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Senate

The Senate met at 10:30 a.m., and was called to order by the Honorable HEIDI HEITKAMP, a Senator from the State of North Dakota.

PRAYER

The Chaplain, Dr. Barry C. Black, offered the following prayer:

Let us pray.

O God, who remains our shelter in the time of storms, we are helpless without Your power. Unless You empower our lawmakers, they can see the ideal but not reach it. They can know the right but not do it. They can comprehend their duty but not perform it. They can seek the truth but not fully find it.

Dear God, help our lawmakers. Enlighten their minds, purify their hearts, and strengthen their wills, enabling them to pass beyond guessing to knowing, beyond doubting to certainty, beyond resolving to doing, and beyond intention to action.

We pray in Your sacred Name. Amen.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The Presiding Officer led the Pledge of Allegiance, as follows:

I pledge allegiance to the Flag of the United States of America, and to the Republic for which it stands, one nation under God, indivisible, with liberty and justice for all.

APPOINTMENT OF ACTING PRESIDENT PRO TEMPORE

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will please read a communication to the Senate from the President pro tempore (Mr. LEAHY).

The legislative clerk read the following letter:

U.S. SENATE,
PRESIDENT PRO TEMPORE,
Washington, DC, October 2, 2013.

To the Senate:

Under the provisions of rule I, paragraph 3, of the Standing Rules of the Senate, I hereby appoint the Honorable HEIDI HEITKAMP, a

Senator from the State of North Dakota, to perform the duties of the Chair.

PATRICK J. LEAHY,
President pro tempore.

Ms. HEITKAMP thereupon assumed the chair as Acting President pro tempore.

RECOGNITION OF THE MAJORITY LEADER

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The majority leader is recognized.

SCHEDULE

Mr. REID. Madam President, following my remarks and those of Senator MCCONNELL, the Senate will be in a period of morning business for debate until noon, with the time equally divided and controlled, with Senators permitted to speak for up to 10 minutes each.

CONTINUING APPROPRIATIONS

Mr. REID. Madam President, it is obvious when you check the press that the Republicans have had a very, very bad week. On the same day that Democrats in Congress delivered quality affordable health insurance to tens of millions more Americans, the Republican Congress delivered this Nation a government shutdown.

Thanks to the Affordable Care Act, yesterday millions of Americans went on line to shop for affordable insurance policies in the new marketplace exchanges. Some compare that to when Google went on line and the many problems that Google had because they had no idea people were so interested in Google. There were some problems they had. Of course, now we know how people feel about Google.

The same is going to happen with this Affordable Care Act. People have until December to sign up. They are on again today as they were yesterday

signing up. But thanks to the Republican government shutdown, hundreds of thousands of public servants were sent home without pay. Thanks to the Republican shutdown, tourists lined up outside Red Rock Canyon outside Las Vegas where more than 1 million people a year go. But they did not go there yesterday. There were gates. They could not get in.

Thanks to the Republican government shutdown, a group of World War II veterans who traveled from Iowa and Mississippi had to break down barricades to visit the Washington, DC, memorial in their honor, some of them in wheelchairs.

Thanks to the Republican government shutdown, 200 very sick patients, including 30 children, were turned away from the National Institutes of Health clinic that offers lifesaving—that is an understatement—lifesaving treatment. Most of the children turned away are suffering from some type of cancer.

I read that modern-day anarchists in the House have been celebrating the shutdown—celebrating the shutdown. They can barely contain their glee at having realized a 2010 campaign promise to halt the basic functions of government. Here is what the tea party spokesperson said. She is their spokesperson, MICHELE BACHMANN. Remember, she is the woman that ran for President and was the leading contender for about 4 hours or whatever it was. But anyway, she loves to talk. Here is what she said yesterday, “It’s exactly what we wanted, and we got it.” You cannot make up stuff like that. Can you imagine anyone saying that when we have babies turned away who are coming for lifesaving treatment? “It’s exactly what we wanted, and we got it.”

It is time for my Republican colleagues to do a gut check. Republicans in the House have proposed one cockamamie, can’t-pass idea after another the last few days: defund

• This “bullet” symbol identifies statements or insertions which are not spoken by a Member of the Senate on the floor.



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ObamaCare, delay ObamaCare, deny preventive health. They tried that before. They tried it again. They were not satisfied until they said: Now, let's also go after women—things as basic as contraceptives—or else we will shut the government down. That is what they said.

They are obsessed with ObamaCare. Now they have gotten their way. They have shut down the government. As BACHMANN said, "It's exactly what we wanted, and we got it." But none of their wacky ideas are any closer to becoming law. Instead of reading the writing on the wall, House Republicans have turned to a new bad idea, to cherry-pick a few parts of government that they like and reopen only those parts.

Credit for this idea goes, I am told, to the junior Senator from Texas. He goes over to the House and tells them what they should do. He, along with people like BACHMANN, are tea party, they are anarchists. They are happy. Listen, I have come here, and I have talked about how happy they are in hurting government. We now have them speaking out openly. "It's exactly what we wanted, and we got it."

But I do have a little bit of advice for my Republican colleagues in the House. When your latest brilliant idea came from the same person who proposed the "dumbest idea ever" according to one of his own Senate Republicans here, I would think it is a sign you are on the wrong track. It is time for Republicans to stop throwing one crazy idea after another at the wall in hopes that something sticks. Nothing has stuck.

There has been a sensible plan to reopen the government right in front of House Republicans all along: A clean 6-week resolution that opens government today. We passed it in the Senate last week. I believe reasonable Republicans—I hope—are desperately looking for a way out. That is what all of the newspapers said today, all of the news reports. Each day a couple more come forward. I do not blame them for looking for a way out.

These piecemeal bills are not a way out. The Obama administration already promised to veto them. So they obviously are not the answer. Reopening only parts of government that they like is not a responsible solution. The Senate already has a plan to reopen the government while we work out our budget differences—open the government based on the resolution we passed last week.

If Republicans really want to reopen the government, they should just go ahead and reopen the government. They have had that power all along. Once they do that, we will be happy to appoint conferees, work out long-term budget priorities with the House. Let's go to conference. We talked about it. PATTY MURRAY has been here 18 times to talk about it.

We should not be fighting over a 6-week stopgap budget bill. We should be working out our long-term fiscal

issues. Americans are tired of this type of knockdown, drag-out debt fight, which costs our economy billions of dollars. The way to put our Nation on sound fiscal footing is to set sensible policies through regular order in the legislative process, not to extort concessions through dangerous hostage taking.

First, Republicans must reopen the government. The next move is to go to conference and set our minds on reaching a reasonable compromise. Right now, Republicans led by JOHN BOEHNER are the only thing standing between Congress and compromise. I would suggest he stop taking advice from BACHMANN and CRUZ.

Unfortunately, it seems that some in the Republican conference are simply too mad at me personally, too obsessed with getting me personally to back down from doing what most of America believes is right. The National Review said yesterday that I was "the villain of villains." JOHN BOEHNER could reopen the government if he wanted to, but he is too obsessed with beating the villain of villains, and obviously too afraid of the tea party to do the right thing for the country.

When I read this yesterday, I said: Villain. Huh. Be careful of the words you choose. Gee, no one likes to be called a villain. So I looked it up in the dictionary. Uncouth person. Well, I acknowledge, I probably was not born in a place that most people would like to be born in. I was not raised the way most people like to be raised. But I would hope over the years that I am not uncouth. I have tried my best to become part of mainstream society.

The other definition is I am a scoundrel or a criminal. Well, I am not a criminal. I am not a scoundrel. So they better get a different definition for me. In spite of being the villain of villains, I have some advice and a suggestion. I really do believe there are reasonable Republicans in Congress. They have to, as I said, do a gut check and understand who they represent—understand that America is waiting for them to do the right thing. I know they believe in public service. But they have to understand why public service is important. I urge them to think about 30 babies—babies, little kids, who yesterday were brought by their parents to Washington, DC, for hope—hope that their little babies and children are not going to die, that they can get lifesaving treatment. They were turned away. So I urge them to do the right thing. I urge them to join us to reopen the Federal Government.

RECOGNITION OF THE MINORITY LEADER.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The Republican leader is recognized.

CONTINUING APPROPRIATIONS

Mr. McCONNELL. Madam President, if it was not clear earlier this week

why Republicans were asking to delay ObamaCare, it should be pretty clear to everybody this morning. The rollout of this thing made a trip to the DMV look like a good time. The word of the day was "glitch." You could probably explain one or two of these glitches away, maybe three, but not glitches in Nebraska, Maryland, Florida, Wisconsin, Illinois, and in Kentucky—not glitches all across the country.

Kentuckians who tried to log in yesterday got a message that read "server error." Let me translate that. It did not work. I mean, if the plural of anecdote is data, it seems to me the plural of glitch has to be systemic failure. This is the law that Washington Democrats were so adamant about unveiling yesterday, they were willing to shut down the government over it.

Instead of agreeing to a couple of commonsense proposals related to this law, they stuck to their absolutist position: 100 percent of ObamaCare when and how they want it, no matter what. This, of course, unless the President thinks you are one of the chosen few who deserve a special break.

So basically Washington Democrats shut down the government because they did not think middle-class Americans deserve the same kind of treatment as their employers, and because they did not think Congress should have to follow the same rules on ObamaCare exchanges as everybody else.

These were fair things to ask for. They were reasonable. If the Democrats who run Washington could have brought themselves to that sensible position, they would have voted to keep the government open. But in the end, they got their shutdown, which they apparently think will help them politically. They held on to their absolutist position on ObamaCare regardless of the consequences for American families.

Two days into this thing they still refuse to budge. The President reiterated again yesterday he is not interested in talking. The majority leader made it clear he is not interested in talking either. He shot down just about every attempt to engage in serious discussions with the House or with any one else for that matter.

Look, this week Washington Democrats had a choice: Defend basic principles of fairness when it comes to ObamaCare or shut down the government. They chose the latter. It was the wrong decision, in my view. It is time for them to start finding solutions, to start talking, and put the interests of their constituents ahead of the interests of their party.

RESERVATION OF LEADER TIME

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

MORNING BUSINESS

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Under the previous order, the Senate will be in a period of morning business for debate until 12 noon, with the time equally divided and controlled between the two leaders or their designees, with Senators permitted to speak therein for up to 10 minutes each.

CONTINUING APPROPRIATIONS

Mr. DURBIN. Madam President, there were two headlines in most of the major newspapers across the United States this morning. I saw it in *Financial Times* as well as the *Wall Street Journal*. The headlines noted: "Americans flock to insurance exchanges."

It was the first day when we had the rollout of the Web site where uninsured Americans had an opportunity to shop—real competition, a variety of plans. Illinois has 54 choices for uninsured people. This is a dream come true. Most of these people have lived their entire lives either without health insurance or with no choice, a take-it-or-leave-it policy that may be worthless when they need it. These are situations where many of them never once in their lives were able to be insured when it came to health insurance. There were a lot of reasons for it. Some of them had jobs that paid so little, offered no benefits, and they couldn't afford to buy health insurance. Some of them had preexisting conditions or perhaps a history of asthma in their family, diabetes, cancer survivors. They couldn't buy health insurance if they wanted to. It wasn't even offered.

Yesterday was different. October 1 was different as 2.8 million Americans came on the first day to this Web site to go shopping for health insurance. What a relief it must have been.

The Chicago papers told the story of a man who had just about given up hope because he had a child with a mental illness and because of that he could never buy health insurance. He was shopping yesterday. He was disappointed. He wanted to sign up yesterday, but so many people came to this Web site the first day that it wasn't able to meet all of the needs of the people who were shopping, or wanted to.

It will. There will be an opportunity. I am sure it will be soon.

I can't get over when I hear the Republican leader come to the floor and, with barely disguised glee, talk about the first day's problems with the Affordable Care Act. There is no question that many Republicans are not only praying for the Affordable Care Act to fail, they are betting on it.

None of them voted for it, not one. Not a single Republican voted for it. They are frightened—frightened at what is to come when the verdict of history comes down on this program. I think I know what the verdict will be. There will be some bumps in the road, glitches, maybe, some problems with

the Web site. But in the end the American people understand the fundamental fairness of the Affordable Care Act; the fundamental fairness that said, yes, we have a right as Americans to health care protection. I believe we do and we should.

I have lived the life, a good one, but I had a moment in that life when I had no health insurance. I was a brandnew father with a brandnew baby with medical challenges and no health insurance. I have never felt more helpless in my life, praying that my little girl would get the best when I didn't have health insurance.

Multiply that times 40 million uninsured Americans and understand what is at stake. Those on the other side who are opposed to affordable care don't want to extend the helping hand of health insurance to those who have been denied for years. They don't have anything to replace it with. Stick with the current free market system.

Forty million Americans have been left behind with this current system. That is why I supported the Affordable Care Act. This is why the President is fighting for the Affordable Care Act. This is why we have to continue to fight every single day to make sure it is not defunded, as the Republicans tried to do only a few days ago, to make sure the coverage for individuals is not delayed as the Republicans tried to do only a few days ago.

No, we have to fight to make sure Americans have this chance. There is no turning back when it comes to offering health insurance to families who desperately need it.

What are the Republicans prepared to bet on this wager to end the Affordable Care Act and health care reform? They are willing to bet the Federal Government. They are willing to shut it down over the Affordable Care Act.

HARRY REID, our Democratic leader, told the story that was reported in the *Wall Street Journal* that the National Institutes of Health—not far from here, in the near suburbs of Maryland and which is a beacon of hope—this is where some of the most important medical research in the world is taking place. The head of NIH, Dr. Francis Collins, may be one of the most extraordinary people who has ever been involved in public service. He was head of the National Genome Project. They said it would probably take him 5, 6, or 8 years. He was so good and had so much talent that he did it in a very brief period of time—mapping the human genome. In doing so, he started opening doors to understanding, knowledge, and finding cures. He took that back to the NIH and they apply it every single day to save lives and find cures.

For the second day in a row, three-quarters of the scientists, doctors, and researchers at NIH sit at home, unable to engage in this critically important research, unable to find the new drugs, new surgeries, new medical devices, and the new procedures to save lives.

That is part of the Republican government shutdown. Oh, they may congratulate themselves on finally bringing this government to its knees, but they have to take responsibility for what they have done as well. They have shut down the National Institutes of Health. They have shut down medical research. It is worse because the toughest medical cases in America end up at the doorsteps of NIH. These are the most challenging medical conditions, families and people who have just about given up hope and think there is one last place to go, NIH, the very best.

Yesterday Dr. Francis Collins announced that 200 people who would have started clinical trials this week at the NIH were turned away because of the government shutdown. Within that population of 200, 30 were children, most of them cancer victims. Imagine for a moment that you are the mother or father of a child diagnosed with cancer and have one last hope, the National Institutes of Health. It may be a great personal sacrifice for you and your family to pick up and come out here, but you are going to do it. It is your baby. Then when you arrive at the door of the NIH there is a sign that says: This agency is closed.

Why is it closed? Some national emergency, some disaster, some crisis? No. It was a manufactured political temper tantrum coming from the tea party, Speaker BOEHNER, and those who believe this is the right way to go.

Excuse me if this example is so stark, but I haven't even begun to go into the details. I would invite any family who has been a victim of this government shutdown at NIH or any other medical facility, come to my Facebook page, my Twitter account. Send me a message and tell me your story. I wish to come to the floor and tell that story too.

People shouldn't disappear into the shadows as we make all this noise over this political debate. They ought to be front and center. Please share your story if you wish. I know it is a matter of privacy and confidentiality. If you don't want to, I certainly understand.

This is what it has come down to. Yesterday, for example, in the House they said: Oh, we are going to open the Veterans' Administration. Senator CRUZ has made a decision he is going to pick and choose the agencies to reopen. We will start with the Veterans' Administration. In other words, as former Speaker PELOSI said, they are going to release one hostage at a time when it comes to our Federal Government.

But what Senator CRUZ and the tea party Republicans failed to acknowledge is of the 800,000 Federal employees who have been furloughed, over 500,000 are veterans. They are out of work. If they care about the veterans, put this government back to work, put 500,000 of our veterans back to work. Incidentally, one out of four of them is disabled, disabled veterans put off the payroll and furloughed. There is no

promise they will ever be paid because of this tea party government shutdown.

We have serious challenges facing America, but we need to reopen this government now. Now. There are no excuses. Speaker BOEHNER sits there with a bill that he could bring before the House by 11 o'clock this morning. They could vote on it and the word would go out before noon that the government is reopened. That is how quickly he can act. It is there, but he won't call it for a vote.

What is he afraid of? Why won't he call this measure for a vote before the House? He knows it will pass because every Democrat will vote for it and moderate Republicans will step up and vote for it.

The only hope we have to end this tea party Republican crisis is if moderate Republicans will step forward now and say we are not part of this strategy. We want this government open. We are prepared to face all the challenges that follow, but we are not going to move forward at the expense of patients coming to the National Institutes of Health.

This is only one example. There are many more just like it.

I would say this in closing. Once again the Republican leaders come to the floor and mention the fact that Members of Congress will be in the insurance exchanges, the same insurance changes that were advertised yesterday for the first time. To give a moment of reflection in history, we are in the insurance exchanges because of an amendment offered by a Republican Senator, Senator GRASSLEY. This is an amendment which was part of the Affordable Care Act, which passed. We will be buying insurance, the same kinds of policies, exactly the same kinds of policies offered to all Americans on the exchanges. There are no special favors for Members of Congress.

Now we hear an objection from Senator MCCONNELL to the employer's contribution for our staff and for Members of Congress. Over half of the American people get their health insurance through their place of employment. Virtually all of them have employer contributions that help them pay their monthly premiums. The same thing is true for Federal employees. The same thing is true for Members of Congress. The same thing will be true when it comes to the insurance exchanges. There is no special treatment of Members of Congress. The notion that we can't have an employer's contribution when it comes to the insurance exchanges is flatout wrong. A business with fewer than 50 employees, for example, can send their employees to the exchanges and continue to contribute to their premiums. It is already accepted under law so there is no special treatment in this. It is only another diversion.

Trying to find ways to create chaos and uncertainty when it comes to the Affordable Care Act is the message of

the Republican Party. Unfortunately, it is being delivered at the expense of 800,000 furloughed Federal employees, the services this government offers, and 200 people turned away this week for clinical trials at the National Institutes of Health.

I yield the floor.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The Republican whip.

Mr. CORNYN. Madam President, I listened with great interest to the comments of the distinguished deputy Democratic majority leader.

I was reminded of a radio commentator, who perhaps is not remembered as frequently now, but when I grew up, he had radio show where when he started out he would say: And now for the rest of the story.

I wish to offer the rest of the story. I listened as Senator DURBIN spoke about the fact that the National Institutes of Health is not open for business. The good news is that Republicans and Democrats both agree that we should reopen the National Institutes of Health. In fact, it is my understanding that the House of Representatives will pass a bill perhaps as early as today and send it over to the Senate.

I hope Senator REID, unlike over the last few days where he has killed every reasonable offer by the House of Representatives, will reconsider and he will not kill that funding for the National Institutes of Health during this partial government shutdown.

There are some other areas where I think we could work together. Senator REID knew that Republicans were going to come to the floor and try to make sure that our uniformed military continued to get their full pay on time during this impasse of Congress. Like the good politician he is, he actually beat us to the punch. He came down here first and made the same offer. The good news is there was bipartisan support for funding our troops in full, our uniformed military, on a timely basis during this impasse.

This has been sort of a surreal experience in so many ways because my friends on the other side of the aisle have been making what I consider to be some very strange arguments. The argument they have been making is that President Obama's health care law, the Affordable Care Act, otherwise known as ObamaCare, is untouchable, and that our efforts to modify it in any way are illegitimate. Their favorite word is "extreme" or the product of some effort by the tea party Republicans or some other disparaging connotation.

I am not sure exactly how to respond except to say this: If ObamaCare is untouchable, if the Obama administration is perfect, if we can't change one word and one sentence about ObamaCare, then you need to tell the Obama administration. Since 2010, the administration has granted more than 1,000 different waivers to its friends and political allies. It suspended all work on a large portion of ObamaCare known as

the CLASS Act. It has delayed ObamaCare's basic health program and delayed the employer mandate. When we tried to delay the individual mandate so average Americans get the same sort of consideration from this administration that employers get, that businesses get, we were told this is an unreasonable request. Senator REID tabled that, in essence killing that provision rather than taking it up and embracing it and saying: You know what. If employers get a break for 1 year, then let's give average Americans a break.

The Obama administration has likewise delayed the eligibility verification for the exchanges. It started yesterday. In other words, you can apply for one of these insurance exchanges, but you don't have to prove what your income is. If there is a bigger open invitation for fraud, I am not aware of what it might be. But that is what the Obama administration has done, delayed the eligibility verification for the Obama exchanges, and they have delayed the cap on out-of-pocket expenses.

In short, the Obama administration has, by its very actions, demonstrated that ObamaCare is not perfect. The administration itself, by its own actions, has acknowledged ObamaCare is not ready for prime time.

This became painfully obvious to millions of Americans yesterday when the ObamaCare exchanges encountered widespread problems on its first day of operation. The President calls these glitches—glitches, a nice poll-tested, fairly benign-sounding word. But these were systemic failures of the ObamaCare exchanges yesterday when they came online—obviously, not ready for prime time.

Meanwhile, there have been other changes in this perfect, inviolable, can't-change-a-word ObamaCare. While the Supreme Court, we certainly acknowledge, has upheld major portions of ObamaCare, it is important to remember it declared a major piece of the law—the compulsory expansion of Medicaid—as unconstitutional. Unconstitutional: incompatible with our fundamental law of the land. Does that sound like a law that is perfect, can't be changed?

Let me give another example. During the ObamaCare debate, Democrats voted on a party-line vote to impose a medical device tax on medical device manufacturers. It is not based on their income, it is based on their gross receipts or how much money comes in the door, before they even deduct their cost of doing business and their overhead. So they would actually have to pay taxes without it generating any net income because of the nature of this tax. This is a job-killing tax.

I have had constituents come into my office and say: We have operations in Costa Rica, so we are going to have to move jobs we would create in Dallas to Costa Rica because of this job-killing medical device tax. You know what. Medical devices are some of the

most innovative parts of our health care system. How better to discourage medical innovation and lifesaving discoveries and manufacturing than to impose this gross receipts tax on medical devices.

That is not just my opinion. The last time we had a debate on the budget resolution, 79 Senators voted against the medical device tax because they realized it was a terrible mistake in this law we are told today, yesterday, and the day before is perfect in every way, wouldn't change a thing. But Senate Democrats are now lining up to repeal the medical device tax. Somehow, in a schizophrenia I don't quite understand, other Democrats are saying an attempt to do that would represent partisan extremism. Which is it? I think the American people know.

I am not sure exactly how our friends on the other side of the aisle define extremism, but I would submit that very few extreme ideas gain the support of 79 Senators in the Senate on a bipartisan basis. How is it extreme to delay ObamaCare's individual mandate when the administration has unilaterally done the same thing for businesses? How is it extreme to ask Members of Congress to live by the same laws that apply to everyone else?

The majority leader, Senator REID, tabled two amendments to the continuing resolution that would change this special carve-out for Congress that would provide a delay of the individual mandate for average Americans, such as the administration has already done for businesses, and we are told that is extreme; that somehow we are the ones who caused the government shutdown.

I am absolutely convinced President Obama and HARRY REID think this shutdown is the best thing that ever happened to them politically in recent memory. So rather than come out and tell sympathetic stories about what is happening at NIH, let's work together to mitigate some of the hardship and inconvenience. Let's talk about working through this impasse. Why can't we get the President to do what he reportedly intended to do in the first place, which is to convene a meeting at the White House with Republicans and Democrats to work through this? They are not just refusing to negotiate big compromises, they are refusing any compromise. It is my way or the highway.

They will not even agree to keep the war memorials open for our Honor Flights coming to Washington, DC. I would urge the majority leader and President Obama to join with us in passing a bill today that would keep our war memorials open.

My father was a World War II veteran. He is dead now, but he was a B-17 pilot in World War II. On his 26th bombing mission, he was shot down and captured as a prisoner of war. My father-in-law landed on Utah Beach the second day of the Normandy invasion. He is 95 years old now. His mind is still sharp, his body not quite what it used

to be. He would love nothing better than to come to Washington, DC, on one of these Honor Flights. Unfortunately, his health will not allow him to do it.

The chairman of the Honor Flight Network, James McLaughlin, has said:

It is beyond belief that those deserving men and women who have waited decades to see their memorial and were selected for this trip of a lifetime, to discover they may not be able to see their memorial.

For many of them, this may be the last time they get during their lifetime. I would ask that the President cancel his trip to Asia—he is leaving on Saturday—to overrule Senator REID and convene that meeting at the White House and come together to try and work through some of these differences.

We can fund NIH. We could do it today if Senator REID and President Obama would allow it. But, no, instead, we are told it is my way or the highway. We actually like this shutdown, they are saying to themselves, because they think they are winning politically. But they are not winning politically when the American people are the net losers.

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

Mr. SCHUMER. My good friend, whom I saw in the gym this morning, sometimes stretches credulity. Who shut down the government? Was it HARRY REID? No. He kept passing messages to keep the government going. Was it Barack Obama? No. We all know who it was. It was the small band of tea party people in the House. It was his junior colleague in the Senate, TED CRUZ, who had the idea of shutting down the government.

As Leader REID said yesterday, we are not in 1984. Truth has some degree of credulity. For my colleague from Texas to get up and say: HARRY REID and Barack Obama open the government, when his junior colleague led the charge to shut it down, when the cries of the tea party are "shut it down," and we are desperately trying to keep it open makes no sense and it is not going to wash.

One of the amazing things about our politics is how rhetoric has become so detached from reality, and then we have talk radio and some of the networks, FOX News, that repeat it. I saw a cartoon in the New York Post yesterday saying that Senators and Congressmen are exempt from ObamaCare. That is just not true. We are part of ObamaCare, and we will join the exchange—I will and so will my colleagues—because that is what they have to do.

But that doesn't even matter. The hard right is so angry at ObamaCare and, frankly, at President Obama and the fact he just trounced them in 2012 in an election that was run on their issues. They are so angry and white hot that their rhetoric just becomes totally detached from reality and totally detached from the truth.

I feel badly for the veterans who couldn't get to the memorial. But why was the government shut down? Because Speaker BOEHNER and the House wouldn't keep it open. Senator CORNYN and many other Republicans paved the way for us to open the government with a vote to allow us to go forward. That got 25 Republicans, even though TED CRUZ, his junior colleague, was urging him not to vote that way. That was the right vote. We know that. He knew, Senator CORNYN did, to his credit, that shutting down the government was bad. So on the one procedural vote that mattered, where he could have had the Senate say shut down the government, he voted the other way.

The real onus here is on Speaker BOEHNER. The entire focus of this debate should be on Speaker BOEHNER. Some might say it should be on Mr. CRUZ, the Senator from Texas. Some might say it should be on the 30 or 40 hard-line tea party people in the House. But in my view it is the Speaker of the House who has the responsibility not to listen to a small faction of his party when so much is at stake. Instead, Speaker BOEHNER seems to be listening to the junior Senator from Texas. The junior Senator from Texas has become the de facto Speaker of the House. If he says jump, the House jumps.

The junior Senator wanted the House to embark on a crusade to defund ObamaCare, so the Speaker, Speaker BOEHNER, did it. The junior Senator from Texas told the House to delay ObamaCare for 1 year, so the Speaker, Speaker BOEHNER, did it. Now this junior Senator from Texas is telling the House to pass piecemeal bills in a cynical attempt to pit important programs against each other, and now the Speaker is trying to do just that.

Senator CRUZ has driven Speaker BOEHNER to pit kids who should be enrolled in Head Start against kids who should be enrolled in cancer trials. He has driven the Speaker to pick families who want to visit the Statue of Liberty against families who own a small business and need help from the SBA. He has pitted research and cancer against health care for our veterans.

It is a cynical strategy. Similar to all the others they have sent us and that have failed, as these will fail today, it has one purpose: not to get anything done but to try and wiggle out of this view that they have shut down the government. Senator CORNYN's rhetoric will not work. It is too far detached from reality.

So Speaker BOEHNER tries to come up with these gizmos, these gimmicks, these legislative ploys to say: Hey, I am trying to do something. At the same time he is in the vice grip of the tea party members of the House who are taking their orders from the junior Senator from Texas.

There is a simple way to open the government, I would say to my friend—and he is my friend, Senator CORNYN of Texas—and my other colleagues on the Republican side in the House.

There is a bill sitting there waiting for a vote. It will open NIH, it will open the Veterans' Administration, it will open the World War II memorial, it will open the Statue of Liberty so the guy with the little sandwich shop right by the Statue of Liberty can get some business back. Make no mistake about it: This crisis doesn't just hurt the Federal Government. It doesn't even just hurt 800,000 families who aren't getting the paychecks on which they depend. This is not abstract. It hurts lots of private sector people as well, whether they be construction workers building a road using Federal dollars or the veteran waiting for that disability claim to come through or the guy with the sandwich shop next to the closed Statue of Liberty who is making those sandwiches. It is not abstract. I get a little resentful when I hear my colleagues talk about the Federal Government as if it is some big ogre; shut it down.

If you watched Rachel Maddow the other night, she had a variety of tea party congressmen who were running for the Congress in 2010 who said they were going to shut the government down. I think it was Congressman MULVANEY of South Carolina who said: When I get to Congress, I am going to shut the government down. And the tea party audience cheered and said "shut it down" before they even had a plan because they hate the Federal Government so much. That is the goal, to shut it down. ObamaCare is an excuse.

Mainstream Republicans know that shutting the government down is a bad thing and know that they are indeed paying a political price. So Speaker BOEHNER should follow the majority and stop being scared of the tea party. He will face them down easily in a challenge for Speaker. Speaker BOEHNER knows, as the "National Review" said this morning, that more than 100 House Republicans would vote for our bill to reopen the government if he put it on the floor. Instead, Republicans are wasting time on political stunts in asking to go to conference on a short-term CR.

The Republicans have this exactly backward. They say: Let's talk, and then maybe we will open the government. They ought to say: We will open the government, and then we can talk. If Republicans would simply switch all the lights back on, allow hundreds of thousands of furloughed Federal employees to go back to work, allow cancer research to continue, veterans to get their disability claims, kids to go back into Head Start, we could have a discussion about the budget, which they rejected 18 times.

Madam President, I yield the floor.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore, The Senator from Washington.

Mrs. MURRAY. Madam President, I woke up this morning feeling like I think most Americans feel today—pretty disappointed in the antics of Washington, DC.

As my colleague from New York just pointed out, we all know why we are

here: Speaker BOEHNER and the Republicans in the House demanded a ransom in order to keep our government open, and their ransom was to repeal a law they do not support—ObamaCare. They made it very clear that the government was going to shut down. My constituents in Washington State who were supposed to go to work today—thousands of them—aren't going to get their paychecks because of that ransom. They made it very clear that they were not going to open the government over a policy about which they care passionately.

I have to say that I started my morning this morning talking to a number of businesspeople involved in the construction industry in the State of Washington. They told me that this uncertainty, this crisis, this shutdown of government is impacting their small businesses at home in the State of Washington because who is going to sign a contract to build something new when it is so unclear where our economy is going to be as a result of this shutdown and the looming debt ceiling crisis. So they are seeing a real retraction of their own businesses right now—not because of the government funding of a program or anything else that is ongoing or in dispute but because of this shutdown today.

Just a few minutes ago, on the other end of a spectrum, I talked to some moms and dads in Head Start from my home State of Washington. A young mom from Bremerton, WA, who has a 2-year-old daughter, told us that a few years ago she was on the streets, homeless, a victim of an abusive partner, and because of Head Start and the wraparound services they provide, they found her a place to stay and got her and her child involved in early childhood education. Because of that support and an early Head Start program, now 2 years later she is back at school working on her degree, her daughter is doing well, and she is back on track.

Thousands of moms and dads such as her exist across the country today, with a helping hand at the right moment from the right program. But because of sequestration and now because of the government shutdown, we are telling moms and dads such as her: Sorry, we are not going to be there for you.

I happen to be a very passionate advocate for early childhood education. I was a former preschool teacher. I am using my skills as a preschool teacher right now. I think all of our colleagues could learn a lot from those kinds of skills. No bullying; it is my turn to talk; be reasonable; teach our children to play well in the sandbox. Those are lessons we teach in preschool. I think we could all learn from that.

I think about that, and I think about those Head Start kids and the children whom I taught before and who are not being taught now because of the sequestration. What lesson are we giving them—that if I don't get my way right now about a bill I fought against and

voted against and an election was run and won on, but I lost, and I am so mad that I am not going to let you have anything else because I am just so entrenched in that. That is not a lesson we should teach our kids.

Let's look at the other side of that argument. What if I came out here and said: I am so passionate about funding early childhood education because I know the research and what a difference it makes and I know what that investment will do for our country not just for today but for 10 or 20 years, and if I don't get my way to make sure every child in this country has that start, this government is going to shut down. That is not the way we run a country. I adamantly and passionately fight for any cause I believe in. Any legislator here can. But the way you get your way isn't to hold the country hostage.

We have a country that is counting on us to be responsible adults and to come to the table and work out our disagreements between each other. And they are large, there is no doubt about that, but you don't do it by hurting every family, every neighborhood, every community, every part of this country by holding this country hostage.

We have a responsibility. It is to pass a clean continuing resolution. It is to get our government working again. It is to tell people they are going to get their paychecks. We are going to responsibly do that, and then we, as Members of Congress, are going to take our differences to a negotiating table and hammer them out. I may want \$1 million for something. My House counterparts may say no. We may meet in the middle. I may say: I didn't get my way; OK, you got yours. That is what you do in a conference committee. You don't do it by holding your country hostage.

So we say to Speaker BOEHNER today: Open the government. Let everybody go back to work. Don't hold our economy hostage. And we will then sit down with you and work out our disagreements, as the Presiding Officer knows we have asked 18 times now to do and have been told, no, we are not going to let you go to that negotiating table, we are not going to let you talk—by the same people who want this government shutdown.

I find myself in a very odd place where we have a country that is closed for business. We are sending a very bad message and lesson to the children of this country that we can't work and play well together, that we can't even disagree together in an admirable way. And we are doing it while people are getting hurt.

Speaker BOEHNER, open the country again, open our economy again and agree to work out our differences the way responsible adults should do.

My understanding is, after trying all kinds of different ways to appease some of his Members with all kinds of different proposals, the latest proposal is

to send us over piecemeal pieces of legislation. Well, OK. We feel bad about the veterans—and we all do. I am the biggest veterans advocate in here. We will take care of them now. And, oh gosh, some of our constituents are mad because they have flown out here and the national museums aren't open, so we will open those, and on and on, whatever the cause of the day is. I guarantee that if we began to pass those piecemeal pieces of legislation, my moms and dads in Head Start would be at the end of the line and would never get funded. I am standing up for them today and saying: You are first in line too.

We are all in this together. We need the government open—all of our agencies. Everybody gets a chance and an opportunity in this country. And we are going to stick together and say to Speaker BOEHNER: Pass a clean CR, and then allow this country and this government and the American way of life to function as our forefathers said—by sitting down at a negotiating table and working out our differences. That is what I have asked for as chair of the Budget Committee 18 times now. It is what we need to say we are going to do again but not while our country is shut down, not while my families in Head Start are held hostage, not while our small businesses are held hostage, not while everybody in this country is looking at us, wondering how we ever got to this.

Open the government, and let's be responsible legislators. That is what I came here to do. I certainly know it is what the Presiding Officer came to do. And let's tell the kids in this country who are watching us today that this country can function, we can work as adults, and we have a responsibility to do that—here and abroad.

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

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

The assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

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

EXTENSION OF MORNING BUSINESS

Mr. DURBIN. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent there be a period of morning business for debate only until 2 p.m., with the time equally divided and controlled between the two leaders or their designees, with Senators permitted to speak therein for up to 10 minutes each, and the majority leader will be recognized at 2 p.m.

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

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

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

The assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

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

Mr. DURBIN. I ask the time used in quorum calls during this period of morning business be equally divided between Democrats and Republicans.

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

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

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

The assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

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

CONTINUING APPROPRIATIONS

Mr. CORKER. Madam President, we find ourselves in a very predictable situation, and what is unpredictable is what our response to this situation is going to be. For some time I have talked about the box canyon that we were taking ourselves into, and I think it has now become very apparent to folks on both sides of the aisle that to overturn a central piece of legislation, it takes more than one-third of government to do so. When we have the presiding President over that piece of legislation, it actually takes two-thirds of each of the bodies to make that happen. I think people have realized that. It gives me no joy, but this is something I have obviously talked about for some time. Now we find ourselves in this box canyon.

What was also very predictable was that my friend TOM COBURN, the great Senator from Oklahoma, laid out very clearly on the Senate floor that even if there was a government shutdown, the health care bill would continue. I think what Americans are waking up to and seeing—even though Republicans have strongly opposed the health care bill at every turn—that even with government being shut down, the health care bill is continuing on and people around the country are signing up for what people call ObamaCare. So both of these were very predictable outcomes.

What is now unpredictable is what our response to that is going to be. I am speaking mostly to my friends on this side of the aisle. There has also been a number of people on the other side of the aisle who have spent a great deal of time over the last 2 or 3 years trying to focus on ways to reduce spending in the government and making our country stronger in the process.

I think to a person over here—as well as many on the other side of the aisle—we understand that our inability to

deal with the fiscal situation in which we find ourselves in this country has hurt us economically. People have not been willing to invest in capital investments within their companies and around the world in many cases because they don't know what is going to happen in our country.

I know first hand as the ranking member on Foreign Relations—and as I have traveled the world—there is no doubt it has affected us around the world. People really do not understand whether we are going to be able to meet the obligations we have made from a security standpoint.

Again, where we are today is very predictable, and I don't want to be crass. Obviously, I know this is creating a hardship for some people who have been furloughed, and it is certainly affecting people around our country, and that is obviously not good. On the other hand, if there is some way for some good policy outcome that strengthens our country over the longer haul, which is why we are all here, then that is a good trade-off. We will see what happens.

Here is my concern: While the situation we are in is very predictable—and many people in this body predicted we would end up exactly where we are today in this box canyon—we knew people would still sign up for the new health care law, which some have tried to defund, in spite of the fact that government has shut down.

What I am concerned about is this: We have made great strides as a nation, and in this body, to reduce government outlays we have control over. This has not happened in this Nation since 1955 and 1956. Two years ago we were at \$1.43 trillion in annual outlays from a discretionary standpoint, and that is what we deal with in a CR. Last year we were at \$988 billion, and this year—if we continue to uphold the law we put in place—we will be at \$967 billion.

That is a phenomenal result for us to have achieved in this body and for our country—to have achieved to strengthen our Nation. While there may be ways of changing the way those outlays are done—and maybe there is mandatory spending that is substituted for discretionary spending. Maybe there are ways of doing it to make it more sensible to people in this body. It is truly remarkable that Washington figured out a way to reduce the amount of spending that was taking place. I know we can figure out a way to do that even smarter.

Let me get to the unpredictable point. Sometimes when people find themselves in a box canyon or in a place that is difficult, they begin doing things that are not in the interest of themselves, and certainly not in the interest of the body that they represent. What I am worried about is that while so many people have been focused on this shiny thing over here and so much of the Nation's focus has been on this shiny thing over here, what people

have not been focused on, in the way I would hope, is the gains we have made in controlling spending as a nation. What I worry about—as it looks like we are now beginning to combine the continuing resolution process with the debt ceiling—is that people forget about the tremendous gains we have made in strengthening this Nation. While I am saying this to an empty Chamber, like most of us do when we speak on the Senate floor—and I know people are busy and have other things to do—my talk today is really focused on people in the other Chamber.

I know there is a lot that is happening over there. What I am worried about is that as the leadership over there tries to cobble together 218 votes to maybe do something relevant to the continuing resolution, and at the same time do something to the debt ceiling, that somehow or other—because we are in this boxed canyon that was very predictable—they deal away what we have gained.

What I hope we will do on this side—and to all of those—and there are many—on the other side who have fought so hard to try to get the momentum going so we will save our country from huge deficits down the road and do what we can to make sure we leave this country a better place for young people like these interns and pages here on the floor—of the aisle is keep our focus on the fact that whenever negotiations take place around a debt ceiling, they traditionally and always have been about making sure we are trying to do those things to keep us from having more debt down the road. We need to keep our eyes focused on the reforms that are necessary to keep that process going.

To be candid—and this is the first time I have said this publicly—to look at a continuing resolution at \$988 billion—I'm sorry. As it now is, the law says we would be spending—beginning a couple of days ago in this new year—at \$967 billion. I know the discussions here on the floor have been: Well, in 6 weeks the sequester—by the way, the sequester is that mechanism that was put in place during the Budget Control Act to continue to put downward pressure on spending—will kick in according to all of the discussions that have taken place.

I think most of us who have fought hard to try to save our Nation from these mounting deficits down the road were a little disappointed that we would be looking at extending last year's spending for 6 weeks, and really not taking ourselves down to \$967 billion. I realize what has happened. But here is my point to the other side of the building, the House: Whatever you have to do to cobble together 218 votes to pass a bill over there relative to maybe the CR and the debt ceiling, please do not negotiate away the hard-won gains we were able to put in place to reduce spending and help make our country stronger for the young people like those sitting in front of me. That is my message.

We are in a place that is very predictable. The outcome is unpredictable, but what I hope the outcome will be is an outcome that causes us not only not to deal away the gains that have been put in place, but to maybe put in place mandatory reforms that we all know need to occur to make this country stronger. There is tremendous bipartisan support.

In April the President laid out a budget that had a number of mandatory reforms that he was in agreement with. So what I hope will happen is we will keep the discretionary levels at levels we have already agreed to and we will take up some of those mandatory reforms that the President has already said he thinks are in the interest of our Nation and use those to help us raise the debt ceiling. As a result, we will have an outcome that causes this country to be stronger, causes this economy to grow, and over time causes us to continue to be able to honor the commitments we have made around the world.

With that I note absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Ms. BALDWIN). The Senator from Kansas.

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

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

Mr. MORAN. Madam President, I had a great honor this morning, and it will change the nature of the remarks I intended to make on the Senate floor.

I just returned from the World War II Memorial. We had a group of 90 World War II veterans who flew here on an Honor Air flight. Honor Air is a national program. The funds for it are raised by friends, neighbors, and community individuals to help bring their World War II veterans to the Nation's Capital.

I have probably visited the World War II Memorial dozens of times—maybe 40 or 50. I visit it every time there is an Honor Air flight from my home State and I am in Washington, DC, I like to be there to say: Welcome and thank you. It is an honor to have you at the memorial that was built for you.

I visited the World War II Memorial. It is especially meaningful to me personally. My dad is a World War II veteran. My dad has been on the Honor Air flight. My dad will be 98 in November.

A few days before the World War II Memorial opened, I walked down there—I was a House Member then, not a Senator—and got a glimpse of what it was going to be like. It is a wonderful place and it reminds us of many things. That day, I stepped away from the memorial and used my cell phone to call my dad at home in Plainville, KS. I was fortunate I got the answering machine, because these are difficult

things to tell your parents. So I said: Dad, I am at the World War II Memorial. Thank you for your service to our country. I respect you and I love you. It was great to be able to say that to an answering machine instead of to your own parent.

My dad actually one-upped me. A few moments later my cell phone rang and he said: Gerald, I couldn't understand what you said.

So I repeated it in person.

The great thing about the memorial is it causes us to reflect and say things and express ourselves in ways that we otherwise would never do. So that memorial, as do others that honor our service men and women, is one that calls us to say we thank you for your service, we respect you, we love you. That was my experience again this morning.

Again, I try to be there every time a group of veterans comes from Kansas, and I was hoping today wouldn't be any different. With the shutdown of our government, with the funding on hold for the National Parks, there was some concern about whether these veterans would be able to actually get to the memorial. It all worked fine. I appreciate the way the morning's events transpired and there was no confrontation and no one wanted to deny those veterans their chance to visit their memorial for the first time.

In addition to those sentiments about these individual veterans, I think what may be of value as we approach today and tomorrow and try to find the solutions that are necessary to solve the circumstance we find ourselves in is a recognition that our veterans—I have had this thought every time I have walked to the Vietnam Wall or to the Korean War Memorial and now to this newer memorial, the World War II Memorial—not a single person represented on that wall or memorialized in the World War II Memorial or the Korean War Memorial, not one of them—I cannot imagine that a single one of them—volunteered or was drafted for purposes of a fight between Republicans and Democrats. No one went to serve our country, no one volunteered to serve our country because they believed in Republicans or they believed in Democrats. Knowing veterans as I do, my view is they answered the call to duty. They were willing to serve because they believed in America. They believed in the United States and our principles and the freedoms and liberties it provides, and they knew their service would make a difference in the lives of their kids and grandkids. They knew their service would help make America a better place for everyone, but certainly for people they knew—their family members.

I hope I can portray to my colleagues here in the Senate and here in this Capitol building and down Pennsylvania Avenue that the battles we engage in need to be a lot less about Republicans and Democrats and much

more about what is good for the country. We ought to use the veterans we met with this morning and those who are memorialized on the National Mall in every circumstance to remind ourselves that there is a higher calling to what we do in our Nation's Capital. There is something more important than political skirmishes.

I don't say this in any Pollyanna way. I don't say it in a way that doesn't acknowledge partisan differences. I always assumed and believed that America sent a variety of people to Washington, DC, to represent their interests and my State of Kansas will probably send somebody different than some other State. We all come here with a philosophy, a background of the way we grew up, the way we think about things, the instructions our constituents have given us, and all of that is reflected in the way we vote, the issues we pursue, the priorities we have. So it is not that we are all supposed to agree, but surely there ought to be a recognition that when there is disagreement, as there often is, there is a desire, just as our service men and women had to serve the country, much more important than the desire to serve our political party.

Today's trip to the World War II Memorial, while it is a common experience for me, was especially useful and meaningful because it happened at a time when these veterans came not knowing whether they would be able to gain entry to the memorial. Being there to encourage them and seeing them welcomed and greeted was important but, perhaps equally as important, it served as a reminder to me that what we do in the Senate is motivated by the best of intentions and the greatest of goals; the idea that America is a special place and we who serve here have a special responsibility. We have a chance to try to do something good for the country.

One of the things that has always inspired and pleased me about Kansans—and I assume it is true elsewhere—most of the conversations I have with folks back home are a lot less about what they want me to do for them but more about what decisions they want me to make, to make certain their kids and grandkids have a better life. There is something very great about how we have an interest—as human beings, as parents—in the well-being of the next generation and not just the well-being of ourselves. So my efforts in trying to find resolution to the circumstance we find ourselves in is strengthened, the resolve I have to try to work with others here in the Senate is one that is highlighted by my experience this morning at the National Mall.

I think about where we are and where we need to go. Again, having decried the high partisanship nature of this place, I don't want to detract from that, but we need to be able to have leaders who are willing to have discussions, conversations, and a coming together. It is true of Republicans and it

is true of Democrats and it is certainly true of whoever is the President of the United States. We need to make certain we have the ability to recognize that not all of us agree on everything, but with the efforts we make to find a solution to a problem, there is a coming together. It seems to me we have now gotten ourselves in this entrenched position. And while I was pleased moments ago to learn that our President has called congressional leaders to the White House, it is disturbing to me that the message is: But we are not negotiating. I am not certain what the purpose of the White House visit will be. I hope it results in movement, in success.

It is my understanding my colleagues on the Democratic side of the aisle have agreed this morning to "not negotiate." All I know about that is what I have read in the press. I don't—again, in an attempt to make certain this doesn't sound partisan and detract from what I was attempting to convey moments ago, we need to make certain Republicans understand we can make progress in the positions we hold even without getting everything we want.

So this experience I described of being a Senator—a Member of this great deliberative body—hasn't been my experience in the short time I have been a Member of the Senate. The idea that we can't negotiate seems to me to be contrary to the purpose of this historic body.

I hope the attitude and approach changes and every Senator recognizes it is not an all-or-nothing proposition. It is an opportunity for us to resolve differences and each find some satisfaction in moving in a direction or preserving the status quo, if that is one's position; that because America is a diverse place and that people care differently about different issues and have different opinions, we certainly have a responsibility to represent those views of the folks back home, but recognizing that the country doesn't always agree with us. Surely, there is that common ground, that opportunity to find solutions.

My call is for leadership—and by leadership I mean broadly all 100 of us; not leadership in the sense of someone who occupies a position of leadership beyond being a Member of the Senate but all of us—to find the leadership to find the necessary resolve to solve our country's problems.

The Affordable Care Act is a very controversial piece of legislation. It has been said here on the Senate floor: It is the law, it is not negotiable. That position doesn't make sense to me. In fact, the President has delayed, excluded, found exemptions for what is the law. So, surely, if the President can, for example, delay the implementation of the employer mandate, it is not outside of the realm—in fact, I would say it is the constitutional responsibility of Congress—to have the debate, discussion, and consideration of whether to delay the individual man-

date. It is the law of the land, but if the President can make changes to the law of the land, surely the body created by article I, the legislative branch, has that opportunity to do so as well. So it ought not be nonnegotiable.

It is time for the Senate to function. It is time for us as individual Senators to provide the leadership to resolve our problems.

In my view, we desperately need leadership from the President. While I have serious policy and philosophical disagreements with President Obama, my greatest complaint about his Presidency is his lack of leadership. We need somebody to rally us, to come together and find solutions to those problems, to better resolve our differences. Again, I don't want to detract from the observations about how partisan this place has become by talking about President Obama. In this case, he is a Democrat and I am a Republican, but regardless of who is the occupant of the White House, in order for the Congress to resolve difficult issues, it takes the leadership of a President.

My call is, as it was earlier to my colleagues in the Senate to provide leadership—I hope the President, in his meeting with the leadership of the Senate and House today, will provide the leadership necessary to help us move in the right direction and step back from the statement that while we are meeting, nothing is negotiable.

I appreciate the opportunity to address the Senate and I yield the floor.

THE PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from West Virginia.

Mr. MANCHIN. First, I wish to apologize to the people of West Virginia. I am embarrassed and ashamed as a Senator and Member of Congress by how we are acting. I have been answering phones in my office. They are upset. I said: Well, you are not as upset as I am. I have a front-row seat, and it is not pretty.

This is not what we were sent here to do. It is not what I signed up for. It is not why I asked the people in West Virginia to allow me to represent what I consider to be the greatest State in the Nation, and I am sure each Senator feels the same way about their State and its wonderful people. I have always looked at public service as an opportunity to fix problems, to make life better, to be able to use the wisdom and skills we have obtained through our experiences in life and watching people and the compassion we have for people to try to make it better.

Shutting down government is simply unacceptable. I don't care what way a person looks at this, it is unacceptable.

This is the first time in 17 years that our government is not open for business—the first time in 17 years we are not open. This is self-inflicted. This did not happen by any outside forces. This has all been self-inflicted. It not only hurts the people of West Virginia deeply, it hurts people all over this country, and they are feeling the effects. This is only the second day, but it is 2 days too long.

Most of you know I am pretty moderate. I am very conservative on fiscal issues. This is how we were raised. We were expected to pay our bills, to take care of our debts, and take care of ourselves and our families. So I have watched that very carefully.

When I became Governor, the first thing I did was I tried to put our financial house in order in West Virginia so that basically we could take care of our values. That was our priority, based on what we wanted—our children to have opportunities. We never cut any services during the recession. We took care of our seniors with the dignity and respect and pride they should have. We took care of our veterans. We could not be everything to everybody, but we really watched our dollars and got our financial house in order. So I look at it from that standpoint, where I come from, as a proud West Virginia Democrat, but I am also very compassionate on social issues. Watching my grandparents and watching my family in the little town of Farmington, WV, where I grew up, people expected you to do things. They expected you to really chip in and help people, but they expected you to help yourself also, and they expected you to take care of those who could not, the less fortunate. I have always taken that with me in every aspect of public service.

I think I am reasonable and willing to compromise and work with anybody on any issue. I have always put my State's interests ahead of my party politics. I do not make any excuses. I really believe I am an absolutely privileged person to be living in the greatest country on Earth and to be a member of a great family in the great State of West Virginia. But I am an American, I am a West Virginian, and then I am a Democrat in West Virginia, and I have dear friends who are Republicans from West Virginia and from all over the country.

So when I looked at the cause of this problem we have right now, it is about finances, strictly about finances. Can we continue to pay? I also looked at the way I felt Democrats truly looked at this. They said: Fine, we will agree to the \$986 billion number—\$986 billion. That was the Republicans' request, to keep that spending level. The Democrats would have loved to have \$1.058 trillion. They reduced it \$90 billion. To me, that was a good compromise. We can live with that \$986 billion number. We have to tighten our belts a little bit, but we are good at that in West Virginia. And we did it.

Then, all of a sudden, the Affordable Care Act—or ObamaCare, as people have referred to it—becomes the issue. There are a lot of things in that piece of legislation that I do not agree with. I do not know how I would have voted if I had been here. I would have tried to make what I would have thought were constructive changes. But do you know what. It is the law. And I said: I am in a mode that I would call for a reform, repair, and then repeal parts of it we

cannot fix. I do not know that yet. We have to get in there and do it.

I am probably part of the problem and caused some of this because I made a statement. We were talking to some people, and they asked me: What do you think is going to happen?

I said: Well, for my colleagues and friends on the other side of the aisle—my Republican friends—I would think they would look, and if they really want to talk about health care, can it be extended for 1 year before it takes effect as the law.

I did not mean to postpone it. I did not mean to stop and don't start it until next year. I meant the fines and the penalties.

Think about this. I am very much opposed to the individual mandate, but I understand it is part of the process. But I would have thought, why wouldn't we have a transition year?

So the law took effect as of yesterday. It has. We have people trying to find the best opportunity they have. In my little State, we do not have a lot of options, so I want to make sure the people who have good insurance are somehow able to keep that. There has to be a way we can work through that. I want to make sure the people who have no insurance and have never been able to buy insurance can now be able to afford it. I want to make sure of that. I want to make sure people who had a preexisting condition or had a child who was born with a condition are able to keep the insurance they now have that they could not have before. I want to make sure that basically the senior citizens in West Virginia, who basically are filling the doughnut hole out of their pockets, which they cannot afford, are taken care of. They can go get an exam on an annual basis and not have to pay a co-payment from their Medicare. Those are all good things, and I know my good friends on the Republican side feel the same way about some of this. Why would you want to throw the baby out with the bathwater when all you have to do is maybe change the water every now and then and we have a little clean water we can bathe the baby in again? These are sensible solutions, like how I was raised, looking at how do you fix it?

I can assure you this: I have never fixed a problem by calling somebody else a name. I have never chastised somebody for their beliefs. I really have not. I have tried to think, OK, if I were in their shoes, how could we fix this?

When I was Governor, I used to sit down with people on the opposite side and think, OK, in the profession we are in—public service—how do I allow them to go home to save face? How do I allow them to have some comfort that they are going to be able to bring constructive ideas to the table that basically make it better? I have always thought of that.

So you are not going to hear me saying that we are right and they are

wrong. In this case here, I will say: Please, don't have this self-inflicted pain on the people of my State of West Virginia or your State or this country. There could be a time when we might not be able to stop what might be happening. The market forces might push us in a direction that we cannot control. This is something we can control, and all we are asking for—please, let government continue. If you want to talk about a big, grand plan, which I hope we do, which is fixing the financial condition, getting our financial house in order, I have been a big supporter of Bowles-Simpson. It is the only bipartisan package that has been on the table since I have been here. There are an awful lot of things of which people say: Well, I don't like this, I don't like that. None of them have said it is not what needs to be done. It is a three-pronged approach. That is the big fix we have talked about. But we are not talking about any of that. We are talking about things we do not like. We are talking about people we do not like. We are calling people names. And it just does not fix things. It does not make it right. So you will hear me continue to talk about the grand bargain. This is the time, between now and the debt ceiling.

I will say this about the debt ceiling: Raising the debt does not fix the debt. We need to have a path to fix it. We should not be going through this political fight every 3, 6 months. This is the fifth time I have been in a debt ceiling debate. How many times have we voted on the so-called ObamaCare? It is ridiculous to continue to fight the same fight over and over.

I hope we are in a reform or repair, and then repeal when you cannot fix it. When you have given it your all for the betterment of your country and it is just not fixable or doable, then you change. We have not gotten there yet. We have all naysayers and people basically who just do not want change. I have too many people who need the services of government. I have too many people who depend on it—not that I believe people should be dependent. I hope people would be independent. But government is so intertwined in all of our lives, and to just say you want to stop it all is wrong.

So I would ask my dear friends and my colleagues on the Republican side to please think about a continuing resolution. Please. We have come to the agreement on the number that you wanted of \$986 billion. Health care—if you wanted to bring up the Keystone Pipeline, I am a total supporter of the Keystone Pipeline for energy independence. I am an "all energy" person—use whatever we have. It is not the place for it. As much as I would like to see it, it is not the place for me to draw the line to inflict so much pain on so many Americans, so many West Virginians, just because of one issue I like or do not like. There is a time for that. There will be a time for this health

care bill, ObamaCare. It will either succeed or fail on its own. But we ought to try to make it better if we can. If we cannot, then come to the conclusion we cannot, but do not shut down government because you do not think it will work—or maybe you are afraid it will work. That could be it too.

With all that being said, I say to my friends, you will never hear me say anything derogatory about you. You can always reach across the aisle to me. I am always going to sit down and talk to you. I am willing to compromise and work on any issue that betters the position we have, that betters the quality of life, that creates opportunities, that makes us the strongest and most powerful Nation on Earth. I will continue to fight for that. But I am asking you for this time, do not allow this self-inflicted pain to continue. This is not fair to my State, it is not fair to the people of West Virginia, it is not fair to the Presiding Officer's State of Wisconsin or to anybody in this great country of ours.

With that, Madam President, I say thank you for allowing me to say what has been on my mind. I am a proud American, and it is about this country first, and it is always going to be about this country first. If the United States of America does well, I will guarantee you the great State of West Virginia is going to be just great, we are going to do fine. But we have to work together and put our priorities in place.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Pennsylvania.

Mr. CASEY. Madam President, first of all, I want to commend the words of my colleague from West Virginia about, first of all, the frustration that so many Americans feel that we share and also his words about trying to come to a resolution. I think it bears repeating.

The main purpose of my remarks today will be focused, really, on one central theme; that is, in the House right now Speaker BOEHNER could put a bill on the floor that would open the government after a House vote. I am holding in my hand the bill that would do that. This is the bill that passed on Friday. It is amendment No. 1974 to H.J. Res. 59. This is the bill that, if the Speaker were to put it on the floor, would pass overwhelmingly. But you would get not just one side of the aisle, it would be a bipartisan vote to pass that bill, and upon passage, then, of course, getting the bill to the President for signature. So within however long it takes for the House to complete a vote—a rule and maybe two votes—and then getting it to the President, this could be over. And it should be over.

We should open the government. This is the way to do it—a bill that does not have anything attached to it. It just funds the government. I would hope the Speaker at long last would put that bill on the floor. We are hearing voices

that are bipartisan today asking for the Speaker to do just that. We have also heard a lot of talk about negotiation and compromise, and it is good that people are talking about that. But I hope some of our Republican friends talk about it with a degree of faithfulness to the facts or add adherence to the facts about what has happened over the last couple of months.

In an effort to reach an agreement that would avoid the shutdown—going back now a number of weeks and even months—Democrats here in the Senate and in the House as well accepted some of the very difficult so-called sequestration cuts. What do I mean by that? I mean the across-the-board indiscriminate cuts that went into effect in 2013 and were, unfortunately, a carryover from a battle and a fight in the summer of 2011. So we have accepted those difficult cuts in this budget negotiation in the so-called continuing resolution—meaning the bill that would keep the government operating, the one I just held up—as a compromise. This happened a while back.

I mentioned that last Friday, September 27, the Senate passed the so-called clean continuing resolution, which is just a fancy way of saying a budget bill without add-ons—nothing about any other issue, just a bill to fund the government. That bill—the one I referred to earlier that passed the Senate on the 27th and is sitting over in the House—would open the government and continue funding for the government until the middle of November so we get past this crisis, we do not have this as a problem in the next debate about paying our bills, and we can have a big debate in November about making sure we can pay for government operations.

What we should do as well, as we are debating in November—I hope we can get there, but as we are debating that, we should figure out a way—this is a bipartisan concern—to shut off, to turn off at least for 2 years the across-the-board cuts with which I think both parties have real disagreement. But the key is passing this in the House, this measure that will end the crisis, open the government.

When we passed it here in the Senate, we accepted those levels of spending, which are significantly less than Democrats would have hoped for, would have wanted. We accepted those despite the fact that we reversed the sequester in the budget we passed this spring. So we had a long budget debate here and, some might remember, last spring voted well into the early morning hours. I think our last vote was at 4 or 5 in the morning.

That was a higher number than we have agreed to already. So Democrats have compromised substantially already on the spending level. That does not seem to get reported very often. The bill that passed the Senate last Friday is a \$70 billion cut from the last fiscal year, 2013, the levels that were enacted spending levels—enacted fiscal

year 2013 before the across-the-board cuts went into effect.

To restate, this legislation which is in the House right now and they could pass with overwhelming bipartisan support, and it would open the government and end this crisis—they could do it this afternoon. They could do it this evening. They could do it without a lot of trouble if they put this bill on the floor. It does not mean all Republicans have to vote for it. The Speaker himself could vote against it. But putting it on the floor and having an up-or-down vote I think would be good for everyone.

It would end this crisis, open the government, and then we could begin to work on what I think the American people want us working on. They expect us to keep the government open. That is fundamental. But I think they expect us as well to work on strategies to create jobs or at least put into effect strategies that will lead to job creation.

I will say it again: This bill that is sitting in the House is not just a bill that will open the government, it will have overwhelming bipartisan support there. The bill is \$70 billion less than what we wanted. To say that is a compromise is an understatement. On the main issue before us, how do you fund the government, how much in terms of dollars do you direct toward the operations of the government, we have already compromised a long time ago to reduce that number by \$70 billion.

So when our friends are saying Democrats are not negotiating or compromising, my goodness, we compromised on day 1. They prevailed in that debate. We decided it is better to compromise in that number and keep the government operating and move the process along in terms of the budget, rather than shutting the government down to get our way.

Some Democrats may have said to us: You know what. You should have taken this part and not accepted those cuts, and maybe even take it as far as some Republicans want to take the debate on health care and shut the government down. We said: That does not make any sense. It is bad for the economy. It is bad for vulnerable people. It is bad for national security and a whole host of other reasons which I will mention in a minute, to shut down the government.

So from the beginning, we were not only willing to compromise and negotiate, we have already done it in a very substantial way on the core issue, which is the budget and the number. For them to say: Well, we are not going to insist that the government stay open, and then they want to have some negotiation about that does not make a lot of sense, does it, when you consider the compromises we have already made?

I think the fundamental thing the American people want us to do is open the government. The key to opening the government is not only sitting in

the House, the key is already in the lock. All the Speaker has to do is turn it ever so slightly—turn that key. The turning of the key is this bill. If this bill goes on the floor of the House of Representatives today, tomorrow morning, tomorrow afternoon, tonight, whenever, it will pass with overwhelming bipartisan support.

I will come back to that in a moment. But I think the question of compromise is, frankly, weighted to our side. I think we have already made a substantial and significant compromise in the negotiation, and that was done a long time ago. I think at this point, when it comes to the question, some Members of the House have tried to do, to bring us to this point where there is a shutdown, I think their actions are, in a word, irresponsible. I think a lot of Americans expect they would act in a more responsible manner. By pushing an agenda that has now led to a government shutdown, in addition to being irresponsible or a dereliction of their duty, is also reckless.

This is a reckless step to take just to make a point about health care, about anything else. There are a lot of us who would like to have our arguments litigated or debated in a way that gets a lot of attention paid to it. But to take it this far, where you are literally willing to take an action which leads, as this has done, to a government shutdown, is both irresponsible and reckless.

I think we are just beginning now, in these hours—and now unfortunately we are into the second day—we are now just beginning to understand the impact this is having on Americans. But in the case of Pennsylvania, we are just beginning to hear the impact on individual Pennsylvanians.

This morning I learned that Bushkill Outreach, a food pantry located in the Delaware Water Gap Recreational Area, is closed because it is on Federal land operated by the National Park Service.

When you close a national park area or a national park itself, you are not just impacting what happens there and the opportunity for people to tour a national park or to recreate, you are actually having an adverse impact, in this case on a food pantry. This particular food pantry, Bushkill Outreach, feeds 30 families per day, amounting to 120 people per day and 1,200 people per month. Imagine that. You have a group of Members of Congress in Washington who believe their ideological point of view on one issue is so compelling and so important to the country that they are willing to shut the government down and deny those 30 families the opportunity to have the benefit of a food pantry in a still tough economy.

We have had, fortunately, a lot of job growth over the last several years. We are happy about that. We are happy that the economy is moving in the right direction on job growth. But it is not moving fast enough for Pennsylvania. In this sense, we have hovered

around half a million people for too long. It was well above 500,000 people. Fortunately, it came down below half a million. But it has begun to creep up again. Once again, Pennsylvania has an unemployment number which is just at about 501,000 people.

In my home area, northeastern Pennsylvania, we saw data today—unfortunately in my home county, Lackawanna County, and the county next door, Luzerne County, at least one, maybe two more, in that region of the State, including the region where Bushkill Outreach is—the unemployment rate in several of those counties is more than 9 percent.

So there a food pantry is not just a place for people who are particularly vulnerable; those are people who have been vulnerable, because of job loss, because of the economy. The shutdown has two adverse impacts on those families. It has a direct impact on their ability to access food every day. That is horrific enough. Talk about direct and substantial pain, physical pain on an individual or family. But it also has another impact when they shut the government down, certainly over a long period of time for sure—and this is irrefutable—you injure the national economy. When you injure the national economy, you make it less likely that those people who have to access food banks can actually get a job in northeastern Pennsylvania or anywhere else in the country.

This is about real life. This is not some Washington theoretical debate. There are thousands of reasons to open up the government. I say to the Speaker of the House: Get this bill on the floor, and the food pantry will no longer be adversely impacted. Our national security will no longer be adversely impacted if we can open the government up again. A lot of the folks who access this food bank are on fixed incomes, so it has a detrimental effect on them.

How about national security? The shutdown is having a direct and substantial impact on national security. Our colleague Senator FEINSTEIN was on the floor yesterday and spoke of the critical impact the shutdown is having on the intelligence community. As many Americans know, intelligence gathering is not just the CIA, it is a whole range of agencies that gather intelligence which arms us with information to protect ourselves and to be able to protect ourselves from terrorist threats.

In the intelligence community, meaning all of the Federal agencies that gather intelligence to protect us, 72 percent of the civilian work force is furloughed. It is hard to comprehend the adverse impact of that. This means the bulk of Federal employees who gather critical intelligence and work with law enforcement agencies are not working during the shutdown.

You have to ask yourself at this point—if you are a Member of the House or the Senate who believes that

the point you want to make on health care or anything else that has led to this shutdown—do you really want to maintain that position, that your point is so important and so compelling that you are willing to allow a shutdown to take place and to continue and allow the number I read, 72 percent of the civilian workforce in the intelligence community, to be furloughed? It puts at risk our soldiers, the fighting men and women on battlefields around the world or in danger zones, it puts at risk our diplomatic personnel, and at some level at some point in time puts Americans at risk because you cannot stop terrorism. You cannot arm yourself against terrorist attacks unless you have information. You do not get the information unless you have the full means of intelligence gathering. So I hope folks would ask themselves: Is my ideological point of view on this or that issue important enough that we should have a government shutdown in place which injures our ability in gathering intelligence for national security? I hope people would ask themselves that question and see what the answer would be.

I have also heard, when you tell people about the furloughs, I have heard some Republicans—not all, a few—make the argument that somehow the President is making the decision about furloughs that adversely impact national security and he is making a mistake when he does that, he or his administration, or that maybe Members of Congress are somehow part of the decision on furloughs that would adversely impact national security.

Look, every Member of Congress is exposed to intelligence. Every Member of Congress has an opportunity to take action on national security and intelligence. Every Member of Congress has an opportunity to say things about decisions that impact national security. But I would say this to my Republican friends: If the charge is the President and his administration are making decisions about furloughs that somehow compromise our national security, if you are going to assert that—you are free to do it; it is a free country—but if you are going to assert that, you should have proof. If you are going to make a charge like that against any President, or, frankly, any Member of Congress, Democrat or Republican, you have got to have proof there. So I would hope the media—when someone makes that charge against the Commander in Chief, I would hope that Member of Congress would have in their hand the proof, a document, a statement, something they can put on the table and say that is the proof. Because if you are going to make a charge which is that serious, in such a grave matter of national security, you have got to prove it. If you cannot prove it, you should keep your mouth shut and not make that charge. So I hope when people say somehow this furlough number—I have heard people say: That is support personnel in the intel community; you really do not need those

folks. If you are going to contest the number and say our national security is okay during the furlough, during a shutdown, you have got to prove it.

A lot of things people say in Washington are part of the political debate, but if one is going to accuse someone of taking an action that would undermine national security, one should have to prove it.

Why do I say that? I spent 6½ years on the Foreign Relations Committee. I have traveled to the Middle East several times, to Pakistan three times, to Afghanistan three times, and to Iraq twice. In regions of the world where our national security interests are directly at stake, we have personnel—either uniformed or diplomatic personnel. I have seen directly how much people can be at risk at those postings in embassies, consulates, and how dependent they are on having marines or literally soldiers to protect the embassy or a consulate, but how dependent they are on good intelligence.

There are a lot of reasons to open the government. There are a lot of reasons for the House to vote on this today and open the government, but there are few as compelling as national security and intelligence.

I wish to go through a list of impacts that the shutdown is having.

We know that the shutdown has an impact on small businesses. Why do we know that? Well, the SBA on a weekly basis provides help to many small businesses across the country. We know that more than 1,000 businesses a week could see their critical financial support deferred until the government opens again. It is bad for small business for the government to be shut down.

A shutdown would end nutrition support for pregnant women and children, the Women, Infants and Children Program, WIC. WIC is the acronym we frequently hear. It is a great program. In the event of a shutdown such as we are living through now, WIC will only be able to continue serving participants for 1 week. We are in day 2 of the shutdown. After 1 week, they would have to stop serving participants.

What are the numbers here? The basic numbers from fiscal year 2012 are that the average monthly participation totaled more than 8.9 million people. Of that 8.9 million, 4.7 million are children and 2.1 million are infants. This is another good reason to pass this bill in the House today with a quick vote. It would be overwhelmingly bipartisan. In addition to national security and intelligence, this would make sure that the WIC Program will serve people who need it.

A government shutdown would compromise public health. Why do I say that? In the shutdown, 70 percent of NIH employees would be furloughed. This is the National Institutes of Health which does research on all kinds of diseases and ailments. It is the envy of the world. No other country in the world has anything equivalent to

the National Institutes of Health, but a shutdown will lead to the furlough of 70 percent of their employees. That is another reason.

As we heard on the news this morning, there is a lot of reporting about the Centers for Disease Control. It is also adversely affected in the shutdown.

A shutdown also compromises school readiness for young children. A government shutdown delays funding for 22 Head Start providers across the country, jeopardizing early childhood education care for the 18,000 children and families those programs serve. We are speaking about 22 providers for Head Start not being able to provide services for 18,000 children and families.

Finally, a shutdown endangers benefits owed to our veterans. The Veterans' Administration will run out of money to pay mandatory benefits for existing beneficiaries by the end of this month. I know we have heard people saying: Well, this check or that check will not be stopped. Ultimately, there is going to be a direct impact if the shutdown is continuous.

I would say to our friends in the House they can take action right now to prevent this from happening. How may they do that? It is very simple. All they need to do is take the bill sitting there and put it on floor. A lot of people can vote against it, but the vote for it would be overwhelming.

If Speaker BOEHNER puts that on the floor today, tonight or tomorrow—he should do it tonight—we can be beyond this. According to a new report in the National Review there are potentially more than 100 House Republicans who would be open to a so-called clean CR. When we hear that, this is a clean bill to fund the government. It doesn't have anything attached to it. It includes the \$70 billion compromise Democrats have already agreed to by reducing the overall cost of the funding of the government.

I hope we could end the shutdown today by having the House adopt this legislation. I urge the Speaker to put the bill on floor for a vote in the House today.

I wish to conclude with some separate remarks related to the shutdown, but they are also related, unfortunately, to a lot of other budget items. I wanted to do this the other day and want to put it on the record.

In addition to everything else I have spoken about, during the shutdown over 30,000 correctional officers in our Federal prisons report to work not knowing when they will receive their next paycheck. These are officers who put their lives at risk every day and deserve to know when they will be paid. During the last shutdown in the midnineties, some guards went well over a month without being paid. These men and women are literally putting their lives on the line every day. Yesterday, I was scheduled to be at an event with a number of families who have been directly impacted by

the violence that is perpetrated against corrections officers, but I couldn't be there because it was at the same time as our 9:30 vote on the budget trying to reverse the shutdown.

I was supposed to meet with Don and Jean Williams, the parents of Eric Williams, who lost his life as a corrections officer. Officer Williams lost his life performing his duties at a U.S. penitentiary in northeastern Pennsylvania, my home area. I was able to meet his parents briefly at his viewing. That is real life for the Williams family.

Unfortunately, they were not the only family represented at the event yesterday. There were several other families who had lost loved ones in that way.

I am not sure I had a full appreciation for this before I was elected to the Senate. We have corrections officers in Pennsylvania in our State system. I had some exposure to their work, but it wasn't until I spent a lot of time talking to corrections officers at the Federal level that I learned the gravity of this problem. It is a problem with multiple elements.

One, of course, is an erosion of support for corrections officers over time, so that over time the ratio of one corrections officer to inmates has grown. To say they have grown to dangerous proportions is an understatement.

One of the reasons Officer Williams lost his life is because often these officers are in situations where they are outnumbered, sometimes by hundreds of inmates. They, of course, can't carry a weapon. The tragedy officer Eric Williams suffered, and the tragedy others have suffered, serves as a stark reminder of the risks that corrections officers and staff face every day.

Budget cuts over time, with across-the-board-cuts from sequestration, plus a shutdown leads to a very dangerous situation for corrections officers. We need to address their concerns and these issues as part of this overall debate about the budget.

In conclusion, I reiterate that I hope the House will take up the bill that can end this crisis and open the government.

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

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. THUNE. 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. THUNE. Madam President, today we continue to find ourselves in the unfortunate position of a partial government shutdown. Following a veto threat from the President, last night Democrats in the House of Representatives killed three spending bills that would have funded parks and monuments, veterans programs, and the DC government. Senate Democrats have already rejected four House-passed proposals that would have provided Americans with relief from ObamaCare while

ensuring that government operations continued. Senate Democrats even rejected one proposal that would have sent the two Chambers to conference—the House and Senate—to work out some sort of a solution to this standoff we find ourselves in, but they haven't even been willing to talk. In fact, when that request from the House came to the Senate to create a conference that would allow the House and Senate to come together to try to find a solution, it was tabled. It was soundly rejected—tabled—by the Democrats here in the Senate.

So we are continuing in this holding pattern as the House continues to send proposals over and they continue to be rejected by the Senate, with Senate Democrats not even wanting to sit down and talk with the House about how we might resolve this.

I am happy to hear the President has, after a week of essentially ignoring congressional Republicans, called the leaders to the White House tonight. I am a little confused, however, about the purpose of the meeting, as the White House continues to say they are not going to negotiate. I hope the President does change his mind on that, that he is evolving on it, and that he will at this meeting express a willingness to work with Republicans because it really is important for the President to be engaged in this process.

I can't imagine a scenario where we have consequences such as these, with a continuing funding resolution still not approved, a partial government shutdown, a debt limit coming up in the middle of the month, and the President essentially saying: I am not going to negotiate. I am not going to negotiate on any of this.

I think that is a position that is completely unreasonable, and I think the American people find it to be completely unreasonable as well.

In the meantime, we have an opportunity now to address some of the concerns that have been raised by people about various parts of our government that as a result of this unnecessary shutdown are not open. So Republicans continue to try to work to open government and at the same time to provide ObamaCare fairness for all.

I have said this before, but I get the sense some of our colleagues on the Democratic side and the President seem to be content with shutting down the government. Well, we Republicans are not. We are consistently trying to come up with solutions.

The House of Representatives will be meeting today, and they are going to be voting again on some of the same proposals that were voted down last night by House Democrats. They are commonsense spending bills that would ensure that important functions of government can resume. These bills would ensure that benefits for our Nation's veterans continue uninterrupted, they would allow our members of the National Guard and Reserve to be paid, and they would provide funding for the

National Institutes of Health to ensure this senseless shutdown does not prevent patients from receiving lifesaving treatments.

I will explain briefly what some of these bills would do that are going to be coming over later today from the House of Representatives to the Senate, where, at least to date, none of the proposals that have been advanced by the House of Representatives have been accepted here in the Senate. They have been tabled by the majority leader. That is unfortunate because it is the essence of what the American people believe we ought to be doing, which is working together, coming together to find a solution to some of these big problems. Unfortunately, as I said before, when the request came over to go to conference with the House, that was tabled as well. So there has been no discussion, no willingness to talk, no willingness to think and cooperate in a way that would help us get the fundamental operations of government up and running again.

Anyway, these bills are going to come over from the House today, and they follow, as I said, the same track they tried to get approved last night. One deals with the availability through the annual appropriations process of the Department of Veterans Affairs to continue to serve veterans—namely, veterans' disability payments, the GI bill, education and training, and VA home loans—under the same conditions that were in effect at the end of the just-completed fiscal year. In other words, it would take all those programs that benefit veterans and make sure they continue uninterrupted and are funded just as they were at the end of the fiscal year until such time as Congress can come up with a longer term solution. That might be an appropriations bill—which, frankly, should have been passed much earlier this year and wasn't because none of the appropriations bills were moved here in the Senate—or another temporary funding measure, such as a continuing resolution, that is put forward. A similar proposal was introduced by a number of Senate Democrats. So when it comes over from the House of Representatives today, I hope we will have broad bipartisan support in the Senate for making sure veterans programs are continued and are funded.

There is also going to be a bill coming over that deals with national parks and museums, and it would provide immediate funding for National Park Service operations, the Smithsonian, the National Gallery of Art, and the U.S. Holocaust Museum at the same rate and under the same conditions as were in effect at the end of the just-completed fiscal year. So the same thing I mentioned with regard to the veterans programs—these functions of government would be funded at the same level they were at the end of the year we just completed until such time as an appropriations bill is passed or a temporary funding measure is put in place.

That was something the House voted on yesterday, and it was defeated. I shouldn't say Democrats universally defeated it, but almost so when that measure was brought up yesterday. Hopefully, today they will get a different outcome in the House. I think they will, and it will come over to the Senate.

Another bill the House will move today will provide for the immediate availability of local funds—which are subject to the control of Congress through the annual appropriations process—for the District of Columbia, again under the same conditions as were in effect at the end of the just-completed fiscal year.

Finally, there will be a bill that comes over from the House that provides funding for the pay and allowances of military personnel in the reserve component who are in active status. So it will fund the Guard and Reserve. Those funds would be made available at the same level as the just completed fiscal year until such time as Congress takes more formal action.

Finally, there will be a fifth bill coming from the House that will provide immediate funding for the National Institutes of Health at the same rate and under the same conditions as in effect at the end of the just completed fiscal year. So the important work done by the National Institutes of Health will continue—if the bill is enacted here in the Senate—and go on even in the midst of a partial shutdown.

What I am saying is Republicans are trying to address all of these concerns that we have about various elements of our government that are not functioning today because of this partial shutdown. Last night they were met with resistance in the House of Representatives and they were voted down by Democrats. We are hoping for and I think we will have a different outcome today in the House of Representatives, at which point those bills will come here to the Senate.

So if the Senate is interested in going on the record and making sure there is funding available for veterans programs, for the museums and our monuments, for our Guard and Reserve, for the National Institutes of Health, and for the District of Columbia—which is under the jurisdiction of the Congress when it comes to funding—the Senate should vote affirmatively and actually ensure that those important functions of our government are addressed and funded.

What I am simply saying is that time and time again the House of Representatives has sent to the Senate legislation—measures—that would continue to fund the government, and in earlier cases when they came over here addressed what I think the American people have said they want to see addressed in ObamaCare.

The President of the United States has granted a 1-year delay to employers in this country from the employer mandate. So essentially he gave a

delay—a waiver—to big business. The House of Representatives in one of the bills they sent to the Senate said we ought to in fairness give the same break to individuals. There is an individual mandate in the ObamaCare law that kicks in, and we ought to be able to give individuals in this country the same treatment that we give to big businesses. So as a matter of fairness that was proposed by the House of Representatives.

When that bill came over, it also included a provision that would ensure that Members of Congress and their staffs and the staffs at the President's office and in the executive branch of the government are all subject to the same law and to the same provisions—that the ObamaCare law is applied in the same way as to other Americans. So we had a 1-year delay—a temporary relief from the individual mandate—included in that, and a provision that ensured that those of us here and our staffs and members of the executive branch are treated the same way as are other Americans. That too was tabled in the Senate.

It strikes me that as we think about the impact of this law, we ought to ensure that middle-class Americans deserve the same relief that the President and Democrats here in the Senate have already given to Members of Congress and to their staffs, as well as to big businesses in this country.

We had an opportunity to do that the other night. That was rejected by the Senate. I think the question that every American ought to be asking is, Why wouldn't Democratic Senators give the same break to the American people that big businesses have received? I would again argue this is an issue of basic fairness. We think it ought to be delayed for all Americans, not just for the favored few.

There is bipartisan support for this. I mentioned before that we have a Democratic Senator in the Senate who has said a delay in the individual mandate is a very reasonable and sensible approach. I hope at some point that view will start to spread to others, and we will be able to actually provide some relief to the American people from the harmful effects of ObamaCare.

But at least while we are in this period, as this continues to be discussed and hopefully, eventually a solution reached, we ought to be protecting those Americans who are being hit by the shutdown.

When these bills come over from the House of Representatives today, I hope the Senate will pick them up quickly and act on them.

We had an example or incident yesterday where a number of World War II veterans came here to Washington, DC, as Honor Flight guests. This is an organization that brings World War II veterans here to see their monument—the World War II monument—here in Washington, and they couldn't get access to it because of the shutdown. That should be unacceptable to every

American. We need to ensure that never happens again.

There was even reporting that they had made a request of the administration to be able to go there and they were turned down. I can't imagine turning down a group of World War II veterans who simply wanted to see and have access to the very memorial for which they fought and defended our country.

So those are the types of things that action taken by the Senate here could prevent, if in fact when these bills come over from the House of Representatives the Senate will act in an expeditious way, pick up those bills and pass them, so we can ensure that people have access to those types of monuments and memorials. We can ensure that veterans programs continue to be funded and operational. We can ensure the National Institutes of Health and the important work that it does continues, and we can ensure that our National Guard and Reserve also are funded through this time. It strikes me that is a very commonsense way to approach the situation in which we find ourselves today.

I hope that at the end of the day we can come to some resolution that would allow the government to be funded on a more sustainable basis. I think when we continue to do these things on a short-term basis, it is not a good way to govern a country as large as ours. We can do better. The American people deserve better. But at least, at a minimum, until we get that broader issue resolved, we ought to work and ensure that veterans and members of the Guard and Reserve, people who are visiting our country wanting to see the memorials and museums and that sort of thing have the opportunity to do that. We can do that today by picking up and passing the bills coming over from the House of Representatives.

Madam President, I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Maryland.

Mr. CARDIN. Madam President, let me review where we are.

Listening to my colleagues on both sides of the aisle talk about the effects of a government shutdown, I will admit I am pretty sensitive about this. My State of Maryland that I have the honor of representing is home to 286,000 Federal workers—124,000 furloughed today. We have 172,000 Federal workers who work in the State of Maryland. So I am very much aware of what the consequences of this government shutdown have been to our local economy. But let me review where we are, because I am one who wants to get together and get government open as quickly as possible. I hope we can reach agreements and move forward, pay our bills, get rid of sequestration, and get a budget that makes sense. But let me just review how we got to this point, because it has been 6 months since the Senate passed a budget. That is the blueprint for our committees to work.

The House passed a budget, which was different than the Senate budget. Then it was important for both sides to negotiate well before October 1 to get a budget we could agree on so we could pass the appropriations bills. But one party—and one party alone—refused to meet. That was the Republican Party. They refused to meet.

Then we got to October 1. This is not the first time in American history that Congress hasn't been able to pass appropriations bills by October 1. It happens too frequently. But what we do if we can't reach agreement is that we keep government open while we continue at last year's funding level. That is called a continuing resolution. That is what this body did. We passed a continuing resolution so the government would stay open at the funding level the Republicans wanted. We didn't want to get into that fight because of the importance of keeping government open.

Then we had the votes to pass that. We passed it here. We had the votes in the other body. But for one person—the Speaker of the House—not bringing that up for a vote in the House of Representatives where we could have had a bipartisan majority—the government shut down at midnight on September 30.

I know people say it is a Democrat speaking or a Republican speaking. So let me read from the Baltimore Sun today and what they said about the negotiations.

It would be tempting, of course, to write that this impasse—the inability to agree on a continuing resolution to fund government past the end of the fiscal year—was the fault of Democrats and Republicans alike. But that would be like blaming the hostages for causing the perpetrator to put a gun to their heads. As President Barack Obama noted, he and Congressional Democrats put forward no agenda other than keeping the government operating temporarily at current levels.

House Republicans set conditions, not Senate Democrats. It's not even clear how many in the GOP truly wanted this to happen. Conventional wisdom is that a so-called "clean" resolution funding government would have passed on a bipartisan vote if it had been allowed on the floor by House Speaker John Boehner—

The editorial goes on and I continue to quote.

Do House leaders think they can push the blame on President Obama? Some have already tried, but it sounds suspiciously like shoplifters blaming store owners for having so much tempting merchandise lying about. National polls show the public isn't buying it—most Americans didn't want the government to shutter over ObamaCare, and Congressional Republicans have a double-digit lead over the White House when it comes to the public's choice for who most deserves the most blame.

Even the unusual anti-government crowd can't find much comfort in this, as sending federal workers home isn't saving anybody any money. The last time the federal government had an extended shutdown—for 21 days in late 1995 to early 1996—it cost something on the order of \$2 billion. What an extraordinary waste of money, particularly at a time when conservatives claim to be worried about the deficit.

So it is hard to negotiate when one side has put on the table where we should be—allowing government to stay open using last year's numbers—and the other side brings in issues that are totally unrelated to the continuation of government.

Having said that, we have got to find a way to get government open. I am pleased the President is meeting with the leaders this afternoon. I am pleased they are also talking about making sure we pay our bills, which is at jeopardy in just 2 weeks.

I mentioned earlier that I am a little sensitive about this because of the impact it has on the economy of my State. It has an impact on the entire country. In my State, it is \$15 million a day in revenue that we lose directly as a result of the government shutdown. It has been estimated by Moody's Brian Kessler that if the shutdown went 3–4 weeks, it would cost our economy \$55 billion. This is no small impact on our economy. It is a major impact on our economy.

It is not just Federal workers who aren't going to get paychecks. It is the shop owners who depend on business that is going to be cut back. It is contractors who depend on the contracts being honored by the Federal Government, and the list goes on and on of the impact it has on our economy. As I quoted from the Sun paper, it is the taxpayers who will pick up the tab. They are not going to save any money. It is going to cost them money—not a few bucks. It is going to cost a lot of money. And every day we wait, it costs the taxpayers of this country more money. So we are interested in dealing with the deficit and keeping government operating. It is a huge waste of resources to shut down the government.

We are going to lose some vital services. Earlier today I held a conference with Senator MIKULSKI, Senator WARREN, and Senator BOXER where we went over some of the real impacts that occur, and we were joined by Federal workers that wanted to be at work, doing service to this country, but because of the government shutdown they were furloughed.

This is not the first attack against Federal workers we have seen. We have seen freezes on their budgets in the last couple of years. We have seen them furloughed as a result of sequestration. We have seen freezes on hiring so they are asked to do more with less. We have the fewest workers per capita in modern history, asked to do more work. Let me relate some of the stories, some of the accounts by people who came to Washington today so their stories can be told.

Marcelo Del Canto works for the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration. He works in Rockville. He lives in Poolesville, MD. He has been a Federal employee for 8 years. He does vital work to help prevent substance abuse. He has work on his desk that he could do today to help

keep people healthier. Instead, he is furloughed, sitting at home—can't go in to work.

We heard from Amy Fritz, a meteorologist and physical oceanographer at the National Weather Service. She works in Silver Spring, MD. I have been there. This is the agency that tracks the storms. Thank goodness we had reliable information about Hurricane Sandy. That work was done not on the weather channel, it was done by Federal public servants. Amy has a double degree. She is a national expert in this area.

Do you know what she said today? "How do I know we should not be tracking a storm right now, getting additional information to keep our country safe?" That is what is at stake. We have seen incredible weather episodes of late. Every person should be on board, doing their work. NOAA had to furlough, same as a layoff, 55 percent of their workforce, 6,633 employees furloughed as a result of the government shutdown.

We heard from Carter Kimsey. She works for the National Science Foundation. She has been there since 1976. She works with young people, getting them involved with science, awarding grants for the basic research that is critically important for economic growth and this country's competitiveness. She tells us she has work on her desk that is critically important to young people continuing in science. She can't work today because of the government shutdown. That is going to affect America's competitiveness. We are going to lose scientists. We are going to lose a great deal as a result of government being shut down.

I heard from Steve Hopkins, Office of Pesticide Programs at the Environmental Protection Agency. EPA had to furlough 94 percent of their workers; 15,181 workers were furloughed at EPA. What is he not doing today that he could have been doing? Helping keep our environment safe from the overuse of pesticides, making it a little bit safer for our children as they breathe the air and drink the water of this country. That is what is at jeopardy here.

I could tell you about their individual stories. When I talked to Marcelo Del Canto, he told me he recently purchased a home in Poolesville, MD. We are happy about that. But he has a mortgage payment. He is married. I asked how is his spouse doing? She is also furloughed. How are they going to make their mortgage payment?

Carter Kimsey was telling us about the ethics they use in scientific experiments. She talked about how they treat the animals they use. She said: You know, we make sure they get the resources necessary. They are fed, they are taken care of. How about our Federal workers? Shouldn't they have their paycheck to pay their food bills?

This is outrageous as far as being wasteful, as far as being against eco-

nomie growth in this country, but it is also wrong. It is wrong to the people who have been victimized by this, who do not know if they are going to get a paycheck. We have people working who do not know if they are going to get paid. We have people who are not working who do not know they are going to get the money to pay their bills. Where is the empathy here for what you are doing? This is outrageous.

My colleagues already talked about the National Institutes of Health located in Maryland; 73 percent of their employees are furloughed. Do you know what they do? Just the most incredible research in the world so we can stay healthy, we can find out the mysteries of incredible diseases. They are working on a vaccine now to deal with influenza to save millions of lives, and what do we do? Tell them to go home and not work? This is not a game. We are affecting people's lives by what we are doing here.

Two hundred patients will be denied care this week at NIH as a result of the shutdown. Who knows for one of those individuals whether it is a question of life or death? That is what is involved.

At the FDA, 45 percent of their employees are furloughed. They will not be able to conduct the inspections for the compliance and enforcement of our food laws, our food safety laws.

At the Department of Interior, 81 percent of their employees are furloughed. What an embarrassment.

I was talking to a reporter from another country.

What an embarrassment, the iconic national parks of America are closed, but it also affects the businesses all around those parks as well as inconveniencing the public.

At the Small Business Administration, two-thirds of their employees are furloughed. Suppose you are a small business person depending on a loan. You do not have the officer there to process that loan. What do you do?

The list goes on and on. I could go through every agency. There is only one answer to this: Keep government—not one agency, two agencies, three agencies—keep every agency open. That is the responsible thing for us to do. We should do that. We should make sure we pay our bills, and yes, we should negotiate a balanced way to move forward with a budget.

I have been talking on the floor many times about that. There is a give and take that we have to make on the budget moving forward. We have to balance our books. We need the revenues necessary to do it. We have to look at all spending, not just discretionary domestic spending. We have to look at all spending. We have to do that in a bipartisan manner because, guess what, the Republicans do not control the House, the Senate, and the White House, and the Democrats do not control the House.

The public expects us to work together on a budget. That is not what this debate is about. This debate is

about whether we are going to keep government open, whether we are going to pay our bills. We must do that for the sake of the people of this country.

I want to mention one other issue. I filed yesterday legislation with many of my colleagues to make it clear that those Federal workers who are furloughed, we are going to fight to do what we did in the 1990s when we went on government shutdown, and pay all Federal workers. They are innocent. They should be made whole. My legislation is cosponsored by many of my colleagues. We have bipartisan support in the House of Representatives. We have to make sure we get that bill passed so every Federal worker is made whole as a result of this shutdown that is not their fault.

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

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

EXTENSION OF MORNING BUSINESS

Mr. CARDIN. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent that morning business be extended until 5 p.m., and that all provisions under the previous order remain in effect, and that Senator REID be recognized following morning business and that all time spent in quorum calls be equally divided.

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

Mr. CARDIN. I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The bill clerk proceeded to call the roll.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Maryland.

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

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

CONTINUING APPROPRIATIONS

Ms. MIKULSKI. Madam President, I wish to speak as if in morning business and consume as much time as is necessary.

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

Ms. MIKULSKI. Wow, I think we are growing weary. I think we are growing weary of the gridlock, deadlock, and hammer lock on our government. I think we are growing weary of the partisan posturing by one faction in one party in one House. The American people want us to reopen government so that the government can meet the national security needs of the United States, protect the safety of the people of the United States, meet compelling human needs, and do what we can to

create jobs today, such as physical infrastructure, and to lay the groundwork for jobs tomorrow by investing in research and development.

The American people want a government that works as hard as they do, and so do I. Instead of working hard to serve our veterans or our elderly or promoting a growing economy, we are dealing with the shutdown of the government.

The House is sending us bills which on first blush seem attractive. I mean, who doesn't support our National Guard? Who doesn't want to fund NIH? I certainly do. NIH is located in my State. I am so proud of the men and women who work there. Funding also goes to great State universities doing research, such as the University of Wisconsin. They are out there doing it. We cannot cherry-pick. What they are doing now is a public relations ploy.

The House wants to send us cherry-picked solutions to the shutdown problem. It is contrived, and it is cynical. What I am asking the House of Representatives to do is take up the Senate bill we sent them that is a clean continued funding resolution. What does clean mean? It means it is stripped of politically motivated ideological riders.

The second thing is it would fund the government for 6 weeks. In that 6 weeks, it would give us the chance to work out what our funding should be for the rest of the year. I would hope we could find a way to cancel the sequester, which is to reduce public debt without reducing jobs or opportunity, and get us through the debt ceiling. Please—that bill is pending in the House now, and I ask that they do that instead of sending us these piecemeal solutions.

I remind my colleagues that the continuing funding resolution passed the Senate last Friday. It reopens the government, and it gives us the opportunity to renegotiate. I am willing to negotiate, but we can't capitulate to these partisan demands to defund ObamaCare and do other kinds of riders that work against us. To move forward, we need to pass the Senate continuing resolution.

I understand that later today the President is meeting with Speaker BOEHNER, NANCY PELOSI, Majority Leader REID, and Senator MCCONNELL. I hope that wiser heads will now prevail so we can get a path forward to reopen all of government, not just cherry-picked items—many of which are absolutely desirable—and open the entire Federal Government.

I know that the House wants to send something over to reopen NIH. Of course. That's what I just said. But what about the Centers for Disease Control? So we open NIH, but we don't open the Centers for Disease Control. It is an agency that is located in Atlanta, but it is part of our public health triad, which is the work at NIH, the work of the Food and Drug Administration, which stands sentry over the safety of our food supply and the safety and efficacy of our drugs and medical devices,

and then there is the Centers for Disease Control, which is down in Atlanta.

Right this very minute in Atlanta, GA, at the Centers for Disease Control, close to 9,000 people have been furloughed. Furlough is just a nice word that means layoff. It also means that it not only affects the labs in Atlanta, but it also affects labs in Colorado, Ohio, Pennsylvania, and West Virginia.

The work of the CDC is also nationwide because they are our biosurveillance system on infectious diseases. That means that State health departments—all 50 States and the territories—depend on the Centers for Disease Control to track and give them information on what the trends are related to infectious diseases. They are the ones who alert clinicians and pediatricians if there is a new kind of ear infection that could infect children. But because of the government shutdown, there is no one there who can do this.

Earlier this year—to give an example—Hepatitis A sickened 162 people in 10 States. The CDC linked the outbreak to pomegranate seeds coming in from a foreign country in a frozen berry mix. We were able to go right to the private sector. They complied with us right away, and we were able to get that off the market and contain this so it wouldn't spread to other people. They worked with the private sector in order to protect the American people.

Don't we want to reopen CDC? I could go over disease after disease and infection after infection which will not monitored. Let's take the common one, flu. We have all had the sniffles, but the sniffles can also kill people. On average more 200,000 Americans will be hospitalized because of flu and 3,000 Americans die from flu. Vaccines can prevent the flu.

The CDC, the Centers for Disease Control, were out there making sure there was enough vaccine available, that it was being distributed fairly and equitably in the United States, but also watching the infection trends because if a trend was heading to one State or one locale, the public health people could work together in order to accelerate or expand our flu vaccine. This is what they do.

Did you also know that there are disease detectives? Many people don't know that there are disease detectives. So what does Senator BARB mean when she says this?

Sometimes there is an outbreak and people get sick. People even die. They wonder what it is. They dial 911, and there is a group of people who are like a disease identification SWAT team. They work with the best and brightest at that State level, use the best technology in science from our country, and even around the world, to identify what that is. That is how we found out about Legionnaires' disease, and the Hantavirus disease which affected Indian reservations. That is how we

jumped in on the pomegranate seed situation. They get right in there. But you know what. Those people were furloughed. What is this?

Do I want to reopen NIH? I absolutely do, but I am going to talk about the Centers for Disease Control. I could also talk about other Federal employees and what shutting down means. It obviously isn't just public health.

I believe in Social Security. I really do. It has meant so much to so many people. It is one of the great earned benefits in our country. I want to make sure there is no false alarm here: Social Security checks will go out. However, as of this week, the people who work at Social Security, those who oversee eligibility benefits for the elderly and disability benefits for those who are unable to work, have been furloughed. Over the entire United States of America, Social Security has furloughed—there are 18,000 people who work in Social Security offices in local communities that were furloughed.

Social Security is everywhere. They provide access for the American people to apply for their Social Security, to apply for disability benefits, and also to apply for their Medicare—18,000 people. Social Security is headquartered in Maryland. This isn't because it is in Maryland. I know these workers. I know the exams they take to qualify to work for Social Security—whether it is a claims representative or an actuary predicting the trends. Those 18,000 people were proud to work for Social Security and make sure that one of the greatest social insurance programs ever was administered efficiently, effectively, and that the people who were eligible got what they earned.

Did you know that the overhead for running Social Security is less than 2 percent? It is lower than any private insurance company in America. Gosh. So they do it well and they do it smartly. They have been stretched because of sequester, but they are there. Right now, because of what we have been doing, we are only going to further delay these other benefits. So I want to open the doors of Social Security. When people apply, they want to be sure help is there. When people dial, they want people to be there.

That is all, by the way, coming back to NIH and what they want to send over from the House. It is in the Labor-HHS appropriations. That is under my very able subcommittee chairman, Senator TOM HARKIN.

Senator HARKIN has worked very hard on his bill to make sure we meet the needs but we do it in a way that is cost-efficient. Did my colleagues know that because of parliamentary obstructionism, Senator HARKIN has not been able to bring his bill to the floor since 2007—2007, year after year, hearing after hearing. When he wanted to bring up the funding for the Department of HHS, which these agencies are in—Education, as well as the Department of Labor, which has things such as mining safety in it—he could not even bring it

to the floor because they would not let him or it would be filibustered.

While everybody over there is strutting around saying we are going to fund NIH, after we shamed them into it yesterday, what they don't tell us is they can't move the Labor-HHS bill in the House. Do we know why? Because they fund it at \$122 billion. Do we know what level that is? That is the 2003 level. It is not even the 2012 level or the 2010 level. They want to fund it back to George Bush and right around the funding level of 2003. They want to take us back a decade. They want to take us back to the Dark Ages. Well, not in the Senate.

Senator HARKIN wanted to come to the floor with funding at \$164 billion, a slight increase from last year. There is a 42-percent difference between the House and the Senate Labor-HHS bill: \$164 billion to \$122 billion.

I want Senator HARKIN to be able to bring his bill to the floor and debate it. Do we want an NIH? Let's fund it. Do we want a Centers for Disease Control, which is in the State of Georgia, with two excellent Senators from Georgia. Then fund it. Let's debate. Let's discuss. Let's amend. Senator HARKIN cannot even get it to the floor. Over in the House, they can't move it either because the funding for Health and Human Services, Education, and the Department of Labor is at the 2003 level. So while they want to send us an individual bill for an individual agency—for HHS and so on—as desirable as it is, I want to reopen government. That is what the Senate bill is. I want to reopen negotiations. I would like to return to a regular order, where using the parliamentary tools, tactics, and even tricks cannot delay bringing a bill to the floor. Since 2007, Senator HARKIN has not been able to bring a bill to the floor for an open debate, unfettered by filibuster, to be able to discuss this.

So this is what this is all about. This isn't about numbers. This is about meeting compelling human needs. In the Labor-HHS subcommittee, we fund NIH, the Centers for Disease Control, the Social Security Administration, mining safety, Department of Education. This is what we should be working on. We should be working on education, money for the disabled, et cetera.

So I come to the floor again as the chair of the Appropriations Committee. I am proud of the work my subcommittee chairmen have done in getting bills ready to come to the floor for debate by following regular order. I so appreciate the cooperation we have received from the other side of the aisle in our committee. There has been a great sense of cooperation. We have had disputes and disagreements on funding levels and even matters of policy, but I had an open amendment process. Everybody had their say. Everybody had their day. We moved the bills forward. That is called regular order. That is called democracy. Everybody has their day and everybody has their say. But let's move the bill.

So let's reopen government. Let's have a true negotiation. I hope that out of the 5:30 meeting will come a path forward. But we have one now: Pass the Senate resolution in the House, come back, and let's let the work of the Senate and the U.S. Government get going again.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. HEINRICH). The Senator from Wyoming.

Mr. ENZI. Mr. President, I wish to thank the chairman of the Appropriations Committee for her comments and all of the effort she has made and the bipartisan cooperation there has been to get bills to the floor. But we are in kind of a pickle right now. We are talking about a continuing resolution. A continuing resolution means we didn't get our work done. If we had the appropriations bills passed through this body, we wouldn't need a continuing resolution. Every agency would understand what it can spend for the whole next year. Instead, we are quibbling over how long a continuing resolution we ought to have and what ought to be in it.

We haven't done total appropriations by the October 1 deadline for I am not even sure how many years. That would be the answer to what we are going through right now. If we got to debate each of those bills in a timely fashion, with an open amendment process—I appreciate there has been an open amendment process in the committee. I am always disturbed that we haven't had much of an open amendment process around here on the floor. Every time a bill comes to the floor—almost every time a bill comes to the floor—there are negotiations about how many amendments each side can have. I have seen those negotiations go on for 2 weeks. Do you know how many amendments we could vote on in 2 weeks? I think we could probably vote on 50, maybe 100 in 2 weeks. Instead, we don't vote on amendments, which gives everyone the impression, of course, that there isn't an open amendment process.

The longer the stopper is kept in the bottle, the more anger there is around here. I would say there is anger on both sides because both sides have amendments they would like to bring up.

We have to quit dealmaking and start legislating around here. This is the way this process was designed. They had legislation in the committee, but we need to have the ability to legislate on the floor—not allocating something to a few people on both sides of the aisle and both ends of the building to come back with some kind of a proposal by some kind of a fiscal falloff date, and that fiscal falloff date, of course, happens to be in statute that the year begins on October 1. That was yesterday. That is when every agency is supposed to know exactly how much they can spend.

How has that been affecting us? There was a sequester. The interesting thing about the sequester is it was 2.3 percent of the amount of money an

agency, program, department was to get. What did it actually turn out to be? It turned out to be 5.3 percent. Why did it turn out to be 5.3 percent? We were already eight-twelfths of the way through the year before they found out that there was going to be a sequester, that they found out for sure that there was going to be a limitation on their spending. They had already spent one-twelfth of what they spent the year before, each month, during that 8-month period and then found out that for the whole year's worth of revenue that they got—eight-twelfths of what they already spent—they have to take a 2.3-percent cut. That makes it a 5.3 cut. That makes it much more difficult.

Actually, CBO scored my penny plan—that is where we just do a 1-percent reduction in every dollar the U.S. Government spends, with flexibility—and if we add that to the sequester, which would bring it to 3.3 percent, they say the budget would balance in 2 years—2 years we could balance the budget. It hasn't happened for over a decade. It only happened four times, I think, in the last 50 years. But we could do it, and I am pretty sure the people would say if we had our appropriations done timely so the agencies knew what they were doing on October 1 and then had a sequester plus 1 percent, I think they could live with it. I think they could make effective cuts, if they wanted to.

One of our problems around here is that government doesn't usually like to make effective cuts. Government likes to make it hurt. When it hurts, people come back and are very upset at what has been taken away from them. But we have a lot of redundancy in government. We have a lot of waste. We have a lot of programs that are happening in a whole bunch of different agencies, none of which are effective, but we are still doing it everywhere. We could get rid of all that duplication or at least half of it. Half of it is all that could be totally effective and give them a little bit of a bonus for doing it. But we are now at a point where we are going to make it hurt.

There were World War II veterans in town yesterday. They were flown in here so they could see their memorial, a tribute to their tremendous efforts. What did they find? They found barricades. I have been to the World War II Memorial a lot of times. There haven't been any barricades there. I also didn't see another person there if I was there late at night. So what was the purpose of the barricades? We have the national parks. Did the national parks get shut down?

Here is the extreme this is being carried to: Over in Teton National Park they even have barricades at the turnouts. Turnouts can be used to fix a flat tire or get a rest if one is tired of driving. They can also be used to take pictures of gorgeous scenery such as the Tetons. That is what the turnouts are primarily designed for. But how much does it cost us if somebody pulls off

and takes a picture of mountains? How much could that cost us? How much does it save us by putting up barricades so they can't pull off the road? How much did it cost us to put barricades out there so they can't pull off the road and take pictures of the Tetons?

Throughout government, we are trying to make it hurt. We are trying to emphasize to people that we did so poorly they need to suffer, and if they suffer enough, they will get hold of us and make us reverse what we have done. We should have been busy last April working on appropriations and working through that process.

The President is about to leave on a trip. I am not planning on leaving until everything has been cleared up here, and I would suggest that he not do that either.

I got an interesting letter from one of my constituents that says: How does the private sector see the Federal Government? The private sector sees the Federal Government as a wagon being pulled by the private sector, and the wagon is filled with people who work for the Federal Government, and there aren't enough people pulling the wagon and too many people riding in the wagon. He makes quite a point. He does admit that the people riding in the wagon pay taxes too, but he also points out that those taxes came from the private sector to pay the wages from which the taxes are taken. So, yes, there are people riding in the wagon, even though they are working as well, but he is pointing out how the private sector has this extra load and now they are getting a little bit more of a load. He makes the point that we need more people in the private sector and said that maybe the private sector ought to shut down.

What would happen if the private sector shut down? What would happen if trucks did not haul any more goods across this country? What happens if the filling stations do not open? What happens with the myriad of things, groceries, the things we count on every day that come from the private sector? He just wanted me to know he is tired of pulling the wagon with so many people in the wagon.

We have a chance to reduce the load in the wagon, and we ought to take advantage of that, but we are not. We need to take advantage of that in a timely manner, and we need to get this wrapped up and get the government under way so people are not suffering in the "make it hurt atmosphere" we have right now. There is another way to do it. There is a better way to do it. We should have done it. We should have been doing it much earlier.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The majority leader.

Mr. REID. Mr. President, I have great affection for my friend from Wyoming. He is a fine man. I enjoy working with him. I am not going to nitpick what he said, but I am going to direct my attention to one thing he said: Why

didn't we do our appropriations bills? Mr. President, please, I would not expect that coming from him. We have tried. We were filibustered. We tried one here. Remember Transportation appropriations? We got one Republican vote. SUSAN COLLINS. They killed that. So do not come and lecture us on why didn't we do the bills last April.

I have often said I sympathize with JOHN BOEHNER, and I do. He has a very difficult job. Even when the Speaker would prefer to be reasonable, when he would prefer to be the Speaker of the House of Representatives—the whole House, Democrats and Republicans, because that is what he is—instead of just Speaker of the Republicans in the House of Representatives and sometimes appearing to be the Speaker for a minority within his majority—he seems to be kowtowing to everything they ask. This is the tea party. These voices in his caucus push him further and further to the right and over the cliff.

It can be difficult to balance the responsibilities of remaining true to one's party's core beliefs and doing the right thing for the government as a whole.

I would like to give a personal example. I try not to do that often, but I will give one today.

The Presiding Officer was not here during the Iraq war. I did not just oppose it, I thought it was bad for our country. I will give you some reasons why I did not like it at all. I hated it as much as I am sure JOHN BOEHNER dislikes the Affordable Care Act. But even though I voted for the 2002 authorization to confront Saddam Hussein, I quickly was appalled at how that authority was used, and the information that got me to vote for it was absolutely false. There were no clear objectives, not a coherent strategy. No one even knew in the administration the difference between Shias and Sunnis. There was no international support for that.

I spent many, for lack of a better description, gut-wrenching nights and some days trying to figure out what I should do. I was disgusted and mad at President Bush and Republicans in Congress that even one more American would be killed or maimed. I was so angry that I said things I wish I had not. They are in the history books. They are there. Some of my friends on the other side of the aisle, especially JOHN MCCAIN, as he can do, told me how wrong I was in opposing the war.

I thought I would be willing to do anything to stop that war, but I faced a choice in 2007. The Commander in Chief, President George Bush, requested \$93 billion for additional government funding to continue the war. Without that, no more war.

Congress sent President Bush a supplemental appropriations bill that ended his blank check in Iraq. He vetoed that bill. At this point, I could have taken the very same steps Speaker BOEHNER has taken this week. I

could have blocked funding for the Federal Government in order to block funding for that war. I faced immense pressure from the left—moveon.org. Oh, I got thousands and thousands and thousands of e-mails and letters from that organization, from my own base, to do just that.

It was a very difficult choice for me. I could put my own opposition to that senseless war and my fellow Democrats' opposition to the war before everything else. But as the leader of the Senate, I had an obligation to ensure the smooth operation of the Federal Government. I could not do both. I tried to figure out a way to do both. I could not figure out a way because there was no way. I could not do both.

It is a decision I took extremely seriously, as I know anyone else would. In the end, I actually defied the strident voices on the left urging me to stay true to my personal belief that the war in Iraq was an unjust war and that I should end that war at any cost, but I felt I had other responsibilities; one was to make sure our government was funded, that we did not lose face in front of the international community and resort to that kind of extremist legislative tactic. So we funded the government. We funded the war I did not like. My choice made a lot of Democrats very unhappy. It made people on my own staff upset with me, their boss. But looking back on that decision, I came to the right decision, in my own mind.

Today, the country finds itself perhaps in a similar situation. Republicans in Congress, for reasons we have discussed on the floor, are obsessed with ObamaCare. They do not like it. I have no reason to doubt their sincerity. I doubt their logic, but I do not doubt their sincerity when they say they believe the Affordable Care Act is damaging our country. They are wrong. They are wrong now, and time will show how truly wrong they are because millions of Americans, right now today, are already benefiting from this law, and millions more will benefit in the years to come. So when these history books are written that people will read, ObamaCare will be seen as one of the greatest single steps to help America. It is in the same league as Social Security and Medicare and it will provide quality affordable health care for America—all Americans. I understand why my Republican colleagues disagree with what I just said.

Unfortunately, though, when Speaker BOEHNER was faced with the same choice I was faced with in 2007, he made a very different decision. He put his own opposition to ObamaCare and his fellow Republicans' opposition to ObamaCare above all else, even above ensuring the strength of our economy and the smooth operation of this government we love. History will prove that to be shortsighted and wrong. But regardless of right or wrong, our responsibility as leaders is to find a path forward to reopen the government and protect our economy.

So earlier today, at a quarter to 11 or thereabouts—no, it was a quarter to 12 this morning—I offered JOHN BOEHNER, the Speaker of the House of Representatives, a reasonable compromise that respects both of our priorities.

Before the House is a Senate-passed legislative tool to reopen the government. The measure funds the government at the level chosen by not us but the House leaders, a level much lower than I would have chosen or Senator MURRAY would have chosen or the chairman of our Appropriations Committee Senator MIKULSKI would have chosen.

I propose that the Speaker allow this joint resolution to come for a vote before the full House of Representatives. Every Democrat will vote for that over there, and according to news reports, more than 100 House Republicans are prepared to vote for it as well.

In short, what it says is: Reopen the government. Then I, on behalf of the Democratic caucus, commit to name conferees to a budget conference, as the Speaker has requested. This conference can engage on the important fiscal issues facing our Nation. The Speaker has often cited these fiscal issues as the most important challenge to our generation.

A conference will be an appropriate place to have these discussions. In a letter that I wrote to the Speaker, we did not limit what we would talk about in the conference. In fact, I will read parts of this letter:

Now we find ourselves at loggerheads.

I say in the letter to JOHN BOEHNER:

There needs to be a path forward to reopen our Government and protect our economy. This is a communication to you offering a sensible, reasonable compromise.

Before the House you have the Senate-passed measure to reopen the Government, funded at the level that the House chose in its own legislation. I propose that you allow this joint resolution to pass, reopening the Government. And I commit to name conferees to a budget conference, as soon as the Government reopens. That conference can discuss the important fiscal issues facing our Nation. You and your Colleagues have repeatedly cited these fiscal issues as the things on which we need to work. This conference would be an appropriate place to have those discussions, where participants could raise whatever proposals—such as tax reform, health care, agriculture, and certainly discretionary spending like veterans, National Parks, and NIH—they felt appropriate.

That is pretty direct and to the point. These conferees could do whatever they wanted without the threat of a government shutdown and ensuing economic collapse hanging over their heads.

Together, we can end this government shutdown and work to address the important issues facing our Nation. Together, we can work to put our nation on sound fiscal footing by engaging in a responsible, long-term budget process—not 5 weeks like the CR that is now before us.

This morning on the Senate floor I warned of the effects of a Republican

government shutdown that have already come to bear. My colleagues have done this all day about what has this done to Federal employees generally? What has it done to NIH? What has it done to transportation? What has it done to the Centers for Disease Control? And on and on with all these programs that are now stunningly stopped.

There are many unintended consequences of this irresponsible and shortsighted shutdown. It is reckless and irresponsible.

But Speaker BOEHNER can end this Republican government shutdown today. We have given him what he wants. They sent over from the House: Let's go to conference. We are saying: We will go to conference on anything you want to go to conference on.

Defy the strident voices on the right urging you to put your personal beliefs and the beliefs of your caucus before the strength of our economy and the needs of our country.

I ask unanimous consent that the letter to which I referred be printed in the RECORD.

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

U.S. SENATE,

Washington, DC, October 2, 2013.

Hon. JOHN BOEHNER,
Speaker, House of Representatives,
Washington, DC.

DEAR MR. SPEAKER: I hated the Iraq war. I think I hated it as much as you hate the Affordable Care Act. Even though I voted in 2002 to give President Bush the authority to confront Saddam Hussein, I became appalled at how that authority was used—without clear objectives, a coherent strategy, or significant international support. There were many gut-wrenching nights when I struggled over what I needed to do to end the carnage. In those days, when President Bush was Commander in Chief, I could have taken the steps that you are taking now to block Government funding in order to gain leverage to end the war. I faced a lot of pressure from my own base to take that action. But I did not do that. I felt that it would have been devastating to America. Therefore, the Government was funded.

Now we find ourselves at loggerheads. There needs to be a path forward to reopen our Government and protect our economy. This is a communication to you offering a sensible, reasonable compromise.

Before the House you have the Senate-passed measure to reopen the Government, funded at the level that the House chose in its own legislation. I propose that you allow this joint resolution to pass, reopening the Government. And I commit to name conferees to a budget conference, as soon as the Government reopens. That conference can discuss the important fiscal issues facing our Nation. You and your Colleagues have repeatedly cited these fiscal issues as the things on which we need to work. This conference would be an appropriate place to have those discussions, where participants could raise whatever proposals—such as tax reform, health care, agriculture, and certainly discretionary spending like veterans, National Parks, and NIH—they felt appropriate.

I hope that we can work together in this fashion. Together, we can end this Government shutdown and work to address the important fiscal issues facing our Nation. I look forward to hearing from you.

Sincerely,

HARRY REID,
United States Senator.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Washington.

Mrs. MURRAY. Mr. President, Democrats and Republicans have some serious differences when it comes to our policies and our values and our priorities. But one thing we should be able to agree on—the bare minimum expected of us in Congress—is that we should not actively allow our constituents to be hurt.

That is why Senate Democrats will be here today with a clear message to Republicans: Open the government. End the shutdown. Allow the government to open, make sure our families and communities that we represent do not have to pay the price for the disagreements we have and then come back to the table and work with us on a long-term budget deal to avoid these constant crises.

Majority Leader REID has made it very clear to Speaker BOEHNER that he is willing to sit down and talk, and I truly hope House Republicans take him up on that.

On Monday night, as the government was shutting down, Speaker BOEHNER and the House Republicans lurched even deeper into the theater of the absurd. I was shocked. I could not believe my ears when I heard, with minutes to go before the shutdown began, Speaker BOEHNER was asking us for a conference on the spending bill. I thought: Is he serious? Is this some kind of joke?

Even by the standards of a party that shut down the government to stop the health care reform law that was going to come online yesterday, no matter what they did, that was bizarre.

I say to Speaker BOEHNER today: Yes, let's start a budget conference. It is a bit late. I have been fighting to start one for 6 months, but better late than never. Let's sit down, let's negotiate, let's work toward the balanced and bipartisan long-term budget deal that our constituents are expecting—a real budget conference, not like the photo op we saw in the House of Representatives yesterday; a budget conference where the two sides can sit at a table, offer some compromises and work toward a balanced and bipartisan long-term budget deal the American people expect.

But there is one condition. It is a reasonable one. It could not be more important. Speaker BOEHNER and the House Republicans should stop allowing our families and our communities to be hurt while we negotiate. They should pass our short-term bill, reopen the government, and then join us at the table for a budget conference where we can work together toward a long-term deal. This is common sense. It is the responsible thing to do. There is absolutely no reason why we should

not get the government back open, right now, while all of us get in a room and work on a deal.

Given that Republicans spent the day yesterday talking about their newfound interest in a conference, I think it would be helpful to go back a bit to remind people who are following us here today how we got to this point.

For 4 years Republicans in the Senate and in the House said it was critical that the Senate pass a budget. They came here to the floor, they blasted out press releases, they made it part of every one of their campaigns across the country.

At the beginning of this year, it seemed that Democrats and Republicans agreed on at least one thing: The budget debate should proceed through regular order. The House was going to pass their budget, the Senate was going to pass ours, and then we were going to get together in a conference room and work out our differences.

Senator MCCONNELL said back then that once the Senate and House passed budgets, “the work of conferencing must begin.” Republicans said a conference was the “best vehicle” for the budget debate “because we are doing it in plain sight.”

I absolutely agree. The Senate Budget Committee wrote our strong pro-growth, pro-middle-class long-term budget. I am sure the hours that we spent debating this budget are not forgotten by anybody on this floor. We spent a week here in an open process debating and voting on amendment after amendment until the very wee hours of the morning. On March 23, the Senate passed our budget. We all remember that. The House, by the way, passed theirs earlier that day.

I thought the next step would be we would go to a conference as quickly as possible. I went to the House Budget Committee chairman, Chairman RYAN. I told him the American people were expecting all of us to get in a room and work it out. I thought it was a no-brainer. We had significant differences between our two budgets, but I was ready to go to work with my colleagues and make compromises.

With 6 months to go before the end of the fiscal year, we had plenty of time. But I was absolutely floored when I heard the House Republicans had changed their mind. They no longer wanted to go to conference. They no longer wanted to follow regular order.

I am sure the idea of debating their budget and having it compared in an open and public forum was pretty unpleasant to them. They knew how unpopular their plans were to end Medicare as we know it and to cut taxes to the rich. But they put it in their budget and now it was their job to negotiate with them.

I came here to the Senate floor and I asked for consent to go to a budget conference. I was joined by Senator REID and many others. We asked to begin bipartisan negotiations. But Senate Republicans said no. We tried again

and again and again. On April 23, we were blocked—April 23, blocked by Senator TOOMEY; on May 6, Senator CRUZ stood up and objected; on May 7, May 8, May 9, May 14, and May 15, Senator MCCONNELL said no; on May 16, Senator LEE said no; on May 21, Senator PAUL blocked our negotiation; May 22, it was Senator RUBIO; May 23, Senator LEE; June 4, Senator RUBIO; June 12, Senator LEE; June 19, Senator TOOMEY; June 26, Senator CRUZ; July 11, Senator RUBIO; July 17, Senator LEE; on August 1, Senator RUBIO blocked us from starting a conference, right before the August recess.

We have come here 18 times. Every single time we tried to get in that room, every time we tried to start a conference and negotiate, Republicans stood and they blocked us.

By the way, it was not just Democrats either. Quite a few of our Senate Republicans joined us in pushing for a conference. My colleague Senator MCCAIN joined Democrats on the floor and said blocking a conference was “incomprehensible” and “insane.”

Senator CORKER said to “keep from appointing conferees is not consistent.”

Senator FLAKE said he “would like to see a conference.”

Republicans offered one excuse after another. By the way, none of them add up. First, they said they wanted a preconference framework, even though that is exactly what a budget is, and was exactly what we were negotiating over.

Then they said they would not allow us to go to conference unless we guaranteed in our budget that the wealthiest Americans and biggest corporations would be protected from paying a penny more in taxes. Then they said they did not want a bipartisan conference to take away the leverage that they would have during a debt ceiling debate. Then they called for a “do-over” of the budget debate, including another 50 hours of debate here on the floor, and a whole new round of unlimited amendments, even after, I will remind all of us, many of them praised the open floor debate that we had during the Senate budget debate.

Their story kept changing. Senator MCCAIN said Republicans’ preconditions and excuses were “absolutely out of line and unprecedented.” Senator COLLINS said that even though there is a lot we do not see eye to eye on, we should at least go to conference and make our best effort to make a deal.

The stalling from some Republicans was, to quote Senators MCCAIN and COLLINS, “a little bit bizarre” and “ironic, to say the least.”

Republicans kept making excuses for stalling. But the bottom line was that after spending years saying the most important thing was for the Senate to pass a budget, once we did, they ran away as quickly as they could. You know, I told Republicans again and again, right here on the Senate floor

and when I talked to them in private, if you do not join us in a conference and give us the time we need to work out a deal, you are going to be pushing us into a completely avoidable crisis. They did not listen. They did not want to conference. They did not want to negotiate. They thought they would have more leverage in a crisis. They were doing everything they could to push us to one. Well, they were right; they pushed us into a crisis. Now families across our country are paying the price.

If Speaker BOEHNER truly wants to negotiate and end this lurching from crisis to crisis, he would let the House vote to keep the government open. It would pass, by the way, with a strong bipartisan vote. Then he would join us at the table in a conference that I have been trying to start for months.

I am going to ask unanimous consent for the 19th time to start a budget conference. To be very clear, this is not a replacement for an immediate end to this shutdown. It would build on a short-term bill to end this crisis. It is not to negotiate a short-term deal while our families and our communities are being hurt by a shutdown. It is to make sure the door is open for long-term negotiations that can start as soon as the threat of a shutdown is taken off the table.

I am hopeful our Republican colleagues on the other side of the aisle who have watched as our constituents look on in amazement at the Senate and House as they say: We were unable to do the job that we have been asked to do, which is to govern the country in a responsible way—I would hope they would take a moment to pause and to say: It is time to stand. It is time to be a leader. It is time to stop holding our country and our communities hostage. It is time to stop putting fear into the lives of so many people. It is time to say, yes, we are going to open the government, we are not going to hold this country hostage, we are going to do our job. That is simply what we are asking to do today, allow the Senate bill to come up for a vote in the House. It will pass. We know we have the votes, Republicans and Democrats together, who want to stop this crisis.

Then we will sit down and do what we have been asked to do by the Republicans for a number of years now, to write a budget, to have the House write a budget and sit down and work out our differences.

I see Senator DURBIN here on the floor. Senator DURBIN worked on the Simpson-Bowles Commission for many years to try and resolve our differences. I think he would agree with me, it is time to get this done.

I see Senator WARNER on the floor right now. He has spent a great deal of time working to get us to a point where we can solve this crisis and have a way to go forward and a path that our country can rely on.

I think many of our colleagues are ready to get past this crisis, are ready

to open the government, and begin the responsible thing of working in the way we are supposed to. I hope they listen to Senator REID and what he offered them today. I hope they do the right thing so families across our country do not have to continue bearing the burden of the Republican Party's dysfunction and division.

With that, I ask unanimous consent that when the Senate receives a message from the House that they have passed H.J. Res. 59, as amended by the Senate, the Senate then proceed to the consideration of Calendar No. 33, H. Con. Res. 25; that the amendment at the desk, which is the text of S. Con. Res. 8, the budget resolution passed by the Senate, be inserted in lieu thereof; that H. Con. Res. 25, as amended, be agreed to, the motion to reconsider be considered made and laid upon the table; that the Senate proceed to a vote on a motion to insist on its amendment, request a conference with the House on the disagreeing votes of the two Houses, and authorize the Chair to appoint conferees on the part of the Senate, with all of the above occurring with no intervening action or debate.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection?

Mr. REID. Mr. President, in a second I am going to ask we go into a quorum call so the Republicans can give this due consideration. I do not want to try to rush into this, so we are going to go into a quorum call, giving the Republicans the opportunity to look at and study this consent agreement.

We have done what we thought the Speaker would want, what the Republican leader would want. We have said we will discuss whatever you want to talk about in the conference. We hope this is something they will accept.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

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

Is there objection to the request of the Senator from Washington?

The Senator from Pennsylvania.

Mr. TOOMEY. Reserving the right to object, I would point out a couple of things I didn't hear in the discussion of the Senator from Washington.

One is the fact that the House has passed three different measures to fund the government. That has already happened. They were sent over here, and each one was rejected by the Senate Democrats, one after another, so that we are now in a government shutdown.

I would also point out that after the Senate Democrats rejected every measure the Republicans sent over to fund the government, the Republican House sent over a measure to go to conference so that we could resolve this problem. I find it a little bit ironic, to say the

least, that our Democratic colleagues are saying: We need to go to conference on the budget resolution. Now, I know the terminology here can get confusing for people, but that is a vehicle that has nothing to do with the immediate problem we have right now, which is the funding of the government, because we don't have a continuing resolution to actually fund the discretionary spending of the government, and that having expired and our Democratic friends having voted down every attempt by the Republicans to fund the government, we are in this bind.

Now we have the unanimous consent request, if I have this right, that says that if the Republicans agree to every demand the Democrats have made beforehand, initially, then and only then would our Democratic friends like to have a conference on the budget. This is what I am hearing.

What I would ask is whether the Senator from Washington would consider a modification to the unanimous consent request, and this would be two things. One would be that they also would agree to go to conference on the CR so we can work out the problem that is preventing us from reopening the government. The other would be that when we go to conference—

Mr. SCHUMER. Would the Senator yield for a clarification?

Mr. TOOMEY. I yield to the Senator.

Mr. SCHUMER. Your request that we go to conference would be while the government is shut down. It doesn't matter in your request whether the government is shut down or not; is that correct?

Mr. TOOMEY. My request is that we try to find a resolution to the shutdown. Go to conference—

Mr. SCHUMER. While the government is shut down?

Mr. TOOMEY. Go immediately, right now. The government is shut down. Let's go right now to conference as the House has requested so that we can reopen the government and can work out an agreement rather than have this impasse. Let's try to break the impasse by trying to go to conference. That would be one condition.

Then I would go back to what our concern has been about the budget conference all along. I have asked unanimous consent to go to conference on the budget. I am a member of the Finance Committee. I would like us to do that. What I have objected to and what many of us have objected to is using it as an opportunity to break the Senate rules and airdrop in a debt ceiling increase without the opportunity to have the 60-vote threshold we ought to have in the Senate if we are going to consider increasing the debt burden on the American people.

I would ask unanimous consent that the Senator from Washington agree to those two modifications.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Does the Senator so modify her request?

Mrs. MURRAY. Mr. President, reserving the right to object, let me

make it very clear that what the Senator from Pennsylvania is asking is that we continue to hold our country, our communities, and our families hostage while they try to get something out of a conference. Mainly, the Senator is talking about saying ObamaCare will be repealed unless we pass a very short-term—a few weeks—continuing resolution. That is completely unacceptable not only to this Senator but to the vast majority of Americans.

The Senator is also saying we can talk while everyone is not at work while the government is shut down. We have been asking to talk for a long time, but the American people deserve to be able to go to work, get their paychecks, and to have our communities and our country running without the threat of this over their heads.

I object to the Senator's request.

I repeat my request that we allow the House to vote on the bill that was sent over to them, that they have the votes on, open the government, and then do as we have asked 19 times, do what the American people expect us to do, which is to go to conference and work out our disagreements.

I renew my original request.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection to the request of the Senator from Washington?

Mr. TOOMEY. The Senator from Washington objects to my request that we go to conference so we can resolve the impasse of the shutdown of government and instead wishes to go to conference on something else, which is the budget resolution, in the event it does not reopen the government.

I object.

Mrs. MURRAY. I object.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Objection is heard.

Mrs. MURRAY. Let me make it clear. The Senator from Washington does not believe we should be negotiating in the dark of night. The government should be open, public, and people should be able to see what we are doing. That is why our unanimous request was so important. I am so disappointed the Republicans are saying: Hold the country hostage. That is the place we are left in.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from New York.

Mr. SCHUMER. I know my colleague from Pennsylvania has gone. Let's clarify a few things because obfuscation is the rule of the day when you are not holding many cards.

First, the Senator from Pennsylvania said they have asked to open the government—they have asked, rather, to go to conference three times and open the government. Yes, they have—if ObamaCare is repealed, if ObamaCare is delayed for 1 year, and if the individual mandate is delayed for 1 year. That is not a request to go to conference. That is saying: Unless I get my way on ObamaCare—which has been voted on by these Chambers, which has been litigated in the election—I am

going to shut the government down. Their position hasn't changed. The bottom line is very simple. The bottom line now is very simple. The bottom line now is, oh, let's go to conference. All of a sudden—sure. Let's go to conference while cancer treatments are being refused. The more we delay, the worse that is. Let's go to conference while veterans' benefits can't be processed, and the more we delay, the more veterans will be hurt. Let's go to conference before 800,000 people get their paychecks, which they need to feed their families. Let's go to conference while the Statue of Liberty is closed and my little sandwich shop nearby is not making any revenue.

Please, I say to my colleague, what the Senator wants to do is use a bludgeon since a small group of tea party fanatics, as they are called, has Speaker BOEHNER in the palm of their hand and they have the power not to fund the government. They say: Until you do what we want, we won't fund the government. So nothing has changed, and there is no concession or willingness to negotiate on a fair basis by the other side—no.

Let me repeat to my colleague from Pennsylvania, you have it backward. You are saying: Let's negotiate, and then we might open the government. The right way to do it is by the resolution offered by the chairwoman of the Budget Committee. Let's open the government, and then we will be happy to sit down and negotiate. That is the fundamental difference here.

On whose side are the American people? Ours—70 to 22. On whose side is every Democrat at each end of Pennsylvania Avenue? Ours, of course. If you look at the quotations in the House and Senate, a large number of votes from the other side of the aisle are on our side too. But because a small number of irresponsible members of the tea party have Speaker BOEHNER in their control right now, we can't succeed. So the tea party shutdown, the shutdown, originated, engineered, and put into place by the tea party with Speaker BOEHNER's fearful acquiescence, is still the law of the day. It will not be for much longer. The pressure from the public, on the economy, and the pressure from Members on the other side of the aisle will increase, and I believe in a short while—in a short while—the other side will have to say: OK, we will fund the government; now let's sit down and talk. That is what Leader REID and Chairwoman MURRAY have simply asked for today. It will just take a few days more, but it will happen.

I wish the other side would acquiesce now because so many innocent millions are being held hostage and being hurt.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The assistant majority leader.

Mr. DURBIN. Mr. President, the unanimous consent request made by the Senator from the State of Washington is eminently sensible. It basi-

cally says: Why hold 800,000 Federal employees hostage while we go about the negotiation of our future budget? The majority leader has made this offer. He has said we are going to go forward. He has offered to Speaker BOEHNER the opportunity—the opportunity—for us to open the government and then get into meaningful negotiations on all of the major issues.

So what do we hear from the Senator from Pennsylvania, Senator TOOMEY? His objection. He wants to continue to keep the government shut down while we are supposed to initiate negotiations. Who pays the price for that? Well, it wouldn't be any Senator. The people who pay a price for it are those 800,000 furloughed employees and all of the people in America who count on their services every single day.

I have said it before, but it bears repeating. Two hundred people were turned away from the National Institutes of Health this week who wanted to enter clinical trials because of a serious life-threatening illness, including 30 children—cancer patients coming to the NIH with their parents for one last hopeful move to save their lives. So the Senator from Pennsylvania says: Sorry, we can't take care of those children. We can't take care of those seriously ill Americans. We have to sit down and negotiate.

It is easy for him, and perhaps easy for others to say it is all about us, but it isn't. It is all about America. It is all about the people we were sent here to represent. It is all about the reputation of this Nation.

What it will take to get beyond this current crisis is very obvious. We have unity on the Democratic side to open the government. We have sent a continuing resolution to the House to do the same. What has to happen now is for moderate Republicans to step forward.

It is interesting to me in the last 48 hours how few have come to the Senate Floor to talk about this issue. Privately they tell me they are torn and worried over what this is doing to our country and what it is doing to their party. But some moderate Republicans in the House of Representatives have spoken. I would like to, if I can, at this point, recount what has been said by some of those who have spoken.

Representative PAT MEEHAN, Republican of Pennsylvania, said:

At this point, I believe it's time for the House to vote for a clean, short-term funding bill to bring the Senate to the table and negotiate a responsible compromise.

A clean short-term funding bill. That has already passed the Senate. It is sitting in the House waiting for the Speaker to call it up.

Representative MIKE FITZPATRICK, another Republican from Pennsylvania. A Fitzpatrick aide tells the Philadelphia Inquirer the Congressman would support a clean funding bill if it came up for a vote.

Representative LOU BARLETTA, Republican of Pennsylvania. Barletta said

he would “absolutely” vote for a clean bill in order to avert a shutdown of the government.

Representative CHARLIE DENT, Republican of Pennsylvania said: “I’m prepared to vote for a clean continuing resolution,” he told the Huffington Post.

In addition to that, Representative JIM GERLACH, another Republican from Pennsylvania, issued a statement saying he would “vote in favor of a so-called clean budget bill.”

The list goes on—and I have mentioned a few on this list: Representative PAT MEEHAN, Republican of Pennsylvania; Representative SCOTT RIGELL—I am sorry if I mispronounced that—Republican of Virginia; Representative JON RUNYAN, Republican of New Jersey; Representative MIKE FITZPATRICK, Republican of Pennsylvania; Representative LOU BARLETTA, Republican of Pennsylvania; Representative PETER KING, Republican of New York; Representative DEVIN NUNES, Republican of California; Representative CHARLIE DENT, Republican of Pennsylvania; Representative FRANK WOLF, Republican of Virginia; Representative MICHAEL GRIMM, Republican of New York; Representative ERIK PAULSEN, Republican of Minnesota; Representative ROB WITTMAN, Republican of Virginia; Representative FRANK LOBIONDO, Republican of New Jersey; Representative RANDY FORBES, Republican of Virginia; Representative JIM GERLACH, Republican of Pennsylvania; Representative LEONARD LANCE, Republican of New Jersey, and Representative MIKE SIMPSON, Republican of Idaho.

Seventeen. Why is that number significant? It takes only two or three more Republican Congressmen—Republican Congressmen—to step up and say they will vote for the CR we sent over from the Senate to reopen the government of the United States of America.

There are six Republican Congressmen in my State of Illinois. I challenge all of them to join this group of their fellow colleagues and Democrats in the House who don’t want to punish America and 800,000 Federal workers.

What is at stake here? It isn’t just bragging rights about how this crisis ends. What is at stake is much more. It even goes beyond the life-and-death situation faced by hundreds at the National Institutes of Health. I am still stunned by what I was told yesterday by Senator FEINSTEIN. It is public knowledge. She announced it on the floor. Seventy-two percent—72 percent—of the civilian workforce in America’s intelligence agencies have been furloughed. What do they do? Well, I will tell you what they do. They listen closely to places and people all around the world to see a threat coming against the United States. They are sent to work each day with the most serious mission of almost anyone working for our government. They are sent there with the mission to avoid the next 9/11, to spare innocent people

across America the possibility of a terrorist attack.

I am not over-dramatizing it. That is what the intelligence agencies are all about every day. Today, almost three out of four of the professional men and women on the civilian side of intelligence are home. They are not listening. They are not watching. They have been sent home by this tea party Republican shutdown. It will only take about 3 more Republican Congressmen to step forward and say: This has to come to an end for the good of our Nation, for the safety of our Nation, and for the future of our economy. That is what we are up against.

What we are trying to do is get the conversation underway to resolve some major issues. I hope we are successful. But in the meantime, let us protect America. Let us serve the people who sent us here. Let us reopen this government as quickly as possible. It has gone on now for a day and a half. It should end this afternoon.

Speaker JOHN BOEHNER has it within his power to end this government shutdown in a matter of minutes—minutes—and then we can start a conversation about the important issues facing us. I think the President is right. We have to do this in a responsible manner and to say once and for all we are not going to hold the American people, the American taxpayers or America’s security, hostage to a political temper tantrum. We have to face our responsibilities honestly and directly.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. COONS). The Senator from Virginia.

Mr. WARNER. Mr. President, I want to thank my colleague, the Senator from Illinois for his comments on this issue. I will comment as well, but I also want to thank the chair of the Budget Committee for asking one more time and saying: Let’s negotiate this.

I think it is important to note, as the Senator from Illinois mentioned, some of the folks who say this is not just about the 800,000 Federal workers who are going on without pay, it is about national security. Seventy-two percent of the folks who work in the intelligence community, who are civilians, are furloughed today. It means our troops in harm’s way are in greater danger. Our embassies are in greater danger, and our country is in greater danger.

I also have heard some remarkable comments from some of our colleagues on the other side about the free enterprise system. I have to say I have spent longer in the free enterprise system than I have in elective office. I can never imagine two businesses that were negotiating saying: We are going to shut down our business rather than negotiate. I mean this really has entered into a new realm of the theater of the absurd.

We think about why so many of those Congressmen from Virginia have stepped up, and it is because this is not

just about the Federal workforce. I point out that today, at NASA Langley, one of our premier research institutions in America, where there are normally 3,500 employees, there are only six working today. But this doesn’t just affect NASA Langley. It affects the gas station nearby, where the folks who go to work at NASA Langley buy gas. It affects the shops and restaurants around there, where people go to eat.

I wonder what the folks who talk about the free enterprise system will say to that motel owner along Skyline Drive in Virginia or outside Yosemite who has a cancellation this weekend. That is not a government worker. That is part of the free enterprise system. No business leader in America, regardless of political stripe, thinks shutting down the Federal Government makes good business sense.

Earlier today, along with my colleagues from Maryland—Senator KING couldn’t be there, but he was very supportive—we brought in some—not faceless budgets but real folks who were directly affected by this shutdown. We had a woman who had worked for the National Science Foundation for close to 40 years, saying she had gone through a \$2,500 hit from furloughs already and was unsure. She hadn’t bought a car last week because this was hanging over her head. She felt she was going to be fine in some way, but she wondered what young scientist would come work in public service today. Again, in a free enterprise system—this is a competitive world—the rest of the world is not going to stop their science, their innovation, their creativity because America can’t get its act together and keep its government operating.

I have been occasionally called by some of my colleagues on this side of the aisle too reflexively bipartisan. There is always both sides of an argument. But on this argument, with these facts, there is no lack of clarity in my mind that holding not just our Federal workforce but the economy of America hostage, and saying that until we get our way we are not going to reopen the largest enterprise in the world—the Federal Government of the United States—is more irresponsible than anything I have seen, not only in my political life but in my business life.

I have had some of the same conversations my colleagues have had, and I know there is a great deal of uneasiness on the other side. I actually don’t believe this is Democrats versus Republicans. We have our bill over on the House side, and I believe, candidly, we will see the majority of the House Republicans join in reopening the government. Then let’s have this kind of very real debate about health care, about tax reform, about getting our country’s balance sheet right.

The notion that we are basically going to affect the lives of 800,000 folks who are furloughed, and countless millions of others who depend on those

services, or countless millions others in the free enterprise system who depend upon our workforce as their customers, is stunningly irresponsible. All of us here say we want our economy to recover. Well, let's get our balance sheet right. But in the meantime, let's open the government. Let these folks get back to their job, and let's have this conference that has been called for 18 different times.

I will close, and I know other folks have mentioned this. No matter what happens going forward, we are going to ask our Federal workforce to do more with less resources. Again, I have spent more time in the private sector than in the public sector. I have built companies. The last thing you do to your workforce, when you are asking them to do more with less, is disrespect them continuously the way we have done to the Federal workforce over the last 3 years—3 years without a pay increase, furloughs, being told that somehow they are riding in the wagon not driving the wagon.

Let me say, as somebody who got here because of a good public school, because of a student loan program, because I had a free enterprise system that allowed me to fail, but then succeed because there was a support system put forward by a Federal Government, I think those folks are pulling that wagon every bit as much as every other American.

I hope we will be able to get not only those folks in the House but others to be willing to say it is time to get this government bill, it is time to have a long overdue conversation about our balance sheet. I appeal to all of my colleagues, let's get this behind us. Please, don't bring somebody down here and say that under the free enterprise system somehow it is rational, logical, or makes good business sense to keep this government shuttered.

Mr. President, I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Iowa.

Mr. HARKIN. Mr. President, first of all, in all this mess there is some good news. The Affordable Care Act is up and running, and the people of America are responding in remarkable numbers.

Remember how the Republicans said this is bad, it is a failure? They kept saying it was a failure even though it had not even started. In the first 24 hours of healthcare.gov being up, the national marketplace, 4.7 million people visited. In California, which has its own State-run marketplace, 5 million people visited that site yesterday. I noted that I heard the Republican leader out here earlier today. In his home state of Kentucky, with 78,000 visitors, they started nearly 4,700 applications and completed more than 2,900 yesterday in the first day.

I think what this all indicates is the American people is hungry to get covered with health insurance. With 30 million people out there without health insurance, with a preexisting condition, or maybe they are ill right

now, maybe they have had other things happen or are out of work—now they can go on the marketplace and get health insurance coverage. And they are flocking to it, because it has been sorely needed for decades.

The Republicans still want to hold the government hostage and defund the Affordable Care Act. I would like to know what the Republican leader might say to those 4,700 people who applied in Kentucky yesterday. And we know it is going to be more as the weeks and months go by. We have 6 months to sign up. But think about those figures just in the first day.

Fifty-five thousand people went to Colorado's exchange and 1,450 created accounts to allow them to start shopping. I mentioned New York. There were 10 million attempts to reach their Web site.

We had some glitches. Yes, some Web sites froze because they didn't expect that many people to come on the first day.

Andrew Stryker was among the first people to purchase health care through the marketplace. Mr. Stryker is 34 years old and lives in Los Angeles where he is a freelancer. He has a pre-existing condition—high blood pressure—and says health insurance companies had denied him coverage on the individual market. He said signing up for coverage through the marketplace will save him over \$6,000 per year when compared with his monthly premium for his COBRA plan. For that, he said, I would have waited all day.

So the Affordable Care Act is up and running, and people all over this country are flocking to it to get the good news that they can get affordable coverage for themselves and their family.

The same is happening in my own State of Iowa, where the plans have come in as some of the lowest in the country.

So that is the good news. The bad news is Republicans here are still trying to stop it before too many people get health insurance because then they know they won't be able to turn it back. The people of America have waited too long to have health insurance coverage for themselves and their families. Now everyone can get health insurance at a price they can afford. So we are going to have health coverage not just for the healthy and the wealthy but for everyone in this country. That is the good news.

We are now in day 2 of the Federal shutdown. If we listen to some Members across the aisle and in the other body, one might get the sense that it is no big deal. The Congressman from my own State said, the sky hasn't fallen. We have had government shutdowns and the sky hasn't fallen, the roof hasn't caved in. No big deal. I may have paraphrased a little bit, but that is basically what he said. They seem to think you can simply turn off the Federal Government for a few days or a month or two and it won't matter. I don't understand this attitude, but it is

what we hear from Members of the other party.

Let me explain what a government shutdown means in the areas I am most familiar with as the chair of the Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions Committee and as chair of the Appropriations Committee that funds those programs.

As of yesterday, the National Institutes of Health stopped enrolling new patients in 497 ongoing clinical research trials. Of those trials, 255 are studying treatments for cancer and 50 involve children with cancer. These are ongoing clinical research trials right now—stopped—50 involving children with cancer. What do you say to those families? Clinical trials can't be completed if they don't have enough patients. But as long as there is a shutdown, the process stops.

I remind everyone, when I am talking about NIH I am not just talking about Bethesda, MD. I am talking about all over this country. NIH funds research and clinical trials in every State in this country. As of yesterday, the NIH began turning away people from its clinical research center. Each week of a shutdown, NIH estimates it will close its doors to 200 new patients who need help. Also yesterday the NIH stopped processing applications for new research grants. These applications are submitted by scientists all over the country, from universities and other places in our States, not just from Bethesda and not just from Washington, DC.

We might say OK, so they have stopped processing new research grants. So what. The sky hasn't fallen, the roof hasn't caved in, according to the Congressman from Iowa. We have no idea which of those grant applications might lead to the next cure for cancer or Alzheimer's or diabetes or might be that one bit of research that fits into that slot where other people can build on it to find cures. But so long as there is a shutdown, none of them will be considered. That is the effect on NIH.

I understand the House is proceeding to some kind of a measure to pass an appropriations measure just for NIH and maybe a couple other things, and they are going to send it over here. Do you know what they are missing if they want to talk about health? They are missing the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

The CDC is the premier public health agency—not just in America but in the world. The people who work there protect America from threats to our health and safety like infectious diseases, chronic diseases, outbreaks of foodborne disease. As of yesterday, the CDC—the premier public health agency in the world—is shut down. All of their labs are closed. The scientists are furloughed. The expert hotlines that physicians and the public call for information are turned off. The emergency operations center is on a skeleton crew for outbreak response. Maybe that

should give us some comfort. But the CDC is not doing any disease monitoring. So who is going to sound the alert if they are not doing the monitoring? I have to add, viruses don't just break out when the government is open.

I will never forget what our former chairman of the Appropriations Committee, and under whom I served some years ago, Mark Hatfield, the great Senator from Oregon, said when he gave his final speech here on the Senate floor. I remember it well. I remember him saying it is not the Russians are coming, the Russians are coming; it is the viruses are coming, the viruses are coming.

Senator Hatfield was looking ahead because he knew what was happening. We know for a fact that the viruses are coming because October is the beginning of flu season. And yet because the government is shut down, there is no one at CDC monitoring influenza.

Why is that important? For most of us, I suppose flu is an inconvenience. For most of us, we can go down here to the doctor's office and get our flu shot. But for many people, flu can be a matter of life and death. More than 200,000 Americans are hospitalized from flu every year. In a mild year, 3,000 Americans who get the flu will die. In a severe year, that toll can rise to almost 50,000.

So right now is precisely when the Center for Disease Control should begin monitoring which strains are circulating across the country, which communities are being hit hardest, so they can isolate it, find out what is happening, and keep it from spreading. As long as there is a shutdown, the CDC is not doing this.

This past April, a new strain of flu, H7N9, appeared in China during their flu season. It is very deadly. Twenty percent of the people who got it died. Thank goodness, we haven't had that outbreak in America; but as long as the CDC is shut down, no one is watching for it. No one is monitoring to see if that strain of flu might cause an outbreak someplace in this country.

I say that to tell people we may think everything is just fine and dandy. My fellow Congressman from Iowa may say, well, the sky hasn't fallen, the roof hasn't caved in. And I hope and pray we don't have an influenza outbreak. I hope and pray we don't have any serious virus outbreaks in the next few days. But viruses don't just wait around for the government to be open.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator has used 10 minutes of his time.

Mr. HARKIN. Under what order are we proceeding?

The PRESIDING OFFICER. There is a unanimous consent agreement that Senators will speak for 10 minutes.

Mr. HARKIN. I have more to say about the Centers for Disease Control, but I guess I will have to seek my 10 minutes later on in the day.

I thank the Chair.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from New Hampshire.

Ms. AYOTTE. Mr. President, if the Senator from Iowa needs a couple of minutes to wrap up, I don't think I will take my whole 10 minutes so I would be happy to cede to him a couple of minutes.

Mr. HARKIN. I thank the Senator. She is very kind. I have at least another 5 to 7 minutes to go. I have some data from CDC that I want to put in. So I thank her very much.

I have been talking about the Centers for Disease Control and what the shutdown means in terms of monitoring outbreaks, food-borne outbreaks, illnesses, virus outbreaks—and that is not happening now.

I want to turn to another thing; that is, what CDC is and how CDC keeps Americans safe every day, and that is in food safety.

The Centers for Disease Control has stopped its epidemiological work to identify potential outbreaks and link the outbreak to a food source. I can't tell you what might be missed while the CDC is shut down. I can give a few examples where recently the CDC has sounded the alarm and kept Americans safe.

Only 12 days ago, 162 people in 10 States became ill with hepatitis A as a result of eating contaminated frozen berries—the kinds of mixed berries you get in the grocery store freezer department. The States are as far apart as Arizona, California, New Jersey, Hawaii, and Wisconsin, but because of the expertise of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, they were able to go out, get this secured, recall the food, and trace it down. They traced it, believe it or not, to some pomegranate seeds that came from Turkey—not America but Turkey. This is another way in which the Centers for Disease Control protects the safety of Americans.

In August cyclospora infected 643 people who ate a particular salad mix in 25 States. A lot of people may remember that. The outbreak was first identified in my home State of Iowa. They immediately called the Centers for Disease Control, and then the CDC got a hold of other States. The next place it popped up was Texas—Iowa, then Texas. They traced it. CDC put its detectives, as I call them, to work. They isolated this salad mix, and it was traced to a place in Mexico. It was recalled. Yes, 643 people got sick, but we stopped it before it spread any further and before anybody died. That is what the CDC did.

Now, because of the government shutdown, CDC has stopped.

I hope there is not another outbreak like this, but one never knows. But the detectives on the CDC epidemiology team are now furloughed. What does that mean for the safety of Americans?

When the Congressman from Iowa on the other side said: Well, you know, the sky hasn't fallen and the roof hasn't caved in because the government has

shut down, implying that it is no big deal, I hope and pray we don't have a virus outbreak, a bacteria outbreak, or a food-borne outbreak such as I just mentioned. Well, will food contamination happen tomorrow? Will a flu outbreak happen this weekend?

I have heard people say: We shouldn't be too concerned about the shutdown. It might last only a few days.

To those I ask, how many days can we afford to lose when a virus emerges? In those few days, how many people will buy and eat a contaminated product? How many more people will catch the flu, West Nile virus, hepatitis or E. coli? I could go on and on. How long can we afford to put a blindfold on the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention?

I am not trying to unduly frighten anybody, but I am telling the facts. What I said here happened recently. This is not mythological. This is not maybe. These things actually happened within the last few weeks in America. People got sick. People lost work.

Again, we have to be concerned. Yes, maybe the sky hasn't fallen or the roof hasn't caved in. Is that what we have to have happen before we reopen the government? I say to that Congressman from Iowa, is that what has to happen—must a lot of people have to get sick, or do lot of people have to die? Then maybe we will say: Oh, I guess now we have to reopen the government. What a terrible way to run a government.

In another area—and again I am talking about things under my jurisdiction as the chair of this committee—the Social Security Administration furloughed 18,000 Federal employees and Social Security officers across the country—29 percent of the agency's workforce.

I suppose some would say: Well, so what. They are just bureaucrats.

Let's take a look at them. Checks will still go out, Social Security checks will still go out, disability and retirement claims will still come in, but that is it. What that will mean is delays in basic services for the 180,000 people who visit a Social Security office every day in America or the 445,000 people who call Social Security offices every day who have a problem, who have a question, maybe a lost card. Need I mention what it means when you have a lost Social Security card, don't have that ID, trying to get some health care services or something else and you don't have your Social Security card? Some 22,000 Americans a day file for retirement benefits. Twelve thousand a day apply for disability benefits.

As I said, Social Security will continue to accept those, but nothing will happen. That means the backlog piles up and piles up and piles up every day. Twenty-two thousand a day file for retirement benefits. They can file it, but nothing happens. So that just builds up day after day after day, and the backlog gets worse.

It already takes about 13 months, on average, to get a decision on an appeal for disability benefits. With this shutdown, it is going to be longer. It is going to be 14 months, 15 months and 18 months, and on and on. If you need a new Social Security card, sorry. As long as there is a shutdown, you can't get one. You cannot get a new Social Security card. If you need to replace your Medicare card, tough luck, you are going to have to wait a long time.

The Department of Labor staff, who investigate worker violations such as wage theft, will be at home instead of on the job. Some worker protection staff are still on the job but they are only looking at the highest risk facilities or responding after an accident has occurred. This isn't acceptable.

Take, for example, MSHA, the Mine Safety Health Administration. It is unable to conduct all of its required inspections because of the shutdown. How many safety and health violations won't be identified and corrected? How many miners are at risk of lifelong injuries and illnesses because of this shutdown?

As someone remarked the other day: You know, these mine operators, they can smell a mine inspector 2 miles away. Well, now, what are these mine operators going to do, when we know what their track record has been in the past, violating safety precautions? When they know they are not going to get inspected, will they ramp up production? They will get as much out of their miners as they can and they won't worry about the safety because the inspectors aren't coming around. How many miners will have their health affected or will be injured? I certainly hope not die, but you never know. That is just at the Department of Labor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. BLUMENTHAL). The Senator has used 10 minutes. I apologize for interrupting him.

Mr. HARKIN. I ask unanimous consent to speak for 10 more minutes.

Mr. President, it is not just our current workforce that is impacted by this stalemate. The government shutdown is also threatening to shut the door at Head Start classrooms. This month, grants for 22 Head Start providers are scheduled to be renewed. These are simply continuations of existing grants. The providers have already enrolled children. But after a shutdown, this funding will be cut off. As a result, 18,000 children and families that those programs serve are going to be losing access to early childhood education services this month—this month—this month.

As I said, I could go on and on, but I just wanted to point out how people are being affected by this shutdown. It may not be visible to all, but it is there, and it is hurtful to them and their families and to our country. This shutdown needs to stop. It is time for cooler heads to prevail. It is time to end this mindless, damaging, preventable shutdown.

There is one simple way to do it. All the Speaker of the House has to do is bring up a clean continuing resolution which is sitting over there right now—bring it to the floor of the House. The votes are there to pass it, and the government will be back in business tomorrow. If he did that, the shutdown would be over, and Americans would know their safety and health—everything from food to illnesses to viruses to bacteria and food safety—will again be protected by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. We would know the research and the operations of the National Institutes of Health will continue. We would know our workers will be safe once again on the job because of the Department of Labor. We would know our Social Security offices will be open and running and will be able to process claims and issue new Social Security cards and Medicare cards.

I just want to make it very clear there are a lot of people being hurt by this. They may not be on the front lines or highly visible, but they are out there and they are being hurt today. It is a shameful, shameful comment on a great nation like ours that we continue this government shutdown, hurting so many people in this country.

With that I yield the floor.

Ms. AYOTTE. Mr. President, as I said before—and I said certainly as I came to this floor last week—governing by crisis is no way to run a government. We simply have to get our act together and work together to get the government funded again, to not lose the forest for the trees in terms of addressing the fiscal challenges our country faces, to come up with a fiscally responsible plan that puts our Nation first and puts us on a path to economic security. And, frankly, we have wasted too much time and energy on political brinkmanship and self-inflicted fiscal crises that also keep us from focusing on the real challenges we face, including our \$17 trillion in debt, an economy that could be much stronger than it is right now to create the best climate for jobs in this country.

As I came to this floor last week, I reiterated my strongly held opposition to ObamaCare because I have seen the impact, hearing from businesses and individuals in New Hampshire concerned about rising health care costs. In New Hampshire, we only have one insurer that will be on the exchange, and 10 of our 26 hospitals will be excluded from the exchange.

But I also said last week that shutting down the government in an attempt to defund ObamaCare was not a winning strategy for success. Why? We have already seen exhibit A why it was not a winning strategy for success—because the government shut down yesterday and the ObamaCare exchanges opened and continued anyway. Why is that? We knew in advance that the Congressional Research Service had told us that the mandatory funding piece that was put in ObamaCare would

continue even if the government were to shut down. We have seen that happen.

While I continue to believe this law is wrong for America because it is causing rising health care costs, because of the notion—in fact, I think it was well said recently by the chairman of the board of trustees of the Frisbie Memorial Hospital, who originally supported the Affordable Care Act but recently came to say: I supported it because we were told we could keep our doctor, and that has turned out to be a lie.

I certainly want to work with my colleagues to do whatever I can to come up with ways that we can repeal ObamaCare, replace it with reforms that are actually going to drive down health care costs, allow people to keep their physicians, and foster more competition in the insurance sector to give people more choice, but we need to end where we are right now. We need to come to a resolution to keep this government funded in a fiscally responsible way.

I am glad congressional leaders are going to speak to the President tonight. We do not need another photo op. What we need is results. We need both sides of the aisle working together to negotiate, to come up with a plan to fund the government, to move forward, to find common ground.

I know there is some common ground in areas of ObamaCare that both sides of the aisle are concerned about—for example, the medical device tax. When we had the budget votes earlier this year, the vote was 79 to 20 to repeal the medical device tax. Members on both sides of the aisle decided that tax was not good for innovation, for jobs, and that it drives up health care costs. That is an area where we have had some common ground in how we can affect this health care law—a health care law I still deeply oppose, but it is time for us to make sure we can get the government funded again.

Why? In my home State of New Hampshire right now, at the Portsmouth Naval Shipyard—one of our Nation's four public shipyards—the skilled workers there are being put in jeopardy. They have a very important function to defend our Nation, to maintain our Virginia-class submarines. Yet, due to the government shutdown, more than 1,700 workers at the Portsmouth Naval Shipyard are being furloughed. Instead of maintaining our submarine fleet and defending our Nation, they are worried about their paychecks. It is wrong.

For our National Guard, more than 330 of our New Hampshire National Guard military technicians are being furloughed. These individuals lost 25 to 30 percent of their pay this summer when they were furloughed because of sequestration. This is no way to treat Americans who are helping defend our country. They play a critical role in the operations of our Guard. Yet we are also being told that the New Hampshire Air National Guard—if they do

not receive more furlough exceptions, they may have to shut down their air-refueling and air-bridge operations to Europe and the Middle East. This is about the defense of our Nation. Many of them canceled their civilian job days at work to come to their drill weekend this weekend, which is now being canceled, so they are losing those days of pay as well.

Yesterday I was answering my phones. I had a constituent call me saying that his family had saved for years for a vacation, that it was going to cost them \$25,000 to \$30,000, and they were at the Grand Canyon. They said: Senator AYOTTE, what is going on? We took our kids out of school for 2 weeks, we saved for years for this vacation, and we cannot go down into the canyon.

We must get this resolved, and we must look for common ground on both sides of the aisle to negotiate this, to get a responsible fiscal plan for the Nation.

By the way, we are fighting about 6 weeks of a continuing resolution right now. Give me a break. We should be looking at long-term funding for this Nation, not 6 weeks. To have this kind of impasse over 6 weeks? I can understand why the American people are frustrated and angry.

All I can say is that tonight, as congressional leaders on both sides of the aisle meet with the President of the United States, we do not need any more posturing. Let's give up the blame game on both sides. No more photo ops. You have all seen enough photo ops at this point. Come out of that meeting with results. Yes, results means that both sides are going to have to negotiate. Both sides are not going to get everything they want, but that is what people do in their daily lives. That is what I know people in New Hampshire do to resolve their differences. That is what the American people expect of us.

I hope this ends soon so we can move forward on behalf of this great Nation.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Vermont.

Mr. LEAHY. On Tuesday at midnight, the Federal Government shut its doors, closed for all but the most essential business concerning national security and the safety of the American people.

Mr. President, you know Vermonters, like Americans in every State and town of this country, are frustrated. They are angry and confused. They have seen Congress's inability to do its job and keep the government running. They have seen us pass a budget—we passed a continuing resolution here in the Senate—and a small group in the House of Representatives, a small group of Republicans said: No, we have to have everything we want or nothing.

Visual consequences of the shutdown can be found around Washington, where museums and national monuments are barricaded. But it is more than just that. It is more than that.

In the States, national parks and national refuges have closed their gates and thousands of Federal offices are shuttered. We heard this morning in the Senate Judiciary Committee from the Director of the National Security Agency, Keith Alexander, that as "each day goes by, the impact and the jeopardy [of a shutdown] to the safety and security of this country will increase." That is true, but the toll of this needless exercise is just beginning to be felt.

While some decry Federal spending as though it were some kind of communicable disease, millions of American families—Republicans, Democrats, Independents—rely on government-supported programs that provide the very lifeline keeping them afloat. Key nutrition programs like the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program support 100,000 Vermonters. Another 1,600 children and families benefit from Head Start. They are the ones who are going to create and run our jobs in the next generation. More than 117,000 seniors are enrolled in Medicare, and close to 200,000 Vermonters are enrolled in Medicaid. These Vermonters will continue to receive assistance through the shutdown, but at what pace, when and for how long is uncertain. They do not know how long this is going to continue.

The shutdown is hurting in other areas, too. Buyers hoping to purchase a home with a loan from the Federal Housing Administration will be turned away. Can you imagine that ripple effect, when real estate has finally started to pick back up?

What they are saying is: oh, the economy; we worry about the economy. They are trying to kill the economy by not letting the Federal Housing Administration work.

Our Nation's readiness to respond is threatened. In Vermont alone, 450 technicians in the National Guard were furloughed yesterday, and another 100 were released from active orders. That has a financial effect, of course, but the national security effects are amazing.

In Vermont we have a lot of agriculture. For farmers in Vermont requiring assistance from the Department of Agriculture, there is no one in the field and no one in the office; over 200 USDA workers—who, especially at this time of the year, are there to help Vermonters—have been forced to close up shop as a result of the shutdown.

WIC, the supplemental food program for pregnant women and young children is 100 percent federally funded; there is only two weeks of funding available in Vermont for the nearly 16,000 participants in the State.

We will say in two weeks, sorry, child, or sorry, pregnant woman, we cannot feed you. Can you just wait until we get our act together? We are eating very well, but could you go without food for a few weeks because we have a few more press conferences and a few more photo ops?

What will happen to them? Our Republican colleagues in the House will not say. They apparently do not care.

Just yesterday, my office heard from one Vermont organization, Rural Edge. With the assistance of the USDA Rural Rental Housing Loan Program, Rural Edge is building much needed affordable rental housing in St. Johnsbury, VT. The time has come for Rural Edge to pay their contractor. They have the money, but nobody is home at USDA's Rural Development office to authorize the payment, and the work is likely to stop. People are apt to be laid off. Winter is going to come, and the time to construct this affordable housing will be lost. This is just one of countless examples of how this needless shutdown has already started to impact my State. Every Senator could tell similar stories.

Many Americans think a government shutdown is a Washington, D.C. problem, and that the hundreds of thousands of Federal workers furloughed live in or near the Nation's capital. Nothing could be further from the truth. Federal agencies operate in all 50 States. We know that. More than 40 Federal agencies operate in Vermont, from the Department of Homeland Security, to the U.S. Postal Service, the Veterans Administration to the Department of Defense, the Department of Agriculture to the Department of Justice.

These agencies employ over over 7,000 people in my little State alone. Nearly 1,000 of these employees reported to work on Tuesday only to receive a furlough notice. These workers and their families are facing an unnecessary financial hardship, all because a handful of ideologues in Washington have elected to shut the government down rather than come to the table to find an acceptable way to pay our bills and respond to the needs of the American people.

These people have families. They have mortgages. They have payments. They have medical expenses. Suddenly, we said: Oh, I am sorry, people; Republicans in the House of Representatives—a small segment of them—are saying, we are making points for our supporters, so tough for you. You are not going to find an acceptable way to pay your bills. We want you to pay your bills; we are just not going to pay ours.

Failing to fund the government does not simply mean Federal workers are furloughed and government programs are suspended. No. Revenue streams for the Federal Government also dry up.

The Department of Education? Nobody is there to collect on defaulted student loans.

The Department of Justice? Civil fraud investigations and litigation, including False Claims Act and fraud cases that bring a lot of money back to the government, are on hold.

They are on hold.

The Internal Revenue Service? Audits that recoup millions in owed taxes

are suspended. Billions of American taxpayers' dollars invested across the country and around the world. A shutdown means no one is home monitoring those investments.

After ping-ponging a continuing resolution back and forth, the House of Representatives has now adopted a piecemeal approach to reopening the government, agency by agency. Cherry-picking the parts of the government they want to fund is no way to fulfill our responsibilities to the American people. Come on.

If they really care about having the government going, they should pass the appropriations bills and go to conference. Let's do it without being filibustered here by some of their same supporters. Go to conference and vote them up or down.

If Republicans in the House were so concerned with staffing our National Parks, they should have passed an Interior appropriations bill which would have funded not only the National Park Service, but also the Environmental Protection Agency, the Forest Service, and other agencies.

They did not.

If Republicans in the House want to address funding for individual agencies, there is a clear path forward. Let's reopen the government and get to the business of passing and conferring appropriations bills in regular order. Let's consider the spending bills that include funding for the National Parks and the Smithsonian, but which also include funding for wildfire prevention and clean drinking water.

Let's consider spending bills that fund the District of Columbia, along with the Treasury and Federal Judiciary.

The Democrats in the Senate have passed a continuing resolution to fund all Federal agencies and would provide us the time needed to consider a path forward over the next 6 weeks. This is a crisis driven by a handful of partisans in the House of Representatives who say: No, we can't do it.

Vote after vote, day after day, the Senate has rejected one flawed House proposal after another, and still the House has not voted on the clean continuing resolution passed by the Senate. For a handful of House members, there is no path to compromise to keep our government running.

We are elected officials sent here to make decisions—not slogans—on behalf of our constituents. We are sent here to make government work for the American people. This Vermonter, like so many others, is sick and tired of the politics-as-usual approach that has led to this shutdown.

Let's come to the table. Let's be grownups and do what we said we ran to do. Let's work together for the good of the American people, reopen the government, and find a responsible and reasonable way to get our fiscal house in order.

It's time for each of us to be a leader, not a sloganeer.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Indiana.

Mr. COATS. Mr. President, today is day 2 of the ongoing government shutdown, and negotiations to find a resolution to our differences remain at a stalemate. Actually, I don't think we can use the word "negotiations" because you really can't negotiate if there is only one side at the table. It takes two parties, and there is only one party there. Yesterday Majority Leader REID made it crystal clear when he blocked the House Republican proposal to sit down and talk. For months we have heard that Republicans need to sit down and talk—from the Senate. The House sent over a bill to do just that, and the majority leader blocked that.

To say that the people in my State are frustrated with this type of action is an understatement. Hoosiers and Americans are tired of the ongoing dysfunction in Washington and the inability of Congress and this administration to do our job. We can't do our jobs if we are not talking to each other and if the White House continues to be absent.

I recently learned that the President has called congressional leaders from both parties to come to the White House. I initially thought that was a positive step, but then I heard the news that the White House has already released a statement saying the President is doing this to reiterate he will not negotiate. So my question is: What is the point? Maybe it is a chance for a photo opportunity, but certainly no progress will be made on the stalemate we are addressing today, tomorrow, and perhaps for weeks ahead.

It is ironic that the President is willing to talk and negotiate with the President of Iran or the President of Russia but is unwilling to negotiate with Republicans or Democrats in the Congress. Sadly, this has been the model over at the White House—continued campaigning, ignoring governing, and assembling pseudo-campaign-like settings to blast Republicans. This is not a helpful strategy to achieve a resolution to this shutdown.

We have seen a series of attempts by House Republicans to send over legislation that would at least fund some of the more dysfunctional effects of a shutdown. Fortunately, we agreed we will fund our troops. They are in harm's way. They have families at home who are trying to pay the mortgage, keep things together, buy food for the kids, save money for their education. They do all of those things while their spouses are overseas defending our country. It would be unconscionable to stop their paychecks, and that is the positive step we have taken.

House Republicans have also offered a number of other initiatives—all of which has been deep-sixed by the majority leader. They are not even allowing debate—we can do that in this morning business time—under the bill. We simply have a motion to table

which does not even allow us an up-or-down vote.

I wish to mention two things that the House is going to send over—and it may already be here—which is five more proposals and they also involve our uniformed soldiers. I am a U.S. Army veteran, but I think every American—whether you are a Democrat or Republican, veteran or not—would agree we have a duty to remember, honor, and support those who have sacrificed so much to protect and defend our country. When they complete their service and come home, those veterans deserve to receive the care and support they need.

The House has sent over an act called Honoring Our Promise to America's Veterans Act. It is a bill that would provide funding for disability payments, the GI bill, education, training, and VA home loans under the same conditions as in effect at the end of the just completed fiscal year.

This legislation needs to be brought before us. It needs to be debated, and it needs to be passed—hopefully unanimously. I am asking the majority leader not to deep-six this legislation. This is too important for our veterans, it is needed, and it should be funded. Any attempt to deny this, I believe, would be a great disservice to the men and women who dedicated so much and put themselves at so great a risk to serve in our military.

Another one of those proposals—and there are five, but I will just talk about two—is the Pay Our Guard and Reserve Act. The bill provides funding for the pay and allowances of military personnel in the Reserve component who are scheduled to report for duty—many as early as this weekend. In Indiana, we have over 20,000 reservists and guardsmen. It is the fourth largest Army National Guard in the country and the sixth largest National Guard Force out of all of the 54 States, provinces, and territories when it is combined with the Air National Guard.

Indiana is home to two Air National Guard wings: the 122nd Fighter Wing in Fort Wayne and the 181st Intelligence Wing in Terre Haute, as well as the 434th Air Refueling Wing at Grissom Air Reserve Base.

The Senate unanimously approved to pay our troops and remove them from the crossfire of the government shutdown debate. Let's do the same for our reservists and guardsmen who are doing their traditional duty of one weekend a month for, as Winston Churchill said, "They are twice the citizen."

Some things simply need to rise above politics. Let's join together, address this issue, and make sure the men and women who have served our country do not pay the price for Washington's failure to govern.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Georgia.

Mr. ISAKSON. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that immediately

following my remarks, the Senator from Vermont, Mr. SANDERS, be recognized.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, so ordered.

TRIBUTE TO CHRIS CARR

Mr. ISAKSON. Mr. President, I rise not to talk about ObamaCare, not to talk about a shutdown, not to talk about the debate we have been going through the last couple of days but, rather, I rise to talk about a man by the name of Chris Carr, who is my chief of staff and has been my chief of staff since I have been in the Senate.

Chris will be leaving my office on November 1 to become the commissioner of economic development in the State of Georgia. It is a tremendous opportunity for him and my State. While it is a loss for me personally, it is a continuation of economic development in my State, where my fingerprint still lies because he will be replacing my former State director, Chris Cummiskey, who has been the commissioner of economic development in the State of Georgia, which means I will still have that fingerprint there.

Chris is a very special person who deserves a tribute on the floor of the Senate for all he has done for me, not just as a Member of the Senate or as my chief of staff but as a deep and abiding personal friend.

Chris joined me in 2003 when I announced I was going to run to replace Zell Miller, who retired as a Senator from Georgia. Before that, Chris had been an attorney at Alston & Bird for what he always refers to as a 15-minute brief time of period. But he went on from there to be an adviser to the Georgia Public Policy Foundation, and a dear friend of ours by the name of T. Rogers Wade, who, by the way, was the executive director for Herman Talmadge and chief of staff years ago in the Senate.

Chris joined me in 2003 for a great adventure—my race for the Senate. He guided us through a primary a lot of people said I couldn't win and a lot of people said I would never win without a runoff. My two opponents were a former Congressman from the State of Georgia and Herman Cain, who everybody knows later ran for President of the United States.

Georgia is a primary State that requires 50 percent plus 1 in terms of votes. So we had to get 50 percent plus 1 in a Republican primary. We did that without a runoff because of Chris's leadership, his dynamics, and his hard work in how he guided that campaign.

We won the general election by 58.8 percent. I brought Chris to Washington, DC, to be my chief of staff in my office, and he has done a phenomenal job. He has traveled with me to Africa—as the Presiding Officer knows because he has been with us on some of these trips. He has guided me through difficult times in my journey from the Foreign Relations Committee

to the Finance Committee to the Commerce Committee. He has been a great guiding hand.

Most important, he brought together a staff that has been loyal, dedicated, and gotten the job done for the people of the State of Georgia.

Chris is a great Georgian. He is what we refer to in our State as a “double dawg.” He graduated with his undergraduate degree from the University of Georgia—which I might add beat LSU very handily last Saturday—and then went to law school at the University of Georgia to get his second degree, a bachelor of law degree from the University of Georgia.

After that he went on, as I said, to Austin & Bird, and then to the Public Policy Foundation, but he has been with me ever since—almost a decade. During that period of time, he has served me as chief of staff. My deputy chief of staff, Joan Kirchner, will be replacing him as chief of staff, so we will have a continuity of service in our office.

I know I would not be where I am today if it weren't for Chris Carr. I know the State of Georgia is going to go places it never thought it would go because of his guiding leadership as commissioner of economic development.

So for a brief minute on the floor of the Senate, I wish to pay tribute to a friend, a chief of staff, a leader, someone who has had a positive influence on my life but, most importantly has had a positive influence on his country, the United States America.

I am thankful to Chris Carr for his support and thankful for all he has done for my State, my country, and our office.

I yield back my time and defer to the Senator from Vermont.

Mr. SANDERS. I thank the Senator from Georgia for yielding, and I ask unanimous consent to address the Senate.

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

The Senator from Vermont.

CONTINUING APPROPRIATIONS

Mr. SANDERS. Mr. President, in Vermont and all across this country there is huge frustration with what is going on in Washington. It is clear to me that with the middle class of this country disappearing, with millions of Americans working longer hours for lower wages, with poverty today at an alltime high in terms of the number of people living in poverty, with young people graduating college deeply in debt and others not having the resources to go to college, with real unemployment at close to 14 percent, youth unemployment higher than that, minority unemployment very high, an infrastructure that is collapsing, with the IPCC, the scientists all over the world who are studying global warming and telling us we have a planetary cri-

sis that must be addressed by cutting greenhouse gas emissions, what people are seeing is that we have all these problems affecting them, their kids, and the planet, and in the Congress we cannot even get a budget passed.

People are angry in Vermont and across the country and they are frustrated. I know many people are saying a plague on everybody; you people are all terrible.

I just hope we can go a little bit beyond that and try to understand, in fact, what is happening and what the cause of this terrible government shutdown is and why 800,000 decent people who happen to work for the Federal Government are not at work, are not earning a paycheck, and are scared to death about how they are going to provide for their families or take care of other basic needs.

How did it happen? I think, very simply, what we should understand is that the Senate passed a conservative budget—continuing resolution—until November 15. It was much lower than I had wanted. In fact, it is a Republican budget. It includes this terrible sequestration—something I strongly opposed—that was passed as a compromise gesture, and it was sent to the House.

Here is the most important point people need to understand in terms of what is going on in Congress: Right now, according to a very knowledgeable source, the House of Representatives has the votes to pass a clean continuing resolution, the bill that was passed in the Senate. They have the votes. It is not a question of the Speaker coming forward and saying: Gee, I just don't have the votes. They have the votes.

The political problem is that the Speaker of the House of Representatives has chosen to be the Speaker of the Republican Party, not of the whole House of Representatives. What is happening is he has 30 or 40 extreme right-wing people who are absolutely insistent that they want to repeal or defund the Affordable Care Act, or ObamaCare. The only way they will support any budget is if there is language in it that defunds ObamaCare.

The reason we cannot support that language is not just because ObamaCare was passed close to 4 years ago and signed by the President and it is the law of the land, it is not just because the U.S. Supreme Court ruled that it was constitutional, it is not just because there was an election held last year in November in which this was perhaps the major issue and the President won reelection by 5 million votes—and in the Senate the Republicans lost two seats and in the House they lost some seats—the real reason we cannot accept that language is that we would begin to accept a terrible precedent.

What the precedent would be is that it doesn't matter what happens in an election. It doesn't matter what happens in terms of the normal legislative

process of the Congress. What we would be saying is that a small group of people can blackmail the American people and hold the American people hostage unless they get their way.

If they are successful in succeeding in terms of what they want to do right now, I can absolutely guarantee that in 2 weeks, when this Congress and the White House are going to have to deal with the debt ceiling and the question of whether, for the first time in the history of the United States of America, we do not pay our bills, the money we owe, we could drive the American financial system and the world's financial system into what economists are describing as a catastrophic situation. Nobody knows what will happen. It has never occurred before, that the largest economy in the world would say, We are deadbeats; we are not paying our bills. But some economists believe this could have a huge impact all over the world: financial chaos, significant shrinkage of GDPs all over the world—gross domestic products—more and more unemployment, at a moment when the world's financial system is already fragile.

People don't have to believe BERNIE SANDERS in saying that. Ironically, we have all of these guys on Wall Street—no friends of mine. We have the Chamber of Commerce and all the multizillion-dollar businesses, saying to the Republicans: Don't do it. Don't take us over the edge; it will have a catastrophic impact on the economy.

When we talk about what is going on here, I don't want people to take my word for it. I have a political position and people know what that is. But I want you to hear what some responsible Republicans are saying about the reckless actions taking place in the House. I am not going to read them all, but let me read just a few. These statements are what Republicans are saying about the House Republican attempt to attach ObamaCare to the budget resolution and bring the U.S. Government to a shutdown.

SAXBY CHAMBLISS, Republican Senator from the State of Georgia, who is no friend of ObamaCare, says:

I'd love to defund ObamaCare too, but shutting down the government and playing into the hands of the President politically is not the right thing to do. Plus, it is going to do great harm on the American people if we pursue that course. We have been there; it didn't work.

DAN COATS, Republican from Indiana, on the floor a moment ago:

Here's the hard truth. President Obama will not overturn his signature legislation so long as he is President and the Democrats have control of the Senate. Along with these political realities, refusing to pass legislation to keep the government funded will not stop ObamaCare from going into effect.

Representative PETER KING, Republican from New York, in the House:

We should not be closing down the government under any circumstances. That doesn't work. It's wrong, and you know, ObamaCare care passed. We have to try to defund it. We have to try to find ways to repeal it, but the

fact is we shouldn't be using it as a threat to shut down the government.

Many more Republicans are saying the same.

What we believe right now is that a significant majority in the House of Representatives today is prepared to end the shutdown if the Speaker will give them the opportunity.

Interestingly enough, while we have great discussions here about ObamaCare and many of my Republican friends come to the floor to say how terrible it is, the American people are today in a sense voicing their opinion on ObamaCare all over this country—in their homes and in their offices all across America. Nationally, more than 10 million Americans have gone onto the Web site healthcare.gov and other Web sites to look for affordable health insurance plans under ObamaCare or to receive more information—10 million Americans in a 2-day period.

The truth of the matter is 48 million Americans have no health insurance—something my Republican friends forget. Many of them are paying much more than they can afford for health insurance. So, yes, people want an opportunity to get insurance if they don't have it and they want an opportunity to get more affordable insurance if they can. So while these guys are talking about ending ObamaCare, millions and millions of people all across the country are trying to find out how they can get into the program, and these guys are saying, Well, we don't care what millions of people want; we are going to defund it.

I mentioned 10 million people have gone to the Federal Web site. In my small State of Vermont, more than 13,000 people have visited our Affordable Care Act Web site. California, if we can believe this—one State—has reported 5 million visits to its Affordable Care Act Web site. In Kentucky, more than 78,000 visitors have gone to its Affordable Care Act Web site. Importantly, Kentucky is the only State in the South that has chosen to participate fully in ObamaCare by both expanding Medicaid and operating a State-level health insurance exchange.

In New York State, almost 10 million people visited the Web site on the first day.

So, to nobody's surprise, if people don't have any health insurance, or if people today have health insurance they cannot afford, and they are given an opportunity to come into a program which provides them with some help, people are taking advantage of it.

As millions and millions of people are trying to figure out how they can get into the system, we have our Republican friends over in the House who are saying, No, we want to defund it; we don't want to give people that opportunity.

There is a Web site called nationofchange.org, a very good Web site. I wish to read some of the headlines they have assembled about how

people are responding to the Affordable Care Act. In Connecticut: "Health Care Plans Begin: 28,000-plus Go Online to State Marketplace."

Georgia: "Enrollment Sites Are Swamped On First Day," according to the Augusta Chronicle.

Idaho: "Idaho Health Exchange Launches With Few Hiccups," Idaho Statesman.

Indiana: "Insurance Marketplace Draws Strong Early Interest," from Journal and Courier.

Kentucky: "Kynect Opens To High Demand," the Courier-Journal.

Maine: "Insurance Marketplace Opens To Flood of Interest."

Delaware: "Off And Running In New Market: Website Overwhelmed On First Day Of Access."

Michigan: "Insurance Exchange Debut Draws Millions," the Detroit News.

New Mexico: "ObamaCare: Plenty Of Interest, a Bevy Of Computer Snags."

On and on and on.

Colorado: "Heavy Traffic Slows Health Website On Debut Day."

All across the country, to nobody's great surprise, people who have no health insurance are saying, Yes, we don't want to go throughout life worrying about whether we are going to go bankrupt or whether we are going to be able to go to a doctor, and they are trying to get more information about the Affordable Care Act, and they are signing up in huge numbers—higher than people had anticipated.

Our Republican friends in the House are saying, We don't care that on the first day 10 million people expressed interest in this legislation. We want to end it. We want to end it.

It passed. It is the law. Millions of people are signing up, gaining information. And they are saying, We will continue to shut down the U.S. Government, deny a paycheck to 800,000 American workers; we don't care what happens to them, unless we get our way. And right here in the Senate—and in the House—we have sensible Republicans who are saying what is obvious: You don't have to agree with ObamaCare. I don't agree with ObamaCare. I think it needs to be improved. I believe in a Medicare-for-all, single-payer program. But at least ObamaCare is providing health insurance to some 20 million Americans today who do not have it.

I think it is important to make a point that is not being made often enough in terms of putting what is going on today with this shutdown in a broader context. Of course we can have an argument over ObamaCare. I don't think it is perfect; I want to see it improved. But where our extreme right-wing friends in the House are coming from is a lot more than trying to end ObamaCare. Everybody needs to understand this, and I think there is too little discussion on this issue. What we are looking at is a small group of people—these are tea party folks, right-wing extremist people—people who are

funded by billionaires such as the Koch brothers who are worth some \$71 billion, and I want to tell my colleagues what their vision is for America, because this is not just about ObamaCare. It is a vision for America and what these guys want to accomplish. For them, I should say—and some of them have been quite public about it—shutting down the government is great. It is great because they don't believe in the concept of government.

I think one of the good sources we can use to get a clue as to where these rightwing extremists are coming from is the Texas Republican Party platform of 2010. I want to use that. I could use other sources, but Texas is a very large State. Texas is today controlled by very conservative Republicans. And the truth is that the party platform of Texas, of one State, ends up being the—the ideas in it end up being adopted more or less by Republicans here in the Congress and all over the country. What they say is—this is not some small fringe group. I am not finding some whacko group out there. This is the State of Texas Republican Party platform of 2012.

I want to be very clear in telling my colleagues what this platform they have is about. These are the ideas by and large that our rightwing extremist friends believe in. It is about a lot more than ObamaCare. This is what the 2012 Republican Party platform states:

We support an immediate and orderly transition to a system of private pensions based on the concept of individual retirement accounts, and gradually phasing out the Social Security tax.

Well, if we phase out the Social Security tax, we are ending Social Security. Goodbye, Social Security. In my view, Social Security is probably the most important program ever passed by this U.S. Government. Today, over 50 million people are in the Social Security system. Social Security has gone a very long way in lowering poverty for senior citizens. Before Social Security, it was close to 50 percent; now it is somewhere around 10 percent. We have a long way to go to get that number lower, but we have made real progress.

What they are saying is they want to eliminate Social Security funding, eliminate Social Security, and when they do that, I am not quite sure what happens to a working person when that person is 67, 68, 75 years of age. No Social Security. And for people who doubt me, go to the Texas Republican Party platform. I just read exactly their quote.

This is the other thing they want to do—and I speak now as the proud chairman of the Senate Committee on Veterans' Affairs. We have oversight over what the Veterans' Administration is doing. Within the Veterans' Administration right now, we have about 152 VA hospitals, we have some 900 community-based outreach clinics, we have hundreds of vet centers. In my

view, they are providing not perfect but pretty good health care for the veterans of America, some 6 million of whom are now within the VA health care system. It is something I believe we should expand. I think we should make VA health care available to every veteran in this country.

This is what the Texas Republican Party platform says:

We support the privatization of veteran's healthcare.

I am not quite sure what that means, but it means ending the VA system as we know it because the VA is a government-funded system. If you privatize it—you can do it in a million ways—but, most likely, it sounds to me as though you would give veterans a voucher, something similar to what the Republicans in the House wanted to do with Medicare. Give people a sum of money. Go out, find the doctor or hospital you need. I think that is a terrible idea for the veterans of this country. But, again, I quote the Texas Republican Party platform of 2012:

We support the privatization of veteran's healthcare.

Another plank in terms of what they want:

We support abolishing all federal agencies whose activities are not specifically enumerated in the Constitution; including the Departments of Education and Energy.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator's time has expired.

Mr. SANDERS. Did I have a time limit? I was not aware there was a time limit.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The only time remaining is for Republicans.

Mr. SANDERS. I see. Let me conclude, if I may. I ask unanimous consent for 2 additional minutes.

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

Mr. SANDERS. Let me say this: This debate is a lot bigger than whether the Republicans are successful in shutting down the government because of their insistence that ObamaCare be defunded. This debate is about whether a minority of the people in the House of Representatives is able to blackmail and hold hostage the American people and the U.S. Congress and the President and say: If we do not get our way, we do not care what happens to 800,000 workers and the millions of people who depend on government services. We do not care. It is our way or the highway. And in 2 weeks, these same people, I assure you, will be saying: We do not care if there is an international financial collapse, maybe the loss of millions of jobs. We do not care unless we get our way.

To surrender to that approach would be a horrible precedent because I can guarantee you absolutely that if we move down that path of government, they will be back again and again, and maybe next year it is: We are going to shut down the government unless you abolish Social Security; we are going to shut down the government unless you end the concept of the minimum

wage because we do not believe in the minimum wage.

I hope that Speaker BOEHNER becomes the Speaker of the U.S. House of Representatives and not just for the Republican Party. Let the Members of the House vote. And if they do, I believe this government will be reopened within hours.

With that, I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator's time has expired.

The Senator from Oklahoma is recognized.

Mr. COBURN. Mr. President, I will respond to a couple points my colleague from Vermont referred to. If one looks at the votes on everything that has come to the Senate thus far, I think the lowest vote total was 221, which is a majority of the House. A majority of the House spoke. What we do with it is our business here in the Senate. So it is not necessarily a minority of the minority. If it were, you would not have 221 votes. That is the first point I make.

The second: I do not know what the Texas Republican Party's platform is. But yours truly has thought that one of the things we ought to do for veterans is to give them real health care rather than promise them health care and then make them travel 200 miles to get it.

So part of privatization is giving veterans who have service-connected health care available to them a card that says you can go wherever you want so you do not have to travel—like in Oklahoma, if you are going to have a knee operation—145 miles to the VA center in Oklahoma City. You can actually get it done by an orthopedist who has a whole lot more experience than a local hospital, paid for at Medicare rates.

So the point is, there are options that will give our veterans better access than they have now. I do not know if that is what they are talking about. But that was part of the Patient's Choice Act that was never considered by the Senate.

I want to spend some time talking about where we are and why we are here, and then I want to talk about the continuing resolution, whether it has something attached to it or not.

As I look at the process, what I see us stuck on has to do with a principle that has been true throughout our Nation. When you do big things in government, the only way those things are successful is when they are done in a bipartisan manner. To quote Daniel Patrick Moynihan: Historic laws don't pass barely. They pass 70-to-30 or they fail. They either fail in implementation or they fail in acceptance by the American public.

I applaud the vigor of my friends in opposing the Affordable Care Act. As a practicing physician, I see what this is ultimately going to do. As the majority leader has spoken, the whole idea behind this—and I think my colleague from Vermont would concur—is for a

single-payer government system as a better solution.

Certainly what we had was not working well. I would not disagree with that. But not having a bipartisan health care bill, rather than a strictly partisan health care bill, has probably instigated a lot of the problems we have with this bill, besides the fact that over 62 percent of the American public do not favor this bill. They do not want the Government shutdown over it. That is obvious. But we are where we are.

One of the reasons we are where we are is failed leadership, both by Republicans and Democrats, and a polarization in our country that is not healthy.

So we have now said—with 800,000 employees on furlough, having a real but small negative effect on our economy—what has to happen when you have people far apart? What you have to have is leadership that says: I am going to try to solve this problem by brokering toward the middle. I do not know what that middle is. But what I have not seen yet in the leadership, including the President, is a willingness to find the common ground that will move us in a direction that puts us where we need to be.

The thing we forget too often in the Senate is that we are all Americans, every one of us. What we do up here matters. It has a profound effect on individual lives. The fact that we find ourselves unable to come to a consensus on this very difficult subject is what happens when you have an absence of leadership.

So it is great that the President is meeting or has met with the leaders of the House and the Senate. It would be great if they spent time working on a solution rather than giving press reports after the meeting. It would be good for all Americans if we were not in a government shutdown.

The very premise that you can get the President and those who have foisted the Affordable Care Act—which I think will be highly unaffordable for our children and us—to change this law at this time is probably not going to happen.

But there has to be a way for a continuation of dialog rather than to say: We will not consider anything. So the House today is going to offer up several bills that will actually take care of very great necessities of this country. It will be unfortunate if we do not consider them. We can vote them down. But not considering is not talking. It is not reaching across and trying to find a solution. It is hardening positions.

I would think the American people would want us to take a timeout and say: What are you doing? What is your job? I recently got a letter from the Liberty Foundation of America, from a man I greatly respect, Dr. David Brown, a renowned orthopedist in Oklahoma. What he is saying to people in America today is a recognition of the failure of our leadership.

I ask unanimous consent his letter be printed in the RECORD.

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

THE LIBERTY FOUNDATION OF AMERICA,
Oklahoma City, OK, September 30, 2013.
Subject: An Open Letter to the Leadership of the United States of America.

TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN: The vast majority of the American people oppose the Affordable Care Act, many because the measure is proving to be quite unaffordable. We have a nation falling off the edge of the fiscal cliff, and the best our government can do is have our President assure the people that our deficit has decreased in its growth rate—meaning we are still going broke but luckily at a slower pace than before. We have an extremely dysfunctional federal government; the two legislative branches can't put aside differences to accomplish anything positive for the country, the executive is merely interested in popularity and amassing power, and the judiciary has forgotten how to read the Constitution. It has been stated, and surely was intended, that we have a representative form of democracy—one "Of the People, For the People and By the People"—something for which many men and women greater than us made the ultimate sacrifice. Therefore, when the government reaches such a level of dysfunction and incompetence as present, it becomes imperative that the people take over responsibility and monitor that government with essential diligence. Today, our nation has reached a necessary impasse, with countless Washington-based solutions that solve little, if anything. Therefore, it behooves each and every state to monitor their representation in Washington—to the tune of each and every vote—and publicize this information, unedited, so the people can ensure their interests and that of their state are truly represented, as opposed to the vested Washington interests that currently enjoy splendor. The status of our country's ineffective leadership from all three branches and the unsatisfactory biased reporting needs to be bypassed for America to solve her problems.

To those elected officials in our nation's capital: Do not follow; lead or get the hell out of the way.

To my colleagues in each state-based organization: You are the closest to the grassroots—the people, the voters. Do your duty for the United States of America.

Respectfully,

DAVID R. BROWN, M.D.,
*Trustee; The Liberty Foundation of America,
Chairman Emeritus; The Heritage
Foundation, Chairman & Founder; The
Oklahoma Council of Public Affairs.*

Mr. COBURN. He makes some profound observations about where we are and the lack of leadership. Here is a practicing orthopedist who loves his country, who wants us to solve the problems, who wants us to take back control of our government and do what is in the best long-term interests of the country, not what is in the best long-term interests of a politician or a political party. I think that is where we have gotten off. Everything is measured by the next election rather than by the next generation.

Although I do not always agree with my colleagues, as most of them know, I am willing to work and compromise and meet as long as we are attaining long-term good goals for our fellow countrymen and for our children.

The other issue I want to talk about is the CR itself, because lost in all of

this battle is a CR that plays a lot of games on the American people. It is disappointing for me to see that we play games with mandatory spending by moving numbers from one year to the next year so we can actually spend more money in a present year.

I did not vote to have a sequester because I think it is an idiotic way to cut spending. But I do support trimming the spending of the Federal Government. As a matter of fact, nobody in the last 9 years has done more to offer amendments, to outline duplication, to outline fraud, to outline abuse than I have on the floor of the Senate.

So it is one thing to do it stupidly. It is wholly another to actually keep your commitments to the American people. The vast majority of my colleagues on the other side of the aisle voted for the Budget Control Act, as did most Republicans. So we have a commitment to keep our word.

I will outline to you that—first of all, I will make two points. One is that we are not keeping our word with the continuing resolution coming from the House. It actually will spend \$38 billion more than what we promised the American people we would spend. I know in Washington \$38 billion is not a large amount of money. But the way you get rid of trillion-dollar deficits is a billion dollars at a time—or \$38 billion at a time.

I am disheartened we are playing the green-eyeshade and walnut-shell game on the American people with this bill.

To make my point, I would like to outline some of the spending and some of the false maneuvers that have been done in what is called CHIMPS, which are changes in mandatory program spending.

We have a program in the United States called the DOJ Assets Forfeiture Fund. These are funds that the Justice Department collects that are forfeited by criminals, by people breaking the law, whether it be a car in a drug bust or the money from a drug bust. So what we are going to do is take that money out of that fund, which goes toward things that actually enforce our law enforcement, and plus that down—in other words, steal that money—so we can spend more money somewhere else. That is just \$723 million. It is almost \$1 billion.

More concerning to me is the fact that there is a victims compensation fund in this country—and that is where criminals pay into a fund to compensate victims—there is \$8.9 billion in that fund, supposedly. But last year the appropriators did exactly the same. They took that \$8.9 billion and said they would pay it back next year—this year—and they were allowed to spend almost \$9 billion more on other things, taking that money that should have been given to victims and spending it through the Federal Government.

Lo and behold, they did not add the \$8.9 billion back this year. They counted the same thing again. So now we have \$18 billion of not taxpayer money

but criminal money that should be going to victims that is now going to be spent on other things, and the victims will not receive the money that is due them through either court orders or judgments.

Finally, there is a lot of spending in the bill that most Americans would see as foolish. I thought I would outline just a little bit of it.

One other point I would make. The U.S. Patent and Trademark Office collects fees when you file a patent. For years they have been falling further and further behind. Thankfully, they got caught up. But the money that is paid for a patent application has been siphoned off, not for patent applications but for spending on other things. It is a user fee. Consequently, now it is over 8 months if you file a patent before someone ever even looks at that at the Patent Office. It is 27 months before you get a response. If we are going to get ahead and compete in this competitive world, we have to allow our Patent Office to work. They are taking hundreds of millions of dollars from the Patent and Trademark Office.

What does the CR spend money on that we really should not? Here are some examples for last year when we spent money that we should not have: funding for the National Science Foundation for the development of a Snooki, a robot bird that impersonates a female sage grouse; funding an NSF grant that studies American attitudes toward the filibuster in the Senate; an NSF grant, *sitegrabber.com*, a new Web site to rate the trustworthiness of other Web sites; an NSF grant funding *ecoATM*, a company commercializing an ATM to give out cash if you give them your old cell phone—that is totally a private separate sector venture, yet we are funding that, in an era when we have a \$750 billion deficit this year and a \$17 trillion debt—an NSF grant paying for participant expenses to attend an annual snowmobile competition in Michigan through 2015.

I do not think that is a priority when we are struggling to pay our bills.

I have a list of Department of Agriculture grants. I will put those in the RECORD.

We are still spending \$30 billion a year for 47 job training programs, none of which have a metric on them. All but three, according to the Government Accountability Office, overlap one another, in other words, do the same thing.

There are 20 Federal programs across 12 different Federal agencies for the study of invasive species. I think we should study invasive species, but I do not think we should have 12 agencies studying them. I think we should have one agency study them. We ought to concentrate the dollars so we get good value out of that.

We are still sending unemployment checks to people who make more than \$1 million a year.

We have 15 different financial literacy programs, a new one being cre-

ated by the Consumer Financial Protection Bureau. This is across 15 different agencies. We are spending millions on that.

We are spending \$1 million for NASA to test food that can be eaten on Mars 30 years from now. I would not think that is a priority.

We are spending \$4 billion for 250 different grant programs at the Department of Justice which, as GAO says, has the worst record of any agency in terms of monitoring their grants and the veracity and the compliance of those grants.

We are spending \$3 billion on 209 different programs for science, technology, engineering, and math across 13 different Federal agencies. I think it is fine if we want to incentivize that, but do we really need over 200 programs to do that? No, we do not. But we have not addressed any of that. It has been known.

We have the GAO out with a report, their third report this year, and they will come with another one next year, outlining at least \$250 billion that could be saved by the Federal Government on duplicative services; in other words, multiple agencies doing the same thing, stepping on each other.

Not one bill has come before this body that addresses that \$250 billion expenditure that could be saved every year, not one bill in this session of Congress. So we are having a fight over spending. Yet Congress is the very real problem we are having on spending. We need to look at what the real problem is. The real problem is the failure to do our job, the failure to look at programs and see if they are effective, the failure to look at programs and see if they are truly a role for the Federal Government as far as the Constitution and as far as common sense, a failure to offer substantive changes or have the ability to offer substantive changes to those bills.

I will conclude with one final remark. The Appropriations Committee did a good job this year, even though at higher levels above the Budget Control Act, of getting their bills in order. Only one of those bills was offered on the floor. It was withdrawn when Members of my caucus were not allowed to offer amendments, because it was not going anywhere if we were not allowed minority rights to offer amendments to change an appropriations bill. So we are doing a continuing resolution to fund the government and handicapping the very employees we are going to ask to make good decisions for our country, because we will not pass appropriation bills on time. We do not need a budget to pass appropriations bills, because we have the Budget Control Act that spells out where we are going to be on discretionary spending for the next 10 years. We know what the levels are.

Consequently, we end up at an impasse over a continuing resolution—over a continuing resolution that says we have not done our job anyway. I

think what Dr. David Brown says in his letter is quite accurate. There is a total lack of leadership in this city, sitting at the executive branch, in the House and in the Senate. Only America can change that. I hope it does.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Delaware is recognized.

Mr. COONS. Mr. President, I come to the floor today to repeat a point that I think is worth repeating, which is that on this second day of the shutdown of our Federal Government, we need to focus more on manufacturing jobs than on manufacturing crises.

I have been here as a Senator now just 3 years. As the Presiding Officer knows, and many of my other colleagues know, the folks from home are calling us in record numbers to say they want us to listen to each other, to work together, and to try to help to get America back to work.

We all remember where we were 5 years ago at the depth of the fiscal crisis, our financial system in collapse and our economy on life support. Millions lost their jobs and millions more lost their savings. We have begun to recover and to heal. We have had 7½ million jobs created over the last 42 months, jobless claims are now at a 5-year low, and we have had 9 consecutive quarters of economic growth. I think we need to find ways to work together to continue to sustain that forward movement. The shutdown of this government does not help in any way.

One thing I want to highlight is some good news we have had. We just learned the manufacturing sector grew last month at its fastest pace in more than 2 years. We need to invest in that success and invest in that growth.

In the first decade of this century, we lost 6 million manufacturing jobs in this country, good-paying jobs, high-skilled jobs, jobs that come with benefits, jobs you can raise a family on. In the last 3 years, we have gained back half a million manufacturing jobs, but we are still way short of where we were in 2000.

There are a few items we could focus on that would help us grow this sector: skills training, opening markets abroad, expanding access to capital, and creating a national manufacturing strategy. I hope to come back to the floor and speak to these in much more detail in the days ahead.

Let me close by saying something that I think is simple. A shutdown is not the answer to this ongoing economic recovery. Defaulting on our debt is not the answer to what the folks from our home States are calling and asking us to do. The answer is for the Speaker of the House to allow the House to vote on a bill passed in this Chamber that, if adopted, would reopen the Federal Government and allow us to work together to revitalize our economy.

I yield the floor.

MORNING BUSINESS

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The majority leader.

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.

ADDITIONAL STATEMENTS

ABILITYONE PROGRAM

• Mr. PRYOR. Mr. President, today I wish to recognize an organization that has been providing opportunities for Arkansans that are blind or visually impaired since 1940. The Arkansas Lighthouse for the Blind started as a dream of a blind Methodist minister, the late Rev. Jeff Smith, and became a reality thanks to \$100 in donations from friends. Since those humble beginnings, the Arkansas Lighthouse for the Blind has grown into a nationally recognized manufacturing business, now employing over 80 people in Little Rock.

The Arkansas Lighthouse for the Blind is a partner of the AbilityOne Program, a Federal purchasing program that enables over 47,000 Americans who are blind or severely disabled to work and provides products and services to Federal and commercial customers. This year marks the 75th anniversary of AbilityOne, and I am pleased to have such an important organization promoting the employment and advancement of people who are blind and visually impaired in my State.

Today in America, 70 percent of blind and visually impaired working-aged Americans are not employed. Through the AbilityOne Program, organizations like Arkansas Lighthouse for the Blind harnesses the purchasing power of the Federal government to provide quality products and services from participating community-based nonprofit agencies dedicated to training and employing individuals with disabilities. These workers proudly manufacture a wide range of paper, textile, and apparel products. From the small SKILCRAFT memo pads on our desks, to the shirts on the backs of our men and women in uniform, they are a part of our American manufacturing base that keeps our government moving each and every day.

I have visited the Arkansas Lighthouse for the Blind and had several opportunities to meet with their employees. During each interaction, I have been impressed by the opportunities this organization provides their associates, both personally and professionally. It is a place that truly lives up to its mission and expands opportunity for persons who are blind throughout the State. I am a proud AbilityOne Champion and appreciate this partnership which allows us to

work together to expand opportunities for individuals with disabilities.

The month of October serves as National Disability Employment Awareness Month and I recognize the Arkansas Lighthouse for the Blind, as well as the AbilityOne program, for the opportunities they have provided for Americans with disabilities. Americans that have worked through this program over the years have acquired job skills and training, received good wages and benefits, as well as gained greater independence and quality of life. It is for this reason that I stand in support of the work they do each and every day to open doors of opportunity for Americans who are blind or visually impaired. •

EXECUTIVE AND OTHER COMMUNICATIONS

The following communications were laid before the Senate, together with accompanying papers, reports, and documents, and were referred as indicated:

EC-3273. A communication from the Acting Assistant Secretary, Bureau of Political-Military Affairs, Department of State, transmitting, pursuant to law, an addendum to a certification, transmittal number: DDTC 2013-1595, of the proposed sale or export of defense articles and/or defense services to a Middle East country regarding any possible effects such a sale might have relating to Israel's Qualitative Military Edge over military threats to Israel; to the Committee on Foreign Relations.

EC-3274. A communication from the Under Secretary of Defense (Global Strategic Affairs), transmitting, pursuant to law, the Department of Defense's 2013 annual report to Congress entitled "The Worldwide Nuclear, Biological, and Chemical Weapons and Ballistic and Cruise Missile Threat" (DCN OSS 2013-1593); to the Committee on Armed Services.

EC-3275. A communication from the Director of Defense Procurement and Acquisition Policy, Department of Defense, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled "Defense Federal Acquisition Regulation Supplement: Allowability of Legal Costs for Whistleblower Proceedings" ((RIN0750-AI04) (DFARS Case 2013-D022)) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on September 27, 2013; to the Committee on Armed Services.

EC-3276. A communication from the Director of Defense Procurement and Acquisition Policy, Department of Defense, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled "Defense Federal Acquisition Regulation Supplement: Acquisitions in Support Operations in Afghanistan" ((RIN0750-AH98) (DFARS Case 2013-D009)) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on September 27, 2013; to the Committee on Armed Services.

EC-3277. A communication from the Director of Defense Procurement and Acquisition Policy, Department of Defense, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled "Defense Federal Acquisition Regulation Supplement: Enhancement of Contractor Employee Whistleblower Protections" ((RIN0750-AH) (DFARS Case 2013-D010)) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on September 27, 2013; to the Committee on Armed Services.

EC-3278. A communication from the Secretary of the Securities and Exchange Commission, transmitting, pursuant to law, the

report of a rule entitled "Temporary Registration as a Municipal Advisor; Required Amendments; and Withdrawal from Temporary Registration" (RIN3235-AK69) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on September 26, 2013; to the Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs.

EC-3279. A communication from the Secretary of the Securities and Exchange Commission, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled "Registration of Municipal Advisors" (RIN3235-AJ86) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on September 26, 2013; to the Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs.

EC-3280. A communication from the Director of Congressional Affairs, Nuclear Regulatory Commission, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled "Maintenance, Testing, and Replacement of Vented Lead-Acid Storage Batteries for Nuclear Power Plants" (Regulatory Guide 1.129, Revision 3) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on September 27, 2013; to the Committee on Environment and Public Works.

EC-3281. A communication from the Chief of the Trade and Commercial Regulations Branch, Customs and Border Protection, Department of Homeland Security, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled "United States - Colombia Trade Promotion Agreement" (RIN1515-AD88) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on September 27, 2013; to the Committee on Finance.

EC-3282. A communication from the Chief of the Trade and Commercial Regulations Branch, Customs and Border Protection, Department of Homeland Security, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled "United States - Panama Trade Promotion Agreement" (RIN1515-AD93) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on September 27, 2013; to the Committee on Finance.

EC-3283. A communication from the Federal Register Certifying Officer, Financial Management Service, Department of the Treasury, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled "Regulatory Reorganization; Administrative Changes to Regulations Due to Consolidation of the Financial Management Service and the Bureau of the Public Debt into the Bureau of the Fiscal Service" (RIN1510-AB31) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on September 27, 2011; to the Committee on Finance.

EC-3284. A communication from the Assistant Administrator, Bureau for Legislative and Public Affairs, U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID), transmitting, pursuant to law, a report responding to a GAO report entitled "Haiti Reconstruction: USAID Infrastructure Projects Have Had Mixed Results and Face Sustainability Challenges"; to the Committee on Foreign Relations.

EC-3285. A communication from the Director of Regulations and Policy Management Staff, Food and Drug Administration, Department of Health and Human Services, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled "Unique Device Identification System" (Docket No. FDA-2011-N-0090) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on September 27, 2013; to the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions.

EC-3286. A communication from the Assistant General Counsel, Federal Retirement Thrift Investment Board, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled "Implementation of United States v. Windsor" (5 CFR Parts 1651 and 1690) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on

September 27, 2013; to the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs.

EC-3287. A communication from the Chief Judge, Superior Court of the District of Columbia, transmitting, pursuant to law, a report relative to modifications to the Jury Plan for the Superior Court of the District of Columbia; to the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs.

EC-3288. A communication from the Executive Director, Commodity Futures Trading Commission, transmitting, pursuant to law, the Commission's fiscal year 2013 FAIR Act inventory; to the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs.

REPORTS OF COMMITTEES

The following reports of committees were submitted:

By Mr. MENENDEZ, from the Committee on Foreign Relations, with amendments:

S. 1545. A bill to extend authorities related to global HIV/AIDS and to promote oversight of United States programs (Rept. No. 113-112).

INTRODUCTION OF BILLS AND JOINT RESOLUTIONS

The following bills and joint resolutions were introduced, read the first and second times by unanimous consent, and referred as indicated:

By Mr. CRUZ:

S.J. Res. 23. A joint resolution making continuing appropriations for fiscal year 2014, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Appropriations.

ADDITIONAL COSPONSORS

S. 468

At the request of Mr. ROCKEFELLER, the name of the Senator from Virginia (Mr. Kaine) was added as a cosponsor of S. 468, a bill to protect the health care and pension benefits of our nation's miners.

S. 813

At the request of Mrs. SHAHEEN, the name of the Senator from Maryland (Mr. CARDIN) was added as a cosponsor of S. 813, a bill to require that Peace Corps volunteers be subject to the same limitations regarding coverage of abortion services as employees of the Peace Corps with respect to coverage of such services, and for other purposes.

S. 897

At the request of Ms. WARREN, the name of the Senator from Massachusetts (Mr. MARKEY) was added as a cosponsor of S. 897, a bill to prevent the doubling of the interest rate for Federal subsidized student loans for the 2013-2014 academic year by providing funds for such loans through the Federal Reserve System, to ensure that such loans are available at interest rates that are equivalent to the interest rates at which the Federal Government provides loans to banks through the discount window operated by the Federal Reserve System, and for other purposes.

S. 1459

At the request of Mr. KIRK, the name of the Senator from Massachusetts

(Mr. MARKEY) was added as a cosponsor of S. 1459, a bill to amend title 49, United States Code, to prohibit the transportation of horses in interstate transportation in a motor vehicle containing 2 or more levels stacked on top of one another.

S. 1467

At the request of Mr. BLUMENTHAL, the name of the Senator from Iowa (Mr. HARKIN) was added as a cosponsor of S. 1467, a bill to establish the Office of the Special Advocate to provide advocacy in cases before courts established by the Foreign Intelligence Surveillance Act of 1978 and for other purposes.

S. 1525

At the request of Mr. HATCH, the name of the Senator from South Carolina (Mr. GRAHAM) was added as a cosponsor of S. 1525, a bill to ensure that the personal and private information of Americans enrolling in Exchanges established under the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act is secured with proper privacy and data security safeguards.

S. 1535

At the request of Mr. SCHUMER, the name of the Senator from Arizona (Mr. FLAKE) was added as a cosponsor of S. 1535, a bill to deter terrorism, provide justice for victims, and for other purposes.

S. 1551

At the request of Mr. WYDEN, the name of the Senator from Hawaii (Mr. SCHATZ) was added as a cosponsor of S. 1551, a bill to reform the authorities of the Federal Government to require the production of certain business records, conduct electronic surveillance, use pen registers and trap and trace devices, and use other forms of information gathering for foreign intelligence, counterterrorism, and criminal purposes, and for other purposes.

S. 1564

At the request of Mr. SANDERS, the name of the Senator from Nevada (Mr. HELLER) was added as a cosponsor of S. 1564, a bill making continuing appropriations for veterans benefits and services in the event of a Government shutdown.

S. 1567

At the request of Mr. CARDIN, the names of the Senator from Pennsylvania (Mr. CASEY) and the Senator from Montana (Mr. BAUCUS) were added as cosponsors of S. 1567, a bill to provide for the compensation of furloughed Federal employees.

S. RES. 75

At the request of Mr. GRASSLEY, his name was added as a cosponsor of S. Res. 75, a resolution condemning the Government of Iran for its state-sponsored persecution of its Baha'i minority and its continued violation of the International Covenants on Human Rights.

S. RES. 203

At the request of Mrs. FEINSTEIN, the name of the Senator from Massachu-

setts (Mr. MARKEY) was added as a cosponsor of S. Res. 203, a resolution expressing the sense of the Senate regarding efforts by the United States to resolve the Israeli-Palestinian conflict through a negotiated two-state solution.

AUTHORITY FOR COMMITTEES TO MEET

COMMITTEE ON HEALTH, EDUCATION, LABOR, AND PENSIONS

Mr. CASEY. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions be authorized to meet during the session of the Senate on October 2, 2013, at 10 a.m. in room SD-430 of the Dirksen Senate Office Building.

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

COMMITTEE ON HOMELAND SECURITY AND GOVERNMENTAL AFFAIRS

Mr. CASEY. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs be authorized to meet during the session of the Senate on October 2, 2013.

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

COMMITTEE ON THE JUDICIARY

Mr. CASEY. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Committee on the Judiciary be authorized to meet during the session of the Senate on October 2, 2013, at 10 a.m. in room SD-226 of the Dirksen Senate Office Building, to conduct a hearing entitled "Continued Oversight of the Foreign Intelligence Surveillance Act."

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

UNANIMOUS CONSENT AGREEMENT—S. 1566

Mr. REID. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that if the Senate receives a bill from the House which is identical to S. 1566, a bill providing a short-term extension of Iraq special immigrant visas, as passed by the Senate, then the bill be read three times and passed and the motion to reconsider be laid on the table with no intervening action or debate.

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

UNANIMOUS CONSENT AGREEMENT—H.J. RES. 70, H.J. RES. 71, H.J. RES. 72, H.J. RES. 73; AND H.R. 3230

Mr. REID. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that if the Senate receives from the House any of the following joint resolutions or bills by 11 a.m. on Thursday, October 3, those measures be considered to have received their second reading and objection to further proceedings considered to have been heard under the provisions of rule XIV during Thursday's session: H.J. Res. 70, H.J. Res. 71, H.J. Res. 72, H.J. Res. 73; and H.R. 3230.

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

ORDERS FOR THURSDAY, OCTOBER 3, 2013

Mr. REID. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that when the Senate completes its business today, it adjourn until 10:30 a.m. Thursday, October 3; that following the prayer and pledge, the Journal of proceedings be approved to date, the time for the two leaders be reserved for their use later in the day; that following any leader remarks, the Senate be in a period of morning business for debate only until 2 p.m. with the first hour equally divided and controlled between the two leaders or their designees, with the Republicans controlling the first 30 minutes and the majority controlling the second 30 minutes, with Senators permitted to speak for up to 10 minutes each.

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

ORDER FOR ADJOURNMENT

Mr. REID. Mr. President, if there is no further business to come before the Senate, I ask unanimous consent that it adjourn under the previous order following the remarks of Senator BARRASSO of Wyoming for up to 10 minutes.

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

HEALTH CARE EXCHANGES

Mr. BARRASSO. Mr. President, I come to the floor today, because Americans all across the country today are speaking out about their personal experiences with the ObamaCare exchanges yesterday. Instead of it being as easy as buying something from Amazon, which the President had promised, Americans ran into roadblocks and technical disasters State after State.

Instead of getting good coverage, their computers crashed. These were not just glitches, they were system failures to the point that in the Casper Star Tribune, on the front page today, it was talking about people spending time working their way just trying—on the computer—one little section had a little cartoon at the bottom. The one guy worked so hard trying to work the computer that he ended up getting carpal tunnel syndrome, while trying to get through the computer to find out more about the costs of the Obama health care law through the exchanges.

The Obama administration has had 3 years to prepare for the launch that occurred on October 1. Even if the technology finally gets fixed, the issue of health care will not. After people finally get a chance to examine what is being offered to them when they make a decision about enrolling or not under the mandates of the law, Americans are still going to find that the exchanges do not match the President's promise.

Let's think about what those promises were. Last week, the President was in New York with Bill Clinton. They had what seemed like an infomercial to me. What the President said is that: Most people will be able to shop and compare. For many people it is going to be cheaper than an average cell phone bill.

The people are not going to find that it is cheaper, even with government subsidies, than the average cell phone bill.

The President has also said: The process is going to be as easy as Amazon. Even if the administration is able to paper over the many problems with the exchanges, it is not going to be as easy as shopping on Amazon.

Remember, from the beginning the President said: If you like your doctor, you can keep your doctor. We are now seeing in State after State that the exchanges are such that, to try to get costs down, they are limiting the market in a way and the networks in a way that fewer doctors are included, fewer hospitals are included.

That is causing an uproar. Instead of doubling down on a broken system, the President should grant all Americans a 1-year delay—the exact same delay he gave their bosses.

The President talks a lot about a “fair shake” for all Americans. We heard it in his campaign speeches, and we hear it as he goes around and talks to groups. He uses the words quite frequently.

ObamaCare, unfortunately, delivers the exact opposite. What the President has done unilaterally is gone outside the law to grant special deals to almost everyone except to people who need it the most, which is the hard-working American public. He basically, I believe, shut down the Federal Government in order to continue his own policy of his health care law, picking winners and losers. This can't continue.

The good news is that today, after once again attempting to lead from behind in a crisis, the President is finally having congressional leaders down to the White House within the next hour to meet with him. This is an opportunity for the President to do the right thing, to open the government, and to finally deliver fairness for Americans under the health care law. After all, if we are going to give people's bosses a break from the mandates of the health care law, the President ought to give hard-working men and women of America the same break. The same for Members of Congress. If the President decides that his own administration, White House employees, and Members of Congress have special treatment under the health care law, that shouldn't be so. That should be eliminated.

I do want to talk for a minute specifically about the government shutdown. Over the past week Senate and House Republicans have voted overwhelmingly for legislation passed by the House of Representatives that

keeps government operations running. It keeps parks open, and it keeps Americans working. Senate Democrats have overwhelmingly rejected these proposals and have allowed to have the government shut down, to have the gates closed at America's national parks, and to have critical services for America's veterans go unfunded through the Veterans' Administration.

Today or tomorrow the Senate will have the opportunity to pass legislation from the House that will immediately open our parks, fund services offered through the Department of Veterans Affairs, and provide time-sensitive funding for the National Institutes of Health. We should pass these bills. We should make sure Americans can use these essential government services right now.

I also would like to talk for a minute about another looming issue that is important to the American people, to our Nation, and one that the President has recently addressed. Later this month Congress will begin debate on the President's sixth debt limit increase, the sixth time he has come to increase the debt limit in his 5 years of office. The President has said he is refusing to negotiate on this issue. Instead, I believe the President should accept that our country can no longer avoid a bipartisan agreement to reform entitlements. The President can no longer avoid a bipartisan agreement to reform entitlements. It is the President's job, responsibility, obligation, and opportunity to lead the effort.

If the President is unwilling to seriously deal with our country's debt, Congress is left with little choice but to use the debt limit to force him into fiscal solutions. The debt ceiling is merely a symptom of a much larger illness, which is Washington's addiction to spending. On spending, the status quo is not sustainable.

It is interesting how the President has seemed to change his tune. The President gave a number of speeches in the Senate when he was a Senator. We can go back and see what he said about raising the debt ceiling. He said that adding to the debt—of course, this was when George W. Bush was President—his key word was “irresponsible.” President Obama as a Senator said it was unpatriotic—raising the debt ceiling—unpatriotic and unacceptable. This was Barack Obama in this body, in this Chamber, in 2006. President Obama—at the time a Senator—actually called raising the debt ceiling “a failure of leadership.” Isn't that what the President himself should be accused of right now as he tries to do what he so vehemently objected to when he was in the Senate?

How bad is the situation? Well, in September the Congressional Budget Office reported that in the long term defense, education, infrastructure, and all discretionary spending will be squeezed by entitlement programs as well as interest on the debt. Over the next 75 years discretionary spending

will increase by 39 percent. This makes the sequester cuts look like child's play. Medicaid and other health spending increases will be by 159 percent; interest on the debt increases 823 percent; Social Security spending rises by only 37 percent only because CBO assumes drastic benefit cuts in the year 2033.

The President recently spoke about making cuts, though, to discretionary spending. That number is underestimated. The President failed to mention that by refusing to make much needed changes to entitlement programs, he is guaranteeing that these investments, as he calls them, will continue to shrink.

Entitlement reform is needed not only to preserve other Federal spending but in order to slow our ever-expanding debt. President Obama has bragged that he is no longer setting up the record-setting deficits he did in his first 4 years. Those self-congratulatory

statements will be short-lived, as the Congressional Budget Office has predicted that deficits will soon start to rise unless real reforms are made today. Without real reform, America's debt will continue to grow, and America's interest and entitlement payments are on course to overwhelm the entire Federal budget.

The American people deserve to hear the truth about the tough choices we must face together as a nation. They also deserve an open and honest discussion about how we are going to make those choices. The President and congressional Democrats ought to rethink their strategies of leadership via blame game and saving via spending.

The President and Democrats have an opportunity today at the White House to put the games aside and work with us on opening the government, on delivering fairness for all Americans, and on actually reducing our debt. I hope they use this meeting to finally

do what is right and to help the American people.

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

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

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

ADJOURNMENT UNTIL 10:30 A.M.
TOMORROW

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the Senate now stands in adjournment until tomorrow at 10:30 a.m.

Thereupon, the Senate, at 5:06 p.m., adjourned until Thursday, October 3, 2013, at 10:30 a.m.