

We have received word that the House Speaker is going to resign. Why? He is resigning because everyone knows he cannot deal with the people he has to deal with in the House. He has tried very hard, and it hasn't worked.

I would hope my friend the Republican leader would start talking reality, not come in and boast about how great the country is doing under Republican leadership. We have gotten nothing done under the Republican leadership.

I am reminded of what Albert Einstein said when he defined insanity as doing the same thing over and over and expecting different results. That is what we have been doing here. We have votes on everything, everyone knowing what the results are going to be. The latest episode was—what a waste of our time—we had a vote here to defund Planned Parenthood. It didn't even get a majority of the Republicans—well, it got a majority of the Republicans; it certainly didn't get a majority of the Senate. It didn't get a majority of the Senate and certainly didn't get 60 votes, which they were trying to do—revoting on things, always knowing the results are going to be the same. It appears that Albert Einstein had a few organizations in mind when he gave this definition of “insanity,” and one of them, as he looked forward, would be this Republican Senate we have.

TRIBUTE TO DR. JAMES BILLINGTON

Mr. REID. Mr. President, in the original Hall of Representatives, which is now called National Statuary Hall, there is a beautiful clock that stands over the Chamber's doorway. The clock and its adjoining sculpture depict Clio, the Greek muse of history, watching over the House of Representatives. The meaning of the clock and statue are clear: History will bear witness to all we do in Congress.

For the last 28 years—almost three decades—James Billington has served as the Librarian of Congress. He has been our Clio, ensuring that the annals of American history are complete and available to everyone.

Dr. Billington came to the Library of Congress in 1987. What a remarkable résumé—valedictorian at Princeton University, a Rhodes Scholar, and he earned his doctorate from Oxford College. Following his graduation from Oxford, he enlisted in the U.S. Army. After his service in the Army, he taught history—first at Harvard and then at Princeton—for 16 years. During that time Dr. Billington became one of the foremost scholars of Russia.

I had the good fortune of being able to travel with Dr. Billington to the Soviet Union. It was like having an encyclopedia with you. It was wonderful to travel to this country with which we had been involved in a Cold War for so many years and to have a scholar with us to give us insight everywhere we

went and on everybody we talked to. He has written a number of important scholarly works on Russian history, culture, and politics.

In 1973 James Billington came to Washington, DC, to lead the Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars, a prestigious organization. As director, he founded the Kennan Institute for Advanced Russian Studies. He served as their director for 14 years before coming over here to become the director of the Library of Congress.

Dr. Billington has done extraordinary work during his tenure at the Library of Congress. He has brought the Library into the 21st century. Dr. Billington doubled the size of the Library's analog collections from 85 million to 160 million. He oversaw the creation of the Library of Congress's online portal, making hundreds of millions of documents, books, and material available to the American public.

Using his relationship with Russian scholars, Dr. Billington founded the Open World Leadership Forum. This important forum creates dialogue and cultural exchanges between U.S. and Russian leaders. James Billington has accompanied 10 congressional delegations to Russia. I was fortunate to be on one of them, as I just said. In June 1988, he accompanied the President and Mrs. Reagan to the Soviet summit in Moscow, and I am confident President Reagan and his staff depended on James Billington's outstanding mind.

Dr. Billington helped establish the congressionally mandated Veterans History Project, which collects and preserves first-person accounts from U.S. veterans dating back to World War I. Dr. Billington helped create the National Book Festival, which brings thousands of authors and readers to the National Mall every year.

In every way imaginable, Dr. James Billington has made the Library of Congress and, by extension, the United States better—a better library, a better country. As he embarks on a well-deserved retirement after 28 years of exemplary service, I wish him the very best. I have no doubt Dr. Billington will enjoy time with his wife Marjorie—a lovely woman I have come to know and admire greatly—and their 4 children and 12 grandchildren.

James Billington, thank you for a job well done. We will all miss you.

GOVERNMENT FUNDING

Mr. REID. Mr. President, I have never been a sentimental person—I have never tried to be one—but today I can't help but think back to a time when keeping the government open and funded wasn't a last-minute exercise. Looking at the clock now, we are almost 14 hours away from what could have been another Republican shutdown of the Federal Government. This kind of brinkmanship is totally unnecessary. Although we will likely avert a shutdown tonight, Republicans brought us dangerously close to a shutdown.

This continuing resolution only funds our government through December 11, as I said earlier. That means that within the coming weeks, we need to negotiate with Republicans to keep our government open.

Yesterday Senator MCCONNELL finally took Democrats up on our call to begin budget negotiations. I welcome that, and I welcome Senator MCCONNELL to the table. We should have started this process months ago, but better late than never, so I am pleased he has come around.

Lifting the sequester has been one of my top priorities for years, and I am hopeful that we can finally achieve this key Democratic goal. Just take what it has done in the past—just take one entity. The National Institutes of Health lost almost \$2 billion and they have never gotten it back. It has been devastating to the most prestigious, important medical research facility in the world. That is what sequestration did.

This time around, we have to do better than just keeping the Federal Government operating by a continuing resolution. We have to stop devastating sequester cuts from hitting our military and our middle class. Even the Republican leader agrees, it appears, because a week or 10 days ago he said: “We are inevitably going to end up in negotiations that will crack the Budget Control Act once again.” And I say hallelujah.

Here we are, ready to negotiate months before the December 11 deadline. After all, that was the original intent of sequestration—to force Democrats and Republicans to the negotiating table. That should be easy to do. We hate sequestration, and I know there are a significant number of Republicans who don't like it. I have heard Senator GRAHAM, and I have heard Senator MCCAIN give speeches in committees and publicly about how terrible it is. So let's get rid of it for the good of the country. This is a so-called no-brainer.

Let's work together—not in December—to repeal the sequester caps, but let's work now to repeal the caps and build a long-term, bipartisan funding bill. Then we can turn our attention to the other matters that deserve our immediate attention, such as the debt ceiling.

We can't put off the debt ceiling much longer. I don't know the exact date when we are going to run out of money, but I am sure it is going to be sometime before Thanksgiving. We all know that in a matter of weeks, unless we act, the United States will lose its ability to pay its bills. And if you think shutting the government down is bad, which I do, that pales in comparison to the government of the United States defaulting on all of our debts. The consequences would be dire and the fallout would be felt around the world.