.

Is that the Senator's next target? Is the Senator going after them? Then there will be a fight because people can't afford health insurance without employers helping to pay. We put it in the Tax Code, we have to protect it in the Tax Code. We have to beat the Vitter amendment.

Think about this for a minute. We started this debate 2 weeks ago. A Senator from Texas took the floor for 21 hours, stayed up all night. His goal: Let's defund ObamaCare.

What happened? The Senator's side ended up shutting down the government and is putting us within 36 hours of defaulting on our national debt for the first time in history over the issue of defunding ObamaCare. Haven't heard about that recently. They stopped talking about it because something has happened. Over 12 million people are now going on the Internet trying to find whether they are eligible for a health insurance policy. The popularity of ObamaCare has gone up as Republicans have criticized it because there are a great many people who don't have health insurance or they have health insurance they can't afford.

I am not going to make excuses for the problems with the computers and the Internet as the program kicks off. It better improve and it will. It shows us what happens when we are overwhelmed with people who want health insurance. The system broke down. We have to get better.

During this period of time when the other side was railing against ObamaCare, the numbers for approval of ObamaCare were going up across America. It didn't work. They gave up on defunding ObamaCare. I haven't heard that phrase in a long time, 2 weeks ago from the Senator from Texas but not since. They have now decided that instead of defunding ObamaCare, they are going to follow the Senator from Louisiana—who wants to take health insurance away or make it prohibitively expensive for Members of Congress and their staff. That is it. That is what this has been all about?

We have shut down the government, and we have run the risk of defaulting on our debts for the first time in history over whether our employees, the people on our staff, are going to get a Federal Government contribution for paying health insurance? It is pathetic we have reached that point.

I believe health insurance is a right. It isn't a privilege. I believe employer-sponsored health insurance is a good thing that we ought to protect. I believe Members of Congress ought to play by the same rules as everybody else in the insurance exchanges and our staffs should as well.

If he accepts those as premises, the Senator's amendment goes away, disappears. But if the Senator is out to get the employer contribution on health insurance, maybe that is the goal, have at it. I think the Senator is going to find it is a very lonely battle. Most Americans, Democrats and Republicans, value health insurance. They need to have it in their lives to give them peace of mind and give them the best care.

This war on health insurance for individuals, the uninsured, even Members of Congress and their employees, is mindless. It is mindless and petty.

We have to do better. We need to expand the reach of health insurance across America. We will. This effort to defund ObamaCare and now the Vitter amendment, we must defeat both of those efforts.

Once this program is in place and Americans have this protection, we are never going to take it away. Once people have that peace of mind with affordable health insurance, then 6 out of 10 people who go on the health insurance exchanges will pay less than $100 a month for health insurance. It is less than a cable bill.

Finally, they will get health insurance. That is what it is all about. Once it happens, once it moves forward, it will become one of the basic concepts in America that we count on to protect ourselves and our families.

We have to defeat the Vitter amendment. It is pathetic that we have reached this point with the shutdown of the government and the idea of defaulting on the debt, that it has come to this amendment. It is very sad.

It doesn't speak well for those on the other side who started off with this lofty goal to defund ObamaCare. Yet in the end all they want to do is to raise the cost of health insurance for the people who are working night and day for them in their offices across America.

I hope the people in this country understand what this debate has finally descended into and will join us in defeating this Vitter amendment.

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

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

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. THUNE. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

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

Mr. THUNE. I ask consent to talk for up to 15 minutes.

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

Mr. THUNE. Madam President, we are now in the third week of government shutdown. We are facing an imminent debt limit crisis. It seems that it has become a pattern around here that we live from crisis to crisis. I hope we do something about that. We obviously have to deal with the immediate issues in front of us in the next day or so, hopefully no more than that. There have been a lot of discussions that have occurred over the course of the weekend and the last few days to try to bring to a conclusion at least this chapter of this particular crisis we are dealing with.

I am encouraged when I hear our colleagues on both sides of the aisle are meeting and having discussions. We have had a number of those that have gone on, I think so far without result. There have been meetings that have occurred between our two leaders. Also I have been working very hard to try to get a result, something they could take back to their respective caucuses and present, that could ultimately be voted on.

There are also discussions going on in the other body, in the House of Representatives, and have been for some time, trying to find a pathway forward that could get the necessary votes to pass in the House of Representatives and then ultimately here in the Senate. I heard some of my colleagues in the Democratic leadership on the floor this morning denouncing some of those efforts in the House of Representatives, which came as a surprise to many of us because I do not think it should be any shock to anyone that the House of Representatives, created in article I of the Constitution, might decide to perform some things that are consistent with its constitutional role.

They have been working on legislation. We had the leader get up this morning and make some comments on the floor with respect to what was happening in the House of Representatives. He described it as a partisan attempt to appease a small group of tea party Republicans. He described it as an extreme piece of legislation, most of the elements of which, by the way, have been part of the bipartisan agreement here in the Senate. He said it was a blatant attack on bipartisanship.

He went on to say he felt blindsided by the news from the House and that extremist Republicans in the House of Representatives were trying to torpedo the Senate's bipartisan progress with a bill that cannot pass the Senate. He went on to lament the fact he was disappointed in the Speaker of the House.

Again it was a big surprise to many of us. I don't think we should feel blindsided when the House of Representatives tries to find the necessary votes to move legislation that is so important to this country. In fact, it would appear at least that perhaps Democrats here in the Senate and the White House—which, by the way, came out and said it was going to veto the proposal from the House of Representatives, of course before it had ever seen it. There had never been anything in print with respect to that. So the Senate Democrats hadn't seen it, the White House hadn't seen it, but the President came out and said he was going to veto it and the Senate leader said he was blindsided on this, it was extreme, it was an attempt to torpedo bipartisan discussions.

It would appear at least that some of the Democrats around here are a lot more concerned about the political consequences and having the opportunity to dance on the political graves of Republicans than in actually solving a problem that is important to the future of this country and the American people.

I think it is unfortunate that is where we are. I hope in the course of the next few hours—that is about all we have left—we will come to some agreement. Whether that originates in the House of Representatives or originates here in the Senate, one way or the other both are going to have to vote on it. Both are going to have to find the necessary votes to pass something that will avoid the disaster that is facing us if we do not take steps to do that. I guess I am one of many who, when I heard those comments this morning, was more than a little bit surprised to think that we here in the Senate would be shocked and surprised and disappointed and blindsided that the House of Representatives would decide to do some work and try to solve this problem as well. Ultimately we have to have the House and the Senate agree and concur.

I am glad to see the House of Representatives is proceeding in a way that will solve this problem. I hope we will continue in the Senate to try to find a solution in the next few hours, something we can actually pass through both Houses of Congress and put on the President's desk and something he might be able to sign into law.

But when you talk about the various elements of those proposals, most of those things that were denounced and rejected here this morning by the Democratic leaders when they came to the floor were the very things that a bipartisan group here in the Senate had been working on for several days.

I hope when we get through this immediate crisis and hopefully create the process by which we might address the real problems the country faces—because this living from crisis to crisis is not a way to govern the country. It is not a way to provide certainty to our economy. It is certainly not a way to get the economy growing and expanding.

Many of us on this side of the aisle think we ought to have a discussion, when we are raising the debt limit, about how we are going to fix the debt, what are we going to do to reduce the debt, what are we going to do to ensure that we don't continue to pile trillions of dollars of debt on the future generations of this country. We do not seem to get serious about that. I hope we will. I hope when we get past the immediate crisis we will take a look at the long term and say what can we do to put this country on a more sustainable fiscal path?

I think we all know what that entails. It means we have to get spending here in Washington, DC, under control, particularly in the areas of some of the mandatory spending parts of the budget. If you look at what the Congressional Budget Office says, over the next 10 years, discretionary spending—which is that small part of the budget that is impacted by the sequester—is going to grow roughly 17 percent. During the same period mandatory spending is going to grow approximately 79 percent or $1.6 trillion over the course of the next decade. So spending on mandatory programs continues to grow. This CBO report underscores that reforming entitlements is absolutely necessary if we are going to get spending under control.

We know what the issues are. It is not like it is a big secret. The Congressional Budget Office gives us insight on regular basis. We have had lots of commissions that have studied these issues, they presented their findings, they put forward recommendations about how to address these long-term crises the country faces, and yet there seems to be the lack, if you will, of political will to try to actually solve the problem.

My own view is that if we can get through this immediate crisis, over the course of the next couple of months, which is basically what we have to work with, we can actually sit down—hopefully with the President engaged in this process—and negotiate in a way that will allow us to put in place solutions that actually do put us on a more sustainable fiscal trajectory for this country's future.

Over the course of the last 4½ years we have seen the publicly held debt of this country double. It took 230-some years of American history and 43 Presidents to get to the first $6.3 trillion in debt, and that has literally doubled in the last 4½ years under this administration.

We have a huge debt problem. We added $1 trillion a year for the first 4 years. This year everybody is patting each other on the back and saying: Gee, the deficit is down to $650 or $700 billion, as if that is some sort of major accomplishment. That is literally the fifth largest deficit in history behind the first 4 years of this administration, which were the four largest deficits in American history.

We have an out-of-control debt. We have an out-of-control deficit that is growing as a percentage of our economy and getting to the point where it is literally going to drown our economy if we don't do something about it.

Controlling the spending part of the equation is essential. The other part that is essential is getting the economy growing and expanding. When the economy is growing and expanding, it means that people are working, people are investing, people are making money, people are paying taxes, government revenues go up, and that makes a lot of these problems look much smaller by comparison too.

We can't have an economy growing at 1 to 2 percent and an unemployment rate that is chronically at about 7½ percent. When we factor in the people who have quit looking for work or are working part time who would rather be working full time, that unemployment rate gets up into the double digits.

We have chronically high unemployment, massive amounts of debt, and a sluggish economy. Those are all things on which we should be focused. In order to get the economy growing and expanding again, we have to create the economic conditions for small businesses to invest, hire more people, put their capital to work, and try to get that economic growth rate back up to where it would allow us to deal not only with our deficits but also to do something that would really improve the quality of life and the standard of living for people in this country. A growth rate in the 3- to 4-percent range is significantly different—dramatically different than a growth rate in the 1- to 2-percent range, and that means a big difference in the take-home pay of middle-class Americans.

If we want to see middle-class Americans do better in this economy, we have to get the economy growing again, and that means reforming our Tax Code, broadening the tax base, and lowering those marginal income tax rates. We have the highest business tax in the world. It makes us noncompetitive in the global environment. We lose jobs every single day to other countries around the world. We need to do things that would lessen the cost of doing business in this country. We need to make it less expensive and less difficult to create jobs, not more expensive and more difficult.

One of the concerns many of us have with respect to ObamaCare is that it is making it more expensive and difficult to create jobs. It has higher taxes. There are higher insurance premiums. Obviously, that translates into fewer jobs.

Getting the cost of regulation to a more reasonable level, keeping the tax rates at a more reasonable level, and doing what is necessary to unleash this economy is the way we will improve the fiscal picture in this country, coupled with good fiscal discipline and constraints on Federal spending, and that means we have to tackle the mandatory part of the budget. That part was not affected—or at least not affected very much—by the sequester.

Those are the ingredients, components, and elements, if you will, that will lead us to a situation where we are not having a crisis every few months where we are worrying about a debt limit increase or how we are going to fund the government. We ought to get to a place where we are in a more systematic way doing what we should be doing in the first place. We should be passing appropriations bills. We didn't pass a single appropriations bill this year, which is why we are here at the eleventh hour trying to come up with a continuing resolution to fund the government.

Those are the things we need to do if we are going to get this fiscal situation improved for our country and get the economy up and growing again and creating jobs and doing what is necessary to improve the lives of the American people. That is what I think the public wants to see.

Actually, if we look at public opinion polls—and there has been a lot of discussion about that lately—by a 2-to-1 margin, people in this country believe that if you are going to raise the debt limit, you ought to do something about the debt. I saw a survey just last week by CBS News that said 55 percent of the people in this country believe that when you are going to raise the debt limit, you ought to do something to reduce spending. I think that only 23 percent of the people surveyed said they supported a clean debt limit increase.

The American people get it. The people in my State of South Dakota understand that you can't spend money you don't have. You have to live within your means, and we have to, as a Federal Government, do the same families across this country have to do on a regular basis. They get this. They understand what this is about.

I hope that in the next few weeks and months we will be able—with the involvement and engagement of the President of the United States—to sit down and negotiate the resolutions, if you will, and proposals and solutions to this debt crisis and get this country on a more sustainable fiscal path and at a place where the economy is growing at a faster rate and creating the types of good-paying jobs that will help middle-class Americans in this economy prosper.

If we look at what happened to take-home pay or household income over the past several years, it has gone down, not up. We have seen the average household income go down by $3,700 since the President took office. It is time we changed that and got the American people back to work, incomes coming up, and jobs that will keep the young people in this country not only employed but looking with confidence and optimism toward their future, which is something we don't see today. Let's deal with the immediate crisis, but let's work together on that.

Instead of coming over here and denouncing what is happening in the House of Representatives or using extreme language to characterize what is happening in the House of Representatives, understand we have to function together. We are the Congress of the United States, and in order for anything to get done here, we have to move legislation through both the House and Senate. It seems to me, at least, that there ought to be a recognition of that in the Senate. As I listened this morning to the comments of some of our leaders on the other side when they came down here and denounced what was happening in the House of Representatives, it struck me that that is not a productive or constructive way to get where we need to go in the next few hours. I hope we can do that, and I looking forward to the kind of bipartisan cooperation that will solve this problem.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from California.

Mrs. BOXER. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent to use as much time as I might consume.

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

Mrs. BOXER. Madam President, the Senator from South Dakota has pointed out how concerned he is about jobs and economic growth. He is concerned about our not doing enough appropriations bills. He is concerned that we have not resolved our differences in the conference.

I want him to know, since he asked for bipartisanship, that as a Democrat, I am concerned about pay and jobs and economic growth. I am concerned that we have not had any appropriations bills. I am concerned that we have not gone to the budget. But I need to speak the truth, and the truth is in the record.

Why don't we have appropriations bills? Because the Republicans filibustered our very first bill, and when we tried to get it done, they would not give us the votes, so it was taken off the floor. Senator MURRAY and Senator COLLINS—our moderate Republican colleague—were very upset about that. The Republicans filibustered the very first appropriations bill we tried to get through, and it was clear they were going to continue to filibuster each one. So to come down here and lament the fact that we didn't take up appropriations bills flies in the face of recent history.

My friend laments the fact that we have not had a chance to discuss what he now sees as a target for cuts in Medicare and Social Security. He calls them entitlement programs. That is their new thing now. They want to cut those programs. Well, you know what. We have said open the government, let's pay our bills, and we will negotiate, listen, and talk.

Our friends on the Republican side stopped us from going to a budget conference 21 times, and now they have

shut down the government. All you have to do is understand why. They were very clear. They don't like the Affordable Care Act.

I have come to the floor, as I have before during this government shutdown that is in its 15th day, to raise the alarm about the harmful, terrible, hurtful impacts on America and its people as a result of 15 days of not having access to their government. Who are they punishing? The people of this Nation. This is their government. Open the door and let them in. Let them talk to us. Let them tell us about the legislation they want us to proceed to. Let them not suffer, as they are in my State and in many States because the government is shut down. In a moment, I will talk about some of the ways my people are hurting.

They shut down the government because they didn't like the Affordable Care Act. I am so happy to say that Covered California-dot-com—coveredCA.com, which is our Web site—has had more than 1.5 million unique visits to the site. The call volume to the service center is 104,000-plus. The average call wait time is now 1 minute 55 seconds. The average call-handling time from the time you get on until the time you get off and get your questions answered is less than 15 minutes. Our cumulative applications are approaching 100,000. Tens of thousands have already completed the signups. This is why they shut down the government. They don't want that to move forward.

I will tell some stories about health care reform in my State.

Rakesh Rikhi of San Jose is now paying $950 a month to insure himself, his wife, and his two children with Kaiser Permanente. According to the NBC station in the Bay area, Rakesh was stunned to learn that through Covered California he can get a similar Kaiser plan for his family for $400 less a month. So when my friend stands here and says premiums are going up, ask Rakesh. He is getting a plan for his family for $400 less a month. He quickly did the math, and when he hung up the phone and signed up, he found out he is saving $5,000 a year.

Why do the Republicans want to shut down the government and stop somebody like that from getting a plan? I think they have to look into their hearts.

Rakesh owns an auto repair shop. He has four employees. He is hoping that with the savings he will be able to offer his workers medical insurance. He cannot wait to sign up and complete the application. He looks forward to feeling relief from the financial pain of skyrocketing insurance costs.

Then there is Laura Hunt of Modesto. She lost her husband's employer-based coverage when he was killed in a car crash in 2006. She is suffering from income loss and the painful loss of a spouse. She contacted Covered California and found out she could have an Anthem Blue Cross policy for a net cost of $23 a month. Why do my friends on the other side of the aisle want to stop Laura Hunt of Modesto, who lost her husband's employer-based coverage when he was killed in a car crash, stop her from getting affordable health care?

Kevin Burke, an assembly worker, told the Fresno Bee he had been out of work for 2 years and now he qualifies for Medicaid and he is going to be OK, and he is not going to wait until he is rushed to an emergency room. Why do my colleagues on the other side of the aisle want to stop Kevin Burke of Fresno from getting affordable health insurance? They need to look into their hearts.

Then there is Rufina Arango, a diabetic. At Vista Family Health Center she filled out an application for coverage through a significant expansion of Medi-Cal. Rufina and her family lost their health insurance several years ago when her husband was laid off after working for 22 years. She said:

> It's so great. It's going to help so many of us. If not for ObamaCare, many of us would not qualify for health insurance.

I could go on and on with these stories. I don't have the time to do it. But I am going to keep on adding these stories to the CONGRESSIONAL RECORD so some day, when people look back at this moment in history, they will realize that when we stood for the people and their right to have affordable health care, that we did it for a very good reason. Some day in the future people will say: You mean there was a time when we had 40 million people without insurance? Are you kidding? But that is the moment we are in now. We are either going to stand sentry, as my friend BARBARA MIKULSKI always says, for a law that is going to help people, or just walk away. No law is perfect. Of course there are glitches and issues. We are very happy to talk about making it better—very happy. The President is as well. He said as much.

I want everyone to read an opinion piece that ran in the Washington Post recently, a couple of days ago, by one of my constituents. Her name is Janine. Janine Urbaniak Reid is a writer, and so she has a beautiful way of expressing herself. She talks about her loving son, Mason, who has brain cancer and who has had to undergo multiple surgeries. Listen to this:

> He would have hit his lifetime limit on the policy and the family would have been driven into—

her words—

> the financial abyss if it wasn't for the Affordable Care Act.

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 2 years, Mason has again learned to walk, talk, eat, and shoot a 3-point basket.

Why would anyone want to hurt that family and reverse our law, the Affordable Care Act, which is everybody's law, that says no more lifetime limits and no more annual limits. We have to ask the Republicans why they want to do it. They come to the floor and they say: Health care costs are rising; these things are happening; the sky is falling. But then we look at the facts, and the facts are that tens of thousands of people are signing up. Young people are now able to stay on their parents' policies until they are 26. There is no more preexisting condition bar. If a person has a preexisting condition, they can still get insurance. There are so many good things. Women are no longer discriminated against. We used to pay twice as much as men. Being a woman was considered a preexisting condition. Can my colleagues imagine. Really? Because, yes, we can have babies and, yes, we had certain needs. Well, that is over now. We have equal rights in this Affordable Care Act.

So the reason for the shutting down of the government was to stop the Affordable Care Act. The Affordable Care Act is now signing up tens of thousands of people. It is saving a lot of our families. If the Republicans want to make improvements in it, that is fine. We are ready to do it. We will sit down with anyone and make this law better—absolutely. But don't stop a law that passed almost 4 years ago and that was upheld by the Supreme Court; and, may I say, there was a big election about it.

Remember what Mitt Romney said:

> The first thing I will do when I am your President is to repeal ObamaCare. That is my promise.

And, boy, I believed him. It was a big issue. People decided that wasn't a good enough reason, and they reelected our President not in a small way but in a big way.

So since there is no more reason to shut down the government because the Affordable Care Act can't be stopped—it is funded by a separate stream of funding, not appropriations—we begged the Republicans: Don't shut the government down over this. It is starting. It is happening. We are not going to repeal a law that took—I would say decades—to pass.

So they didn't listen. Now they have stopped talking about the Affordable Care Act, pretty much. Now they have a whole different reason for shutting down the government and bringing us to the brink of default, and that reason is deficits—deficits.

I want to speak a little bit about default because we are hours away from a default—the first time in this Nation's great history. If we don't take action, we will be unable to pay the bills that have been incurred in the past.

It is important to note that we have gone through so many crises in our Nation—tough, tough, tough ones, including civil strife, world wars, the Great Depression. We always followed the Constitution that says, ''The validity

of the public debt of the United States, authorized by law, shall not be questioned.'' This is in the Constitution. Yet from the people who say they are constitutionalists, they seem not to read that part, and they are flirting, for the first time, with allowing us to get to the point where we can't pay all of our bills. That is a default.

Some of our colleagues come to the floor, and they say that it is not a default if we pay interest on the bonds. I am an old economics major, but I don't pretend to know everything about economics. But I can tell my colleagues this: The definition of a default in Black's Law Dictionary is ''the failure to make a payment when due.'' It doesn't say the failure to make an interest payment when due. It says, the failure to make a payment. That means to our contractors. That means to our workers. That means to our Social Security recipients. That means to our Medicare recipients.

I have never seen such creative license taken when it comes to the default. A party that says it is fiscally conservative and then says it is not a default when we don't pay our bills as long as we pay China the interest we owe them? They have to be kidding. Take that to a town hall meeting, I say to my friend who represents so many wonderful seniors in the great State of Florida, Senator NELSON, who is on the floor. So we have never gotten to this point.

Mr. NELSON. Would the Senator yield?

Mrs. BOXER. Yes, I am delighted to yield.

Mr. NELSON. If the Senator will yield on that point.

Mrs. BOXER. Yes. I can yield for as much time as my colleague wants.

Mr. NELSON. Since the Senator so eloquently posed this question, since this Senator has the privilege of being the chairman of the Special Committee on Aging, and since the Senator from California has just pointed out that seniors are at risk, I wish to remind the Senate that on October 23, there is a bill due to be paid of $12 billion to Social Security recipients—October 23. Shortly thereafter, on November 1, there is another bill due: $67 billion for Social Security recipients, for Medicare recipients, and for SSI, which is Social Security for low-income seniors. In addition to the default the Senator from California has spoken about—defaulting on interest payments on U.S. Treasury bills—we are talking about default to real people with real needs. This is just a drop in the bucket of the total amount that is coming due.

I thank the Senator for letting me share that information in this discussion.

I might say that the Presiding Officer, the junior Senator from Massachusetts—or now the senior Senator from Massachusetts—is one of the most active and prominent members of the Special Committee on Aging, and our committee has pointed out statistics such as these over and over.

Mrs. BOXER. I wish to thank my friend, and I hope we can continue to have these conversations. I thank the Presiding Officer for recognizing my friend so he could make his point.

We are, as leader PELOSI said, playing with fire. We are playing with lives.

One of our colleagues, Senator CASEY from Pennsylvania, read the most amazing letter he got from a constituent and he said:

> She is so worried about her parents. They are in their 80s, and the fear—just the thought—of maybe not getting a check on time, that is making her parents physically ill.

Why are we doing this? There is no reason to do this. This is a self-inflicted wound. The government shutdown is self-inflicted. Playing with the full faith and credit of the United States of America is a self-inflicted wound.

Here is the thing: We know one of the heroes of the Republican Party and a hero to many Democrats is Ronald Reagan. Let's see what he said. I have it here. When it comes to the debt:

> The full consequences of a default, or even the serious prospect of a default, 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 on the value of the dollar in exchange markets. The Nation can ill afford to allow such a result.

That is Ronald Reagan. I was here during most of his presidency. I was over in the House. I think my friend from Florida was as well. Lord knows, we didn't agree with Ronald Reagan on everything. We agreed with him on some things, not all things, and we may have cast a vote or two to say that we object. But no one ever brought down the full faith and credit of the United States. He got 18 increases in the debt ceiling during his presidency—18 over 8 years.

So there are two paths we can take. One path is a road that is a little bit bumpy and curvy and dusty, but at the end of the day it gets us where we want to go: Into a budget conference with our bills paid and our government open to the people. That is the bipartisan road. It is not easy.

I am so proud of Senators REID and MCCONNELL for working on a plan that is something we can accept. No one on either side is thrilled about it, but we can accept it. It gets us out of this mess. That is the road we should take, the bipartisan road that gets us into the conference, that opens the doors of government, and pays our bills.

The other road is the road the House Republicans are taking. That road is straight over the cliff. That is the partisan road, and we will dive down. We are not going to get there that way. We are going to bring a world of hurt on the people.

What did the people do to deserve this? They did not vote the way my Republican friends in the House wanted them to. Sorry, that is what elections are about. I have been disappointed in election outcomes, believe me, more times than I care to admit. That is what elections are about.

Well, once you get here, you have to work across party lines, and even though that road is bumpy and dusty and twisty and windy, and all the rest of it, that is the road that gets us where we have to go. That is the road Leaders REID and MCCONNELL had us on until a few hours ago when all of a sudden that road kind of shut down and the other road—that partisan road—opened right up. I do not know why they are taking us down that road leading us off a cliff, with all the pain and suffering and job loss and economic chaos that awaits if we go down that road. But I honestly think we can get back on that bipartisan path. I do not know exactly how it will come about. How a bill becomes law is sometimes very complicated, but if the House sends us something, but we can work to make it bipartisan, we will be over this. We will be over this. We cannot have a strictly partisan political bill.

I want to share with the Presiding Officer and with my colleagues the fact that Fitch, a credit rating service, has put our creditworthiness ''under review for a downgrade,'' according to the Associated Press. It means that America's AAA rating is in doubt. Let me say that again. Fitch, a credit rating service, put our creditworthiness ''under review for a downgrade,'' reports the Associated Press, putting America's AAA rating in doubt.

Mr. NELSON. Just this afternoon.

Mrs. BOXER. Just this afternoon, after the bipartisan plan was stalled here in the Senate and the House went forward with their partisan plan.

What Fitch did is a warning sign. It is a warning sign for businesses in terms of their borrowing costs to expand. It is a warning sign to the job market if there is a lack of expansion by the business community. It is a warning sign that students could be paying higher interest rates to go to college. It is a warning sign for homeowners who could be paying higher rates for their mortgages.

What is going on? We are just getting out of the worst recession since the Great Depression. The Presiding Officer is in the Senate because she fought so hard to get this economy on track, and people in her State said: That is what we need, and she came here. And now this self-inflicted wound just as we are coming out of it, just as we are starting to see progress? Why are we doing this?

I want to talk a little bit about the bill the House is probably going to be voting on soon because it deals with a couple of things that are very problematic. I have already said it is a partisan bill. Speaker BOEHNER did not have a conversation with Leader PELOSI. He just wrote the bill with Republicans only, as opposed to HARRY REID, who wrote our compromise with the Republicans, taking us down that bipartisan road.

My understanding is the House bill does something that is inexplicable to me and many others, both Republicans and Democrats. Listen to this. It says that no President—starting now with this President, and into the future—no President can take steps to avoid default. I do not get it. We all know a default is chaos. Everyone agrees it is terrible, it is bad. Republican and Democratic administrations for decades have taken measures when there is a little stall here or there and they need a few days to move around a bill or two.

I cannot believe it—from a party that said: In case we default, we should prioritize who we pay—they will not allow future administrations to avoid a default and add a couple of days until we face that.

Listen to what Tony Fratto said. He worked in the Bush administration as Assistant Secretary of Public Affairs for Treasury. He said the following:

> Restricting Treasury's use of extraordinary measures is like restricting the fire department's use of hoses.

So imagine if you said to a fire department: You can use every tool at your disposal, but you can't use a water hose to put out a fire. They are saying to the Treasury Department: You have to default even if there is an easy way to avoid it for a few days.

What are they thinking? Do they want this administration and others to have an easier path to default? I thought we would all agree we certainly do not ever want to default but certainly give the ability of an administration—Democratic or Republican—to avert a default, if they can. Their language makes no sense.

Then their other rider they have on there—it is my understanding; I could be wrong, but this is what I get from reading what their legislation, I think, is going to be—the other one involves treating congressional employees differently than any other employee in the country who works for a large employer by taking away the employer contribution that these workers have had for more than 50 years.

I do not get it. Why do Republicans want to punish the people who work so hard for them and work so hard for our country? What are they thinking? Why do they want to treat people differently than all other workers who work for large employers?

Honest to God, I do not get it. I do not get it. If they do not like the people who work for them, then get somebody else. But do not punish your staff, who work day and night. And I want to say, my staff and the Presiding Officer's who are working are working without a paycheck. Well, this is a lovely thing to say to these workers, some of whom earn very little: You are going to be the only people in the country now who cannot get an employer contribution. I do not get it. I really do not.

So here we are: a government shutdown because the Republicans will not accept the fact that a law passed 4 years ago that they do not like, that the Supreme Court upheld—and they did not like that—there was an election over it—and they did not like that—so they stamped their feet and said: We are shutting down the government.

And is there ever pain. I have communities in Los Angeles, one particular one where kids are getting nosebleeds. They are sick. They live near an industrial site, and the Environmental Protection Agency was about to find out what the problem was when they shut down. And those kids do not have an answer.

I had a plane crash at a small airport in Santa Monica that killed four people. We do not know why it happened, but there is no investigation. It had to stop midstream.

I do not have any inspectors on the ground inspecting clean air, clean water, safe drinking water. There are 505 superfund sites where cleanup has been suspended. I know the Presiding Officer has some in her State. These sites are toxic brews. They have arsenic. They have benzene. They have chlorine. They have everything in them that is bad for people to breathe. It is bad if it gets in the drinking water. No inspectors on the ground and no cleanup at 505 superfund sites.

Remember Fukushima? I think everyone knows what Fukushima is. Well, now 92 percent of the Nuclear Regulatory Commission staff have been furloughed. They have one mission, and I am quoting from their mission: ''to ensure the safe use of radioactive materials.''

The Army Corps manages 12 million acres of public lands. They host 370 million visitors annually. This is just the time of year when people still—just before we get to winter—can go out there and enjoy the recreation. No. They are closed.

And just think about the mom-and-pop shops that exist around our parks, our Army Corps land, our wildlife refuges. Madam President, 561 refuges—they are all closed because of the shutdown. Hunting season is in full swing.

I already talked about the fact that the National Transportation Safety Board furloughed 380 of its 400 employees, and they have suspended all their pending investigations. I talked about that.

There is another crash they were investigating in San Francisco, the Asiana Airlines Flight 214. I will tell you, when you stop an investigation like that, it is hard to get right back to it. The problem is, it takes you longer to find the cause of the crash. A lot of times these crashes have clues in them that there may be a part in a certain type of plane that is defective, there may be a problem on the runway—something wrong.

The Consumer Product Safety Commission—another watchdog. In San Diego last week, a 2-year-old child, Annette Estrada, was killed. She was crushed by a falling TV. So they cannot investigate this incident, and maybe some other kids are going to suffer that. It might have been a very defective design.

What does the House do? They are governing by press release: Well, we will open this little sliver of an agency and that one. That is not how you run the greatest Nation on Earth.

Open the government. You said you shut it down because of ObamaCare. ObamaCare is going forward. You want to fix some parts of it. We are ready to talk. There are no winners in this shutdown. It is devastating for our workers. Do you know there are more contract employees than there are Federal employees? There are. Even if you take away the military Federal contract employees—and we hope they are getting paid; we are not positive that all are, but let's say they are—there are more than 2 million contract employees who do not know when the next paycheck is coming.

We sent a bill over to Speaker BOEHNER in the House. Open the government. Just open it. Then we will negotiate all the issues you want to talk about. He would not even allow a vote on that.

We are in a bad place. I have to say, I have lived long enough to know that life does deal us some terrible blows. We know that, each of us. We have each had our tragedies, our challenges, whether they are health challenges or financial challenges or all kinds of challenges. We have enough of those without a self-inflicted wound—two: a government shutdown over here, and a pending default over here, totally unnecessary. It could end in 5 minutes, but still the angst continues, still the anxiety continues, still the uncertainty continues.

I will close with a hopeful note. I laid out the two paths we have: the partisan path to a cliff or the windy, difficult bipartisan path, which the Senate was on until we were pulled off it. I hope and pray that we will get back on that bipartisan path, that we will reopen this government, that we will pay our bills, and this great Nation—this great Nation—can get back to doing what we do best: making sure this American dream is there for everybody, making sure we care about our people, making sure they have access to their government, and getting us out of this morass we are in for no good reason.

We can do it. The path is there. Let's hope we take that path.

I yield the floor.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

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

The bill clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

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

MORNING BUSINESS

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

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

TRIBUTE TO PALMER DEPAULIS

Mr. HATCH. Mr. President, it is my pleasure to celebrate the career of a very dedicated Utah public servant. Palmer DePaulis has served the people of Utah for over 30 years, most recently as the executive director of Utah Department of Human Services.

As executive director, Mr. DePaulis has made great strides in creating safe and permanent homes for vulnerable children and at-risk families. He has instituted a ''System of Care'' approach for children and families that creates a partnership between children, their families, and caregivers that focuses on an individualized, culturally responsive plan to address a variety of mental health challenges so that children can be kept in the least restrictive, most integrated, and safe setting possible.

Current law directs the majority of Federal dollars to the least desirable outcomes for vulnerable families, namely, removing a child from the home and placing them in foster care.

During the last session of Congress, the Congress passed and the President signed legislation I drafted that permits some States to apply for and receive waivers for certain rules relative to foster care.

In drafting this legislation, I worked closely with Mr. DePaulis and his team to craft policies that would give Utah and other States the flexibility to innovate and try different approaches to improving child welfare systems.

I am pleased that Utah was one of the first States to successfully apply for and be granted a child welfare waiver. Utah's plan is a strategic and forward thinking approach that strives to gain a better understanding of the needs and strengths of children and families that have experienced child abuse, neglect, and dependency. It acknowledges, as a guiding principle, that, whenever possible, children should remain safely at home. Utah's wavier proposal adopts a holistic framework to provide supportive family services that prevents neglect and abuse and bolsters a family's ability to keep a child safe within the home and preserve intact families when a family's problems can be addressed safely and effectively.

I am confident that the Utah's waiver, instigated by Mr. DePaulis and his team, will result in improved outcomes for children and families.

In addition to his work in the area of child welfare, Mr. DePaulis also oversaw services that have benefited thousands of Utahans. These include, but are not limited to: meals to homebound seniors, treatment for mental health and substance abuse, and services that help individuals with disabilities lead independent and productive lives.

Prior to joining Utah Department of Human Services, Mr. DePaulis served as mayor of Salt Lake City. During his tenure as mayor, Mr. DePaulis made the humane treatment of the homeless one of his signature issues. He helped open family and men's homeless shelters and worked with community partners to highlight the need for a continuum of services to ensure shelter residents had access to medical, transportation, substance abuse, and mental health services.

Throughout his long and distinguished career, Mr. DePaulis has worked to improve the lives of our most vulnerable and forgotten citizens. Utahans and the Nation owe him our gratitude and appreciation.

REMEMBERING ADMIRAL TAZEWELL T. SHEPARD, JR.

Mr. SESSIONS. Mr. President, I was honored to be at the funeral services at Arlington for ADM Tazewell T. Shepard, Jr., an American patriot, a native of Mobile, AL, a man widely recognized for his character and integrity as well as for courage, intelligence, and professionalism.

Admiral Shepard was born in Mobile, AL, attended Murphy High School, one of Alabama's great high schools, and joined the Navy when World War II began. He married the daughter of Senator John Sparkman and they were partners for 71 years. He received the Navy Cross, the Navy's highest award for heroism during the Battle of Guadalcanal acting with coolness and courage to direct action and to care for casualties.

He was a naval aide to President John F. Kennedy and advised the President during the Bay of Pigs crisis in 1961. He published a book John F. Kennedy: Man of the Sea, in 1965.

His quiet and firm character was the quality that stands out in this life well lived. Former Justice Sandra Day O'Connor spoke at the service and recalled those times of friendship—tennis, bridge, and dancing—enjoyed by their families. His son, Tazewell Shepard Ill, spoke also and provided insights that revealed the strong values and positive qualities of his father. The service, honored by the presence of a naval detachment, closed with the naval hymn.

Admiral Shepard through the quality of his life set an example of faith, family and patriotism. We extend our sympathy to his fine family and even in this time of loss celebrate his wonderful and productive life.

MESSAGE FROM THE HOUSE

At 10:58 a.m., a message from the House of Representatives, delivered by Mrs. Cole, one of its reading clerks, announced that the House has passed the following bill and joint resolution, in which it requests the concurrence of the Senate:

H.R. 3190. An act to provide for the continued performance of the functions of the United States Parole Commission, and for other purposes.

H.J. Res. 80. Joint resolution making continuing appropriations for the Bureau of Indian Affairs, the Bureau of Indian Education, and the Indian Health Service for fiscal year 2014, and for other purposes.

MEASURES READ THE FIRST TIME

The following joint resolution was read the first time:

H.J. Res. 80. Joint resolution making continuing appropriations for the Bureau of Indian Affairs, the Bureau of Indian Education, and the Indian Health Service for fiscal year 2014, and for other purposes.

INTRODUCTION OF BILLS AND JOINT RESOLUTIONS

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

By Mr. ALEXANDER (for himself and Mr. HATCH):

S. 1572. A bill to direct the Secretary of the Treasury to reimburse States that use State funds to operate National Parks during the Federal Government shutdown, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Energy and Natural Resources.

ADDITIONAL COSPONSORS

S. 338

At the request of Mr. BAUCUS, the name of the Senator from Vermont (Mr. SANDERS) was added as a cosponsor of S. 338, a bill to amend the Land and Water Conservation Fund Act of 1965 to provide consistent and reliable authority for, and for the funding of, the land and water conservation fund to maximize the effectiveness of the fund for future generations, and for other purposes.

S. 653

At the request of Mr. BLUNT, the name of the Senator from Arkansas (Mr. PRYOR) was added as a cosponsor of S. 653, a bill to provide for the establishment of the Special Envoy to Promote Religious Freedom of Religious Minorities in the Near East and South Central Asia.

S. 666

At the request of Mr. BLUMENTHAL, the names of the Senator from Vermont (Mr. SANDERS) and the Senator from Virginia (Mr. WARNER) were added as cosponsors of S. 666, a bill to prohibit attendance of an animal fighting venture, and for other purposes.

S. 749

At the request of Mr. CORNYN, the name of the Senator from Missouri (Mr. BLUNT) was added as a cosponsor of S. 749, a bill to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to permanently

extend the 15-year recovery period for qualified leasehold improvement property, qualified restaurant property, and qualified retail improvement property.

S. 1143

At the request of Mr. MORAN, the name of the Senator from New Mexico (Mr. HEINRICH) was added as a cosponsor of S. 1143, a bill to amend title XVIII of the Social Security Act with respect to physician supervision of therapeutic hospital outpatient services.

S. 1349

At the request of Mr. MORAN, the name of the Senator from Georgia (Mr. ISAKSON) was added as a cosponsor of S. 1349, a bill to enhance the ability of community financial institutions to foster economic growth and serve their communities, boost small businesses, increase individual savings, and for other purposes.

S. 1551

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

S. 1555

At the request of Mr. WICKER, the name of the Senator from Mississippi (Mr. COCHRAN) was added as a cosponsor of S. 1555, a bill to amend titles XVIII and XIX of the Social Security Act to provide for a delay in the implementation schedule of the reductions in disproportionate share hospital payments, and for other purposes.

AUTHORITY FOR COMMITTEES TO MEET

COMMITTEE ON SMALL BUSINESS AND ENTREPRENEURSHIP

Mr. BLUMENTHAL. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Committee on Small Business and Entrepreneurship be authorized to meet during the session of the Senate on October 15, 2013, at 2:30 p.m. room 428A Russell Senate Office building to conduct a hearing entitled ''Small Businesses Speak: Surviving the Government Shutdown?''

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

SELECT COMMITTEE ON INTELLIGENCE

Mr. BLUMENTHAL. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Select Committee on Intelligence be authorized to meet during the session of the Senate on October 15, 2013, at 2:30 p.m.

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

MEASURE READ THE FIRST TIME—H.J. RES. 80

Mr. SCHUMER. Mr. President, I understand that H.J. Res. 80 has been received from the House and 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. 80) making continuing appropriations for the Bureau of Indian Affairs, the Bureau of Indian Education, and the Indian Health Service for fiscal year 2014, and for other purposes.

Mr. SCHUMER. Mr. 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 WEDNESDAY, OCTOBER 16, 2013

Mr. SCHUMER. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that when the Senate completes its business today, it adjourn until 12 noon on Wednesday, October 16, 2013; that following the prayer and pledge, the morning hour be deemed expired, the Journal of proceedings be approved to date, and the time for the two leaders be reserved for their use later in the day; and that following any leader remarks, Senators be permitted to speak for up to 10 minutes each.

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

ADJOURNMENT UNTIL TOMORROW

Mr. SCHUMER. Mr. President, if there is no further business to come before the Senate, I ask unanimous consent that it adjourn under the previous order.

There being no objection, the Senate, at 10:08 p.m., adjourned until Wednesday, October 16, 2013, at 12 noon.

EXTENSIONS OF REMARKS

RETIREMENT OF POLICE OFFICER JOHN D. COOPER

HON. JOHN GARAMENDI

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, October 15, 2013

Mr. GARAMENDI. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize Police Officer John D. Cooper as he retires after more than 28 years of law enforcement service, with 25 years of that service to the City of Fairfield.

After serving three years as a Deputy Sheriff with the Santa Clara County Sheriff's Office, he was hired as a police officer with the Fairfield Police Department on March 14, 1988. As an officer, Cooper worked in various capacities that included Patrol, Investigations, Youth Services, School Resources, and Field Training. His high work ethic and dedication to police work was evident and he was promoted to Police Corporal on December 31, 1999. Officer Cooper has a genuine attitude of putting public service before himself and as a trainer of newly hired police officers, he taught them to be public servants as well as police officers.

Some of Officer Cooper's most significant contributions to the Police Department have been his ability to remain calm and communicate well during crisis situations. He has assisted with the investigation of numerous major crimes and high profile cases, and his keen investigative skills have contributed to the successful resolution and conviction of numerous criminals. Officer Cooper has been a good representation of the City of Fairfield and the Fairfield Police Department.

He has been a valued employee and his commitment to the community was evident on a daily basis. Officer Cooper was a loyal representative of the law enforcement community and admired for his hard work, dedication, and positive work ethic.

IN MEMORY OF FRED ESMOND

HON. ADAM KINZINGER

OF ILLINOIS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, October 15, 2013

Mr. KINZINGER of Illinois. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor the memory of Fred Esmond who passed away on October 2, 2013.

Fred Esmond served in the U.S. Army Reserves, was a small business owner, participated in many community organizations, and beginning in 2001 was elected four times to serve as the Mayor of Utica, Illinois. I have no doubt that he will be remembered for his stewardship and love for his community during some of its most trying times, including a devastating tornado and multiple floods.

Mayor Esmond leaves a legacy that will continue to serve the residents of Utica for years to come. Under his leadership, the town constructed a new village hall, fire station, and numerous community buildings. Additionally, visitors and residents often recognize the beautiful streetscapes lining the realigned Illinois Route 178 and a striking memorial to the victims of a 2004 tornado.

Fred is survived by his wife Sandra; his daughters, Sarah Schweickert and Lisa Esmond; his grandchildren, Addison and Bailey Schweickert; and his three brothers, Jack, William, and Truman. While Fred has passed, his legacy and memory will endure in the hearts and minds of his friends and family.

Mr. Speaker, on behalf of the 16th District of Illinois, I offer my heartfelt condolences to Mayor Esmond's family. The State of Illinois has lost an outstanding citizen and the Illinois River Valley community will miss him dearly.

CONGRESSIONAL BLACK CAUCUS

SPEECH OF

HON. EDDIE BERNICE JOHNSON

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, October 14, 2013

Ms. EDDIE BERNICE JOHNSON of Texas. Mr. Speaker, brinksmanship makes for poor politics, and defaulting on America's debts will make for a poor national economy and a poor global image. It should not be understated how devastating defaulting on the debt ceiling would be for America's growing economy. A default as a result of political games would be even more embarrassing.

Most games have winners and losers, but if the political games being employed by the Republican party cause a default on America's financial obligations, everyone loses. To be clear, this is not a game. The consequences on the American economy, our country's global image, and the lives of all Americans will be very real.

The Republican government shutdown has illuminated the party's willingness to put politics before people. If the Republican political brinksmanship causes a default on America's obligations, it will demonstrate their willingness to torpedo a growing American economy. This brinksmanship must end and we must raise the debt ceiling and continue advancing policies that have and will continue to allow our economy to grow.

HISPANIC HERITAGE MONTH HONOREES

HON. ALAN GRAYSON

OF FLORIDA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, October 15, 2013

RECOGNIZING THE CAREER AND SERVICE OF VIVIAN RODRIGUEZ

Mr. GRAYSON. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in honor of Hispanic Heritage Month, to recognize the inspiring career of Vivian Rodriguez. Vivian is the President of the Democratic Hispanic Caucus of Florida and the Constituent Field Representative for my office.

She presently holds the position of Vice Chair for the Orange County Democratic Executive Committee and is on the Advisory Board of the Central Florida Community Initiative, an organization acting as a liaison between the Office of the State Attorney for the Ninth Judicial Circuit and the citizens of Orange and Osceola County. Vivian was the Political Director of Hispanic Outreach for Joe Saunders, Florida House Representative for District 49, contributing to the successful election of one of the first openly gay legislators in Tallahassee. She is also on the Board of Directors for Equality Florida, which advocates for equality and justice for the LGBT community.

Vivian retired from the New York City Police Department in August 2004, after completing twenty-one years of honorable service and achieving the highest recognition within the NYPD Detective Bureau, Promotion to First-Grade Detective. She was assigned to various specialized elite units which included the Intelligence Division, Executive Protection Unit, Dignitary Protection Unit, the Organized Crime Control Bureau, Task Force Mobilization Unit, Recruitment Section, and the LGBT Sensitivity Training Program for all incoming NYPD police cadets. Vivian was the President of the Gay Officers Action League and Secretary to the NYPD Hispanic Society. She has been acknowledged for her dedicated work in public service and has received various accolades within the Hispanic and LGBT community.

Vivian's last assignment in the NYPD was with the Intelligence Liaison Unit. This unit was created after the 911 Attacks in New York City, to combat the global international threat of terrorism in the NYC area. Vivian participated in several counter-terrorism operations to detect and deter terrorist reconnaissance and pre-operational activity to protect the city from future terrorist attacks. Upon retirement, Vivian became a consultant with the Department of Homeland Security, Federal Law Enforcement Training Center, and several other law enforcement agencies instructing on intelligence and terrorism.

Vivian's greatest accomplishment was meeting her life partner Valerie Finello, who continues to support all her endeavors. Her pride and joy is her loving son, Tyler, who has grown into a fine young man.

I am happy to honor Vivian Rodriguez, during Hispanic Heritage Month, for her exemplary career in public service and commitment to equality and justice.

RECOGNIZING THE CONTRIBUTIONS OF EURIBIADES CERRUD II

Mr. Speaker, I rise today in honor of Hispanic Heritage Month, to recognize Euribiades Cerrud II for all he has contributed to the city of Orlando.

Euribiades Cerrud II, better known as "Euri," was born in San Juan, Puerto Rico, on January 26, 1972. Euri was born to an immigrant father from Panama and a Puerto Rican mother. His father was the first person in his

hometown to graduate from high school and grew up to become a world-class oncologic surgeon. His mother was a pediatrician who dedicated herself to care for impoverished children.

After graduating from high school, Euri moved to Orlando, FL, to complete his education. While taking a course at Valencia Community College, he met the love of his life, Karen N. Cerrud-Santos. After completing his associate's degree, he continued his education at the University of Central Florida. While attending UCF, out of his own monthly allowance, Euri paid for the civil engineering degree of a homeless man. He also shared his apartment, on different occasions, with individuals who could not afford a place to live.

Having developed a great interest in pure mathematics, he attended Rollins College on a full scholarship where he completed a bachelor's degree in Mathematics with minors in humanities, physics, chemistry, and business administration. As part of his thesis, Euri developed an advanced equations system that was converted into an interactive computer program for the estimation of dieting, insulin, and food intake of diabetic patients. The program was eventually donated to the National Institutes of Health and modified to program insulin pumps.

After completing his mathematics degree, Euri went to New England Law in Boston to study law. He successfully graduated at the top of his class, while having a newborn with his wife, holding a full-time position at the legal department of the Boston Stock Exchange, and volunteering part-time to teach law to gifted students at a charter program in Boston.

Upon his return to Orlando, Euri has been very involved in the community. He served as a board member of Christian Help providing Christmas gifts and dinners to dozens of families in the community and also as board member of the Puerto Rico Chamber of Commerce during three separate terms. Currently, he serves as Vice-Chair of the City of Orlando Civil Service Board, Advisory Board Member to the Hispanic Business Initiative Fund and the UCF Small Business Development Center, Ambassador to the Hispanic Chamber of Commerce, member of the editorial board of the Hispanic Chamber of Commerce Vision Magazine and Chair of Pack 25 of Cub Scouts Troop 25 at Good Shepherd Catholic School. He is also a lecturer to the Orange County Bar Association's Business Law Section.

I am happy to honor Euri Cerrud, during Hispanic Heritage Month, for his contributions to the Hispanic community and to Orlando.

RECOGNIZING THE CAREER OF LUIS M. MARTINEZ-ALICEA

Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize the career of Luis M. Martinez-Alicea. Mr. Martinez earned a Bachelor's Degree in Communications from the University of the Sacred Heart in Puerto Rico and a Master's Degree in Business Administration from Ana G. Mendez University System, Orlando Campus. During his college years, he worked at the Puerto Rico Department of State as Press Officer.

Mr. Martinez founded Starlight Productions, a nonprofit organization devoted to encouraging talented youth to develop their artistic abilities through training and live musical-theater productions.

In 2000, Mr. Martinez relocated to Orlando to pursue a Master's degree in business. He worked at Walt Disney World and studied Arts Management at the University of Central Florida. Mr. Martinez was also the host of local events, performed as an actor in theater plays, and worked on TV commercials targeted to the Hispanic market. During his personal time off, he served as a volunteer in various community organizations.

Mr. Martinez worked as Marketing Coordinator and Reporter at El Nuevo Dia newspaper. He later served for five years as Director of Marketing & Recruitment at the Ana G. Mendez University System, in which he implemented innovative recruitment and marketing strategies and developed strong community ties to increase corporate branding and diversity.

In January 2012, Mr. Martinez was appointed by Orlando Mayor Buddy Dyer as Director of Multicultural Affairs, an executive position that promotes the engagement of minority communities, businesses and residents with the city of Orlando. In addition, he serves as the Mayor's Hispanic Spokesperson to local Hispanic and Brazilian media and assists Orlando's Economic Development Department.

I am happy to honor Luis M. Martinez-Alicea, during Hispanic Heritage Month, for his many accomplishments and service to the Central Florida community.

RECOGNIZING THE CONTRIBUTIONS OF JOHN CORTES

Mr. Speaker, I rise today in honor of Hispanic Heritage Month, to recognize John Cortes for his leadership in the Hispanic community and his many years of service to Central Florida. John has been a valuable member of his community and has worked to better the lives of his family, friends, and the community at large in Osceola County.

John Cortes is a retired New York City Corrections Officer who now serves as the First Vice President for the Democratic Hispanic Caucus of Florida. John was born in Brooklyn, New York, and raised in Puerto Rico where he graduated from high school. He attended John Jay College of Criminal Justice in New York for two years and graduated from the New York City Department of Corrections Training Academy for Disasters. John has lived in Osceola County for the past 14 years with his loving wife, Caridad Cortes.

John is the Precinct Committeeman for the Osceola County Democratic Executive Committee and serves as the Vice President for the Osceola County Democratic Hispanic Caucus. He is also a current member and former president of the Kissimmee Neighborhood Crime Watch, as well as the former president of the Osceola County Democratic Hispanic Caucus. John served on the Social Service Funding Board for the United Way, and on the Board of Parks and Recreation for Osceola County. John is also a graduate of the Federal Emergency Management Agency's Community Emergency Response Team (CERT) Program, and a graduate of the Kissimmee Police Department Civilian Police Academy in Osceola County.

I am happy to honor John Cortes, during Hispanic Heritage Month, for his years of service within Florida's Ninth District.

RECOGNIZING THE CONTRIBUTIONS OF JAMES AUFFANT

Mr. Speaker, I rise today in honor of Hispanic Heritage Month, to recognize James Auffant for his leadership within the Central Florida community. James currently serves as the Secretary for the Florida Democratic Party.

James was born in New York City and raised in San Juan, Puerto Rico. He attended American University in San Juan and graduated with a BA in Political Science. After graduating from law school, James moved to Orlando in 1977 with his wife, Lillian. James became a member of the Florida Bar in 1978 and has continued to practice law in Orlando since that time.

James worked for the Legal Aid Society of Orange County and for the Office of the Public Defender before going into private practice in 1982. James is very active in the Central Florida community and is a former board member of Valencia Community College. James was on the City of Orlando's Nominating Board, the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission for Orange County, the Minority Business Board of Orange County, the United Cerebral Palsy Board, and the Community Action Board of Orange County. He also acted as Chair for the Florida Bar's Juvenile Rules Committee and currently serves as a board member of the Apopka Family Learning Center. James serves as the State Committeeman for the Orange County Democratic Executive Committee and was the founding president of the Hispanic Community Center in Central Florida, Asociación Borinquerña de la Florida Central.

I am happy to honor James Auffant, during Hispanic Heritage Month, for his service to the Central Florida community and the state of Florida.

RECOGNIZING THE CONTRIBUTIONS OF WANDA RAMOS

Mr. Speaker, I rise today in honor of Hispanic Heritage Month, to recognize Wanda Ramos for her service to the Central Florida community and for her advocacy on behalf of workers and their families.

Wanda Ramos was born and raised in Puerto Rico and is a dedicated wife and proud mother of a 15 year old son. Mrs. Ramos moved to Orlando in 1999 where she became involved in fighting for workers' rights, empowering new voters, advocating for civil rights, and creating awareness about the importance of parental involvement in education.

While working at a retailer, Mrs. Ramos organized workers to achieve better working conditions and better pay. When the unionizing efforts were discouraged by her employer, Mrs. Ramos still managed to accomplish the implementation of safety standards for a better working environment and better pay for workers.

Mrs. Ramos has been an active member of Jobs With Justice where she eventually earned a place on their Board of Directors. She joined the Labor Council for Latin American Advancement (LCLAA) and served in various capacities and campaigns to empower and elect Latinos in Central Florida.

Through her involvement with the Family Leadership Institute, Mrs. Ramos has traveled to other states to raise awareness of parental involvement in education by speaking to parents, teachers, and administrators. Mrs. Ramos is also a member of the PTSA, SAC, the OCPS Hispanic Advisory Council.

In 2008, she joined the presidential campaign of Barack Obama performing many duties as a volunteer, including giving a speech to introduce Hillary Clinton when she came to Central Florida to campaign for Mr. Obama.

Mrs. Ramos has advocated for women and children through organizations such as Community Legal Services of Mid Florida (CLSMF) and Legal Advocacy Center of Central Florida (LACCF), where she served as a board member for 2 years.

As a talk show host of a radio program at Latina 1580 AM Radio, Mrs. Ramos gave community organizations and elected officials the opportunity to provide information and create awareness about important issues affecting the community.

I am happy to honor Wanda Ramos, during Hispanic Heritage Month, for her many accomplishments and her contributions to the Central Florida community.

RECOGNIZING THE CONTRIBUTION OF CHAD M. BRANDT

Mr. Speaker, I rise today in honor of Hispanic Heritage Month, to recognize Chad M. Brandt for his contributions to the Central Florida community. Mr. Brandt was born in Melbourne, Florida, in 1970. He is a first generation Cuban-American who has witnessed firsthand the challenges that immigrants face in the United States. He has dedicated his life and career to serve the cause of the immigrants in his community.

Mr. Brandt received a bachelor's degree in Political Science from Florida International University and a law degree from the University of Florida Levin College of Law, both with honors. He is currently a member of the Florida Bar, the American Immigration Lawyers Association, and admitted before the Florida Supreme Court and the United States District Court for the Middle District of Florida

Mr. Brandt is the owner and founder of Brandt Immigration, a law firm specialized in immigration law. He devotes a substantial portion of his immigration practice to deportation defense and representing individuals, families, and businesses during interviews and appearances before immigration officials. Additionally, Mr. Brandt assists clients in obtaining temporary visas and permanent resident status.

Mr. Brandt is also actively involved in his community. He is currently a board member of the statewide and the local chapter of the Hispanic Business Initiative Fund, a non-profit organization dedicated to assisting Hispanic entrepreneurs. He is also a member of the Hispanic Bar Association of Central Florida and the Hispanic Chamber of Commerce of Metro Orlando. He has lectured on immigration law at the University of Florida Levin College of Law and his articles have been featured in the Orlando Sentinel and Ahora Magazine.

Mr. Brandt currently lives in Orlando, FL, with his wife, Jennifer, and his five children, Chad Jr., Emily, Ethan, Lily, and William.

I am happy to honor Chad Brandt, during Hispanic Heritage Month, for his service to the immigrant community in Central Florida.

INTRODUCING THE DEBT LIMIT REFORM ACT

HON. ALCEE L. HASTINGS

OF FLORIDA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, October 15, 2013

Mr. HASTINGS of Florida. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to introduce the Debt Limit Reform Act. This bill will reform the statutory limits on our nation's federal debt by providing the President of the United States with explicit authority to raise the debt ceiling without Congressional approval, and by removing intragovernmental accounts from the debt ceiling calculation. As Congress faces an ongoing government shutdown that has left hundreds of thousands of American workers without a paycheck, we are getting ever closer to our nation defaulting on its debt obligations. On October 17th, the debt ceiling is expected to be breached. Democrats and Republicans must come together before then to act or risk a global economic catastrophe. This is exactly where we were just two years ago, and where we will be again in the near future if we do not take any steps to reform the way in which we calculate and consider our nation's debt.

Congress has legislatively limited federal debt for nearly 100 years, from the Second Liberty Bond Act of 1917 to the more recent Budget Control Act of 2011 and subsequent increases. These increases, however, do not address the fact that the current manner in which we determine the debt ceiling is no longer relevant to how we govern today.

We need a new debt limit law—one that takes the modern world into account. Under this bill, the debt ceiling will distinguish between mere accounting techniques and actual debt. No longer will debt owed from one branch of our government to another be considered the same as debt held by foreign governments, banks, pension funds, and other entities. According to the Congressional Budget Office (CBO), of the $16.699 trillion in outstanding debt subject to limit, roughly $11.9 trillion is held by the public and about $4.8 trillion is held by government accounts.

By excluding these government-held accounts from the debt limit calculation—particularly the Old-Age and Survivors Insurance (OASI) and the Disability Insurance (DI) Trust Funds that constitute the Social Security Trust Funds, Medicare Parts A and B, the Civil Service and Military Retirement Trust Funds, Unemployment Insurance, the Highway Trust Fund, Community Living Assistance Services and Supports (CLASS) Trust Fund, and Airport and Airway Trust Fund—we will have a more accurate view of our actual debt obligations.

These intra-governmental accounts are the means by which the Treasury tracks payouts and obligations to other government entities. They are accounting techniques, not debts. These funds serve to help retired workers and their families, the families of deceased workers, and disabled workers and their families. In addition, they provide inpatient hospital stay and medical insurance benefits; fund programs for civilian and military retirement; provide unemployment benefits to eligible workers who become unemployed through no fault of their own; fund road construction and mass transit projects; provide insurance for long-term services in the case of disability; and fund the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA). They need not be considered the same as our government's debt for purposes of calculating the debt ceiling.

Mr. Speaker, at a time when partisan gridlock is having a devastating impact on our nation's economy through a government shutdown and further threatening to destabilize global financial systems, this legislation represents a common sense solution to modernizing the way in which we calculate our nation's debt and increase the debt ceiling. By excluding intragovernmental accounts from the Treasury's debt ceiling equation and authorizing the Executive to alter the ceiling as needed, the Debt Limit Reform Act will help Congress avoid some of the last-minute showdowns that have become all too common in recent years. In this way we can begin to tackle the real challenges facing this country.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

HON. CAROLYN McCARTHY

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, October 15, 2013

Mrs. McCARTHY of New York. Mr. Speaker, I was unavoidably absent during the week September 23, 2013. If I were present, I would have voted on the following:

Rollcall vote No. 484: H.R. 1961, ''nay;''

Rollcall vote No. 485: H. Res. 354, ''yea;''

Rollcall vote No. 486: H.R. 3095, ''yea;''

Rollcall vote No. 487: H.R. 2600, ''yea;''

Rollcall vote No. 488: Journal Vote, ''yea;''

Rollcall vote No. 489: Grijalva Amendment, ''aye;''

Rollcall vote No. 490: Napolitano Amendment, ''aye;''

Rollcall vote No. 491: Senate Amendment to H.R. 1412, ''yea;''

Rollcall vote No. 492: H.R. 3096, ''aye;''

Rollcall vote No. 493: H. Res. 361—Martial Law Authority Rule, ''nay;''

Rollcall vote No. 494: Motion on Ordering the Previous Question on the Rule, ''nay;''

Rollcall vote No. 495: H. Res. 366—Rule providing for consideration of both the amendments to the Senate Amendment to H.J. Res. 59, ''nay;''

Rollcall vote No. 496: H.R. 2251, ''yea;''

Rollcall vote No. 497: Motion to Concur with the Senate Amendment with a House Amendment, Part 1 (Paulsen), ''yea;''

Rollcall vote No. 498: Motion to Concur with the Senate Amendment with a House Amendment, Part 2 (Blackburn), ''nay;''

Rollcall vote No. 499: H.R. 3210—Pay Our Military Act, ''yea;'' and

Rollcall vote No. 500: H.R. 2848—Department of State Operations and Embassy Security Authorization Act, Fiscal Year 2014, ''yea.''

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

HON. SAM GRAVES

OF MISSOURI

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, October 15, 2013

Mr. GRAVES of Missouri. Mr. Speaker, on Monday, October 14, I missed a rollcall vote. Had I been present, I would have voted ''yea'' on No. 548.

HONORING JIM MURAKAMI OF SANTA ROSA, CALIFORNIA

HON. MIKE THOMPSON

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, October 15, 2013

Mr. THOMPSON of California. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to posthumously honor and pay tribute to Jim Murakami, a great community leader who dedicated much of his life to advocating for the Civil Liberties Act of 1988, which achieved redress for the 120,000 United States citizens of Japanese descent on the West Coast that were wrongfully incarcerated in internment camps during World War II.

Mr. Murakami was born and raised in Santa Rosa, California. When WWII broke out, Mr. Murakami and his family were first incarcerated in the temporary internment camp in

Merced, California and were later moved to the camp at Amache, Colorado.

After Mr. Murakami graduated from high school, he joined the Army and served two years in Germany. After he was discharged, Mr. Murakami returned to his hometown of Santa Rosa, where he raised a family with his wife of 59 years, Margarette, and where he lived until his death in 2012.

Mr. Murakami joined the Japanese American Citizens League (JACL) in the early 1950s and quickly rose through the ranks of the organization. He was the president of the local JACL chapter, the first governor of the Northern California-Western Nevada-Pacific District, as well as the national vice president of the organization from 1972–1975 before becoming the national president from 1976–1978.

During his tenure with the JACL, Mr. Murakami worked tirelessly on the Civil Liberties Act of 1988, finally seeing it passed and signed into law by President Reagan in 1988. The Act required a Presidential apology and a symbolic payment to the surviving internees who were subjected to forced relocation.

In addition to his work with the JACL, Mr. Murakami was also a member of the Santa Rosa East Rotary for more than 50 years as well as a permanent member of the Veterans of Foreign Wars.

He was a regular financial supporter of the Hannah Boys Center, the Sonoma County Museum, and his local fire department.

Mr. Speaker, Mr. Murakami was forced to endure dreadful circumstances that most of us have never, nor will ever, experience. In the face of this adversity, Mr. Murakami not only served his country in the Armed Forces when called upon but also worked tirelessly to right the injustice he experienced through his advocacy for the Civil Liberties Act of 1988. Mr. Murakami was a valuable, contributing member of his community, both locally and nationally. It is therefore appropriate that, on this 25th anniversary of the enactment of the Civil Liberties Act of 1988, we honor and remember him today for his many contributions.

HISPANIC HERITAGE MONTH

HON. ALAN GRAYSON

OF FLORIDA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, October 15, 2013

Mr. GRAYSON. Mr. Speaker, I submit the following.

RECOGNIZING THE CAREER AND CONTRIBUTIONS OF MARIA LUYANDA

Mr. Speaker, I rise today in honor of Hispanic Heritage Month, to recognize Maria Luyanda for her leadership within the Central Florida Hispanic Community.

Maria Luyanda was born in Vega Baja, Puerto Rico. She attended college at Missouri University and completed courses in accounting at Methodist University in Dallas, Texas. She began her career as a teller at Banco Popular de Puerto Rico, where she was recognized for her professionalism and later became assistant manager.

In 1998, Maria was hired by American Airlines Credit Union as manager of the San Juan, Puerto Rico office. During her time at American Airlines, Maria established a loan system to benefit the employees of the Caribbean islands and was soon appointed Regional Director. She was later promoted to Executive Director and became part of the World Association of Credit Unions, as operational adviser. In this position, she had the opportunity to help smaller credit unions organize their operational capabilities and to experience financial growth.

Maria moved to Orlando, Florida in 1998 and served as the assistant Vice President of Banco Popular. In 2004, she started Luyanda Insurance with her son Jose, a company dedicated to looking for innovative products to satisfy the local market. Maria was also the treasurer and vice president of the Hispanic American Professional and Business Women Association and on the Board of the Hispanic Youth Group of Deltona. Maria currently serves as the President of the Puerto Rican Chamber of Commerce and is on the Advisory Board for Polytechnic University's Orlando Campus.

I am happy to honor Maria Luyanda, during Hispanic Heritage Month, for her continued leadership within the Central Florida community.

RECOGNIZING THE PUBLIC SERVICE OF ZORAIDA ANDINO RIOS

Mr. Speaker, I rise today in honor of Hispanic Heritage Month, to recognize the public service of Zoraida Andino Rios. Zoraida was born in East Chicago, Indiana. Her passion for social justice started when she was studying at Saint Joseph's College where she received a Bachelor's Degree in Sociology and Education. As a student, she was the founder of an organization called ''Palante'' and was the assistant director of a college TV program, ''Know Your Community,'' which informs Latino students about issues affecting the Hispanic community. She is the proud mother of her two children, Carolina Raquel and Gilberto Antonio. Her pride and joy is her granddaughter Analiz Diana Balderas.

In 1979, Zoraida moved to Puerto Rico and worked for several community services companies. In 1986, she returned to Indiana and began advocating for the rights of the Puerto Rican and Latino community. She served as President of Madre Atrevete Muevete Ahora (MAMA) and Secretary of the Latino Historical Society. She was also active with the Northwest Indiana Voter Registration and Education Foundation, United Citizens Organization, and United Farm Workers. Zoraida was the co-founder and President of the National Conference of Puerto Rican Women and received their Lifetime Achievement Award in 2000. She also received the Roberto Clemente Community Service Award from the Northwest Indiana Coordinating Counsel.

After moving to Florida with her family, Zoraida became the founder and President of the National Conference of Puerto Rican Women's local chapter in Orlando. She is also a member of the Asociación Borinqueña and La Casa de Puerto Rico. In 2008, she got involved with various social justice groups and served as Vice President for Frente Unido 436 and Vice President of the National Council of Puerto Rican Rights. She is also involved with the Black, Latino, Puerto Rican Alliance for Justice and is founder and co-director of the Orlando chapter of the National Congress of Puerto Rican Rights. She is currently working on her project ''Boricua,'' a tool to unite the worldwide Puerto Rican community.

I am happy to honor Zoraida Andino Rios, during Hispanic Heritage Month, for her public service to the Hispanic community.

RECOGNIZING THE SERVICE OF MELISSA MCGUIRE-MANIAU

Mr. Speaker, I rise today in honor of Hispanic Heritage Month, to recognize an amazing woman in my community, Melissa McGuire-Maniau.

Melissa McGuire-Maniau was born in Puerto Rico, raised in Orlando and is a veteran of the United States Air Force. For the last eight years Melissa has been proudly married to her husband, a native of Mexico. Together they have three girls.

Melissa has been at the forefront of the fight for comprehensive immigration reform and has helped build a movement in Central Florida for the rights of immigrants. Melissa's journey in the immigrant rights movement started in 2005 when she began to study her husband's immigration case. After living in the United States for over twenty years, her husband was still an undocumented immigrant facing deportation. Seeking legal status and citizenship for her husband was nearly impossible.

On October 5, 2011, Melissa's husband was taken from their home and sent to a private immigrant detention center in South Florida. Having worked as a volunteer with several immigrant rights organizations, Melissa used her experience to fight back. Thanks to the support and collaborative efforts of the community, Melissa's husband was eventually released. Her husband became a legal permanent resident in April 2013.

Over the last several years, Melissa and her family have volunteered with the National Farm Worker Ministry. Melissa is now the Immigration Chair of the Youth and Young Adult Network of the National Farm Worker Ministry, and serves as Vice President of the Board of Directors for the Florida Immigrant Coalition. Melissa is currently in the Pre-Law Program at Rollins College working towards becoming an immigration attorney in order to continue the fight for justice for all immigrant families.

I am happy to honor Melissa McGuire-Maniau, during Hispanic Heritage Month, for her service to our country and her community.

RECOGNIZING THE CONTRIBUTIONS OF VANESSA HALL FERREIRA

Mr. Speaker, I rise today in honor of Hispanic Heritage Month, to recognize the courage and commitment of Vanessa Hall Ferreira. Vanessa was born and grew up as the youngest of six in Bridgeport, Connecticut. As a young child, Vanessa grew up in a housing project with her single mother, 4 sisters, and brother. Vanessa was the first in her family to graduate high school. She married her high school sweetheart Alfredo Ferreira in 1971 with whom she has two daughters and three grandsons.

Vanessa began her bakery career in 1983. She got a full time job in the bakery of a grocery store, which she really enjoyed. She moved to another grocery store chain where there were good worker protections and was able to earn a pension and get 100% vested. In 1995, she decided to move the family to Florida.

In 1998, Vanessa got a job at Walmart as a cake decorator. It was a great place to work even though the pay was not much. When she asked for a 75 cent raise, Walmart denied her, saying it was too much. She left to work at a competitor grocery store where she received training, great benefits, and higher wages.

When the store went out of business, Venessa had no choice but to go back to work at Walmart in 2005. Vanessa and other associates had concerns about scheduling and management's attitude toward the workers. Eventually, the store began to hire temporary workers instead of giving full time work to the current employees.

In 2009, Vanessa discovered the Organization United for Respect at Walmart or OUR Walmart. She became an ''Our Walmart'' member online but kept her membership private. In 2012, Vanessa went on strike at her store during the week of Black Friday. Vanessa returned back to work after going on strike with a new sense of dignity.

Vanessa became one of the main leaders for Our Walmart in Central Florida. In April 2013, Vanessa was fired from her position with Walmart in retaliation for her activism. She continues to advocate for workers' rights by sharing her own experiences.

I am happy to honor Vanessa Hall Ferreira, during Hispanic Heritage Month, for her courage and commitment to workers' rights.

RECOGNIZING THE CAREER OF MARCOS VILAR

Mr. Speaker, I rise today in honor of Hispanic Heritage Month, to recognize the career of Marcos Vilar. Mr. Vilar was born in Ponce, Puerto Rico. He moved to the United States at the age of 14 and has since lived in New Hampshire, Wisconsin, Washington, DC, Chicago, Tampa, and Orlando. He holds a Bachelor's Degree in History from the University of Maryland and a Master's Degree in Education from the University of Illinois, Chicago.

Mr. Vilar worked as a teacher in Chicago, where he also was active in community work. During his tenure at Roberto Community Academy he was best known for working with at risk youth and developing arts and cultural programming into after school activities. He was also advisor for the Student Government body and a leader of the local reform movement at the school.

Mr. Vilar moved to Washington, DC in January of 2002, and there held several national leadership positions including National Field Director for the Que Nada Nos Detenga, voter registration campaign of the Puerto Rico Federal Affairs Administration, Executive Director for America's Families United, National Political Director for SEIU, and National Field Director for Mi Familia Vota Education Fund.

Mr. Vilar's work as Executive Director for America's Families United was fundamental to the development of Catalist, which has become the standard voter file database used by progressive organizations. He was also a founding member of the Catalist Board of Managers.

As Political Director of SEIU, Mr. Vilar focused on improving member databases and was responsible for aggressively growing the COPE Fund, SEIU's Political Action Committee (PAC). During his two year tenure, the PAC doubled its annual income and became the largest PAC in the country.

As National Field Director for Mi Familia Vota Education Fund, Mr. Vilar led efforts to engage Latinos in the 2012 election cycle. He was instrumental in the development and success of the National Latino Civic Engagement Table, a coalition of national organizations working together to increase Latino civic participation in key states. In addition he oversaw the opening of Mi Familia Vota Education Fund operations in Texas and Florida in 2011 and 2012.

Vilar moved to Florida in 2012 and served as statewide coordinator for the Alliance for Citizenship, a national immigration reform campaign. He is now working as Statewide Field Director for Florida New Majority.

I am happy to honor Marcos Vilar, during Hispanic Heritage Month, for his many accomplishments and contributions to his community.

RECOGNIZING THE CAREER AND SERVICE OF LUIS R. PASTRANA SILVA

Mr. Speaker, I rise today in honor of Hispanic Heritage Month, to recognize Luis R. Pastrana Silva for his service to our country and to the Hispanic community in Central Florida.

Mr. Pastrana was born in Rio Piedras, Puerto Rico. He holds a B.B.A. from the University of Puerto Rico (UPR), Rio Piedras Campus, an M.B.A. from Farleigh Dickinson University, and a J.D. from the UPR School of Law. Mr. Pastrana honorably served as a commissioned officer in the U.S. Army for 20 years. After his retirement from the Army in 1978, Mr. Pastrana held several positions within the government of Puerto Rico, promoting business and economic development.

In 2001, he moved to Orlando to serve as the Puerto Rico Federal Affairs Administration's Regional Director for Southern States. Since 2003, he has served as Distinguished Professor at the Ana G. Mendez University System in Orlando, FL. He is also a member of the Puerto Rico Bar, the American Bar Association, and the Hispanic National Bar Association.

Mr. Pastrana has been a leader in the Puerto Rican community in Central Florida and a champion for business development. He has published two autobiographies and one research book on the U.S. Constitution. He is happily married to Mareitssa Griggs, a college professor, and together they have five children and five grandchildren.

I am happy to honor Luis R. Pastrana Silva, during Hispanic Heritage Month, for his service to our country and to the Hispanic community.

HONORING THE LEGACY OF LOVE OF JUANITA GARCÍA PERAZA

Mr. Speaker, I rise today in honor of Hispanic Heritage Month to recognize the life and legacy of Juanita García Peraza, founder of the Congregación Mita Church.

Juanita García Peraza was born on June 24, 1897, in Hatillo, Puerto Rico. She came from a distinguished family, and was known for her moral and spiritual values, her love for the poor, and her sensitivity toward the pain of others. In the late 1930's, when Puerto Rico and the U.S. were experiencing a great economic crisis, Juanita became ill and was bedridden with gastroenteritis. While confined with the illness, Juanita promised the Lord that if He healed her, she would serve Him for the rest of her days. She was healed. She then abandoned her social position and fortune, and traveled the countryside visiting the poor and the needy to preach the good news.

In 1940, in the town of Arecibo, Puerto Rico, Juanita founded the Congregación Mita Church with a message of love, freedom, and unity. In 1947, the Church was established in the capital city of San Juan, in the Hato Rey sector. She performed missionary work, visiting prisons and hospitals and helping reform many alcoholics and drug addicts. In addition to her spiritual work, Juanita carried out extraordinary social work in the community. She developed credit unions and corporations that provide employment and economic opportunities to members of the church. She established Bible schools, known as the ''Consejero,'' to instruct, counsel, and guide children in their integral development. She founded music academies to benefit children and adolescents by encouraging their development in the arts. Also, she established the Ministry of Guards to watch over the church's properties and the surrounding neighborhoods.

Likewise, Juanita established the Ministry of Preachers and Deacons who perform social work wherever the congregation is established. She envisioned the creation of a shelter for the elderly and a school for the children and youth of the community, both of which became a reality a few years after she passed away. Under her leadership, her work spread to New York, Chicago, and Washington, DC, as well as Santo Domingo and Santiago de los Caballeros in the Dominican Republic.

Juanita initiated a new era for women. At a time when women were not allowed to officiate in church and faced discrimination, she removed barriers and cleared the way for women to express themselves openly. Juanita allowed women equal participation in the church, including leadership roles. Despite being assailed, slandered, and misinterpreted, she pushed ahead bravely, leaving behind a legacy of love in the hearts of those who knew her.

In 1978, the Universidad Hispano Americana recognized Juanita for her extraordinary work, and awarded her the degree of Doctor of Philosophy in Management Honoris Causae. A public elementary school in one of the communities where she served was also named in her honor.

I am happy to honor Juanita García Peraza, during Hispanic Heritage Month, for all her hard work, courage, and dedication.

OUR UNCONSCIONABLE NATIONAL DEBT

HON. MIKE COFFMAN

OF COLORADO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, October 15, 2013

Mr. COFFMAN. Mr. Speaker, on January 20, 2009, the day President Obama took office, the national debt was $10,626,877,048,913.08.

Today, it is $16,747,411,584,091.53. We've added $6,120,534,535,178.45 to our debt in 4 years. This is $6.1 trillion in debt our nation, our economy, and our children could have avoided with a balanced budget amendment.

HONORING CECILIA CASSIDY

HON. JAMES P. MORAN

OF VIRGINIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, October 15, 2013

Mr. MORAN. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor and recognize the outstanding contributions of Cecilia Cassidy and to commemorate her retirement after 21 years of service to the community of Rosslyn.

As executive director of Rosslyn Renaissance, Ms. Cassidy was crucial in growing the

member-based organization from a small core of volunteers to a respected business organization. Rosslyn Renaissance eventually merged with the Arlington Business Improvement District, BID, in 2012, and the majority of the programs Ms. Cassidy created while at Renaissance were implemented at the BID.

In 2003, Ms. Cassidy worked with property owners, the business community, the County Manager's Office and Arlington Economic Development to help create the Rosslyn Business Improvement District, BID. The first BID in Northern Virginia, Rosslyn BID was formed to enhance development and growth through highlighting the uniqueness and strengths of Arlington's Rosslyn neighborhood.

Her leadership as executive director of the BID paved the way for an influx of residential, retail, and dining offerings, which have transformed Rosslyni into a vibrant, dynamic, and more livable community. Today Rosslyn is a more walkable and drivable community; home to a number of award-winning living spaces.

Ms. Cassidy was instrumental in bringing Artisphere to Rosslyn. In order to make Arlington Counties' vision for Artisphere possible, BID pledged $1 million in start-up revenue and $300,000 annually for the life of the center. The state-of-the-art cultural center cemented Rosslyn as the cultural capital of Arlington.

Under the leadership of Ms. Cassidy, the Rosslyn BID garnered a number of awards including three from the International Downtown Association, one for urban placemaking for Central Space, and one in marketing for ROSSLYN magazine.

Ms. Cassidy has said that one of her proudest accomplishments as executive director of the BID was working with local partners to provide services for the homeless. Rosslyn BID is one of the only BIDs in the nation to provide homeless services.

A TRIBUTE TO WELCOME WILSON, SR.

HON. PETE OLSON

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, October 15, 2013

Mr. OLSON. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize Welcome Wilson, Sr., who was named chairman of University of Houston's ''Drive to Tier One'' initiative. The University of Houston is on track for Tier One status. Mr. Wilson is a member of the Board of Regents at the University of Houston System. He was also inducted into the Texas Business Hall of Fame in 2010, served in the executive office of President John F. Kennedy, was Houston chairman for the March of Dimes, and graduated first in his class from the Naval Officers School.

Wilson will work to mobilize the community and alumni organization in support of the Tier One initiative. Elevating the University of Houston to one the Nation's elite research institutions would attract high-technology businesses seeking to form partnerships with universities and boost the economy of Houston and its surrounding area. Adding another top-tier university in Texas would also allow lower-income students to attend high-quality schools closer to home for less money.

Great universities are built by great communities. Mr. Wilson is a leader who represents our community with distinction and honor. On behalf of all residents of the Twenty-Second Congressional District of Texas, it's an honor to recognize the appointment of Welcome Wilson, Sr., and I support Mr. Wilson and the University of Houston in their endeavors to achieve Tier One status.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

HON. TULSI GABBARD

OF HAWAII

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, October 15, 2013

Ms. GABBARD. Mr. Speaker, on October 9, 2013, I was unavoidably detained and missed rollcall vote Nos. 536 and 537. Had I been present I would have voted:

Rollcall No. 536: ''no.''—On Motion to Table the Motion to Appeal the Ruling of the Chair.

Rollcall No. 537: ''no''—On Passage.

FOURTH U.S. POW DELEGATION TO JAPAN, OCTOBER 13–21, 2013

HON. MICHAEL M. HONDA

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, October 15, 2013

Mr. HONDA. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor veterans from America's greatest generation and thank the Government of Japan for recognizing the sacrifices of these men. On Sunday, October 13, seven former members or widows of former members of the U.S. Army, U.S. Army Air Corps, and U.S. Marines who fought in the Pacific Theater of World War II—and who were once prisoners of war of Imperial Japan—will travel to Japan as guests of the Japanese government. Marking an act of historic reconciliation and remembrance, this is the fourth delegation of U.S. POWs to visit Japan through this program.

Their first trip to Japan was on aging freighters called ''Hellships,'' where the men were loaded into suffocating holds with little space, water, food, or sanitation. The conditions in which they were held are unimaginable. At the POW camps in the Philippines, Japan and China, they suffered unmerciful abuse aggravated by the lack of food, medical care, clothing, and appropriate housing. Each POW also became a slave laborer at the mines, factories, and docks of some of Japan's largest companies. In the end, nearly 40 percent of the American POWs held by Japan perished; compared to two percent of those in Nazi Germany's POW camps. The POWs of this delegation slaved for Mitsubishi, Nippon Express, Sumitomo, Nisshin Flour, Hitachi, Dowa Holdings, and JFE Holdings.

In September 2010, the Japanese government delivered to the first American POW delegation an official, Cabinet-approved apology for the damage and suffering these men endured. Although the Japanese government had hosted POWs from the wartime Allies of the United States since the late 1990s, the 2010 trip was the first trip to Japan for American POWs. It was also the first official apology to any prisoners of war held by Japan.

I know that the American POWs fought hard for this recognition. Dr. Lester Tenney of California, a former POW who mined coal for Mitsui, was instrumental in persuading the Government of Japan to offer the apology and initiate the trips of reconciliation. He says he is ''honored to have had the opportunity of assisting the U.S. State Department and the Japanese Embassy in arranging this year's POW Visitation Program. Like the years past, the visit will no doubt yield many memories while at the same time erase many bad experiences that left its mark on the POWs. This year, for the first time, Japan's Minister of Foreign Affairs has allowed three widows of former POWs to participate in the program and visit the sites of their husbands' Japanese prison camps located in various cities in Japan.''

I thank the POWs for their persistent pursuit of justice, and commend the U.S. State Department for helping them. I also appreciate the willingness of the Japanese government to pursue an historic and meaningful apology. It is my hope that the POW Visitation Program continues to expand, and that it will be a healing mechanism for the POWs, their families and communities.

Now, it is time for the many Japanese companies that used POWs for slave labor during World War II to follow the example of their government by offering an apology and supporting programs for lasting remembrance and reconciliation.

Mr. Speaker, I wish these men a fulfilling trip to Japan, and I hope that their trip contributes to securing the historic peace between the U.S. and our important ally Japan.

FOURTH U.S. POW DELEGATION TO JAPAN, OCTOBER 13–21, 2013

Phillip W. Coon, 94, is a full blood Muscogee Creek who grew up in Oklahoma. After graduating from the Haskell Institute (today's Haskell Indian Nations University) in Lawrence, Kansas, he enlisted in the U.S. Army on September 29, 1941. He was assigned to the 31st Infantry Regiment and sent immediately to the Philippines Islands aboard the USAT *Willard A. Holbrook* arriving on October 23, 1941. At Fort McKinley he trained as a .30 caliber machine gunner (M1919 Browning). He fought on Bataan Peninsula against the invading Japanese forces and was surrendered on April 9. Forced on the infamous 65-mile Bataan Death March, he was subjected to capricious cruelty and abuse, denied water, food, rest and protection from the sun. Nearly all on the March had surrendered sick and malnourished causing thousands to die before they reached their destination of Camp O'Donnell. Coon credits his survival to God, or as he said, ''We ran out of food, ammunition and men, but we didn't run out of prayer.'' His first POW Camp was Camp O'Donnell where he worked burial detail. For the next two years, he was held at Cabanatuan, Camp Lipa-Batangas, Camp Murphy-Rizal, and Bilibid. On October 1, 1944, he was shipped via Hong Kong on the Hellship *Hokusen Maru* to Taiwan where he was held briefly at the Inrin Temporary POW Camp. From Taiwan he was sent to Moji, Japan, via the Hellship *Melbourne Maru* arriving January 23, 1945. He was then shipped north to Sendai and became a slave laborer mining cooper for Fujita Gumi Kosaka Kozan (today's Dowa Holdings Co. Ltd.) at the Sendai-#8B Kosaka POW Camp. After his liberation in September 1945, he returned to the U.S. and was discharged from service as a Corporal on June 24, 1946. He returned home to work as Union Painter doing

high-scaffold work. Helen, his wife of 67 years, died this spring. Mr. Coon lives with his son, Michael, a Vietnam vet who works with DAV Creek County Chapter #9 as a Service Officer helping veterans with their disability claims. Six members of the Muscogee Creek Nation became prisoners of Japan on the Philippines: five from Corregidor and Mr. Coon who was on Bataan. POW#Unknown

Lora Cummins, 87, is the widow of Ferron E. Cummins (1917–1990). She lives in San Antonio, Texas. Mr. Cummins grew up in New Mexico where he graduated in 1938 from Tyler Commercial College in Texas and went to work as a bookkeeper for the First National Bank in Hagerman, New Mexico (today's First American Bank). In November 1940, he enlisted in the U.S. Army Air Corps and had his Basic Training at Brooks and Kelly Fields near San Antonio, Texas. He was assigned to the V Interceptor Command, 24th Pursuit Group, 34th Pursuit Squadron at Hamilton Field, California. In November 1941, Cummins was transferred to the Philippines Islands aboard the USS *Coolidge*. He arrived on November 20 and was assigned to Nichols Field. When the Japanese invaded the Philippines on December 8, he was sent to Aglaloma Point, Bataan to fight with the 71st Infantry joining men from all branches of the Armed Services. He was surrendered on April 9, 1942 and forced on the infamous 65-mile Bataan Death March on April 10, 1942 from Mariveles to Camp O'Donnell arriving on April 21, 1942. From Camp O'Donnell, he was moved to Cabanatuan, then Bilibid. At these camps he survived sunstroke, dysentery, malaria, dengue fever, wet and dry beriberi, yellow jaundice, and blindness. In August 1944, he was shipped to Moji, Japan, aboard the Hellship *Noto Maru*. He was taken to Hiroshima and became a slave stevedore for Hitachi Shipyard (today's Hitachi Zosen Corporation) at Mukaijima [Mukaishima] Hiroshima Sub-camp #4. A Japanese elementary school in Mukaishima today honors the memory of the men of this camp. On August 6, 1945, he felt the air warm and watched a three-mile high mushroom cloud rise above Hiroshima from the atomic bomb. He was officially liberated September 14, 1945. He returned to Lake Arthur, New Mexico where he remained in the Air Force and married the girl down the street, Lora Mae Lane. Upon retirement, he owned a laundry and vending machine business. In 1967, the family moved to San Antonio, Texas where he worked for SEARS. He and Lora had one child, Glenda, and were married 43 years. Lora was a civilian employee of the Air Force. He passed away on March 26, 1990 of a heart attack just days after returning from his second trip to the Philippines with his wife, daughter, son-in-law, and grandson, Ferron. Mr. Cummins is buried at Fort Sam Houston National Cemetery in San Antonio, Texas. POW# 115

Robert B. Heer, 92, lives in Sequim, Washington. He grew up in Iowa and joined the U.S. Army Air Corps in June 1940 becoming a carpenter with the 30th Bombardment Squadron, 19th Bomb Group (Heavy), V Bomber Command stationed at March Field, California. He was stationed at Kirtland Field in Albuquerque, New Mexico, before being ordered to the Philippine Islands in October 1941 He arrived on October 23, 1941 aboard USAT *Willard A. Holbrook* and was sent to Clark Field. On December 29, 1941, the 30th Bombardment Squadron was evacuated to Mindanao and he was sent to the Del Monte Airfield. He was surrendered on May 10 and sent to Camp Casisang, about five kilometers southwest of Malaybalay, Mindanao. On September 6, 1942, the Generals and Colonels were removed from Camp Casisang and sent to Formosa (Taiwan). Heer served as an orderly to Brig. General Joseph P. Vachon, the former C.O. of the Philippine Army's 101st Division on Mindanao, with whom Bob Heer was sent to Karenko POW Camp via the freighter *Suzuya Maru*. At Karenko he wrote a message to his family that the Japanese broadcast to the U.S. over shortwave radio. In May 1943, he was shipped to Heito POW Camp to clear and work in sugar cane fields. He remained there nearly a year before being moved to Taihoku POW Camp #6 where he slaved at building a memorial park for Japanese soldiers and a man-made lake for the irrigation of rice fields. In early 1945, he was shipped to Japan, first to the port of Moji on Kyushu and then north to Hokkaido. There he was first a slave stevedore for the Hakodate Port Transportation Company at Hakodate 2–D POW. In late May 1945, he was moved north to become a slave laborer mining coal for Sumitomo Mining (today's Sumitomo Metal Mining Co. Ltd.) at Hakodate #2 Akihira POW Camp. He was liberated in early September 1945, when American Army records clerks arrived and told them the war was over. After liberation, Heer remembers eating well and gaining 40 pounds in Japan, making friends with post-war civilians there. ''I was giving food to the Japanese,'' he said, even eating dinner with one family who invited him in after he gave them matches and soap, which was in short supply. On April 20, 1946, Heer was honorably discharged from the Air Corps at Camp Beale (Beale A.F.B.) in California. He used the GI Bill to earn a degree in photography from the Fred Archer School of Photography in Los Angeles, California. Missing friends and the military life, he returned to active duty with the Air Force in 1950, retiring in 1966 as a Technical Sergeant. In retirement he has worked as an amateur historian of American POWs of Japan and embarked on a ''third career'' as a house husband. He has been married to Karen Harper since 1989, and has four children from two previous marriages. POW# 330

Esther Jennings, 90, is the widow of Clinton S. Jennings (1919–2004). She lives in San Francisco, California. Mr. Jennings, a California native, served in the Civilian Conservation Corps before enlisting in the U.S. Army in 1941. He was sent to the Philippine Islands the same year aboard the USS *Republic* (AP–33). He was stationed on Corregidor to join Battery ''K'' 59th Coast Artillery Regiment where he helped man fixed 60″ Searchlights No. 1 through 8, plus a number of 60″ and 30″ mobile seacoast searchlights. Surrendered on May 6, 1942, he was sent to a series of POW camps on the Philippines: Bongabong, Cabanatuan, Lipa-Batanga, and Bilibid. In July 1944, he was herded along with 1,600 other American POWs aboard the Hellship *Nissyo Marti* to be shipped to Japan. The nightmarish two-week voyage to Moji, Japan included an attack by an American submarine wolfpack on the unmarked transport. Jennings was first held in Fukuoka-23-Keisen as slave laborer mining coal for Meiji Mining [Meiji Kogyo] Hirayama Mine (The company was dissolved in 1969, but its exploration and research division became independent as Meiji Consultant Co., Ltd. in 1965, and still exists). He was then transferred to Fukuoka #9B, located near the town of Miyata (now the city of Miyawaka), again to be a slave laborer mining coal, but for Kaijima Coal Mining Onoura Mine (the company no longer exists). After the war, he spent 25 years in the Army working in finance. He retired in 1965 and worked in public finance at the Bank of America retiring again in 1985. Jennings was a dedicated volunteer: he spent 27 years at KQED; 24 years at the Fine Arts Museums of San Francisco; and 20 years for the San Francisco Opera Guild where he enjoyed being a supernumerary. He was a member of American Defenders of Bataan & Corregidor; American Ex-Prisoners of War; Philippine Scouts Heritage Society; American Legion; San Francisco History Association; VFW; Military Order of the Purple Heart; Past President of Golden Gate Chapter #18 of National Sojourners; Native Sons of the Golden West, Guadalupe Parlor; The Great War Society; Past Master of Masonic Lodge San Francisco #120; Scottish Rite, Shriners; President of the National Assn. of Civilian Conservation Corps Alumni; The Retired Officers Association and the Reserve Officers Association. He was married to Esther Bloom for 34 years and had three children from a prior marriage. He succumbed to cancer on October 28, 2004. Mr. Jennings is buried at Hills of Eternity, Colma, California. POW# Unknown

Erwin R. Johnson, 91, divides his time between Wynantskill, New York, outside of Albany and Lacombe, Louisiana. He grew up in New Orleans, Louisiana, and enlisted in the U.S. Army Air Corps in September 1940. He was assigned to the 48th Materiel Squadron, 27th Bombardment Group (Light), V Bomber Command where he was trained as a mechanic for A–20 fighter planes. He was transferred to the Philippine Islands aboard the USS *President Coolidge* in November 1941, arriving on November 20th and was deployed to Fort McKinley south of Manila. When Japanese forces attacked the Philippine Islands in December 1941, though not trained as an infantryman, Johnson was issued a rifle and ordered to defend against the Japanese advance. He and all American and Filipino troops on the Bataan Peninsula were surrendered on April 9, 1942. Immediately, he was forced on the infamous 65-mile Bataan Death March to Camp O'Donnell. He recalls many horrific events during the march; maybe the worst was a Japanese guard bayoneting to death a Filipino mother and her baby for trying to pass food to the starving, sick POWs. At Camp O'Donnell he volunteered for work duty building bridges and other projects. Later that year, he was transferred to Cabanatuan where he volunteered for work details outside of the Camp. He was among 500 other American POWs shipped from the tropical Philippines to the freezing Mukden, China (today's Shenyang) in October 1942 aboard Mitsubishi's Hellship *Tottori Maru* via Formosa and Korea to Manchukuo (Manchuria). None of the men had winter clothing. Johnson was housed at the Hoten POW Camp and became a slave laborer at MKK (Manshu Kosaku Kikai or Manchouko Kibitsu Kaishi, which some researchers believe was owned by Mitsubishi and known as Manchuria Mitsubishi Machine Tool Company, Ltd.). The camp was liberated in August 1945 by Russian and OSS forces.

Discharged in June 1946, he used the GI bill to obtain a mechanical engineering degree from Tulane University. He worked for a number of technology manufacturing companies in Southern California including North American Aviation (today's Boeing) and eventually returned to Louisiana, retiring from the Port of New Orleans in 1993. In retirement, he and his wife Margaret traveled throughout the United States and were active in a number of veterans and POW organizations. Margaret, his wife of 53 years, passed away in 2010. Together they raised five boys. In 2011, he married Ann Wilbur Lampins whose brother, Staff Sgt Charles S. Wilbur, was also a member of the U.S. Army Air Corps. He was with the 28th Materiel Squadron, 20th Air Base Group, Far East Air Force in the Philippines. He too became a prisoner of Imperial Japan and was also shipped to Mukden. He died of pneumonia soon after arrival on December 28, 1942. The Johnsons are active members of the Mukden POW Survivors group and other veterans' organizations. POW # 277

Marjean McGrew, 87, is the widow of Alfred Curtis McGrew (1922–2008). She lives in San Diego, California. Mr. McGrew grew up in Columbus, Ohio. After high school and briefly working with the Civilian Conservation Corps, he enlisted in the U.S. Army at Fort Hayes. In January 1941, his unit sailed to the Philippine Islands aboard the USS *Republic* (AP–33). He took Basic Training at the 92nd Garage on Corregidor and was assigned to Battery ''D'' (Denver) 60th Coast Artillery (A.A.). He was transferred to Battery ''H'' (Hartford) 60th, Coast Artillery (A.A.) at Herring Field, Middleside and was taken prisoner there on May 6, 1942, with the surrender of Corregidor and the Philippines. He was held in the following POW camps: 92nd Garage, Bilibid, Cabanatuan 2 and 1; Camp O'Donnell, Nichols Field. In August 1944, he was shipped to Moji, Japan aboard the Hellship *Noto Maru*. In Japan, McGrew became a slave stevedore for Nippon Express (still in operation) at Omori Tokyo Base Camp; then a slave stevedore for Nisshin Flour Milling Dispatched Camp (Tokyo 24–D) (today's Nisshin Seifun Group); and finally at Suwa Branch Camp (Tokyo 6–B) he was a slave laborer for Nippon Steel Tube & Mining Company (today's JFE Holdings). He was liberated in Yokohama on September 6, 1945. He later became an Honorary Member and friend of the U.S. Army 503rd Parachute Regiment Combat Team (RCT) who liberated Corregidor from the Japanese in 1945, and the 4th Marine Regiment who had defended it. After returning to Columbus, he met and married Marjean Herres of Bellefontaine, Ohio (the love of his life for 59 years). They moved to San Diego to be nearer the ocean and raise their two children, Vicki and Steve. He retired from Control Data Corporation after 27 years when the manufacturing division left San Diego.

In retirement, McGrew traveled back to Corregidor many times to collect photos, documents, and data from those who served on Corregidor. During his many trips back, he sat in the ruins of Corregidor thinking of the great times and the bad times as well as the many young friends he lost. As a long-time amateur historian, he assisted many families and friends in their search for information on their loved ones serving and/or captured on Corregidor. McGrew's approach to life was to use humor as a base for survival and survive he did several times in his life. For fun, he enjoyed scuba diving, golfing, table tennis, camping, and traveling with his wife around the U.S. in their R.V. Mrs. McGrew was a nurse and an avid folk dancer. He succumbed to cancer on January 27, 2008, surrounded by his loving children and his wife. Mr. McGrew is buried at Fort Rosecrans National Cemetery, Point Loma, California. POW# Unknown

Marvin A. Roslansky, 91, lives with his wife Josephine in Mesa, Arizona. Mr. Roslansky grew up in Minnesota and enlisted in the Marine Corps in the spring of 1941. He was sent to Guam in September 1941. He was one of 153 Marines assigned to defend Guam, a U.S. territory administered by the U.S. Navy in the Pacific. As a member of the Insular Patrol Unit, he fought in the brief defense of the island (December 8–9, 1941) and was captured by invading Japanese forces. On January 10, 1942, the American prisoners of the Guam garrison including five nurses and a civilian mother and child were shipped to prison camps in Japan aboard the MS *Argentina Maru*, what was Mitsui's OSK Line's fastest ship. Arriving in Japan on January 16, 1942, he was taken to Shikoku and imprisoned at the Zentsuji POW Camp (Zentsuji was originally built to house German prisoners of the Japanese in World War I). The camp was on an island about 400 miles west of Tokyo. He spent the rest of the war there as a slave stevedore for Nippon Express (still in operation) working 12-hour days at the Sakaide Rail Yards and the Port of Takamatsu. He was liberated September 27, 1945. After the war, he lived in Racine, Wisconsin where he owned an auto parts business. Retired in 1981, he volunteered at the Clement J. Zablocki VA Medical Center in Milwaukee as well as doing veterans service work for the DAV, the American Defenders of Bataan and Corregidor, and the Milwaukee Barb Wire, East Valley, and Prairieland Minnesota Chapters of AXPOW. With his first wife, Iva, he raised four daughters and three sons. He married Josephine Plourde in 2010. POW# Unknown

CONGRATULATING THE MINNESOTA LYNX

HON. BETTY McCOLLUM

OF MINNESOTA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, October 15, 2013

Ms. MCCOLLUM. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to congratulate the Minnesota Lynx for winning their second WNBA title in three years.

The Lynx entered the playoffs with the WNBA's best record, 26–8, and a starting lineup that boasted four all-stars and three gold medalists. They were undefeated through all seven post-season games, sweeping the Seattle Storm, Phoenix Mercury and the Atlanta Dream, to win their second title.

The Lynx's starting lineup, Seimone Augustus, Maya Moore, Lindsay Whalen, Rebekkah Brunson, and Janel McCarville, was unstoppable. Their balanced attack was a demonstration of smart and selfless teamwork as crisp passes found the open teammate. In the final game versus the Dream, all five starters scored in the double digits.

Finals MVP Maya Moore led the league in post-season points per game. Seimone Augustus put on a show of defensive and offensive prowess, guarding some of the best in the league and still averaging 17 points per game. Lindsay Whalen organized her team's potent offensive attack and Rebekkah Brunson, now all-time WNBA leader in rebounds, was tremendous on both sides of the court. Janel McCarville's defense was outstanding and her through-the-legs pass to Brunson was one of the series' great moments. That excellence extended to the players coming off the bench, especially Monica Wright who scored 20 points and had five rebounds, three assists and three steals in game one against the Dream.

Lynx Coach Cheryl Reeve asked that the talk of repeat championships wait until January. Due respect to Coach Reeve, I look forward to watching the Lynx take the court to defend their title next year.

Daily Digest

Senate

Chamber Action

Routine Proceedings, pages S7475–S7501

Measures Introduced: One bill was introduced, as follows: S. 1572. **Page S7500**

Measures Considered:

Default Prevention Act: Senate began consideration of the motion to proceed to consideration of S. 1569, to ensure the complete and timely payment of the obligations of the United States Government until December 31, 2014. **Pages S7475–99**

Messages from the House: **Page S7500**

Measures Read the First Time: **Pages S7500, S7501**

Additional Cosponsors: **Pages S7500–01**

Statements on Introduced Bills/Resolutions

Additional Statements

Authorities for Committees to Meet: **Page S7501**

Adjournment: Senate convened at 10 a.m. and adjourned at 10:08 p.m., until 12 p.m. on Wednesday, October 16, 2013. (For Senate's program, see the remarks of the Acting Majority Leader in today's Record on page S7501.)

Committee Meetings

(Committees not listed did not meet)

SMALL BUSINESSES DURING THE GOVERNMENT SHUTDOWN

Committee on Small Business and Entrepreneurship: Committee concluded a hearing to examine small businesses, focusing on the government shutdown, after receiving testimony from Joaneane A. Smith, Global Commerce and Services, LLC, Avondale, Louisiana; Lisa Firestone, Managed Care Advisors, and Ronald D. Paul, EagleBank, both of Bethesda, Maryland; Sabrina Poole, Systems Engineering Research Development Institute, Rockville, Maryland; Sally Robertson, Business Finance Group, Inc., Fairfax, Virginia; Chuck Withee, Provident Bank, Portsmouth, New Hampshire; Christopher J. Leh, TL Technologies, Inc., Ephrata, Pennsylvania; Keith Griffall, Western Leisure, Inc., Salt Lake City, Utah; Barun Singh, WegoWise, Inc., Boston, Massachusetts; and Antwanye Ford, Enlightened, Inc., Washington, DC.

INTELLIGENCE

Select Committee on Intelligence: Committee held closed hearings on intelligence matters, receiving testimony from officials of the intelligence community.

Committee recessed subject to the call.

House of Representatives

Chamber Action

Public Bills and Resolutions Introduced: 3 public bills, H.R. 3292–3294; and 3 resolutions, H.J. Res. 94–96 were introduced. **Page H6604**

Additional Cosponsors: **Pages H6604–05**

Reports Filed: There were no reports filed today.

Speaker: Read a letter from the Speaker wherein he appointed Representative Huizenga to act as Speaker pro tempore for today. **Page H6595**

Recess: The House recessed at 10:42 a.m. and reconvened at 12 noon. **Page H6599**

Chaplain: The prayer was offered by the guest chaplain, Rev. Andrew Hofer, OP, Dominican House of Studies, Washington, DC. **Page H6599**

Journal: The House agreed to the Speaker's approval of the Journal by voice vote. **Page H6600**

Recess: The House recessed at 12:30 p.m. and reconvened at 7:33 p.m. **Page H6603**

Committee Resignation: Read a letter from Representative Yarmuth, wherein he resigned from the Committee on Education and the Workforce.

Page H6603

Quorum Calls—Votes: There were no Yea-and-Nay votes, and there were no Recorded votes. There were no quorum calls.

Adjournment: The House met at 10 a.m. and adjourned at 7:35 p.m.

Committee Meetings

No hearings were held.

Joint Meetings

No joint committee meetings were held.

NEW PUBLIC LAWS

(For last listing of Public Laws, see DAILY DIGEST, *p. D963)*

H.J. Res. 91, making continuing appropriations for death gratuities and related survivor benefits for survivors of deceased military service members of the Department of Defense for fiscal year 2014. Signed on October 10, 2013. (Public Law 113–44)

COMMITTEE MEETINGS FOR WEDNESDAY, OCTOBER 16, 2013

(Committee meetings are open unless otherwise indicated)

Senate

Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs: business meeting to consider the nominations of Tony Hammond, of Missouri, and Nanci E. Langley, of Hawaii, both to be a Commissioner of the Postal Regulatory Commission, and William Ward Nooter, to be an Associate Judge of the Superior Court of the District of Columbia, Time to be announced, S–216, Capitol.

House

Committee on Oversight and Government Reform, Full Committee and Committee on Natural Resources, joint hearing entitled ''As Difficult As Possible: The National Park Service's Implementation of the Government Shutdown'', 9:30 a.m., 2167 Rayburn.

House Permanent Select Committee on Intelligence, Full Committee, meeting on Member Access Requests, 9 a.m., HVC–304. This hearing may close.

Next Meeting of the SENATE

12 p.m., Wednesday, October 16

Senate Chamber

Program for Wednesday: Senators will be permitted to speak for up to 10 minutes each.

Next Meeting of the HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

10 a.m., Wednesday, October 16

House Chamber

Program for Wednesday: To be announced.

Extensions of Remarks, as inserted in this issue

HOUSE

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