

the University of Louisville next Monday. I know the students and the larger community there are all looking forward to her visit.

But for now, this is a truly special day here at the Capitol. It has been a long time coming. We are honored to have this hero with us today and delighted to award her our Nation's highest civilian honor.

Madam President, I yield the floor.

RESERVATION OF LEADER TIME

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Under the previous order, the leadership time is reserved.

VETERANS JOBS CORPS ACT OF 2012

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Under the previous order, the Senate will resume consideration of S. 3457, which the clerk will report by title.

The legislative clerk read as follows:

A bill (S. 3457) to require the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to establish a veterans jobs corps, and for other purposes.

Pending:

Reid (for Murray) amendment No. 2789, in the nature of a substitute.

Reid amendment No. 2808 (to amendment No. 2789), to change the enactment date.

Reid amendment No. 2809 (to amendment No. 2808), of a perfecting nature.

Reid amendment No. 2810 (to the language proposed to be stricken by amendment No. 2789), to change the enactment date.

Reid amendment No. 2811 (to amendment No. 2810), of a perfecting nature.

Reid motion to commit the bill to the Committee on Veterans' Affairs, with instructions, Reid amendment No. 2812, to change the enactment date.

Reid amendment No. 2813 (to (the instructions) amendment No. 2812), of a perfecting nature.

Reid amendment No. 2814 (to amendment No. 2813), of a perfecting nature.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Under the previous order, the time until 12 noon will be equally divided and controlled between the two leaders or their designees.

The Senator from Illinois.

KNOWING WHO YOU REALLY ARE

Mr. DURBIN. Madam President, Bill Daley is a businessman in Chicago and a friend of mine. A few years back he was the chairman of the Al Gore Presidential campaign. We all know how the campaign ended in the Florida recount. Bill was contacted several years later by those who wanted to run for President. They made their trip to Chicago and asked Bill if he could give them some insight into what it was all about, how you would win. Bill said to them, one and all, the same thing: I am not sure I have any special strategy to tell you, but there is one thing I have discovered over the years. By the end of the Presidential campaign, the American people will know who you really are.

I thought that was very simply and directly stated by Bill Daley and reflected the fact that although every candidate at every level tries to sur-

round himself or herself with the wisest people in Christendom, to give them advice on polling and media and analyzing the electorate and the right words to be said, that more so in a Presidential campaign than almost any others, by the end of the campaign, the American people know who you really are.

The revelations into a person's values and character are not those well-scripted ads or even those flowery speeches. The revelations come by observing that person in good times and bad and perhaps hearing the unguarded comments which give you an insight into what they think when the camera is not on.

That is why this release of a video of Mitt Romney has had such an impact on America. What he said at a fundraiser in Boca Raton, FL, to some very wealthy supporters on May 17, 2012, bears repeating in specific detail. Here is what he said:

There are 47 percent of the people who will vote for the president no matter what. All right, there are 47 percent who are with him, who are dependent upon government, who believe that they are victims, who believe the government has a responsibility to care for them, who believe that they are entitled to health care, to food, to housing, to you-name-it. That that's an entitlement. And the government should give it to them. And they will vote for this president no matter what. . . . These are people who pay no income tax. . . . [M]y job—

This is Mitt Romney speaking—

is not to worry about those people. I'll never convince them they should take personal responsibility and care for their lives.

It was a moment of candor by Romney in a room full of friends about his view of America, and it has become the centerpiece of this week's debate in the Presidential campaign, not just because he was caught in an off moment or with an embarrassing statement, but the fact that since then he has not retracted, he has not backed off of those statements.

In his first press conference, when confronted, he said he was "inelegant" in the way he spoke. Well, assuming that he meant ineloquent and not lacking eloquence, I would say he has had enough time to develop an elegant reply, and we have not heard it.

I think there is more truth than not in what he says when it comes to his point of view of this country, and it is no surprise when you look back to those other unguarded moments and things he has said during the course of the campaign.

We remember the highlights. "Corporations are people, my friend," he said. "I like being able to fire people," he said. "I'm not concerned about the very poor," Romney said. "I'm also unemployed," Romney said. "Ann drives a couple of Cadillacs," Romney said. "Ten thousand bucks? \$10,000 bet?" he said. "I have some great friends that are NASCAR team owners," he said.

It was Bill Kristol who wrote recently—I believe it was yesterday—in the Weekly Standard a response in

which he was critical of President Obama but also of Governor Romney. Here is what Bill Kristol, one of the prominent conservative spokesmen in America, in response to Romney's revelation at the Boca Raton fundraiser, wrote:

It's worth recalling that a good chunk of the 47 percent who don't pay income taxes are Romney supporters—especially of course seniors (who might well "believe they are entitled to health care," a position Romney agrees with), as well as many lower-income Americans (including men and women serving in the military) who think conservative policies are better for the country even if they're not getting a tax cut under the Romney plan. So Romney seems to have contempt not just for the Democrats who oppose him, but for tens of millions who intend to vote for him.

End of quote from Bill Kristol.

This was a revelation into his values and his view of America. But it also tells us that he does not understand this country and the people who live in it. Because when we take a close look at those in the 47 percent, here is who we find: the elderly, working families with children, and low-wage earners. That is the 47 percent.

The elderly. One in five of the elderly is in the 47 percent. These Americans do not owe any Federal income tax because of a longstanding policy choice that Social Security benefits—modest Social Security benefits—should not be taxed. Does Romney oppose that? Does he want to tax Social Security benefits so these will be responsible nonvictims in his view of America?

Now let's turn to low-income working families with children. They make up approximately one out of six people in the 47 percent. They benefit from the earned income tax credit. It was an incentive for them to go to work. Realizing they do not make much money working, we are going to give them a break in the Tax Code to help them get by.

As the majority leader mentioned earlier, this notion came out under President Ronald Reagan. It was Ronald Reagan who said, when he signed this into law in 1986, this will remove "six million [poor] people from the income tax rolls," making it one of the most effective antipoverty programs in our history."

So these people are not paying taxes—so-called victims, so-called irresponsible, under Romney's analysis. Is he suggesting the earned income tax credit has to go?

When you take a look at these people who make up the 47 percent in America, you understand that many of them have paid their dues. Veterans on disability may not be paying income taxes. They are part of the 47 percent. People who are middle-income working families, whose kids borrow money for college are turning to the government for help when they want to put their kids through school to make sure they have a better life.

I close because I know I have my colleagues coming to the floor. There is

one thing that leapt off the page when I read this quote from Boca Raton. It appears that Mitt Romney makes his value judgments on Americans based on their income tax returns.

Historically, American voters have made a judgment on Presidential candidates based on their income tax returns. The man who set the gold standard that was followed for decades in America in Presidential races was Mitt Romney's father George Romney, former Governor of Michigan. He disclosed 12 years of income tax returns, and he said: Do not just give me 1 year. That does not tell me anything. One year might look good. Give me 12 years, and I can then decide whether this person is paying taxes as they should and make a value judgment accordingly.

Well, the son did not learn from the father. Over the past 36 years, Willard Mitt Romney holds the distinction of all Presidential candidates of either political party of having made the least disclosure of income tax returns of any Presidential candidate—1 year. He promises another, but 1 year.

What did this 1 year reveal? It revealed he is the first Presidential candidate in the history of the United States of America with a Swiss bank account. I have asked business leaders across America, Why would you have a Swiss bank account?

I asked Warren Buffett—he is one of the wealthiest men in our country—have you ever had a Swiss bank account. He said: No, there are perfectly good banks in the United States.

Then I asked business leaders—and seriously—Why would you have a Swiss bank account? Two reasons. You want to conceal what you have and the transactions that lead up to you acquiring it or, secondly, you believe the Swiss franc is a stronger currency than the U.S. dollar. I might add that Mitt Romney created a Swiss bank account under President George W. Bush's administration.

Secondly, the offshore tax shelters in the Cayman Islands and Bermuda—why do you have those? To avoid tax liability in the United States.

I do not know what is in Mitt Romney's income tax returns. There must be something in there he does not want America to see, because he is defying all the calls to go public with the income tax returns.

Are income tax returns important? In Boca Raton he judged 47 percent of the American people based on their income tax returns. We should judge Mitt Romney based on his income tax returns or his refusal to disclose them.

Madam President, I yield the floor.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The Senator from Alabama.

Mr. SESSIONS. Madam President, I know my colleague, the Democratic assistant leader, is here, and I will make a budget point of order now because I understand he would be objecting.

Madam President, the pending amendment, No. 2789, offered by the

Senator from Washington, would cause the underlying legislation to exceed the authorizing committee's section 302(a) allocation of new budget authority and outlays. Therefore, it violates the budget and I raise a point of order against this measure pursuant to section 302(f) of the Congressional Budget Act of 1974.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The Senator from Illinois.

Mr. DURBIN. Madam President, pursuant to section 904 of the Congressional Budget Act of 1974, I move to waive the applicable sections of that act for purposes of the pending amendment, and I ask for the yeas and nays.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Is there a sufficient second?

There appears to be a sufficient second.

The yeas and nays were ordered.

Mr. SESSIONS. Madam President, I will say to my colleague, I appreciate his eloquence and his advocacy. He gave us a real partisan speech this morning. I will just ask a few things of one of our leaders in the Senate, Mr. DURBIN.

What about the responsibility of this body to pass a budget? We have not had one in over 1,200 days. What about the responsibility of this body to move appropriations bills? Not one single appropriations bill has been advanced. And while we are working on legislation that could help veterans find jobs—it will cost about \$200 million a year—why has this body not brought up the defense appropriations bill that funds the Defense Department at over \$500 billion? We have not even brought it up for a vote, even though the House has passed one.

Why have we not brought up the defense authorization bill that passed the Armed Services Committee unanimously? I am a member of it. It has been sitting here for months and not been brought up. Why? Because we would have a debate, actually have some votes around here?

So that is a problem I think we have in this Senate, and I believe it is a serious matter.

I was going to make some comments about the bill before us.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The Senator from Illinois.

Mr. DURBIN. I will be brief. I thank the Senator from Alabama, my friend, for yielding the floor. He asks an important question: Why has Congress not passed a budget resolution in a number of years? But he knows the answer. The answer is because we did better than that. We enacted a statute, a law. A resolution is a message from one house of Congress, back and forth, and kind of binds us internally. A law signed by the President has the force of law. It was called the Budget Control Act.

The interesting thing about the Budget Control Act is it was written by Democrats and Republicans. It charts the course of spending for 2 years, including the one we are appropriating

into now. It was voted on in favor by Democratic and Republican leaders alike. It was a bipartisan effort signed by President Obama with the force of law. That has more power than any budget resolution.

So, clearly, saying that we did not pass a budget resolution on its face is true, but to say that we are not bound by rules when it comes to spending is to ignore the obvious—a budget control act voted on by the leaders on both sides of the aisle.

The second question he asked is, are we ignoring that spending restriction when it comes to those veterans programs, and why should we?

Well, first, the bill that is before us, this Veterans Jobs Corps Act, is paid for. It does not add a penny to the deficit.

The second question is, Well, why do you need it anyway?

Have you noticed the veterans coming home? Have you noticed the high unemployment rate? Have you noticed the problems they are facing when they bring home visible and invisible scars from this war? Is it greater than we thought we would face at this time? Yes. Do we have an obligation to spend this money regardless? Of course. Did we not promise these men and women: If you raise your hand and swear your allegiance to the United States and your willingness to risk your life, we will stand with you when you come home. We will help you find a job. We will give you the medical care you need.

We promised it. We are going to keep the promise.

Now comes the Budget Act, and now a technicality is being argued that maybe we cannot keep the promise. I am going to vote to waive the Budget Act because I stood on this floor with Democrats and Republicans alike, joined in the speeches, joined in the parades, joined in the flag waving saying how much we respect these veterans. But when it comes to spending the money we promised them we would spend so they could become a vital part of America's future, I am not going to step back and hide behind the Budget Act. I am going to stand and make sure that money is there, paid for, not adding to the deficit, so that they have the help they need for the lives we promised them.

I yield the floor.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The Senator from Alabama.

Mr. SESSIONS. Madam President, I thank my eloquent colleague. But we do not have a budget. The law requires us to have a budget—passed decades ago. The Senate Democratic leadership, of which he is a part, said it was foolish to have a budget. They were not going to have one. We have not had one for 3 years. So it resulted last year in a debate over raising the debt ceiling because we had run up more debt than any time in the history of this Republic. And there was an agreement to limit spending. It is not a budget. It

sets a limit on spending—only on discretionary spending, not on the 60 percent of the government otherwise on which we spend money. It is inadequate and insufficient, and before the ink is dry on it, we are back in here with a Democratic majority advocating legislation that violates that cap. There is no dispute about it. This is the eighth time we have raised budget points of order for violation of the agreement setting a cap on spending limits. So here we go again.

Public opinion of Congress is lower today than at almost any time in history. According to the most recent Gallup Poll, only 13 percent of the public approves of Congress's actions. Americans do not trust us. Why should Americans trust us when we keep using gimmicks and budget slights of hand to hide more spending and drive this country further into debt when we make a promise by passing a law that limits spending and then promptly violate that law within months of passage? And, now, the Democrats will attempt again today to violate that law? Why should the American people respect an institution, such as this one, that cannot adhere to a sound financial course for America?

On August 28, our country's gross debt reached \$16 trillion—\$16 trillion—over 100 percent of the entire gross domestic product of this Nation. It is a danger zone, according to every expert who has testified.

According to the Office of Management and Budget's latest mid-session review of our fiscal condition, our Nation's debt will increase \$4.4 trillion over the next 4 years, rising to over \$20 trillion. And in that period of time, we will virtually have doubled the entire debt of the United States since the Democrats took the majority in the Senate and President Obama was elected—double the entire debt. And the course we remain on does not get better. These are their budget numbers. This is a course America is on, and we are not getting off of it. It is \$1 trillion a year in deficits. The U.S. debt per household is now \$137,000 per household—up \$80,000 since just 2002. While Americans have tightened their budgets to make ends meet, Congress has not passed a budget in 1,239 days.

Erskine Bowles, whom President Obama asked to chair the debt commission, noted recently—I saw him in a CNBC interview at a conference on July 12. He said:

If you take last year, 100 percent of our revenue came into the country . . . was spent on our—what's called mandatory spending and interest on the debt. Mandatory spending is principally the entitlement programs, Medicare, Medicaid, and Social Security.

That is what the tax revenue pays for. Everything above that is funded by borrowed money. That is what he said. Is he correct? Absolutely. We are now borrowing 40 cents of every dollar we spend. That is not sustainable. At that conference, Mr. Bowles repeated what

he said before the Budget Committee, on which I am ranking member. Mr. Bowles said this Nation has never been on a more predictable financial crisis path. That is what he said. If we continue at this rate, we are going to have a financial crisis like 2007. Hopefully not if we can avoid it, but if we do not change what we are doing, we are going to have one. He is absolutely confident about it. He has repeated it. So has the Federal Reserve Chairman, Mr. Bernanke. He said: These numbers are not going to continue. If you do not change, we will have a crisis before we get there.

At the debt debate last summer—most Americans remember that; Congress should certainly remember it—we finally reached an agreement that is now being violated. We passed the Budget Control Act last August at the last minute, if you remember, to set strict spending limits over the next 10 years. It created a super committee to solve all of our problems, we hoped, or if the committee failed, which it did, to enact \$1.2 trillion, at least, in cuts through sequestration. That would raise the debt ceiling \$2.1 trillion. We would have a net cut in spending of \$2.1 trillion. The debt ceiling money gets spent now. We have almost added another \$2.1 trillion to the debt since last August. We are getting close to the debt limit again. But the cuts were promised to be over 10 years. We will spend now, but we promise you we have got a plan. We have a law that will keep us on the right path over the next 10 years. So the questions are: Are we spending at that limit? Will we stay there?

Secondly, let me note parenthetically that the \$2.1 trillion is not enough in reduced spending projections. We are talking about reducing projected spending rates—the increase—not cutting spending \$2.1 trillion. We are talking about cutting the projected increase in spending. So at the current rate of spending—\$3.7, \$3.8 trillion this year—if you carry that out for 10 years, that would be \$38 trillion. Under the projections, we are to spend \$47 trillion over the next 10 years—almost \$10 trillion more. All the Budget Control act says is: We are going to spend \$45 trillion rather than \$47 trillion, that our spending would increase from \$37 trillion to \$45 trillion. Can the Republic sustain that? Is that going to throw us into the ocean? Will we collapse as a nation? Will children starve and people not get their Social Security? Of course not. We will still be spending more money. That is all the budget agreement called for, and we are already waffling on that commitment that occurred last summer.

So here we are. While our colleagues have offered well-meaning legislation and something that we should work on to try to deal with the unfortunate increase in unemployment for our veterans—and we can help them, I truly believe—they have refused to go by the promises made under the Budget Control Act last summer—flatly refused.

So I am worried about unemployment. I am worried about it especially among veterans. And there are things we can do. In an effort to find common ground, Senator BURR from North Carolina, representing Fort Bragg, where I spent a summer, offered an alternative bill, the Careers for Veterans Act, which would help our veterans find jobs while keeping the Federal budget under control and honoring the commitment we made last summer. It can be done. This is not hard to do if you want to do it.

Since the Senate majority will not even allow a vote on any bill that abides by the budget—Senator REID is obstructing the right of Members to offer amendments to the bill—I have raised a budget point of order against Senator MURRAY's substitute amendment. Sustaining this point of order will allow us to keep the promises made in the Budget Control Act that Senator DURBIN talked about so proudly—just stay within those promises. It will allow us to continue to work on this bill in a way that helps our veterans without adding more to our children's debt. It does not kill the legislation; it simply tells the sponsors: We are not going to do this until you get it within the budget limits to which we agreed. And it can be done. Senator BURR's bill does it. It certainly can be done.

The Senate majority had the opportunity to write legislation complying with the spending limits set in the Budget Control Act. Instead, they bypassed the committee process. We have not had any committee hearings on this legislation. And they have offered a substitute amendment that violates the Congressional Budget Act by increasing mandatory spending \$700 million over the Veterans' Affairs Committee's 302(a) allocation.

Under the Budget Act, the committee is given a certain amount of money to spend for veterans, and this amendment would violate that agreement. Specifically, the Murray amendment violates Section 302(f) of the Congressional Budget Act by spending \$61 million above the committee's allocation for 2013 and \$480 million above the committee's allocation for 2013 through 2017. It would also spend \$666 million above the committee's allocation for 2013 through 2022.

Surely, out of a budget that spends \$47 trillion over 10 years, we can find \$700 million in savings to pay for this bill. That is all that needs to be done to ensure that the bill complies with the Budget Act. As a result of exceeding the Veterans' Affairs Committee's allocation, the Murray substitute amendment violates Section 302(f) of the Congressional Budget Act. That has been discussed with Chairman CONRAD, the Democratic chairman of the Budget Committee. He acknowledges that it does, and so does his staff. I am very confident that the Parliamentarian agrees and will rule that it violates the Budget Act.

Now the Senate majority plans to have a vote to waive—to waive the promise they made to the American people to control spending just over a year ago. So that is the issue before us today. Do we take the bill and fix it so it complies with the budget—which can easily be done because the substitute Senator BURR has drafted does it—or will we once again waive the promises we made last August and so proudly touted that we were going to cut \$2.1 trillion in spending.

In effect, there is a tax increase, argued with some validity, to pay for this bill. The bill uses a tax enforcement measure to stop abuses by people who don't fully pay their taxes. This will raise revenue, and, therefore, the bill is offset, and so we shouldn't worry about it. So here we have a new idea for helping veterans: We will raise taxes and revenue and we pay for it.

But this is what is called tax and spend. Tax and spend. We agreed to a limit on what we would spend. If we have discovered a method to collect more taxes or raise taxes to get more revenue, that money, under our budget agreement last summer, is to be used to pay down the debt, not to take more money to spend on a new program today because we have more revenue to spend. So that is a fundamental issue. Just because it is paid for does not mean we are not spending more than we agreed to spend. We very precisely are.

Not only does the Murray amendment violate the Budget Act by spending above agreed-to levels, but it also uses budget gimmicks—extraordinarily really—to make the bill appear to be offset. This budget sleight of hand is called a timing shift. What about this offset or pay-for idea? Let me discuss that a moment.

This is one of the issues that, if the American people fully understood it, would outrage them. As a matter of fact, it is probably part of why they are not happy with us now because they have seen so much of this. This is a recurring gimmick. If a CEO offered stock based on this kind of promise of financial solvency they would go to jail. It is as bogus as a three-dollar bill. This is what it is. It shifts the payment of corporate income taxes 2 to 3 months sooner so we can count it in this fiscal year. Specifically, this gimmick would collect additional revenue over the 2013 through 2017 budget window, which is the budget window they were trying to deal with since it violates the Budget Act over that 5 year period. So this was designed to cover up more spending.

But think about it. It is exactly the same amount of less revenue that will occur in the 2014 through 2018 budget window. If we ask someone to pay their taxes earlier, they do not owe it the next year when we would otherwise expect to receive it.

The height of this gimmick was demonstrated years ago when I first came to the Senate. I was shocked. This is

what they did: They moved a Social Security check from this fiscal year to the next fiscal year. What was the result? It resulted in having a lot of money to spend this fiscal year; right? The CBO said we have more money because we didn't pay a Social Security payment. They moved—delayed—it by 1 day. That is what they wanted to do, to move it 1 day. But what happens to the next fiscal year? Is this really a gain or a gimmick? It is a gimmick because the next fiscal year we would need to make an additional Social Security payment in that budget year.

It is just a way to spend more today and push off the cost until tomorrow. That is what they did then, and that is exactly what this is today. It is a smoke-and-mirror scheme used to avoid the rules in the Budget Act and the scorekeepers at the Congressional Budget Office. It being used to manipulate the scoring for short-term gain. It simply speeds up the payments in the first 5 years so it appears we have more money to spend. In reality, the gimmick merely creates a hole in the budget next year because the money that was expected to come in next year—now coming in this year—is not coming in next year.

So this point of order is not a technical issue, it is an issue of whether this body will uphold its commitment to the American people on how much money we are going to spend. Congress agreed to certain spending levels in the Budget Control Act. We voted on those spending levels, and we should stick with those spending levels today. There is no reason for us to violate that agreement. The point of order exists so that Congress cannot raise taxes and spend money over the agreed-to amount. The point of order requires 60 votes to waive, and it exists so the Senate does not succumb to political pressure to spend beyond our means. Really, it is meant to try to stop spending beyond our means.

The Senate majority was aware of the budget rules when they wrote this bill. They were aware of it. Instead of writing a bill that complied with the Budget Act, they decided to go above the agreed-upon spending levels. Senator BURR—a fine Senator—was also aware of the rules under the Budget Act and the spending levels set under the Budget Control Act. He drafted alternative legislation that complied with the budget rules and that would fund a veterans jobs program through discretionary spending.

Unfortunately, the Senate majority took most of Senator BURR's policy suggestions but did not keep the fiscal discipline found in his bill. They will not allow us to have a vote to aid veterans within the spending agreement.

Contrary to what my friends on the other side of the aisle claim, this point of order will not kill the bill. It only returns the bill to the legislative calendar. It will remain right there on the calendar, but it will allow the people who support it, if they want it passed—

and they do—to propose changes so that the bill complies with the Budget Act.

We can still fix and pass this bill before we leave this week. It wouldn't take much time at all to fix this matter. A vote in support of the point of order will protect the integrity of the budget process. Supporting this point of order will allow us to change the underlying bill so that it is fiscally sound and complies with the spending levels we have agreed to.

Unfortunately, while the Senate majority refuses to allow a vote on a reasonable veterans bill that complies with the Budget Act, they are neglecting the looming cuts that face our military men and women on January 2, 2013—the sequester. Given the events happening around the world today, we need to be very careful not to allow these kinds of cuts to take place in the first part of next year. There are various ways we could easily fix that, in my opinion, but we will not even confront the issue. The Senate majority has refused to address sequestration, which the Secretary of Defense—President Obama's Secretary of Defense—said would be catastrophic. Defense people have said it would hollow out the military. It is too rapid a bite, according to the experts in the Obama administration and others, but no effort has been brought forward to confront that problem—to bring it up on the Senate floor and have a full debate about it.

We can do a \$200 million a year bill that we spent a week or more on, but we have no time on the Senate floor dedicated to dealing with the sequester, which would take \$500 billion out of the defense budget. This bill on the floor today would spend nearly \$1 billion over 5 years above the budget.

What about the \$500 billion in cuts that are looming right now in January? We need to wrestle with that and decide how we are going to confront that. It is not going to be easy. Maybe defense can sustain some more cuts, but I don't think this much. They have already taken \$500 billion in cuts, and this would be an additional \$500 billion in cuts.

The Defense Department, under the plan today, which represents one-sixth of Federal Government spending, would get half the cuts, and the remaining five-sixths of the Federal Government would get the other half of the cuts. This is disproportionate. It should not have been part of the Budget Act. But they slipped it in the dead of night, and it came to the floor and people went along with it so we would not hit the debt ceiling. But it is not good, and we need to fix that, in my opinion.

House Republicans have confronted this matter. They realized this was a problem, and they proposed a budget and a plan to replace and undo the sequester and to do it in a way that made sense without violating spending levels we agreed to last August. How many proposals to fix this problem have we

received from Senator DURBIN and Senator REID? Zero. Nothing. They are not doing anything but blocking any attempt to bring up legislation that would fix it.

That is why we don't have a Defense authorization bill, which came out of my committee unanimously, the Armed Services Committee. It has been sitting here and not being brought up. Why? Because if we do, we will have a discussion about the sequester and the Defense Department and the future of America, and they do not want that. The House passed the Defense authorization bill in May, and they passed the Defense appropriations bill in June. We have passed none of them, not even brought them to the floor.

They want to attack Republicans as not caring about our men and women who serve our country. Yet we are trying to fix the sequester, trying to bring up a Defense bill that will actually do some good and give a pay raise to our men and women in uniform—a small one, but a pay raise. So I am really disappointed we haven't brought up the Defense authorization bill, which came out of my committee.

A few days ago—last week—Senator McCAIN spoke about this. He said: Shame, shame, shame. Imagine that for 51 years, every year, this Senate has passed the Defense authorization bill. This will be the first time in 51 years we haven't passed the Defense authorization bill, and we have so many important issues related to our Defense Department today. Nothing is more important than that. Yet we spent a whole week, or the last few days, discussing a bill that could have been agreed to just like that, with the suggestions of Senator BURR, because we can't wait to get out of this place. This could have already passed, and we could have been dealing with these important issues. I find it breathtaking, frankly.

Let me just point out the bill is not going to go through the House since it violates the Constitution. There are revenue proposals in this bill. It will not see the light of day in the House because the Constitution says revenue bills must be generated in the House. So we have wasted all this time producing a bill that cannot and will not be received by the House.

Article 1, Section 7 of the United States Constitution says:

All Bills for raising Revenue shall originate in the House of Representatives. . . .

This is a revenue bill.

So what has happened? Is it just an idea? Let's see, we don't want to talk about the Defense appropriations bill. We don't want to talk about the Defense authorization bill; it involves hundreds of billions of dollars. We don't want to talk about those, so let's bring up this veterans bill. We will bring it up even though it violates the Budget Act. And do you know what those stupid Republicans will do? They will object and say it violates the Budget Act. And do you know what we

can say? We can say: You don't like veterans. You don't believe in honoring those who served our country. Do you want to know the truth? That is what has happened right here today, and it is irresponsible.

So let's vote for Senator BURR's bill. Let's pass legislation that will help veterans right now, or we are going to send this bill back—I am confident—to see if they come up with some other plan that would be helpful to our veterans and their employment prospects without violating the Budget Act.

I want to mention one more thing because I think it is important. The two largest veterans groups, the VFW and the American Legion, have said these things. Steve Gonzalez, assistant director of the American Legion, said both bills, the Burr and Murray bills "have ideas on how to get veterans quality jobs," and added that BURR's version stands a better chance of passing.

What about the VFW? In the Washington Post today:

"VFW supports concepts behind the Veterans Job Corps bill, but we have some concerns about the budgetary implications," said Ryan Gallucci, deputy director of national legislative affairs for the VFW.

We don't have to do it the way this bill has come up. Senator BURR has offered a very fine proposal that the VFW and the American Legion seem to support. Let's do that. Let's do it that way and not violate our commitment to the American people to live within our means.

I yield the floor.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The Senator from Colorado.

PRODUCTION TAX CREDIT

Mr. UDALL of Colorado. Madam President, I rise again this morning, as I have for a number of months, to talk about the most important issue facing the American people and this Congress, and that is jobs.

A good news story on the jobs front has been our wind energy industry. The wind energy industry has created thousands of good-paying jobs, and it could create thousands more. But the troubling news that goes along with the good news is that the potentially bright future of this industry is uncertain. Why? Because we in the Congress are holding the wind energy industry hostage because we have failed to extend the production tax credit.

As I have said every day I have been on the Senate floor since June to discuss this topic, every day that we fail to extend the PTC for wind energy more jobs are put at risk. We have seen this unfortunate reality unfold across the country as predicted, including in my home State of Colorado, where over 100 people have lost their jobs. I don't have to tell my colleagues that when people lose jobs, those job losses negatively affect families and the communities where they live.

Just yesterday—it breaks my heart—Siemens Energy announced they are going to lay off more than 600 people in Iowa, Kansas, and Florida. Enough is

enough. These layoffs that continue to be announced almost weekly should spur us to extend the wind production tax credit without any further delay.

Jobs are at stake. It is that simple. With many Americans already losing their jobs, more jobs are at risk—thousands, literally—if we don't act.

Here is my question: Why would we forfeit leadership in an industry that is poised to grow even further? There is no reason we should cede leadership of this important industry to China or anywhere else by letting the production tax credit expire. If we commit to extending the PTC, we will then lead the world in wind power, and here is a part of why I come to the floor every day and talk about particular States.

There are few places that is more apparent than in Wyoming. Wyoming has phenomenal wind reserves. If you have driven through Wyoming, you know what I am talking about. If you talk to anybody from Wyoming, they will always ironically say: One of the things we have in excess in Wyoming is wind.

The National Global Energy Lab based in Colorado estimates that Wyoming has enough wind power potential to meet 116 times the State's energy needs. To put it another way, that is 25 million homes that would be powered by harnessing wind.

Wyoming is well on its way to harnessing its wind potential. Why? Although it ranks 11th in the Nation for installed wind power—which is not a shabby number, frankly—there are plans to nearly quadruple the amount of wind power in the State of Wyoming. Not only would that create thousands of jobs—that goes without saying—it would produce enough electricity to power 1.5 million homes. The construction of those projects will create hundreds of nicely paying renewable energy jobs right in the State of Wyoming.

It is no wonder then that the massive wind potential in Wyoming has also attracted investment for manufacturers. To make that point, I want to share a development with you.

Last year a plan to build the first wind energy manufacturing facility in Wyoming was announced. It was a joint venture between the Spanish wind manufacturer Gestamp and an Ohio-based company called Worthington Industries. They formed a conglomerate called Gestamp Worthington Wind Steel. The companies announced they would build a facility in Cheyenne, WY, and there would be 150 good-paying jobs attached to that facility. They planned to invest \$40 million in the plant. But here is the twist: That project has now been put on hold. Those jobs and the millions in investment that were planned to be directed into Wyoming have been shelved.

This isn't an isolated incident. There are wind manufacturing facilities and wind projects across the country where we are seeing exactly the same thing happening, and the reason is clear: uncertainty over the future of the production tax credit. So our inaction in the

Congress is putting good-paying American jobs at risk and reducing opportunities for further investments in this growing industry. There is just no reason for it. The PTC has strong support from both sides of the aisle and from both Houses of the Congress. Of course, a broad array of groups in the private sector support the wind energy industry.

Yesterday, a group of businesses from across the country wrote to leaders in the House and the Senate urging us to bring up and pass an extension of the PTC as soon as possible. Businesses such as Starbucks and Levi's joined a diverse group of companies, including Colorado's own Aspen Skiing Company and New Belgium Brewery, in urging us in the Congress to work across the divide, work across the aisle, and extend the PTC. These companies understand how positive the production tax credit and our wind industry has been for jobs, national security, and our clean energy economy. They made that case yesterday in their letter.

I ask unanimous consent to have printed in the RECORD a copy of this letter.

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

BUSINESS FOR INNOVATIVE
CLIMATE AND ENERGY POLICY,
Boston, MA, September 18, 2012.

Re: Production Tax Credit for Wind Energy.

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

Hon. NANCY PELOSI,
House Minority Leader, U.S. House of Representatives, Washington, DC.

Hon. HARRY REID,
Senate Majority Leader, U.S. Senate, Washington, DC.

Hon. MITCH MCCONNELL,
Senate Minority Leader, U.S. Senate, Washington, DC.

DEAR SPEAKER BOEHNER, MAJORITY LEADER REID, MINORITY LEADER PELOSI, AND MINORITY LEADER MCCONNELL: As major U.S. employers and some of the largest non-utility purchasers of renewable energy, we urge you to extend the Production Tax Credit (PTC) for wind energy before the end of the 112th Congress. A failure to pass an extension will amount to levying a tax on companies committed to buying American energy and growing the U.S. economy. In today's economic climate, a tax hike on American businesses buying American renewable energy is unwarranted.

In the past decade American businesses have significantly ramped up their purchase of American wind energy. For consumers of wind electricity, the economic benefits of the PTC are tremendous. Electricity rates, which reflect marginal costs for power plant operations and fuel prices, consistently decrease when wind enters the market. Because wind prices can be locked in up front, businesses incorporating wind into their energy portfolios are better equipped to hedge market volatility in traditional fuels markets caused by supply shocks. We are concerned that allowing the PTC to expire will immediately raise prices for the renewable electricity we buy today.

The PTC has enabled the industry to slash wind energy costs—90% since 1980—a big reason why companies like ours are buying increasing amounts of renewable energy. Wind

now supplies over 3% of U.S. demand and accounts for 35% of new power capacity installed in the last four years. In the seven years that the PTC has been continuously in place, installed wind capacity has grown sevenfold to nearly 47 Gigawatts representing more than \$79 billion in private investment.

As Congress investigates ways to spur business growth, we urge you to ensure an extension of the PTC. Failure to extend the PTC for wind would tax our companies and thousands of others like us that purchase significant amounts of renewable energy and hurt our bottom lines at a time when the economy is struggling to recover. Extending the PTC lowers prices for all consumers, keeps America competitive in a global marketplace and creates homegrown American jobs.

Sincerely,

Akamai Technologies, Annie's, Inc., Aspen Skiing Company, Ben & Jerry's, Clif Bar, Johnson & Johnson, Jones Lang LaSalle, Levi Strauss & Co, New Belgium Brewing, The North Face, Piney Bowes, Portland Trail Blazers, Seventh Generation, Sprint, Starbucks, Stonyfield Farm, Symantec, Timberland, Yahoo!

Mr. UDALL of Colorado. Madam President, as I conclude I want to remind us that in August, before we adjourned for our month's State work period, our Senate Finance Committee passed legislation that would include an extension of the production tax credit. I was encouraged to see that the committee bridged the partisan divide to advance what is really and truly a commonsense policy that will help our American economy and our middle class.

We should build on what the Finance Committee did and take up and pass this legislation as soon as possible. The longer we delay, the more jobs we put at risk and the more our economic recovery is at risk.

It is very simple: The production tax credit equals jobs. We should pass it as soon as possible. So, my colleagues, let's work together. Let's find a path forward, and let's pass this critical tax credit as soon as possible.

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

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

The assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The Senator from Oklahoma.

Mr. COBURN. 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.

Mr. COBURN. Madam President, I want to spend a few moments this morning talking about the budget point of order. But a bigger topic is we are going to have a vote at noon, and the question, in my mind, is: Will we at some point in the future recognize the hole we are in?

When I talk to individual Members they all agree we are in a hole, we have a problem, and it is getting ready to bite this country in ways that are unimaginable in terms of its impact on the everyday citizens of this country.

Yet in the Senate we have done nothing to address the bigger problems facing the country.

Now we have a bill that has a budget point of order that is lying against it, and the question is: Will we continue the behavior that put our country in the problems we are in today or will we take a new track?

The desire to help veterans is a noble desire, but there are a lot of points about this bill that the average American and the average veteran ought to be asking. There are also other questions, such as: What are the other things we are doing for jobs for veterans, and how well are they working?

We have six veterans job training programs. We already have a preference across the Federal Government for hiring veterans. We have SBA programs like crazy. We have contracting programs 8a and 8b. We have all these programs, but not one hearing has been held by the committee of jurisdiction oversight of the job training programs or the other programs we have to enhance the economic well-being of our veterans.

So what we have is a bill that is brought to the Senate floor that has good intentions behind it but shows the absolute laziness of Congress in terms of digging things out.

When the GAO issued its duplication report on the job training programs for veterans, four of them do exactly the same thing. None of them has a metric. So we don't know if they are working, and we haven't held a hearing to find out if they are working. But what are we doing? We are proposing another jobs program for veterans without having done the serious work of how we invest \$1 billion.

Now, the other point that we should know is, we are spending \$1 billion a year right now on veterans job training programs. This bill has \$1 billion over 5. The second point I would like to make—and I think it was made by the ranking member of the Budget Committee—is there is no honest accounting in this bill regardless of the budget point of order or the blue slip, the non-constitutionality of originating revenue bills in the Senate. There is absolutely no transparency nor correctness nor character nor integrity in the financing of this bill. When we find ourselves \$16 trillion in debt and we are going to pay for another bill over 5 years by 10 years of change, we never get out of the problem. We make the problem worse.

What are we doing and whom are we doing it for? Are we truly thinking about veterans when we do not solve the bigger problems? We have the manifest presence in this bill of the very problems we say we need to be addressing. Yet we are making them worse with this bill. We are making the financial problems worse with this bill.

I am befuddled and disappointed that we cannot, as a group of individuals who all love this country very much,

come together on some certain baseline principles that we ought to be operating under in the Senate. The first of those ought to be we ought to do nothing now that makes the problem worse for our kids and grandkids. We are now over \$200,000 per family of debt in this country. We are over \$200,000—it is actually about \$225,000. Think about the median family income over the last 4 years that has gone down 9 percent in this country, and we are going to make sure it goes down even further if we continue to do what we are doing in this bill. We have gone from \$54,900 median family to \$50,200 in the last 4 years, median family income, and we have gas prices as high as they have ever been and we are going to perpetuate a system that says we are going to continue to make the problem worse, not better.

There is also another little gimmick in this bill that if we were to do it in private, we would go to jail for it; that is, we are going to charge corporations more income tax than what they actually owe to get past 1 year, and then after the year is over, we are going to flip it back so we can say we paid for something when we did not. That violates all aspects of integrity and honesty. Do you know what the answer I hear as to why we are doing it? “Oh, we have done that in the past.” It was not right in the past, and it is certainly not right now to lie, to cheat, to be dishonest about the accounting principles surrounding this bill in terms of how we pay for it because, in essence, it violates pay-go—the very rule we said was going to help us get out of our problems that 67 times has been waived in the last 3 years. As a matter of fact, I don’t know the last time a pay-go challenge was not waived.

The second principle we ought to be dealing with is we ought to follow the rules we set up for ourselves that are supposed to discipline us in terms of getting our country out of the problems which we are, regrettably, continually ignoring. If, in fact, we want to help veterans get jobs, there are a lot of ways for us to do it. One is make sure the job programs we have are working—and they are not. If they are not working, why are we continuing to spend \$1 billion a year on them? No. 2, create a level of confidence in this country, by our own behavior, that we are actually addressing the real problems in front of the country rather than the political dynamics of an election that says we want to do something and everybody in this Chamber knows, even if we pass this bill, it is not going to accomplish anything because, in fact, it has a blue slip against it because of the Constitution.

On Monday mornings when I get up—I get up about 4:30 to catch a flight to come back here—I have noticed I have an attitude problem. I don’t want to come anymore. The reason I don’t want to come anymore is because we are not doing anything to address the real problems that are in front of our coun-

try. We are ignoring the real problems so we can create political contrasts for an election, all the while the country is sinking and sinking and sinking.

What it is is a lack of leadership. We can lead in the wrong direction, knowing what the problems are and making mistakes, and we can be forgiven for that. But when we know what the real problems are and we are ignoring them, that is an unforgivable failure of leadership. That is where we find ourselves.

I heard my colleague mention the Defense authorization bill. There is absolutely no excuse for us not to have passed a Defense authorization bill that gives the planning, the direction, and the commitment for this country’s future in terms of our defenses—the No. 1 priority for us as a Congress, according to the Constitution. Yet we have not done that. We have made the immediate political situation trump everything. That is the opposite of leadership. It is actually cowardice, because when someone is a leader and they duck the real problems in front of them, they take everybody down with them—the well intentioned and the not well intentioned. That is where we are—as a country, as a Senate—by not addressing the real issues of this country.

I don’t know what is going to happen on the votes on this bill, but I know what needs to happen in the Senate. There needs to be a renewed sense of awareness of the real problems facing this country and a redoubling of our commitment to shed partisan roles and get down to fixing the real problems in front of us. Parochialism has no place in that discussion. The political careers of Members have no place in that discussion. The real future of our country is at risk and we are, similar to the proverbial person with their head in the sand, ignoring that risk. The greatest country in the world is on the precipice of falling, predicted long ago by such people as John Adams and Thomas Jefferson—that the day would come that we, in fact, would put the political ahead of the best interests of our country. That is what we are seeing played out in Washington. That is exactly what we are seeing played out with this bill. The American people deserve much better.

I yield the floor.

Mr. SESSIONS. Madam President, before the Senator leaves, I would ask him a question. And the reason I am asking Senator COBURN about this is because there is no one of these 100 Senators here today who has spent more hours, effort and time in dealing with the duplicative programs of the Federal Government than Senator COBURN. He has brought up these issues time and again.

I just ask, according to the GAO, in 2009, Senator COBURN, I understand that 9 Federal agencies spent \$18 billion to administer 47 job training programs. The Senator has looked into that. I know I have heard him speak on that specifically. I was surprised the

Senator brought out that there are already six programs for veterans now, and this would be a new one added to it.

What is the Senator’s view of what a responsible Congress should do when we learn we are spending this much money on these programs with their own bureaucrats and so forth? Can we do better?

Mr. COBURN. Absolutely. Let me give people some hope. VIRGINIA FOXX, a Representative in the House, who is the chairman of the Subcommittee on Workforce and Labor, has passed a bill out of her committee that consolidates 33 of those job training programs into 1, puts metrics on every one of them so we will know if they are working and requires mandatory oversight of them. The reason she did not do all 47 is 14 of them are not in her jurisdiction.

But add to it another \$4 billion, and another 20-plus programs for the disabled, so we actually have almost 70 programs and \$23 billion a year we are spending on job training, of which nobody knows—as a matter of fact I know they are not working.

We actually released a report on job training in Oklahoma. We looked at every Federal job training and State job training program going on in Oklahoma. Do you know what works? Oklahoma programs. Do you know what does not work? Federal job training programs in Oklahoma.

We have 1 city in Oklahoma that is 16,000 people, 17 Federal job training centers, and an unemployment rate of 4.7 percent; 17 different Federal agencies in 1 city of 16,000 people with an unemployment rate of 4.7 percent. What we are doing is employing people in the job training industry—which may be good if they are having results. But we have results that are untenable.

Job training is just one area of our Federal Government. The GAO has released reports on duplication. Their final report will come in February of next year, where they will have looked at the entire Federal Government. What we know right now is if we did our work, the 100 Senators who care about our country did our work, over the next 10 years we could save \$200 billion by eliminating duplication in Federal programs—\$200 billion. I said over 10 years; that is, \$200 billion per year. It is \$2 trillion over 10 years. We could save over \$200 billion per year.

We wouldn’t be having sequestration if we did our job, if we did our oversight, if we consolidated programs, made them transparent and made them accountable and then put metrics on them to see if they were working and then did oversight to see that they are working. We would not be in sequestration. We would not have near the problems we have today. But the failure is us. The Congress has failed to do its job.

The consequences will not be borne by us. The consequences will be borne by the son of my health LA who was just born, by my new grandson who is

now almost 7 weeks old. That is who is going to pay the consequences—the children of this country—when we fail to do our jobs.

I appreciate the Senator's leadership. I am going to support his point of order. It is the right thing to do. I did not even talk about the areas he talked about in terms of—we set up this budget agreement for 2 years. I will tell you what, the CR coming—this is the irony of all ironies. Had we not had that budget agreement and we did a CR, we would spend \$2.6 billion less next year if we had a clean CR than under the Budget Control Act we passed. By doing the Budget Control Act, we are actually going to spend more money than we did last year.

So everything is upside down in Washington because everything is political or parochial and nobody is thinking long term about the big problems facing our country.

I yield the floor.

Mr. SESSIONS. Madam President, I thank the Senator from Oklahoma. He served on the debt commission. He is steeped in the challenges facing our country and he is working hard to fix our problems.

I salute Senator BURR for coming forward with a proposal that helps veterans while abiding by the rules set forth in the Budget Act. Regretfully, I think we will end this matter today, the legislation that is coming forward, through the budget point of order.

I thank the Chair and yield the floor.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The Senator from Florida.

Mr. NELSON of Florida. Madam President, the Senator from Alabama knows the personal friendship we have and my high regard for him and the privilege I have had working with him over the years. It has been a working relationship.

Regardless of what one feels about a budget and a budget point of order, we are talking about a technicality to kill a bill to help unemployed veterans at a time they desperately need help because they are coming back from Iraq and Afghanistan and they can't find work. Until we come out of the recession—and the recovery is under way, but veterans have a higher percentage of unemployment and especially veterans under age 24 have an even higher percentage of unemployment. So what we have is a piece of legislation to give an employment cushion for veterans for at least a year, until they can find employment in the private sector.

This is employment to do things we need, since so many of our national resources, such as parks and emergency responders and firefighters and police, need help. Look at all of the deterioration in the national parks. This would be an opportunity to employ those veterans and to employ them up to a year. Everybody knows this makes common sense and it is the right thing to do.

What is happening is the folks on that side of the aisle, because we are in an election year and because this hap-

pened to be a proposal coming out of the White House and is brought to the floor by this Senator from Florida, are not going to support it, and they are going to kill it on a technicality by denying us 60 votes in order to waive the budgetary point of order. That is the bottom line. That is what is going on here, and it is sad. Yet that is what is happening.

Look at the votes in the last week. We passed the motion for cloture on the motion to proceed by 95 to 1. Doesn't that tell us something? Then we had the second procedural vote which was 84 to 8. All we need is 60 votes to get over this hurdle and to get to the bill and then probably pass it by unanimous consent because everybody agrees with the substance of the bill. It is clear that commonsense legislation that has bipartisan support is getting thwarted in this Chamber. We all know how important it is to help our veterans find work as they return home.

Does the Senator from Oklahoma want to ask a question? The Senator from Oklahoma knows my respect for him and my personal friendship for him. I admire the Senator for the courageous stance he takes. But I hope the Senator from Oklahoma understands—and I respectfully say that—for a need so great as unemployed veterans, this is not the time to draw a technical line on a budget. I would earnestly and respectfully request of my friend that this be one of the considerations he would make.

Does the Senator wish to engage in any conversation? If not, I will complete my remarks.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The Senator from Oklahoma.

Mr. COBURN. Madam President, I would ask to have a back-and-forth real debate on this, recognizing us both, with the Senator from Florida controlling the time, if he has no difficulty agreeing with that.

One of the reasons I came out is I don't agree with the substance of this bill and I don't want the Senator from Florida to make a statement on the floor that everybody agrees with it. We have six veterans job training programs that nobody is overseeing. Nobody knows if they work.

Mr. NELSON of Florida. OK. Then what I would suggest to my friend—and he knows he is my friend—if we have a difference of opinion, I respect that, and I would like him to share that. I wish to complete my very brief statement and then the Senator from Oklahoma may make whatever statement he wishes to make.

The unemployment rate among veterans returning from Iraq and Afghanistan is hovering around 11 percent, and for those unemployed veterans age 24 and less it is even higher. We have taken steps to combat this problem. This past summer we passed legislation that will help veterans get Federal occupational licenses when their military training matches civilian requirements. That made sense. That made

common sense. As a matter of fact, we got that through the Senate unanimously and it was signed into law. The bill recognized that a veteran gets all of this specialized training and they ought to be able to utilize that training without having to go through all the retraining and the relicensing. We could do that—and what we passed is now law—we could do that in Federal employment where there is a similar kind of requirement.

What is in this bill is to do that for the State occupational requirements; to take a veteran who has a military discipline—a specialty—as that veteran is applying for a private sector job that happens to be covered by State law on the occupational requirements and requirements of licensing, that it is a consideration, instead of the veteran having to go through all of that again. That makes common sense.

That particular idea was offered by the Senator from Arkansas, Mr. PRYOR, and it is a part of the bill. Also, Senator MURRAY, who is here on the floor and who is the chairman of the committee, reached out and incorporated a number—and she can address that—of the different bipartisan ideas and not just my idea, which is the one I was talking about wherein veterans can have employment up to a year—but so many others that are incorporated into the bill that came out of committee.

So we already did something about matching civilian requirements, albeit what was signed into law was just with regard to Federal employment.

Also, last year we passed a bill that granted tax benefits to companies that hire wounded warriors. Of course, we know what inspiration all the rest of us take from the wounded warriors. The Senator from Oklahoma and I from time to time go to Bethesda to what used to be called Bethesda Naval and now is the combined, all-military services Walter Reed. For every one of us who goes out there and suddenly sees these veterans coming in who are on these new kinds of computer-controlled prostheses where they can actually walk and run, even when their leg has been blown off above the knee, it pulls at our hearts and yet we are so glad that technology has moved forward. But those same ladies and gentlemen need jobs. Until the recovery is complete, they are having difficulty. That is why I filed this bill. The chairman of the committee and the ranking member have done their best to work across the aisle.

Veterans don't care to hear about why we can't help them. They don't care to hear about technicalities of a budget point of order. They want our country to support them in the way they have supported us, and that is an obligation. A lot of us in this Chamber have served in the military. I think it is engrained in every Senator here that we have an obligation to those who have served this country.

This effort here today that we are going to vote on in 20 minutes has

broad support from veterans and police organizations. The Disabled American Veterans, the Military Officers Association of America, the National Association of Police Organizations, and the American Legion all support it. The Iraq and Afghanistan Veterans of America have called and pleaded for its immediate passage. They know why: Because of their veterans' need to know that Congress has their back.

So I would make a plea to the Senate. We just need a few votes from that side of the aisle to get to the threshold of 60 to waive the technicality of the budget point of order.

I look forward to the comments of my friend, the Senator from Oklahoma.

Madam President, since the time is controlled over here, I reserve the final 7 minutes for the chairman of the committee.

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

Mr. NELSON of Florida. I yield the floor.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The Senator from Oklahoma.

Mr. COBURN. Madam President, my colleague from Florida raises some good points about us wanting to help our veterans. I don't think there is anybody who does not recognize their significant sacrifice. As a matter of fact, it was not long ago that the 45th from Oklahoma lost 17 people in Afghanistan and hundreds were wounded.

The real question is: how do we help them the best? How do we really help veterans? We are going to have plenty of opportunities to say there is a reason to not do the right thing for the long-term best interests of our country.

We have never found ourselves in the predicament we find ourselves in today in terms of our financial exposure and the real risk to the veterans who have jobs today—which nobody is talking about but the real risk for them. Because when this thing goes down—and I am talking about the financial collapse of this country—when it happens, those who have jobs who are veterans today are going to lose them. So there could be no more noble cause than to make an exception for veterans, except that is not what the Senate does. We make an exception every time—every time.

Here is the question for my friend: Under what system of values, honor, and integrity did these veterans serve? The highest and noblest of honor and integrity, without a doubt.

They put their life on the line so I do not have to, so my adult, mature children in their thirties and forties do not have to. The difference is, what they put their life on the line for was to ensure that the freedom and liberty and vibrancy of this country goes forward. We are taking a little pocketknife to one of the legs of the three-legged stool with our actions and slowly nibbling the support of that leg. We are taking it away by our very actions.

Mr. NELSON of Florida. Madam President, I would like to respond to my friend.

Mr. COBURN. If I could finish. Since the other side has the last 7 minutes, I will be finished well before then.

We are going to say the financial condition of the country does not matter. We are going to say it does not matter the \$1 billion a year we are spending already on veterans job training programs. It does not matter. We are going to say here is a year's program for jobs for 20,000 veterans and that is going to trump everything else.

You would not have any objection from this Senator if you actually really paid for this, No. 1, if you did not violate pay-go and you truly did it in a way that oversights the present job training programs we have and you truly did it in a way that matches the integrity and honor of our veterans. But we did not do that. No. We played games. We played games with budget rules. We played games with pay-go. We did not do any oversight. We did not even have a hearing. There was no hearing on this bill.

You took Senator BURR's suggestions, which were common sense, and applied it broadly across the government. But we did not match the honor and integrity and valor and purpose. When I meet with veterans in townhall meetings, I ask them why they serve. Do you know what they tell me? Because this is the greatest country the world has ever known and they want to keep it that way.

What we are doing today does not keep it that way. It perpetuates the same problems that created the very dangerous situation this country is in.

So when we make a claim about that everybody agrees with this bill, I just wish to say I do not agree with the bill. There are a whole lot of ways to help veterans that are better than this, that give them a permanent job. We passed the post-9/11 GI bill; right? They can get paid a stipend while they go to college to learn a new skill, the same as a noncom officer. They get paid for the books and tuition and everything else so they can become whole as they learn a skill. We have the capability for studies while we are in the military. We have six separate job training programs that we are spending \$1 billion a year on.

The best way to help veterans is to fix this country's economic situation to create opportunity, and they will fly because they have already proven they have the initiative, the strength, the moral courage, the integrity, and the valor to accomplish anything they want to accomplish.

So I am in disagreement with my friend. I think we have a political device in front of us, and I am going to be very interested to see the character of the Senate on whether it succumbs to the parochial and political over the best long-term interests of the country. If it does, it just proves that the Senate needs to be changed to truly address the real problems in front of our country. That is what it is going to prove, regardless of the outcome: Do

we have the character? Do we match the valor, honor, and integrity of the people who serve this Nation in the Armed Forces with our willingness to sacrifice our political careers to do what is in the best long-term interest of the country?

They set the example for us. The question is whether we will follow their example.

I yield to my friend from Florida.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The Senator from Florida.

Mr. NELSON of Florida. Madam President, before the chairman of the committee uses the time reserved for her, I wish to respond to my friend from Oklahoma—and he is my friend—by telling him why I think he is wrong on this issue and telling him by way of a compliment to him because the Senator from Oklahoma and I, the Senator from Florida, had worked together, he being much more prominent in the efforts, to bring the budget under control 1 year ago.

In having discussions across the aisle—often private discussions—what started as a rump group known as the Gang of 6 that grew and blossomed into what, in effect, became a group of 45—and I think that was the number of us who stood in the Senate Press Gallery in the summer 1 year ago; it was the summer of 2011—and we said we wanted a big \$4 trillion-plus budget deficit, and we pointed out ways we could get there.

Indeed, what this Senator has said—and I have heard other Republican Senators who feel and have said very close to identical things publicly; and I will name one and that is Senator LINDSEY GRAHAM and he stated it on “Meet the Press” a couple months ago—that the way we get there is producing revenue through reform of the Tax Code by going after all the tax preferences which have ballooned out of control since the last tax reform bill in 1986, that this Senator, then a young Congressman, voted for, to the point that tax expenditures, tax preferences are now \$14 trillion over 10 years. A lot of them have outlived their usefulness. For a lot of them, their special interests or sponsors would tell us: We would not want that if we could have a certainty of a lower rate.

Therefore, we have said many times on this floor and in public statements, we can take tax preferences, restrain them, and use that revenue to do two things: lower everybody's tax rates, including corporate, streamline the Tax Code by getting all this underbrush of preferences out of the way, and then use the rest of the revenue to lower the deficit.

I suspect the Senator and I feel very similar about that issue. So when he talks about reforming the spending process, the fiscal process which includes the revenue process of this country, then I think we have grounds for significant agreement, and I would hope we are going to address that in the lameduck session that starts.

My plea is that we do not take it out, in this particular case, on something that can be done immediately for veterans in need returning home from Iraq and Afghanistan.

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

Mr. NELSON of Florida. Of course.

Mr. COBURN. Through the Chair, I would ask the Senator, how did he vote on the tax extender package coming out of the Senate Finance Committee? Because that is the real test of whether the Senator wants to reform the Tax Code. As I recall, the Senator voted for it and I voted against it. There is a very big difference.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The Senator's time has expired.

Mrs. MURRAY. Madam President, I would remind all the Senators, we are here on the floor on a very important bill on the Veterans Jobs Corps, and I wish to thank my colleague from Florida, Senator BILL NELSON, for his tremendous leadership and passion on the issue of making sure our veterans get back to work, at a time when they have a 20-percent-plus unemployment rate, and for his work on this bill as we move to this point.

I have been listening to the debate on this bill, and what I have heard are some pretty weak arguments against the merits of this legislation. I have heard we have not held hearings on the employment or on the provisions of this legislation.

The Senators who spoke may not have known—they are not on our committee—but, indeed, we have had hearings on employment both last year and this year and on this bill. Veterans groups and the VA at multiple hearings, in fact, have had multiple opportunities to give their views. The COPS and SAFER Grant Programs in this bill have been around for years, and we know they work.

On the point I heard reiterated here, that the bill was not paid for, violated pay-go, as all bills that come before the Senate, this bill is fully paid for. It does not violate pay-go rules.

We are going to have a vote shortly on a point of order on this bill. A vote to support the point of order, plain and simple, says we spend enough now on our veterans.

That is what it says: We spend enough on our veterans. A vote to support this point of order says that despite the fact that we have paid for this bill, despite the fact that one in four of our young veterans is out of work, despite the fact that veteran suicides are outpacing combat deaths, and despite the fact that more and more veterans are coming home today, we are not going to invest in those challenges. It says we have done enough.

This point of order puts a price on what we as a country are willing to provide our veterans and says we are not going to do a penny more. It is a point of order that not only will kill our ability, I will tell my colleagues, to pass this bill, but it will also affect

every effort we make to improve the lives of our veterans going forward.

In fact, just last week we held a markup in the Veterans' Affairs Committee. We passed a slew of bills in a bipartisan fashion. Those were very important bills to improve mental health access, to give students new tools so they can maximize their GI benefit, and, importantly, it would give veterans who have lost their ability to start a family access to fertility services. All those bills, under this, would be subject to a point of order, as would, of course, countless other bills introduced by Senators on both sides of the aisle. There is no end in sight, I would tell everyone, for how long this point of order could be raised.

We have to consider, as we vote, the lasting effect of this vote that we are about to take. We should all consider the fact that veterans are watching this vote very closely.

(Mr. FRANKEN assumed the Chair.)

Mr. President, this is a bill that has been endorsed by the American Legion and by the Iraq and Afghanistan Veterans of America. They know, as I do, neither party has a magic bullet for this problem of employment, and we should be taking good ideas from both sides of the aisle, which is exactly what we have done with this bill that is before us. This bill includes 12 different provisions to help create veterans jobs. Eight of them are ideas that have come from Republicans. In fact, to make this bill even more inclusive and more bipartisan, we took Senator BURR's entire alternative bill and added it to our bill.

At every turn we have sought compromise. But instead of meeting us halfway, we have been met with resistance. Instead of saying yes to nearly 1 million unemployed veterans, it seems that some on the other side of the aisle have spent the last week and a half seeking any way to say no.

It does not have to end this way for our unemployed veterans. We can join together and pass this bill.

Mr. President, as you have heard me say, our veterans don't ask for a lot. My own father never talked about his service. The veterans whom I meet across the country do not want to be seen as dependent on government. But we owe them more than a pat on the back, sending them out to the world when they come home. We owe them more than bumper stickers and platitudes. We owe them more than procedural roadblocks, which is what we will vote on shortly, that will impede our ability to provide them not only help now but into the future.

We owe them action. We owe them real investments that will help them get back to work, and that is what this legislation does. It does so because putting our servicemembers back to work is a cost of war. Putting our veterans back to work is a cost of war, just like their health care and benefits. It is part of what we owe the less than 1 percent of men and women who sacrificed for the 99 percent who did not.

It is no secret that this is not the easiest time of year to get a bill passed.

It is too easy to point to the calendar here and level accusations about politics against one another. But in my two decades working on veterans issues here in the Senate, I have seen veterans issues rise above politics time and again, even when it seemed our backs were against the wall. I have seen Democrats and Republicans come together, and they have done so because there is one group of Americans who do not care about the calendar or how many days we are out from an election; that is, our unemployed veterans. What they care about is finding work in their communities, finding work that gives them the self-esteem they need today, and finding work that helps them provide for their loved ones. We can do that today.

I urge my colleagues to join with us in waiving this point of order, to join with us in telling our veterans we are not done investing in their care and benefits, not by a long shot. Join with us in moving forward with a bill that is paid for, that will not add to our deficit, and that should not be killed by procedural games. Join with us in putting veterans above political obstructionism and back to work.

I yield the floor and yield back any time that remains.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the question is on agreeing to the motion.

The yeas and nays have previously been ordered.

The clerk will call the roll.

The bill clerk called the roll.

Mr. KYL. The following Senators are necessarily absent: the Senator from Oklahoma (Mr. INHOFE) and the Senator from Illinois (Mr. KIRK).

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Are there any other Senators in the Chamber desiring to vote?

The yeas and nays resulted—yeas 58, nays 40, as follows:

[Rollcall Vote No. 193 Leg.]

YEAS—58

Akaka	Hagan	Nelson (NE)
Baucus	Harkin	Nelson (FL)
Begich	Heller	Pryor
Bennet	Inouye	Reed
Bingaman	Johnson (SD)	Reid
Blumenthal	Kerry	Rockefeller
Boxer	Klobuchar	Sanders
Brown (MA)	Kohl	Schumer
Brown (OH)	Landrieu	Shaheen
Cantwell	Lautenberg	Snowe
Cardin	Leahy	Stabenow
Carper	Levin	Tester
Casey	Lieberman	Udall (CO)
Collins	Manchin	Udall (NM)
Conrad	McCaskill	Warner
Coons	Menendez	Webb
Durbin	Merkley	Whitehouse
Feinstein	Mikulski	Wyden
Franken	Murkowski	
Gillibrand	Murray	

NAYS—40

Alexander	Coats	Enzi
Ayotte	Coburn	Graham
Barrasso	Cochran	Grassley
Blunt	Corker	Hatch
Boozman	Cornyn	Hoeben
Burr	Crapo	Hutchison
Chambliss	DeMint	Isakson

Johanns	Moran	Shelby
Johnson (WI)	Paul	Thune
Kyl	Portman	Toomey
Lee	Risch	Vitter
Lugar	Roberts	Wicker
McCain	Rubio	
McConnell	Sessions	

NOT VOTING—2

Inhofe Kirk

Mr. FRANKEN. On this vote, the yeas are 58 and the nays are 40. Three-fifths of the Senators duly chosen and sworn not having voted in the affirmative, the motion is not agreed to. The point of order is sustained, and the amendment falls.

Under the previous order, the cloture motions with respect to amendment No. 2789 and S. 3457 are withdrawn and the bill will be returned to the calendar.

The majority leader.

Mr. REID. Mr. President, I now move to withdraw my motion to proceed to Calendar No. 499.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator has that right. The motion is withdrawn.

MAKING CONTINUING APPROPRIATIONS FOR FISCAL YEAR 2013

Mr. REID. Mr. President, I now move to proceed to Calendar No. 511, H.J. Res. 117, which is the continuing resolution.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report.

The bill clerk read as follows.

A resolution (H.J. Res. 117) making continuing appropriations for fiscal year 2013, and for other purposes.

CLOTURE MOTION

Mr. REID. Mr. President, I am momentarily going to send to the desk a cloture motion that I will ask be reported. But prior to that, I am filing cloture. What a shame. Why would we have to file cloture on the continuing resolution? It is absurd. But I will go through the process and do it. I think it is just such a shame.

I have a cloture motion at the desk, and I ask that it be reported.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The cloture motion having been presented under rule XXII, the Chair directs the clerk to read the motion.

The bill clerk read as follows:

CLOTURE MOTION

We, the undersigned Senators, in accordance with the provisions of rule XXII of the Standing Rules of the Senate, do hereby move to bring to a close debate on the motion to proceed to calendar No. 511, H.J. Res. 117, a joint resolution making continuing appropriations for fiscal year 2013, and for other purposes.

Harry Reid, Daniel K. Inouye, Patty Murray, Bernard Sanders, Jeanne Shaheen, Richard J. Durbin, Sheldon Whitehouse, Debbie Stabenow, Ron Wyden, Max Baucus, Mark Pryor, Christopher A. Coons, Jon Tester, Michael F. Bennet, Kay R. Hagan, Robert P. Casey, Jr., Richard Blumenthal, Barbara Boxer.

Mr. REID. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the mandatory quorum required under rule XXII be waived.

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

Mr. REID. Mr. President, per our previous consent agreement which is now before the Senate, we will have the cloture vote after the caucus lunches, at 2:15 p.m. today.

RECESS

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

Thereupon, the Senate, at 12:35 p.m., recessed until 2:15 p.m., and reassembled when called to order by the Presiding Officer (Mr. SANDERS).

MAKING CONTINUING APPROPRIATIONS FOR FISCAL YEAR 2013

CLOTURE MOTION

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, pursuant to rule XXII, the Chair lays before the Senate the pending cloture motion, which the clerk will state.

The legislative clerk read as follows:

CLOTURE MOTION

We, the undersigned Senators, in accordance with the provisions of rule XXII of the Standing Rules of the Senate, do hereby move to bring to a close debate on the motion to proceed to calendar No. 511, H.J. Res. 117, a joint resolution making continuing appropriations for fiscal year 2013, and for other purposes.

Harry Reid, Daniel K. Inouye, Patty Murray, Bernard Sanders, Jeanne Shaheen, Richard J. Durbin, Sheldon Whitehouse, Debbie Stabenow, Ron Wyden, Max Baucus, Mark Pryor, Christopher A. Coons, Jon Tester, Michael F. Bennet, Kay R. Hagan, Robert P. Casey, Jr., Richard Blumenthal, Barbara Boxer.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. By unanimous consent, the mandatory quorum call has been waived.

The question is, Is it the sense of the Senate that debate on the motion to proceed to H.J. Res. 117, a joint resolution making continuing appropriations for fiscal year 2013, and for other purposes, shall be brought to a close?

The yeas and nays are mandatory under the rule. The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk called the roll.

Mr. KYL. The following Senators are necessarily absent: the Senator from Oklahoma (Mr. INHOFE,) and the Senator from Illinois (Mr. KIRK).

Further, if present and voting, the Senator from Oklahoma (Mr. INHOFE) would have voted: "yea."

The yeas and nays resulted—yeas 76, nays 22, as follows:

[Rollcall Vote No. 194 Leg.]

YEAS—76

Akaka	Brown (MA)	Conrad
Alexander	Brown (OH)	Coons
Ayotte	Burr	Cornyn
Baucus	Cantwell	Durbin
Begich	Cardin	Feinstein
Bennet	Carper	Franken
Bingaman	Casey	Gillibrand
Blumenthal	Chambliss	Hagan
Blunt	Coats	Harkin
Boxer	Cochran	Hatch

Heller	Lieberman	Rockefeller
Hoeven	Lugar	Sanders
Hutchinson	McCaskill	Schumer
Inouye	McConnell	Shaheen
Isakson	Menendez	Stabenow
Johanns	Merkley	Tester
Johnson (SD)	Mikulski	Thune
Johnson (WI)	Murkowski	Udall (CO)
Kerry	Murray	Udall (NM)
Klobuchar	Nelson (NE)	Warner
Kohl	Nelson (FL)	Webb
Kyl	Portman	Whitehouse
Landrieu	Pryor	Wicker
Lautenberg	Reed	Wyden
Leahy	Reid	
Levin	Roberts	

NAYS—22

Barrasso	Graham	Rubio
Boozman	Grassley	Sessions
Coburn	Lee	Shelby
Collins	Manchin	Snowe
Corker	McCain	Toomey
Crapo	Moran	Vitter
DeMint	Paul	
Enzi	Risch	

NOT VOTING—2

Inhofe Kirk

The PRESIDING OFFICER. On this vote, the yeas are 76, the nays are 22. Three-fifths of the Senators duly chosen and sworn having voted in the affirmative, the motion is agreed to.

The Senator from Montana.

THE FARM BILL

Mr. BAUCUS. Mr. President, 3 months ago the United States Senate came together and passed a full 5-year farm bill. We did not kick the can down the road. We passed a bill, working together, that provides the certainty America's farmers and ranchers need to continue supporting rural jobs and putting food on our tables. So there is absolutely no excuse for Congress to adjourn without sending this bill to the President's desk to be signed into law. Still, because the House refuses to even bring this bill up for a vote, it looks as though that is exactly what is going to happen. It is shameful.

Passing the bill in the Senate was not easy; everyone had to make a compromise. But the farm bill touches on the lives of millions of Americans in every single State. It is too important not to act.

The Senate's farm bill is true reform. We cut the deficit by more than \$23 billion over 10 years. We streamlined programs to make them more efficient. We went back to the drawing board on commodity programs and created a true safety net—one that works for America's farmers as well as for the taxpayers—again, cutting the farm program by \$23 billion.

The House Agriculture Committee pushed out a bipartisan farm bill as well. I give the House Agriculture Committee a lot of credit. It is no secret that there are differences, but even to begin working out those differences the House needs to catch up, because despite having a bipartisan farm bill that passed the House Agriculture Committee, the House leadership is refusing to take it up.

This isn't my first farm bill. I can tell my colleagues from personal experience that this action in the House body is unprecedented. House leadership has never blocked a farm bill that