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 President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

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

LIBYA

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, just a brief observation about the vote we just had. I would say to our colleague from Kentucky, Senator PAUL, the issue of the American effort in Libya is a legitimate discussion for debate, I think a legitimate issue for debate. That is a debate we need to have, and I will be talking to the majority leader about the appropriate time to do that.

A number of Senators are talking among themselves on a bipartisan basis about what kind of resolution would be appropriate, and certainly the Senate speaking on this issue is something we need to do in the very near future.

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 President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

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

BUDGET DIFFERENCES

Mr. HARKIN. Mr. President, the responsible leaders in Washington are working hard to find a compromise to fund the government through the end of the year. Regrettably, however, many Republicans in the House—spurred on by tea party radicals—are still threatening to throw a temper tantrum and shut down the government if they don't get all of their demands. This morning, the Washington Post reports that Speaker JOHN BOEHNER received an ovation from the Republican caucus when he told them he had directed the House Administration Committee to prepare for a shutdown, as Congressman MIKE PENCE, former head of the Republican Policy Committee, shouted at a tea party rally last week, ''Shut it down!''

So it seems what we are confronting is kind of a monolithic House driven by the tea party vigilantes, as I refer to them, to brook no compromise. They want it all their way or they are going to shut down the government.

Republicans are seizing on the budget crisis as a pretext for ramming through their longstanding ideological wishes. In Iowa, Wisconsin, Ohio, and elsewhere Republicans are using the budget crisis as the pretext for an assault on public sector unions and their hard-working teachers, firefighters, prison guards, and others. On Capitol Hill Republicans are using this crisis to try to defund health care reform, to gut Medicare and Medicaid and Social Security, and, yes, to cut tax rates even more deeply for the wealthiest in our society. This tea party budget is an unprecedented assault on the middle-class and working Americans. It would drive down our American standard of living, shred the economic safety net, reduce access to health care and higher education, and do grave damage to our public schools and our ability to prepare the next generation for the jobs of the future.

Let's be clear. This is not about reducing budget deficits. Republican Governors and Republicans in Congress are demanding budget cuts for the middle class. At the same time, they continue to push for tax cuts for large corporations and the wealthy. So call it what it is. Republicans are waging a class warfare in America. Republican Governors have the gall to attack teachers and firefighters, police officers, and other public employees.

In the words of Indiana Governor Daniels, he called them ''the privileged elite.'' Think about that. Our teachers, our firefighters, prison guards, and others who are public union members are the privileged elite in our society according to Governor Daniels.

Why are they the privileged elite? Well, I guess because they actually have pensions. They actually have access to decent health care, and they are making decent wages with decent working conditions. That is the privileged elite. I guess now the middle class are people who are working for minimum wage at McDonald's, with no health care, no pensions, no retirement, and not enough to support their families. I guess that is the new middle class in America, but the privileged elite are those who have pensions, access to health care, and decent wages.

This is the worst kind of demagoguery against loyal and hard-working public servants, our friends, and our neighbors. We shouldn't be dragging people down because they have a middle-class life. We should be working every day to give every American that opportunity.

Meanwhile, as the Republicans at the State and national level go after the health care, retirement, and security of middle-class Americans, they are going all out to pass more tax cuts for the wealthy. The Republican Governor in Michigan called for a $1.8 billion cut in corporate taxes. Wisconsin Governor Walker has called for $200 million in cuts. In Congress, just a few months ago, in December, Republicans demanded and got hundreds of billions of dollars in new tax cuts largely, again, for the wealthy.

Now, House Republicans—the tea party-driven House Republicans—are demanding we reduce the top tax rate for high earners. Get this, reduce the top tax rate for high earners from 35 percent down to 25 percent, preserving every penny of the tax breaks given to the wealthy back in 2001. All of these tax cut proposals will make deficits far worse. So, again, this whole battle we are talking about is not about deficits. Indeed, the tax cuts congressional Republicans secured in December will add, according to CBO, $354 billion to the deficit just this year and even more next year.

Early this year House Republicans voted to repeal the health reform law which would add $210 billion to the deficit over the next decade and over $1 trillion in the decade to follow. Now, again, that is the savings CBO said would come about because of the health reform bill we passed. Yet these same Republican politicians in the House and around the country are claiming to be worried about the deficit.

Well, I think this demagoguery is not fooling anyone any longer. It is not about deficit reduction; it is about ideology. Republicans are taking a meat ax to programs for the middle class—everything from cancer research to Pell grants to health care. They are gutting the safety net started and built up over generations, starting with President Franklin Roosevelt. It is the same old Republican game plan: give huge, unaffordable tax cuts to the wealthy and give budget cuts to the middle class and the most vulnerable in our society, including seniors and people with disabilities.

This new tea party Republican budget proposal gives new meaning to the word ''extreme.''

Look at what they have proposed. The new budget that has just come out on the House side would basically eliminate Medicare as we know it. It would create a new voucher program with seniors in the future paying out of pocket for many lifesaving health care costs. Estimates are that this would raise premiums and cut benefits of over 25 million seniors.

It is a massive giveaway to private insurers, a system that CBO—the Congressional Budget Office—tells us is much more expensive and, we know, less efficient than Medicare. By design these vouchers would not keep up with rising health care costs, so they would lose value every year with seniors paying the difference or ending up uninsured. Again, the assault on Medicare is a transfer of wealth from the middle class to insurance companies and their shareholders, their stockholders.

The House budget would reopen the prescription drug doughnut hole requiring seniors to pay $3,600 a year more for prescription drugs. They propose to block grant Medicaid and cut $1 trillion in health care services which would end vital services that seniors and disabled Americans depend on such as coverage for nursing homes or home health agencies by shifting the cost to the States. This would worsen State budget deficits and lead to higher property taxes. Seventeen Governors sent a letter to congressional leaders opposing this, saying it would shift costs and risks to States. States would be forced to bear all costs after hitting the annual cap just as the baby boom generation is entering the retirement years with likely steep increases in their

health care and long-term care costs. The ensuing funding shortfall would leave States with an untenable choice between increasing taxes, cutting other State programs or cutting eligibility, benefits or provider payments.

That is a letter 17 Governors sent to the President.

I remind my colleagues that Republicans complained bitterly in the last Congress when we approved support for the States to maintain health programs for the poor in the recent recession—a level of support the Republicans are now trying to slash in the States. The House budget would put future seniors in the same budget fight, and the Republican budget proposal doesn't stop at dismantling the safety net and programs that the seniors rely on for a secure retirement. It makes profound and destructive cuts to the entire range of programs that underpin the American middle-class standard of living—everything from education, student grants, loans, law enforcement, clean air and clean water, food safety, biomedical research, highways, bridges, and other infrastructure—in short, all the programs and services Americans rely on for a decent way of life.

The Republican assault on the middle class is breathtaking, both in the scope and in its depth. It cannot come at a worse time for working Americans, who are already under enormous strain and fear that the American dream is slipping away.

It is no secret people are working longer and harder than ever before, but they still can't meet the cost of basic, everyday needs such as education, transportation, housing, and health care, let alone put away enough money to support themselves in old age.

Even before the great recession, during boom times, working people weren't sharing in our Nation's prosperity. Real wages peaked in the 1970s, and they have not moved since. Think about this. Real wages, accounting for inflation, are about where they were in 1979. Think about that. The middle class in America has not made any headway since 1979. We wonder why people are upset. They see the middle class way of life slipping away from them and their children.

I don't think we can say the wealthiest 400 or 500 people in America are at the same place they were in 1979—not at all. In fact, in the mid-1970s, the top 1 percent of Americans, in terms of wealth, had about $8 trillion in assets. Today, that same 1 percent has over $40 trillion in assets. It is not the same as where they were in 1979.

The top 1 percent has seen their income soar. Last Friday, our colleague from Rhode Island, Senator WHITEHOUSE, was on the floor, and he had some very startling statistics. He pointed out that the 400 highest income earners in America earn an average of $344 million a year. Got that? They earn an average of $344 million a year, and they paid an effective tax of 16.7 percent. The average person working around here—the police we see here, the janitors, the food service workers, and others in the Capitol—do you know what they pay? They are probably paying 29, 30 percent of their income in taxes. But the 400 highest income earners only paid 16.7 percent. We wonder why people think things aren't quite on the up and up or quite fair.

Do you detect people who are just kind of feeling uneasy about where this country is headed? People are profoundly anxious about the future, but look at what the House Republicans are doing. They are going to make it worse on the middle class. People are worried they will not be able to have a decent house or enough food for their families or pay for their kids' college education. People are working harder, and they don't even take vacations any longer because they can't afford it.

If we learned anything from the great recession, it is that most families, even though solidly in the middle class, are one pink slip away from economic catastrophe. Everybody keeps talking about a recovery. Many of our friends and neighbors aren't seeing that. Corporate America is sitting on over $1 trillion in cash, while 14 million Americans are out of work. That is just the official number. That is not counting another 15 million who are underemployed or who have quit looking for jobs because they have been shut out of the job market.

This doesn't look like a real recovery to me. It is a repeat of the last recession, when the recovery went to the wealthiest and the working people were left behind. Republicans have proposed a budget that will destroy the middle class in this country. That is what the Republican budget is about.

Many Republicans apparently believe that as public sector workers and others lose their jobs, it will be somehow good for the economy. Two weeks ago, the Republican staff on the Joint Economic Committee released a report arguing that widespread layoffs would actually increase jobs. How about that for funny reasoning?

As Nobel Prize-winning economist Paul Krugman pointed out, this is a throwback to the thinking of Depression-era Treasury Secretary Andrew Mellon, the idea that by driving down wages and benefits, we will increase employment. This is now ''the official doctrine of the GOP,'' he points out. If we drive down wages and benefits, we will somehow increase employment. I suppose we could. I suppose if we got everybody down to working for $1 an hour, there might be a lot of jobs out there.

The idea is not a job. It is not just having someone work. The idea is to have a good job. I have pointed out in speeches in the past that, when we think about it, in our sordid history of America, every slave had a job. Think about that. Every slave had a job. Were they free? Were they happy? Did they keep their families together? Were they able to build up a middle-class nest egg? Did they have decent retirement and health care? No. But they had a job. Is that all we are after is just a job? It seems to me that we are after jobs that pay decent wages, with decent working conditions, and allow people to have time with their kids and their families.

What is wrong with having a job that has a decent wage and decent working conditions and you get to take a decent vacation and you have health care coverage and you have a pension for your old age? What is wrong with that kind of a job? These are the kinds of jobs we want for Americans—not just a job. But the Republican philosophy seems to be just a job. Forget about the pension and your standard of living, just be thankful that you have a minimum-wage job. That is where this Republican budget is driving us.

I could not help but think about this in terms of what is happening in the world—in Libya and what happened in Egypt and in Syria and in Yemen and what is happening in other places around the globe. When stripped away from all of it, it seems to me that in all these countries, people are saying we have had enough of a system where a few at the top get everything and nobody else gets anything and we are all at the bottom. In so many of these countries, these revolutions are going on so people can have a more decent life, a better share, if you will, of the products of their own society. So they are going in the direction of trying to establish a better middle class, a stronger middle class.

What are we doing in America, the bastion of middle-class virtues. We are going in the other direction. We are destroying the middle class, taking away the kinds of livelihoods that built the middle class. That is what this is about. The future of our Nation depends on our ability to ensure that the benefits from economic growth are widely shared. That means putting policies into place that build a strong and vibrant middle class, with good jobs, fair wages, and good benefits. That is the America I want to see, one where people who work hard and play by the rules can have a decent life.

Tragically, the tea party budget plan would take us in exactly the opposite direction. It would gut the whole range of programs that support the middle class in our country. It would dismantle the safety net that has been built for seniors, those with disabilities and the low income—a safety net created under President Roosevelt and has been strengthened since.

The Republican tea party budget is built on bad priorities, bad policies, and just plain bad values.

As columnist E.J. Dionne points out, Americans can now see ''how radical the new conservatives in Washington are, and the extent to which some politicians would transfer even more resources from the have-nots and the have-a-littles to the have-a-lots.''

I don't believe the American people will stand for this unwise, unbalanced, unfair assault on their economic security and their way of life. We must stand strong and oppose these grossly misguided proposals in every way we possibly can. This is a battle that is joined and we cannot be faint of heart or weak in spirit. We must stand strong for middle-class values and what allowed America to become a strong middle-class nation. I believe the American people are definitely on our side in this battle.

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.

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

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

Mrs. BOXER. Madam President, what is the order?

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The Senate is in morning business.

Mrs. BOXER. Is there any time limit on Senators?

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Ten minutes.

Mrs. BOXER. I ask unanimous consent that I be given an additional 10 minutes.

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

Mrs. BOXER. Madam President, I come to the floor to talk about the possibility of a government shutdown and to say that such an alternative will be very hurtful for the people of this country. I was here when the government was shut down before by another Republican Speaker, and I can tell you that my small businesspeople around Yosemite National Park, for example, who count on tourism still remember the sting of losing over $200 million because people had to cancel their trips. That is one example.

I know Superfund site cleanups were halted in their tracks. We had issues at the borders. We had a whole series of problems. It seems to me it is a reckless way to go, but it also seems to me the House Republicans want us to have a government shutdown.

Why do I say that? I say that because Republicans gave the Speaker of the House an ovation when he informed them ''to begin preparing for a possible shutdown.'' An ovation. I would hope we would reserve our ovations for our leaders when they tell us that because of our work in funding the National Institutes of Health, we now have a cure for cancer. I would like to have an ovation about that.

I would like to have an ovation for our firefighters and our first responders who are brave every single day. I would like to have an ovation for them.

I do not think having an ovation because we might have a government shutdown is appropriate, but it was an honest response. That is what they want. One has to ask why. Why do they want this? Because they want to cut $100 billion from the President's budget, when Democrats have already agreed to meet them with $73 billion in cuts?

There are three parties to these negotiations: the President, who is a Democrat; the Senate, which is Democratic; and the House, which is Republican. Since when does one-third represent a majority? Since when is one-third allowed to say: My way or the highway? Apparently, that is what they are doing.

They put H.R. 1 before the House that has all these cuts—but not just cuts, political vendettas attached, such as zeroing out funds for Planned Parenthood. Nothing to do with abortion funding because we cannot use Federal funds for that, but the other work of Planned Parenthood in preventing unwanted pregnancies, the work they do to ensure people can have contraception, the work they do to make sure there is not a spread of communicable diseases sexually transmitted. The work they do—and, yes, no matter what the rightwing says, to do breast cancer screenings.

There was a big article in the paper: Senator BOXER is spreading a big lie that Planned Parenthood does breast cancer screenings. They do breast cancer screenings. Although, I understand, one of their clinics does mammograms, they definitely say to someone, if they find a suspicious lump in that breast cancer screening, they will help people get the help they need.

They do Pap smears. They make sure they talk about the dangerous spread of HIV/AIDS. Five million people go to those clinics. They want to shut them down.

They want to shut down title X—the whole program—which is family planning. On the one side, they do not want abortions. Nobody does. On the other side, they turn their backs on family planning. This does not make sense. That is what was in H.R. 1.

Also, in my State, $700 million would have been cut in Pell grants, which meant 1 million California students who rely on these grants could no longer rely on them and, therefore, would have to drop out of college. That is what was in H.R. 1. That is what they want us to accept.

Head Start—everybody knows Head Start. It is a success story. The fact is, H.R. 1 would slash it by $1.1 billion and would lay off 55,000 teachers and staff and more than 218,000 low-income children would be cut from the program. In my State, 24,000 low-income kids would lose access to Head Start. They are doing all this while they are giving huge tax breaks to the billionaires. It is wrong.

They would cut community health care centers—457,000 Californians. That is a big number. There are some States that have fewer than that. But 457,000 Californians would lose their health care if they went to community health care centers. Twelve centers would close. Why on Earth would anyone want to do it? They want to do it. We can figure out other ways to get to those cuts. There are other ways to do it.

What amazes me is that Democrats are the ones who balanced the budget with Bill Clinton. We took deficits as far as the eye could see and turned them around, balanced the budget, and created surpluses. Now we are being lectured that if we do not do it the exact way our friends want, which is to hurt children and education and environmental protection and, by the way, safety issues, such as making sure our airplanes do not develop holes in them, an important point, they go after all of this.

There are cuts to afterschool programs. That breaks my heart because I know 11,000 kids in California would be shut out. We all know kids need help after school. If they are alone, they get in trouble. If they get in trouble, it costs us money. These cuts are ridiculous.

We can sit together and work together and do it in a much more fair way, if people pay their fair share. If everybody takes a little bit of a nick, we can get there. We have shown them how to get to $73 billion worth of cuts. That is just for the next 6 months. They are demanding $100 billion, their way or the highway. This is a ridiculous situation to be in.

I am going to say again, if you control one-third of the power in this trio where you have the President is a third, the Senate is a third, and the House is a third, and you are in the House and you are the only one run by the Republicans, by what measure do you have the right to say my way or the highway? I don't think the American people would think that is right. They want us to work together and that is the message of the President.

I have to tell you, this budget by the Republicans, H.R. 1, that we voted down here, would lead to nearly 900 fewer Border Patrol agents nationwide. Everyone wants to make sure our border is safe. Nine hundred would be gone. How about a $1.3 billion cut in the National Institutes of Health, working as they are to develop new treatments and cures for cancer and Alzheimer's? If you ask the average family what they fear, they will mention we fear that somebody in our family is going to suffer from one of these diseases.

It is outrageous. They are going to kill an Energy Department loan program when we know we cannot be dependent on foreign oil. We need to find those alternatives. Energy research and development is slashed by almost $2 billion. Transportation infrastructure is slashed. There are Draconian cuts at the Environmental Protection Agency.

And then all these riders. There are a whole bunch of them, as I know you

are aware, on the Environmental Protection site. Here is the irony. The Republicans want to destroy the EPA, which was created by Richard Nixon, a Republican President. Former Administrators of the EPA Ruckelshaus and Whitman wrote a beautiful op-ed in the Washington Post—I believe it was the Washington Post, or the Times, I am not sure which—in which they clearly say this is a bipartisan matter. Yet the Republicans, in H.R. 1, want to stop the EPA from enforcing the clean air law, which will make our skies dirtier. Our kids will get asthma, premature deaths, and all the rest. Big surprise, we voted it down here. It only got 44 votes. It is radical. We can meet them way more than halfway—we already have—without hurting our people and still getting the budget cuts we need.

I am here to say it has now been 35 days, 35 days since the Senate passed S. 388. What is S. 388? S. 388 says, if there is a shutdown, Members of Congress and the President will not receive their pay. Why do I think this is important? Because most people do not know that, although our staffs will not get paid, although many Federal employees will not get paid, Members of Congress have a special protection built in because we are paid under a statute and so is the President. So 35 days ago we sent over to the House a very simple bill. It said if there is a shutdown, basically that means failure on our part to keep the Government going—what could be more basic than that—we should not get paid and we should not get paid retroactively. Our colleagues over there have taken no action.

If you ask them, they will say: Yes, we did, we put that in another bill and passed it. You know what the other bill is? The other bill is an illegal bill. The other bill would make our Founders roll over in their graves. This is what the bill they embedded ''no budget, no pay'' in says. Follow me—and I especially hope the young people listening to this debate will follow me because you have learned how a bill becomes a law.

It goes through a committee usually. It doesn't have to. It goes to one House, they pass it; the other House passes it; so you get the House and the Senate, and then it goes to the President. He either signs it or vetoes it. If he signs it, it is law. If it is vetoed, two-thirds can override it.

Guess what, they put ''no budget, no pay'' into a bill that says the following: If the Senate has not acted by a date certain on H.R. 1, this horrible bill that I talked to you about, that bill will have been deemed to be the law. It is a new deal: ''we deem.'' In other words: I have 20 bills that I have introduced, today I deem them law. I have some great bills. One is a Violence Against Children Act, very important. Another would help many of my transportation folks. I deem them all law.

How is that legal? It is illegal. They are saying if we do not act on H.R. 1, again, it is deemed the law. It doesn't even pass the smell test, the laugh test, and they have embedded in it ''no budget, no pay.'' So, big surprise, we are not going to pass it over here in that form.

I am saying this is a maneuver, and a little dance by Speaker BOEHNER and ERIC CANTOR, who is the leader over there, to make it look as though they are not for them getting their pay but to do nothing about it.

Let me tell you what I have done. I have written a letter. It has many colleagues on it. I will read the letter. We are sending it by the end of business tonight.

Dear Speaker BOEHNER:

We write to discuss a meeting with you to discuss House passage of S. 388, legislation to prohibit Members of Congress and the President to prevent any Members of Congress from receiving pay. Over 1 month has passed since the Senate unanimously passed our bill. Despite written requests for immediate House consideration, you have failed to schedule a vote on stand-alone legislation that would treat Members of Congress and the President no differently from other Federal employees during a shutdown. Our bill is simple. If we cannot do our work and keep the Government functioning, we should not receive a paycheck. If we can't compromise and meet each other halfway, then we should not get paid.

As we noted in a previous letter, while appearing on the CNN program ''Crossfire'' in 1995, Mr. BOEHNER offered his support for a bill identical to S. 388, so it is unclear why he has not scheduled a vote on stand-alone legislation. Embedding ''no budget, no pay'' in a bill that has no chance of passage isn't fooling anybody. We request a meeting with Speaker BOEHNER as soon as possible, whether in person or via conference call, to discuss how we can work together to immediately send this legislation to the President.

Here is a bill that passed here without a dissenting vote. It is basically 100 to nothing. In a time when we cannot agree on the color of that wall, we agreed to pass this ''no budget, no pay'' legislation. But Speaker BOEHNER, who got a standing ovation—maybe it was a sitting ovation; it didn't say standing ovation—but he got an ovation for talking about preparing for a shutdown, has not done one thing to make sure his Members and he do not get paid in case of a shutdown.

I think it is appalling. It is embarrassing. I am stunned. The reason I am pressing this is I believe that people should be treated equally. I believe that if they are cavalierly applauding and giving an ovation to Speaker BOEHNER when he talks about planning for a shutdown, I believe they want a shutdown and they have no skin in the game. They pay no price. They get paid.

We had one of them over there complaining he didn't get paid enough money. He gets paid over $170,000. It wasn't enough money. Sorry, boo-hoo. There are people in this government who get paid $60,000, $40,000, $30,000, and they are not going to get paid. Sorry.

I am going to keep coming to this floor, 36 days, 37, 38, 39, 40—this is just plain wrong.

I want to say who has signed our letter. You can see it is a good selection of the caucus, from liberal to conservative: JOE MANCHIN, CLAIRE MCCASKILL, MICHAEL BENNET, BEN NELSON, BOB MENENDEZ, DEBBIE STABENOW, JAY ROCKEFELLER, KAY HAGAN, JEFF MERKLEY, RON WYDEN, MARK WARNER, SHERROD BROWN, TOM HARKIN, CHRIS COONS, JON TESTER, SHELDON WHITEHOUSE, and Senator MIKULSKI and Senator BEGICH. Myself and Senator CASEY are the first two names because it happens to be our bill. It is the Boxer-Casey bill.

In closing, I want to spread the word from here over to the House side that we are serious, those of us who signed this letter. We are keeping this issue in front of the American people because I assure you, if you walked out and asked anyone who happened to be walking down the street who was not involved here, who didn't work for the Federal Government, and you said this: In case of a shutdown because the two sides fail to negotiate an agreement, the only people who are assured of their pay would be Members of Congress and the President, what do you think? I think the average person would say that is wrong; they should pay a price. This is a basic function of theirs, to keep this government running, to keep this country going.

I could tell, because I remember the last one, the pain and the hurt from people who wanted to get on Social Security, to veterans who trying to figure out their disability payments, frankly to everyone who calls your office or my office in deep trouble because they are having problems with a Federal agency, they need the help of a Federal agency, they want to make sure to get their Medicare taken care of, their Social Security taken care of, or they are contractors who have private employees and they are fixing the road or fixing a bridge. This is wrong.

We are trying to find out exactly who would be affected, but I can tell you right now is not the time to lose, for example, inspectors who are inspecting the safety of our aircraft. I hope they would stay on, but we do not know.

What about those who are inspecting our nuclear powerplants? You know, we have 23 reactors that are the same exact reactor as the ones that have these problems in Japan. We don't want to stop those inspections; they have to move forward. We don't want to have the USGS; that is, the U.S. Geological Survey, close down in the middle of making new earthquake maps. I care about this a lot. I have two nuclear powerplants that are on or near earthquake faults.

I say to my friends on the other side, I know my message is not pretty to you. It is not pretty to say you don't deserve to get paid in case of a shutdown, but that is my message. Once the American people wake up to this,

that we are getting paid but our staffs are not getting paid, I think there is going to be an outcry. So I ask the Speaker on behalf of all those colleagues whose names I read to take up S. 388 without delay. It is sitting at the desk. What does it say? Members of Congress and the President should not be paid in case of a shutdown.

That is pretty simple.

I know my colleagues are on the Senate floor. Let me guess, Senator BLUMENTHAL and Senator LIEBERMAN, might you be here to discuss what happened last night? And I am going to—since my remarks were not happy, I am happy to give up the floor at this time and listen to their remarks. I congratulate both of them on a great victory.

I yield the floor.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The Senator from Connecticut.

CONGRATULATING THE UNIVERSITY OF CONNECTICUT BASKETBALL TEAMS

Mr. LIEBERMAN. Madam President, I thank the Chair, and I thank my friend from California. One might say, in the context of the debates going on in Congress now, that Senator BLUMENTHAL and I have come to the floor of the Senate to talk about a governmental program that really works, that has inspired an entire State, perhaps a nation. I speak, of course, of the University of Connecticut baseball program.

It is with great joy that I come to the floor of the Senate today to congratulate the University of Connecticut men's basketball team and their great coach, Jim Calhoun, on winning the NCAA championship last night. This has been a remarkable season. A team that started unranked, a young team in a year that was supposed to be a rebuilding year came together in a magical way. They had their ups early in the season, they had their downs as time went on, but the run that began with the Big East tournament a few weeks ago has, for our State and I think anybody who follows and loves college basketball, really been inspirational.

I do want to say, in terms of inspiration and I suppose I might say in the spirit of bipartisanship or at least good sportsmanship, that I offer congratulations to the Butler Bulldogs on their great run in the tournament, which also was inspirational. I thank my Indiana colleagues for their good sportsmanship and for what they described as the best popcorn in America, made in Indiana—that is part of a friendly wager they made, Senators LUGAR and COATS, with Senator BLUMENTHAL and me—which we will be pleased to accept and devour.

This has been quite a year. Led by their floor leader, Kemba Walker, and assisted by an extraordinary group of young athletes, this group of student athletes demonstrated to all of us what a combination of hard work, dedication, commitment, and teamwork can achieve. Honestly, I tip my hat to these ''top dogs'' today of college basketball.

Of course, in my opinion, no matter how good and how much potential the players on this UConn men's basketball team had, they simply could not have done it without their great coach and a great man, Jim Calhoun. This is not the first time I have had the honor to come to the Senate floor to commend the performance of Coach Calhoun and the UConn Huskies. In fact, with last night's victory, Jim has etched his name in basketball glory by winning his third national title. He becomes only the fifth coach in history to win three national championships, and he joins the ranks of other greats such as John Wooden and Coach K, Mike Krzyzewski. He is only one of 8 coaches to run up over 800 career wins.

Over the years, I have watched Jim build upon the athletic program at UConn, transforming it from an occasionally regional contender to a regular national powerhouse. His three national championships and seven Big East championships have put our team, the State team of a relatively small State, on the college basketball map and set a high standard of excellence. I think none of this would have happened without Coach Calhoun's vision, his drive, his caring for players, and his extraordinary basketball brains.

There is a larger lesson, as there often is in sports. But this was a team that came into the Big East tournament with most people thinking the season would end quickly for them. They had will, which is a word Coach Calhoun uses a lot. They always had the potential and the ability, but they had the will. I am looking at the Senate pages now, young people.

There are a lot of people who read these UConn Huskies out at different times of the season, but they didn't read themselves out of the competition, and their coach never did. He kept telling them they had what it took to be champions. They pulled together. They worked together. They developed their potential to the fullest. They played and lived like a family. And you might say Coach Calhoun is the loving father who employs a lot of tough love but draws greatness out of these players and gives all of us in Connecticut a tremendous sense of pride.

I do not want to finish my statement without also telling Coach Geno Auriemma and the great players on the UConn women's basketball team how proud we are of them and how much we thank them for another remarkable season that was also filled with historic accomplishments, including an impressive run to the Final Four and a recordbreaking 90-consecutive-wins streak. The Lady Huskies were led by the all-impressive Maya Moore, who achieved AP All American honors in each of her 4 seasons at UConn and scored over 3,000 career points. So I give my congratulations to Coach Geno Auriemma and to the players on the UConn Lady Huskies, who also made us proud.

I am going to yield the floor in a minute to my colleague, Senator BLUMENTHAL. It strikes me that this is the first time I have had the chance to celebrate here when my former colleague, Senator Chris Dodd, is not here. The first time we celebrated together on the floor, I ended my remarks with the UConn cheer. Afterward, Senator Dodd, then the senior Senator, gave me a hard time as to whether I would make a good cheerleader and whether it was a decorous thing to do on the floor of the Senate. I told him at the time that it could have been worse—I could have just done the UConn Huskies' ''woof.''

But now I am the senior Senator, and may I conclude by simply saying U-C-O-N-N, UConn, UConn, UConn. National champs. I know my ending needs a little work, and I will be working on that from now until next year when we hopefully secure another championship.

I yield the floor to Senator BLUMENTHAL.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The Senator from Connecticut.

Mr. BLUMENTHAL. I thank the senior Senator from Connecticut for that very eloquent tribute to our team. I am not going to try to match the cheer this year but perhaps next. And I thank him for providing such a model of support for the University of Connecticut, truly a government program that works but also, obviously, one that is completely nonpolitical, bipartisan—perhaps providing another lesson for us here.

I am very honored to rise in celebrating this remarkable accomplishment. This majestic and momentous victory culminates a kind of magical journey for this team. They defied the odds. They disproved the doubt and the doubters, and they stared down adversity with real grit and grace. Remember that they rallied after losing 4 out of 5 of their last regular season games and then had an extraordinary streak of 11 straight wins to win the Big East and then the NCAA championship. They were relentless and courageous in believing in themselves throughout that very tough battle. At some point, as someone said, this team forgot how to lose—again, a life lesson for many of us.

As in every remarkable triumph, this one had a team effort and it had stars. Kemba Walker was perhaps the most notable among them, and he won awards that recognized his remarkable individual effort, but there were also freshmen who were important—I say that as a freshman Senator—Jeremy Lamb and Roscoe Smith.

As important as any player, as my colleague has recognized, was Coach Calhoun, who really demonstrated again the reason he is a champion and a hero to Huskies fans throughout the State of Connecticut and the Nation.