

Oh, yes, you can laugh about closing down Yellowstone, and maybe that is not the explosive thing—270,000 jobs, mostly in the West. I did not hear that the West had such a low unemployment rate that they do not give a darn. Local communities near national parks will lose \$14 million a day. That is the national park argument.

Let me go to the contractors. I represent the State of Maryland, where we have a lot of contractors. Take the Goddard Space Agency, 3,000 civil servants who do everything from help run the Hubble telescope and green science, to figuring out how we can fix the satellites through robots in the sky. But there are 6,000 contractors—6,000 contractors. Some of them are small business, 8(a) contractors working their way up.

Many of them—some of them are women. Many of them are veterans who started small- to medium-sized businesses. These people, if there is a government shutdown, will not get paid. Hello, colleagues. This is not only going to happen in my State, this is going to happen in your State.

There was a major article in the Wall Street Journal yesterday about what the shutdown means to the private sector. Well, let's wake up and let's move more quickly to this sitdown.

I wish to talk about essential versus nonessential. In my State, I represent over 100,000 Federal employees. Three of them are Nobel Prize winners I will talk about in a minute—Nobel Prize winners who are civil servants. Those are not even the gangs at Hopkins and the University of Maryland. Those are three Nobel Prize winners who are actual civil servants.

Under this shutdown we are headed for, they are going to be told they are nonessential. We have a Nobel Prize winner at NIST who works on the development of new work on laser light. Secretary Chu was his partner.

We have a Nobel Prize winner at NIH who won the Nobel Prize for proteins and cellular communication that could lead to a cure for cancer and a Nobel Prize winner at Goddard in physics. I am not going to call their names; I do not want to feel awkward. But what am I going to do midnight Friday? Am I going to call these three Nobel Prize winners and say: Hey, guys, you are nonessential. We know you could be in the private sector making millions of dollars, but you are staying here to do research to save lives, save the planet, and lead to saving our economy. But, hey, I guess you are nonessential.

In other countries, they carry you around on their shoulders and so on. But here, no, we are told they are nonessential. It is not only Nobel Prize winners, it is all the other people who are working. We are going to turn out the lights at the National Institutes of Health. We are going to say to a researcher: I know you are working on that cure for cancer. I know you are working on that cure for Alzheimer's or autism or arthritis—sticking just

with the "A" words. But you know what, Washington, the Congress says, you are not essential.

What about Social Security? I have over 10,000 people who work at the Social Security Administration. You say: Well, my God, that is a lot. That is 24/7 to make sure it all functions properly and efficiently. We have the lowest overhead of any "insurance company" in America. But these lights are going to be shuttered at Social Security, not only in Senator BARB's and Senator BEN CARDIN's State, but it is also going to be shuttered, Madam President, in your State. When people want to come to apply for benefits they are eligible for, when people who are disabled want to apply for those benefits, they are going to come to a shuttered Social Security office. They are going to be told they are not essential.

Well, then, let's wait until Monday morning. Are they not going to come to work fired up, ready to work for America, ready to help America be great again? They are America's essential employees doing the work that goes on at NIH, Social Security, the National Institutes of Standards. They come up with new ideas.

Then look at commerce. I represent the great Port of Baltimore. Ships are going to come into the port. Who is going to inspect their cargo? Traffic coming into airports, who is going to inspect their cargo?

But, oh, no, we are going to tell them they are nonessential. Well, I am telling you, this is not going to be good. But you know what is not good, not only the consequences but the way we are functioning.

Madam President—hello? Madam President. I do not know if my speech is not that attention-getting, but can I have your attention?

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The Senator has consumed 10 minutes.

Ms. MIKULSKI. Well, then, my time is up. Well, maybe the Senate is not paying attention, but the American people are paying attention. I am telling you, this is a situation of enormous negative consequence. I think we are going to rue the day at the way we are functioning. We need to come to the table, and we need to sit around and act like rational human beings.

I yield the floor.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The Senator from New Hampshire.

STEM FIELDS

Mrs. SHAHEEN. Madam President, as Congress and the Obama administration grapples with how to responsibly address our long-term deficit, we need to remember why it is so important to get on a path to balanced budgets. We need to address the long-term deficit because it is a threat to America's future prosperity. It is about economic growth and jobs. That is why the deficit matters. The deficit is not just

some math problem where it is solved if the numbers add up right. The choices we make, which spending programs we cut which tax expenditures we eliminate, where we continue to boost investment, matter.

The overarching challenge facing our country is how we keep our economy competitive.

We cannot compete with India and China for low-wage manufacturing jobs. That is not our future.

America's future is in continuing to be the global leader in science and technology. America makes the best, most innovative products and services, and that ingenuity and excellence is our chief economic strength as a nation.

But we are in danger of losing that edge. Science, technology, engineering and math, what we call the STEM fields, are the skills that drive innovation.

And jobs in the STEM fields are expected to be the fastest-growing occupations of the next decade. However, not enough students in our country are pursuing an education in STEM subjects to keep up with the increased demand.

For those students that do pursue education in STEM fields, they are being outperformed by international competitors. Studies show that by the end of eighth grade, students in the U.S. are 2 years behind their international peers in math. American students rank 21st in science and 25th in math among industrialized countries. In addition, the U.S. has produced a declining number of Ph.Ds in science and engineering compared to the European Union and China over the past 3 decades. It is clear that to remain competitive internationally, we must encourage and strengthen the supply of STEM-trained graduates.

That is why this week Leader REID and Senators KLOBUCHAR, KERRY, BEGICH, COONS and I introduced legislation, the Innovation Inspiration School Grant Program, which will bolster our Nation's ability to compete in the global economy.

My legislation will provide new incentives for our schools to think outside the box and embrace extra-curricular and nontraditional STEM education programs. It establishes a competitive grant program that will encourage schools to partner with the private sector, both for financial support and to provide mentors who can serve as guides and role models to students.

I am proud that New Hampshire is the home to the FIRST Robotics program. For over a decade, teams of students have been designing robots to compete against one another in regional, then national, competitions. On Monday we hosted FIRST teams from Maryland and Virginia who demonstrated in the Dirksen building how the robots they designed and built actually work. It is these kinds of non-traditional STEM programs that make

a difference in the students' lives and inspire them to continue in STEM careers or postsecondary education.

In fact, research shows that 99 percent of students who participate in FIRST Robotics graduate high school and almost 90 percent go on the college. And once in college, these students are nearly seven times more likely to major in engineering and twice as likely to major in computer science. They are also significantly more likely to attain a postgraduate degree. The data speaks for itself: investments in these sorts of programs matter and make a difference.

I urge colleagues to join me in supporting this important legislation that will inspire our students to become scientists, engineers, computer programmers and mathematicians. Our country's economic future depends on it.

I yield the floor.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The Senator for Kansas.

Mr. ROBERTS. Madam President, I am going to speak for approximately 4 minutes during morning business. I had originally intended on 15, but I am going to do that tomorrow on another subject. If I could be recognized for 4 minutes, that is my intention.

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

Mr. ROBERTS. I thank the Chair.

WICHITA STATE UNIVERSITY SHOCKERS

Mr. ROBERTS. Madam President, I know it is pretty serious business talking about a government shutdown and things of this nature that affect all Americans. I certainly hope we can reach some accommodation. I wish to do a little bragging on behalf of my home State.

We are pretty proud of our basketball heritage in Kansas, but I note that we have not received national recognition to the extent I think we should in regards to the recent accomplishment I wish to highlight.

I rise to congratulate the Wichita State University Shockers. The Shockers won the 2011 Men's National Invitation Tournament in the Big Apple, the championship in New York City. In claiming the championship trophy, Wichita State set the school record with 29 victories in the season. Wichita State advanced to the NIT championship with four straight wins in the tournament. They beat the University of Nebraska in the first round, Virginia Tech in the second round, the College of Charleston in the quarter finals, Washington State University in the semifinal, and, finally, the University of Alabama in the championship game. All of these schools have good basketball teams, and Wichita State came out on top.

Graham Hatch was named the NIT's most outstanding player and a member of the All-Tournament Team, while Garret Stutz was named to the All-Tournament Team as well.

Wichita State and head coach Gregg Marshall were not only successful on the court but in the classroom as well. Earlier this year, Coach Hatch and Garrett Stutz were named to the 2011 Missouri Valley Conference Scholar Athlete first and honorable mention teams, respectively. I congratulate the Wichita State University Shockers, their head coach Gregg Marshall, the athletic director Eric Sexton, a good friend of mine, and Wichita State University president Don Beggs. Don, you are back again, and you certainly did us proud.

Specifically, I congratulate each member of the team for an exemplary season: Gabe Blair, Derek Brown, J.T. Durley, Aaron Ellis, Jerome Hamilton, Graham Hatch, Trey Jones, David Kyles, Toure Murry, Ehimen Orukpe, Joe Ragland, Tyler Richardson, Ben Smith, Garrett Stutz, Randall Vautravers, Josh Walker, and Demitric Williams.

If I mispronounced any name, I am terribly sorry. They did not do anything wrong with the tournament in terms of winning the NIT. Congratulations to all Shockers basketball fans. The coach has made the decision to stay at Wichita State. Good news for Kansas. Good news for Wichita State, an exemplary action on the part of the coach after a very successful team effort and winning the NIT and then staying at Wichita State University. Good news for Kansas, good news for Wichita State, and good news all the way around.

By the way, we will not shut down the team. They are going to keep on fighting.

I think the signal there was not four quarters and let's go play hard, but the 4 minutes are up.

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

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

The bill clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. BARRASSO. I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

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

A SECOND OPINION

Mr. BARRASSO. Madam President, I come to the floor today as a doctor who has practiced medicine in Wyoming for about 25 years. During that time I was medical director of something called Wyoming Health Fairs where we provide employees low-cost blood screening for early detection and early treatment of medical problems. We know one of the things that was attempted to be solved with the discussion on health care was to have people involved in their own health care decisions and early detection, as well as prevention of disease.

I attended a health fair last weekend in Worland, Washakie County, WY,

where I had a chance to meet with a number of folks, including people from small businesses. First, I wish to congratulate this body, and specifically Senator JOHANNIS from Nebraska, for the repeal of the 1099 form regulations which significantly burden small businesses all around the country.

I also come to the floor as someone who has practiced medicine and has been watching the health care law closely. It is one that I believe is bad for patients, bad for providers and nurses and doctors who take care of the patients, and bad for the American taxpayers because I think this is going to add significantly to our growing debt problem. These are things that need to be addressed.

One part of the health care law, the 2,700-page law that was passed, dealt with something called accountable care organizations. Those are intended to help people coordinate care and have that coordinated care increase people's health by early detection of problems and to help minimize problems but also attempt to save money.

The six pages of the health care law that dealt with accountable care organizations has resulted in the release of regulations on March 31, 429 pages of regulations which have a significant impact on restructuring the way medicine is practiced.

As I look at this in terms of our growing debt, my concern is that the administration is bragging that the regulations save Medicare money, about \$960 million total, best care scenario, over a 3-year period. So savings of less than \$1 billion, a restructuring of the way medicine is being practiced, a savings of less than \$1 billion, at a time when Medicare will be spending over those 3 years over \$1.5 trillion, a savings of less than \$1 billion on an expenditure of over \$1.5 trillion.

The other aspect that was so interesting in watching this administration is they have come out with a statement about regulations.

The small businesspeople I talked to in Worland last weekend at the health fair told me that increased government regulations add to the cost of doing business and make it harder for them to hire more people. Specifically, it is related to increased costs.

It was interesting to see the administration saying that an increase in labor demand due to regulations may have a stimulative effect that results in a net increase in overall employment. The administration apparently believes if we increase the rules and regulations on businesses, it will make it better for them, when they will tell us universally that it will make it worse.

Additionally, last Friday night the Department of Health and Human Services released their new next round of ObamaCare waivers. We have talked about those in the past on this floor as part of a doctor's second opinion. If this health care law is so good, why do millions and millions of Americans say: We can't live under this, and the