

reconsider be laid upon the table, with no intervening action or debate.

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

The resolution (S. Res. 160) was agreed to.

The preamble was agreed to.

(The resolution, with its preamble, is printed in today's RECORD under "Submitted Resolutions.")

RECESS

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

Thereupon, the Senate, at 12:32 p.m., recessed until 2:15 p.m. and reassembled when called to order by the Presiding Officer (Ms. BALDWIN).

AGRICULTURE REFORM, FOOD, AND JOBS ACT OF 2013—Continued

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Arizona.

THE PAST, PRESENT, AND FUTURE

Mr. FLAKE. Madam President, the Senate, I am learning, is an institution bound by tradition and precedent. One of the time-honored and worthwhile traditions in this body is that new Senators, for at least the first few months of their service, are to be essentially seen and not heard until they deliver their maiden speeches on the Senate floor. This, Madam President, I am doing today.

As an aside, and in the same vein of new Senators traditionally not being heard but seen, I may have been well advised for the first few months of my service to avoid the throngs of reporters who congregate outside this Chamber, but it is too late for that. Politicians, after all, can only heed so much advice.

For the past 12 years it was my privilege to serve in the House of Representatives, a body that has its own traditions and precedents. At its core the House is governed by the concept of majority rule—one party can have a majority of only one or two and, by virtue of the rules, can still maintain control of that body. During my time in the House, I had the experience of being both in the majority and in the minority. All things equal, I have preferred the former, but I understood the power wielded by being in the majority is fleeting. That is as it should be.

The Senate, on the other hand, is a body governed by consensus. The party holding the gavel is on a short leash. Bringing even the most noncontroversial resolutions to the Senate floor requires the agreement, or at least the acquiescence, of the minority party. Over the past decades, both parties have chafed under this arrangement. Both parties have at times considered changing the rules that would in some way make the Senate more like the House. Both parties have wisely reconsidered. The House has rules appropriate for the House. The rules of the

Senate, however frustrating to the party that happens to wield the gavel, are appropriate for the Senate.

I come to this point with great appreciation for those Arizona Senators who have preceded me. The 48th State in the Union, Arizona celebrated its centennial just last year. Prior to my swearing in this year, Arizona had sent just 10 Senators to this body. These Arizonans who came before me left more of an impression than simply carving their names in these desks. Few in this body have matched the longevity of Carl Hayden. Few have had the lasting impact of Barry Goldwater, who helped launch the conservative movement.

I consider it a high honor to follow in the footsteps of Senator Jon Kyl, whose steady principled leadership shaped Arizona for the better and made our Nation stronger and more secure. My constituents now call the same telephone number I once answered as an intern for Senator Dennis DeConcini. He taught me a great deal about constituent service.

Now I have the incredible honor to serve here with Senator JOHN MCCAIN who, as a prisoner of war, taught us all the meaning of sacrifice. Since that time he has served Arizona, the country, and the Senate nobly and honorably. Fortunately for all of us his service to this institution continues. It is my great privilege to serve with him.

The challenges America faces today are legion and growing. Abroad, cells of terrorists bent on our destruction continue to incubate. Some receive aid and comfort from countries with long-held grievances and irreconcilable enmity toward the United States. Other terrorists take advantage of failed states and lawless regions to hatch their plans.

But it is not just individual terrorists or terror cells we have to worry about. Countries unbound by the norms and conventions of traditional nation-states now threaten peace. Today our concern is primarily focused on Iran and North Korea, but myriad other countries are but one election or coup removed from boiling over into regional and international instability.

Here at home our fiscal situation is dire. We continue to spend considerably more than we take in. Worse yet, we have no serious plan to remedy the problem in any structural way. We seem to endlessly lurch from cliff to crisis and back again with fiscal high-wire acts that erode the confidence of markets and invite the disdain of our constituents.

It is understandable that with 2-year election cycles the House of Representatives begins to focus on the next election as soon as one election is finished. In the House difficult issues are often avoided or perpetually shelved until the next election. But in the Senate we have 6-year terms. Senators, therefore, should come with an added dose of courage to take up the thorny and vexing issues on which the other Chamber takes a pass. It is our responsibility to

lead, and if there was ever a time for this body, this Chamber—the United States Senate—to lead, this is it.

I am a proud and unapologetic conservative and a Republican, and I hope my votes will consistently reflect that philosophy. So I am not suggesting we hold hands and agree on every issue or even most issues. There are profound and meaningful differences between the parties. But I want to spend more time exercising my franchise while debating the legislation itself and less time on deciding whether such legislation should be debated on the Senate floor.

There is a time and a place for using supermajority rules to block legislation and/or nominees from coming to the Senate floor; there is a time and a place for partisanship but not every time and not every place.

This country yearns for a functioning Senate, a Senate that recognizes the gravity of our fiscal situation and its responsibility to propose and adopt measures to solve it for the long term. This country yearns for a Senate that exercises its prerogative as part of the first branch of government to rein in executive branch excesses in both domestic and foreign affairs.

Domestically, the parade of missteps and abuses at the IRS and other Federal agencies stand as exhibit A of the need for more robust legislative direction and oversight. Recent Presidents, both Republican and Democratic, have exercised authority in the foreign arena far beyond that contemplated for a Commander in Chief, often obligating future Congresses to financial commitments far beyond security arrangements. A better functioning Senate, less distracted by games of shirts and skins, would not countenance such theft of its authority.

Now is not the time for this institution to retreat into irrelevance, where the sum of our influence is to sign off on another continuing resolution to fund the government for another 6 months; where success is measured by how well our tracks are covered when the debt ceiling is raised; where prioritizing spending cuts are avoided by invoking another sequester. No, we have been there, done that. It is time now for the Senate to lead.

There are encouraging signs we may be moving in this direction. Earlier this year a budget was passed by this Chamber. It wasn't a budget I preferred, but I was given ample opportunity to offer and debate amendments to that legislation, as were my Republican colleagues. We came up short, but at least the Senate got back to regular order.

In the coming weeks this body will consider an immigration bill. Immigration reform has been and remains a complex and vexing issue, with Members holding strong and discordant views on many of its facets. Still, a bill having had a thorough vetting in committee will now be allowed to come to the Senate floor to be debated, amended, and, hopefully, improved upon. This is the way it should work.

To conclude, a few days after last November's election, the 12 newly elected Senate freshmen were invited to the National Archives. We were taken to the legislative vault where we viewed the original signed copies of the first bill enacted by Congress, as well as other landmark pieces of legislation and memorabilia. Oaths of allegiance signed by Revolutionary War soldiers witnessed by General Washington, and documents and artifacts related to the Civil War, segregation, and women's suffrage were also on hand. It was an affirmation to me of the tumultuous seas through which our ship of state has sailed for more than 200 years.

We have had many brilliant and inspired individuals at the helm and trimming the sails along the way. We have also had personalities ranging from mediocre to malevolent. But our system of government has survived them all.

Serious challenges lie ahead, but any honest reckoning of our history and our prospects will note we have confronted and survived more daunting challenges than we now face. This is a durable, resilient system of government, designed to withstand the foibles of men, including yours truly.

It is the honor of a lifetime just to be here in this storied institution—more than I could have ever hoped for. My modest hope going forward is that my contributions will in some small way honor the Senate's storied past and help it realize its full potential as the world's most deliberative body.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Connecticut.

GUN VIOLENCE

Mr. MURPHY. Madam President, first let me congratulate Senator FLAKE on his maiden speech. It was very thoughtful and I think a challenge to this body to get back to the work it has been given by the American people.

I come to the floor to once again talk about the 4,670 victims of gun violence we have seen across this country since December 14.

December 14 is a date that everyone in Connecticut knows but, as time goes by, maybe fades from the memories of other Americans. That is the day in which a deranged young man walked into Sandy Hook Elementary School in Newtown, CT, and gunned down 20 6- and 7-year-olds, in addition to 6 teachers and education professionals who were charged with taking care of those kids. That is a day none of us will ever forget.

We came to the floor of the Senate in the weeks and months that followed with the intention of passing legislation that would make sure we did everything within our power to assure that another Sandy Hook didn't happen somewhere else in this country. But we also were endeavoring to do something about the all too routine gun violence that has plagued our cities and our suburbs—frankly, almost every community in this country.

This is a stunning number. Since December 14 of last year, in just over 6 months, 4,670 people have died from gun violence, and during that time the Senate and the House of Representatives have done nothing to try to change that reality. I will at least give this body credit; we debated a bill in the Judiciary Committee and we brought it to the Senate floor. Because of the rules of this place, unfortunately, 55 votes was not enough to get a gun violence package passed that would have imposed criminal background checks on thousands of gun purchases that now operate outside that system that would have made it a Federal crime to illegally traffic in guns, that would have placed more resources in the hands of mental health professionals. At least in the Senate we tried to do it. The House, on the other hand, has taken no steps to try to cut down on the 4,670 deaths all across this country just in the last 6 months.

What I have tried to do every week since the failure of that bill is to come down to the floor of the Senate. Instead of talking over and over about the policy implications or the different ways and paths we can get to a gun violence package, instead, I think it is important to talk about the victims. Who are these 4,670 people? Because their stories should be the ones that move this place to action.

One such story as that of Matthew Tarto, age 16, who died just a few days ago, May 24. He was killed implausibly by his father. His 52-year-old father killed his 16-year-old son in an apparent murder-suicide.

Matthew was an amazing young man. He was a backup offensive lineman for his high school, John Curtis Christian School. He was a superior track and field athlete. He was an honor roll student. His friends called him a happy-go-lucky kid. They said he always had a smile. His football coach said:

This kind of thing is unbelievable, that something like this could happen. The only way we know how to get through this is with deep prayer. I just feel so heartbroken, not only for his family but for the kids, his friends and his teammates.

We talk a lot about the fact that it is important to change gun laws. There are others who say that all of our emphasis should be on early intervention; that our mental health system should be the sole focus of this place so we can stop these murders before they happen. But as we know, often we can't see these things coming.

The case of Matthew Tarto is such an illustration. Neighbors said they never saw any signs of trouble from this household. In fact, one neighbor remembers seeing the father and the son taking walks together through the neighborhood just days and weeks before this happened.

Matthew was an amazing guy: honor roll student, great athlete, friendly, happy-go-lucky kid, but in an awful murder-suicide, he was taken from us, as well as his father.

Another 16-year-old 3 days before-hand was gunned down in the Back of the Yards neighborhood of Chicago. Angel Cano was killed with a gunshot wound to the head. He was pronounced dead on the scene, according to the Cook County Medical Examiner's Office.

His father had brought his oldest son to Chicago from Mexico in 2004 in search of a better life. His father said his son just desperately wanted to be someone. His son, at 16 years old, had dreams of becoming a singer or a professional soccer player. He was always down at the local soccer fields playing soccer, endlessly, teaching other young kids how to be better soccer players. At 16, he still had this dream. Yet apparently on the way back from the soccer fields that evening, he was gunned down. The police have said it may be gang related, but the family says that Angel was never, ever affiliated with any gangs.

Then, lastly, the story of Jamica Woods. Ms. Woods was 37 years old. The night before she died, on May 20, her boyfriend uploaded pictures onto his Facebook page of a shotgun, along with pictures of a shotgun shell, that he had recently bought at Walmart. He uploaded the pictures because he had already set about a plan to kill his girlfriend the next night.

According to police, Ms. Woods had taken out an emergency protective order against her boyfriend last December, but she had never gone about the process of finalizing it. She was in the process of kicking her boyfriend out when she got killed. Had she just taken a few more steps, it is possible he would have never been able to buy that gun in the first place. If she had taken those steps to fill out a protective order and if that order had been filed and if the Walmart had run a background check and found that protective order, it is possible she would still be alive today.

Frankly, there are hundreds, if not thousands, of men and women across this country who are alive today because of that law—because of that law that came so very close to saving Jamica Woods: a protective order being filed due to domestic violence, a gun purchase being stopped because of that order.

One of the reasons we have that law on the books today is the advocacy of Senator FRANK LAUTENBERG. Senator FRANK LAUTENBERG, who died this week, made it his life's cause to try to make the streets of his State of New Jersey safer. He was advocating right up until his final days on the floor of this Chamber to enact a ban on high-capacity magazines such as the one that killed 20 little 6- and 7-year-olds in Connecticut.

But he was successful in passing through this Chamber a piece of legislation that keeps guns out of the hands of people who have been convicted of domestic violence. It is a law that has worked. It is a law that has saved the

lives of hundreds, if not thousands, of men and women all across this country. It is a reminder that this place can do something about the 4,670 people who have died since Newtown due to gun violence.

FRANK LAUTENBERG knew this place had the power to save lives by enacting commonsense gun violence legislation—in his case, just a simple rule that if someone has been convicted of domestic violence, maybe they shouldn't get their hands on a gun.

Senator LAUTENBERG's work is a reminder that whether it is next month, later this year or next year, we still have work to do to try to honor the memories of the thousands of victims of gun violence all across this country.

I yield the floor.

Ms. STABENOW. Madam President, I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The assistant bill clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

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

IMMIGRATION

Mr. SANDERS. Madam President, I rise this afternoon to say a few words about the immigration reform bill that, as I understand it, we will begin discussing next week. As the son of an immigrant, somebody who came to this country at the age of 17 without a nickel in his pocket and who was able to send his two kids to college, needless to say I support immigration. Our country is unique in the world. Our country is great because we are the sons and daughters of immigrants. I think we should all be very proud of that.

I also commend the Judiciary Committee, Senator LEAHY and Senator SCHUMER and Senator DURBIN—all of those people who have been working very hard on what I consider to be a good and strong immigration reform bill. Here are some of the very strong components of that bill that I hope every Member of the Senate would support: That is the need for a pathway to citizenship for the 11 million undocumented immigrants in this country. Bringing undocumented workers out of the shadows and giving them legal status will make it more difficult for employers to undercut the wages and benefits of all workers and, in my view, will be good for the entire economy.

I have always—and continue to—strongly support the DREAM Act part of the immigration reform bill, which is to make sure that children of illegal immigrants who are brought into this country by their parents years and years ago are allowed to become citizens.

I strongly support a number of the provisions that deal with agriculture. Some years ago I was in Immokalee, FL, a place that I suspect has some of the most exploited workers in America.

They pick the tomatoes which go to the fast-food restaurants throughout this country. I can tell everyone that in the State of Vermont, we have dairy farms that are now dependent on foreign labor, and it is important that we treat those workers with dignity and give them legal status. It is extremely important to have an approach which provides legal status for agricultural workers.

I obviously support making sure our borders are strong and that we stop illegal immigration as best we can, and I applaud the committee for including all of those provisions in the immigration bill that is going to come to the Senate I expect next week.

What I worry about very much, and have deep concerns about in terms of the current legislation, is that while we have made a good step forward in terms of improving our economy as to where it was in the midst of the financial crisis, we still have a long way to go. The real unemployment rate in America is not 7.5 percent. That is the official unemployment rate. The real unemployment rate is closer to 14 percent. If we include those people who have given up looking for work in high-unemployment areas and people who are working part time and want to work full time, the real unemployment rate is closer to 14 percent. In other words, if we include unemployment among minorities as well as the young people in this country, we continue to have a very serious unemployment problem in the United States of America, and it is an issue with which we have to deal. I have a number of ideas on how to deal with it. One thing we sure as heck do not want to do is make a bad situation worse.

It seems to me that in a moment when our middle class continues to disappear, when millions of workers are working longer hours for lower wages, when median-family income has gone down by \$5,000 since 1999, it does not make a lot of sense to me that we have an immigration reform bill which includes a massive increase in temporary guest worker programs that will allow large multinational corporations to import hundreds of thousands of temporary blue-collar and white-collar guest workers.

One of my major concerns is that corporate America is sort of using immigration reform as a means to continue their effort to lower wages in the United States of America, and we must not allow that to happen.

We all know we have a serious crisis in terms of the high cost of a college education, which is another issue we are going to be dealing with soon on the floor. One thing I can say—and I suspect I speak for a number of other Members in Congress—is if we didn't come from a family with a lot of money and we needed to get some financial help in order to pay for college, we worked in the summertime. I find it alarming that within this bill we are looking at a situation in which we are

importing a lot of young people from Europe and elsewhere to fill jobs which young people in this country need in the summertime to allow them to get going in terms of their careers and allow them to make a few bucks in order to help them with their college education.

I understand that jobs such as a waiter, waitress, or busboy—and I did some of that when I was a kid—are not glamorous jobs. But you know what. They help a little bit as far as paying for college. I know it is not glamorous to work as a lifeguard, at the front desk of a hotel or resort, as a ski instructor, as a cook or chef in a kitchen, as a chambermaid, or as a landscaper. The jobs I just mentioned will not pay huge amounts of money, but for someone who needs to figure out how to pay for college in the fall, those jobs help. For someone who needs some experience in order to get their career off the ground, those jobs help. I am concerned that kids in this country are going to be looking for jobs and employers are going to say: Well, actually we don't have any jobs; the job has been filled by some young person from Eastern Europe. So I want us to take that issue into account.

Theoretically the J-1 Program is supposed to bring young people into this country so they can learn about our culture. It is a program to expose young people from around the world to American culture, and that is a good thing. I believe in that. I believe young people in America should have the opportunity to go abroad, and young people from around the world should have the opportunity to learn about America. It is a good thing.

I fear this J-1 Program is being exploited by corporations such as Hershey's and McDonald's in an effort to simply bring students from abroad to work at low-paying jobs in the United States.

Supporters of the temporary H-2B Guest Worker Program claim there are not enough Americans willing to do these types of jobs; that in essence what they are saying is the young American people are too lazy to work at these jobs. I do not accept that. I truly do not accept it. I think it is a slap in the face not only to our young people but to the many working people who do not have much in the way of an education and want to work so they can earn some money. It is a slap in the face to say to those people: No, we are going to have to bring people in from abroad to do those jobs, such as being a waiter, waitress, chambermaid, or lifeguard. These are not high-tech skilled jobs; these are jobs our young people can do and need to do.

I have a great concern about the transformation of the J-1 Program from being a program dealing with American culture to being one where corporations are exploiting young people from abroad to work in low-paying jobs in the United States.

I also find it interesting that instead of raising wages in this country to attract workers, what many of these companies are doing is bringing in people from abroad. We know what supply and demand is about. What we learned in economics 101 in college is that if an employer cannot find a certain type of worker, the way to entice that worker is to raise wages. Instead of raising wages, what employers are saying is: We have huge amounts of cheap labor all over the world. Instead of raising wages for American workers, we are going to bring in cheap labor from around the world, and I think that is wrong. I think as we deal with this legislation, this is an issue we have to address front and center.

When we talk about H-2B jobs, what we are talking about is people who may be working as a landscaper, amusement park worker, housekeeper, waiter, or waitress. Further, during the summer, businesses are using guest worker programs to hire young people from other countries to be lifeguards.

Maybe I am mistaken, but I kind of think there are young people in this country who can work as lifeguards and hold other positions in some of the resorts all over this country. We are talking jobs such as being a ski instructor in Vermont. I can tell everyone that in the State of Vermont, we have a whole lot of young people who are very good at skiing and can teach skiing. We don't need people from Europe to take those jobs away from young Americans.

Let me be clear—and I find this to be interesting, if not ironic—the same corporations and businesses that support a massive expansion in guest worker programs coincidentally happen to be the same exact corporations that are opposed to raising the minimum wage. These are the same corporations that support the outsourcing of American jobs, not to mention the same corporations which in some cases have reduced wages and benefits for American workers at a time when corporate America is making record-breaking profits.

In too many cases the H-2B Program for lower skilled guest workers, as well as the H-1B Program for high-skilled guest workers, is being used by employers to drive down the wages and benefits of American workers and to replace American workers with cheap labor from abroad.

Here is what it comes down to: supply and demand. If the employers of this country need labor, let them start raising wages for American workers rather than bringing in cheap labor from all over this world. The immigration reform bill that passed the Senate Judiciary Committee could increase the number of low-skilled—I hear speeches here that we are going to have these genius high-tech guys who are going to start companies and create all kinds of jobs. Great. That is not what we are talking about here. We are talking about an immigration reform bill

from the Judiciary Committee that could increase the number of low-skilled guest workers by as much as 800 percent over the next 5 years and could more than triple the number of temporary white-collar guest workers coming into this country. During the next 5 years, H-1B high-skilled visas could go from 85,000 to as many as 230,000. The number of H-2B low-skilled visas could go from 65,000 to as many as 325,000. The new W visa program for low-skilled workers could go as high as 200,000.

The first question the American people and Members have to ask is, is unemployment throughout America in States such as Arizona, Oklahoma, Vermont, Michigan so low right now that we desperately need more and more foreign workers to fill jobs Americans cannot fill?

The high-tech industry tells us they need the H-1B Program so they can hire the best and the brightest science, technology, engineering, and math workers in the world, and that there are not qualified American workers in these fields. Let me be the first to admit that in some cases I believe that is true. I have spoken to employers in Vermont. I suspect it is true all over this country, that there are areas where companies cannot find the skilled workers they need so they need employees from abroad, and to the degree that is true, let us address that issue. But let's also give some facts which suggest that may not be quite as true as some of the employers and corporations are saying.

In 2010, 54 percent of H-1B guest workers were employed in entry-level jobs. So the argument is: Hey, we need all of these brilliant guys who are going to start companies and create jobs. In 2010, 54 percent of the H-1B guest workers were employed in entry-level jobs and performed "routine tasks requiring limited judgment" according to the Government Accountability Office.

In 2010 the official U.S. unemployment rate averaged more than 9.6 percent per month. Why couldn't these types of jobs be performed by Americans?

So, again, the point is—I know some of my friends say: Every one of these guys is some genius who is going to start a company. I wish that were the case. Many of these are lower wage, entry-level jobs that certainly American workers could do.

Further, only 6 percent of H-1B visas were given to workers with highly specialized skills in 2010. That is the issue I keep hearing about, highly specialized skills, but only 6 percent of H-1B visas went to those folks. More than 80 percent of H-1B guest workers are paid wages that are less than American workers in comparable positions, according to the Economic Policy Institute. Over 9 million Americans have degrees in a STEM-related field, but only about 3 million have a job in that area.

Last year the top 10 employers of H-1B guest workers were all offshore outsourcing companies. Let me repeat that. One of the great crises we have faced in the last 30 years is that companies have shut down in America, moved abroad, and gotten cheap labor abroad. The top 10 employers of H-1B guest workers were all offshore outsourcing companies. These firms are responsible for shifting huge numbers of American information technology jobs to India and other countries. Nearly half of all H-1B visas go to offshore outsourcing firms, while less than 3 percent of them apply to become permanent residents.

Further, half of all recent college graduates majoring in computer and information science did not receive jobs in the information technology sector. In other words, we have large numbers of Americans who are graduating with degrees who can handle these jobs. Yet we are bringing in large numbers of people from abroad to do them. It doesn't make a whole lot of sense to me.

Not only would the Senate immigration bill greatly expand the number of H-1B guest workers, it also would provide an unlimited number of green cards to foreign graduates who receive a master's degree or a Ph.D. in a STEM-related field. If we are going to provide green cards to every foreign student with an advanced STEM degree, what purpose does the H-1B program serve other than to suppress the wages of American workers who are already struggling? At the very least I believe we should prohibit offshore outsourcing firms from hiring temporary guest workers.

Under the Senate immigration bill, the number of college-educated H-1B guest workers and STEM green card holders who are under 30 years of age will exceed the number of jobs that are available for young information technology graduates. What message does that send to young people in our country who are interested in pursuing careers in information technology?

Making matters even worse, I am very concerned that Senator HATCH was able to gut the very modest reforms to the H-1B program designed to prevent companies from replacing American workers with H-1B guest workers. At a minimum it is essential that these proworker reforms be put back into the bill before it is passed by the full Senate.

This country was built by immigrants. I am a son of an immigrant, and many of us are. I believe we are a nation that wants to see comprehensive immigration reform passed. I certainly do.

Again, I wish to congratulate all of those people who have worked on this bill because there are a lot of very important and positive provisions in the bill. But I think we have to improve the bill as it leaves committee and as it comes to the floor of the Senate. What we want to make certain of is

that at a time when this country continues to struggle economically, when millions of people are working longer hours for lower wages, when minority unemployment is extraordinarily high, we do not take any action that lowers wages or increases unemployment for American workers.

Again, my congratulations to those who worked on this bill, but we have a whole lot of work to do as the bill reaches the floor, and I intend to be working with my colleagues to make those improvements.

With that, I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. MANCHIN). The Senator from Arizona.

Mr. MCCAIN. Mr. President, I say to the Senator from Vermont that I appreciate much of what he had to say, and I look forward to working with him to see how we can best address some of his very legitimate concerns.

I would point out to my friend from Vermont that there is going to be a requirement for any of these foreign workers that first the job be advertised in a variety of ways to make sure there are no American workers who would take these jobs. I hope that to some degree resolves some of his concerns. But I paid close attention to his statement, and I look forward to addressing some of those very legitimate concerns. I thank the Senator from Vermont.

Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent to set aside the pending amendment and call up McCain amendment No. 956.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection?

The Senator from Louisiana.

Ms. LANDRIEU. Mr. President, I object. Reserving the right to object, I have some difficulty with the amendment the Senator from Arizona wishes to discuss. I have been trying to get a vote on amendment No. 1113 on flood insurance, and one of the Members from the other side is holding it up. So until we get things worked out—and I hope the Senator from Arizona will appreciate the predicament we are in. I am happy for the Senator to discuss his amendment, but to call up an amendment and to then vote on it, I would have to object.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Objection is heard.

Mr. MCCAIN. Mr. President, I appreciate the Senator from Louisiana allowing me to discuss my amendment. I am deeply appreciative.

This amendment would eliminate a proposed catfish inspection program within the U.S. Department of Agriculture, USDA. The Government Accountability Office, GAO, warns that this catfish program will be “duplicative” and “wasteful” of federal resources. I am grateful for the support of my colleagues who have cosponsored this amendment: Senators SHAHEEN, CRAPO, COBURN, CANTWELL, MURRAY, WARNER, AYOTTE, RISCH, KIRK, LAUTENBERG, and INHOFE.

Mr. President, I will ask to add the following senators as cosponsors to

this amendment: Senators WHITEHOUSE, REED, HELLER, and COWAN.

When Congress passed the 2008 Farm Bill, a small provision was quietly added in conference that requires USDA to establish an office to inspect catfish. Just catfish. According to USDA, setting up the catfish office will cost taxpayers about \$30 million, and then cost another \$15 million a year to operate. At least 95 new government inspectors would be hired, trained, and placed throughout the United States to inspect catfish. I support ensuring that our Nation's food supply is safe—except that USDA is not in the business of inspecting catfish or any other seafood. USDA is responsible for inspecting meat, poultry, and egg products. All other food, including seafood, is inspected and certified by the Food and Drug Administration, FDA.

There is no such thing as “USDA Grade A seafood.” So why should we spend millions in taxpayer dollars every year to inspect catfish? GAO asked the same question and in 4 different reports concluded that the catfish office is duplicative of FDA functions and explicitly recommended that Congress repeal it.

It's “duplicative” because we would be wasting tax dollars on having USDA inspectors doing the same work alongside FDA inspectors. This would be a burden to any business that stores, processes or distributes seafood.

According to a GAO report titled “Actions Needed to Reduce Fragmentation, Overlap, and Duplication,” GAO said: “We suggest that Congress repeal the provisions that assigned USDA responsibilities for examining and inspecting catfish” because “USDA plans are essentially the same as FDA's hazard analysis requirements.”

In another report published in 2011, GAO said the USDA catfish program “fragments our food safety system” and “splits up seafood oversight between FDA and USDA, expending scarce resources.”

In another GAO report, simply titled—“Responsibility for Inspecting Catfish Should Not Be Assigned to USDA,” GAO said: “[USDA] uses outdated and limited information as its scientific bases for catfish inspection” and that “the cost effectiveness of the catfish inspection program is unclear because USDA would oversee a small fraction of all seafood imports while FDA, using its enhanced authorities, could undertake oversight of all imported seafood.”

GAO is not the only critic of the catfish office. The Centers for Disease Control reports that of the 1.8 billion catfish meals enjoyed by Americans, only two people get sick a year. FDA requires foreign producers to abide by the same food safety standards as domestic facilities and turns away unsafe seafood. In fact, USDA itself says there is no benefit for having them inspect catfish. A report issued in 2010 by the USDA Food Safety Inspection Service said, “There is substantial uncertainty

regarding the actual effectiveness of the catfish inspection program” and that there is “no rational relationship” between the Catfish Office and human health. That is probably why the President's Budget for FY2014 proposes to eliminate the program. If USDA can't justify a catfish inspection program—how can anyone in Congress?

The USDA catfish does nothing to enhance food safety. GAO says it's a sham. USDA says it's a sham. FDA says it's a sham. OMB says it's a sham. So why did Congress propose it in 2008? It turns out there's a group of domestic catfish farmers in two or three southern States that are having a difficult time competing against catfish importers. In classic Farm Bill politics, they worked up some talking points about how Americans need a whole new government agency to inspect foreign catfish imports.

Unfortunately, there are grave trade implications if we don't repeal the catfish program. Trade experts warn that Vietnam and other Asian exporters of catfish have a strong case that the USDA Catfish Office would constitute a WTO violation.

I have a letter from former Congressman and WTO appellate judge Jim Baucus to Congress concerning the WTO risk posed by this catfish office. He says, “There was, and still is no meaningful evidence that catfish, domestic or imported, posed a significant health hazard when Congress acted in 2008 to shift [catfish] jurisdiction from FDA to USDA, in essence singling out catfish from all other seafood products.” He goes on to say, “the United States would face a daunting challenge in defending the catfish rule . . . it will be giving other nations an opening to enact ‘copycat legislation’ which will disadvantage our exports.” This is “particularly inopportune” in the face of Trans-Pacific Partnership, TPP, negotiations that are important to American exporters.

The trade concern is that USDA catfish office is a de facto trade barrier on foreign imports. It is meant to enrich the domestic catfish industry. The USDA would ban catfish imports for 5–7 years while USDA duplicates FDA's rules for foreign catfish farms. During that time, American farmers, dairy-men, cattle growers risk WTO retaliation against a \$20 billion export market for American soybean, pork, beef, dairy, and poultry exports.

Is it worth sacrificing the export markets of our American beef producers, wheat and soy farmers just because southern catfish farmers don't want to compete? Absolutely not.

USDA catfish office serves no public health purpose and duplicates FDA work in inspecting catfish. It wastes millions of tax dollars just so that southern catfish farmers will have less competition. My amendment would eliminate the USDA catfish office just as GAO recommends.

I urge my colleagues to support this amendment.

I also wish to say to the distinguished managers of the bill that there are a number of amendments—my colleague from Oklahoma has them—and it is going to be regrettable if we are not able to take up and address these amendments. It is not really what we had agreed to when we took up the bill. So I hope there will be another opportunity.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Louisiana.

Ms. LANDRIEU. Mr. President, I do not like at all objecting to the McCain amendment, but I am compelled to because I have been literally trying for several weeks now—not just on this bill but the previous bill—to get a vote, just a vote. I will even take a 60-vote threshold. I am not asking for a 53-vote threshold; I will accept a 60-vote threshold on an amendment that will make it clear that we could grandfather in flood insurance rates until an affordability study that was supposed to be done is done.

The interesting thing about this is that my amendment has no score. It wouldn't cost the Federal Government anything if this amendment were to pass. It is a zero score. It simply delays for 3 years a certain category of flood insurance premium until an affordability study can be conducted. It is a zero score.

Unfortunately, the Senator from Pennsylvania, to my knowledge, is still holding up this amendment. So I know there are other Republicans who would like to offer amendments, but I am going to object to the offering or voting on any Republican amendments until the Senator from Pennsylvania allows me to have a vote on my amendment.

I hate to be here because I don't like being in this position, but I have no choice because I can't even get the Republicans to vote on the flood insurance amendment. They can vote no. The amendment may not pass. I think I have the 60 votes to pass it. I hope it will. We have explained it. It is important not just to Louisiana but to New York, California, New Jersey, and even Virginia has some issues.

Please understand, because I have a lot of respect for Senator COBURN—he and I work together on the Homeland Security Committee. I know this program has to be self-sustaining over time. No one depends on it to be self-sustaining more than the people in Florida and Louisiana and California. But there is a right way to get it self-sustaining and there is a wrong way. The wrong way is going to blow up the dreams of people who built their homes according to official flood maps, who did everything they were supposed to do under the official flood maps, and then when those maps changed, their rates then can go up 25 percent, compounded for the next 5 years, not only pricing them out of the market but making their homes unsellable, and it affects banks in these communities.

This is not just a Louisiana issue. I am proud to advocate so much for my State that when people come here and see me, they say: Oh, there she goes again, advocating for Louisiana. I wear that as a badge of honor. Let me be clear. My State has the 32 lowest kinds of rates of insurance on these claims. I am not even in the top three. This is affecting States—and I read them out earlier. Let me just say for the record that the top 10 States affected are Rhode Island, Connecticut, Massachusetts, Vermont, New York, Maine, New Jersey, Pennsylvania, Alaska, New Hampshire, Illinois, Michigan, West Virginia, Missouri, Indiana, Iowa, California, and Ohio. These are the States with the highest premiums now, and they could double or triple—actually almost triple—in the next 5 years.

Maybe some of these rates need to go up. Interestingly, when the recalculations are done, some of the rates around the country will go down. I am not disagreeing with that. What I am disagreeing with is the rapid rate in which it is going to happen, and it is going to have catastrophic effects on many communities—not all but many—and I happen to represent some of those on which it will. So my realtors have asked me to stand up for this. My homebuilders have called with concerns. My community bankers are very concerned.

I wish to thank the Senator from Michigan and the Senator from Mississippi. I know they are doing their very best job to move this bill forward. I think they have been quite fair, giving people on both sides an opportunity for amendments. I have been very patient. I have not objected to many amendments. The irony of this is that even the Toomey amendment—the Senator from Pennsylvania, my friend, who was going to end a program that was vitally important to my State, I even allowed him to have a vote on that. I mean, it is a terrible amendment for Louisiana. We were happy we beat the amendment, but I even allowed him to have a debate. I could have stopped it. I am one Senator here. One Senator can stop anything. But I am not trying to stop this. I am just trying to advance a vote on flood insurance.

So maybe Senator COBURN and Senator MCCAIN can be more convincing to their colleague from Pennsylvania than I have been. But I will just say for the record that if I have to stay on the floor until the end of the week, I will have to stay here, but I will object to any Republican amendment until we get a vote on the Landrieu-Vitter, et al., Schumer, Gillibrand, Menendez—and our good friend Senator LAUTENBERG who just passed was also a supporter. I would like to keep his name on it, if I could.

I yield the floor, and I am very sorry. I say to my colleague from Oklahoma.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Oklahoma.

Mr. COBURN. Mr. President, I somewhat associate myself with the re-

marks of the Senator from Louisiana. We have unwound because we don't want to have real debates and real votes. We just fixed the flood insurance program. We didn't fix it well enough, and if Senator LANDRIEU is allowed her amendment, I will vote against it, but I think she ought to be able to have her amendment.

The reason the Senate isn't working is because we want to use a procedure that has never before been used except in the last 2 or 3 years in this body, and that is to limit the rights of Senators to offer amendments.

The fact is that Senator LANDRIEU may, in fact, win her amendment, but there is another chance. The House may not go along with it. There will be a conference committee. It may not go anywhere. She didn't win this when we fixed the flood insurance. She wasn't for us raising it to the extent we did. We didn't raise it nearly enough to make it healthy yet. And delaying the 3 years will markedly hurt the Flood Insurance Program, which is operated through FEMA, and I am the ranking member on that subcommittee. But the fact is that she ought to be able to offer her amendment. I agree with that.

So what I am going to do is painfully go through and talk about every amendment I have for the farm bill. I understand there will be objections. If there are objections to mine—and even if the Landrieu amendment gets cleared, I am going to object to everybody else's until mine are cleared.

So we can either keep going around in this circle or we can start acting like grownups and have debate. Even if a Member doesn't like an amendment, we can vote on it. And if a Member is not capable of defending their vote on any issue, they don't have any business being here in the first place.

But to not vote, to not allow the managers of the bill to operate the bill the way they want to operate it and put it on the table—because the majority leader is going to file cloture, and so all of these amendments are going to fall, which may be pleasing to the managers—I don't know—and only the germane amendments are going to be available, and they are going to be under a time constraint. So the American people are actually going to get cheated out of a full and rigorous debate on what ought to be changed in this bill.

So I am going to act as though the amendments are approved even though they are not, and I am going to debate the amendments. I am going to propose every one of them, and I am going to let the Senator from Louisiana object, and then she can explain to her constituents the dysfunction of the Senate. It does not just happen on the Republican side, I would remind my colleague from Louisiana. There are plenty of unilateral objections on the other side. And if we are going to operate this way, then nothing is going to happen in the Senate.

With that, I will begin.

Ms. STABENOW. Mr. President, will the Senator yield for a question?

Mr. COBURN. I will be happy to yield for a question.

Ms. STABENOW. I thank the Senator.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Michigan.

Ms. STABENOW. Mr. President, I thank my friend. Before the Senator proceeds with his unanimous consent request, I would ask the Senator if he would agree that when we brought the farm bill to the floor the last time, we had 73 votes and it was done in a large agreement, but we worked through every one of them. I agree. My preference is—as I know our distinguished ranking member's preference is—to be able to work through amendments and to have votes and so on. Would the Senator agree that process worked last time—and I know my friend did not end up voting for the final bill, but we did work through a process of 73 votes; it was a very long day or 2 days, I think, actually—and that would be a good way to proceed on this bill?

Mr. COBURN. I agree.

Ms. STABENOW. Mr. President, I certainly yield back to my friend, but I just want to indicate that is what we have been working on doing, and we do, in fact, have objections from various Members for various reasons. But we have been spending our time hoping to come up with—even postcloture it would be our desire to come up with a finite list of amendments that we could then move forward and get an agreement to vote on because I am very happy to have additional votes on the bill.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Oklahoma.

Mr. COBURN. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the pending amendment be set aside and Coburn amendment No. 1003 be called up.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection?

Ms. LANDRIEU. I object.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Objection is heard.

Mr. COBURN. Mr. President, I am going to talk about this amendment. This is an amendment that prohibits—let me set the stage for it. We are going to have somewhere between a \$500 billion and \$700 billion deficit. We have \$17.5 trillion worth of debt today. What this amendment does is it prohibits people who are tax evaders from receiving government assistance, including grants, contracts, loans, and tax credits provided in the farm bill, with the exception of SNAP. So we are still going to take care of the food provision. Even if they refuse to pay their taxes, we are going to still provide them food. But we are not going to allow them, with this amendment, to take advantage of other programs within the farm bill or any other area that is associated with direct grants or associated with the Agriculture bill.

The most critical issues facing our country today—and everybody knows

how to solve it. We know what has to be done to save Medicare. We know what has to be done to save Social Security. We know we need to reform the Tax Code so we generate more jobs, we generate more income to the Federal Government. We know all that. But we have billions of dollars that are owed—it is not being contested; it is owed—and then we turn around to those same people who owe us billions of dollars and give them programs and benefits. Whether it be conservation payments or whether it be crop insurance or whatever it is, we turn around and give them money. I think the average tax-paying American does not agree with that.

Part of being a responsible citizen is paying the taxes you owe. We are not talking about things that are in dispute. We are talking about settled agreements that are not paid, and they continue to not be paid, and it is billions of dollars.

This provision would not apply if the individual is currently paying the taxes, interest, and penalties that are owed to the IRS: if the individual and the IRS have worked out a compromise on the amount of taxes, interest, and penalties and it is in the process of being repaid; if the individual has not exhausted his or her right to due process under the law; if the individual has filed a joint return and successfully contends that he or she should not be fully liable for the taxes in a joint return because of something the other party to the return did or did not do. Further, this provision would not apply to SNAP payments provided in the bill.

Farm income is subject to very little scrutiny and reporting requirements. In fact, there was a 78-percent reporting gap in farm income reported to the IRS just last year—a 78-percent gap. This is by far the largest gap in individual income reporting to the IRS.

In a time of strict budgets and when many in Washington are calling for an increase in revenue, it is inappropriate for us to continue to provide funding to individuals who owe back taxes and are not in compliance with their obligations. Total taxes owed in the United States in 2006 were \$2.66 trillion. The gross tax gap for that year—taxes owed but not collected—was \$450 billion. The net tax gap in 2006—taxes still not paid after late payments enforced—was still \$385 billion. Now the President wants another \$600 billion or \$800 billion. What we have to do is start figuring out ways to collect the taxes that are owed.

According to the Internal Revenue Service, the difference between the amount legally owed in taxes and the amount actually collected was this \$385 billion. That is the most recent year the IRS can give us—5-year-old data. Mr. President, \$28 billion that was owed was because people failed to file. Underpayment was \$46 billion, and intentional underreporting of income was \$376 billion.

So what this amendment does is it just puts a prohibition in place. It says:

You cannot have this money if you owe X money and it is settled, it is not under dispute. So it is not about not giving people their rights. It has already been adjudicated. Why would we not want to do that with the farm bill? Can you think of a reason why we would not want the people who owe taxes, who already have agreed they owe the taxes—that we are going to give them money, and they are not going to pay the taxes they owe the Federal Government?

It is a commonsense amendment. We are not going to get a vote on that, and we are not going to get a vote on it because we have cowardly Members of the Senate—and I am not talking about the Senator from Louisiana—who refuse to come down here and voice their objections to bills and refuse to debate why they will not allow an amendment that does something for the future, that actually will make a difference in a kid's life in the future, that will actually increase some income so we can afford the Flood Insurance Program we have. They will not come down and debate it and express an opinion why they will not allow a vote on it. It dishonors the Senate.

Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the pending amendment be set aside and amendment No. 1004 be called up.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection?

Ms. LANDRIEU. Mr. President, I object to that as well, but I know the Senator wants to speak about it.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Objection is heard.

Mr. COBURN. Mr. President, this amendment ends conservation payments to millionaires—people who make a million bucks a year.

We have a rule at the USDA that says people making \$1 million a year are not supposed to get these payments. But guess what the USDA does. They waive the rule. What this amendment would do is say you cannot waive the rule.

If you, again, are talking about our debt, the very well-heeled, the very well-connected are getting a majority of the conservation payments in this country. They are the ones most capable of doing conservation on their own land, and do, but now they do it with the assistance of my or the President pro tempore's grandchildren because what we are actually doing is paying them dollars that our grandkids are going to have to pay back. What we are doing with this program is incentivizing people to do what they are already going to do in their best interests.

All I am saying is, enforce the rule, the law today. Do not give the Department of Agriculture the ability to waive. If somebody is making \$1 million a year, they do not need our help right now. Our kids need that help, our grandkids need that help, our schools need that help. They do not need that help.

Ms. STABENOW. Mr. President, will the Senator yield for actually a question and a clarification?

Mr. COBURN. Absolutely.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Michigan.

Ms. STABENOW. I have good news for the Senator. On page 309 of the bill, based on the fact that we took the amendments from last time, his language is in the bill. It was part of the 73 amendments that were offered. As I indicated earlier, we included everything that was, in fact, passed by the Senate on the floor last time so that people would know that their amendments were included in the bill. There was one exception to that, which was the Coburn-Durbin amendment, which was, in fact, revoted on and is now a part of the bill. But I refer the Senator to page 309, section 2610, "Adjusted Gross Income Limitation For Conservation Programs." So the Senator is correct. It was passed last time. And the good news is that it is in the bill.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Oklahoma.

Mr. COBURN. Well, Mr. President, I thank the chairman of the committee. I will double-check that with my staff. This excludes something that was in the bill, so I will have to look at what the old bill said to be able to concur with that. If that is the case, then there should not be any problem with accepting this amendment if, in fact, it is not complete because it is the intent of the authors—both the chair and the ranking member—that this limitation be a part of this farm bill.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Michigan.

Ms. STABENOW. Mr. President, if I might, I say to the Senator, we will work with you and look at the intent, and it is the intent. I would also just in passing indicate that hopefully we will have an opportunity, as we come to a universe of amendments, as we did last year, to have the Senator's previous amendment that he talked about, which is also one that I support.

So as we work through this, again, what we need to do is what we did last time: to come up with a universe—it can be large or small—and in the interest of time make sure a variety of Senators have the opportunity to offer different amendments as well—not just one or two Senators but that a number of Senators have the opportunity to—and hopefully Members will be willing to come together and put together a list that includes Senator LANDRIEU's flood insurance amendment, which is absolutely critical. We have other amendments. Senator GRASSLEY has an amendment we have been working on to pair with Senator LANDRIEU's that we would like very much to put together. I would be very interested in including Senator COBURN's amendment No. 1003, which he talked about previously, because I think it makes sense.

So right now we are at a point where we just have to get people positively

working together on a list that we can move through together. But the good news is, I say to Senator COBURN, the one you are speaking about, I believe, is as you had offered it last time. But we will be happy to work with the Senator.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Oklahoma.

Mr. COBURN. I thank the chairman of the committee.

Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the pending amendment be set aside and amendment No. 1005 be called up.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection?

Ms. LANDRIEU. I object.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Objection is heard.

Mr. COBURN. Mr. President, 3½ years ago, with the debt limit increase, my colleagues and I overwhelmingly voted to ask the GAO to study duplicative programs in the Federal Government. This last April they gave the third in what will be a continuing roll-out of the programs in the Federal Government.

I will say that the Director of the OMB followed another amendment that I offered directing that all the programs of the Federal Government be published. They made their first stab at that. This was last week. Director Burwell, in whom I have the utmost confidence at OMB—a stellar individual—made the first attempt. The problem is, what is a program in the Federal Government? There is no definition. So we have a rough start in an attempt to do that.

But what the GAO has done—and they are magnificent employees—over the last 3½ years is identified at least \$250 billion of waste and duplication that we ought to be getting rid of.

Here is an amendment that is not highly prescriptive but recognizes what GAO told us about food assistance programs—domestic food assistance programs. We did not make any attempt in this bill to streamline those or consolidate them or put metrics on them. So this amendment tries to bring that together through the USDA to put, No. 1, metrics on them; and, No. 2, combine the ones that are duplicative so we can actually be effective in what we intend them to be, but also be efficient.

Those are two words that hardly ever happen in Washington, "efficiency" and "effectiveness." GAO found signs of overlap and inefficient use of the resources within the 18 different programs. Now, we have 18 different programs. Three of them are outside of the Department of Agriculture. One of them is in Homeland Security.

First of all, there should not be a food assistance program in the Department of Homeland Security. Two of them are at HHS. We should not have duplicative bureaucracies in those other two departments when we have a bureaucracy in Agriculture. But of those 18 programs, what they found was the following: In 11 of the 18 pro-

grams, there was not enough research to even determine whether the programs were effective.

We do not know if what we are doing is working because never when we pass these programs do we require a metric or some type of method to assess their effectiveness. So that is one of the things this amendment will do. It allows the Department of Agriculture to do that. As a matter of fact, it mandates it. Is it effective? What parameters are you using to say it is effective? In other words, if the American taxpayers are going to spend money on this program, ought they to know whether it works? I mean, only in Washington do we do programs and not know whether they work and not ask whether they work.

So in 11 of the 18 programs there is not enough knowledge even at the Department of Agriculture to know whether they are working. This amendment requires the Department of Agriculture to evaluate the following 10 programs: Child and Adult Care Food Program, the Community Food Projects Competitive Grant Program, the Emergency Food and Shelter National Board Program, the Grants to the American Indian, Alaska Native, and Native Hawaiian Program, the Organizations for Nutrition and Support Services Program, the Food Distribution Program on Indian Reservations, the Fresh Fruit and Vegetables Program, the Senior Farmer Market Nutrition Program, the Summer Food Service Program, the Emergency Food Assistance Program, and the WIC Farmers Nutritional Program.

Now, let me just mention one of these. The Summer Food Service Program, as announced by KOTV in Tulsa, OK, just last night, no matter who you are they are going to feed you two meals a day in the summer, whether you make \$100,000 a year or whether you are in need of a meal. So, first of all, we have a problem with that program. We ought to be supplying food for people who need food, not for people who do not need food. Smart people are going to take advantage of that and say: Man, I can get two meals a day. I am not in need, but since it is free I am going to take it.

Last summer we served 180,000 meals in Tulsa. A large proportion of those were not people in need. So I have no objection to helping people who have need, but here is a program that has no limits on it and no metrics on it. It is a wide open program—well intentioned, but there is not a metric and there is not a limitation.

So here is all we are saying with this amendment: Here are 10 programs, Department of Agriculture. Determine whether they are effective. And, by the way, how did you determine that? What were the parameters you used to do that?

That is just common sense. Why would we not want to know if the programs are working? Why would we not want to know if they are efficient and

effective? Why shouldn't we look at it when we are running—we are down to 24 cents on the dollar that we are just borrowing against our kids' future from 48. That is because of the economy growing last year to the tune of \$360 billion coming in, and \$620 billion over the next 10 years in tax increases on the very wealthy in this country. So we are down to 24 cents, but we are still borrowing 24 cents out of every dollar we spend. Why would we not want to spend the time to make sure these programs are effective and efficient?

It is very straightforward. This amendment also eliminates one program, the Commodity Supplemental Food Program, and moves any incomplete or ongoing projects to the appropriate USDA programs. USDA proposed eliminating this program which targets low-income pregnant women, children, persons age 60 or over, but Congress continued to fund the program. The reason they wanted to get rid of it is because there are already programs that duplicate this one. Yet here we find it is still going to get funded. It is going to get authorized. Even USDA says we do not need this program.

It is the only program we have—in 2012, the program was funded at \$177 million, and it duplicates SNAP, Grants to Native Americans, the Home Delivered Nutrition Program. In other words, USDA already recognizes it is a duplicative program. They have asked for it to be eliminated. We did not eliminate it. So this amendment would eliminate it.

This amendment also eliminates the Senior Farmers Market Nutrition Program and moves the nonduplicate function to the WIC Farmers Nutrition Program. Both of these programs do exactly the same thing. They provide grants to participating States to offer vouchers and coupons and electronic benefit cards to low-income participants that may be used in farmers' markets, roadside stands, and other approved venues to purchase fresh produce.

They provide exactly the same assistance to women, children, and seniors and should be combined. GAO says they should be combined. USDA says they should be combined. But they are not combined in the bill. All cost savings from the elimination of those consolidations and three eliminations are directed toward providing food assistance. In other words, none of the money comes back out. It goes back into programs that have proven to be effective.

This amendment also directs the USDA to coordinate with the Health and Human Services Administration on Aging to identify and address fragmentation, overlap, and duplication between the programs providing food services on Indian reservations where we have a real need. So we are not just looking for duplication, we are looking for gaps in service.

It also requires them to report their recommendations back to Congress.

Since I do not want to use my big slides today I will use my small slides.

Here are the food assistance programs, all 18 of them. Fifteen are run at the Department of Agriculture, two are run through HHS, and one through Homeland Security. Yet GAO says we can collapse these 18 into 10 and be more effective and get better nutrition to the people in at-risk groups. We have not done it. So it is like we asked GAO to do all of this work, and then we did not pay any attention to it.

I ask that the pending amendment be set aside and amendment No. 1006 be called up.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection?

Ms. LANDRIEU. I object. May I say something? First of all—

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Would the Senator yield?

Mr. COBURN. I will yield for a question, but I will not yield the floor. I will be happy to yield for a question.

Ms. LANDRIEU. I would ask the Senator, does he know that some of us are very sympathetic with the amendments he is offering, and does he know some of us would actually really like to vote on some of those amendments? I am sure he is aware. Is he aware that I am sorry that I have to object, but it is the only way I can get my amendment up.

Mr. COBURN. I would respond to the Senator from Louisiana, I have no ill will toward her objection. I stated it plainly before. I believe the Senate ought to have any and all amendments prior to cloture. I think Senators have the right to offer anything they think is pertinent to this country on any bill that is going through here. I used that tactic for the first 3 years I was in the Senate. Nobody objected. Now that we have become so partisan and so cowardly that we are afraid to vote on issues, and that we abuse the rights in the Senate to the detriment of the whole body, I hold no ill will against the Senator for objecting.

The point is, is the country worse off for it? I am sure some of my colleagues do not want to have to vote on some of my amendments. I understand that. There are amendments I do not like voting on either, but I have no problem going home and taking a stand. The fact is we can figure out what we are for and what we are against. You know, the fact is, when it goes through here it does not mean it is law. What it means is it has to be conferred with the House. We ought to let it roll. We ought to open the spigot and let things roll in the Senate, have the votes.

We used to have 10 and 12 votes at a time. We used to do bills. Come down and all morning long we would be offering amendments. We would have committee hearings and other things in the afternoon. At 4 o'clock we would come down and vote, 9, 10, 8 amendments. The next day we would do the same thing. The next day we would do the same thing.

So the fact is, if we really want to get our country back, if we really want

the confidence of the American people to return to those who represent them in Washington, we have to start saying, you know, you cannot win everything. I am going to try. If I lose, I lose. But I tried hard. That is how we ought to play the game.

The fact that we have people abusing the process on both sides, not just one side—I will never forget, former Senator Akaka, one of the loveliest men I have ever met in my life, when I first came to the Senate and offered an amendment that was not germane, he objected to it. One of my colleagues stood up and said: Senator Akaka, do you really mean that? You have to understand where that starts. If you object to his amendment, that means in the future I am going to be objecting to your amendment, and we have not done that. What we actually want is a free-wheeling, open amendment process so people can be heard.

The fact is I represent 4 million people. The Senators from California represent 37 million. Everybody's voice ought to be heard. We each ought to be able to have our voice heard. We each ought to be able to offer amendments. We ought to be able to get votes on those amendments. What are we afraid of? Is the next election really that important that we do not want to allow people to offer their ideas, in what used to be the greatest deliberative body? It certainly is not now. It is not anywhere close. Do we really not want ideas to be offered and debated and the American people to understand what is at stake?

I mean, what I have offered today maybe not everybody would agree with, but you cannot disagree that it does not make sense; that it is not common sense; that we should not be more efficient and more effective; that we should worry about the future as we worry about the present; that we ought not to be spending 24 cents out of every dollar by borrowing it from other people in the world or having Ben Bernanke print it at the Federal Reserve.

We can solve these problems. The grown-ups need to stand and say we are going to have debate, we are going to have amendments, even if we do not like them.

So I have no ill will toward the Senator from Louisiana. I have ill will for the process that has devolved. I think the shame is that the American people are being shortchanged by the lack of debate and lack of votes.

I think this amendment, even though objected to, is another critical area where we do not have our eye on the ball. This is an amendment that relates to the Specialty Crop Block Grant Program. What it does is in this bill it has been increased, the amount of money has been increased to \$70 million a year. It was at \$55 million in 2012. There is nothing wrong with having this block grant program, but I want to show you how we can save \$75 million over the next 5 years. And \$75 million is not chump change, it is \$75 million.

The amendment freezes spending for the specialty crop block grant at \$55 million authorized by the bill. The amendment prioritizes food safety and access to affordable foods for schoolchildren and low-income families. One-third of the projects funded by the Specialty Crop Block Grant Program last year were for marketing and promotion. They were not for kids, they were not for seniors, they were spending money to promote.

Let me show you who got the money. Let's see. We spent money to promote the emotional benefits of real flowers and plants in the home. That has to be a priority right now; is it not? We are going to borrow \$500 billion this year. We are going to spend money to make sure everyone in America knows the emotional value of having real flowers and plants in the home. That is a priority right now. How about grant funds for floats that travel to fairs and festivals and encourage people to eat more fruits and vegetables? That has to be a priority. We are going to pay for a float that goes around to all these festivals so we can promote eating. People know about eating properly. Could we spend that dollar in a better way and get a better effect?

How about wine receptions and tastings? By the way, the Market Access Program already covers it, but we take money from this block grant program and promote wines in China and in Taiwan. We do it also with the Market Access Program. Here is an absolute direct duplication. We are spending millions of dollars promoting something that another program is designed to promote, and we didn't do anything about that.

How about a short video showcasing pear growers and promoting State wines in Mexico and in India? Again, duplication of what the Market Access Program does, but we take from the Specialty Crop Block Grant Program. We have one program for market access and promotion and then we take a different program and use it for exactly the same thing.

Specifically, the amendment requires that no less than 80 percent of the total funding appropriated for the Specialty Crop Block Grant Program be spent on the following: increasing access, availability and affordability of specialty crops for children, youth, families and others at risk, including but not limited to specialty crops for meals served at schools and food banks; ensuring food safety; protecting crops from plant pests and disease; and production of specialty crops.

That is what it was originally set up for, by the way. It wasn't set up to promote wines in India or China or Taiwan or Brazil or Mexico. So part of it is the way we wrote the bill that allows USDA to give grants that go outside the original purposes of it. Funds could still be spent on marketing promotion but not at the expense of crops and consumers.

I ask unanimous consent that the pending amendment be set aside and

Coburn amendment No. 1007 be called up.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection?

Ms. LANDRIEU. Reserving the right to object, may I ask the good Senator from Oklahoma, since he has talked about three amendments, may I ask unanimous consent for my amendment, to see if anybody would object to it?

Mr. COBURN. I would be happy to yield a limited time for the Senator to ask for unanimous consent.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, the Senator from Louisiana is recognized.

Ms. LANDRIEU. I will try to do this in less than 3 minutes.

I ask unanimous consent that the pending amendment be set aside and the following amendments be made pending en bloc: Landrieu No. 1113, Johnson No. 1117, Cardin No. 1159, and Grassley No. 1097; that the time until 5 p.m. today be equally divided and controlled in the usual form and that at 5 p.m. the Senate proceed to vote on the amendments listed; that there be 2 minutes of debate prior to each vote; that no second-degree amendments be in order to any of the amendments prior to the votes and that the amendments be subject to a 60-affirmative-vote threshold.

I would also like to add that I would not object personally to having one of Senator COBURN's amendments added to this list, but this is the list I was given to ask unanimous consent for—just four amendments, two on flood insurance and the Grassley amendment on freedom of information regarding EPA.

So we would have votes, all of them requiring a 60-vote threshold, with both sides having a side-by-side, which we sometimes do in this body so if someone wants to vote no they can then have something to vote yes for. This is the most reasonable way I could present this list to help us get a vote on flood insurance and another important amendment to Senator GRASSLEY, a Republican. I am a Democrat, Senator GRASSLEY is a Republican, so it is very balanced on each side.

So I am asking unanimous consent to try to get a vote this afternoon.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection?

The Senator from Pennsylvania.

Mr. TOOMEY. Mr. President, reserving the right to object, the Senator from Louisiana is proposing an amendment that I strongly disagree with the substance on. Despite that, I don't object to her having a vote on her amendment. What I object to is the fact there are only four Senators who get to have amendments.

We have a list of maybe a dozen, maybe it is 15 amendments, that Senators from our side have been requesting to have considered and they have been objected to all week long. Now we are told that soon we can expect the majority leader to file a cloture motion on the bill which will lead to shut-

ting off this bill entirely. This seems to me a clear strategy to block amendments.

So far we have had 10 rollcall votes on amendments on this bill. Of those, three have been Republican. Last year, the farm bill had 42 rollcall votes. What I would like to do is work this out right now, and we can do that, as far as I am concerned, if these amendments could be made in order. Maybe there are others on your side, and I would welcome them.

I have no objection to the Senator from Louisiana having a vote on her amendment, but I don't think we should be doing just these four or some subset thereof and continuing to shut out all the other Senators who have been trying to get their amendments agreed to.

So, for that reason, I object.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Objection is heard.

The Senator from Louisiana.

Ms. LANDRIEU. Mr. President, I would respond to the Senator from Pennsylvania, then I will relinquish the floor to the managers of the bill because it is their responsibility and they have been doing a great job trying to help us get through the farm bill.

I wish to thank the Senator from Pennsylvania because this is real progress. He said he will not object to a vote on our amendment on flood insurance. I appreciate that because I know he has strong objections to it. I may not win the vote, but the people in my State have asked me to do everything I can to fight for them. This is a very serious issue in the State of Louisiana, in Texas, in Florida, in Rhode Island, in Maine, in Massachusetts, in Vermont, and even in Pennsylvania.

So I thank the Senator. Let me yield the floor back to the chairman of the committee to see what could potentially be worked out, but I am so happy the Senator will not object to a flood insurance amendment if we can ever get to one.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Oklahoma has the floor.

Does the Senator from Oklahoma yield?

Mr. COBURN. I yield to the chairman of the committee.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Michigan.

Ms. STABENOW. I realize the Senator from Oklahoma has the floor and he wishes to continue with his amendments.

I wish to speak to all the Members who are on the floor as well as those who are in their offices, because, as everyone knows—again, to hearken back to the last time around we did this—we had 73 amendments. Not all of them took a recorded vote, but we did come up with a finite list. It was 73. It was a big list, but we came up with a list.

That is what we are trying to do now. We have been working with colleagues. We want that list. No one wants that more than I and Senator COCHRAN—to come up with a group of amendments,

so everyone knows what we will be voting on so we can begin to move through that.

I indicated we had included in the bill the amendments we had voted on the floor the last time. I did make one error that my staff reminded me of. There was one we did vote on that is not in here, which was the amendment of Senator McCAIN on catfish. That was not included, in deference to those who had objected. But everything else that was of substance, as I understand, is in the underlying bill.

I also do want to note the distinguished Senator from Oklahoma did have a significant amendment that came very early in this process. In fact, it was one I did not support, but he won his amendment. We could have blocked it. I could have objected, because I don't support the policy, but I did not do that. So the Senator's amendment did pass, even though I voted no and do not support it. So from my perspective, as the chair of the committee, I am happy to have debate. I am happier when I win than when I lose, but I am happy to have debate.

We want to put together a universe of amendments. Right now we don't, at this point, have time to go through 150 amendments. So we have to find out what is a priority for everyone, put together a finite list, and we are going to continue to work on that. If the majority leader files cloture, we can still continue to do that. We can put together a finite list, vitiate the cloture vote, and move to a vote on a group of amendments.

That would be my preference. I know it would be the preference of Senator COCHRAN as well. So we are going to continue to work on that, whether cloture is filed or not—see if we can't come together with a group of amendments and, hopefully, we will be able to get that done. That is my preference on how to do a bill. We will continue to attempt to make that happen.

I appreciate the time allotted, with the Senator from Oklahoma yielding to me, and we will continue to work with him as well as all Members to move to a place where we can have an opportunity for amendments to be offered in a timely manner to get the bill done.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection to the request of the Senator from Oklahoma to set aside the pending amendment?

Ms. STABENOW. On behalf of Senator LANDRIEU, I object.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Objection is heard.

Mr. COBURN. Mr. President, I think I am starting to hear the Senate starting to work the way it should, and so I am going to offer a unanimous consent request that the list she presently has, with the ranking member, the Senator from Mississippi, of a large number of amendments be considered as read and in order; that the list the Senator proffered, which went through both cloakrooms this afternoon, I ask unanimous consent that be agreed to and those be filed and considered.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection?

Ms. STABENOW. Reserving the right to object, that is, unfortunately, an unrealistic motion from my perspective. We have to work with Members. Many Members, including the Senator who is speaking, have multiple amendments and we need to get a list of priorities from people so we have a smaller list we can work with to get this done in a timely manner.

So I object at this point. I would like very much to see us get together a list but to do this in a way where some Members have many amendments and others have very few—

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Objection is heard.

The Senator from Oklahoma.

Mr. COBURN. Since objection is heard, it was my understanding the Senator from Michigan had an agreed-upon list that was sent to both cloakrooms.

Ms. STABENOW. No, I wish I did.

Mr. COBURN. Failing that, what I would propose, based on what I have heard out here this afternoon, is that the chairman put it together and let's try it and let's ask unanimous consent.

The fact is the chairman and ranking member of this committee have worked hard to get this bill. We can do this bill. But one thing the Senator said in her statement is she wants a finite list. That is fine. What we want to do is have an open amendment process. So as the Senator considers that, let's move it.

Here is what will happen, and here is what used to happen in the Senate, for my colleagues who are new. People file all sorts of amendments, including me, and about half of them we wouldn't bring up. So we don't know in this universe of 150 how many are truly serious, how many are done filing an amendment and made a statement, such as I did on one amendment changing the name of SNAP. I have no intention of calling that up, but I wished to make a statement about whether it is really nutrition—the Supplemental Nutrition Access Program. So I would suggest the chairman and ranking member put that out there. Give it to me and let me offer a unanimous consent request on the floor live. We have had a great debate. We understand what the problems are. Let's start voting. Let's start debating and voting.

When we consider all the time huddled in a group of staffers, we don't do anything. We don't debate the bill, we don't vote the bill, and so, consequently, the American people get shortchanged. So I will offer that unanimous consent request. I will not even participate in what is in the mix. I believe the process ought to move forward, whether I win or not. The fact is it is selfishness on the part of our colleagues, because they do not want to vote on something, that keeps us from doing the country's work.

I believe we are at a seminal moment right now in the Senate where we can

change what is happening in this body if, in fact, we will lead in doing that. I know the President pro tempore wants to see that happen. I believe my colleague from Michigan wants to see that happen. I know the ranking member has had that philosophy for years in the Senate. He taught it to me. I learned that from him.

I offered a lot of amendments that he opposed and didn't like, some of them affecting Mississippi, and he beat me every time. But he never said, You can't offer the amendment.

I think we are at a seminal moment. Let's start moving things. What I will do is call on the ranking member and the chairman: Give me that list. Let me go fight for it. Let's break this beaver dam in the Senate, and let's start acting like grownups here.

Ms. STABENOW. Would the Senator be willing to yield?

Mr. COBURN. I would be willing to yield for a question.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Michigan.

Ms. STABENOW. Let me first say that if I am hearing the Senator right, he will work with us to move forward on a unanimous consent request on a list of amendments. I certainly would welcome his doing that.

I also do need to indicate we spent last week and this week moving amendments. We started moving amendments. The Senator's was one of the very first ones we did vote on. We have been working together today, trying to move in small groups amendments to be able to get things moving, now facing objections as we do that. But we did have the opportunity to do a number of amendments last week and have moved forward to vote on some. We will continue to do that with colleagues. That is our intent.

Again, if my friend will remember, this is the second time around for us. We have already done this once. We are back doing it again. We want to get it done. We want to have the opportunity for people to offer more amendments.

Mr. COBURN. I know there is a question in there somewhere.

Ms. STABENOW. Yes, there is a question. If I might say to my friend I am hearing that he is desiring to work with us in order to get together a list. Is that correct?

Mr. COBURN. That is correct.

Mr. President, I have a unanimous consent, and I want to preface this unanimous consent. There are 150 amendments, I think the chairman said, or thereabouts. A lot of those aren't going to require votes; some are. I ask unanimous consent that every amendment that has been filed at this point be considered as read and considered debatable and votable.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection?

Ms. STABENOW. There is objection.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Objection is heard.

Mr. COBURN. If an objection is heard—I retain my time.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Objection is heard.

Mr. COBURN. I would appreciate my time.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Oklahoma has the floor.

Mr. COBURN. Let me make this point. If the Senator from Michigan wouldn't have objected, we could start voting tonight, we could vote tomorrow, we could get through those. Half of those will be pulled, and we would be almost to the same number of votes you would have had, that you did have, the last time the bill came to the floor. So do we really want to break this logjam? Let me offer it again. We can move this thing. Let's just do it. Let's go out and vote. Let's take the tough votes. Some of us are going to get bruised. Big deal. We are all grownups. Let's have the votes. Let's move amendments. Let's debate in the Senate. Let's do the country's business. Instead, we are not going to do it.

There is a compromise. More than half of those will be withdrawn. My colleagues know that. Let's put them all in order. Let's vote them, let's take care of it, and let's be grown up and get the Senate back to where it is supposed to be.

I am going to offer my unanimous consent one more time, that every amendment that has been filed today as of now be considered as read and pending.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection?

Ms. STABENOW. Reserving the right to object, let me indicate, as the manager of this bill, I appreciate the advice we are receiving from the Senator from Oklahoma, and we will certainly look forward to working with him and receiving his advice. We are managing the bill on the floor. We appreciate very much the efforts of the Senator to come down and move things in the direction he wishes. We will continue to manage this bill in a way that is fair and open and work with all of our colleagues and look forward to getting this done.

I would—also reserving the right to object—indicate we have a bill in front of us that affects 16 million people and their jobs. We have a bill that is \$24 billion in deficit reduction, unlike any other bill that has come before us in bipartisan deficit reduction. We have a bill in front of us that has eliminated 100 different authorizations or programs because of duplication, which I know is near and dear to the heart of the Senator from Oklahoma.

We have a bill right now worthy of voting on and passing. We will continue to work with all of our colleagues to move this forward to get this done on behalf of the 16 million men and women who work in agriculture. We will certainly take his ideas under consideration as we move forward to manage this bill.

I object.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Objection is heard.

Mr. COBURN. Mr. President, fair and balanced consideration to our colleagues is allowing them to have amendments, and the Senator just objected to that. So that is where we are. That doesn't keep her from managing the bill. The Senator still gets to set the priorities of what comes up when. But here lies the problem in the Senate: There are obviously some amendments in there they don't want to vote on; otherwise, we would not have heard an objection. So it is not just Senator TOOMEY, who has now said he would not object to Senator LANDRIEU's amendment, it is other objections of people who won't come down here to the floor and show their constituency what they are objecting to. In other words, it is darkness. It is not light, it is not transparency, it is not of good character, it is not of good moral fiber. What it is, is the least of these, the lowest of these, who refuse to participate in an open and honest debate about what is going to happen in our country.

I call on all my colleagues, Republican and Democrat alike. We know what has to happen to open the Senate. Let's vote. Let's vote. For my colleagues on the Republican side objecting, I disagree. Go ahead and vote. For my colleagues on the Democratic side, let's vote. Let the chips fall. The American people decide who is to come up here. Gaming this system by hiding behind an anonymous objection, putting it through the chairman—I am proud to see the Senator from Louisiana. She came down here, she showed courage and said, Here is why I am doing it. She spoke honestly to her constituents back home and also to the Members of this body. We don't have enough of that.

We had an opportunity just then to move this bill, restore the Senate to the way it should function, and we chose not to do it. The American people have got to be shaking their head right now in disgust, because had the time been spent, instead of figuring out what is OK and what is not OK, actually debating and then voting amendments, we could have voted 30 or 40 amendments by now on this bill. But we chose not to do it. Some of us chose not to do it.

Kindergarten is out around most of the rest of the country, except in the Senate, and it is still in session here. We ought to be disgusted with ourselves, and the American people ought to be disgusted with us as well, because we are not allowing this body to do what our Founders intended it to do. I am going to spend a minute talking about that.

This place is very different than the House. No matter who is in charge, the tendency is to overuse the power of the majority. But what our Founders intended was the Senate to be totally different than the House. The reason 6-year terms were put there was so you wouldn't be susceptible to the political influence of reelection, so you would

become a long-term thinker, and that your motivation would be primarily a motivation for the best will of this country and not your State or your political career.

The assessment of the Senate today is that we have lost our focus. It is about politics, not our country. It is about the short term, not the long term. It is about anything but the best interests of the country.

Here we have commonsense amendments. I appreciate the fact that the chairman and ranking member have included some of mine in what they were proffering, but let's include them all. What is so bad about voting on a stupid amendment? If it is really stupid, they are either going to withdraw it or lose big. If it is really controversial, the American people want to see us debate and vote on controversial topics. They do not want to see us duck our responsibilities.

We have met the enemy. The enemy is us.

Mr. COBURN. Mr. President, since I have an objection to that amendment 1007, I ask unanimous consent that amendment No. 1008 be called up.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection?

Ms. STABENOW. Mr. President, on behalf of Senator LANDRIEU, I would object.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Objection is heard.

Mr. COBURN. Mr. President, even though the amendment has been objected to, I am going to talk about it.

The amendment is to require the Rural Utilities Service of the Department of Agriculture to ensure that the grants and loans it makes to provide access to broadband telecommunications services in rural areas are made to rural areas that don't already have access to broadband.

Wait a minute. Why would we want an amendment to do that? This is an amendment to tell them to do what they are supposed to be doing.

Over the years, the rural broadband program has seen a large amount of Federal funding. In 2009, the Department of Agriculture broadband program received \$2.5 billion from the stimulus bill. The inspector general examined the Rural Utilities Service broadband loan and guarantee program, and what he found was that a large majority of the funds went to areas that already had broadband services. In other words, they didn't spend the money where we don't have broadband; they spent the money where we already do.

Specifically, this inspector general found that 148 communities that received broadband service funded by this program were within 30 miles of cities with more than 200,000 people—including the cities of Chicago and Las Vegas.

Some of the Federal funds going to broadband programs originate from the Department of Commerce as well. So we have the Department of Agriculture

and the Department of Commerce both doing the same thing.

The issue is highlighted by the problems with the broadband program that occurred in West Virginia, the President pro tempore's State. Specifically, the State could not handle nor had the use for the routers that were delivered to them. Put simply, the libraries and schools didn't have the need for the powerful stuff that was sent to them. So we wasted the money. It was a \$24 million error.

You get to \$1 billion \$1 million at a time, and you get to \$1 trillion \$1 billion at a time.

What this amendment does is make them spend the money where we don't have broadband, not where we do. In other words, it prioritizes—which most of us would agree to—that broadband funds through this grant program go to areas that don't have broadband rather than areas that already do. So let's wire the whole country first before we upgrade everybody else.

Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the pending amendment be set aside, and amendment No. 1010 be brought up.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection?

Ms. STABENOW. There is objection. On behalf of Senator LANDRIEU, I object.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Objection is heard.

Mr. COBURN. Mr. President, this amendment is very controversial, I know, amongst my colleagues. But I have practiced medicine for 25 years, and before that I ran a pretty successful business.

The Department of Health and Human Services delayed the implementation of ICD-10. Let me explain what that is. ICD-10 is a new diagnostic code book. Why is that important? Well, we use ICD-9 now, which helps us write the diagnostic codes. Whether you are in a hospital, a clinic, a doctor's office, an outpatient surgery center, a home health, whatever it is, those diagnostic codes categorize what we actually did for you. Well-intentioned public health experts thought we aren't broad enough in what we do with the ICD-9, International Classification of Diseases, so as a part of the Affordable Care Act, ICD-10 was implemented.

There is nothing wrong with updating it, but let me explain to you what we did. We went from 18,000 codes of diseases to 140,000 codes, the cost of which, at a minimum, in the health care system under various studies will be at least \$5 billion a year in added costs.

Will there be some benefit? Yes, to the public health experts who study disease patterns there will be some limited benefit. The question we have to ask is, What is our biggest problem with health care? Our biggest problem with health care is it costs too much. What we have done with ICD-10 is, just the implementation—I am talking \$5 billion a year from here on. The imple-

mentation is going to cost \$10 to \$15 billion to put it in. What this amendment would do is make a significant delay in the implementation of ICD-10.

The implementation of the Affordable Care Act is going to cost enough as it is. This would refocus us on what is important. It is important that providers spend time with patients, not spend time trying to figure out how they fill out a disease code. For any of you who doubt the significance of this now, if there are 18,000 codes now—most doctors write the disease code. They don't have a staff to do that. When you go from 18,000 to 140,000, what are your doctors going to be doing? They are not going to take care of you, they are going to be spending time looking at a book that has 140,000 diagnostic codes and listing that. So we are going to take time away from patient care.

Why is it important that the doctors get it right? Because the penalties under Medicare for mislabeling are severe and the sanctions are severe—penalties of 1 percent to 2 percent payment per year on your total billing to Medicare or Medicaid. So the costs associated with ICD-10 are enormous. So it is not only hard and costly to implement it, but it takes people away, the very doctors we want spending time with patients. It limits that because they are going to be spending more time filling out paperwork for the Federal Government.

The other thing it will do is it will not improve health care outcomes at all. It does nothing to improve health care outcomes. It will not improve the first patient, so there is no positive benefit in the short run or medium term to the patient. The only limited benefit would be to long-term studies of public health.

Let me give some diagnostic codes to think about how foolish this is.

The new codes account for injury sites ranging from opera houses to chicken coops to squash courts. Not only do you have to list what an injury was, you then have to go through this book and find out where it was. Was it on a ranch? Was it in the coral? Was it in the chicken coop? If you mislabel it, you are under threat of penalty from CMS.

How about nine different codes where you got hurt around a mobile home? How about a burn due to water skis? How about walking into a lamp post? If you hit your head it is important for public health officials to know that you walked into a lamp post.

It includes 300 different codes related to every different animal. So if you got a bite from a rat or a chipmunk or a squirrel, there are 312 different codes around each one of those animals.

It has 72 codes pertaining to birds. You got pooped on, you got pecked at, you got bit—72 separate codes.

How about bitten by a turtle or, the second one, struck by a turtle? Or walked on a turtle? Or kicked a turtle? That is how much foolishness is in

ICD-10. We are going to ask our doctors to spend time figuring out 160,000 different codes, disease related, when 18,000 does it just fine right now. What this would do would forego the implementation of ICD-10.

I ask the present amendment be set aside and amendment No. 1076 be called up.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection?

Ms. STABENOW. On behalf of Senator LANDRIEU, I object.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Objection is heard.

Mr. COBURN. I understand the objection. I have no ill will toward my chairman or ranking member for their objection.

What this amendment does is during sequester, it prohibits performance awards in the Senior Executive Service. We are paying performance bonuses right now during sequester. The Office of Management and Budget has ordered a freeze on most bonuses for Federal workers during sequestration, but the current law provides an exemption for members of the Senior Executive Service who are among the most highly paid Federal Government employees. This amendment closes that exemption loophole. If we are all going to suffer, everybody is going to suffer. Just because you work in the Senior Executive Service doesn't mean you should not have to participate and lead on the sacrifice this country is going to have to be making and is making. This treats SES personnel just like every other Federal employee.

I ask the pending amendment be set aside—actually, I think I will stop with that—one other.

Mr. President, I ask amendment No. 1152 be called up.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection?

Ms. STABENOW. Reserving the right to object, I will object, Mr. President, but I would like to ask my friend, given all the amendments, if we were able to accept all of his amendments would he be supporting the bill?

Mr. COBURN. I have not made that decision.

Ms. STABENOW. I object on behalf of Senator LANDRIEU.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Objection is heard.

Mr. COBURN. I will tell you how I go through looking at the farm bill. I believe farmers ought to farm. I don't believe they ought to farm the government. I think you all, over the last few years, have done a good job changing that scenario.

I believe food security is an important part of what America can do for both our country and our world. I also know our farmers are some of our hardest working people.

Having said all of that, there are a ton of programs in here that do not directly benefit food security in this country or the American public. When we still have the well-heeled, well-connected in this country taking advantage of farm programs, from pro athletes to everything else, who use the

farm program as a method, as a tax hedge, and use the supplemental systems, by eliminating direct payments, you have done a great deal.

I am all for crop insurance. I think it ought to be a little more costly and spread around. I think crop insurance in terms of the commissions paid to the people who sell it are a little too rich. There are a lot of people who would like to have that book of business for a whole lot less money. We have not done that. It will be a balance to me as I look at improvements.

I congratulate the chairman and ranking member for making progress on the farm bill. We have a long way to go. This amendment relates to one of those, which is how do we I make sure, if we are going to take taxpayer money and help people with their needs under the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program, how do we make sure we are doing it in a way that actually gives them nutritious food?

As a physician who has cared for obesity and heart disease and cancer and high blood pressure for years, diet is a big factor on that. Senator HARKIN and I have an amendment together, this amendment, which would create a pilot project in two States to allow States to use a nutrition assessment for setting what can be brought with SNAP. That is what this amendment does.

A lot of the companies do not like it. A lot of people say: How can you do that? But I remind our colleagues, for many of the people who do not buy nutritious food when we are helping them, we are paying for it twice. That is because when they make poor choices with our money to buy their food, they are creating disease categories that we are going to pay for in the future, with our money, for their disease.

So the idea of trying a pilot project in two States where they use nutritional value to make a determination of what food products are eligible and what are not for the SNAP program, this is a try that most people out in the country would like to see.

Most Americans want to help anybody who needs help, but I hear it all the time when people say: I see people buying stuff I don't buy or I can't afford to buy with their SNAP card.

There is no good way to do that other than do it on a nutritional basis. That is the only way we should look at that. If we are going to help somebody we ought to help them.

There is a great book by Marvin Olasky. It is called "The Tragedy of American Compassion." He talks about how to help people. You do not help people by giving them a blank check. You help people in short term. You help them as long as they have a need. But you help them in a way that they get to help themselves and by that they get to help themselves and get their dignity back.

Senator HARKIN and I have agreed that this is a pilot project that will have to be evaluated at the end of 2

years. All the costs of it have to be borne by the States. We have checked out all the computer companies. There is no problem in putting limitations on UPC codes or anything on all the checkout items. It is not an issue. We have done all the homework on it.

It would be interesting to see, once we do a nutritional evaluation and a limitation on SNAP products, what would happen to the health of the people we are helping. That is the amendment he and I have worked on together. We would love to see it go. We think it is time for that to happen. It certainly will be good.

The key is, can we help people get back to being self-reliant? I don't want us to be a big brother, but I also want to make sure the money we are stealing from our kids, from their future, actually does help somebody and doesn't hurt them.

With that, I again congratulate both the chairman and ranking member for the bill they brought. It has marked improvements. I thank them for their patience dealing with me today on the floor. I very much regret that you have objected to a way to move this bill forward because it doesn't just have implications for this bill. The courage to stand up and say let's do that will have great implications for how this body functions for the next 16 months. I think we are going to miss a big opportunity if we do not do that.

I would love to see the Senate go back to operating the way it did when I first came here. My hopes were dashed, however, with that objection.

I yield the floor.

THE PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Washington.

REMEMBERING FRANK R. LAUTENBERG

Ms. CANTWELL. Mr. President, I have been listening to this debate with my colleagues, but I came to share a few thoughts about the passing of our dear friend Senator FRANK LAUTENBERG. He was a dear friend, a colleague. When I originally sat in the Senate, he sat right behind me. We shared seats together on the Commerce Committee. I can tell you FRANK's wit was as quick as his downhill slalom skiing. He always had something funny to say.

We knew him as somebody who had been in one of the largest computer services companies, ADP, and helped get that company started, and as somebody who represented veterans as one of the last World War II veterans in this body. He served here for almost 30 years.

What always amazed me about Frank is that he brought that business attitude to the Senate when it came to legislating; that is, results matter. Because of that, he had a long list of legislative accomplishments.

I don't know if everybody, because of the turnover in the Senate, realized how many things FRANK accomplished: banning smoking on airplanes, lowering the threshold for drunk driving, better protection against toxic chemicals, helping to improve the everyday

safety of Americans, improving the quality of our environmental laws in the United States. He also had an amendment that helped allow for better refugee status, for members of historically persecuted groups to easily get refugee status in the United States.

He did many different things while he was in the Senate, and he worked very hard because of that experience in World War II and being a veteran and going to school on the GI bill—somebody who lost his father at a very early age. He used that GI bill to get the education he needed to do these incredible things.

When Frank had a victory, he didn't stop at that victory, he kept going. After he and DICK DURBIN helped ban smoking on commercial flights, he followed that with a provision to the Transportation appropriations bill that extended the ban to include all Federal buildings.

In the same kind of fervor, once he helped make our drunk driving laws stronger, he continued to try to implement stronger measures as a key player in establishing a national blood alcohol level at 0.08 percent. At the time, many States decided to do otherwise, but Frank worked to try to champion this at the Federal level, and as a result he helped to save tens of thousands of lives.

He was also a huge champion of our environment. He championed ocean acidification issues before they were probably really known by a lot of people in America. He understood that this was a looming disaster and that we needed to do more research for marine life, our economy, and our way of life.

He also knew and understood that Americans needed protection from toxic pollutants. Well, that is something most of us would say: Yes, we don't like toxic pollutants. Back in 1986 he wrote a bill that created a public database about toxins released in the United States. That was certainly brave for somebody from New Jersey because it was a leading chemical-producing State. The fact that Frank took that on showed a lot of tenacity and a lot of courage, and just as he did on the other things, he followed that up.

Recently, he introduced the Safe Chemicals Act to improve the understanding and reporting of chemicals found in products that make their way into the hands of Americans every single day.

He also championed improving our transportation system. I asked him: Frank, how did you already get a train station named for you on the Jersey line? Anyone who has taken the Amtrak up to New York has had a chance to see that one of the stops in Secaucus is named the FRANK R. LAUTENBERG Station. He had been a great champion for Amtrak, but he was also a great champion for freight and freight mobility. He knew it was important to New Jersey as a major port in our country, and he wanted to make sure that not

only people but products got to where they needed to go and got there on time.

We all like to think we are remembered by the American people for the accomplishments we have, and I am not sure whether they will remember all of the things FRANK LAUTENBERG did to contribute to their way of life. One thing I can say is that when I think about his advocacy for a modernized GI bill or banning smoking on planes, he touched the lives of millions of Americans.

He also had tenacity. He had the tenacity once to help a boy from New Jersey who had been involved in a domestic dispute where the father had lost custody. The young boy at that time, Sean Goldman, who was from New Jersey, had been taken by a family member and was in Brazil. His father tried going through the Brazilian courts for years to get him back. He really wasn't successful until FRANK LAUTENBERG joined the fight. Frank brought the same tenacity he had shown in the past and held up a generalized system of preferences bill—which remove tariffs on \$2.7 billion worth of Brazilian goods—here in the Senate. He knew that threatening to hold up that bill would get their attention, and he was right. He literally got them to do something and return this young boy, Sean Goldman, to his father. FRANK really cared about results. He knew it was important to get that father and son reunited, and he knew the importance of getting results for his constituency in New Jersey.

We will miss FRANK. We will miss all of his legislative actions, his standing on the Senate floor and giving a speech or, as he would say, giving heck to somebody. Oftentimes it was somebody on the other side or somebody he thought was a big giant doing too many things that needed to be challenged. He will be remembered as part of a great generation of Americans who were successful in so many ways. He lived the American dream, came to the Senate and was a contributor. He will be remembered for his tenacity and standing and fighting for people.

We are going to miss you, FRANK.

I yield the floor.

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

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Ms. WARREN). The clerk will call the roll.

The assistant bill clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

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

IRAN ELECTIONS

Mr. HOEVEN. Madam President, I rise to speak about S. Res. 154. S. Res. 154 is a resolution I submitted last month with Senator BLUMENTHAL. It calls for fair and free elections in Iran and points out that the Iranian regime is fundamentally illegitimate.

Americans believe in the power of elections. We believe voting means

something. The rest of the world also understands and respects that elections are powerful events. Most countries that hold elections want to channel the will of their people into the governing of their country.

The Supreme Leader of Iran believes in the power of elections too, but he does not respect them. He himself has never been elected, and he knows a free election might threaten his power base. So he ensures that a truly free election is impossible for the Iranian people.

In past elections fraud has been rampant. The government has cracked down on public dissent and moved against media sources that are not officially sanctioned.

But most of all, Iran's Supreme Leader has developed the unfortunate habit of selecting which candidates may be permitted to run for office.

Hundreds of candidates were prohibited from running for Parliament last year and hundreds more were denied the right to run for President this year. Apparently, the Supreme Leader believes there is too much at stake to risk anyone other than a handpicked candidate to prevail at the voting booth.

The restrictions on candidates are so strict it almost seems it would be easier for the Supreme Leader to cancel the elections altogether and just appoint a President. But the Supreme Leader wants the legitimacy conferred by elections as badly as he wants to retain full control of the Iranian regime.

There are lots of analysts in the United States and elsewhere who attempt to understand which way Iran is going based on which candidates stand for election and which ones prevail. Some candidates are judged to be reformers, others conservatives, and so forth.

But this analysis gives the Iranian regime more legitimacy than it deserves. Because dissent is stifled, because candidates are blocked for political reasons, and, most of all, because the Supreme Leader holds all of the levers of power, Iran's regime cannot be seen to have legitimacy.

Consider that the current Supreme Leader came to power in 1989. He has never been held accountable to the people of Iran, but he is in full control of the country. He controls the defense and foreign policy outright.

He has the power to veto anything that comes from Parliament. He vets candidates for Parliament, and he helps choose the members of the Assembly of Experts and the Guardian Council—the very governing bodies that formally oversee the Supreme Leader. Simply put, power in Iran begins and ends with the Supreme Leader.

On June 14, Iran will elect a new President. While much will be said about who wins that election, we already know what the outcome will be. The Supreme Leader will continue to dominate Iran, run roughshod over the rights of the people of Iran, and deny

the Iranian people the ability to chart their own future.

For this reason I urge my colleagues to join Senator BLUMENTHAL and myself in supporting S. Res. 154. Our resolution points out, first, that Iran has a terrible track record of fraudulent and illegitimate elections; two, that Iran crushes the right to free speech and to a free press; and, three, that true power in Iran remains firmly in the grip of the Supreme Leader.

Our resolution calls on Iran to correct these injustices. It makes clear that the United States will not view Iran's regime as a legitimate expression of the will of its people unless and until its elections are free and truly fair, until those at the highest level of power are made accountable.

Holding autocracy responsible is important not only to the Iranian people but to the people of the world at large.

We face an enormous challenge in trying to get Iran to abandon its nuclear program, and we would be dangerously mistaken if we believed that the winner of the June 14 election will somehow represent the Iranian people.

We must remember—and remind the world—that if Iran continues to work toward a nuclear weapon, it will be because that is the course plotted and pursued by the Supreme Leader. The June 14 elections, unfortunately, will not change that reality.

I hope my colleagues will join us in standing with the Iranian people and against an unelected and illegitimate regime bent on a dangerous course of action.

I hope we can adopt this resolution to demonstrate that we are not fooled by elections that give voters false choices and install leaders determined to threaten the security of other nations.

Only true and fair elections that hold Iran's leaders accountable to the Iranian people will produce a government that deserves to be seen by the world as legitimate. I call on my Senate colleagues to send that message loud and clear to Tehran.

I now yield the floor to my esteemed colleague from the State of Connecticut who is joining me in this resolution, Senator BLUMENTHAL. I wish to thank him for his support of this resolution and for his willingness to not only speak up but to stand up for the people of Iran.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Connecticut.

Mr. BLUMENTHAL. Madam President, I thank my colleague Senator HOEVEN for his leadership on this issue, for his dedication to this cause, his perseverance and persistence in support of democracy.

This resolution, in fact, is all about democracy in a land that has been deprived of it for far too long. Unless Americans think this cause of democracy is far removed and inconsequential to their lives, Americans know elections have consequences. In this instance, the consequences have ramifications across the world because it is

the authoritarian, undemocratic regime of Iran that is pursuing nuclear weapons without regard to the well-being of its people.

If it does not answer to its people, if it is undemocratic and authoritarian, it can continue to pursue this nonsensical, thoughtless, lawless course of seeking to arm itself with nuclear weapons. That is bad not only for the Iranian people but for the American people and for the people of the world.

I rise today in support of the Hoeven-Blumenthal resolution calling for free and fair elections in Iran and condemning the Government of the Islamic Republic of Iran for its ongoing violation of human rights.

On June 14, Iran will hold what looks to be yet another round of elections that are not fair, not free, and certainly not democratic—a sham, a charade that demeans even the pretense of democracy. On June 14 Iranians will elect a new president, but they will do so in an environment filled with systematic fraud and manipulation. They will be faced with a ballot hand-selected by the Supreme Leader, because he and his aides have prohibited literally hundreds of candidates from running. They have accepted only eight candidates for this election.

They are doing so in a country with severe restrictions on freedom of expression and assembly and without media freedom. We ought to note and, as my colleague Senator HOEVEN says so well, remind the world that the real power in Iran continues to rest with the Supreme Leader who controls foreign policy and defense and can veto any decision made by the President or the Parliament. The Supreme Leader has been in power since 1989. He has never been subject to an election or popular referendum of any kind. That is why Senator HOEVEN and I are again offering this resolution supporting political reform and freedom in Iran, and strongly siding with the Iranian people on behalf of the American people in the struggle for democracy. I thank Senator HOEVEN and so many of my colleagues who worked with us before when we sponsored a similar resolution last year condemning the 2012 elections which were neither free nor fair.

We rise again to speak this truth to power. The Iranian people are denied basic and fundamental universal human rights and continue to suffer a repressive leadership that denies the validity of their views. As a global leader on human rights and a beacon to the world on democratic values, this body has an obligation to stand with the people of Iran and demand accountability from their leaders.

Other countries around the world are struggling for democracy, and our ally in the Middle East, Israel, exemplifies it as a shining model. I am reminded of how many people in that region are denied rights and freedoms. But we should reaffirm at every opportunity our commitment to democracy and urge the Iranian Government to hold

free elections, end arbitrary detentions, stop harassing people who fight for basic rights and freedoms, and reform their political process.

I also want to commend President Obama for tightening sanctions on Iran's currency and auto industry, which should prevent the government from procuring some equipment used in nuclear programs. I support continuing efforts to show Iran that we are serious when we say they must halt their nuclear weapons development program. People look to the United States for democracy and freedom. They watch what we do and what we say on this floor of the greatest deliberative body in the world.

We must be unequivocal and remind the world how important it is to stand with the people of Iran, which is what the Hoeven-Blumenthal resolution does. I thank again my colleague Senator HOEVEN.

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.

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

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

Mr. BARRASSO. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senator from Ohio, Mr. BROWN, speak after me for up to 10 minutes.

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

Mr. BARRASSO. I ask unanimous consent to speak as in morning business.

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

HEALTH CARE

Mr. BARRASSO. Madam President, I come to the floor today as millions of students in high school and colleges across the country have recently graduated. I had an opportunity to attend a number of commencements across Wyoming to speak to a number of students who were graduating. I note that President Obama has also been out giving graduation speeches this year. At Ohio State University, the President criticized those of us who warn that government does not always have the best answer. The President suggested that anyone who thinks Washington has grown too inefficient or too ineffective is somehow opposed to democracy entirely. That is what President Obama told new college graduates. It is absurd, but that is exactly what he had to say. He told them he wants to give everyone, as he says, "a fair shake." What he did not tell these young people, these young men and woman, is that his policies—the policies he has been promoting and passing—have actually been hurting them and millions of other young Americans.

He made no mention of the heavy burdens he has heaped on their backs, or the damage his policies have done to

our economy. President Obama did not say anything about it, but those graduates are actually going to figure it out very quickly. They are going to see what they are getting from President Obama is not at all a fair shake.

The first thing they will notice is how difficult it is for them to find a good job in the Obama economy. One of the things the Wall Street Journal had to say in an article by Dan Henninger:

In Campaign 2012, Barack Obama promised the youth vote a rose garden. What they've got instead, as far as the eye can see, is an employment wasteland.

According to a report by the Center for American Progress, the unemployment rate for Americans under age 24 is 16.2 percent. Their study estimated that even when this group eventually starts earning a paycheck, these young Americans, they will collectively suffer reduced earnings of about \$20 billion over the next decade. It works out to about \$22,000 for each one of those young men and young women.

The Center for American Progress, which did this study and did this report, is actually a very liberal think tank. Here is what else they said: "Employment prospects for young Americans are dismal." This is what the liberal think tank is saying. "The employment prospects for young Americans are dismal by both historical and by international comparisons."

We know young people who do find jobs are often stuck with part-time work. What they are looking for is a career. It has been nearly 4 years since the recession ended. Since then we have had a much weaker economic recovery than we should have. In the first quarter of this year alone, the economy grew at an annual rate of 2.4 percent. Wages have continued to stagnate. The average work week continues to shrink.

Why would that be? Why would we see wages stagnating? Why would the average work week shrink? Why are employment prospects so dismal for young Americans? One big reason is the weight of government regulations on our economy. Businesses want to grow. They want to hire. But they have been buried under a mountain of new rules and Washington mandates.

So far in 2013, the Obama administration has released more than 32,000 pages of new regulations. All of that new redtape is strangling our economy and making it tougher for businesses to create jobs for these young graduates.

One part of this—and I have warned about it before—is the new mandate in the President's health care law. It says businesses with 50 or more full-time workers have to provide expensive government-approved health insurance. The law does not say "expensive" government-approved health insurance, but the government-approved health insurance is turning out to be expensive.

A lot of us on this side of the aisle predicted the President's mandates

were going to do terrible things to the economy. Well, that is exactly what happened. That is exactly what happened. It is one of the reasons we have had such weak job creation. The new jobs we do get, well, they are concentrated in businesses that basically use hourly workers.

I have come to the floor and talked about one small business after another that is saying they are keeping workers to less than 30 hours. That usually hits people without work experience. It hits people like new graduates, just starting out, especially hard. Of course, the President didn't mention any of that at his graduation speeches.

There is another thing the President hasn't told young people. It has to do with the sticker shock a lot of them are going to have when they try to buy health insurance. One reason is because the health care law forces young healthy people to pay more so that older sicker people can pay less. Another reason is because the Obama administration has come up with a long list of things insurance policies have to cover. Remember, none of these extras is free; they are just prepaid at higher premiums. Young people won't be able to just get the insurance they want that is right for them or that they can afford. No. Now they will have to pay for the Obama administration mandated and approved health insurance. It is going to be much more expensive, and it may actually do them no medical good.

Why should Washington tell a single 23-year-old woman she has to pay for prostate cancer screening? Why should a 22-year-old man with no children have to pay for a plan that covers pediatric eye exams? Young people don't need many of these mandated services, they do not want them, and they don't want to pay for them. Yet they are mandated to buy them. Again, President Obama is making young people pay more for health insurance so that someone else might pay less.

How much more are they going to have to pay? Well, according to one survey of insurance companies, younger and healthier people can expect average premium increases of 169 percent next year. While some people are going to get government subsidies to help cover part of this extra cost, not everyone will. Even with the subsidies, a lot of young people are still going to pay much more than they would have without the President's health care law. We haven't heard the President talk much about that during his graduation speeches.

Young people and future generations have already been saddled with \$6 trillion in new debt since President Obama took office. Washington's debt is now more than \$53,000 for every man, woman, and child in the United States. These are people who will end up spending the rest of their lives paying higher taxes to cover that debt and the interest on the debt. President Obama's latest budget called for young

people to pay even more by increasing the debt another \$7 trillion over the next decade. That is something else he didn't happen to tell young people during his graduation speeches.

That doesn't mean Washington Democrats are keeping quiet. According to an article by Bloomberg, they are trying hard to sell the President's health care law. Here is how they put it in the article by Bloomberg:

The White House has told all cabinet members and senior officials to use commencement speeches to drive home for graduating college students and their parents the benefits they gain from a provision of the law that allows young adults to stay on their families' insurance plans until they turn 26.

Other Democrats are trying to say the same thing. NANCY PELOSI sent out a 78-page booklet telling Democrats in the House how to spin this unpopular health care law. I have a copy of it here. It is astonishing. Roll Call wrote about it the other day. The article is entitled "Democrats Unleash a Binder Full of Obamacare Messaging." One of the suggestions was to find one or two young adults in your district who are now on their parents' plan because of the new law. That is what NANCY PELOSI is recommending to the Democrats. That is the sales pitch. The President wants young people to believe they are getting free insurance. He doesn't want them to see all the ways the health care law is going to hurt them. That is what the President is telling young people. That is his message. That is what he wants other Washington Democrats to tell everyone too.

Health and Human Services Secretary Kathleen Sebelius is leading the cheers. She says she plans to travel around the country to spread the word about enrollment. The enrollment she is talking about is trying to get people to sign up for the health care law's insurance exchanges. She especially needs young healthy people to sign up for the exchanges, such as these new graduates. In the Wall Street Journal, Dr. Ezekiel Emanuel spelled out why in an op-ed. Remember, he was one of the President's top advisers in creating the health care law. He is also the brother of former White House Chief of Staff Rahm Emanuel. This is what he had to say. He wrote that young people "are bewildered about the health care reform in general and exchanges in particular." The title is "Health Care Exchanges Will Need the Young Invincibles."

Just yesterday the Los Angeles Times front page read "Young adults a hurdle for health act." Dr. Emanuel is concerned these young people won't see the Obama exchanges as being in their best interest. Well, of course they won't see it as being in their best interest, and that is because the exchanges are not in their best interest. That is why the Los Angeles Times is right—"Young adults a hurdle for health act." The solution, Ezekiel Emanuel writes, is that "every commencement address

by an administration official should encourage young graduates to get health insurance."

That is not going to be an easy sell for this administration. A recent Harvard poll of 18-to-24-year-old college students found that only 42 percent approve of how the President has handled health care. Young people are skeptical about the health care law. They are being told they have to buy expensive insurance that they may not need or may not want and that is not right for them because if they do not, the only people in the exchanges will be the old and the sick, and the whole thing will collapse under its own weight. For the President, that would be a terrible political disaster, and apparently this administration is willing to do whatever it takes to avoid that disaster.

According to the Washington Post, Secretary Sebelius is now going hat in hand to health industry officials asking them to donate to nonprofit groups in trying to enroll more people in the exchanges. At best, the Sebelius shake-down is a conflict of interest. And this latest scandal will only make young people more skeptical of the President's sales job on his health care law.

Young people understand they will have to pay more for health coverage so that older people will pay less. Young people understand they are being told to do something that is not in their best interest, and the reason they are being told to do it is to give the President a political win—not because they will get better health care but to give the President a political win. They understand the President's bad economy means they may not find a job, but they are supposed to be OK with that because mom and dad are allowed to pay their bills for a couple more years. Young people know a Cabinet Secretary shouldn't pressure businesses to support organizations that share the President's political agenda. They understand all of that even if the President won't say it to them during commencement speeches. If the President really wants to give young people a speech they will remember, he will tell them the truth about how terrible these policies are for them.

The President should leave the spin for the campaign trail and then come back to Washington and be ready to sit down and work with Republicans on policies that work for our economy, that work for young people, that work for future generations, and that work for all Americans.

Madam President, I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Ohio.

Mr. BROWN. I thank the Senator from Wyoming for his unanimous consent request, and I ask unanimous consent that after I conclude my remarks, the Senator from Rhode Island Mr. WHITEHOUSE be recognized for up to 15 minutes.

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

U.S.-CHINA TRADE DEFICIT

Mr. BROWN. Madam President, today new U.S.-China trade deficit figures from April show a 34-percent increase since March. Last month our trade deficit with the world's second largest economy was more than \$24 billion. I remember about a dozen years ago when the Senate and the House approved PNTR—permanent normal trade relations—with China. Around that time the bilateral yearly trade deficit with China was barely \$10 billion. Today, just for last month, it was \$24 billion. It has persistently and consistently been over \$200 billion a year in recent history.

This kind of trade deficit keeps our domestic companies on the defensive. It means workers in Ohio, Massachusetts, Rhode Island, throughout the Midwest, and across America are prevented from unlocking their potential. Our manufacturers are still the most productive in the world. Our workers are the most skilled and the most productive in the world. Their productivity continues to go up and up and up, in part because of globalization; however, their wages have been stagnant. That is part of the price our country has paid for globalization.

Our workers can't compete when China cheats. How can we win the future when our manufacturers can't win contracts because China doesn't play fair? In many ways China and so many of our trading partners practice trade according to their national interest. Yet we in the United States practice trade according to some economics textbook that has been out of print for the last 20 years.

Despite universal agreement that China continues to manipulate its currency to gain an artificial advantage over American-made goods, no action has been taken down the hall by the House of Representatives and no action has been taken down the street at the White House. No action has been taken by the House despite widespread support for legislation this Chamber passed in October 2011. That legislation, worked on by many of my colleagues, would establish new criteria for the Treasury Department to identify countries that misalign their currency. The bill would trigger tough consequences for those countries which engage in such unfair trade practices. It would allow for industries harmed by currency manipulation to seek relief, the way they do for other export subsidies, which several industries in my State have sought, such as steel pipe producers in Lorain, where I visited last week, in Youngstown.

We can solve this problem. The major reason there have been new investments in the Lorain U.S. Steel plant, at V&M Star in Youngstown, at Wheatland Tube, also in the Mahoning Valley, stabilization in jobs, and growth in jobs is because we have enforced trade laws. We can solve this problem further with currency reform. That is why Senator SESSIONS, a Re-

publican from Alabama, and I will join our colleagues, including Senators Schumer, Collins, Stabenow, and Burr, tomorrow when we reintroduce this bill. Why? Because more nations are engaged in this practice, and it is clear we don't have the tools to address it.

It is no longer just China manipulating its currency. There are a number of other countries—especially in East Asia—that are engaging in this practice, and, as I said, we don't have the tools to address it.

In 2009, as nations were seeking to restore stability to financial markets and respond to the global financial crisis, G-20 leaders met in Pittsburgh to set a framework that would better promote more evenly balanced trade. Among the steps to be taken would be a more market-oriented exchange rate—something China obviously isn't familiar with—and a move away from the practice of adopting artificial, manipulated exchange rates not based on market forces.

While this appeared to be a step in the right direction, there has been too little to show for the good intentions stated back in 2009. Here is what we know. Workers and manufacturers still face an unfair advantage from currency manipulation. By keeping the value of the RMB—the Chinese currency—artificially low, China drives foreign corporations to shift production there because it makes exports to China more expensive and it makes Chinese exports back into the United States cheaper.

It has only been in recent history that business after business after business, as we have seen in the United States, has developed a business plan that involves shutting down production in Lima, OH, move that production to Beijing, and then sell back to the United States of America. Never really in history has that been a widely adopted business plan in a country—shut down production in Springfield, MA, or Springfield, OH, move that production to Shihan, China, or Wuhan, China, get tax breaks for doing it, and then sell those products back into the United States. Part of the reason for that is currency manipulation.

This continued undervaluation has caused serious harm for this economy. It has cost American jobs. The first President Bush said in the 1980s that \$1 billion in trade surplus or trade deficit could translate into some 12,000 jobs—meaning that if there is a trade deficit with a country, it costs this country 12,000 jobs. Multiply that by a \$500 billion, \$600 billion, or \$700 billion trade deficit, and see what we get.

A December 2012 report by the Peterson Institute for International Economics found that currency manipulation by foreign governments had cost the U.S. from 1 to 5 million jobs and increased the U.S. trade deficit by \$200 billion to \$500 billion per year.

Think of that. By addressing currency manipulation now, we could create up to 5 million jobs and reduce our trade deficit by tens of billions of dol-

lars, and doing so wouldn't cost taxpayers a cent.

But let's look for a moment beyond the numbers. Workers in my home State who work hard and play by the rules at Titan Tire in Bryan, OH, American Aluminum Extrusions in Stark County, Wheatland Tube in Trumbull County, the people who make coated paper and lightweight thermal paper in southern Ohio, the Ohioans who forge steel into products we all use—these women and men deserve a chance to earn a living without companies in other countries illegally dumping goods—or legally if we don't do anything about currency—on our markets. We can't afford to sit idly by while our trade deficit grows and our domestic manufacturing base erodes.

By addressing currency manipulation and other unfair trade practices, we create American jobs and position ourselves to meet the challenges and opportunities of globalization.

I look forward to continued debate and action on finally penalizing the countries that cheat on trade.

Madam President, I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Rhode Island.

Mr. WHITEHOUSE. Madam President, I would like to yield 5 minutes to my friend Senator BLUNT and then reclaim the floor.

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

Mr. BLUNT. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent to speak as if in morning business.

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

Mr. BLUNT. I appreciate my good friend Senator WHITEHOUSE yielding the time for me.

REMEMBERING FRANK R. LAUTENBERG

Mr. BLUNT. I would like to talk for a few minutes about Senator LAUTENBERG and what he brought to this body and what he brought to public service.

I represent Missouri in the Senate, and in the House I represented southwest Missouri. Many times in the last 2½ years, Senator LAUTENBERG wanted to talk about going to basic training at Camp Crowder near Neosho, MO, as a young man barely on the edge of his twenties—I am not sure which edge of his twenties it was, but he was serving in World War II, first as a teenager and then as a man barely in his twenties—and what it was like to be surrounded by small communities, all of which were smaller than the camp at which the enlisted men were training, and what it was like when they had some free time and could go to any of these communities where they probably outnumbered the community. He always remembered that part of his training with some pleasure. The story was always different from the story before, but I am sure all the stories happened.

But what he was really talking about to me every time was that commitment to service that particularly our World War II veterans brought to this body. And we all know, after the reflections of the last 2 days, that he was the

last of the World War II veterans to serve here and likely to be the last of the World War II veterans to ever serve here, and the spirit of service they all brought was reflected in Senator LAUTENBERG in lots of ways.

All you would have to do is look at our voting record to know there were lots of areas at the end of the day we didn't agree on, but somehow we managed to do that and still appreciate the commitment to public service that he reflected, and I think he appreciated that in me.

One of the chances I missed here was the opportunity to serve with him on the surface subcommittee in Commerce. He was going to be the chairman of that committee for this Congress, and I was going to be the leading Republican and was looking forward to that because this was one area where I thought we were going to find and would have found a lot of common ground. Senator LAUTENBERG's understanding of transportation, his understanding beyond most of us of the importance of passenger rail and rail generally and how you need to integrate this system so that it works the best and the most efficiently, was clearly one of the areas where he had spent a lot of time over the years.

Remember, Senator LAUTENBERG was here as a Senator, and then he decided to retire and then called back into public service. At a time when most people would have made that decision and moved on, he came back and served here, as it turned out, for the rest of his life of service.

It was an honor for us to get to serve with him. It was an honor for me to get to serve with him. It is a disappointment for me that I didn't get to learn more about this issue he and I were about to join hands on together.

But there is a lot we should learn from his service and the service of that World War II generation. I hope that is one of the things we will be reflecting on over the next few days as we reflect on his career of service and that whole generation of service. We really do see that moment pass with Senator Inouye and Senator LAUTENBERG and others who have served here just in recent years, all gone. But if we could look at the times they could come together in that spirit of World War II to make things happen, we would all learn an important lesson.

I join his family and his friends and his colleagues in missing him and missing his service.

I am pleased to yield the time back to my good friend Mr. WHITEHOUSE, who gave me the time to say these words.

THE PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Rhode Island.

GASPEE DAYS

Mr. WHITEHOUSE. Madam President, American summertime is when we celebrate and commemorate the patriots who fought to establish and protect this great Republic. From Memorial Day through Independence Day

and on to Veterans Day, communities across this country turn out star-spangled bunting and gather for parades, cookouts, and wreath layings to reflect on the heroes and events that embody our Nation's great spirit.

June in Rhode Island is marked by the annual celebration of *Gaspee* Days, when we recognize and celebrate one of the earliest acts of defiance against the British Crown in our American struggle for independence. Most Americans remember and I know the Presiding Senator from Massachusetts certainly is well aware of the Boston Tea Party when, in fact, literally spirited Bostonians clamored onto the decks of the East India Company's ships and dumped tea bags into Boston Harbor to protest British taxation without representation.

I am sure throwing tea bags into the harbor is a very big deal, but there was another milestone in the path to the Revolutionary War that is too often overlooked. It is the story of 60 brave Rhode Islanders who, more than a year before the Tea Party in Boston, risked their lives in defiance of oppression more than 240 years ago and drew the first blood in what became the revolutionary conflict.

In the years before the Revolutionary War, one of the most notorious of the armed customs vessels patrolling Rhode Island's Narragansett Bay, imposing the authority of the British Crown, was Her Majesty's ship *Gaspee*. The ship and its captain, Lieutenant William Dudingston, were known for destroying fishing vessels, seizing cargo, and flagging down ships only to harass, humiliate, and interrogate the colonials.

A 100-year-old report says:

This unprincipled ruffian had ruthlessly ravaged the Rhode Island coast for several months, destroying unoffending fishing vessels, and confiscating everything he could lay hands on. The attack on the "*Gaspee*" caused the first bloodshed in the struggle for American independence, and was the first resistance to the British navy.

How did it come about? Well, on June 9, 1772, Rhode Island ship captain Benjamin Lindsey was en route to Providence from Newport, sailing in his packet sloop the *Hannah*, when he was accosted and ordered to yield for inspection by the *Gaspee*. Captain Lindsey had had enough of the *Gaspee*. He ignored the command and raced up Narragansett Bay, ignoring warning shots fired at him by the *Gaspee*. As the *Gaspee* gave chase, Captain Lindsey—who was a wily Rhode Island ship captain—realized that his ship was lighter and drew less water than the *Gaspee*, so he sped north toward Pawtuxet Cove, toward the shallows off of Namquid Point. The *Hannah* shot over these shallows, but the heavier *Gaspee* grounded and stuck firm. The British ship and her crew were caught stranded in a falling tide and would need to wait many hours for a rising tide to free the hulking *Gaspee*.

Captain Lindsey continued on his way to Providence and rallied a group

of Rhode Island patriots at Sabin's Tavern. Together, the group resolved to put an end to the *Gaspee*'s menace to Rhode Island waters. They may have shared one thing with their Boston compatriots: They may have been spirited themselves.

That night the men embarked down Narragansett Bay in eight longboats with muffled oars. They encircled the stranded *Gaspee* and called on Lieutenant Dudingston to surrender his ship. Dudingston refused and ordered his men to fire on anyone who tried to board. The Rhode Islanders forced their way onto the *Gaspee*'s deck, and in the struggle Lieutenant Dudingston was wounded, shot with a musket ball. Right there in the waters off Warwick, RI, the very first blood in the conflict that was to become the American Revolution thus was drawn.

The brave patriots took the captive Englishmen ashore and returned to the *Gaspee* to rid Narragansett Bay of her noxious presence once and for all. Near daylight on June 10, they set her afire. The blaze spread to the ship's powder magazine, and the resulting blast echoed across Narragansett Bay as airborne fragments of this former ship splashed down into the water.

The incident prompted a special commission instructed by King George III to deliver any persons indicted in the burning of the *Gaspee* to the Royal Navy for transport to England for trial and execution.

Samuel Adams, in a letter published in the Newport Mercury on December 21, 1772, and reprinted in the Providence Gazette on December 26, called it "a court of inquisition, more horrid than that of Spain or Portugal. The persons who are the commissioners of this new-fangled court are vested with most exorbitant and unconstitutional power." A few days later he wrote that "an Attack upon the Liberties of one Colony is an Attack upon the Liberties of all; and therefore in this Instance all should be ready to yield Assistance to Rhode Island."

In a letter to a friend in Rhode Island, John Adams, the future President, summed up the tension felt across the Colonies:

"We are all in a fury here about . . . the Commission for trying the Rhode Islanders for Burning the *Gaspee*. I wonder how your Colony happens to sleep so securely in a whole skin, when her sisters are so worried and tormented."

King George III offered a handsome reward for information leading to the arrest of those responsible for the burning and destruction of his revenue cutter. But Rhode Islanders are a loyal bunch—the reward went unclaimed.

The site of Rhode Island's opening salvo in the American Revolution is now named *Gaspee* Point. The annual *Gaspee* Days celebration has grown to span several weeks each June and includes an arts and crafts festival, a walking tour with students playing the roles of Colonialists, an encampment of local militia, a parade down Narragansett Parkway in Warwick, and, of

course, a mock burning of the HMS *Gaspee*.

My friend, State Representative Joe McNamara, and the Gaspee Days Committee work each year to make these events the best they can be and to remind our State and Nation of the bravery of those few dozen souls. Indeed, this year another Rhode Islander Mark Tracy, a pediatric neurologist at Hasbro Children's Hospital, was able to acquire original news stories from 1772 that related this incident and gave them to the Gaspee Committee. I will note that he was able to get them rather inexpensively because "the auction house concentrated on describing the batches of newspapers—from the estate of an unnamed Providence collector—in terms of the coming Boston Tea Party and other events," paying no attention to the fact that Rhode Island's greater act and prior act was actually enclosed and described in these newspapers.

This summer will also mark another historic anniversary for Rhode Island because it was in July of 1663–350 years ago this summer—that King Charles II granted a royal charter establishing the Colony of Rhode Island and Providence Plantations.

"To hold forth a lively experiment," it declared "that a most flourishing civil state may stand and best be maintained . . . with a full liberty in religious concerns."

This charter provided in Rhode Island the world's first formal establishment of freedom of religion, distinguishing us from the rigid theocracy of Massachusetts. I am sorry to say, where ideological conformity was enforced by the gallows and the lash.

This charter has been called America's Magna Carta, for it is the first formal document in all of history granting the separation of church and state, along with extraordinary freedoms of speech, to a political entity. This "lively experiment" in Rhode Island blazed a path for American freedom of religion, one of our greatest national blessings. And, more practically, this liberty also allowed trading networks of Quakers and Baptists and Jews to connect in Newport and created their abundant wealth and commerce.

That freedom of religion, that freedom of conscience was the great legacy of Rhode Island's founder Roger Williams, who had been banished from Massachusetts for his beliefs about religious tolerance. Williams established his new colony as "a shelter for persons," as he said, "distressed for conscience." His battle for freedom of conscience, won and reflected in the King Charles Charter, is the reason his statue stands right out there, outside the Chamber of the Senate.

I know these events and the patriots whose efforts allowed for their success are not forgotten in my home State. This summer we will gather in these ways to celebrate Rhode Island's independent streak. We will recall the

courage and zeal of these men and women who embodied those most American values—freedom of conscience and freedom from tyranny, values that ignited a revolution in the summer of 1776.

I yield the floor.

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

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

Mr. MERKLEY. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent to enter into a colloquy with Senator STABENOW.

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

MONSANTO PROTECTION ACT

Mr. MERKLEY. Madam President, I rise to talk about an issue that is important to many Oregonians, section 735 of the continuing resolution, also known as the Monsanto Protection Act. I appreciate this opportunity to engage in a dialog about it with Senator STABENOW, who, as the chair of the committee, is doing a magnificent job of guiding this farm bill through the Senate.

The Monsanto Protection Act refers to a policy rider the House slipped into the recently passed continuing resolution and sent over to the Senate. Because of the time-urgent consideration of this must-pass legislation—necessary to avert a government shutdown—this policy rider slipped through without examination or debate.

That outcome is unfortunate and unacceptable because the content of the policy rider is nothing short of astounding. It allows the unrestricted sale and planting of new variants of genetically modified seeds that a court ruled have not been properly examined for their effect on other farmers, the environment, and human health.

The impact on other farmers can be significant. The current situation in Oregon of GMO wheat escaping a field test—resulting in several nations suspending the import of white wheat from the United States—underscores the fact that poorly regulated GMO cultivation can pose a significant threat to farmers who are not cultivating GMO crops.

Equally troubling to the policy rider's allowance of unrestricted sale and planting of GMO seeds is the fact that the Monsanto Protection Act instructs the seed producers to ignore a ruling of the court, thereby raising profound questions about the constitutional separation of powers and the ability of our courts to hold agencies accountable.

Moreover, while there is undoubtedly some difference in this legislative body on the wisdom of the core policy, there should be outrage on all sides about the manner in which this policy rider was adopted. I have certainly heard that outrage from my constituents in

Oregon. They have come to my town-halls to protest, and more than 2,200 have written to me.

In an accountable and transparent legislative system, the Monsanto Protection Act would have had to be considered by the Agriculture Committee, complete with testimony by relevant parties. If the committee had approved the act, there would have been a subsequent opportunity to debate it on the floor of this Chamber. Complete transparency with a full opportunity for the public to weigh in is essential.

Since these features of an accountable and transparent legislative system were not honored and because I think the policy itself is unacceptable, I have offered an amendment to the farm bill which would repeal this rider in its entirety. To this point, my efforts to introduce that amendment have been objected to, and it takes unanimous consent. This type of rider has no place in an appropriations bill to fund the Federal Government, and a bill that interferes with our system of checks and balances should never have become law.

Ms. STABENOW. Madam President, I absolutely understand Senator MERKLEY's concerns about the issue and the concerns of many people about this issue. There has been a long-running understanding that we should not be legislating on appropriations, and I share the concern of my colleague that the Agriculture Committee and other appropriate committees didn't have an opportunity to engage in this debate.

As the Senator from Oregon knows, this language was included in the continuing resolution, the bill that funds the government, and that bill will expire on September 30 of this year. I agree with my colleague; we should not extend that provision through the appropriations process. We should have the same type of full and transparent process that both Senator MERKLEY and I have talked about today.

I wish to assure my friend that I think it would be inappropriate for that language to be adopted in a conference committee or otherwise adopted in a manner designed to bypass open debate in the relevant committees and this Chamber.

I will do my best to oppose any effort to add this kind of extension in the conference committee on this farm bill or to otherwise extend it without appropriate legislative examination.

Mr. MERKLEY. Madam President, I thank Senator STABENOW. I deeply appreciate the commitment of my colleague to ensure that the Monsanto Protection Act is not tucked into subsequent legislation in a manner that bypasses full committee examination and Senate debate.

The farm bill is extremely important to our Nation. The Senator from Michigan has worked with me to incorporate a number of provisions that are important to the farmers in Oregon, including disaster programs, responding to forest fires, specialty crop research

programs, improvements in insurance for organic farmers, and low-cost loans offered through rural electrical co-ops for energy-saving home and business renovations.

It has been a real pleasure to work with Senator STABENOW on those provisions and, again, I thank the Senator for her support for them and for advocating responsible legislative examination of measures such as the Monsanto Protection Act.

Ms. STABENOW. Madam President, I thank the Senator from Oregon for his advocacy on so many important policies in this legislation. We worked together closely on forest fires. Senator MERKLEY and I have been on the phone many times. He wanted to make sure I was aware of what has happened to farmers, homeowners, and landowners in Oregon.

We share a great interest in so many areas as it relates to our organic growers and rural development as well as what is happening in terms of energy efficiency, and, as my friend mentioned, rural electric co-ops.

I thank Senator MERKLEY for his leadership in many areas, and I look forward to working with the Senator from Oregon as we bring the farm bill to a final vote.

Mr. MERKLEY. Madam President, again, I thank the chair for her leadership. I know how much she looks forward to the conclusion of this process as we try to enable folks to have various amendments which are appropriate for the farm bill debated on the floor.

I 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 Rhode Island.

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

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

Mr. WHITEHOUSE. I ask unanimous consent to speak for up to 15 minutes as in morning business.

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

CLIMATE CHANGE

Mr. WHITEHOUSE. Madam President, the last week we were here, I gave my weekly "Time To Wake Up" speech, as usual. It is a speech I wrote well earlier. In a truly and, unfortunately, almost eerie coincidence, in my speech last week I spoke about a variety of natural disasters, including—and I will quote my own speech—"cyclones in Oklahoma." I said that in the same hour the cyclone touched down in Moore, OK.

When people are suffering in the wake of a calamity such as that, they need to hear one thing from Washington; that is, how can we help. That is all they need to hear. No one likes to be chided when what they need is help and comfort.

J.E. Reynolds of the Daily Oklahoman wrote: "Victims and survivors need help, not a sermon in the first hours following a storm." I agree. I agree very much. My thoughts are with the victims of those Oklahoma storms and with everyone who is working to pick up the pieces.

Far from seeking to exploit their tragedy, I had no idea of the weather in Oklahoma that was happening virtually at the time I gave the speech, mentioning Oklahoma cyclones among other examples of extreme weather. But the eerie timing was what it was, and it did not send that single simple message: How can we help? So I am sorry. I have apologized to my Oklahoma colleagues for the unfortunate coincidence of timing of my earlier remarks, and I, of course, stand ready to help them speed relief to their State.

It is, of course, impossible to say that any single weather event is caused by climate change, and that is not something I have ever said. What is true is that climate change is altering weather patterns. Scientists have studied these changes in weather patterns, and they have modeled what is to come. Most are convinced that increases in the frequency and intensity of extreme weather will be a result of the megatons of carbon pollution we continue to emit.

The way I have described it is that climate change "loads the dice" for extreme weather. We might not know which roll is caused by the loaded dice. We are going to get a 6 or a 7 or a 12 or a 2 sooner or later anyway, but the extreme weather will come more often because of this. We cannot pretend this isn't happening. We just hit 400 parts per million of carbon in the atmosphere, measured at the NOAA observatory on Mauna Loa in Hawaii.

What does 400 parts per million mean? Well, look at it this way: For at least 800,000 years, and perhaps millions, we have been in a range on Earth between 170 and 300 parts per million of carbon in our atmosphere—800,000 years, minimum. Homo sapiens as a species have only been around for about 200,000 years, but just since the industrial revolution and the "Great Carbon Dump" began, we have blown out of the 170- to 300-parts-per-million range and have now hit 400.

This is very serious. We already see the effects. In Alaska, permafrost is melting and native villages once protected by winter ice are being eroded into the sea. In the Carolinas, roads to the Outer Banks have to be raised as seas rise and storms worsen. Coral reefs are fading off in Florida and in the Caribbean. In Rhode Island, we have measured almost 10 inches of sea level rise since the 1930s. Rhode Island fishermen going out to sea from Point Judith are reporting "real anomalies . . . things just aren't making sense."

All of these effects from climate change hit our farmers too. Since before the founding of this Republic, our farmers have relied on the Sun, the

rain, and the land to provide us their bounty. In 2011, farming and the industries that rely directly on agriculture accounted for almost 5 percent of the entire U.S. economy. But growing conditions in the United States are changing. More and more of our rainfall is coming in heavy downpours. Since 1991, the amount of rain falling in what scientists call "extreme precipitation events"—the amount of rain falling in extreme precipitation events has been above the 1901-to-1960 average in every region of the country.

In the Northeast where I am from extreme precipitation has increased 74 percent just between 1958 and 2010. That matters to our farmers. The very seasons are shifting. During the last two decades, the average frost-free season was about 10 days longer than during that period between 1901 and 1960. In the Southwest it is an astonishing 3 weeks longer. That matters to our farmers.

Average temperature in the contiguous United States has increased by about 1.5 degrees Fahrenheit since records began in 1895. Most of that increase occurred since the 1980s, and 2012 was the warmest year ever. That matters to our farmers.

This chart shows the extent of the U.S. drought in August of 2012. The red and the dark areas indicate extreme and exceptional drought. These conditions lasted most of the year. That matters to our farmers.

The U.S. Department of Agriculture Chief Economist Joseph Glauber testified before the Agriculture Committee that "the heat and rainfall deficit conditions that characterized the summer of 2012 were well outside the range of normal weather variation." That is precisely what scientists mean when they say climate change "loads the dice" for extreme weather.

Climate change doesn't cause specific heat waves but the average temperature shifts to warmer weather and the extremes move with it.

The New York Botanical Garden has seen apricot trees blossom in February. The Audubon Society of Rhode Island has reported cherry trees in Providence blooming as early as December. This could affect farmers too.

Jeff Send, a Michigan cherry farmer, explained to the Agriculture Committee that the record warm March temperatures brought his region's cherry trees out of dormancy early and exposed them to later freezes. In Michigan he said:

We have the capacity to produce 275 million pounds of tart cherries. In 2012, our total was 11.6 million pounds.

A potential of 275 million pounds; actual crop, 11.6 million pounds, less than one-twentieth, all because of that early warming and that early bloom and the freezes that then killed them.

These changes I keep speaking about will continue if we go on polluting our atmosphere with greenhouse gases. As the harmful effects of climate change become more prevalent, our agricultural policies should reflect the threat

posed to farming and food production by these changes. Yet in the farm bill climate change and extreme weather are not mentioned once.

Well, let me correct myself. They are mentioned once. The bill makes reference to an earlier law from 1990, and in the title of that 1990 law the words "climate change" appear. So by referring to the 1990 law, the farm bill once mentions climate change. But with all of this going on, that is the only reference. And the reason is that our Republican colleagues will oppose legislation if it even mentions the words "climate change."

We can't get around using the name of a statute that passed 20-plus years ago, if "climate change" is in the name, so that one had to go in. But, otherwise, climate change is not mentioned in the farm bill, despite all of this activity and effect on farming.

It is not that there aren't things we could do. The Bicameral Task Force on Climate Change, which I cochair with Representative WAXMAN, Senator CARDIN, and Representative MARKEY, asked stakeholders in the agriculture economy about carbon pollution and our resiliency to climate change.

The National Farmers Union, which represents more than 200,000 family farmers, ranchers, and rural members, responded—this is the National Farmers Union:

Mitigating and adapting to climate change is of significant concern to our membership and will be a defining trend that shapes the world.

That is the National Farmers Union on climate change. It will be "a defining trend that shapes the world."

Cap-and-trade legislation, the Farmers Union said, would provide a boon to farming and forest lands that take the lead on reducing greenhouse gases. The National Sustainable Agricultural Coalition encouraged a comprehensive approach. An effective policy to reduce greenhouse gas emissions, wrote the group, "should have as its cornerstone the support and promotion of sustainable organic cultural systems throughout USDA's programs and initiatives."

Even the American Farm Bureau Federation, which has at times opposed climate change legislation, expressed clear support for farming practices that keep carbon out of the atmosphere and for investments in biofuels and in renewable energy.

We are grateful to all of the scientific and industry leaders who have shared their ideas with the Bicameral Task Force on Climate Change. We need active and willing partners in the effort to ensure our farms can meet the needs of a strong nation.

They are not alone. Responsible people across the spectrum want us to act on carbon and climate. Responsible people such as the Joint Chiefs of Staff of the United States of America, the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops, and dozens of major scientific societies—virtually every major one—and the folks in the corporate sector who

run Apple and Ford and Nike and Coca Cola—get it. Republicans such as Ronald Reagan's Secretary of State George Schultz, former House Science Committee chair Sherry Boehlert, former Utah Governor and GOP Presidential candidate John Huntsman—responsible people across the spectrum get it. The scientists at NASA get it, and they are telling us to get serious. They are the ones who took a robot the size of an SUV and sent it millions of miles to Mars where they landed it safely on the surface of Mars and now they are driving it around. Do we think they might know what they are talking about? They get it. All across the spectrum, people get it. They are on one side getting something done about climate change.

On the other side are the polluters with their familiar retinue of cranks, extremists, and front organizations. That is basically it. And for some reason, the Republican Party—the great American Republican Party—has chosen to hitch its wagon to the polluters. I do not get it. I do not see how that works out for them.

Every day the pollution gets worse, and every day the evidence that this is serious gets stronger. I do not know why the Republican Party of Theodore Roosevelt wants to paint itself as the party that went with the polluters and not the scientists; that went with the fringe extreme against the responsible center. It has to be a bad bet. It is a crazy bet.

To make that bet you have to believe God will intervene and perform some magic, in violation of His own laws of physics and chemistry. Is that a bet you want to take? You have to believe that the market will work, even though the market is flagrantly skewed. Is that a bet you want to make? And you have to believe the people who have a vested interest to lie and disbelieve the people who have no conflict of interest, unless you are prepared to think that the Joint Chiefs of Staff and the Catholic bishops and all the major scientific organizations all have a conflict of interest. Does that sound very sensible? Does that sound like where you want to hitch the wagon of one of America's great political parties?

Let me close, as we talk about climate change in the context of the farm bill, by quoting our friend Senator TESTER, who recently spelled out the crisis facing our farmers in an op-ed in USA Today.

I ask unanimous consent that op-ed be printed at the conclusion of my remarks.

Senator TESTER and his wife Sharla have been farming for almost 40 years—the same land that his grandparents homesteaded. This is how our friend from Montana described the changes he sees:

When I was younger, frequent bone-chilling winds whipped snow off the Rocky Mountain Front and brought bitterly cold days that reached -30 degrees. Today, we have only a

handful of days that even reach 0 degrees. Changes in the weather are forcing Sharla and I to change how we operate our farm. It's now more difficult to know when to plant to take advantage of the rains.

Some might say the end of bitter winters will be a boon for Montana's economy. But with milder winters, we've seen the sawfly come out earlier to destroy our crops before they can be harvested. Montana's deep freezes also used to kill off the pine bark beetle, which today kills millions of acres of trees across the American West.

He writes:

Montanans already understand that climate change is affecting our daily lives. The argument isn't whether the world is changing, it's how to respond.

I will say, once again, it is time—it is well past time—for us in Congress to wake up to the urgent challenge of our time. There is a lot at stake. There is a lot at stake for all of us. There is a lot at stake for every State, and there is a lot at stake for every generation, particularly for the generations that are to follow.

So often I hear my Republican colleagues expressing concern about what our debt will do to future generations. Fine. What will a ruined climate do to future generations? What will acidified seas do to future generations? What will worse extreme weather and rising seas do to future generations?

There is indeed a lot at stake, and it is time to wake up. It is time to take action.

I yield the floor.

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

[From USA Today, Apr. 5, 2013]

CLIMATE CHANGE ALREADY FELT BY FARMERS

Montanans already understand that climate change is affecting our daily lives. The argument isn't whether the world is changing, it's how to respond.

I am a third-generation farmer from north-central Montana. My wife, Sharla, and I farm the same land homesteaded by my grandparents a century ago, continuing a Montana tradition of making a living off the land. We've farmed this land for nearly 40 years.

For the average American, particularly those of us from rural America, the political conversation about climate change seems worlds away. For us, warmer winters and extreme weather events are already presenting new challenges for our way of life.

It's an experience with climate change that too often goes unreported and overlooked. But as a nation we must start paying attention, because the experiences of America's farmers, ranchers, and sportsmen and women will change the debate if policymakers start listening.

Scientists tell us that climate change will bring shorter, warmer and drier winters to Montana. I see it every time I get on my tractor.

When I was younger, frequent bone-chilling winds whipped snow off the Rocky Mountain Front and brought bitterly cold days that reached -30 degrees. Today, we have only a handful of days that even reach 0 degrees. Changes in the weather are forcing Sharla and I to change how we operate our farm. It's now more difficult to know when to plant to take advantage of the rains.

Some might say the end of bitter winters will be a boon for Montana's economy. But

with milder winters, we've seen the sawfly come out earlier to destroy our crops before they can be harvested. Montana's deep freezes also used to kill off the pine bark beetle, which today kills millions of acres of trees across the American West.

Those dead trees—many of which litter our National Forests—combined with historic drought to make 2012's record-setting wildfires possible. Last year's blazes, which burned Colorado suburbs, National Parks and more than 1 million acres in Montana, will become commonplace as the West continues to heat up. And I fear that epic droughts and floods will continue to be regular stories in the national news.

Montana's economy depends in part on the natural beauty of our state. Our outdoor economy generates nearly \$6 billion each year. But decimated forests, wildfires and lost wildlife habitat put our outdoor economy at risk.

Our economy also depends on our state's number one industry: agriculture. Montana's farmers and ranchers feed our state and our nation, but back-to-back years of record flooding and drought are testing even the hardest of our producers.

Montanans already understand that climate change is affecting our daily lives. The argument isn't whether the world is changing, it's how to respond.

History will judge us based on what we do next. In the Senate, I am pushing to develop more sources of renewable energy. I still fill up my tractor with diesel fuel because there are no better options available, but by encouraging the development of wind, water, next-generation biofuels and other renewables, we will create new jobs as we cut the emissions that warm our planet and increase our energy options. That's why I introduced my Public Lands Renewable Energy Development Act (http://www.wildlifemanagementinstitute.org/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=562:bipartisan-senate-bill-would-establish-renewable-energy-leasing-process&catid=34:ONB%20Articles&Itemid=54) to streamline the permitting for renewable energy projects on public lands.

I've also proposed my Forest Jobs and Recreation Act (<http://www.testersenate.gov/?p=issue&id=70>). For decades, conservationists and loggers fought to control Montana's forests while our trees became fodder for fire and infestation. My bill brought Montanans together to set aside some lands for recreation while requiring logging in others. By better taking care of our forests, we will reduce the growing threat of wildfire.

These are important steps, but achieving a comprehensive solution to climate change and energy development and use will require all Americans to work together before it's too late. Last year was the hottest year on record (http://articles.washingtonpost.com/2013-01-08/national/36207396_1_noaa-analysis-climate-change-thomas-r-karl) in the United States. We are increasingly victims of strong and frequent natural disasters that leave us struggling to pay for both prevention and recovery efforts.

Folks in rural America are already adapting to the new realities brought by climate change. For farmers like me, it means erratic weather is putting my ability to make a living off the land and produce food at risk.

But for folks devastated by Hurricane Sandy or picking up the pieces from last year's wildfires, the ongoing political debate over climate change is even more frustrating. They know action is needed. They're calling for change. The only question is when we are going to listen.

Jon Tester is the junior Senator from Montana. He and his wife, Sharla, still farm the 1,800 acres his grandparents homesteaded in 1912.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. KING). The majority leader.

Mr. REID. Mr. President, before my friend leaves the floor, I appreciate very much him doing his utmost to keep our eye on the problem we have facing this country. We have no more important issue in the world than this issue, period. So I appreciate very much the Senator from Rhode Island keeping us focused on this.

Mr. WHITEHOUSE. I thank the majority leader.

CLOTURE MOTION

Mr. REID. Mr. President, I have a cloture motion at the desk.

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

The legislative clerk read as follows:

CLOTURE MOTION

We, the undersigned Senators, in accordance with the provisions of rule XXII of the Standing Rules of the Senate, hereby move to bring to a close debate on S. 954, a bill to reauthorize agricultural programs through 2018.

Harry Reid, Debbie Stabenow, Amy Klobuchar, Christopher A. Coons, Sherrod Brown, Tom Harkin, Benjamin L. Cardin, Heidi Heitkamp, Patrick J. Leahy, Michael F. Bennet, Joe Donnelly, Al Franken, Max Baucus, Patty Murray, Tim Johnson, Mark Udall, Jon Tester.

UNANIMOUS CONSENT AGREEMENT—S. 1003 AND S. 953

CLOTURE MOTIONS

Mr. REID. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that it be considered as if the following motions to proceed were made: motion to proceed to Calendar No. 76, S. 1003, and motion to proceed to Calendar No. 74, S. 953; further, that the cloture motions, which are at the desk, be reported in the order the motions were considered made; finally, that the mandatory quorum required under rule XXII be waived for these cloture motions and the cloture motion for S. 954.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection?

Without objection, it is so ordered.

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

The legislative clerk read as follows:

CLOTURE MOTION

We, the undersigned Senators, in accordance with the provisions of rule XXII of the Standing Rules of the Senate, do hereby move to bring to a close debate on the motion to proceed to S. 1003, a bill to amend the Higher Education Act of 1965 to reset interest rates for new student loans.

Mitch McConnell, John Cornyn, Lamar Alexander, Kelly Ayotte, David Vitter, Thad Cochran, Orrin G. Hatch, John Thune, Rob Portman, Lisa Murkowski, Michael B. Enzi, John Barrasso, John McCain, Roger F. Wicker, Roy Blunt, Johnny Isakson, Daniel Coats.

CLOTURE MOTION

We, the undersigned Senators, in accordance with the provisions of rule XXII of the Standing Rules of the Senate, hereby move to bring to a close debate on the motion to proceed to Calendar No. 74, S. 953, a bill to

amend the Higher Education Act of 1965 to extend the reduced interest rate for undergraduate Federal Direct Stafford Loans, to modify required distribution rules for pensions plans, to limit earnings stripping by expatriated entities, to provide for modifications related to the Oil Spill Liability Trust Fund, and for other purposes.

Harry Reid, Jack Reed, Tom Harkin, Richard J. Durbin, Patty Murray, Benjamin L. Cardin, Al Franken, Amy Klobuchar, Jeff Merkley, Jon Tester, Sherrod Brown, Barbara A. Mikulski, Robert P. Casey, Jr., Elizabeth Warren, Charles E. Schumer, Sheldon Whitehouse, Barbara Boxer.

Mr. REID. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that at 10 a.m. on Thursday, June 6, the Senate proceed to vote on the motion to invoke cloture on S. 954; that upon the conclusion of that vote and notwithstanding cloture having been invoked, if invoked, the Senate then proceed to vote on the motion to invoke cloture on the motion to proceed to Calendar No. 76, S. 1003; that upon the conclusion of the vote and notwithstanding cloture having been invoked, if invoked, the Senate proceed to vote on the motion to invoke cloture on the motion to proceed to Calendar No. 74, S. 953; that upon the conclusion of the vote and notwithstanding cloture having been invoked, if invoked, the Senate resume consideration of S. 954, postcloture, if cloture was invoked on the bill; that upon disposition of S. 954, if cloture had been invoked on one of the motions to proceed, the Senate then resume that motion to proceed postcloture; further, if cloture was invoked on both motions to proceed, the Senate consider the motions, postcloture, in the order in which cloture was invoked; finally, if the motion to proceed to S. 1003 is agreed to, and notwithstanding cloture having been invoked on the other motion to proceed to S. 953, the Senate resume the following motion to proceed, postcloture, upon disposition of S. 1003.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection?

Without objection, it is so ordered.

MORNING BUSINESS

Mr. REID. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate 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.

TRIBUTE TO KRY'S BART

Mr. REID. Mr. President, I rise today to recognize the leadership of Krys Bart, the president and CEO of the Reno-Tahoe Airport Authority. Krys has worked at the airport authority for 14 years and transformed the airport into a modern facility that welcomes visitors from across the United States and the world to Northern Nevada.

Krys arrived in Northern Nevada in 1998 at a turning point for the airport.