

for a vote. It would pass. The \$1.1 billion is not to my liking, but I would accept it in a heartbeat. This legislation would save lives, and it would pass the House of Representatives if they would let the Democrats vote. But Speaker RYAN has this deal that he is following, which is a deal into oblivion. It didn't work for my friend, whom I care so much about, former Speaker Boehner. It didn't work for him, and it is not going to work for Speaker RYAN. He cannot do this. He cannot try to do everything in his power to appease the far-right crazies in his caucus. They are even adhering to the Hastert rule, named after the disgraced former Speaker Dennis Hastert, who is now in prison.

Speaker RYAN should listen to the American people. They desperately want Congress to act. Americans have had enough of Republicans putting party over country this year—and any year, frankly. They want us to responsibly solve problems like the Zika virus and opioids and not waste time appealing to the most extreme elements in our political system.

The Hastert rule is that the Speaker will not allow a vote unless it can pass with the majority of the majority. To get a majority of the majority over there is worse than trying to get a majority of the majority over here. We have some dandies over here, but they take the cake in their efforts. It is not going to work for us, Speaker RYAN. We are willing to work with you to get this done.

We shouldn't just leave here for this 7-week-long vacation with nothing done on Zika, this terrible scourge we have. It is time for Speaker RYAN and his fellow Republicans to put politics aside and let the whole House vote on this. Our country is facing an emergency with Zika, and it is time for Republicans to start treating it as such.

Mr. President, I heard a Republican Senator come to the floor yesterday and she said: I don't know what they are talking about. The words "Planned Parenthood" are not in the legislation we have.

Of course it doesn't say "Planned Parenthood," but if you read the English language, it stops people from going to these Planned Parenthood clinics to get their advice on birth control, where millions of American women go.

My Republican friends have an obsession with Planned Parenthood. They want to do everything they can to stop them. In fact, as you know, there were Republicans who went and got phony pictures that were proven false. And, oh, that gave the Republicans such—oh, they loved that. Oh, what terrible stuff is going on; they are selling body parts. That was totally wrong. It was a scam by some rightwing character who has been shown to be just that—a scam artist.

The provision we are asked to vote for exempts pesticide spraying from the Clean Water Act provisions. It cuts

veteran funding by \$500 million below the Senate bill. What was that money for? It was to process veterans' claims. They whack it out. It cuts Ebola funding by \$107 million. It cuts ObamaCare by \$543 million.

I am sure my Republican friends are happy voting for this one. What we sent over there said you can't have the Confederate flag flying over military cemeteries. They took that out. That must be a real joy, that we can now start flying Confederate flags in cemeteries.

This legislation sets a terrible precedent of offsetting emergencies. It is wrong.

Mr. President, I ask the Chair to announce the business of the day.

RESERVATION OF LEADER TIME

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the leadership time is reserved.

NATIONAL SEA GRANT COLLEGE PROGRAM AMENDMENTS ACT OF 2015

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the Senate will resume consideration of the House message to accompany S. 764, which the clerk will report.

The bill clerk read as follows:

House message to accompany S. 764, a bill to reauthorize and amend the National Sea Grant College Program Act, and for other purposes.

Pending:

McConnell motion to concur in the House amendment to the bill, with McConnell (for Roberts) amendment No. 4935, in the nature of a substitute.

McConnell amendment No. 4936 (to amendment No. 4935), to change the enactment date.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Iowa.

AUDITING THE BOOKS OF THE DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE

Mr. GRASSLEY. Mr. President, I come to the floor today to send a message to Secretary of Defense Carter. I wish to alert him to a problem that needs high-level attention. It is standing in the way of one of the top priority goals of the Congress—auditing the books of the Defense Department.

The need for annual financial audits was originally established by the Chief Financial Officers Act of 1990. By March of 1992, each agency of the Federal Government was supposed to present a financial statement to an inspector general for audit in accordance with the prescribed standards. To date, all departments have earned unqualified or clean opinions. But there is one glaring exception; that is, the Defense Department. It has a dubious distinction, under both Republican and Democrat administrations, of earning an unblemished string of failing opinions known as "disclaimers."

In the face of endless slipping and stumbling, Congress finally cracked

down—except it looks as though the crackdown hasn't done any good. At that time, there was a new line drawn in the sand. It was placed in section 1003 of the National Defense Authorization Act of 2009. In 2009, the Department was given a charitable 7-year reprieve from the requirement to have their books auditable, and it was given until September 30, 2017. Those 7 bonus years did not buy us in the Congress much. All the slipping and sliding and stumbling have continued undiminished.

The 25-year push to audit the books is stuck at a roadblock. Billions of dollars have been spent trying to solve the root cause of the problem, but the fix is nowhere in sight. And until it is, auditing the books will remain an elusive goal for the Department of Defense but a goal that has been met by every other agency of the Federal Government.

What I am talking about is the Department's broken accounting system. This problem has been a festering sore for many years. It adversely affected every facet of the audit effort. The broken accounting system is driving the audit freight train. How could the mighty Defense Department be buffaloes for so long by something so simple? The Pentagon develops and produces the most advanced weapons the world has ever known and does it with relative ease. Yet the Defense Department can't seem to acquire the tools it needs to keep track of the money it spends.

With little or no fiscal accountability, Congress cannot exercise effective oversight of defense spending. If Congress can't do that, then adding money to the defense budget, and borrowing at the same time to do it, is foolish, in my book. That is precisely why I opposed a recent amendment to add \$18 billion to the Defense bill.

I want to take a moment to put my spotlight on the issue. My hope is to stimulate creative problem-solving and innovative solutions that seem to not be getting their proper attention at the Department of Defense.

A recent press report pinpointed the cause for all the stumbling that is going on at the Defense Department. It drew on testimony by the government's preeminent authority on accounting, Comptroller General Gene Dodaro. His testimony before the Senate Committee on the Budget had a razor-sharp edge. It zeroed right in on the old stumbling block—underlying accounting problems. While the Pentagon is spending in excess of \$10 billion a year to modernize its vast accounting system, the GAO director said these investments "have not yielded positive results." And since DOD officials "continue to make system investments that don't produce better systems," he said, those responsible "need to be held accountable." They are wasting money, in other words. As a clear, unambiguous indicator of the continuing accounting mess, he cited