

among Congress's top three priorities; 83 percent say Congress should spend more time addressing the national debt; 62 percent expect the national debt crisis to get worse in the next few years.

Some of my colleagues may believe we have no obligation to handle the American people's money responsibly. They might still claim that Congress can get its fiscal act together on its own or they may deny that the American people should be able to set the fiscal rules for the government they elect, using the Constitution that belongs to them.

Those colleagues should remember what the American people think about Congress. Disapproval of this institution is 83 percent today, higher than 98 percent of the time since the early 1970s. The percentage of Americans with very little or no confidence at all in Congress is the highest since Gallup started asking in May of 1973.

I am continually amazed at the wisdom and foresight of America's Founders. Thomas Jefferson was right in 1798 that one of the most effective ways of keeping the Federal Government within constitutional principles is to require a balanced budget. The Appropriations Committee was right in 1947 that Congress will not balance its budget unless the Constitution requires it. After seven more decades of attempting to tackle the debt by will-power or legislation, the crisis is worse than ever.

Continued failure is not an option, and there is only one solution. We must act before it is too late.

Mr. President, I yield the floor.

#### CONCLUSION OF MORNING BUSINESS

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Morning business is closed.

#### ENERGY AND WATER DEVELOPMENT AND RELATED AGENCIES APPROPRIATIONS ACT, 2016—MOTION TO PROCEED

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the Senate will resume consideration of the motion to proceed to H.R. 2028, which the clerk will report.

The senior assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

Motion to proceed to Calendar No. 96, H.R. 2028, a bill making appropriations for energy and water development and related agencies for the fiscal year ending September 30, 2016, and for other purposes.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the time until 11:30 a.m. will be controlled by the majority. The Senator from West Virginia.

#### NATIONAL DEFENSE AUTHORIZATION BILL

Mrs. CAPITO. Mr. President, yesterday the Senate came together in a bipartisan way to pass the National Defense Authorization Act conference report. This important legislation au-

thorizes vital resources for our Nation's troops, our wounded warriors, and their families.

This NDAA provides for our national security needs and will meet our commitments to our allies. The defense funding bill also includes programs that will directly benefit the West Virginia National Guard, including our partnership program with Peru and the Drug Interdiction and Counter-Drug Program to fight the wave of prescription drug abuse that is all over our States and our State in particular.

This bill provides funding for STARBASE—I visited STARBASE just recently—an innovative program that provides hands-on learning opportunities for students in science, technology, and mathematics, and helps spur their interest in STEM. They were really excited that day.

On Monday when I visited the 167th Air Lift Wing in Martinsburg, I enjoyed the opportunity to personally meet and thank our servicemembers and learn about the challenges they face. These brave men and women deserve our unified support and should not be subject to the gridlock that has been too common in Washington.

Unbelievably to me, though, the President has threatened to veto this bipartisan legislation, even though it authorizes the same amount of spending for national defense that he asked for in his budget submission. Just recently the administration authorized tens of billions of dollars for Iran through sanctions relief, including money that will be used admittedly to further destabilize the Middle East. Now the President is threatening to veto funding authorization for our own troops.

We face great and growing threats to our national security. ISIS continues to advance. Syria's ongoing civil war is creating a flood of refugees in Europe, Russia is increasing its influence in the Middle East, and Iran will gain strength due to the sanctions relief granted in the nuclear agreement. It would be a mistake for the President to veto this funding for our national defense.

As the Washington Post editorialized this weekend, "American presidents rarely veto national defense authorization bills, since they are, well, vital to national security."

The editorial continues, "Refusing to sign this bill would make history, but not in a good way."

This is not the legacy the President wants to leave behind. He should reconsider his position and follow the lead of the 70 Senators who voted yesterday—including 21 Democrats—to put our national security before politics.

The Senate is now considering another bipartisan bill that has important implications to our national security. The Energy and Water appropriations bill funds programs that help us use our energy resources in the most efficient way possible.

I serve on the Appropriations Committee. I saw the bipartisan work that

occurred between the chair and the ranking member. Continued innovation in our energy resources, whether it is coal, natural gas or oil, is absolutely a strategic asset to our national energy independence.

The benefit of innovation in our energy sector is reflected in the vast reserves of shale gas that are now being produced in West Virginia and elsewhere across the country. It was less than a decade ago, when I came to Congress, many of us were worried about a shortage of natural gas. Today, natural gas production is surging. In West Virginia alone, production has increased by over 500 percent in the last decade. It is exciting to watch. An energy economy is a jobs economy.

Not only does shale gas help us meet our domestic energy needs, we have an opportunity to expand our LNG exports, creating more jobs at home while helping to meet the energy and security needs of our allies in Europe and Japan.

Innovation and investment in clean coal technologies, not across-the-board regulation, should be our focus. The Energy and Water appropriations bill includes \$610 million in fossil fuel development. This is a necessary investment in entities such as the National Energy and Technology Lab in Morgantown, so that they can use these dollars to develop the technologies to make coal, oil, and natural gas production cleaner and more efficient.

I strongly disagree with EPA regulations that require the use of technology that is not commercially available. That is what we see in these regulations. They increase the cost of energy and they decrease the reliability of electricity grid. The best way to provide that energy and improve our environment is to invest in the technologies that will help us and use those coal reserves in the most efficient way possible.

This bill also provides important funding for the Appalachian Regional Commission. West Virginia is the only State that is completely within the boundaries of the Appalachian Regional Commission, and the ARC plays an important role in helping West Virginians meet our economic challenges. The funding provided in this bill can help ARC promote rural broadband—something I talk a lot about on the floor of the Senate—and will expand rural health care services and offer opportunity to our State's workers.

Investments made in the Army Corps of Engineers through this bill will help provide the infrastructure we need to make sure American products can move to markets across the country and around the world.

The Energy and Water appropriations bill impacts every American. It was carefully crafted, robustly debated in committee, and passed the full Appropriations Committee with bipartisan support.

Mr. President and my fellow Members of the Senate, the Appropriations