

bogus denial organizations propped up to create doubt in this debate.

Against this tide of propaganda and nonsense stands States, including Rhode Island, that already cap and reduce carbon emissions. Nineteen States have climate adaptation plans completed or in progress. Thirty-one States have a renewable and/or alternative energy portfolio standard.

Twenty-three States require State buildings to meet Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design or LEED standards.

The obstructionists may be well funded by the polluting special interests, but the majority of the American people—the vast majority of the American people—understand that climate change is a very real problem. They want their leaders to take action. Americans want their leaders to listen to the climate scientists. They want us to plan and to prepare, to limit, to mitigate, and to adapt to the changes that are coming.

Here in Congress it is long past time to move forward with meaningful action. That is why I am working with several colleagues to establish a fee on carbon pollution. As I said in my remarks last week, the idea is a simple one. It is basic market 101, law 101, and fairness 101. If you are creating a cost that someone else has to bear, that cost should be put back into the price of the product.

The big carbon polluters should pay a fee to the American people to cover the cost of their dumping their waste into our oceans and air. It is a cost they now happily push off onto the rest of us, allowing them an unfair and improper market advantage, in effect to cheat against rival energy sources. The deniers want to make this the problem which shall not be named. But I am here to name it, as are many others. I am here to shame them if I can, if shame is a feeling a big corporation can even have. I am here to see to it that we wake up and that we get to work.

I yield the floor.

RECESS

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senate stands in recess until 2:15 p.m.

Thereupon, the Senate, at 1:02 p.m., recessed until 2:15 p.m., and reassembled when called to order by the Acting President pro tempore (Ms. HEITKAMP).

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

Mr. SHELBY. Madam President, I suggest the absence of a quorum.

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

The bill clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

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

AMENDMENT NO. 29, AS MODIFIED

Mr. INHOFE. Madam President, I have a modification at the desk to amendment No. 29.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The amendment will be so modified.

The amendment, as modified, is as follows:

At the end of title VII of division C, insert the following:

SEC. 17____. No funds made available under this Act shall be used for a 180-day period beginning on date of enactment of this Act to enforce with respect to any farm (as that term is defined in section 112.2 of title 40, Code of Federal Regulations (or successor regulations)) the Spill, Prevention, Control, and Countermeasure rule, including amendments to that rule, promulgated by the Environmental Protection Agency under part 112 of title 40, Code of Federal Regulations.

Mr. INHOFE. Madam President, I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The bill clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. CRUZ. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

Ms. MIKULSKI. Madam President, reserving the right to object, I will not, I just want to seek clarification from the Senator from Texas. About how long will the Senator seek recognition?

Mr. CRUZ. I need only 5 minutes.

Ms. MIKULSKI. That is more than agreeable. We know the topic and we are anxious to hear it.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Ms. WARREN). Without objection, it is so ordered. The Senator from Texas.

Mr. CRUZ. Madam President, I thank the Senator from Maryland and I ask unanimous consent to speak as in morning business for 5 minutes.

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

TRIBUTE TO JOHN MCCAIN

Mr. CRUZ. Madam President, I note that today is the 40th anniversary of the release of JOHN MCCAIN from a prisoner of war camp in Vietnam. I wanted to take a moment in this body to thank Senator MCCAIN for his extraordinary service to our Nation.

On October 26, 1967, JOHN MCCAIN, then a young man, volunteered to serve his country, to put himself in harm's way. He found himself very directly in harm's way, captured and imprisoned in the infamous Hanoi Hilton and subject to unspeakable torture and abuse.

He did so for our country. He did so for every American. When midway through his imprisonment he was offered early release, JOHN MCCAIN showed extraordinary courage and valor, turning that down, believing it inconsistent with his obligations as an officer.

That is the sort of bravery that those of us who have never endured imprisonment and torture can only imagine. Yet he continued to remain in harrowing circumstances, suffering beatings and abuse that to this day

limit his mobility. Forty years ago, JOHN MCCAIN was released, able to come home to America and return a hero. Since that time, since being released from Vietnam, he has been a leader on a great many issues. He has been a public servant in this body and he has repeatedly exemplified courage and integrity. I thought it only fitting that we as a body, I have no doubt, would unanimously agree in commending his valor and integrity and sacrifice for his country and recognize this very important milestone, this 40th anniversary.

I yield the remainder of my time.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The bill clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

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

Ms. MIKULSKI. Madam President, I want to tell my colleagues and anyone watching that just because Senators are not speaking on the Senate floor doesn't mean nothing is going on. I am incredibly impressed by the cooperation on both sides of the aisle as we try to get a finite list of amendments, as well as the proper sequence of those amendments in order to complete the business of moving to the continuing resolution. So there is a lot going on in other offices. These are not back rooms; they are not deal cutting. This is the workman-like way a parliamentary democratic institution does business.

There are Senators who have ideas to improve the bill. Senator SHELBY and I think our bill needs no improvement. We think we ought to just move to it, do it, send it to the House, and avoid any kind of gridlock of a government shutdown. However, Senators do have the right to offer amendments, and they have now offered their amendments. People are scrutinizing the amendments to make sure they understand the policy consequences and also that we don't have unintended consequences. Although it looks as though there is no debate going on here on the floor, there is a lot of discussion going on in Member offices. We hope that in a very short time we will be able to move to amendments so we can discuss and dispose of those amendments in a way that satisfies both parties.

I just wanted people to know that. When we talk to folks back home, they say: I watch C-SPAN, all I hear is Senators' names called out in alphabetical order. They also may know that there might not be an official hearing going on, though we do know some are going on today. I just wanted to talk about some of what is going on and that this is part of the process. This is a big bill, and I hope that a big bill—one that includes every aspect of the Federal

funding—is not done this way in fiscal 2014. I want to continue the cooperation that has begun between Senator SHELBY and myself and the mutual leadership. For the funding bills, we wish to move them in a regular order.

For instance, the two biggest departments are the Department of Defense and Labor, Education, Health and Human Services. We want to go through them and look at what is the appropriate funding level and is there any way we are going to achieve more frugality and more value.

The Senator from Oklahoma is on the floor, and he is my red-team guy. He often takes a look at the bill and has pointed out some things that cause heartburn. This is the way a democracy should work. I want to get back to a regular order where we know what we are doing and the American public understands what we are doing.

We are moving expeditiously. I would dearly love to be able to bring this bill to a closure tonight. I am not sure it is possible. That is why we are scrutinizing and scrubbing these amendments now. We cannot proceed to any other amendments until we see the whole package and look at the best way to organize it and sequence it.

I wanted to share this with my colleagues who are watching from their offices and committee rooms.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Oklahoma.

Mr. COBURN. I want to compliment the chairman of the Appropriations Committee. She has done a good job. She does want to get back to regular order.

As we can see, nothing has happened. There is a reason nothing has happened. It is not in her control. Nothing is happening because there are a lot of amendments and they are not sure they want to take votes. Rather than the regular process of offering amendments that are germane and agreeing to a 60-vote level for their passage—having had that agreement—now we are not allowed to offer amendments because supposedly somebody has to agree with them.

Well, that is not what the Senate is about. The way we decide whether the Senate agrees to it is to offer the amendment, vote on it, and stand up and defend your vote. It is not the chairman who is doing this, and it is not Senator SHELBY who is doing this, it is the leadership. We were criticized because we wanted to read the bill. We now have amendments. We have been waiting to offer amendments. I waited around here an hour last night to offer amendments, and then I had another commitment so I could not do it. I offered to come over here at 9:30 this morning, and could not do it. We have offered one amendment, and we have five other amendments. We could not get a vote. If we stay in a quorum call, people's business will not get done. People will start to be furloughed in the next 2 weeks, and it is because

somebody wants to take away the individual right of a Senator to offer an amendment. We are not postcloture, so even amendments that are not germane are adequate to be filed against this bill.

I have no animus at all against the chairman. I am thankful she is the chairman of the Appropriations Committee. I trust her implicitly to move on regular order. This bill is out of her committee and we need to bring amendments to the floor. The idea that we have to have permission from somebody in the Senate to offer an amendment goes totally counter to what the Senate is all about. We have a lot of problems to solve. We could finish this bill. We are sitting here. I could offer all of my amendments in 15 minutes, and we could stack them and vote on them—60 votes, I don't care.

The fact is we cannot offer an amendment. If I ask to bring up an amendment right now, the chairman has been instructed to object to that. I understand. I will not make her go through that exercise.

I think it is important that the American people know what is going on. It is not out in the open; it is behind the scenes. They are negotiating away amendments so we won't know what could have happened or what might happen. Had we been in regular order, we would have been through with this bill. We are wasting time trying to play behind-the-scenes, non-transparent negotiation about a bill that is vitally important to this country. The process is not working well. I trust the chairman to bring that process back, but she is handicapped by the instructions she has received.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Utah.

Mr. HATCH. Madam President, next week the Senate will for the first time in over 4 years—

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Maryland.

Ms. MIKULSKI. The CR is on the floor. Does the Senator wish to speak in morning business?

Mr. HATCH. I am sorry, I thought we were in morning business.

Ms. MIKULSKI. How long does the Senator wish to speak?

Mr. HATCH. Approximately 15 minutes. Is that too long?

Ms. MIKULSKI. It could be.

Mr. HATCH. I will withdraw.

Ms. MIKULSKI. Madam President, I note the absence of a quorum so we can discuss how we are going to proceed on the debate.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Utah.

Mr. HATCH. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent that the quorum call be rescinded.

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

THE BUDGET

Mr. HATCH. Madam President, next week the Senate will, for the first time in over 4 years, debate a budget resolution on the Senate floor. While I have many qualms as to the substance of the budget we will be debating, I have to say that in terms of the process, this is a welcome development.

The American people have waited too long for the Senate to fulfill its basic legal obligation to produce a budget every year. Yesterday, with the release of the Democrats' budget plan, that delay officially came to an end.

Of course, now that I have had a chance to look over that budget, my praise for it ends there. The budget we will be debating next week is, to put it bluntly, a cynical political document. It is not designed to address our Nation's pressing fiscal challenges but, rather, it is to provide a Democratic base and have a fresh supply of political talking points.

Rather than addressing our government's problems and runaway entitlements, the Democratic budget contains yet more wasteful spending. In order to pay for that spending, the budget contains what could be around \$1.5 trillion in tax hikes, much of which will necessarily impact the middle class and small businesses. It would hijack the bipartisan tax reform efforts currently underway in both the House and Senate by instructing the Senate Finance Committee to abandon these efforts in order to scour the Tax Code for additional revenues to the tune of nearly \$1 trillion.

In addition to the reconciliation instructions, the budget includes potentially \$½ trillion in additional tax hikes in order to replace the sequester and to offset more stimulus spending.

Even with all of these new revenues in place, the Democratic budget does not balance—not at any point. Under this budget, the government would be still be spending more than it takes in at the end of the 10-year budget window. By the end of it all, our national debt would be over \$24 trillion, an increase of more than \$7 trillion, with no relief in sight.

Gross debt, relative to the size of our economy, never dips below 94 percent in this budget. As the nonpartisan Congressional Budget Office warns, when the debt is that high, we as a Nation have less flexibility to respond to unexpected challenges. CBO also warns that when the debt is that high, there is increased risk of a fiscal crisis and soaring interest rates. Make no mistake: If interest rates rise even slightly more than assumed in this budget, Federal spending on interest payments would increase substantially, moving us even closer to a fiscal crisis.

One of the most disappointing and disheartening parts of the budget produced by the majority in the Budget Committee is that it makes no attempt whatsoever to address entitlement spending. Instead, it would keep programs such as Medicare, Medicaid, and

Social Security on autopilot, making it far more difficult to preserve them for future generations.

Let's take a look at the numbers, because they are astounding. Over the next 10 years, we will spend \$6.8 trillion on Medicare, \$5.9 trillion on Medicaid, and \$11.2 trillion on Social Security, for a combined total of \$24 trillion.

The Democratic budget would reduce that spending by only \$56 billion over 10 years, which amounts to a minuscule 0.2 percent reduction—that is right, 0.2 percent. Let's put that number in perspective.

Despite the acknowledgment of the administration, the nonpartisan Congressional Budget Office, and any sane analyst on the Federal budget that entitlement spending is unsustainable, the Democratic budget proposes to do next to nothing about it. Rather, they settle for spending reductions over a 10-year period that amount to about 5 days' worth of Federal spending.

This lack of attention to entitlements sends a clear message to younger generations. That message, unfortunately, is, we don't care that the social safety net will not be there for you. And it won't be for our young people, especially if we keep going this way. Federal entitlement spending is the biggest driver of our debts and deficits, and absent real structural reforms, these programs threaten to swallow up our government and take our economy down with it.

This is not rhetoric or supposition. These are cold, hard facts. Yet, with their budget, the Democrats have apparently opted to ignore reality and let these programs continue on their current unsustainable trajectory. On that trajectory, the safety net frays. On that trajectory, disabled American workers face benefit cuts of over 20 percent in 2016. And on that trajectory, trust funds associated with the safety net become exhausted.

The course charted by this budget is simply irresponsible. No one serious about governing would choose to ignore entitlement spending for another 10 years. Even President Obama—hardly a picture of bravery when it comes to taking on entitlements—has proposed as much as \$530 billion in Medicare and Social Security reforms. This budget undercuts the President's proposal by nearly 90 percent.

So once again this budget is not about dealing with reality; it is about politics, pure and simple. Instead of working with Republicans on bipartisan solutions to our Nation's problems, the Democrats have decided to reveal their campaign talking points for next year.

There are some of us here in the Senate who have been looking for opportunities to work with those on the other side to address what are, in the view of many, the defining challenges of our time. For example, on January 1, I came to the floor to propose five bipartisan solutions to reform Medicare and Medicaid and asked my colleagues to

work with me on this effort. These proposals are not my ideal solutions to the problems facing these programs. Instead, they are five solid ideas that have all had bipartisan support in the recent past.

For example, I propose raising the Medicare eligibility age—something President Obama and several other Democrats have at one time or another supported. I also suggest limiting Medigap plans from providing first-dollar coverage in order to prevent overutilization of Medicare benefits. This was supported by the Simpson-Bowles Commission and was also included in the Biden-Cantor fiscal negotiations in 2011.

Another one of my proposals is to streamline cost-sharing for Medicare Part A and Part B. Like the Medigap proposal, this idea was also supported by the Simpson-Bowles Commission.

In addition, I propose introducing competitive bidding into Medicare to allow for greater competition in order to reduce costs and improve quality of care. While some have deemed this idea controversial, President Clinton proposed a similar idea in 1999 as part of a major set of Medicare reforms—President Clinton, no less.

Finally, I propose instituting per capita caps on Federal Medicaid spending. This was another Democratic Party idea. It was first proposed by President Clinton in 1995, and at that time all 46 Democratic Senators signed a letter supporting this very policy.

I came to the floor in January in hopes that I could bring some of my Democratic colleagues on board with these proposals so we could at least start a bipartisan conversation on entitlement reform on the floor. My door and my mind remain open to my colleagues across the aisle on these ideas.

Today, as I look at this proposed budget, it is clear I shouldn't be looking to anyone supporting this budget to work on anything resembling a bipartisan approach. Indeed, if this budget passes as is, without any significant changes, I may have to look outside of the Senate entirely.

That is why earlier today I reached out to President Obama and asked him to seriously consider my five bipartisan entitlement reforms. The President talks a lot about grand bargains and balanced approaches, and he has a very winning personality, as was evidenced as he spoke to us Republican Senators today. The budget unveiled yesterday, however, is a step in the wrong direction. I hope he will demonstrate real leadership and engage in these enormous challenges in a meaningful way.

The budget proposed by the Democrats on the Budget Committee is fiscally irresponsible and will be detrimental to the current and future generations of American workers who depend on the social safety net and who want to see it preserved for the future. This budget grows government, not the private economy. This budget taxes too

much and spends too much. This budget doesn't balance today, tomorrow, or ever. This budget keeps us at the edge of a fiscal crisis, with no flexibility to respond to future emergencies. That being the case, this budget should be soundly rejected by anyone who cares about our Nation's future and about prosperity and opportunity for America's middle class.

TANF

Now I wish to take a few minutes to talk about the Temporary Assistance for Needy Families, or TANF, Program.

Authority for TANF expired at the end of fiscal year 2010. Since that time, the program has limped along on a series of short-term extensions. President Obama has never submitted a TANF reauthorization to Congress for consideration. Senate Democrats, who have been in the majority since 2007, have never proposed a reauthorization of TANF. Instead of submitting a reauthorization proposal that can be considered in regular order on a bipartisan basis, the Obama administration instead unilaterally granted themselves the authority to waive critical Federal welfare work requirements. As I have said many times here on the Senate floor, there is no provision in the TANF statute granting this administration this authority.

Aided by Democrats in Congress, the administration has resisted any attempt to replace their waiver scheme with an actual legislative proposal. Rather than trying to explain what specific policy improvements cannot occur under the flexibility States have under current law, the Obama administration and Democrats in Congress have opted to issue a series of platitudes about State flexibility.

In addition, they point to a letter delivered by the Republican Governors Association to Majority Leader Frist in 2005 asking for more flexibility under TANF, ignoring the fact that the main focus of the letter was to urge floor consideration of welfare legislation reported by the Senate Finance Committee. This is hardly adequate justification for an unprecedented power grab by the executive branch.

The Senate Finance Committee needs to act on welfare reform. The TANF Program has languished for nearly a decade without a robust debate on reauthorization. Programs that benefit low-income families have suffered as a result of Congress's inattention to TANF.

The legislation before us contains yet another short-term extension, which would ensure that the program will go through the rest of this year without a reauthorization. This is simply unacceptable. The Senate Finance Committee, which has jurisdiction over TANF, needs to get to work on a full 5-year TANF reauthorization.

Several times over the past few months I have come to the floor to argue in favor of regular order and in support of reinstating the committee

process. For too long now major policy decisions have been made not in the committees of jurisdiction but in the office of the majority leader. As I have said, I think the results speak for themselves.

This shouldn't be the case. If we want bipartisan solutions, we need to restore the deliberative decisions of the Senate and allow the committees to do their work. For this reason I prepared a motion to commit H.R. 933 to the Finance Committee in hopes that, once the bill was moved to the committee, we could roll up our sleeves and work on a bipartisan basis to strengthen the work requirement in TANF and give States the flexibility they claim they need while providing greater transparency, coordination, and accountability.

I understand there is a bipartisan process under way with regard to the continuing resolution, so I won't be seeking a vote on this motion today. And I wish to personally praise the distinguished Senator from Maryland and the distinguished Senator from Alabama for the work they have done on the Appropriations Committee. I am really impressed. I think they have shown the whole Senate that things can get done if we just work together, and they are two of our great Senators here in the Senate. That doesn't mean I am relenting in my efforts to restore regular order here in the Senate. I hope more of my colleagues will join me in this cause.

With that, I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. COWAN). Without objection, it is so ordered.

Ms. MIKULSKI. Mr. President, I also ask unanimous consent that the pending Inhofe amendment, No. 29, as modified, be agreed to; and that upon disposition of the Inhofe amendment, Senator TOOMEY or his designee be recognized to call up amendment No. 115.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection to the request?

Without objection, it is so ordered.

Amendment No. 29, as modified, was agreed to.

Ms. MIKULSKI. Mr. President, we note the Senator from Pennsylvania is coming to offer his amendment. While we are waiting for him to get ready to proceed, I would like to thank Senator INHOFE, Senator BOXER, and all who worked on a satisfactory resolution of the Inhofe amendment. It shows if the Senate takes a minute or two, keeps its powder dry and sticks to the issues, we can move this bill forward.

We now look forward to a discussion on Toomey No. 115. I note the Senator from Pennsylvania is on the floor to offer his amendment.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Pennsylvania.

AMENDMENT NO. 115 TO AMENDMENT NO. 26

Mr. TOOMEY. Mr. President, I call up amendment No. 115, which is at the desk.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, the clerk will report.

The legislative clerk read as follows:

The Senator from Pennsylvania [Mr. TOOMEY] proposes an amendment numbered 115 to amendment No. 26.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Ohio.

Mr. BROWN. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent to set aside the pending amendment and call up amendment No. 83.

Ms. MIKULSKI. Mr. President, on behalf of Senator LANDRIEU and myself, I object to the Senator's request.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Objection is heard.

The amendment (No. 115) is as follows:

(Purpose: To increase by \$60,000,000 the amount appropriated for Operation and Maintenance for the Department of Defense for programs, projects, and activities in the continental United States, and to provide an offset)

At the end of title VIII of division C, insert the following:

SEC. 8131. (a) ADDITIONAL AMOUNT FOR O&M FOR ACTIVITIES IN CONUS.—The aggregate amount appropriated by title II of this division for operation and maintenance is hereby increased by \$60,000,000, with the amount to be available, as determined by the Secretary of Defense, for operation and maintenance expenses of the Department of Defense in connection with programs, projects, and activities in the continental United States.

(b) OFFSET.—The amount appropriated by title III of this division under the heading "PROCUREMENT, DEFENSE-WIDE" is hereby decreased by \$60,000,000, with the amount of the reduction to be allocated to amounts available under that heading for Advanced Drop in Biofuel Production.

(c) For the purposes of section, is determined by the Secretary of Defense means a spend-out rate in compliance with the aggregate outlay levels as set forth in the Budget Control Act of 2011.

Ms. MIKULSKI. Mr. President, before we proceed to debate on the Toomey amendment, I say to my colleague from Ohio that his strong advocacy for working people is appreciated. From the standpoint of discussion, the Senator has some excellent ideas, and I hope he and the Senator who chairs the Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs Committee can talk about how we can reach some type of consensus to generate jobs, retain the integrity of a professional workforce, and keep our economy going. I salute him for the work he does every day in that area.

Mr. BROWN. I would say to Chairwoman MIKULSKI that the amendment I would have offered along with Senator ISAKSON would strike the language on the pilot projects that expire at the end of the year with privatization of customs services. It is something I will work on with Senator LANDRIEU, and I appreciate Senator MIKULSKI's input on that. It is about public services and

creating jobs and assisting with imports and exports.

I thank the chairwoman.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Pennsylvania.

Mr. TOOMEY. Mr. President, let me just briefly describe my amendment. This will not take very long, but I think it is an important movement in the right direction. It has come to my attention that the CR, probably for a variety of reasons, underfunds the DOD's operations and maintenance account relative to what the Army staff certainly has requested—actually to the tune of \$2 billion relative to what the Army staff would prefer. This affects salaries, vital maintenance, and combat training. It affects certainly skilled defense contractors, employees, at our military facilities.

Obviously, we have very significant maintenance requirements for the very sophisticated equipment on which our troops rely, and so this is a very important account. The operations and maintenance account also includes training exercises that help make sure our forces are the best in the world.

Unfortunately, at the same time that we are underfunding this account, we are also spending money on alternative energy at DOD that is of very dubious value, in my mind. We have much more affordable energy than the kinds of energy we require the DOD to use, in some instances. And what this amendment would do is provide a modest transfer of \$60 million from the DOD's account from the Pentagon biofuels program and allow that money to go over to the operations and maintenance account.

Now, I know there are some people who are big fans of spending money to develop biofuels and build the plants and refineries that create these biofuels. I would point out this is a much more expensive source of fuel than alternatives already readily available, and so I would ask a more basic question: If we believe this is a good and appropriate activity, wouldn't it be better to handle this at the Department of Energy rather than take the precious resources from our Defense Department and have it spent on the construction of plants for biofuel capability?

I think it makes more sense to move this over to the operations and maintenance account, and that is what my amendment does.

Mr. President, I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Illinois.

Mr. DURBIN. Mr. President, I rise in opposition to the amendment offered by the Senator from Pennsylvania, and at the appropriate moment I will offer a budget point of order which will require an extraordinary vote on the floor of the Senate, but I first want to address the merits of Senator TOOMEY's amendment.

Senator TOOMEY's amendment proposes to cut \$60 million from the Advanced Drop-In Biofuels Production

Program in the procurement defense fund and move these funds to the operations and maintenance account. The Senator has, unfortunately, an error in his amendment, and he cuts funding from the wrong account. He has rewritten it several times. Unfortunately, he is still cutting funding from the wrong account. That is an error which he may be able to resolve.

The appropriations account that would be cut by this amendment has nothing to do with alternative energy or biofuels. The account provides for funds for Special Operations Command equipment, DOD communications infrastructure, and the Chemical and Biological Defense Program. This is a very serious mistake in the creation of this amendment.

New language added to this version tries to correct an additional problem with outlays but does not. The amendment still violates the budget cap on outlays and is subject to a point of order, which I will make at a later time.

This amendment, which is being offered by the Senator from Pennsylvania, is opposed not only by me but also by Senator LEVIN, the chairman of the Armed Services Committee, and of course Senator MIKULSKI, chairman of the Senate Appropriations Committee.

Let's address the substance of the amendment if it were drafted properly. The Senate has already made it clear it supports biofuels and ending our Nation's dependence on foreign oil. We look at the challenge of foreign oil every time we drive by a gas station and we think to ourselves: How high can these prices go? They were knocking on the door of \$5 a gallon in Chicago just a couple weeks ago. They have come down a little bit, but they are worse in other parts of the country, and we think to ourselves: When is this country going to reach the point where we are not held captive by OPEC nations and other suppliers of oil? That is the frustration we feel. That is the impact we have as consumers in America.

Now take this into a theater of war. Now it is a different story. We cannot manage and run our professional military without energy and fuel. The price we have paid to transfer fuel to the field of battle is dramatic, hundreds of dollars a gallon—not \$5 a gallon, hundreds of dollars a gallon—because, unfortunately, if we are going to keep our men and women safe, we have to fuel the vehicles, the vehicles they rely on, whether it is the humvees or the tanks, airplanes or whatever they are using, and we have to move the fuel to where they need it and we have to move it now.

Let me also tell you something. Moving that fuel is not without danger. The first National Guard unit I visited in Iraq from my State of Illinois was a transport unit. They were driving these tanker trucks. Well, you think, these are soldiers driving trucks? They risked their lives every time they did it. That is where the roadside bombs were planted.

So when we start talking about moving energy to the military, we are talking about a life-and-death challenge. Unfortunately, many Americans have lost their lives moving that fuel to the field of battle.

So what do the generals and secretaries in the Pentagon tell us? We have to take a look at our energy consumption and find ways to have more fuel-efficient vehicles for our troops to reduce the need to keep moving this fuel, and we have to find better sources for fuel—fuel that might work better in one theater of battle than in another. That is what they have asked for, and that is what the Senator from Pennsylvania says—no, we can't afford that. We shouldn't do that. We ought to cut the \$60 million involved in this research.

The Senate voted twice on Senator TOOMEY's proposal, and it voted both times in support of the Department of Defense initiative biofuels program. That was during the debate of the Senate Armed Services authorization bill. But no ideas ever go away in the Senate. This one is back again for the third try by Senator TOOMEY. I hope it reaches the same fate as the other two tries.

The conference agreement that was reached after the Department's authorization bill said that the Departments of Energy and Agriculture had to provide matching funds, and due to budget constraints they are not going to go that this year. However, the money that is appropriated for this purpose is going to continue to be able to be spent in other years and the research can continue.

Why would we stop this? Why would we say we are not going to do the research necessary to find more efficient fuels? Why are we going to try to stop the research in more efficient vehicles that keep our troops safe and reduce the likelihood that the men and women in uniform transporting these fuels are risking their lives to do so? Why in the world do we want to subject them to roadside bombs for the transport of fuels if we are told by the military they want to look at other options? Why wouldn't we do that? Sadly, the Senator from Pennsylvania just thinks we shouldn't do it, and that is why he has offered this amendment.

The funds appropriated for this project are available until expended. When other agencies are able to meet their own cost shares, they will certainly be used. The chairman of the Armed Services Committee, Senator CARL LEVIN, agrees with me on this. There is no conflict between the Defense Appropriations and the Defense Authorization committees.

Keeping the funds in this bill supports the Senate's clear position on giving to our military the authority they need to protect our troops and to lessen their need for using these energy sources. Reducing DOD energy costs and reducing the volatility of gasoline supplies is critical—critical to making

sure the best military in the world is the safest military in the world.

The Defense Department is the Federal Government's largest energy consumer by far. The events of the Arab Spring and Iran's continued threats to deny access to the Strait of Hormuz demonstrate the security risk of relying on foreign oil sources. That is why this is a critical decision—it is a life-and-death decision—to look to other energy sources.

The Senator may say we can move \$60 million to operations and maintenance. I am sure they need it. But they literally need much more than that. It is better we keep this research moving forward.

A 2012 report from the Congressional Research Service noted that since the early 1990s, the cost of buying fuel has increased faster than any other major Department of Defense budget category. That includes health care and military personnel. Between fiscal years 2005 and 2011, the Department's petroleum use decreased by 4 percent, but the Department's spending on petroleum rose 381 percent over that same period of time. Recall that we paid for our wars under the previous administration on a credit card. Part of that credit card charge related to the cost of fuel—a dramatic cost—which we are still paying off.

The Department of Defense estimates that every 25-cent increase in the price of a gallon of oil means an additional \$1 billion a year in fuel costs. The \$60 million in this bill for biofuels is such a small investment of the Navy's annual cost for petroleum-based fuel, approximately \$4.5 billion in fiscal year 2011, and an even smaller fraction of the Navy's total budget of \$173 billion. Sixty million dollars in research against the Navy's fuel costs of \$4.5 billion—penny wise and pound foolish with this Toomey amendment.

This modest investment is worth the potential of being able to provide a secure alternative to the national security risk of petroleum dependence.

For the sake of reducing the cost of protecting America, for the sake of protecting the lives of men and women who serve our Nation and risk their lives every day and depend on this energy and fuel, for the sake of at least being thoughtful enough to put money into research to find ways for more fuel efficiency and better sources of fuel, please vote no on the Toomey amendment.

THE PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Pennsylvania.

MR. TOOMEY. Mr. President, I know there are people who are very passionately interested in developing any kind of alternative energy. I would just suggest there are research facilities where that is probably appropriate. I suppose the Department of Energy might be a candidate. But the kind of biofuels that are generated cost far more than conventional fuels. We have a tremendous volume of conventional fuels, and it is a savings to be able to use conventional fuels.

In this case, my suggestion is that this money goes to where it is vitally needed, in the operations and maintenance accounts. But I would like to discuss with the Senator from Illinois the concern he has about a budget point of order, so I will suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. UDALL of New Mexico. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

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

Mr. UDALL of New Mexico. Mr. President, I would like to speak today on the Toomey amendment, No. 115. I rise to argue against the Toomey amendment.

This is an amendment about energy. As we all know, energy is a strategic resource for us. Every member of our Armed Forces understands this, and they understand it well. Energy is essential to our national security mission. Everybody knows you do not go out there and move in an aggressive way without good, solid energy supplies behind you. Having access to reliable energy supplies to protect our men and women in uniform is absolutely essential. No matter where they may be in the world, it is critical to our Nation that we have these good energy supplies.

Each branch of the Armed Forces recognizes the importance of biofuels as a critical part of its energy needs. Our military faces numerous logistical challenges with its dependence on fossil fuels. Increasing diversification through investment in alternative fuels will help the military carry out its mission safely and without the need to rely exclusively on foreign sources of fuel from countries that do not share our interests overseas.

The amendment offered by Senator TOOMEY, the Senator from Pennsylvania, trades some short-term benefits at the cost of our long-term needs. Reducing the Department of Defense's ability to procure biofuels by \$60 million is a step in the wrong direction. Biofuels are an American industry, growing energy right here in our own backyard—energy at home, made in America.

In my own State, the Los Alamos National Lab is growing the next generation of algae feedstocks for future biofuels. We are doing some great research in this area of biofuels. We also have a biorefinery facility operated by Sapphire Energy near Columbus, NM. This facility is up and running and can produce 1.5 million gallons per year of fuel. That is fuel derived from these advanced-generation algae. This story is not unique to New Mexico. Texas, California, Missouri, and Iowa lead the United States in the number of biorefineries per State.

This amendment limits opportunities for bioenergy companies across the

United States. Biofuels are a significant source of energy for the Department of Defense. We should provide as many opportunities as possible to grow this industry. We should maximize the long-term economic and national security benefits of U.S. biofuels.

It is for those reasons that I urge a "no" vote on the Toomey amendment.

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

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

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

Ms. MIKULSKI. Mr. President, I rise to speak on the Toomey amendment.

I want to reiterate what my colleague from Illinois said about this amendment. Senator DURBIN chairs the Subcommittee on Defense. He recently took this over with the passing of Senator Dan Inouye. Senator DICK DURBIN has now assumed the Chair. It is a committee we are now looking at funding.

I too have met with the Department of Defense—whether it was Secretary Hagel, Deputy Secretary Ash Carter. I have talked things over with General Dempsey. When they talk about what are the big-buck expenditures in defense—is it guns? Is it bullets? Is it body armor? Is it tanks or planes? The exploding costs are in the area of military personnel. We have to pay our people, so we agree with that. Then there is the issue of providing health care. Wow, after a 10-year war where we have asked too much from too few for too long, people are coming back with the permanent wounds of war. All are coming back with the permanent impact of war. Health care problems are showing up among them. But to my surprise—I was not surprised about that—I was surprised that one of the largest expenditures in DOD is energy. I already knew that DOD is the Federal Government's largest energy consumer and that the Congressional Research Service notes that since early 1990, the cost of buying fuel has increased faster than any other DOD budget category. Isn't that a surprise, that it is increasing faster than health care? I actually believed health care would be the fastest because of what our troops and their families have endured. But it is the fastest growing category.

Some numbers. I know a lot of our colleagues are numbers people. Between fiscal years 2005 and 2011, the Department's petroleum use actually went down. Their use of petroleum went down by 4 percent. You would think their costs went down. But guess what. Their spending on petroleum rose 381 percent in that same period. What an amazing number. When your use goes down but your cost goes up 381 percent, it is time to take a new look and begin to find new ways to deal with

this challenge. Our Department of Defense went right to work.

DOD tells us that for every 25-cent increase in the price of a gallon of oil, the Federal Government and DOD incur over \$1 billion in additional fuel costs. Every time a gallon of oil goes up 25 cents, the Federal Government ends up spending \$1 billion more at only DOD. That is \$1 billion that could go a long way in either making sure we have modern weapons or for our returning troops—and they are returning—to have the health care they need.

We need to modernize the military. Senator MCCAIN has challenged us. We need to make sure we don't hollow out the military.

We need to make sure we address the new emerging threats not only in geographic areas but in cyber space. I am on the Select Committee on Intelligence. Those cyber threats are eye-popping when you study the issue.

We need to do something about our cost of fuel. The Navy had planned to spend close to \$200 million on advanced biofuels between fiscal year 2009 and 2012. The \$60 million we are talking about is a small fraction of the Navy's annual cost for petroleum-based fuel—approximately \$4.5 billion in fiscal year 2011.

Secretary of the Navy Mabus has talked about how energy security is a growing national security issue not only for our country but also specifically for the DOD. What is the answer to that? We have to be able to look at funding for the advanced biofuel program. As Senator DURBIN said, the Senate has already voted twice in support of DOD's biofuels programs. The Department continues to spend money in fiscal 2012 for biofuels. The fiscal 2013 year will maintain funding to pursue the program in future years.

I hope we understand what are the real costs facing the Department of Defense. Just because you do not like a program—let's look at these programs in terms of the challenges facing our military. We think the challenge facing our military is terrorism, and it is al-Qaida. Gosh, when one thinks about those marines up there, as we speak, in the mountains of Afghanistan, it just gives you chills. When they are up there fighting for us, they need to have resources. They need to have the weapons, they need to have the armor to protect themselves, but they also need to have the fuel to get around. As Senator DURBIN said, they are often incredibly at risk because they are riding over roads loaded with these mines. We have come a long way in learning how to deal with IEDs, but the hurt locker continues to exist. We have to do something to protect our military, protect those in the military who support the frontline troops. That means they need to have the fuel on which the DOD will continue to run.

We need to look for alternative sources. The policy is a good one. I think the amendment of Senator

TOOMEY is well intentioned, to fund operations and maintenance, but operations and maintenance is really also having the right fuel, which means we have to develop alternatives to what we have now.

I wanted to comment on this. As I have taken over the chair of the full committee, I have learned a lot more about the funding of the Department of Defense and the challenges they face. The more we scrutinize it, some of the really big-buck expenditures that support the troops are not visible in the public eye, but they are visible as we look at our expenditures.

We need to support our military, and we need to do it not only in the way we are supporting them today, but to have the new technologies for the kind of support they will need in the future.

I yield the floor and note the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Maryland.

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

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

Ms. MIKULSKI. Mr. President, that also takes me to the fact that there are these growing issues in the area of health care that we need to take a look at. There are a variety of challenges facing the Department of Defense that we need to look at and address, but let's do it through the regular order, through our appropriate authorizing committee, and through our appropriate Appropriations Committee.

I yield the floor and note the absence of a quorum.

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Illinois.

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

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

AMENDMENT NO. 123 TO AMENDMENT NO. 115

Mr. DURBIN. Mr. President, I send an amendment in the nature of a second-degree to the desk and ask that it be reported.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. If there is no objection, the clerk will report the amendment.

The assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

The Senator from Illinois [Mr. DURBIN] proposes an amendment numbered 123 to amendment No. 115.

The amendment is as follows:

At the end, add the following:

(d) This section shall become effective 1 day after the date of enactment.

Mr. DURBIN. This is a second-degree amendment to the Toomey amendment numbered 115.

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

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Connecticut.

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

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

Mr. BLUMENTHAL. Mr. President, I rise today in the midst of a profoundly important conversation on the floor of this body about the future of our financial situation with the Federal Government, and I want to thank the Senator from Maryland for her extraordinarily impressive work. I thank her on behalf of myself, Connecticut, and the Nation for her very diligent and dedicated labors to bring us to this conclusion, which all of us hope will take place in the next few hours.

DREAM ACT

I want to deal with a separate issue of equal importance that will be enabled on the floor of the Senate if we are able to overcome our differences on this fiscal issue. The issue I am referring to is comprehensive and accountable immigration reform, which this Nation desperately needs. I am working to achieve it, as I know my colleagues are.

The President of the United States has advanced that agenda very compellingly in his proposals that include a path to earned citizenship for the 11 million or more undocumented people in this country, stronger enforcement at the borders against illegal immigration into this country, and stronger enforcement within our borders against illegal employment of undocumented people already here. Of course, we also need a streamlined and fairer immigration process so we can provide a process that comports not only with our due process obligations, but also with the fundamental concept of fairness.

This is not the first time I have come to the floor to deal with one area of immigration reform that ought to be expedited as part of that agenda. I am here to talk about Connecticut DREAMers and their invaluable contributions to their communities and DREAMers across the United States who make those same kind of contributions to our communities and my colleagues on the Senate floor.

Over the last couple of months a tremendous momentum has developed in favor of comprehensive and accountable immigration reform. I am thrilled by these developments. They are tremendously heartening, and I commend my colleagues for their profoundly significant work. Most importantly, I look forward to seizing this unique and historic moment and the opportunity to reform our broken immigration system.

The DREAM Act would give young immigrants who have been brought to this country as children a chance to earn their citizenship through edu-

cation or military service. The idea about immigration reform is to achieve earned citizenship. These young people—or DREAMers, as they are often called—are undocumented immigrants who were brought to this country at a young age, as infants, or young children through no fault or choice of their own. America is the only home they have ever known. English is the only language many of them know. Their friends are here, their life is in this country, and they make invaluable contributions to this great Nation.

I thank one of my colleagues and friend, Senator DURBIN, for his championing this cause over many years, and in fact, he introduced the DREAM Act 11 years ago and has tirelessly and relentlessly fought for its passage. He has come close to success, and my hope is that immigration reform will include this vitally important measure.

The immigrants who would benefit from the DREAM Act identify as American. But our immigration system affords them no direct path to achieving legal immigration status, let alone citizenship.

The DREAM Act would give them a chance to earn legal status if they meet several requirements such as having come to America as children, having good moral character, having graduated from high school, and completed 2 years of college or military service.

A DREAMer who meets these requirements can apply for legal permanent residency and pursue a path to citizenship.

DREAMers who live in our communities but fear deportation have been given some relief by the President of the United States, in effect, a temporary reprieve. But they still lack the security and permanency, and they should be given it, even after the President's program. Because just as they were given that reprieve administratively, they can also lose it in the same way at the end of 2 years, which is the limit currently of the reprieve from deportation they have been granted.

Two million immigrants nationwide would benefit from the DREAM Act. There are between 11,000 and 20,000 DREAMers living in Connecticut, and one of them is Vanessa Bautista. I am going to place her photograph on this stand and say to the people of Connecticut, we should be proud of Vanessa. I am proud of Vanessa. She was born in Ecuador and came to America at the age of 10, raised by her grandmother and reunited with her parents here in America. Soon after joining her parents in Connecticut, Vanessa learned English and she began school. She had a dream to go to college and become a nurse. As a teenager, she worked cleaning houses. She babysat. She saved money as much as she could for college because it was part of her dream of becoming a U.S. citizen and giving back to the greatest Nation in the history of the world.

She was accepted to Southern Connecticut State University, having to

pay the entire tuition. During her first year at Southern, she worked full time and went to school full time. She did both full time—had a job and sought an education. She doesn't remember having any rest during that year, not surprisingly. She went to school in the morning and then worked and babysat every night until midnight. Even with this challenge, she achieved a 3.9 GPA that year. She dreams of graduating from college and one day working as a registered nurse. She wants to give back, which she will do, and she will give back to the country she calls home. But she understands these dreams will be out of reach unless this body, this Congress, this Nation, approves the DREAM Act and the rights she is seeking.

I say in conclusion, I urge my colleagues to work hard on the issues at hand, which are fiscal in nature. They are key to our future in this country. But equally important to this great Nation of immigrants is providing a path to earned citizenship for young men and women such as Vanessa, their parents, and the 11 million people in this country who now live in the shadows. Let us enable them to come out of the shadows, pay fines and pay back taxes, show they have no criminal record, and otherwise meet the strong criteria we should establish as part of that pathway to earned citizenship, and truly achieve for Vanessa and the DREAMers what is certainly the American dream: Work hard, play by the rules, and you will be recognized for what you achieve, what you earn, what you give back and contribute to the greatest Nation in the history of the world.

Thank you, Mr. President. I yield the floor and I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

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

Ms. HIRONO. Mr. President, I rise today in strong opposition to amendment No. 115, the Toomey amendment. This amendment would reduce funding for advanced drop in biofuels production.

I strongly oppose this amendment for several reasons. First, this amendment undermines our long-term national security. The 2010 Quadrennial Defense Review outlines several areas where reforms are imperative to improving our national security. Implementing reforms to strengthen our energy security was one of these areas.

Right now, our military is almost totally dependent on fossil fuels. These resources are finite, priced on a global marketplace, and produced by nations with whom we don't always see eye to eye. There are also new powers rising and new challenges evolving. So to pre-

serve a 21st century force, we need to invest in 21st century priorities. This means we must diversify how we power our military.

The project this amendment seeks to cut is fairly modest in the scheme of the military budget, but the overall benefits to our forces will be well worth it. Our Nation has always invested in technologies that produce long-term benefits and address changing circumstances—from more advanced tanks and aircraft to faster communications and lighter armor. We have to innovate now in order for our military to have the capabilities to protect our Nation. We need to make the same kinds of investments now in our military's long-term energy needs.

Already the research and deployment of alternative energy is benefiting our long-term capabilities, improving troop safety, and making security operations more affordable. In fact, just last summer, at the Rim of the Pacific Exercise—RIMPAC—the U.S. Navy demonstrated its "Great Green Fleet" with surface combatants and aircraft using advanced biofuels for the first time. This exercise—the largest international exercise in the world—proved that our military platforms can use these fuels.

Prior to this exercise, Navy Secretary Ray Mabus said of the biofuels demonstration:

The Navy has always led the nation in transforming the way we use energy, not because it is popular, but because it makes us better war fighters.

Clearly, continuing to support this type of investment will pay additional dividends that will help ensure the United States remains the world's pre-eminent military and technological power in the 21st century.

However, there is another reason to oppose this amendment and support the military's ongoing efforts to improve its energy security. That reason is that it makes good long-run budgetary sense. Fossil fuels are a finite resource that are priced on a global market. Increasingly, as I mentioned, this fuel is produced by nations with whom we don't see eye to eye. As global competition for fuel resources intensifies, it is vital that we reduce the amount necessary to power our military.

Not only does our reliance on fossil fuels constrain our assets and resources from an operational perspective, it also puts significant strains on already stretched budgets. For example, between fiscal year 2005 and fiscal year 2011, the Department of Defense spending on petroleum rose from \$4.5 billion to \$17.3 billion. That is a 381-percent increase. While that number is shocking, another shocking fact is that during this time the Department of Defense was actually using 4 percent less petroleum. In other words, we are paying nearly four times more money for less fuel.

In addition, global price spikes make budgeting for our current energy costs extremely challenging. According to

the Navy, every time oil prices rise by \$1, their fuel budget inflates by \$30 million. In fiscal year 2012, the U.S. Pacific Command, which is based in Hawaii, faced a \$200 million shortfall in operation and maintenance funds. This is directly related to spiking fuel costs. These unforeseen circumstances reduce our military's capabilities and readiness. It is also unsustainable in today's budget environment.

So while the Senator from Pennsylvania argues that biofuels are too expensive now, new technologies are always more expensive at first. That is exactly why we need to invest in scaling up instead of scaling back. The first fighter jets off the assembly line are always more expensive than the 100th fighter off that line. The fact is that it is the height of irresponsibility for us to rely on fuel sources with such unstable costs.

That is why the military is already working to reduce its fossil fuel usage and to develop and deploy alternatives wherever possible. At the U.S. Pacific Command, investments in renewable energy, energy-efficient buildings, and fuel cell or hybrid vehicles are making installations more cost-effective. In fact, PACOM expects to reduce its reliance on fossil fuels for electricity by 80 percent. That would reduce the total DOD electricity demand in Hawaii by 34 percent and save the DOD \$42 million per year in electricity costs. This \$42 million could be put to better uses.

These are savings that can be replicated on a servicewide scale and will save far more money that could be used to support O&M than the Toomey amendment will. The military recognizes this. This is why GEN James Mattis has stated:

I remain committed to unleash the burden of fuel from our operational and tactical commanders to the greatest extent possible.

These investments are about improving our national security by changing the way we power our military. Advanced biofuels is an investment in that goal and one we should continue.

As U.S. Marine Corps Gen. John Allen has said:

Operational energy equates exactly to operational capability. Let's all work this hard, together!

So I urge my colleagues to vote against the Toomey amendment.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Colorado.

Mr. UDALL of Colorado. Mr. President, I too rise, as my colleague from Hawaii just did, to speak in support of the Department of Defense and in opposition to the amendment offered by the Senator from Pennsylvania. As has been outlined, this amendment would strike funding for a very important and effective Navy program which now works with private industry along with the Department of Energy and the Department of Agriculture to produce alternative fuels. As we work together to overcome the harm that has been done by sequestration, it is essential we provide the military with the flexibility to

overcome current and future threats. That includes allowing the DOD to invest in energy sources and fuel technologies that reduce our dependence on foreign oil.

Unfortunately, the Toomey amendment does the opposite. So accepting it would do real harm to our military. It would cost more money than it would save and it would damage the military's strong and necessary efforts to reduce its dependence on foreign oil.

In carrying out the work of our Nation, the Department of Defense consumes approximately 330,000 barrels of oil every single day. That works out to be 120 million barrels per year. What does that cost us? Last year, the military spent over \$16 billion on fuel. Because of rising global oil prices, that was about \$2.5 billion more than they forecasted. Those rising costs—in dollars and in operational capability—are staggering. I think that is the only word that applies.

If we think about it, we realize that for every 25-percent increase in the price per gallon of oil, the military's fuel costs increase by \$1 billion. In order to make up for that shortfall, the DOD has to pull money from operations and maintenance, which means that rising fuel costs result in less training, deferred maintenance, and reduced operational capability. That is a terrible triad if there ever was one. That means our troops, then, are also less prepared when they go into harm's way. They are less ready to fight when it matters most.

The Toomey amendment would undercut efforts to end that cycle. It would delay the development of technologies that would clearly bring lower costs, more domestic production, and more American jobs. That is why the DOD is investing in these domestic alternatives to foreign oil.

It should tell us something that in an era of reduced Department of Defense budgets our senior leaders remain fully committed to this effort. Even when we have to tighten our belts, they think this is an investment that makes sense.

What are we doing? We are investing in research and development that will develop new fuels that can be made from biologic feedstocks. These are fuels that can be grown and then refined here at home.

I want to be clear, these are not programs that are being forced on the DOD through earmarks or by environmentalists or other groups that some like to demonize. These are DOD initiatives, undertaken to protect the military from rising fuel costs and an increasingly volatile international marketplace.

So even under the threat of sequestration, investments in new energy technologies and alternative fuels remain a priority.

I would say to my friends who say we cannot afford to spend money on alternative fuels, our uniformed senior leaders tell us we cannot afford not to.

Think about it another way. We send \$300 billion overseas every year for oil. If we could keep about one-twentieth of a percent of that money at home, we would pay for this program.

For about half of what we spend on military bands each year, we could be establishing a domestic energy industry.

For about one-sixth of the cost of this year's funding for the MEADS missile system—a system that the DOD has no intention of putting into operational use—we could diversify our energy portfolio and drive down costs.

We would be taking billions out of the hands of terrorists and reducing the risk, at the same time, to our military personnel.

The proponents for cutting off these investments in alternative fuels would argue that the Defense Department should not be involved in the development of new energy sources. I could not disagree more. Let me tell you why.

These biofuels could not be used as leverage against us. The refineries could not be taken over by al-Qaida-backed extremists or blockaded by Iranian gunboats.

Energy security is national security, and this is exactly the right kind of investment that our military should be making.

Just think historically: Military research and development has sustained the enormous technological advantage we maintain over our adversaries. Our willingness to invest in the future has helped keep us safe.

It has also been said that the DOD should not be spending money on energy development. If that were the case, we would not have a nuclear-powered Navy. Without military investment in emerging technologies, we would not have jet engines, microchips, microwave ovens, radar, or GPS navigation.

Ensuring our energy security ought to be a national priority. Our reliance on foreign oil is a threat to our security and our economy, and I suggest even our very way of life.

We need a whole-of-America solution to this national problem, and the Department of Defense absolutely has a critical role to play in that effort.

If you believe that the DOD has a vested interest in having reliable sources of fuel and energy, then you should agree that they have a role to play in ensuring that new fuels meet their needs.

As I mentioned, we are all concerned about the effect of sequestration on our troops, but we cannot solve our problems with the same kind of shortsighted thinking that got us here in the first place.

Killing the Navy's biofuels program—and make no mistake, that is exactly what this amendment would do—will cost more money than it saves. It will set back an industry that is poised to provide our country with enormous and important benefits. And it will make

sure—it will ensure—that we keep pouring money into foreign coffers.

So I urge my colleagues to continue to support smart investments in our future, like the Navy's biofuels initiative. Therefore, I urge my colleagues to oppose the Toomey amendment.

Mr. President, thank you for your attention.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Kansas.

Mr. MORAN. Mr. President, I am here to speak to an amendment that I previously filed, amendment No. 41.

The purpose of this amendment is to help provide the White House with the opportunity to reopen its doors to the American people. It certainly has received a lot of attention, which demonstrates to me—and I am sure to my colleagues—how important a visit to the White House is to so many Americans.

In my view, we can be much smarter, and we must be much smarter, with our spending decisions and make cuts in ways that do not intentionally or unnecessarily inflict hardship or aggravation upon the citizens of our country.

Canceling White House tours is one of those unnecessary and unfair ways for the Department of Homeland Security to meet its budget-cutting obligations—particularly if the necessary savings can be found someplace else within their budget.

The self-guided White House tours were canceled either by the Secret Service or the White House—I have not been able to get a clear answer to actually who made that decision. But, regardless, they were canceled in order to save a minimum of \$2.14 million, according to the Secret Service.

This amendment proposes to transfer \$2.5 million from TSA to the U.S. Secret Service to pay for the security staff necessary for the White House tours to continue for the remainder of fiscal year 2013.

Why go after TSA? In my view, TSA can absorb these costs. Just last week, TSA signed a contract—just last week TSA signed a contract—that would allow it to spend up to \$50 million on uniform-related expenses over the course of the next 2 years. So last week, TSA spends \$50 million for new uniforms, and now we have no money for tours at the White House.

Prior to signing that \$50 million uniform contract, the TSA uniform allowance for security officers had already doubled last November as part of a new TSA collective bargaining agreement to an estimated \$9.57 million annually. This works out to \$443 per TSA employee per year. By comparison, officers in the U.S. Armed Forces receive either no uniform allowance or a one-time \$400 allowance over the lifetime of their service.

There is no reason why American taxpayers should spend more on TSA uniforms every year than a U.S. Marine Corps lieutenant spends in a lifetime. And the same taxpayers who are

funding the TSA officers' uniforms are being denied the opportunity to tour the White House—the people's house.

This amendment has been scored by CBO, which found it would result in no net change in budget authority and would result in an estimated decrease in fiscal year 2013 outlays of \$1 million. So it is an amendment that saves money.

These White House tour closings are actually falling on the burden of Members of Congress because it is our responsibility to organize the tours, get the permission, and we are the ones who are now telling our constituents that tours that were previously approved—we have to call and give them the bad news.

In fact, today I had a couple of Kansans and their three young boys on the Capitol steps for a photograph and conversation, and these constituents with their family from Kansas were indicating how sad it was to tell their boys, even though they were here in Washington, DC, they could not see the White House. In fact, they said: We played by the rules. We signed up. We went through the security. For months we were planning to come to Washington, DC, but now that we have arrived, the White House is something that is not available to us and our boys.

It is often that we are the ones now providing that news to families in Kansas and across the country. My office has received lots of e-mails from concerned constituents, including some whose tours are not even scheduled until next May or June, sometime in the summer, asking whether we believe the White House will be reopened to them by that time.

Between March 9 and March 21—just in that short period of time—we have already canceled 16 previously approved White House tours. Multiply that—assuming we are normal or average—by 100 Senate offices and 435 House Members, and that is a lot of Americans who had hoped or thought they were going to see the White House on their visit to our Nation's Capitol.

I read today that the White House has indicated they are going to try to find ways. I think the President said he is going to try to find ways to get young people, children, into the White House. I certainly express my desire to see that happen. But I was thinking, if we make that the case, then what happens to the Kansan who is the 91-year-old World War II veteran who is back here to see the World War II Memorial and while here wants to see the White House?

Again, the White House should be available to all Americans—in fact, people from around the globe—to see the home of our President.

Shaking up our entire tour scheduling process at a time in which the tourists are soon coming—or coming now with spring break and cherry blossoms—is something, in my view, we can avoid. This amendment would take

money that we believe is less wisely spent and reopen the White House to the American people.

So I appreciate the opportunity to explain my amendment and would hope we can find a way, in working with the White House and working with the Secret Service, to make sure that noble building at 1600 Pennsylvania Avenue is something that is available for Americans to see, to view, and to be inspired.

One of those kids, one of those folks who walks through that White House, someday might be the President of the United States. And we do not want to do anything that hinders the opportunity for that inspiration to occur and for Americans to continue to be proud in their Executive Officer—the President—and to be proud of the system of government we have. Let's not lose the inspiration. Let's not deny the American taxpayer, the American family the opportunity to see the White House at 1600 Pennsylvania Avenue.

Thank you, Mr. President.
The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Oregon.

AMENDMENT NO. 115

Mr. WYDEN. Mr. President, I chair the Energy and Natural Resources Committee, and in that capacity, I want to take a couple of minutes to speak against the Toomey amendment. That is amendment No. 115 that would slash, in effect, the biofuels program at the Department of Defense.

Of course, we are going to hear that this will save money, that with the sequester and a very tough set of financial circumstances, which the Presiding Officer knows all too well, the argument will be we cannot afford to have this biofuels program in the Department of Defense.

My argument would be, we cannot afford not to have this program, and I am going to take a couple minutes to try to describe why that is the case.

Right now, the Department of Defense is the single largest user of energy in our country, with annual fuel expenditures in excess of \$16 billion. So you have this massive need for energy at the Pentagon—really a thirst for energy at the Pentagon—and fluctuations in global energy prices have, in effect, enormous effects on defense spending. Every \$10 increase in a barrel of oil costs the American military annually an extra \$1.3 billion.

For some time there has been a recognition among military experts—and some are in the Presiding Officer's home State of Massachusetts, where they have spent a lot of time looking at these issues—there has been a recognition that the military, particularly the Pentagon, is exactly the place where we ought to be looking for fresh innovative approaches in order to cut energy use and find alternative sources.

For the life of me, I cannot figure out how somehow this effort by the Pentagon—let me repeat: by our country's military—has somehow been conflated

into some kind of green plot, some kind of plot by those who are obsessed with green energy and are simply interested in promoting programs to satisfy their ideological interests.

I can tell you the reason this is being pursued at the Pentagon is not because this is somehow some sort of green plot, some sort of subversive green plot. This is being pursued at the Pentagon because they have made the judgment that these kinds of alternative fuels and supporting them is a vital national security matter. This is not about some kind of ideological green agenda. This is about national security. Their judgment is we need exactly this kind of effort.

DOD contracts are particularly crucial because they help promote research and development efforts. What we have seen repeatedly is a lot of the most exciting alternative fuels. The biofuels have enormous potential. The challenge is to keep driving down the costs and do it in a cost-effective kind of way. That is exactly what goes on now at the Department of Defense as relates to biofuels. It is exactly what would be undermined if the Toomey amendment, amendment No. 115, was passed and signed into law.

The last point I would make is that Bloomberg, which has a new energy finance unit, a special unit that looks at these issues, their analysts predict that some aviation biofuels are going to be cost competitive with standard jet fuel in just a few years. That will happen if we do not undermine current development rates in this area of biofuels at the Department of Defense.

That is why, colleagues, I feel so strongly about opposing the Toomey amendment on biofuels at the Pentagon. I hope my colleagues will agree.

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

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. UDALL of Colorado). The clerk will call the roll.

The assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

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

Mrs. SHAHEEN. Mr. President, I come to the floor this evening to address Senator TOOMEY's amendment, which would remove the provisions around biofuels, amendment No. 115. I think it is important to point out that this is really more than a budget issue. The Presiding Officer understands, as he and I worked together to address this when we passed the Defense authorization bill. This is really a national security issue.

I had the opportunity, as chair of the Water and Power Subcommittee in Energy, to go down to Norfolk to have a hearing aboard the USS Kearsarge to talk about exactly what the Navy—and they are reflective of the military—is doing to address energy use. I saw some very amazing progress in terms of their

reduction in energy use, their energy efficiency. I saw some of the things they are doing, such as using solar blankets and small, compact batteries out in the field. This allows them to do their mission much better.

They pointed out that our access to energy is complicated by political unrest and by threats to our supply lines around the globe. We spend billions to protect these fragile supply lines.

Oil prices are set on a global market, often driven by speculation and rumor. Our military is too often exposed to price shocks. The military consumes about 300,000 barrels of oil a day, which is about \$30 million a day.

The Federal Government is the largest consumer of energy in the United States, with 93 percent consumed by the military. For every dollar rise in a barrel of oil, the Navy incurs a cost of \$30 million at current prices. Last year the Navy incurred a \$1.1 billion budget shortfall because the cost of a barrel of oil increased by \$38. The commander of the Pacific Fleet was forced to cut \$200 million from its flying and steaming costs because of those cost increases.

In fiscal years 2011 and 2012, the Department of Defense came up \$5.6 billion short for military operations and maintenance because it needed to spend more on fuel than anticipated.

As I saw in Norfolk on the Kearsarge, each of our services is making real progress on energy efficiency and moving to alternative fuels. This is not the time to hinder those efforts.

The per-gallon cost of test quantities of advanced biofuels under Navy contracts has declined more than 90 percent over the past 2 years, and it is going to continue to decline. The Navy and the Department of Defense have been on the leading edge of innovation and technological achievements over the last 200 years. This is another example of innovation and technological advancement.

Last year the Chief of Naval Operations, ADM Jonathan Greenert, sent a letter to my office advocating his strong support for the Navy's efforts on biofuels and urging Congress to provide him with the flexibility to continue this effort. He states:

I support the Secretary of the Navy's efforts . . . to accelerate the establishment of a domestic alternative fuels industry through DPA, Title III. This effort will enhance our energy security by diversifying the supply of fuels.

Restricting this biofuel effort will "impede America's energy security."

I applaud my colleague Senator TOOMEY for the efforts he made to look at what we are spending in government to attempt to reduce those costs. He and I are working very closely in an attempt to reduce the cost of sugar subsidies in this country. This is a situation where, for short-term gain, they would risk the long-term benefit.

I would urge my colleagues to oppose the Toomey amendment and ensure our military continues to be on the leading edge of energy security for the world.

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

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The bill clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

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

IN MEMORY OF ANDY ATHENS

Mr. DURBIN. Mr. President, I want to take a moment to remember a friend of mine who passed away last night. Andy Athens was a civic institution in Chicago. He was a brilliant business leader. He was also "the Dean" of the Greek American community—a founder and former president and the co-founder of the National Coordinated Effort of Hellenes.

We are so grateful that when Andy's father left Greece in 1904 he came to Chicago. With his brother Tom, Andy built a business that provided steel to the world and good jobs and dignity for generations of Chicago's American families. But Andy's contributions went far beyond Chicago. Growing up, Andy attended school at St. Constantine and Helen Greek Orthodox Church in Chicago, where he learned the importance of Greek culture and the Greek Orthodox Church.

When World War II came, Andy served as a captain in the U.S. Army in Europe and Africa and was awarded the Bronze Star. But he brought more than a Bronze Star home from that experience. He stayed on in Belgium after the war ended to run a liberated Ford Motor Company plant that was rebuilding American-made cars and trucks for sale to European governments. Landing that job was the second best thing that happened to him in Belgium. By far, his greatest source of luck was when he met his beautiful wife Louise.

Before Andy retired from the steel business, he used to have to carry two briefcases to keep all his activities straight. In one briefcase were the things he needed for his business. The other briefcase held his blueprints and details for all the extraordinary works of philanthropy and diplomacy by the American Council of Hellenics.

During the tragic invasion of Cyprus by Turkey in 1974, Andy founded the United Hellenic American Congress in Chicago to organize the Greek-American community and press for peace and justice in Cyprus. He served as president or chairman or both over the years, and every Greek-American organization wanted Andy to be part of it.

In 1995, leaders of organizations representing the 7 million Hellenes living outside of Greece met in Greece to create an organization uniting all Greeks around the world. The result was the World Council of Hellenes. Who did the new council choose as its first president? The Dean, Andy Athens.

If it is discovered there are Hellenes living on other planets, I am sure Andy would have organized them and would

have been elected first president of their group as well.

Andy Athens was a global ambassador for the shared values on which Hellenism in America is based: freedom, democracy, human rights, human dignity, and service to others. He and the organizations he helped to establish brought hope, opportunity and justice, and the priceless gift of health to millions around the world.

Last year, I traveled to Eastern Europe and met with leaders in several nations who not so long ago were part of the Soviet Union. As so often happens when I visit other lands, I found myself following in Andy's footsteps. I traveled to the Nation of Georgia, where Hellenicare, the medical philanthropy Andy founded, supports a number of health care centers.

I visited the Ukraine, home to Hellenicare's visiting nurses' program. I went to Armenia, where thousands of people each month receive care at a health clinic established by Hellenicare. This was a man whose good works are known throughout the world. As our friend Senator MIKULSKI says, "Andy Athens was a one-man foreign aid program."

Other than faith and family, no cause was dearer to Andy than the cause of freedom and justice for Cyprus. Andy Athens did more than any other American to end the division and occupation of Cyprus and to keep the cause of justice for Cyprus on our Nation's agenda. For his efforts, he received countless honors, including the Grand Cross of the Order of Merit of the Republic of Cyprus and the Hellenic Republic's highest honor, the Gold Cross of the Order of the Phoenix.

Andy was 91 years old when he passed away. Loretta and I want to offer our condolences to Andy's wife Louise, their children and grandchildren, and to Andy's legions of friends. Andy Athens was a hero not only of this Nation but of Greece, Cyprus, and so many other nations. I am proud to say he was my friend, and I will miss him.

Mr. President, I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Maryland.

Ms. MIKULSKI. Mr. President, to my colleague and friend from Illinois, through you, I also express my condolences to the Athens family. Andy was a good friend to me. We had such a warm, cordial, affectionate relationship. But he made that easy because of the kind of man he was—a real entrepreneur in that immigrant sense, starting with very little and really creating a business. But along the way, he not only built a business, he raised a family and he built a community. And I enjoyed so much working with him on the issues.

Yes, we did work on Cyprus, the fact that Cyprus is yet to be unified and is still occupied in northern Cyprus. But was the Senator from Illinois aware of his work in creating health services in Russia and in the Orthodox community there—he was like a one-man NGO in

what he did. Was the Senator aware of that?

Mr. DURBIN. I tried to read some of them, but I couldn't read the entire list. And I actually quoted the Senator from Maryland, who once referred to him as a one-man foreign aid program.

Ms. MIKULSKI. I am going to put that in neon here this evening, yes.

Mr. DURBIN. He was an extraordinary man. What a legacy he leaves around the world, not just in Chicago and in Washington.

Ms. MIKULSKI. What did he pass away from?

Mr. DURBIN. I was told he passed away peacefully in the night. The last time I saw him was in the Capitol Building about a year ago, and you could tell he was struggling a little bit. But it was a day when he was honored and everyone cheered him on and was happy to be there.

He was such an extraordinarily good man. And when the Senator and I value our own heritage and the fact that so many people from different parts of the world come here, proud to be American but also proud of their roots and try to do something for the country they came from or their family came from—Andy was one of those people.

Ms. MIKULSKI. Absolutely. I am so pleased, if I may comment, that the Senator brought this to the attention of the full Senate. I will submit my own statement. We would welcome to know how to get in touch with the Athens family. But let me say it to the Senator.

Mr. DURBIN. I thank the Senator from Maryland. I might also add that her former colleague Senator Paul Sarbanes was a dear close friend to Andy Athens. Whenever we would have a meeting of the Hellenic group here in the Capitol, you always knew Paul Sarbanes and Andy Athens were going to be right there in front with the Manatos families and others—a wonderful group, both in Chicago and here.

Mr. President, I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The majority leader.

Mr. REID. Mr. President, at the end of a long, hard few days, people probably aren't expecting me to say some positive things about Republicans, but I think it is appropriate to do so.

First of all, the Speaker sent us this bill in a time where we had an opportunity to look at it and work on it. He should be commended, as I do commend him for doing that rather than trying to jam us with something right before the CR expires.

We valiantly tried to make this a better bill, and that has been done because of the outstanding work of Senator MIKULSKI and Senator SHELBY. The product we have is a good product. It funds the government for 6 months, that is all. But it is good because not only does it fund the government for 6 months, it allows us to get back to regular order here, which we have all been talking about doing. Not only is this legislation important but what we are

going to do to follow up, to do regular appropriations bills, to fund the government for the fiscal year 2014.

So we have made progress on this bill. We voted on some important matters. But I have to say that I am disappointed in a number of my Democrats and a number of Republicans because we have to compromise and work together to get this done.

As an example, we have five different amendments that have been offered on Egypt. This is a CR for 6 months. We have a functioning Foreign Relations Committee. That is where this should take place. I have spoken with Chairman MENENDEZ. There are people on his committee who are offering various versions of what should happen on Egypt. We all have concerns about Egypt, our funding of Egypt, maintaining stability in the region, supporting Israel. As I have indicated, we have five Senators who have filed five separate, distinct amendments, and, literally, staffs, with Senators, have worked all day coming up with amendments that Democrats and Republicans could agree on. It hasn't been done. That doesn't mean it can't be done, but it hasn't been done.

I would again remind Senators that this is a continuing resolution. A long-term solution to the situation in the Middle East is not a short-term CR. Whatever we do on this bill would expire in 6 months anyway. The issue should be brought up in committee and worked on there and brought to us. That is what my Republican friends have said they wanted, and that is what my Democratic friends have said they wanted. They want to get back to where we do that kind of work.

I thank very much Senators MENENDEZ, RUBIO, LEAHY, MCCAIN—remember, two and two: two Democrats and two Republicans. I appreciate the work they have done. But we haven't been able to merge these different approaches to get something done.

We are behind the scenes around here. Just because you don't see a lot of talking going on here doesn't mean there isn't a lot of work going on. There have been numerous discussions about how to get the amendments into shape so they can be voted on. We can't even get Senators to agree that we should have votes on amendments, unless, "I want mine." "If he gets his, I want mine." So we have had difficulty on both sides to agree on a path forward.

Now, the Speaker has been pretty clear. He has said that unless we get a bill that doesn't have a lot of junk in it—I am paraphrasing what he said to make the point—he is going to strike everything and send us back a straight CR. He said that publicly, not privately. So we need to move forward, cautiously but quickly.

Next week we have something on which we have had speeches on both sides of the Senate—we need to do a budget. As we speak, the Budget Committee is in session working to get a

budget so that we can work on it next week.

Now, the budget is defined, how we do it. There is a statute that says there are no filibusters. There are certain ways you can slow it down a little bit, but there is 50 hours. That is how much time we have on it, plus the vote-athon afterward.

So yesterday I filed a motion on the pending substitute and the underlying bill. What I would request—and I have spoken to the managers of this bill—is that they and their staffs make themselves available to Senators and Senators' staff to try to come up with a finite list of amendments—not hundreds but a finite, small list of amendments that we think would improve this bill and not further develop the ire of the Speaker, who is kind of in charge of a lot of what we do around here even though we are on the other side of the Capitol than he is.

The managers have already agreed to be available and their staffs will be available to work on a finite list of amendments. Staffs need to be reasonable, and Senators need to be reasonable.

It is doable. We can do this. If we have a finite list of amendments, we will complete work on this matter Monday. If we don't, then there is not much choice we have except to vote on cloture on Monday. One way or the other, we are going to move forward with this bill on Monday. I hope the Senate will be able to come to a resolution on this important appropriations matter on Monday. We need to do that. I hope this Senate can turn immediately after that to the budget resolution.

I can't say enough how much I appreciate the efforts of Senators MIKULSKI and SHELBY. They have had a very difficult time trying to manage people who at times are unmanageable.

So that is it for tonight. Again, we will go out tonight and have people work to try to come up with a list of amendments that will allow us to move forward on this bill.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Maryland.

Ms. MIKULSKI. Mr. President, I know we are going to go out. I thank the majority leader for his kind words. I assure the leader and the Republican leader that the staffs on the Appropriations Committee will be working once again through another weekend to scrutinize these amendments.

We now have 99 amendments pending. In order to properly advise the Senate and to ensure that they would get good scrutiny from both a budgetary standpoint and policy, to be able to consult with one another, it requires us working through the weekend. We are ready to do it. We worked last weekend. Senator SHELBY and I were in frequent contact. We were in frequent contact with our House counterparts, Congressman ROGERS and Congresswoman NITA, who graciously made themselves available to get their view on their lay of the land. So we will do it again.

Every Senator has a right to offer amendments. Every Senator has a right to have his or her day. But I would hope they wouldn't do it all on this amendment or all on this bill.

This is the continuing funding resolution. We have worked with such diligence and such a sense of cooperation and bipartisanship. Our goal is to get the Federal Government funded through the fiscal year October 1 to avoid a government shutdown. This isn't a BARBARA MIKULSKI threat. We have a due date on March 27, when it expires. Congress leaves for the Easter-Passover break next Friday, March 22.

So I would say to my colleagues, now that we have the amendments, we will do our due diligence, and Senators will know our analysis and their own respective staff's analysis.

So on Monday, once again, on the floor will be Shelby-Mikulski, Mikulski-Shelby. We will be ready to move amendments. We need our colleagues ready to move on their own amendments and to cooperate with us on offering them, debating them, and putting them in the sequence that has the greatest leverage to get the job done.

I really can't say enough about the help I have gotten from Senator SHELBY, my vice chairman, the distinguished Senator from Alabama, his staff, and the cooperation we have received from the minority. This is not the usual slamdown party politics. This is a big bill. It is the funding for the government of the United States. There is a lot of pent-up desire to participate in policymaking. Let's keep it not to what we would like to do, but let's keep it to what we must do. What we would like to do can come as we bring up individual bills, where we can really dive deep into the issues and policies and the funding. So let's do what we can.

I would hope that on Monday Senators come ready to really wrap it up because we would have liked to have sent our bill to the House at noon today. Well, it didn't work out that way. So we are ready to do business. We are ready to get the job done. We would love to get this job done Monday night, if we could.

Mr. President, I again thank everyone. I also thank our staffs on both sides of the aisle who have been working so assiduously for the last several weeks to get this bill ready to present to the Senate on the floor and for what they will continue to do to help us do our jobs.

Mr. President, I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Alabama.

Mr. SHELBY. Mr. President, I wish to take a few minutes this evening to thank the majority leader, Senator REID, and also the Republican leader, Senator MCCONNELL, for helping us come together, being where we are thus far. I also wish to thank Senator MIKULSKI, the chairperson of the full Committee on Appropriations. We have

been working and we have made some progress. We would have liked to have finished this bill tonight. There are a lot of amendments—I think 90-something that Senator MIKULSKI said. I hope people will try to work this weekend and try to get through this.

We need to pass this bill. This is one of the cleanest appropriations bills I have seen since I have been up here. We said no to the Democrats, Senator MIKULSKI has, and I have said no to the Republicans on some things. We have a continuing resolution—I call it a hybrid—with five appropriations bills. We can do this. This would take care of the government—in other words, not go from crisis to crisis—until the end of this fiscal year, September 30, where we can get on the budget and other things.

America is watching us. We are trying to respond in a bipartisan way. I hope we can make a lot of progress this weekend. Our staffs are going to be here working. We are going to be here working. Come Monday, we need to move this bill.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The majority leader.

Mr. REID. Mr. President, before he leaves the floor, I apologize for not mentioning Senator MCCONNELL. Senator MCCONNELL, when the bill came from the House, stood up for the prerogatives of the Senate.

Mr. SHELBY. Absolutely.

Mr. REID. He said they have done subcommittees. We are going to do our own. I failed to mention my friend Senator MCCONNELL. I am glad you did. Because we are here today, making as much progress as we have, because of Senator MCCONNELL standing up for the Senate.

Mr. SHELBY. Because of both of them. I thank the Senator.

• Mr. COWAN. Mr. President, Senator ELIZABETH WARREN, the distinguished Senior Senator from Massachusetts and I are cosponsors of the Murkowski amendment to the Continuing Appropriations bill. This amendment would provide \$150 million in disaster assistance for the fishermen and the fishing communities which received a Department of Commerce disaster declaration last year. This amendment is offset by an across-the-board cut to the Department of Commerce budget in Fiscal Year 2013.

While Senator WARREN and I are cosponsors of this bipartisan amendment, we would strongly prefer that this amendment use an emergency funding designation instead of the offset included in this amendment.

In recent years, Massachusetts fishermen and fishing communities have been struggling to survive amid Federal regulations and environmental changes that have limited fishing opportunities. Last year, the Department of Commerce declared a fishery failure for the Northeast multispecies fishery for the 2013 season.

Last year, the Senate included a \$150 million fund in the Senate Hurricane

Sandy Supplemental Appropriations bill to assist fisheries disasters, like those in the Northeast using an emergency designation. Unfortunately, this provision was not included in the final Hurricane Sandy Supplemental Appropriations bill due to opposition from Republicans in the House of Representatives.

Senator WARREN and I will continue to do all that we can to provide disaster assistance funding for Massachusetts fishermen and fishing communities. •

Ms. COLLINS. Mr. President, I am pleased to be a cosponsor of the amendment sponsored by my friend from Alaska, Senator MURKOWSKI, which would provide \$150 million in disaster funding for officially declared fisheries disasters.

The funding for declared fisheries disasters is necessary to address the devastating economic consequences of significant projected reductions in the total allowable catch for critical groundfish stocks. In September of last year, the acting Secretary of Commerce, recognizing the economic difficulty fishing communities have faced and will continue to face, declared a federal fisheries disaster for Maine, Rhode Island, Massachusetts, New Hampshire, New York, and Connecticut for the 2013 fishing year. This authority is provided under the Magnuson-Stevens Fisheries Conservation and Management Act and the Interjurisdictional Fisheries Act.

Fishing is more than just a profession in New England. Fishing is a way of life and a significant part of Maine's heritage. There are 45 vessels based in Maine which are actively fishing with Federal groundfish permits. Last year, more than five million pounds of groundfish, with a dockside value approaching \$5.8 million, were landed in Maine. Despite strict adherence to rigorous management practices by fishermen, the projected reductions, which may be as high as 73 percent, could devastate groundfishing communities.

The requested funding would be used to provide economic relief to the region's struggling groundfish industry and to make targeted investments which will allow the fleet to survive and become more sustainable in the years ahead. These funds could also be used to fully cover the costs of at-sea monitoring and to address long-term overcapacity in the fishing industry. This is critical to rebuilding fish stocks and preserving a thriving fishing industry well into the future.

Slow recovery and declining fish stocks continue to have a negative impact on commercial fishing, which harms local communities and economies. This federal disaster assistance is vital to the long-term success and short-term survival of fishing communities throughout the region.

I urge adoption of the amendment.

MORNING BUSINESS

Mr. REID. I ask unanimous consent we now proceed to a period of morning business, with Senators permitted to speak for up to 10 minutes each.

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

RECOGNIZING TONY POMERLEAU'S GENEROSITY

Mr. LEAHY. Mr. President, I have spoken many times on the floor of the Senate about Antonio Pomerleau of Burlington, VT. As my wife, Marcelle, has often said, he is her "favorite Uncle Tony." Given his extraordinary service and dedication to the people of our state, it is safe to say that he is every Vermonter's "favorite Uncle Tony."

Tony has done so much for so many, from his enormously generous contribution to help the survivors of Hurricane Irene, through his constant and generous support of our Vermont National Guard and their families, to most recently his large donation to the Community Health Centers of Burlington, in memory of his daughter, Anne Marie.

Marcelle and I of course knew her cousin Anne Marie, and we warmly remember her spirit and her life. Even though health problems nearly immobilized her toward the end, the cheer, love and friendship she gave—not only to members of the family but to everyone else—was a treasure in all of our lives. Tony continues to lift Vermonters' spirits and make lives better in so many ways. I have an article from The Burlington Free Press that highlights yet another token of Uncle Tony's generosity.

I ask unanimous consent that this article be printed in the RECORD.

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

[From the Burlington Free Press,
Mar. 6, 2013]

POMERLEAU GIVES TO HEALTH CENTERS—COMMUNITY HEALTH CENTERS OF BURLINGTON RECEIVE \$200,000 GIFT

"You people deserve the thanks for the outstanding work you do," Burlington businessman Tony Pomerleau told a small crowd Wednesday afternoon at the Riverside Health Center. "I just come up with the money, that's all."

Applause and cheers greeted Pomerleau's announcement of a \$200,000 donation to Community Health Centers of Burlington in memory of his daughter, Anne Marie.

"This is a large gift for us," beamed Jack Donnelly, the executive director of the centers.

He said the sum would be dedicated to the nonprofit's Homeless Health Care Program.

Specifically, Donnelly said, it will fund improvements to the basement at Safe Harbor Health Center at South Winooski Avenue and King Street—one of the Community Health Centers' four facilities in Burlington.

Director of Community Relations Alison Calderara summarized the centers' mission: It provides sliding-scale health, dental and human services; and includes low-cost prescription programs, social work support and interpreters for non-English speaking patients.

Soon after Wednesday's fanfare subsided, it segued into mid-day sandwiches.

The philanthropist made himself comfortable in an armchair and indulged in a little storytelling.

It turns out that Pomerleau has good reason to be grateful for easy access to health care: When he was 2 or 3 years old he tumbled into the basement of his family's summer kitchen.

"I wore a cast iron brace for four years," he said.

His parents regularly took the boy 50 miles north by train to Sherbrooke, Quebec, for treatment.

For Pomerleau, who is in his mid-90s now, the half-dozen years after the accident remain a blank.

"The lights came on when I was seven or eight," he said. "The doctors told my parents I might reach 10, but I'd never reach 12."

"I'd been awake, of course," Pomerleau continued. "I'd learned English in school; I'd grown—but I don't remember anything."

"Now, people say I remember too much," he said.

SEQUESTER MITIGATION

Mr. UDALL of Colorado. Mr. President, I rise today to talk about the bipartisan UdallCollins flexibility plan, which is designed to help mitigate the damaging effects of the automatic spending cuts our country now faces, commonly called the sequester. If left unchanged, these indiscriminate sequester cuts will undermine services that hardworking families rely on and harm our economic growth during this fragile recovery.

So what is the sequester and how did our politics deteriorate so badly that we are left to watch as this self-inflicted wound is leveled on our country? It boils down to two problems that both Democrats and Republicans readily acknowledge deserve our attention: our national deficit and debt. In some ways it is just as the President has described it: a matter of pure math. The Federal Government is spending more than it is taking in and that picture is not projected to change in the long run—in fact, it is projected to get worse.

And this has been a long time coming. In 2010, I was part of a core group of Senators who urged the White House to establish a bipartisan fiscal commission that would help us address our debt and deficit. The administration heard our call and established a debt and deficit panel to recommend a balanced and comprehensive way to get our fiscal house in order. Their plan, as you know Mr. President, is now commonly referred to as the Simpson-Bowles plan. Former Republican Wyoming Senator Al Simpson and Former Clinton Chief of Staff Erskine Bowles led the effort and both Democrats and Republicans here in the Senate embraced the framework that pushed for spending cuts, raising revenue and responsibly reforming our entitlements. With bipartisan support for such a balanced plan, it should have been an open-and-shut case, which is why I endorsed the idea and repeatedly encouraged my colleagues to bring it to the floor for a vote.

The problem is that it doesn't just take some bipartisanship to get any-

thing done around here; it takes a lot of bipartisanship—60 votes in the Senate and 218 votes in the House of Representatives. Ideologues on both sides of the aisle and in both chambers have since dug in their heels, totally unwilling to set aside differences to reach a compromise.

So that brings us back to the sequester. Because Congress cannot agree on a balanced and bipartisan plan to reduce the deficit, we are left with these automatic and blunt across-the-board cuts.

There is no doubt that we must reduce the deficit, which is why I have been saying for months that we ought to bring forward the Simpson-Bowles plan and find a way to achieve deficit reduction in a more thoughtful and strategic way. That approach would include additional revenue and shoring up our entitlements. In theory, many of my colleagues on both sides of the aisle agree with this approach. But at the end of the day, there just aren't enough of them with the courage to support a balanced, deficit-reduction plan. We owe it to the American people to be honest. Let's just acknowledge that we have reached an impasse.

And until there are enough Members willing to make the difficult decisions we are left with these terrible and indiscriminate cuts to our Government. Let's get it straight: the sequester is not a solution. It is neither smart, nor strategic—it wasn't designed to be. I firmly believe that the sequester will leave our Government frayed and our economy weakened.

The sheer magnitude of the sequester cuts will not only damage our economy, but will also put our national security at a level of risk that could have been avoided had Congress exercised the courage to pass a bipartisan and balanced plan. We can do better, and the Udall-Collins plans suggests that there are more reasonable ways to find these savings than implementing blunt, thoughtless cuts.

Our plan says, "Wait a minute, if we really have to live with these terrible cuts, shouldn't we at least be strategic about how and where we make them?"

The proposal that Senator COLLINS and I have put forward is not about providing flexibility to choose between cutting children's education funding in New York City versus Kansas City. Our plan simply provides the administration and Congress with the flexibility to look at where our Government's highest-value investments are so we can continue to invest in them, while cutting back in areas that do not provide mission-critical value for Americans.

While there are still difficult decisions to make and tough choices to confront, the best way forward is through a collaborative process between the administration and Congress—as the Udall-Collins plan would provide.

Last week, the Senate voted down a politically motivated flexibility proposal. Senator COLLINS and I are not