

Mr. McCAIN. Madam President, I am grateful for the kind words and sentiment expressed by my leader Senator MCCONNELL, and I appreciate very much his kind remarks. On this anniversary day, I still think the greatest honor of my life was the privilege of serving in the company of heroes who inspired all of us to things that otherwise we may not have been capable of. It has been a great honor for me to serve with Senator MCCONNELL as my leader in the Senate. On this particular day, I appreciate his very kind sentiments.

I yield the floor.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The Senator from Maryland.

Ms. MIKULSKI. Madam President, what a wonderful speech. I am proud to serve with Senator McCAIN. America has so few heroes. America needs all the heroes we can get, and people whom we can identify with—not comic book figures wearing weird costumes. There are men and women who put themselves in harm's way and do daring and dashing things for the good of other people, and it is just an honor. We have our dustups, but that is part of the fun.

I just want to salute Senator McCAIN in the warmest and most sincere way. God bless Senator McCAIN, and we wish him good health—and even a good voice and occasionally a good amendment. Again, it is an honor.

If I might speak to the Republican leader, I am so glad Senator MCCONNELL did this today because I think we need to take a pause to understand why we are in it together, why we should respect each other, work with each other, and take a moment or two to recall a great story about a great hero.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The Senator from Arizona.

Mr. McCAIN. Madam President, I thank the Senator from Maryland. I can assure her that if she and I had served together in that place faraway, she would have been a very tough and courageous resister.

Ms. MIKULSKI. I thank the Senator.

RESERVATION OF LEADER TIME

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

DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE MILITARY CONSTRUCTION AND VETERANS AFFAIRS, AND FULL-YEAR CONTINUING APPROPRIATIONS ACT, 2013

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Under the previous order, the Senate will resume consideration of H.R. 933.

The clerk will report the bill.

The legislative clerk read as follows:

A bill (H.R. 933) to make appropriations for the Department of Defense, the Department of Veterans Affairs, and other departments and agencies for the fiscal year ending September 30, 2013, and for other purposes.

Pending:

Reid (for Mikulski-Shelby) modified amendment No. 26, in the nature of a substitute.

Harkin-Cardin amendment No. 53 (to amendment No. 26), of a perfecting nature.

Inhofe amendment No. 29 (to amendment No. 26), to prohibit the expenditure of Federal funds to enforce the spill prevention, control, and countermeasure rule of the Environmental Protection Agency against farmers.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The Senator from Maryland is recognized.

Ms. MIKULSKI. Madam President, I have a unanimous consent request that I understand has been cleared on both sides of the aisle.

I ask unanimous consent that it now be in order for Senator COBURN to call up his amendment numbered 66; that there be 60 minutes equally divided in the usual form for debate on the Harkin and Coburn amendments to run concurrently; and that upon the use or yielding back of time, the Senate proceed to vote in relation to the Harkin and Coburn amendments in the order offered; that there be no amendments in order to either amendment prior to the votes; and both amendments to be subject to a 60-affirmative-vote threshold.

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

Ms. MIKULSKI. Madam President, I note that the Senator from Oklahoma is on the floor.

I yield the floor.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The Senator from Oklahoma.

AMENDMENT NO. 66 TO AMENDMENT NO. 26

Mr. COBURN. Madam President, I ask that the pending amendment be set aside and amendment No. 66 be called up.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The clerk will report the amendment.

The legislative clerk read as follows:

The Senator from Oklahoma [Mr. COBURN], for himself and Mr. McCAIN, proposes an amendment numbered 66.

The amendment is as follows:

(Purpose: To temporarily freeze the hiring of nonessential Federal employees)

At the appropriate place, insert the following:

SEC. ____ . FREEZE ON HIRING OF NONESSENTIAL FEDERAL EMPLOYEES.

(a) IN GENERAL.—Except as provided in subsection (b), none of the funds made available under division A, B, C, D, E, or F of this Act may be used by any Executive agency (as defined under section 105 of title 5, United States Code, except that such term shall not include the Government Accountability Office) to hire any new employee.

(b) EXCEPTION.—Subsection (a) shall not apply to the hiring of an excepted employee or an employee performing emergency work, as such terms are defined by the Office of Personnel Management.

Mr. COBURN. Madam President, this is a fairly straightforward amendment. It actually follows the guidelines of the recommendations of the Office of Management and Budget. The administra-

tion claims that during this sequestration period we will have to furlough essential workers, which will negatively impact the daily lives of the American people.

Despite dire warnings to cut TSA agents—by the way, Director Pistole thinks they will be just fine, which is totally opposite of what the rest of the administration has said. Air traffic controllers, food inspectors, and thousands of new Federal jobs have been posted since the sequester went into effect.

Let me spend a minute on this issue. Since the sequester has been in effect, the Department of Treasury is looking to hire a leadership development specialist with a salary of \$182,000. The FDA advertised for a social media management service to streamline management of multiple social media platforms. There are 23 openings on the Federal jobs list for recreation, which includes: recreation aide, recreation specialist, and recreation assistant. The Air Force is looking to hire several full-time painters. There is a search to pay \$165,000 for a director of history and museum policies and programs.

The list continues: The Department of Treasury is currently advertising for an outreach manager. The Department of Labor is looking for a staff assistant at \$81,000 a year to answer the phone. There is a search for a policy coordinator for the Department of Health and Human Services to attend and facilitate meetings at \$81,000 a year. There is an opening for a director for the Air Force history and museums policies and programs at \$165,000 a year. There is another opening for an analyst for the Legislative Affairs Office at the Marine Corps for \$90,000 a year. The Department of Agriculture is looking for a director of the government employee services at a range of \$179,000 a year.

There is an opening for counsel for the Morris K. Udall Scholarship Foundation at \$155,000 a year, an opening for an executive assistant at the Department of Agriculture Forest Service to prepare itineraries for travel plans, an opening for an executive staff officer for the Air Force to represent the director of staff at meetings to write draft reports and memos at \$93,000.

These are all nonpriority hirings at a time when we are in sequester. What this amendment would do is simply implement OMB's guidance and freeze hiring for nonessential Federal positions during sequestration but still allow hiring of employees defined by the Office of Personnel Management as exempted or emergency personnel.

If this amendment does not freeze hiring of exempted or emergency employees as defined by OPM—and we all know what that means—there is also an exemption in here that gives agencies the flexibility to know which positions are critical to performing duties and allows their progression.

Right now the agencies are not following OMB's guidance. We hear about possible furloughs, but a good portion