One of the most significant impacts of the storm has been on my State's livestock producers. ''Tens of thousands of cattle killed in Friday's blizzard . . . '' proclaims the Rapid City Journal headline.

Silvia Christen, with the South Dakota Stockgrowers Association, has shared with me gut-wrenching stories of ranchers who have lost their herds. She said a man near Interior found his cows had pushed themselves and their calves over a Badlands wall and killed many of them. He estimates his loss at 50 percent of his total herd.

A young man east of Hermosa estimates he lost 30 percent of his 200 breeding cows. He found them all in one pile in a draw covered in snow. He saw the heads and hooves sticking out from the snow and can't bring himself to go closer or dig them out. He stated:

> I'm young, but I always thought I was a good rancher. I thought I'd taken care of them but I guess I should have done more.

He hung up the phone with an apology as his voice broke.

Our cowboys are resilient people, but this blizzard comes on the heels of a devastating drought last year from which ranchers still haven't fully recovered.

I am very proud of our State and local officials who have taken immediate action to assist those in need. The National Guard is conducting lifesaving safety operations to ensure folks without power are OK and to open roads. The State is working with a local rendering company to assist with finding, identifying, and dealing with livestock that have been killed. Our ag organizations in the State are providing help and guidance to ranchers who were hit.

The one place where help is lacking is from the Federal Government. Because of the government shutdown, producers can't rely on their FSA offices for assistance.

Since Congress hasn't finished the farm bill, West River ranchers may have to wait for disaster assistance. The 2008 farm bill included several critical disaster assistance programs, including the Livestock Indemnity Program, which provides help to producers affected by natural disasters. Unfortunately, that program expired in 2011, and because Congress hasn't yet completed a comprehensive farm bill, there continues to be no funding available for them.

We passed a good farm bill here in the Senate twice in the past 2 years. I worked to include funding for these livestock disaster programs, which are in both the Senate and House bills. The Senate is ready to negotiate the farm bill, but the House hasn't appointed conferees. The longer they delay, the longer my constituents will suffer without disaster aid.

The House needs to pass a clean continuing resolution, and they need to appoint conferees so that we can finally finish the farm bill.

It will take many months for the Black Hills communities to clean up from the October blizzard. For ranchers who lost livestock, it may take years to recover. But whatever Mother Nature has to deliver, it cannot dampen the spirit of South Dakotans.

Mr. President, 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.

Mrs. FISCHER. Mr. 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

Mrs. FISCHER. Mr. President, I rise today to give voice to frustrated Nebraskans. I rise to testify to the simple truth that a government should not intentionally make life harder for its people. I rise to say: Enough. Enough press conferences. Enough brinkmanship. Enough dividing people of good will against one another.

I am still pretty new here, but I can say that in Nebraska and in so many other States across this Nation we actually work together—and not just on small bills but also on the big issues. I urge my colleagues to remember where we came from.

While I served in the Nebraska Legislature, we dealt with a major budget shortfall. We didn't go on TV or Twitter or fight; we legislated and we fixed the problem. That is the Nebraska way. We roll up our sleeves, we cut through the talking points, and we get to work.

Nebraskans are pragmatic. They are well informed, and they expect results. So when Nebraskans look at the dysfunction we have here in Washington, they are frustrated, and I am too. I am very frustrated. I am frustrated that this Congress can't pass appropriations bills that comply with the law. I am frustrated that this Congress cannot agree on a budget. I am frustrated with crisis management instead of responsible governance. I am frustrated with being told one thing only to learn it is just not true. I am frustrated with the willful ignorance that goes on in Washington when it comes to our debt. And I am frustrated with the lack of solutions.

The American people do not want us to just stand in opposition; they want us to put forth constructive ideas to solve problems. As a result of Congress's failure to agree on a spending plan, the government is shut down. The result? Well, in yesterday's Omaha World Herald there was a report that Nebraska farmers are unable to cash checks when they bring their grain in after harvest. The article noted:

> State law requires elevators to include a lender's name on a check when a farmer has a loan against the grain. With no one at Farm Service Agency offices because of the shutdown, checks can't be cashed when the lender is the FSA.
>
> ''We've got millions of dollars of grain checks out there that farmers need,'' said Dan Poppe, president of the Archer (Neb.) Cooperative Credit Union, with locations in Archer, Dannebrog and Central City.
>
> He said entire rural economies count on the money.
>
> ''It impacts not only our farmers, who are relying heavily on the money, but also the local grocery store, hardware store, the feed and seed,'' Poppe said.

It is not just farmers and ranchers, it is also our manufacturers and our investors. A constituent from Waco, NB, wrote:

> I am a Dow employee living in your district. This impasse is beginning to threaten Dow's investment in new U.S. manufacturing. Not only will a continued delay push back Dow's plans to create thousands of new American jobs, it will harm Dow's competitiveness and directly impact me and my family. Greater economic certainty will help Dow, its employees, and our State thrive.

The wife of a Federal law enforcement officer from Gretna wrote:

> We are a single income family. We have a 2 and 3 year old and one more on the way. I am due in November. This shutdown will leave us unable to pay our bills.

A 23-year-old Department of Agriculture employee emailed me saying:

> My wife works two jobs to help make ends meet, but we still live paycheck to paycheck. If this shutdown is not resolved within the next few days, we will be devastated financially.

A U.S. Air Force veteran wrote to tell me:

> I applied for Social Security disability assistance on the 15th of August and my claim had gone for medical review on the 26th of August. I have no money, and I just found out yesterday that because of the shutdown SSA claims are on hold.

A furloughed Federal worker from Omaha called my office to say: We are all tired. We are tired of not getting a budget until the last minute. We are all tired. You guys need to do your job.

I agree. I hear these same messages over and over. Nebraskans are tired of the name calling and the blame games. They want to see government work, and they want to see it work well. They are not fooled by the rhetoric, and they expect us to govern responsibly. I agree. That is why I am talking with my colleagues—not publicly in front of the cameras but privately—to see if we can forge a way forward. But I believe we have to do more than just open the government. That is just the basics. We have to address our $17 trillion debt. It is smothering this country, it is jeopardizing our national security, and it is a threat to our children's future.

Congress will soon vote on increasing the debt ceiling—the sixth debt limit increase in the past 5 years. Our national debt has almost doubled since 2006, and our debt limit has grown twice as much as our economy in the past 2 years. Shouldn't the opposite be true? Meanwhile, our economy's lethargic recovery continues sluggishly along at a rate of 1 to 2 percent. This is unacceptable.

Instead of growing our economy by reducing spending, cutting regulations, and overhauling an outdated tax code,

Congress has continued to spend money we just don't have.

I didn't run for office to shut down the government. I ran for office to help hard-working Americans get back to work. I ran for this office to stand for middle-class families who aren't asking government for a hand up, they are just asking that the government stop holding them down. Nebraskans want to know they can provide for their families, and I don't think that is asking too much.

Make no mistake. High public debt depresses economic growth, which in turn dampens job creation. Ironically, our country's debt crisis comes as the Congressional Budget Office is predicting that tax revenues will be at an alltime high—$2.7 trillion in tax revenues. The problem isn't that we have too little revenue, the problem is that we are spending too much.

Part of why Nebraskans are frustrated is that our problems are so clear. We know exactly what they are. There is no mystery here. The American people know you can't keep spending twice what you make. They live within a budget—a budget that must balance—and they expect government to do the same. Our government is a long way from a balanced budget, but we can work at a minimum to try to get there.

Despite these realities, we are not moving forward. For the past several weeks, Members of Congress, the President, and the press have been participants in a circus. After 9 days, there is still no end in sight. Let me repeat that. After 9 days of a government shutdown, there is still no end in sight.

That is not to say there aren't some good ideas out there. Several of my colleagues have offered a number of commonsense proposals that do have broad support. These ideas include repeal of the medical device tax, which was adopted by the Senate as an amendment to its budget resolution by an overwhelming vote of 79 to 20. And this happened in March. Other ideas include a commitment to reducing spending, as required by current law, but we would increase the flexibility for Federal agencies to make smarter cuts. We all agree sequestration is a very clumsy way to cut spending.

That is why we need to provide program managers with the ability to determine which programs are wasteful or less efficient.

It is a matter of setting priorities so we can make wise decisions. That is the Nebraska way, and that is what we need to do in Washington as well.

Senator COLLINS' sequestration proposal would also allow Congress to continue to exercise oversight on all spending and related cuts. That is important. Even the President has put forth ideas to cut spending by $400 billion over the next 10 years. These offers could give us the framework for a real discussion.

Yet we remain at an impasse, unable to move forward. A nation of movers, thinkers, innovators, and entrepreneurs should not be caught in neutral. We should move forward—always forward, and always building a better future. We are the single greatest nation the world has ever known. We have stood as a sentinel of liberty and economic prosperity for over 200 years, yet we find ourselves no longer able to perform even the most basic functions of government. That is not acceptable. Our forefathers, our constituents, and our children and our grandchildren deserve better.

I am ready to move forward. I am tired of waiting, and I am willing to work with any of my colleagues to find a reasonable solution. So let's get to work.

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

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. BLUMENTHAL). The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

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

Mr. BROWN. Mr. President, I am privileged to represent the State of Ohio, as I know the Presiding Officer is to represent Connecticut, and the previous speaker is to represent Nebraska.

We are home to several large research facilities—medical research facilities, aeronautics research facilities, military research facilities, some that are overwhelmingly represented to do research in pure science. All of them have a major impact in their communities in terms of employment with usually very good-paying jobs—scientists, engineers, physicians, chemists, and all kinds of people in the natural, medical, or aeronautic sciences and all of the support staff. These research facilities are always good for communities. And they not only provide employment, but they provide great wealth for our country. So much of this research helps people in their daily lives and is commercialized into businesses, and entrepreneurs take much of this research and applied science and create more economic activity, prosperity, and good-paying jobs. And that is where this shutdown is particularly problematic.

There are 800,000 Federal employees that have lost jobs as a result of this ridiculous shutdown. I have spent much of the last several days on the phone talking to people running these institutions, talking to smalltown and big-city bankers, entrepreneurs, businesses, union officials, and people who represent or run many of these organizations. All of them think this shutdown is absolutely unnecessary.

Just a moment ago the Presiding Officer and I had a conversation, and we both shake our heads: Why do radicals in the House of Representatives want to inflict this kind of pain—not just on the 800,000 Federal workers, but on the contractors near these facilities, the restaurants, hardware stores and businesses, and the school districts that are affected because people aren't bringing home the income and aren't paying as much taxes—all that happens when this willful government shutdown, orchestrated because a group of people want to attach their political platform, ideas, gimmicks, or statements to legislation we need to pass?

It is pretty simple: Pass the continuing resolution. Keep the government open. That is not a Democratic or Republican platform. That is what we need to do. Don't go around attaching political statements in a political platform to a simple ''keep the government open'' resolution.

The same on the debt ceiling. Nobody is wild about increasing the debt ceiling. Nobody is wild about passing legislation so we don't default. It is not a part of the 2012 Democratic platform to raise the debt ceiling, nor is it a part of the 2012 Republican platform. So when we have a vote, it is not negotiated: Let's add a bunch of 2012 Republican party platform rhetoric to something to raise the debt ceiling so the government of the United States pays its bills. It is not a Democratic or a Republican value to pay the bills this Congress ran up. It is our duty.

We take an oath of office. I took the oath in January 2013. The Presiding Officer took his oath. We know running the government and paying our bills is what you do as an elected official. Those never used to be controversial, until some radicals in the House of Representatives decided that this is a political opportunity. We can accuse the President of not negotiating. We can tell the public the Democrats are willing to shut down the government. The Republican Governor of Nevada to the Democratic majority leader from Nevada this week called it a Republican shutdown. So it is clearly a group of radicals.

Back to what I was saying about these great research facilities. The Presiding Officer has them in Connecticut, I have them in Ohio, and the Senator from Hawaii has them in her State. An administrator of one said it is asymmetrical, killing and building a major scientific endeavor. It is a lot harder and takes a lot longer for a group of engineers, doctors or scientists to construct a very important scientific endeavor than it does to kill one.

Fifty years ago, Speaker of the House Rayburn from Texas at one time said—and I will clean this up: Any mule can kick down a barn. It takes a carpenter to build one.

I will make it more personal. A dozen years ago I was involved in a car accident and broke my back. I was in good health and exercised, but for 3 days I didn't get out of bed. I remember the first day I got out of bed and tried to walk. My leg muscles had atrophied. It takes a lot of time to build up those leg muscles, and it took 3 days for them to

atrophy. I was in my late 40s then and in good shape.

That is also the way science is, in the same sense that it takes a long time and a lot of investment of public dollars and a lot of brain power and really high-quality, talented scientists, engineers, doctors, or medical researchers to do these projects. And then we are going to lay them off for 2 or 3 weeks because somebody has some political idea they want to attach to a continuing resolution. Somebody wants to take their political platform and put it on legislation that the government pay its bills for their political gain.

A leader of one of these major institutions in Ohio told me he had to bring in many of his managers and employees and tell them there were going to be layoffs and furloughs. In some cases, with no end in sight because of this government shutdown, what are they going to do? Their scientific endeavors get interrupted and in some cases may not be repaired or rebuilt. So many of the best scientists and engineers are going to say: I am not coming back and doing this.

So the radical Republicans in the House of Representatives say: OK, we can keep the government open if you repeal part of ObamaCare.

If the President had done that and said: OK, keep the government open, and we will repeal this section of ObamaCare, what would have happened next? Then there would have been another continuing resolution or another end of the fiscal year or another opportunity these politicians would have seized to again threaten to shut the government down and gut something else, some other law they don't like. In other words, if there is a law they don't like, and they are in the position, then they are going to say: I am going to shut the government down if you don't change this law. If the President says yes to that, what happens the next time? Then, I am going to ask the President to get rid of two laws I don't like or I will shut the government down or I am going to block the government from paying its bills because I don't like a law passed back in 1993 or 2007. We can't operate the government like that.

NASA Glenn Research facilities, one of the great NASA facilities in the country; Wright-Patterson Air Force Base, a major research facility near Dayton, OH; Battelle Memorial Institute in Columbus—thousands of employees, engineers, scientists, technicians, highly-skilled people, very educated, run eight of the national energy labs. Case Western Reserve University Medical School and Engineering School, Ohio State University, University of Cincinnati—I could name one after another. These places can't operate if every 6 months or 1 year they are subject to a potential government shutdown unless the President does what some radical Members of Congress want.

So when people say: First, open the government; second, pay our bills; and, third, let's negotiate—we have already negotiated the dollar figure on the continuing resolution. Every time the continuing resolution expires or the fiscal year ends, every time we have to pay our debts when the debt ceiling limit is reached—if we have to play this game, it is going to mean a potential government shutdown or disruption at Battelle, NASA Glenn, Ohio State's medical school funding and research funding, and Wright-Patterson Air Force Base. If that is the way this crowd believes we should run a government, they don't have much regard for government.

Every time they have had a chance, they tried to privatize Medicare, they tried to privatize Social Security. They don't like EPA, Head Start, or Meals On Wheels. They don't like these government programs. I understand that, but play it right. Don't threaten to close the government unless we change the law which Congress passed, the President signed, and the Supreme Court affirmed. But if it was my political platform in 2012—even though it was defeated in front of tens of millions of voters—and I don't like what you are doing, then I am going to threaten to shut down the government. Our country is too important and too big for that.

On an international scale, the President of the United States didn't go to China for a major economic conference because he had to be here because the government was shut down. Other countries—particularly China—made fun of us. Other countries basically were asking: Is the United States abdicating its leadership role? And the Peoples Republic of China is not slowing down in their investment in scientific research or modernizing their infrastructure.

If we allow this kind of government shutdown and this kind of activity by radicals in the House of Representatives, this is not good for our country.

Mr. President, I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Texas.

Mr. CORNYN. Mr. President, amid all the rhetoric and the blame games and, yes, even theatrics, I want to make sure the American people actually understand what President Obama and the majority leader are asking us to do. Their position is that Congress should raise the debt limit—actually suspend the debt limit through the end of 2014 and increase our national debt by another $1.1 trillion without doing anything to solve our underlying fiscal problems, including the $17 trillion in debt we have already run up.

I cannot imagine there is anyone in this Chamber or within the sound of my voice who thinks that is a good idea. At some point, if we keep maxing out our credit card rather than dealing with our debt problem, our spending problem, we come back to the bank, so to speak, and ask for our debt limit to be increased another $1.1 trillion, where will this end? I can tell you where I think it will end: It will end in disaster. Ultimately, at some point our creditors will lose confidence in our ability to repay that money. At some point interest rates are going to not be zero or next to zero, they will be up around the historic average, 4 percent or 5 percent, and we will have to pay China and our other creditors more and more of our Federal budget just to pay interest on the national debt.

At some point that becomes unsustainable. It will hurt our national security. It will hurt the safety net programs we all care about, to protect our most vulnerable. Unfortunately, the President and the majority leader remain dug in. Notwithstanding the charts we have seen on this floor that talk about negotiations, there have been no real negotiations. The President called Speaker BOEHNER last night to tell him: In case you missed the message, Mr. Speaker, from when we met at the White House last week, we are still not negotiating.

What is that all about? The President could have sent him a text message with as much information as that conveyed.

I am told the President has invited the Republican Members of Congress to the White House to meet with him tomorrow. I hope that meeting is more productive than the meetings he has already held or the phone conversations he has had with the Speaker. I can only hope the President has reconsidered his unsustainable position, that he is not willing to negotiate.

The Founders of this great country created a Constitution for us with coequal branches of government. Congress is not better or worse than the executive branch. We are coequal. We cannot function without one another. We can pass a law, but it cannot become the law unless the President signs it. The President cannot pass a law without Congress. So we have to learn to work together.

In the context of the recent history I want to recount for everybody, the President's refusal to negotiate is simply unsustainable and quite remarkable. Over the last 30 years, virtually every major domestic policy reform has involved at least some kind of bipartisan compromise.

In 1983, a conservative Republican President worked with a liberal Speaker of the House and Senate leaders from both parties to save and preserve Social Security. That was in 1983. At the time those Social Security amendments were signed into law, Republicans had the same Senate majority the Democrats have today, 54 Republicans then, 46 Democrats. Meanwhile, the Democratic House majority was significantly larger than the Republican House majority today. Yet both sides did what so far we have been unable to do and that is come together, negotiate and reach an outcome. Ronald Reagan, back in 1983, then signed that negotiated outcome into law. In the end, the majority Senate Democrats voted for those Social Security

amendments, as did a majority of Senate Republicans.

Three years later, in 1986, liberal Democrats and conservative Democrats joined together to enact another landmark reform bill. Once again the President's party controlled the Senate but not the House. Once again, there was not a refusal to negotiate; rather, there was a negotiation and a bipartisan outcome—notwithstanding the normal partisan rivalries that will always exist. In June 1986, 97 Members of this Chamber, a massive, overwhelming supermajority, voted in favor of the Tax Reform Act which lowered Federal income tax rates and broadened the base. The final version of that bill was supported by a majority of Senate Democrats and a majority of Senate Republicans as well. That was the kind of historic accomplishment that seems to be slipping through our fingers today by virtue of the refusal to negotiate. That was a historic accomplishment that dramatically simplified the U.S. Tax Code and made it more conducive to economic growth—a lesson we would do well to recall and emulate today.

Fast forward a decade to 1996. A Democratic President, Bill Clinton, joined together with the Republican House and Senate and, despite partisan pressure enough to go around and all sorts of heated rhetoric, Democrats and Republicans joined together and reformed our welfare system, helping millions of disadvantaged people to get off welfare rolls and make the transition from dependency to work, dignity and self-reliance. That was a great accomplishment. In the end, 78 Senators, including most Senate Democrats and every single Senate Republican, voted for that.

One more prominent example. In 2001, a conservative Republican President worked with a prominent liberal Democrat to enact a major overhaul to our education laws. Indeed, the No Child Left Behind Act was a direct result of President Bush's negotiations and collaboration with the late Senator Ted Kennedy. The final legislation 87 Senators voted for, including a majority of Senate Democrats and a majority of Senate Republicans.

I am not necessarily saying every single one of those pieces of legislation was something that was perfect in every way. I think we have learned there are things that still needed to be done, particularly when it came to education reform, but the three Presidents I mentioned, two Republicans and one Democrat, worked together to make substantial compromises in order to pass Social Security reform, tax reform, welfare reform, and education reform. But they also understood that politics is the art of the possible and they did not treat the word negotiate as a dirty four-letter word.

I want to emphasize one more time that Republicans stand ready to work with President Obama in addressing our country's most serious fiscal and economic challenges. Yet rather than to pursue serious good-faith negotiations over things such as entitlement reform and tax reform, things that would actually be good for our economy and good for our country, President Obama decides to erect and then knock down strawmen.

For example, when Republicans talk about entitlement reform, he says we want to eliminate the safety net. When Republicans talk about tax reform, he says we want to give tax breaks to rich people. That is campaigning, that is not governing.

Here is the reality, though. Republicans do not want to eliminate the safety net, we want to improve the safety net, particularly Medicare and Social Security. We don't want to give special tax breaks just to the wealthy, we want to give all Americans a simpler, flatter, fairer Tax Code that is more conducive to economic growth. We want the type of Tax Code the President's own bipartisan fiscal commission, Simpson-Bowles—the recommendations they made in 2010. Yet the President ignored it, walked away, and has done nothing to contribute to that debate.

We understand, being elected officials ourselves, that all elected politicians have to campaign for office. It goes with the territory. You cannot get here unless you run for office and you win an election. But at some point the campaign has to end. At some point we have to govern. At some point the partisan rhetoric has to give way to actually accomplishing things and solving problems. At some point America's elected leadership needs to demonstrate real leadership and a willingness to govern.

President Obama has now reached a critical point in his Presidency, in his second term. He will be remembered for one thing or another. He will be remembered either as a President who was willing to step up when America needed that kind of leadership, when Congress needed bipartisan cooperation in order to solve our Nation's biggest challenges, or he will leave a legacy, if he does not do that, of a President who refused to do his job in order to try to win the partisan battles.

We need something better and America deserves better. We need a President who will govern and not campaign perpetually.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Hawaii.

Ms. HIRONO. Mr. President, our distinguished Republican whip referred to negotiations that occurred regarding welfare reform, tax reform, education reform, No Child Left Behind. These negotiations occurred, yes, but they certainly occurred not in the context of a threat of a government shutdown or the threat of government defaulting on our obligations. There is a very big difference in the context in which these negotiations occurred. That is not what we have before us today.

This past Saturday I came to the floor to share some thoughts on the impact of this government shutdown on Hawaii's Federal employees. In those remarks, I tried to remind my colleagues that we have to think beyond the most recent news cycle. Shutting down government hurts the confidence of the American people in our institutions. It drives people away from public service and it undermines our national security and our economy. If we are going to live up to the legacy of our Nation as the world's indispensable Nation, we have to rise above zero sum politics. We have to show our allies and our adversaries that our political process can withstand grave disagreements. Our process is intended to allow for vigorous debate but to ultimately find common ground.

Over 6 months ago, the Senate passed a budget. So did the House. A little over 6 days ago the U.S. Government shut down. How did this happen? The reason is that Republicans have blocked now 21 attempts to negotiate a Federal budget agreement in a timely fashion. That is how negotiations are supposed to happen—not with the threat of a government shutdown, not with the threat of defaulting on our obligations and debt.

Instead, after 6 months of failing to come to the table, tea party Republicans are holding the U.S. Government—and, if we default on our debts, the world economy—hostage.

Enough is enough. The Senate is prepared to negotiate on fiscal issues. The President is ready to negotiate on fiscal issues. We can find a way forward so we can all agree on the path. But first Congress needs to do its job. It needs to reopen the government and make sure the United States pays its bills. These are fundamental responsibilities.

Just to be clear, defaulting on our debt would be the most irresponsible action I can imagine. It is the most easily avoidable catastrophe in history. We are not talking about a natural disaster, we are talking about a totally avoidable catastrophe. Yet some Republicans in the House believe a default would not be a big deal. In fact, one Member of the House actually said that a default would ''bring stability to world markets.''

That is an opinion that no one outside of the tea party bubble agrees with. In fact, economists, small businesses, bankers, big businesses, realtors, and nearly everyone in between have been clear: Default would be a catastrophe for our economy—and not just our economy either. Our currency, our bonds, and the full faith and credit they are backed by are the linchpin of the global economy. How a default from the world's most trusted Nation could possibly bring stability to world markets is incomprehensible.

We have to stop the ideological games and irresponsible rhetoric, and then we can negotiate on fiscal issues and other policies—mindful of the work

we were elected to do and mindful of the people, families, and communities that elected us to serve them.

Today I would like to share some more stories from Hawaii families and businesses about how the government shutdown is impacting one of the key drivers of Hawaii's economy—tourism.

Each year millions of people from all over the world flock to Hawaii. Our State has so much to offer. They come to enjoy our blue oceans and sandy beaches. They come to visit our breathtaking national parks and wildlife refugees. They also come to learn and pay respect at our historical attractions, such as Pearl Harbor.

Last year Hawaii welcomed over 8 million visitors—a record number. Combined, these visitors spent $42 million per day, of which $5 million supports State and local government activities that benefit our communities. In 2012 about 20 percent of our State's gross domestic product was generated by tourism. That economic activity supports 175,000 jobs in Hawaii.

Due to our location in the center of the Pacific Ocean, Hawaii's tourism industry relies on critical government services to keep people moving and commerce flowing. These include the work done by our air traffic controllers, our customs and TSA personnel, and agricultural inspectors. Many of these workers are on the job, but they are not getting paid right now. Thanks to them, our transportation systems are operating safely and effectively. As a result, visitors are still flocking to our resorts, our beaches, and other attractions. Even with the tea party shutdown, 2013 is on track to be another strong year for tourism in Hawaii.

Unfortunately, at the same time, there are small businesses around the State that are being impacted by this shutdown. For the last 7 days our national parks, wildlife refugees, and historical sites have been closed to the public. These Federal sites are critical to many small businesses, particularly in our rural communities.

Over the past week I have heard from many people—especially small business owners—whose livelihoods are being impacted by the closure of these Federal sites. One tour operator wrote to me:

> Our business is losing money, as do our tour guides who cannot perform the tours to the National Parks. We have to return the money to a lot of our clients because their tours have to be cancelled. Our tour guides are losing income as well, as they will not be able to do the tours.

National parks are some of the main attractions in Hawaii. People travel thousands of miles from all parts of the world, spend a lot of money to come and visit, and then the main things that attract them are closed and they are not able to see them. For a lot of people, these trips are once in a lifetime, and if they don't see them now, they will never be able to see them again.

A restaurant owner from Hawaii Island wrote:

> Well, we are in a small town on the Big Island of Hawaii. Our economy is totally tourist driven. We are dependent on people going to the National Park and stopping at our place to eat. Since the shutdown, our revenue has dropped a lot and we have had to cut hours for employees to compensate for the lack of business.
>
> I'm tired of all this Republican childish actions and wish all politicians would drop the partisan nonsense and do what is right for the American People.
>
> Thank you for your concern.

One gentleman from Maui reminded me that private businesses don't get to pause on meeting their commitments when the government is closed. He wrote:

> My daughter and son-in-law have a tourist based clientele for their bicycle crater tour business on Maui. When Haleakala National Park was closed down, they lost their income and are still having to pay office expenses, etc., etc., as well as their home expenses, but nothing is coming in, as everything is going out.
>
> They are losing hundreds to thousands of dollars a day, their employees who have families aren't able to work with the business closed, tourists who come to Maui to have a good time, part of which was the bike ride down from Haleakala, are angry and disappointed and some even think this is somehow Maui government's fault!

He goes on to say:

> My daughter has six children, mortgage payments. Money is going out, but none is coming in. My family are diligent middle class people who work hard, pay their taxes, vote in every election—responsible citizens who do their part always.
>
> If this ridiculous federal government shutdown continues for any length of time, my family will lose their business and be at poverty level in no time, as will all their employees. Everyone I know, on either side of the political spectrum, thinks the shutdown is ridiculous and unnecessary.

I also heard about the impact of the shutdown on the visitors themselves who go to Hawaii. One person from Hawaii whose family members traveled to Hawaii to visit wrote:

> My family has travelled 6,000 miles on a once in a lifetime trip—sorry—no Pearl Harbor (Dad was a lifer Navy man) no Volcanoes National Park—no Puukohola—these sites are essential to our culture and tourism alike—many are without work—it is just ridiculous over a LAW that has been declared Constitutional—their antics change nothing—just hurt our country.

Another local bed-and-breakfast owner on the Big Island shared the perspective of some of her international guests:

> Aloha, I have a bed and breakfast in Hilo and I feel sorry for my guests who have saved for a once in a lifetime vacation to Hawaii. They have come from all over the world to see our Beautiful Volcano National Park! These Guests do not understand how the government can CLOSE and deny them access to the Park.
>
> This week I have guests from Montreal, Canada; Singapore, Germany, France and Japan! They may NEVER have the opportunity to visit here again. This is Shameful for our country. Not only is this behavior bad for our Country but bad for the world.

The tea party shutdown is also impacting Hawaiian visitors to our Nation's Capital. Yesterday I met with 81 students from Millilani Middle School on Oahu. They made the long trip from Hawaii to Washington, DC, in hopes of seeing historical sites, visiting museums, and learning about their country and our democracy. The trip was saved for and planned for months in advance. The sites and museums were scheduled. Their tickets and reservations were already paid for. They could not rebook their travel even though the shutdown has closed many of the sites they planned to visit. I took them on a tour of the Capitol myself because it was the only way they could see these halls of government. These students are here to learn about our democracy. Many of them asked me about the shutdown and how we were going to get government back on track. What kind of message will they take home with them about how our government operates?

These are just some of the stories that illustrate the real impact of the tea party shutdown on communities, families, and people in Hawaii. So many of the folks whose letters I have shared work hard to earn an honest living. They go to work each day, striving to show our visitors aloha while building something for themselves and their families to be proud of. They play by the rules, meet their commitments, and do what they can to be good community members. Yet, through no fault of their own, many of these Hawaii small businesses are losing income and their livelihoods are being affected.

It is past time for the House to take the responsible action to pass the Senate bill to keep government running and services going. It is not fair to our veterans, our students, and their families when they can't visit our Nation's historical and national treasures just because a small minority in Congress has chosen recklessness over responsibility. It is not fair that this shutdown and these senseless default threats have gone on for a week. This behavior is harming our economy and undermining our credibility around the world. We need to stop the tea party temper tantrum, we need to open the government, we need to pay our bills, and then we can negotiate on other matters.

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

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

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

Mr. COBURN. Mr. President, I appreciate the time to be on the floor. I want to continue talking about what I think are the real problems with where we are today.

What we are hearing in the press is that there is no agreement on a continuing resolution, that there is conflict and lack of discussion in Washington, that the debt limit is coming

up, yet Washington is not capable of solving its problems.

I made some points yesterday about the reason we are not capable of solving our problems is that there is an absence of leadership. We are not only bankrupt financially, we are bankrupt when it comes to our leadership.

I want to dispel the rumor that our problems are not insolvable. They are imminently solvable. We have $126 trillion worth of unfunded liabilities for which Americans are responsible. We have $17 trillion worth of debt, and we have $94 trillion of total assets in this country if you add what the Federal Government and everybody else owns. So the difference between $128 trillion and $94 trillion is $34 trillion, and then another $17 trillion—that is $51 trillion we are going to have to account for. What is in front of us—and by the way, the Affordable Care Act will add $6.7 trillion to those outstanding liabilities net of any tax revenues and tax increases it collects.

So what are we to do? What are the American people to think? They see impasse, lack of conversation, lack of compromise, lack of resolution, and no reconciliation. So I wanted to take a few minutes today to kind of give a little history, first of all, and then outline what is possible—I am not saying we must do it—over the next 10 years that we could do that would put us on a pathway to where we would be solving the problems and not leaving our children an inheritance of debt.

I made the point yesterday that the median family income in this country today in terms of real dollars is exactly where it was in 1989. We are going backward. We are going to go backward this year. What that really means is that the standard of living is declining. The American public is getting further and further behind.

One of the quotes I use—and I don't know if it is accurate—has been attributed to Alexander Tytler, a Scottish historian. Let me read it:

> A democracy—
>
> In this case a constitutional Republic—
>
> is always temporary in nature; it simply cannot exist as a permanent form of government. It will continue to exist until the time that voters discover that they can vote themselves generous gifts from the public treasury. From that moment on, the majority always votes with the candidates who promise the most benefits from the public treasury, with the result that every democracy will finally collapse due to loose fiscal policy, which is always followed by a dictatorship.

Where are we in that line? Is $50 trillion in negative net worth not a sign that we are going there? Is declining median family income not a sign that we are going there?

What we have seen in this last so-called recovery is the wealthy have done very well but nobody else has. So what we are seeing is history repeat itself in terms of what has been outlined and observed in the past.

Alexander Tytler was also accredited with this, but nobody can prove it:

> The average age of the world's greatest civilizations from the beginning of history has been about 200 years. During these 200 years, these nations always progressed through the following sequence: From bondage to spiritual faith; from spiritual faith to great courage; from courage to liberty; from liberty to abundance; from abundance to complacency; from complacency to apathy; from apathy to dependence; from dependence back into bondage.

I think we are somewhere in here, if history speaks accurately, or at least his observation of history.

So what we ought to be about is making sure we cheat history—all of us, together, liberals, conservatives, Democrats, Republicans, Independents—we ought to be about cheating history. How do we do that? Are the problems we have in front of us so big that we can't solve them? I don't think so. Are positions so hardened that we can't think in a long-term way about solving the problems that are in front of our country?

When we talk about the debt ceiling—I have been accosted a lot in the news media in the last 48 hours because I don't believe the debt ceiling equals default on our obligations in terms of our sovereign debt. It just so happens Moody's, the rating agency, agreed with me today; that, in fact, they are not the same thing and they say there should be no effect. That doesn't mean we should. I am not proposing we should. But the scare tactics of saying the Earth is going to collapse if we somehow fail on time to raise the debt limit is not true. The Earth will collapse for Americans if we don't address the underlying problems facing our country—this $50 trillion in unfunded liability and negative net worth.

Here is what we know has happened in the last few years, and it proves the point. It is why median family income is going down. It is because our debt is growing twice as fast as our economy.

Here is our GDP increase over the last few years: $1.199 trillion. Here is our debt: It went up $2.405 trillion. To say that another way, that is 2.4 billion millions. These numbers are unfathomable, but the graph shows it all. Our GDP has increased. So what is happening is that for every $1 in debt we go into, we are getting a deepening decrease in return in our economy, and it is continuing to go down. So the more we borrow, the less well off we are in terms of being able to grow our economy. So the problems in front of us and what we see is what I would say as careerists don't want to solve the problem because the thing that comes to the careerist's mind is how does that effect the next election.

I don't care what happens in the next election in this country; what I care about is whether we are going to address the real problems and secure the future for the country. Whether they be Democrats or Republicans, liberals or conservatives, I don't care. We are all in this together. When our living standard goes down, we all go down together.

So how do we solve this problem? The first thing in any addiction—and we have an addiction to spending—is to recognize we have an addiction. We have an addiction to spending. We have an addiction to not living within our means. We just passed $600 billion in January of increased taxes on the American economy, most of that coming from the people who are doing much better during this tepid recovery. Will that solve our problems? Can we tax our way out of this? Can we have confiscatory tax policies that will not hurt our economy and get us out of this? The answer is no, and everybody recognizes it.

What else does everybody recognize? They recognize that a big portion of the problem is entitlement spending, and no political party wants to be blamed for being the person who ''fixed'' entitlement spending unless we do it together. So we have a great opportunity to, together, modify our mandatory spending programs and make significant savings. But having spent the last 9 years with my colleague from Delaware who is on the floor oversighting the Federal Government, I can tell my colleagues there are more things we can do other than that.

So I thought I would spend a few minutes to go over a publication I put out a couple of summers ago, and it is called ''Back in Black.'' It is not perfect. I will be the first to admit it. I know we will not ever pass $9 trillion worth of savings over 10 years. But here is $9 trillion worth of options we could look at and take half of them and actually get on the road to health.

What would getting on the road to health look like? It would be rising personal incomes, not declining personal incomes as we are seeing today. It would be rising median family incomes. It would be faster economic growth.

Mr. President, am I out of time?

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

Mr. COBURN. My request was for 30 minutes when I came to the floor. Evidently, that wasn't made. Is the order of the day 10 minutes?

The PRESIDING OFFICER. It is.

Mr. COBURN. I would ask for just a short period of additional time if my colleague from Delaware would allow it.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Delaware.

Mr. CARPER. May I ask unanimous consent that the doctor be afforded another 10 minutes.

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

Mr. COBURN. I will spend some time tomorrow then going through what this is. But it is solving our problem in such a way that it doesn't kick the can down the road, which is what we are getting ready to do.

What I would say in conclusion is by increasing the debt limit, we let the politicians off the hook because then

they don't have to make the hard choices required for us to live within our means.

Mr. CARPER. Mr. President, I have a parliamentary inquiry, if I may.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Delaware will state his inquiry.

Mr. CARPER. I have no objection; I can stay 10 minutes, 20 minutes. I would like for the Senator from Oklahoma Dr. COBURN to have a chance to explain what he wanted to say. I don't mean to interrupt.

Mr. COBURN. Mr. President, I would just inquire if there are other speakers after Senator CARPER.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. There is no apparent order of speakers, and if there is no objection, the Senator from Oklahoma can take an additional 20 minutes.

Mr. COBURN. I thank the Chair. I truly thank my colleague. He is a great colleague to work with. People are always telling stories about how people don't work together. I can tell my colleagues that the Senator from Delaware Mr. CARPER and I work together. He is my chairman, and I am the ranking member on the Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs Committee, where most of this information came from, and he helped dig it up.

What I say is we have an opportunity to do that. We have an opportunity for Democrats and Republicans to come together, forge a compromise, make major changes that are necessary and absolutely required if we are going to have a secure future. I think we ought to look at it.

So we put together a plan that has $3 trillion—that is $300 billion over 10 years—in discretionary spending; that is nonmandatory. It has $1 trillion in defense spending, which is about what we already have. Health care entitlements is $2.7 trillion, and we can go into the details of that. Tax Code simplification, $1 trillion to come back to the Federal Government. Interest payment savings of $1.3 trillion, and Social Security reform that says it will be healthy for the next 75 years. That comes to $9 trillion that our kids aren't going to have to pay back. That is $9 trillion in money we are not going to borrow. So even if we just took half of that—$4.5 trillion—and said we are going to get on the path to health, we are going to float that $3 trillion that is sitting in cash in Americans' bank accounts and give them the confidence back to invest it in our country, it would make a massive difference in our country because what is going on right now is a crisis of confidence.

The American people don't trust Congress. I think we got a pretty low rating this week and deservedly so. The approval rating of President Obama is at his alltime low. So how do we fix that? We don't fix that individually. We don't fix that by pointing out what is wrong with the other person. We fix that by coming together and solving real problems that will give the American people confidence that we have their best interests at heart—not in the short term, as Alexander Tytler was talking about, but in the long term; that, in fact, we want to secure the future for our kids and grandkids.

I think we ought to be about cutting up the credit card. I know I am in the minority in the Senate. I don't believe we should have another debt limit increase. I think the thing to force us to make these hard choices—because there is certainly not the political will to do it—is to put ourselves in the position where we are forced to make the hard choices.

We are going to make them eventually. Everybody agrees with that. We are basically going to make these changes because there will come a time when we will not be able to borrow money no matter what interest rate we pay. So we are not talking about defaulting on our sovereign debt. We are not talking about not paying interest on our sovereign debt. We are talking about forcing ourselves into a position where we have to prioritize what we spend.

What do the GAO reports tell us? In the last 3 years, the GAO has given Congress wonderful information which Congress has not acted on. What have they told us? They have told us we have 91 different health care workforce training programs—91. They have told us we have 679 renewable energy initiatives, none of which have a metric on them. They have told us we have 76 different drug abuse and prevention programs run by the Federal Government. They have told us the Department of Defense has 159 different contracting organizations, none of them being held accountable. They have told us that at Homeland Security, where Senator CARPER and I chair and vice chair the committee, they have six different R&D facilities, three of which are doing exactly the same thing. We have 209 science, technology, engineering, and math programs—209. We have 200 different crime prevention programs. We have 160 homeowners and renters assistance programs. We have 94 private sector green building assistance programs, none with a metric, and the agencies don't even know how much money they are spending on them. They told us we have 82 teacher quality programs run by the Federal Government, half of which are not in the Department of Education. I will not continue, but my colleagues get my point.

What have we done about those things? Nothing. Where is the oversight on them? There is none. So the whole idea for me—I am thinking about the future more than I am a political career—is I think we ought to be working on those things. I think the American public expects us to work on them.

I will finish by saying we have been running the credit card for a long time. Do we, in fact, have the right or the privilege or the ability to ask for an extension and a raising of our debt when, in fact, we have not acted responsibly with our spending? Nobody else in the country gets their credit raised when they have not acted responsibly. They actually check your credit score. They know what kind of bills you are paying, whether you are getting further behind. So should we, in fact, tear up the credit card? Should we force some good old adult supervision on Congress, where we will actually be forced to make difficult decisions about priorities on how we spend America's money? When I say ''America's money,'' I mean the people out there working hard every day. They may not be the highest tax payers, but it is unconscionable to me that when we spend their money, we are wasting 15 to 20 percent of it all the time.

So I think we ought to tear it up. The way we tear it up is we just tear it up. We tear the credit card up. We shred the credit card, and we say: You are going to live within your means. You are going to start making the hard choices. You are addicted to spending. You are addicted to not being responsible with the dollars you have.

Congress needs to be in a 12-step program, and it should start with us.

Mr. President, I thank my colleague the Senator from Delaware for his patience and his friendship.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Delaware.

Mr. CARPER. Mr. President, Dr. COBURN is a tough act to follow, and I am not going to try to do that. But I am happy to serve with him. We come from different parts of the country, different kinds of training, upbringing, and careers, but we have ended up here together in the Senate for the last 9 years and have had an opportunity to lead, first, the subcommittee on Federal financial management—it is a subcommittee of the Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs Committee—and this year to be the Democratic and Republican leaders of the committee. I enjoy working with him. I find that we have the opportunity to do some really good for our country, and I thank him for letting me be his wingman.

I want to just follow on with what Dr. COBURN has said, by asking us to think of how we spend money and what we spend it for in this government of ours. Then I actually have an op-ed that I read recently in our local paper in Delaware that I would like to read into the RECORD from Dr. Bob Laskowski, who is the CEO and the president of Christiana Care Health System, one of the largest hospital systems not just in our State but one of the largest in our part of the country.

Before I do that, I want to follow on to some of Dr. COBURN's comments by talking about our spending in the Federal Government. I would like to think of it as a pie. It is a big pie. A little more than half of the spending pie goes for something we call entitlements—things we are entitled to by virtue of our age, our station in life, or we might

be entitled to Medicare if we are 65 or older, or Medicare if we are disabled and unable to work, or we may be entitled to early Social Security benefits at age 62, full retirement Medicare benefits 5 or so years after that. We may be entitled to benefits because we served in the military or we are a veteran or somebody with a disability. Those are all programs that are called entitlement programs. A lot of people say they are uncontrollable, we cannot do anything to control them, and they have grown like Topsy.

Today, if you think of the spending pie, over half of it is for entitlement. Roughly, closer to another 5 to 10 percent of spending today is for interest on the debt. If interest rates were not so low, it would be a lot more than 5 or 10 percent. Fortunately, we are blessed to have very low interest rates, but still our interest as a percentage of that pie is somewhere, I think, between 5 and 10 percent.

The whole rest of the Federal government is called discretionary spending, which means we actually have some discretion on how that money is spent. It is not an entitlement program, but we actually have to pass spending bills. We call them, usually, appropriations bills. There are about a dozen of them that cover everything from agriculture to defense, to housing, to the environment, to education, to transportation—you name it. That part of the budget—roughly, close to 40 percent, 35 to 40 percent—is called discretionary spending. More than half of that discretionary spending is for defense—I would say roughly 20 percent of the whole pie, maybe a little more than 20 percent. About 15 percent of the whole pie—a little less than half of the discretionary spending—is for nondefense matters.

So if you think about it, it goes something like this: For the spending pie, over half of it is entitlements. Allegedly, those are things we cannot reduce, control. I do not agree with that. Another 5 or 10 percent is for interest. Then we have roughly 40 percent for discretionary spending, the lion's share of which is for defense, and a little less than half of it is for nondefense spending. Think about that—entitlements, interest, defense spending. You set that aside, and for the whole rest of the government you have about 15 percent. That is domestic or nondefense discretionary spending.

We could actually eliminate domestic discretionary spending in its entirety—get rid of everything, everything we do in government other than entitlement programs, interest, and defense—and we would still have a deficit.

For people who say we can only focus on domestic discretionary spending or squeeze that to reduce the deficit further, the deficit is down from about $1.4 trillion about 4 years ago to about half that today. So we have made progress. It is still way too big, but we cannot get from here to where we want to go in terms of a balanced budget by just focusing on domestic discretionary spending.

I would like to say there are three things we need to do. Dr. COBURN has heard me say this more times than he wants to remember. The Presiding Officer has heard me say it a time or two as well.

There are three things we need to do if we are serious about deficit reduction, facing the reality of today.

No. 1, entitlement reform. These are the President's words: entitlement reform that saves money, entitlement reform that saves these programs for our kids and our grandchildren, and entitlement reform—these are my words—entitlement reform that does not savage old people or poor people, but it is sensitive to the least of these in our society.

The second thing we need to do is to focus on revenues. We need some more revenues. If you look at our country last year, when our deficit was about $700 billion—the year we just finished—as I recall, revenue as a percentage of gross domestic product was somewhere in the area of 17 percent, maybe 18 percent—revenue as a percentage of GDP. Spending as a percentage of GDP was over 20 percent, maybe around 21, 22, 23 percent.

The difference between revenues as a percentage of GDP down here at 17, 18, 19 percent of GDP and spending at 21, 22, or 23 percent, that difference right there is about a $700 billion deficit from the last year.

At the end of the day we need to make the revenues come closer to, actually, the spending. I suggest that we need to take a page out of the book they did in the second term of President Bill Clinton when we had run chronic deficits since 1968. President Clinton asked Erskine Bowles, who was then his Chief of Staff, to work with a Republican Senate and Republican House—a Republican Congress—to see if we could come up with a budget plan that included revenues, included spending, to actually balance the budget.

As we all know the story, famously it worked. A Democratic President, working with a Republican House and Senate, with the help of Erskine Bowles and Sylvia Mathews—now Sylvia Mathews Burwell, who was Erskine's Deputy Chief of Staff, later Deputy OMB Director—they got the job done. They reached across the aisle and worked it out. The deficit reduction plan was a 50–50 deal—50 percent on the revenue side and 50 percent on the spending side. They grew the heck out of the economy. As a result, we had four balanced budgets in a row—I think 1998, 1999, 2000, and 2001.

Harry Truman used to say: The only thing that is new in the world is the history we forgot and never learned. I think as we try to figure out what to do with today's deficits and how to get on an even more fiscally responsible track, it would be smart to look back about 15 years and see how it worked then.

For folks who might be watching this around the country, we actually have a budget law. I think our budget law was adopted in 1974. There is an expectation in our Nation's budget law for the President to present us in the Congress with a budget—one budget, not a capital budget and an operating budget but one budget. It is different from the States. It is different from my State, where I was Governor of Delaware for 8 years, where we have a capital budget and an operating budget. But we have one budget.

The President usually submits a budget in January, maybe February. This year it was a little late. The expectation here in the Congress, under the law, is that by, say, the end of April—a couple months later—the House and the Senate would have passed something called a budget resolution.

A budget resolution—what is that? It is not a budget. A budget resolution is a framework for a budget. It includes not nitty-gritty line-item spending plans for everything—defense and nondefense—but it says, roughly, we will spend this much in these programs, and generally, we will raise this much money in these ways from these revenue sources. It is not very specific, but it is a framework for the budget. I like to think of it as the skeleton, and later on, when we pass appropriations bills, when we pass revenue measures, we put the meat on the bones. That is where the real specificity comes along.

For a number of years we have not been able to pass in the Senate, in the House, a budget resolution—they are usually different—and then go to conference, create a conference committee to create a compromise. We have found it difficult to actually come up with a compromise budget resolution—a compromise, a spending plan, a framework for the appropriations bills and revenue measures.

This year started more promising because in the Senate here, in April, under the leadership of our Senate Budget Committee chairman PATTY MURRAY of Washington, we actually passed a budget resolution—sadly, without Republican support. We passed one, and it was one of those like the Clinton years, a 50–50 deficit reduction deal. It did not eliminate the deficit, but it kept it going in the right track. Half of the deficit reduction was on the spending side, half on the revenue side.

Over in the House, they passed a different kind of budget resolution. The budget resolution they passed did a little entitlement reform. But that 15 percent of the spending pie I was talking about—the 15 percent that is domestic discretionary spending—was reduced, as I recall, from 15 percent to like 5 percent. Think about that. We would be talking about—aside from entitlement spending, interest on the debt, and defense spending—having about the whole rest of the government be like 5 percent of our spending. That is not my vision of what our government

should be about. That is not my vision. And I do not think that is the vision of a lot of people in this body and in this country.

So the three things we need to do: No. 1, entitlement reform. It saves money, saves the programs. It does not savage old people, poor people. The second thing, we need some additional revenues.

I remember Kent Conrad, when he was our Budget Committee chairman, gave a presentation at a meeting a year or so ago. He talked about revenues. He talked about tax expenditures. As to the tax expenditures that he talked about, he said over the next 10 years we will see about $12 to $15 trillion go out of the Treasury because of tax breaks—tax credits, tax deductions, tax loopholes, the tax gap—$12 to $15 trillion go out of the Treasury for those tax expenditures. He said more money will come out of the Treasury for those tax expenditures—tax breaks, tax credits, tax deductions, tax loopholes—than all the appropriations bills we are going to pass. Think about that.

He said we have a new way to appropriate money, we just do it through the Tax Code. I would say to our Republican and Democratic friends, this is where I think Senator Conrad was coming from. If we cannot figure out how out of $12 or $15 trillion of tax expenditures a year, maybe 5 percent of those that could be reduced or could be eliminated because they serve no useful purpose, something is wrong with us. If we can do 5 percent of, say, just $12 trillion in those tax expenditures, 5 percent would be about $600 billion over the next 10 years. Match that with entitlement spending reductions, that is about $1.2 trillion. That is a pretty good next step to take in narrowing our deficit on top of what we have already done.

The third piece, in addition to entitlement reform that saves money, saves the programs for the long haul, and does not savage old people or poor people, some additional revenue, generally from eliminating or reducing tax expenditures, the third piece—and Dr. COBURN was talking a little bit about this. He was talking about the way we spend money. We have a culture in the Federal Government. We have had it for a long time. Big companies have this culture too, and some States as well as counties and cities. I call it a culture of spend thrifts as opposed to a culture of thrift. What Dr. COBURN and I attempt to do with the folks on our committee is look at everything we do in the Federal Government to the extent that one committee can. We like to work with the Office of Management and Budget, OMB, with the General Accountability Office, GAO, the Office of Personnel Management, with the General Services Administration, all of the inspector generals across the agencies, throughout the Federal Government. We like to work with nonprofit groups such as Citizens Against Government Waste and others.

We do this in order to figure out what we are doing. How are we spending the taxpayers' money? Are there ways we can do those things, realize the goals we are trying to achieve, by spending less money or getting better results for the same amount of money? We need to do that in everything.

One of my colleagues said to me, when I said I was coming over to speak tonight: What are you going to talk about?

I said I think I will talk about regular order. We talk a fair amount about regular order around this place. We do not always follow it. Regular order, for the people watching who are tuned in wondering what is regular order, means following the rules. In this case, we have a Budget Act that says the President submits a budget the early part of the calendar year. Congress adopts a budget resolution. We do that about the beginning of May. Then we do our work on preparing appropriations bills and revenue measures. In order to go to a conference on a budget resolution, we have to get agreement. The majority leader will come or the Budget Committee chair will come to the floor and say: I ask unanimous consent to go to conference with the House and to name conferees and begin working out a compromise between the House and the Senate.

For many years it was perfunctory. The unanimous consent request was made. We would go to conference with the House. We would go to work on a budget resolution between the two bodies. This year, every time that request has been made—and it has been made dozens of times by Democrats and by at least one Republican—dozens of times—there has always been an objection to keep us from going to conference to work out this compromise.

As much as anything, we need to create an environment where we can focus on doing the three things I talked about: entitlement reform, tax reform that raises some revenues through deficit reduction, and try to focus on everything we do and say how do we get a better result, how do we get a better result for less money or the same amount of money.

I would say to my Republican colleagues who continue to object: Stop. Please stop. Let us actually have a chance to gather in a room in this building and see what we can hammer out to address, not a short-term continuing resolution but actually a thoughtful, comprehensive spending plan as we did 15, 16 years ago when the Republicans were in the majority here, House and Senate, and we had a Democratic President. We got the job done and helped to continue the longest running economic expansion in the history of this country.

I mentioned Bob Laskowski, president and CEO of Christiana Care Health System, a large regional health care system. He did a great job. We are very proud of him in our State. They provide care to a lot of people. He is a doctor and a health system leader. I thought his perspectives on health care reform and the Affordable Care Act were important enough to share on the floor.

This comes from an op-ed that appeared in one of our local statewide papers called the News Journal, a Gannett publication. His op-ed was in the News Journal this past week. I am going to read it. It is not that long. It goes like this:

> With some in Washington promising to speak out against implementation of the Affordable Care Act until they ''can no longer stand,'' it might be a useful reality check to visit an emergency room in any town or city across America.

He goes on to say:

> There you will find thousands of Americans each day that really cannot stand. It is not just because an injury, illness or disease has put them on their backs.
>
> Too often, it is because an eminently treatable ailment has been allowed to turn into something much worse—for the simple reason that the patient doesn't have health insurance and couldn't afford to see a doctor until things became so bad that the emergency room was their only option.
>
> In the continuing cacophony of criticism around so-called ObamaCare, this crucial fact keeps being lost: Our health care system remains badly broken—and in the absence of reform, it will continue to get a lot worse.
>
> I see this—as a physician and as a health care executive; but more importantly, I experience this as the friend of too many neighbors with no health insurance.

He goes on to say:

> I think that might be the reason why 3 in 4 Americans surveyed in a recent Pew Research poll say they oppose efforts to sabotage the law: because they know that the people threatening to derail and defund the Affordable Care Act are not offering a better solution.

Ironically, the part of the Affordable Care Act that we are attempting to implement and stand up across the country right now, the health exchanges or marketplaces, is a Republican idea. It was first offered as an alternative to HillaryCare back in the first term of President Clinton. It is a Republican idea, a business idea.

But I do not care whether it is a Democratic or Republican idea. It is a smart idea to use large purchasing pools, enable people who otherwise would buy health insurance for one person or five people or for a small business—it is a way for them to bring down the cost of their care, use competition to get better options. It is a smart idea.

The idea of another criticism, the individual mandates, people being individually mandated to get health care and if they did not they would maybe face some kind of fine—modest at first, it grows in time—that is not a Democratic idea. Ironically, that is an idea we got out of Massachusetts. The author, the Governor who signed it into law, was the Republican nominee for President last year, Mitt Romney.

So what we have tried to do is take some Republican ideas and some Democratic ideas and, frankly, some good ideas.

And over half of those who ''oppose'' the law today, say they want it fixed, not scrapped.

I agree with that—fixed, not scrapped.

They know that in the absence of reform, there are still too many people who use the emergency room as their only source of medical care; too many families and businesses who cannot keep up with the ever-rising cost of health care premiums; and too many Americans who find nothing but frustration when navigating our health care system—who still fill out too many forms, are prescribed too many tests that do not help them and get passed from office to office without anyone guiding them overall care.

Beginning [last week], millions of uninsured Americans began to shop for quality, affordable health care through the health insurance marketplaces. These marketplaces are a key element of the Affordable Care Act and represent an important step toward putting quality health care within reach of all Americans.

Just as Medicare has enabled seniors to get the care they need to live longer and healthier lives, increasing access to health insurance is vital to unlocking a healthier country, by ensuring something that millions of Americans do not have today: The opportunity to stay healthy through regular doctor visits rather than seeking help only when they get sick.

In some cases very sick.

It is worth remembering: Health care reform is not about special interests. It is about people like us, our families and our neighbors. It is about fellow parishioners and Little League coaches. It is about a neighbor who cuts himself making dinner and a spouse who finds a worrisome lump.

Everyone we know and everyone we love—will need our health care system at some point. Three years after America debated the need for health care reform, millions of Americans who work hard, pay taxes, and raise families still cannot afford to see a doctor. That is wrong.

And even though the resistance of some states to fully adopt the Affordable Care Act will tragically still leave some families in those states in the lurch, we now at long last have the unprecedented opportunity to create a system that will work better for us all.

We should also remember: Over time, the Affordable Care Act promises to improve the system as much for the shrinking majority of Americans who have health insurance as for those who do not.

Access is just the first step. The act provides a blueprint for a new model of care, one that rewards doctors for more coordinated care. Here at Christiana Care [and throughout Delaware] we have seen what happens when we provide that kind of care through reengineered medical practices, known as ''medical homes,'' where doctors are enabled to not only efficiently meet patients' needs but to anticipate them as well.

This coordinated approach makes getting care simpler and makes the lives of those getting care easier. It makes quality better; and, by making care simpler, better, and more accessible, it saves money.

No law as big or ambitious as the ACA can possibly get it all right on the first try. But let us not forget: When Medicare was signed into law, critics warned seniors would languish in long lines, and that we would all long for the good old days before reform took place.

Today, Medicare has helped hundreds of millions of Americans live longer, healthier lives—while reducing the poverty rate among seniors by 75 percent.

Dr. Laskowski goes on to write:

I believe if these historic changes are given a chance, we will collectively create a system that is defined not by volume, but by value. Over the next several years, I know we can make health care in America more ''people focused'' and less transactional by realizing the best way to provide better outcomes at lower cost is by partnering with patients.

As we in health care listen to our patients, we will learn what our patients truly value. Then we will be able to free up resources to help patients get healthy faster and stay well.

The Affordable Care Act is a map toward that future. History is being made.

I will close by saying: While many of our colleagues argue that the Affordable Care Act will lead to rising insurance costs and lost jobs, the truth is that in Delaware and throughout the rest of the country, millions of Americans are already learning they will be able to find quality health care, insurance plans for a more affordable price.

In Delaware and much of the country, millions of Americans will be able to find quality insurance plans for less than $100 a month. I have told my constituents and my colleagues since this debate over health care reform began, this law is not written in stone. We want to make the law better wherever we can, just as we have made the Medicare prescription drug program better, which was largely supported by Republicans. But we actually made it better in the Affordable Care Act.

I would urge my Republican colleagues to enable us to reopen our government, to reassure Americans and our creditors in this country and around the world that we will honor our debts. Then let's get to work right away to improve the Affordable Care Act and these insurance marketplaces and come to a consensus on a bipartisan budget resolution that lays out a spending plan that will get us from where we are to where we need to be.

Last word. I spent some time in the Navy, and the Presiding Officer spent some time in the military. One of the Presiding Officer's sons may be on Active Duty today. Some of the time we used to fly in and out of Japan in Navy P–3 airplanes.

I learned not long ago that in Japan they spend about 8 percent of GDP for health care. In this country, we spend about 17 or 18 percent. Think about that. They spend 8 percent of GDP for health care. We spend 17 or 18 percent. They get better results. For the most part they have lower rates of infant mortality and higher rates of life expectancy than we do.

The other thing is they cover everybody. Tonight when folks go to bed in this country, this evening some 40 million will go to bed without health care coverage. The Japanese, smart as they are, cannot be that smart. We cannot be that dumb. We cannot be that dumb.

There are ways to get better results for less money, including in the provision of health care. We can work together. If we work together, we can make that a reality.

The last thing I will say is I think the Presiding Officer has heard me tell how I love to ask people who have been married a long time what the secret is for being married 40, 50, 60, 70 years. People give me very funny answers. Some are actually hysterical. But every now and then some of them are serious, almost poignant. And I will close with one of them tonight.

A couple of years ago I met a couple who had been married over 50 years.

I said to them: What is the secret for being married 55 years?

They said: The two Cs.

The two Cs.

I said: What is that?

They said: Communicate and compromise.

Think about that. Communicate and compromise. I said: That is pretty good advice.

I got to thinking about it later, and I thought that is also some pretty good advice and maybe the secret for a vibrant democracy—to communicate and to compromise. We think we were willing to compromise on the short-term spending resolution that is the continuing resolution by agreeing to the numbers set by the Republican House leaders. They do not regard that as a compromise, but I think it was an attempt to compromise.

We need to find compromises in a conference on the budget resolution. That is where we should put our money, that is where we should put our efforts in the weeks to come.

I would add one more C. Communicate and compromise, as important as they are, maybe a third C would be collaborate. That would be a good one to add. So three Cs: Communicate, compromise and collaborate. It is what the American people sent us here to do.

I know the Presiding Officer feels that way, and so do I, as does Dr. COBURN. There are a bunch of us who feel that way. So let's do that.

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

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

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

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

Mr. CASEY. Mr. President, pending before the Senate is a unanimous consent request on H. Con. Res. 58, a bill to urge the Department of Defense to allow military chaplains to perform duties during the shutdown.

Earlier today, I objected to this bill because I misunderstood its purpose, and I would like to withdraw that objection at this time.

The bill will urge the Department of Defense to allow military chaplains, including contract personnel, to perform religious services during the shutdown and permit services to take place on property owned by the Department of Defense.

Today, just as the Department of Defense and the administration solved the

problem with military families and their death benefits upon the loss of one of their loved ones serving our country, I urge, and I know others will as well, the DOD to ensure that all active-duty members are able to exercise their First Amendment rights and participate in religious ceremonies while they are serving. So that is something I hope we can resolve.

I also want to raise some issues that relate to the shutdown. I raised some earlier, but these are additional concerns I have with regard to the shutdown.

The impact of this shutdown is being felt across the board, across the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, and, indeed, across the country. It is felt by small businesses, States and municipalities are feeling it already and anticipating much more of an impact as time goes by, and, of course, families are feeling it very acutely. Yesterday I sent a letter to Speaker BOEHNER emphasizing the detrimental impact the shutdown was having on my constituents in Pennsylvania.

Just by way of a couple of examples that apply to Pennsylvania and to the Nation, domestic violence programs across the country have been impacted directly by the shutdown. The offices that oversee grants under the Violence Against Women Act have had to shut down and are not able to issue grants or provide reimbursements to local programs.

I would say parenthetically that it took many months for the Violence Against Women Act reauthorization to go forward. There were a lot of problems along the way, a lot of objections. Fortunately, we have the program reauthorized, but now, because of the shutdown, we are having problems with women who are victims of violence getting the services they are entitled to.

We are hearing as well from folks in our domestic violence shelters—shelters that rely upon Federal funds and that have already been impacted by the sequester—the across-the-board indiscriminate cuts that have been in effect since March. These shelters may have to further reduce services to vulnerable victims of domestic violence.

In the words of one State advocate: We are hanging on by our fingernails.

Meaning they are hanging on in terms of just being able to provide services, with funding either limited or funding being jeopardized.

Women trying to escape abusive relationships should not be hampered by the failures here in Washington to end this shutdown.

In terms of Social Security, we know Social Security checks are going out, fortunately, but in Pennsylvania, on average, 2,900 new claims are processed each week. That is the typical weekly total for new claims. This means Pennsylvanians who have reached retirement age and have paid into the system their entire careers are now forced to wait for benefits.

You have to ask yourself: Why should a domestic violence center, with people who work to help domestic violence victims, have to wait for a political dispute where one wing of one party engaged in an ideological exercise allows a government shutdown, and, therefore, that domestic violence center doesn't get the help it needs, and the women, mostly women who are impacted, don't get the help they need.

The same could be said of someone who reaches retirement age and expects, and has a right to expect, their Social Security eligibility will be processed. Why should they have to wait for Washington?

In Pennsylvania alone, when it comes to small businesses, 30 loans, on average, are made each week by the SBA, for a total of $13 million each and every week. The loss of these loans is hindering entrepreneurs from growing their businesses and from obtaining much-needed capital. Again, why should a business owner—a small businessperson who gets help from the SBA and has an expectation of getting that help—and, remember, we average 30 of those loans every week in Pennsylvania amounting to $13 million—why should that all be stopped because someone in Washington has an ideological point to make? It makes no sense, and it is an outrage.

The shutdown is also impacting infrastructure in public lands across the country. Until the government is open, the maintenance of our Nation's basic infrastructure is impacted. In Pennsylvania, a lot of that basic infrastructure involves our waterways—the locks and dams. That whole system which is in place for Pennsylvania and many other States, the maintenance of those locks and dams, is deferred. We all know what happens when you defer maintenance on something as fundamental as infrastructure.

I have been informed that repairs that were scheduled to take place on locks along the Lower Monongahela River in western Pennsylvania are suspended. If you have a problem with those, with a lock—and locks and dams generally, but in particular focusing on the Monongahela River—you stop the flow of commerce or you slow it down substantially. When you slow down or stop the flow of commerce, that affects jobs and the economy of southwestern Pennsylvania. If just one of these locks were to fail, it could have a detrimental economic impact on the whole region.

How about national parks? We have heard a lot about that topic this week and last week. The closure of national parks is negatively impacting Pennsylvania's economy. According to the National Park Service, the communities and businesses surrounding Pennsylvania's national parks and memorials are losing up to $5.7 million in spending by nonlocal visitors for each week the government remains closed. That is just national parks and just in Pennsylvania—almost $6 million—and that is just the beginning of what could be a much more substantial and detrimental impact to the State's economy.

I would go back to the point I made several times—and all of us have made these arguments in different ways—and that is that we know for sure there is a very simple way out of this predicament for Washington but, more importantly, for the country, and that is for the Speaker to put on the floor a bill which both parties now agree will pass. It is a clean funding bill. All it does is fund the operations of the government, albeit at a much lower level—$70 billion less—than our side wanted.

We compromised greatly at the beginning of this process, despite what some have said. So we have compromised to make sure we can fund the government. It is about time for the Speaker to put this bill on the floor. They can vote on it very quickly, and it would pass very quickly. It is only 16 pages long. And that is the key to resolving and ending this tea party shutdown.

I urge the Speaker to do that. I have urged him, as we all have in various ways, and we respectfully suggest that could happen tomorrow. Thursday would be a good day to end all of this so we can get people back to work, we can have the functions of government operating to such an extent the economy can grow, and we can have a lot of debate and discussion about how to fund the government long term or what to do about our fiscal challenges—what to do about a whole range of issues. But it is time for the government to open, and it is time for the House to act to do that.

It is also time to make sure we pay our bills.

Thirdly, it is important we continue to negotiate, just as we negotiated a long time ago, many weeks ago, to reach the point where we can have a bill that would fund the operations of the government.

Some people in the House chose to take a different path which led to the shutdown. It is about time we get them back on the right path, which is to open the government, pay our bills, and then have negotiations and discussions and compromises to move the country forward.

Mr. President, I yield the floor.

DEATH GRATUITY PAYMENTS

Mr. CHAMBLISS. Mr. President, today I wish to express my deep disappointment at our failure to adequately provide for our fallen heroes and their families.

Once again, we learn that we have suffered recent casualties. And since the government shut down last week, the Department of Defense has been unable to guarantee full benefits and honors to those servicemen and women who have been killed in the defense of our Nation.

Among those who have given their lives in service of our Nation in recent days are two Army Rangers assigned to the 3rd Battalion, 75th Ranger Regiment, headquartered at Fort Benning in my home state of Georgia.