

bill is a big percentage of any of their take-home pay.

We are already seeing early signs that tax reform will create an environment where wages will be higher and opportunity will be more abundant for years, even decades, to come.

President Trump and Republicans in Congress understand that when you make America a more attractive place to invest and create jobs, you are helping American families and communities.

We understand that the myth of an “us versus them” economy, where employers must lose for workers to win, is nothing more than a divisive political talking point with no basis in economics. That is why we seized this generational opportunity to provide a 21st century tax code that will give our country a fairer fight with our competitors overseas. We are already seeing new factories announced and new investments pouring into our country as a result.

Tax reform is far from the only way this President and this Congress have gone to bat for the future of our country. We have taken a machete to the forest of redtape that the Obama administration left behind.

To name just three examples, Congress and the White House have teamed up to roll back regulations that threatened hundreds of thousands of coal jobs, required States to give grants to Planned Parenthood, and had needlessly blocked oil exploration in a small portion of Federal land in Alaska.

After the Senate confirmed President Trump’s Cabinet, from Secretary Mattis at the Pentagon to Administrator Pruitt at the EPA, these fine officials have notched achievement after achievement for the American people, laying the groundwork for a stronger and safer nation.

We have made major progress for American veterans, like Cpl Matthew Bradford of Central Kentucky, a true American hero who will be attending tonight as a guest of the First Lady.

Congress has passed and the President has signed laws that will help our veterans access the healthcare options they need and the employment training programs they deserve. We have much more to do for our heroes, but these first steps are indeed promising.

We have taken big steps in the war against addiction and the scourge of opioids, an issue that is deeply personal for far, far too many American families.

In just his first year in office, the President has begun to transform the Federal judiciary. President Trump had more new circuit court judges confirmed in his first year than any prior President, a testimony to the fine quality of the nominees he sends here to the Senate, and we will vote to confirm another excellent judge later today. And the President rose to the occasion of a Supreme Court vacancy by filling it with a brilliant and experienced jurist in Justice Gorsuch.

On all of these fronts—from middle-class Americans’ pocketbooks to the ongoing fight against ISIL—there is more good news than I can begin to recite this morning.

I very much look forward to attending the State of the Union tonight and hearing from our President. On behalf of all the Americans we represent—men and women from coast to coast who are seeing the economy turn around and their country grow stronger before their eyes—I am glad there will be so much to applaud.

RESERVATION OF LEADER TIME

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

CONCLUSION OF MORNING BUSINESS

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Morning business is closed.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

EXECUTIVE CALENDAR

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the Senate will proceed to executive session to resume consideration of the following nomination, which the clerk will report.

The senior assistant legislative clerk read the nomination of David Ryan Stras, of Minnesota, to be United States Circuit Judge for the Eighth Circuit.

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

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The senior assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

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

REMEMBERING ELDER VON G. KEETCH

Mr. FLAKE. Mr. President, I rise to honor the life of my friend Elder Von G. Keetch, legal counsel and leader in the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. His passing on Friday evening was sudden and unexpected, and I wish to extend my condolences to his family during this difficult time.

Elder Keetch served as a general authority and executive director of the LDS Church’s Public Affairs Department. He helped to shape community and government relations for the church as a recognized expert in constitutional law. His career was devoted to defending religious liberty for all religious institutions. His insight was particularly salient during this ever-changing world. As his daughter Steffani Keetch Dastrup said, “He wanted to defend and support all churches and all religious beliefs and all people’s rights to believe and act

the way they feel is right. That was a big part of his work.”

I consider it a privilege to have worked alongside Elder Keetch over the past several years. I was able to witness firsthand the love he had for his wife, the pride he had in his children, and the devotion he had for the Gospel of Jesus Christ. I am grateful for his guidance, for his counsel, and for his friendship.

His humble expertise and kind demeanor will be sorely missed by all those who knew him. His legacy of faith and love will bless his family for generations to come.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Arizona.

REMEMBERING ED LORENZEN

Mr. FLAKE. Mr. President, I rise with great sadness to remember Edward Lorenzen, who, along with his 4-year-old son Michael, perished this weekend in a house fire.

Ed was invaluable to my staff during last year’s tax reform debate. The Washington Post honored his contributions to Congress, saying: “Quietly and intelligently, Mr. Lorenzen provided objective, reliable fiscal information, even—or especially—when facts and figures were the last thing wishful thinkers in Washington [or the government] wanted to face.”

The Committee for a Responsible Federal Budget, where Ed served as a senior adviser, said: “He was a brilliant budget mind—his guidance and expertise is a void that cannot be filled.”

The committee also remembered his deep love for his children, saying: “We worked every day with a kind, loving man who cherished his three kids, bringing them to the office on occasion and lighting up in their presence and at the sound of their names.”

I cannot imagine the grief Ed and Michael’s family and loved ones face. I would like to extend my deepest sympathies to them during this difficult time. May we all hold our families a little closer today.

I yield the floor.

RECOGNITION OF THE MINORITY LEADER

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Democratic leader is recognized.

STATE OF THE UNION ADDRESS

Mr. SCHUMER. Mr. President, tonight the President will address a joint session of Congress in his first official State of the Union. I want to talk about what I expect the President to say and also what I suspect he will not.

The President will be eager to defend the accomplishments of his nascent administration and take credit for a healthy American economy, pointing to low unemployment, job growth, and a soaring stock market, but the truth is, these trends were present before Donald Trump took office. President Trump was handed an already healthy economy by his predecessor. Like many things in his life, he inherited the healthy economy.

Here are two words we will not hear President Trump say tonight about the

economy—thanks, Obama—because much of the growth in 2017 was created by President Obama's policies and, by many measures, the growth under President Obama was better than under President Trump.

Under President Obama, employment was driven from over 10 percent down into the fours. The tightening of the labor market finally started to reverse the stagnancy of median income. The stock market President Trump often touts on Twitter was booming under President Obama as well.

In President Trump's first year, the economy created 2.06 million jobs. That is less than the 2.24 million jobs created in 2016, the last year of Obama's term.

Again, President Trump, President Obama created more jobs in the last year of his term than you created in the first year of yours. So if you are going to pat yourself on the back, give a shout out to Barack Obama because he did even better than you in job creation.

In 2017, under President Trump, average monthly job growth was lower than in 2016, 2015, 2014, 2013, 2012, and 2011, all under President Obama.

Again, President Trump, job growth in the first year of your term was less than in each of the last 6 years of President Obama's term.

How about the stock market. In the first 6 months of 2017, the percentage growth of the S&P 500 was lower than during the first 6 months of President Obama's term. In the first year of the Trump Presidency, the percentage growth of the Dow was lower than during the first year of President Obama.

So, again, here are two words we would like President Trump to say tonight about the economy: Thanks, Obama. We may never hear President Trump say those words, but he ought to.

I also expect the President to speak about bipartisanship. President Trump understands there is a very low bar when it comes to the topic. His first year in office has been so divisive, even a mere appeal to bipartisanship sounds like progress, but the proof will be in the pudding. Will President Trump pursue real bipartisanship through his actions or will he fall back on empty rhetoric? When it comes to bipartisanship, President Trump has to walk the walk, not just talk the talk intermittently. Mr. President, when it comes to bipartisanship, actions speak a whole lot louder than words.

I would remind President Trump that this has been one of the most partisan administrations many of us have ever worked with. I have worked under President Reagan, President H.W. Bush, and President W. Bush—all Republicans. All of them were legions more bipartisan than President Trump's first year.

What have we seen? An assembly line of partisan CRAs designed not to need a single Democratic vote; a Supreme Court Justice picked by the hard-right

Heritage Foundation and Federalist Society, no consultation, not a consensus nominee; a partisan healthcare bill that failed under reconciliation, specifically designed not to include Democrats; a partisan tax bill that ultimately passed, also under reconciliation—no consultation with Democrats, not a single Democratic vote.

The reason these don't get Democratic votes is President Trump and his administration don't talk to us. They don't ask us what we might suggest. They don't try to create a bipartisan meld which great Presidents have done from the time of George Washington; they just act in a narrow, partisan way, and the American people know it.

There has been hardly a shred of bipartisanship in the Trump era, despite our many appeals for it. The President and congressional Republicans seem to think that bipartisanship happens when one side puts together a bill, pounds the table, and demands the other side support the bill, with no negotiation, no compromise.

They are missing the step where they consult with the other side and work with the other side to earn their support. That is the hard work of legislating in our democracy, but this administration eschews hard work. The Republican majority and the White House have been content to craft legislation on their own, demand Democrats support it, and then label us obstructionists when, without consultation, without compromise, we don't. That dynamic is the root of the ineffectiveness and gridlock in Congress. I sincerely hope that changes.

If the President calls for bipartisanship tonight, I welcome it. But we eagerly await action, not just a sound bite in a speech. We await the honest debate, the good faith give-and-take, and the eventual compromise that are the actual hallmarks of bipartisanship. If those things arise, even though they haven't in the first year, Democrats will gladly work with our Republican colleagues and the White House to get things done for the middle class. But we need to see it to believe it. Mere words in a speech tonight will not create bipartisanship; actions will.

Finally, here is something that President Trump should discuss tonight: Russia sanctions. He ought to impose the sanctions, as Congress voted for in an overwhelmingly bipartisan fashion, or at least explain why he hasn't done so yet. We call on President Trump in the State of the Union to tell Americans that he will support the sanctions 90 percent of America supports or tell us why he will not.

Over a year ago, the U.S. intelligence community concluded that Russian President Putin ordered an influence campaign in 2016 aimed at the U.S. Presidential election. That is a fact. That is a fact that is shocking. A hostile foreign power interfered with an American election and likely influenced it in measurable ways. The Founders of our country feared this

very possibility. They knew that for a democracy to work, the election of the people's representatives must be free, fair, and legitimate, and that foreign powers, even back then, would try to corrupt the process. They wrote safeguards into the Constitution to protect it.

Last year, the American people were the victim of such an attack by an antagonistic foreign power: Russia. I call on President Trump tonight to use his State of the Union to tell Americans what he plans to do about Russian attacks on our democracy.

Implement sanctions, President Trump, or at the very least tell us why you haven't.

Today is the day the President is supposed to obey the sanctions issue Congress voted on overwhelmingly a while back. There is no subject more worthy of a thorough and unbiased investigation than the Russian interference in our elections. Yet the President and his allies have waged a scorched-earth campaign to discredit the investigation in any way possible—by assassinating the character of career civil servants, assailing the credibility of the media, attacking our own law enforcement agencies and officers, even denigrating the institutions of American Government.

The White House and congressional Republicans' attacks on Mueller and his investigation make you believe it was taking place in a banana republic, Erdogan's Turkey, or Putin's Russia, not in the United States of America. What has been done by House Republicans and gone along with by just about the whole Republican establishment is not worthy of this democracy. It makes us look like a banana republic, and it is shameful.

A different kind of President would be encouraging Special Counsel Mueller's investigation and shouting down those forces who tried to interfere with it. A different kind of President would want to know how precisely Russia meddled in our election and would have severely punished Putin for it to discourage him from ever trying it again.

Here we are, 180 days since the President signed the historic Russia sanctions bill passed by this body by a vote of 97 to 2, and he hasn't even implemented those sanctions. He is supposed to do it today, the day of the State of the Union.

Again, Mr. President, implement the sanctions tonight, or at least tell the American people why you are not, opening an invitation to Russia to do it again.

Why won't Donald Trump use the power given to him by a near-unanimous vote in Congress to hold Russia accountable?

The administration refused to implement secondary sanctions against the Russian defense and intelligence sectors. Last night, the administration released a mandated report of Russian

oligarchs that seems to match a list already put together by Forbes magazine. This is a reflection of the lack of seriousness with which they took up this task.

When it comes to sanctions, the White House has engaged in a dangerous Kabuki theater that tries to show strength when in fact there is none. These actions are not good enough. They are for show.

Why is the President so afraid to sanction Putin, his associates, or other corrupt Russian actors and officials? Why is President Trump giving Putin a free pass after he attacked our democracy? What is he so afraid of? The American people are asking that question, and they have their answers.

Only a year after a hostile foreign power shook the very bedrock of our democracy, any other President would spend his first State of the Union talking about efforts that were underway to punish the abuser and prevent such an attack from ever recurring. Why not this President?

If President Trump wishes to save his Presidency from the shame of having failed to address one of the gravest threats threatening our country, he will announce this evening in no uncertain terms that he is sanctioning President Putin. Any other President would have already made it their priority to take decisive action in their first year, but this President is paralyzed when it comes to Putin and his cronies in Russia.

Here are two words the President may not say tonight: "Russia sanctions"—but he ought to.

I yield the floor.

THE PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Colorado.

HONORING SHERIFF'S DEPUTY HEATH GUMM

MR. GARDNER. Mr. President, I rise to speak about a horrible tragedy that occurred in Adams County, CO, on January 24, just last week. Adams County sheriff's deputy Heath Gumm was pursuing a suspect when he was shot and killed in the line of duty.

Heath was 31 years old and is survived by his wife and other loving family members. He had served with the Adams County Sheriff's Office since 2012, which was not a surprise to those who knew him best, because of his upbringing.

He grew up in a family of first responders. His father is a retired West Metro Fire Protection District engineer. So his teachers and classmates who knew Heath as a student at Mullen High School, in Denver, were not shocked to learn that he had decided to become a law enforcement officer.

As reported by the Denver Post, Heath's ninth grade English teacher, Sean Keefe, said:

By all accounts, he lived his life as a grown man as he did as a kid. He was a good guy. That didn't change. That only got more accentuated as he grew up. He lifted his friends. He made his friends the best version of themselves, and they did that to him as well.

Heath's cousin remembers him as the "kind of man you wanted out there protecting our streets. He was kind, fair, funny and friendly to everyone."

Keefe went on to remember Heath as "someone people gravitated towards, and he was someone who people could count on."

It is these qualities that made Heath such an incredible sheriff's deputy.

At a press conference last Thursday, Adams County sheriff Michael McIntosh read parts of a letter he had received from a stranded motorist whom Heath had recently helped when he was out on patrol.

The resident wrote: "Heath made the interaction enjoyable and easy to get through instead of acting like I was in trouble or a nuisance."

Heath showed what it means to be a law enforcement officer who selflessly serves and protects a community. He went to work each and every day—ready to walk that thin blue line.

When we lose an officer in Colorado, I come to this Chamber to honor his sacrifice and recite the words of LTC Dave Grossman, who wrote that American law enforcement is the loyal and brave sheepdog who is always standing watch for the wolf that lurks in the dark.

Unfortunately, many in this Chamber have heard me read that quote far too often in the last weeks.

Across Colorado and across the country, we owe so much to Heath and law enforcement officers for their service. Instead of fleeing to safety, they run toward danger to save lives. They provide hope and safety to our families in the worst of times.

I thank Heath for answering the call. He protected his community. I, along with Coloradans across the State, are forever grateful. We will never forget his sacrifice, and we will always honor his memory.

We also lost a sheriff's deputy on New Year's Eve in Colorado, just a few weeks before. In a tribute to him, I read something that former State Representative Joe Rice had written during his service in the Army. I think it is appropriate to share it now because, each and every day they wake up, I know the thoughts of many in law enforcement are reflected in the words of Representative Joe Rice:

In a few hours, it will be Christmas in Afghanistan. I spent 3 Christmas Days in Iraq. Only on one of them did I have to go out on Christmas Day, itself. I found myself praying that I didn't want to die this day and ruin every future Christmas for my family. I realize that most of the other soldiers I was with were quietly or openly saying the same thing.

So, for all of those around the world who are in harm's way, we pray with you: Please God, just not today.

To our men and women in law enforcement, please know that I pray with you each and every day: Please God, just not this day.

I yield the floor.

THE PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. KENNEDY). The Senator from Florida.

DISASTER AID

MR. NELSON. Mr. President, I am absolutely shocked that FEMA has announced that on Wednesday it will stop distributing food and water to Puerto Rico. Cutting this aid to the people of Puerto Rico, while still almost a third of them do not have electricity, is unconscionable and a travesty.

I urge the administration to reverse this disastrous decision immediately and to continue providing the people of Puerto Rico with the help they need as they are trying to recover from two disastrous hurricanes.

This Senator has been speaking on the floor over and over of their desperate needs, but here I am again to remind our colleagues that Puerto Ricans are American citizens, that they are just like the people of any State, including those in the States of Kentucky, Texas, Wyoming, and in so many of the other States where needs might be forgotten. They are our fellow countrymen, and they deserve the same care and protection that we would provide any other citizen in his time of need. They have supplied some of the greatest warriors of our U.S. military in World War I, World War II, Korea, and on up to the present.

If the people of any other State were being neglected like the people of Puerto Rico have been in the wake of this storm, there would be an absolute outrage in this Senate. The people of Puerto Rico need help, but they are not the only ones. Millions of people were affected by the storms that hit last year in my State of Florida, in the State of Texas, in, of course, the U.S. Virgin Islands, and in Puerto Rico, and many were affected by the wildfires in California.

Right now, many of them are desperately waiting for the Senate to act on a disaster supplemental package to help them recover. We are trying to pass it, and it keeps getting shuffled off into the future. We are trying to add to the supplemental—the necessary disaster aid that is needed in agriculture, particularly for the citrus industry in Florida—the financial assistance that is needed in Puerto Rico. I hope our colleagues in the Senate will understand the urgency of this matter. We cannot keep pushing this off into the future. The need to act is now.

In addition, people in Florida are struggling. We should not neglect what is happening on the mainland. It is true in Texas. It is true in California. It is true in Florida. It is true on the islands. The storm destroyed homes and damaged apartments all around Florida, but we haven't seen any real attempt to address the housing needs of the hurricane victims in the State—by the way, including those coming to Florida from Puerto Rico.

Florida received about \$600 million out of the \$7.4 billion, which was made available in the CDBG-DR, in the September supplemental. What percentage is that of \$7.4 billion? It is much less than 10 percent. It defies comprehension. Florida was one of the places that

was the hardest hit last year. Hurricane Irma virtually covered up the entire peninsula of Florida. It wreaked havoc all across the State. Add to that the aftereffects of Hurricane Maria, with thousands fleeing Puerto Rico and going to Florida, and we have a real housing crisis on our hands. The \$600 million, which is to help those who have been left bare by two of the most devastating storms to hit the country in decades, is a drop in the bucket. We should be able to get people the help they need in the time they need it. It is required now—not a year later, not 6 months later, but now.

Schools in Florida have been stretched thin in their having enrolled nearly 12,000 students who have evacuated Puerto Rico and the U.S. Virgin Islands. Every child has a right to a quality education, but the school systems cannot do it on their own, not after a natural disaster. Dealing with such a large influx of students in a short period requires extra resources.

The House has passed a package that includes \$2.9 billion for education funding. We desperately need it. The schools and students need this aid now. We cannot keep kicking the can down the road. Their educations cannot wait. You cannot keep relying on teachers to go out and get the extra supplies for them.

I mentioned our citrus growers. The industry has already been devastated by a bacteria called greening. When it gets into the phloem sap of the tree, it kills the tree in 5 years. We are not going to have a citrus industry if we can't find the cure for that. With the extra care of the groves, they have been able to nurture back crops. So here are all of these crops of oranges and grapefruit on the trees, and along comes Irma. In some groves, not only have 100 percent of the crops been blown off the trees, but the trees have been uprooted. That is why we desperately need the money—to clean up and replant.

The farmers in Florida suffered at least \$2.5 billion in losses when Hurricane Irma tore through the State, and that included a lot of our citrus. Citrus alone experienced \$760 million in losses. That is on top of the difficulties that they were having already with the bacteria.

The USDA is estimating that Florida growers will only harvest 46 million boxes this season. Get this: 10 years ago, there were 203 million boxes of citrus harvested. A decade before that, there were 244 million boxes of oranges harvested. For months our farmers have been told to wait their turn. Some of them are going bankrupt. They have waited long enough. They need the help now. We just have to act on this disaster bill.

Additionally, it has been over 100 days since Hurricane Maria hit Puerto Rico. Over 30 percent of the island remains without power, and parts of the island still lack running water. Some people have running water still, but

they cannot drink it. They have to boil it.

When I was there in the little mountain town of Utuado, the source of water about 2 weeks after the hurricane—with the roads cut off, the only source of outside help was by helicopter, and the running water that they had was from a pipe that was coming out of the mountain, the mountain water draining down. I don't want to mince words here. We have a full-blown humanitarian crisis in Puerto Rico right now. My colleague, MARCO RUBIO from Florida, has been there also, and he is here to testify to the same thing.

As a result, recent estimates suggest that over 300,000 Puerto Ricans may have moved to Florida. Some are fortunate enough to move in with relatives, but others are living in motels that line the I-4 corridor. Some are living out of their cars. This is absolutely heartbreaking. How can we fail fellow American citizens like this? Yet, given the current situation, the administration thinks that now, today, is the appropriate time to cut off food and water for the people of Puerto Rico.

There is no common sense here. FEMA needs to continue to provide food and water to the island until, at the very least, all of the island has access to potable water and electricity. They are suffering, and while the administration is trying to abandon the responsibility of the United States to Puerto Rico, the House aid package shortchanges recovery efforts on the island. We must enhance it in the Senate package.

For instance, it fails to address the current Medicaid crisis that is just a month away. If nothing is done, Puerto Rico's Medicaid Program is going to run out of money. Congress must act; otherwise, over 1 million U.S. citizens will be denied healthcare coverage when they need it the most.

It has been over a month since the House passed the disaster bill. We haven't seen any action. The longer we wait, the more people suffer. It is clear the government is not working the way it should. We need to turn the corner, and it needs to start with this disaster bill being bumped up in the Senate and then quickly passed.

I beg our colleagues, and Senator MARCO RUBIO joins me: Let's take up this bill. Let's fix the deficiencies, and let's pass it immediately.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Florida.

MR. RUBIO. Mr. President, I want to begin by thanking Senator NELSON, the senior Senator from our State, for once again raising this on the floor. I am glad to be able to follow him and to make many of the same points about the importance of acting on this.

The Presiding Officer is from a State that has been impacted by storms. He knows that long after the cameras leave and long after the stories have been written, real people's lives have

been disrupted, sometimes permanently, certainly in ways that we don't think about. We have come to think about hurricane damage as roofs being ripped off of buildings and trees in the road, and once those are picked up, everything is back to normal. What we don't recognize is that underneath all of that is the long-term damage done to a small business that went 2 weeks without any sort of income, so they closed.

There is the impact we see in the Florida Keys, where there are a lot of people, for example, who have used their retirement savings to buy a small property that they rent out in the Florida Keys. It is very common. They buy a small townhouse, they rent it out in the winter for people to stay there, and then they use it in the summer for their family.

Well, guess what. This winter they are probably not getting a lot of visitors. In some cases—I know of one in particular—there is all this debris from the storm that is sitting in the canal. It is not very attractive for a visitor to come to the Keys and stay in a townhouse where they can't even go out into the ocean because the canals and the waterways that take them out have refrigerators floating in them and have all kind of debris in them. By the way, there is still debris there from previous storms, almost 15 years—10 years ago.

What does that mean? That means the owner of the unit doesn't have the rent they were using to pay the mortgage. She might be a teacher or he might be a firefighter, and now they are not getting the income they were counting on to make the mortgage, so they potentially could fall behind and could lose this rental property that they had invested in for their family. These are not rich people. These are people who had an investment for the future and had a good business model until the storm came. That is not measured anywhere, but that is real harm.

The small businesses have been harmed. The Florida Keys, in particular, is a place that has had lot of small businesses that have been there for a long time. Some of these places have gone months without clients. If that person doesn't come and rent out that unit I just described, that means that person isn't using the fuel from the local gas station, isn't eating at the local restaurants, and isn't contributing to the local economy.

To top it off, it is so expensive. Imagine if you are a worker at one of these buildings making \$15 an hour. It is so expensive. They already had a housing problem, and this has made it worse. So it would be a mistake to say that the hurricane damage is over, and the effort to address it ends the minute the trees are removed from the road and the roofs are tarped and repaired. It goes on for a while.

In the case of this particular storm, Florida was also impacted by the impact that Maria had on Puerto Rico. As

Senator NELSON just outlined, up to 300,000 American citizens—I say that because there are still a lot of people wondering, why are we giving aid to Puerto Rico? Puerto Rico is a U.S. territory, and its residents are U.S. citizens. There are 300,000 U.S. citizens from Puerto Rico who have moved to Florida. They enrich our State, but our schools weren't counting on the kids, so they have to scramble to deal with that.

Our housing stock—I met with a group of people on Friday. We still have people living in hotels who have been there for 3 or 4 months. Even if they wanted to go out and find an apartment, there is nothing available. There are all sorts of challenges. We have heard stories, for example, that they have to pay a \$75 application fee for each one of the housing units they apply for, even if they are turned down. Just figure that out. If someone applies to just three or four of them, that is a lot of money out of pocket for someone who has already lost everything in the storm. Florida is facing that as well.

I am disappointed. If someone had told me that we would get to the last week of January without taking up disaster relief, I would have been surprised because we had a chance to actually address this at the end of last year. The House sent over a bill that didn't go far enough. The Senate had ideas about how to make it better, and then for reasons involving leverage and using it as a tool to get people to vote for CRs—short-term spending at the end—it has been held up. That is unfortunate because these problems are only getting worse, not better, as time goes on.

Senator NELSON talked about the citrus industry. One of our signature crops, if not our signature crop, was already being challenged by citrus greening, which is a terrible disease. Senator NELSON and I went to some of those groves together, and there are growers who basically were already hurting. They have lost everything for this year. There is no money coming in. The fruit is gone. Once that fruit touches the ground and that ground is wet, you can't sell it. The trees are damaged. It is not as though we can just buy a new tree at Walmart, and in 1 year it produces. It has to put it in the ground, and it takes 5 years before it will start to produce. They are hurting, and they are wondering, should I replant? Is this a good business for me to be in?

Some of these families have been in citrus for three or four or five generations, and this could be the end, not just the end for them but the end of Florida citrus. We helped them in the tax bill with the ability to immediately expense replanting, but that will not be enough. That is why this package has to include USDA resources to help replace these lost trees and rehabilitate the groves that were flooded. This is critical and essential to our food supply.

The Army Corps of Engineers plays a huge role in the State of Florida. For example, there is the Herbert Hoover Dike, which is a dike on Lake Okeechobee that would prevent a catastrophic flooding event, should the lake levels rise too high. We have people living just south of it, and what happened, almost a century ago, is that people died because of flooding there. So this dike was built. It has been found to be and rated among the most vulnerable water infrastructure projects in the Nation, and we are lucky that it wasn't breached in the storm, but it could have been, had the rainfall been located at the right place at the right time. It has been the priority of our delegation for a long time to expedite the construction of rehabilitation to strengthen that dike. This is a good opportunity to do that because there will be other storms. Because the project was delayed when the storm hit, this is a chance to finish that role.

Other parts that are critical to Florida's economy are beach renourishment and intracoastal navigation projects. These are hugely important and not just what makes Florida an attractive place to live; it is the reason people visit. Some of these beaches were severely eroded. Particularly in Northeast Florida, there is no beach, and the water is coming up to the edge of the property lines. If there is no beach, the hotels and the condominiums that rent out on that beach do not have visitors. People will not go there unless there is sand on the beach, and the erosion that happens in a storm like this needs to be fixed.

Of course, we have all been engaged, and I hope all are committed to our Everglades restoration projects. The Everglades are some of the most unique environments on the planet. They happen to be in the United States and happen to be in our home State. In these Everglades restoration projects, we want to continue to make progress toward our goal of saving them.

By the way, the Everglades are a source of water for over 8 million Floridians. So I hope the disaster funding also addresses all the work that was destroyed and the damage that happened to a lot of the restoration projects that were in place.

I will not go deep into education because Senator NELSON has already addressed that, but suffice it to say we had thousands of students who were displaced, and we add to that thousands of people from Puerto Rico whom the school districts welcome but weren't counting on. Now we have to accommodate classroom space. In many cases, for these children, although everyone in Puerto Rico learns English and Spanish, their primary language is Spanish, so we have to get instructors who are able to bring them to proficiency in English. That is a challenge. All of that is falling on the State of Florida as well. While Florida welcomes our fellow Americans from

Puerto Rico who are seeking refuge, the costs need to be accounted for.

We had hospitals that were damaged from the storms, and the repairs to some of these continue to rise. In some cases, these hospital repairs resulted in the closure of the hospital for more than a year.

There is a hospital in the Keys that is going to be completely rebuilt. If you have ever been to the Florida Keys, the distances are bad, and there is a hospital that is going to have to be completely rebuilt.

In addition to all of that, we have our healthcare providers in Florida who provided charitable care, not just to Floridians after the storm but to displaced Americans from Puerto Rico and from the U.S. Virgin Islands. They need to be reimbursed for doing that. They didn't sit back and say: We are not going to do it unless you send us a check. They did it, and there were real expenses. Then they were also hit by the storm, and they are dealing with those new expenses.

By the way, one of the things I hope we will do is expedite hiring authority for medical personnel in HHS because, for years, we have failed to maintain adequate levels of personnel willing to give a couple of weeks of their time to aid in a time of disaster. Our medical teams are depleted, and at this rate we will already have a staffing shortage by the next hurricane season, which is just a few months away.

NOAA, another Federal agency—the disaster bill needs to fund the continued removal of the things I have already discussed: marine debris, lost lobster traps, capsized vessels. There is an environmental component to it, and there is an economic component to it. If our canal is full of refrigerators, debris, things that need to be removed, the water cannot be navigated. The value of all that property is wiped out, and also what is wiped out is the desire of people to come and visit. Beyond increasing—or as we call it around here “plussing up”—critical FEMA accounts like the Disaster Relief Fund, we should also include language in the bill to protect counties, cities, towns, and individual homeowners who received FEMA disaster assistance from the uncertainty about when the Federal Government may come back in a few years and claw back that support. In essence, they can come back in a few years and say: We gave you too much money; give it back to us.

If someone did something wrong, I am not talking about that. I am talking about a good faith estimate that both sides agreed on, and they delivered the money, and then 4 years later they show up and say: Hey, we have looked at it again, and in hindsight we gave you \$1,000 more in the case of an individual or \$50,000 or \$100,000 more in the case of a city or a county, and now they have to scramble to pay this back.

So I will continue to work to make sure that FEMA has the resources it needs to assist for recovery victims for

both short-term and long-term recovery but without this threat of clawback, and there are ways to do that which will allow us to be fiscally responsible.

I have already talked about the housing issue in Monroe County in Southwest Florida. Monroe County is in the Florida Keys, and that is why it is critical that FEMA has the resources to utilize programs such as direct relief assistance, which will enable the Federal Government to lease a property that would not generally be available to the public, such as corporate lodging, to house survivors, to house people, as opposed to just giving them a voucher and saying: Go find a hotel.

Here is what happens. They get a hotel in South Dade in Homestead, and the big rates come in February, and everyone gets kicked out in February because those rooms were booked a year ago at those rates, and they have nowhere to go. It is disruptive. If we were able to lease out an entire long-term corporate housing or lodging facility, these people would have some certainty to go about their lives while their homes and their lives are rebuilt. Programs such as Direct Lease assistance provide the type of flexibility that Florida and, quite frankly, the whole country needs. We are going to continue to advocate for the program so we can provide roofs over the heads of displaced Floridians and Puerto Ricans.

Infrastructure damage throughout Florida is also substantial. In particular, I was able to go down to the Everglades to Flamingo. It is a place we have gone often. It is one of the places we leave from to go fishing with my children. The facilities there were already in bad shape, to be frank. It looked like something out of one of those 1960s black-and-white movies they show in schools.

This place was badly hurt. Again, this is Federal property. That is a national park that belongs to the American people, under the custody of the Federal Government, and it was wiped out and hurt and destroyed. We need to help rebuild it. By the way, that includes airports, NASA—the Kennedy Space Center—which also suffered damages.

I have a couple more points, then I will close.

Housing and Urban Development. On December 14, I introduced the Disaster Assistance Simplification Act. That prohibits HUD from penalizing victims of natural disasters who apply but then turn down an SBA disaster loan. So if you apply for an SBA disaster loan, HUD will come back and take away your assistance or render you ineligible for HUD assistance not because you received the HUD loan but because you applied for it. That should be taken out.

I have worked with colleagues to ensure that this language is included in the upcoming supplemental because I don't understand how we can allow

unsynchronized and burdensome disaster assistance programs to make recovery more difficult for someone impacted by a storm. You just went through a storm. Your business was destroyed. Your home was destroyed. Your family had to move to another county or another city. On top of that, you have to agonize over what the Federal Government may or may not give you. If they gave it to you, you have to agonize over when they may come back and take it away. We can't further victimize victims by penalizing victims who do not take assistance. Our laws are discouraging people from applying for SBA disaster loans.

Again, on that particular point, I am not talking about people who are double-dipping. I am talking about people who applied for HUD and SBA. Just the act of applying for that loan means you can't get the HUD assistance. That is ridiculous.

I will close with Puerto Rico. It doesn't get enough attention, in my mind. We read about the situation every day. Now the articles are saying: Can you believe they still don't have electricity in Puerto Rico? There are a lot of problems that need to be addressed. Puerto Rico had a lot of problems before the storm.

At end of the day, here is the bottom line. Puerto Rico is a U.S. territory. It is the responsibility of the United States. These are American citizens. They are children. They are residents. They wear the uniform of this country. If you go to Arlington Cemetery, not far from here, you will see their names after paying the ultimate sacrifice. They contribute to every area of our lives, whether they choose to live on the mainland or on the island. Perhaps because it isn't always in the headlines, a lot of people just don't understand its status, its importance, and our relationship and obligations.

We have been involved from the very beginning, not just because of the impact it has had on Florida but because, on a personal level, I have so many friends and people I care about who live there. If you live in Florida, you know people who have people they love who live there.

Right after the storm, I sent three members of my staff, who spent over a week at their emergency operations center, just trying to act as a conduit to facilitate between Federal efforts and the efforts of Puerto Rico's government, but the work that remains is extraordinary.

I talk about the people who are still displaced. We have seen the story of people losing their housing vouchers who were staying in a hotel. People say: We just heard from the government in Puerto Rico that your home is habitable so you are done. Check out tomorrow afternoon. They have nowhere to go. If they have family, maybe, but if they don't, where do they go that night? It is a problem. We have seen that happen in Connecticut and fear it could happen in other places.

On the disaster relief, we think recovering is not just about putting up light posts. We think it is about helping the economy grow, about attracting business and investment back, and about helping people who want to stay to be able to stay.

We have a number of provisions we hope will be included. One is a temporary payroll tax deduction so whatever it is you get paid, you get to keep more of it. It would be temporary for a year, but at least it is a way of giving people a raise without being a burden on businesses.

We would also like to see a temporary expansion of the child tax credit. Because of a quirk in the law, people who file taxes from Puerto Rico are not eligible for it at its full value the way someone on the mainland would be. Again, all they have to do is move to Florida, and they can do it.

These are U.S. citizens. If they can fight in our Armed Forces, if they pledge allegiance to our flag, if they are citizens of our Nation, why should they not be entitled to the same tax versions there that they would be if they were living on the mainland?

We also need to deal with, as Senator NELSON talked about, the Medicaid cliff. Because of the healthcare law that passed a number of years ago, the funding mechanism that was created places them in a position where soon they will run out of money in their Medicaid Program. Ultimately, what will happen is, people who need these services will move to Florida or some other State, and then they will sign up for Medicaid in the States and get what they couldn't get in Puerto Rico. It will actually cost more. If money is what you are worried about, it will cost more in the long run not to do it than to do it.

I also think we need to increase funding for energy grid technical assistance from the Department of Energy. On that note, I would say, we are getting reports that they are being forced to rebuild using the exact same equipment that was there before the storm. Some of this equipment is so old, it isn't even manufactured anymore. They don't make it anymore. They had to retrofit and make things up.

If we are going to rebuild or help rebuild the grid in Puerto Rico, shouldn't they be able to put in something that is modern as opposed to rebuilding the old stuff? That makes no sense. It will actually make the system more resilient.

A lot of these proposals may meet with resistance, but they all make sense. We can justify every single one of them. I hope we will pursue them. I worked very closely with Resident Commissioner Jenniffer Gonzalez on these efforts. I am grateful for her strong advocacy and the support of so many of my colleagues on behalf of our fellow Americans in Puerto Rico.

I close by asking our colleagues this. I know we have the policy work this week. The Democrats and Republicans

are doing their thing. I know we have funding issues a week from this Friday that we have to address. I know immigration is an important issue that we need to confront, but do not forget about disaster relief. We have to get it done for the people out west in California, the people in Texas, the people of Florida, the people of Puerto Rico, and for our fellow Americans who were hurt by the hurricanes this season and the fires of 2017.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Arizona.

IMMIGRATION

Mr. FLAKE. Mr. President, as we continue the debate on the issue of immigration as it relates to providing a permanent solution to those young immigrants who benefited from the Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals, or DACA, the scope of this debate has expanded to include other issues.

Some of these issues are directly related to the DACA issue, including persistent concerns on our southern border, like improving barriers and border access roads, providing hiring and retention incentives for Customs and Border Protection personnel to ensure that all locations on the border remain secure. Other things being debated, like changes to legal immigration levels, truly need their own debate.

Some appear to have seized on this as an opportunity to push forth an agenda aimed at limiting the future flow of legal immigration. Before this idea gains any steam, we have to fully discuss and debate its potentially enormous impact on our economy. It is easy for some to see unemployed Americans and point to immigrants as a scapegoat. To suggest that every immigrant who passes through our borders represents a job being pried from the hands of an American citizen is far-fetched, at best.

After taking the time to actually examine the facts, the shortsightedness of this thinking is exposed. For example, cleaving the number of new legal immigrants by almost 50 percent—which is what the White House proposal appears to envision over time—would initially reduce the overall rate of economic growth in the United States by an estimated 12.5 percent when compared to currently projected levels through 2045. This is because labor force growth is one of the most important factors tied to economic growth. More troubling, these changes in legal immigration would come just as the aging U.S. population increases our dependence on a growing workforce.

Some have suggested that legal immigrants represent some sort of drag on government resources. In fact, the National Academy of Sciences estimates that the average immigrant contributes, in net present value terms, \$92,000 more in taxes than they receive in benefits over their lifetime.

We can only expect these numbers to increase as we move to a kind of merit

or employment-based system. I should note that in the bipartisan approach in 2015, we did restrict the number of family-based visas. I think it was from a total of 75 percent of legal immigration, we moved it down to 50 percent from family-based visas. At that same time, what we did was reallocate those visas to merit-based or employment-based visas so we wouldn't have an overall drop in legal immigration.

To look into the future of what happens when the philosophy of limiting legal immigration takes hold, we need to look no further than the current economic struggles Japan is having. In a timely piece by Fred Hiatt in the Washington Post this last Sunday, he points out that Japan's population of 127 million is forecast to shrink by one-third over the next half century. The increase in lifespans coupled with a decrease in fertility is projected to lead to near-stagnant economic growth, reduced innovation, labor shortages, and huge pressure on entitlements and pensions in Japan.

These disastrous realities facing Japan are the direct result of that nation's historically low level of immigrants. As Hiatt astutely points out, "You can be pro-growth. You can be anti-immigration. But honestly, you can't be both."

Legal immigration policy is complicated, but it is important, and it is worth debating this reform on its own. There may be a strong appetite for merit-based immigration, but rather than drastically cutting legal and necessary immigration flows, we need to work together to provide a way for the best and brightest to make it to the United States, both for their benefit and ours.

Let's not be lured into thinking that legal immigration is some kind of simplistic zero-sum game that can be easily reformed without consequence. During the last administration, many of us rejected the new normal of low economic growth driven by overregulation and irrational tax policy. It would be a supreme irony if we were to fix those anti-growth fiscal and regulatory policies only to counteract them with immigration restrictions that affect our workforce.

Let's give this important and complex issue the time for discussion, analysis, and debate it deserves and not shoehorn it into a DACA fix.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Vermont.

THE BUDGET

Mr. LEAHY. Mr. President, I cannot help but note that the fiscal year began October 1 last year. Four months have passed. That is 122 days since the start of the fiscal year, and we still don't have a budget deal to allow us to finish the fiscal year 2018 appropriations bills. That is 122 days, and the Congress has not done their job.

Recently, President Trump has taken to Twitter. He has accused Democrats of holding up funding for our troops.

Well, the idea that Democrats are holding up defense spending doesn't pass the laugh test. I mean, last July—7 months ago—I called for bipartisan budget negotiations, something we have always done in the past. As the vice chairman of Appropriations, I put forward a proposal that would increase defense spending by \$54 billion and would increase nondefense spending by an equal amount of \$54 billion. Basically, what we did when Senator MURRAY and then-Congressman RYAN worked out the budget agreement. We did that years ago based on parity. The proposal was responsible, it was reasonable, and it was based on parity. It was something we have done for years. It would have fully funded President Trump's budget request for our military, but it would also have provided much needed relief from the damaging effects of sequestration that we have seen on both sides of the ledger, defense and nondefense.

But instead of trying to reach a bipartisan budget deal to allow us to finish our spending bills on time, the Republican leadership, which controls the agenda, had other priorities. They spent the last 7 months trying to repeal healthcare for millions of Americans and rolling back important consumer protections. They cut environmental and workplace protections, protections for women in the workplace, and they passed budget-busting tax cuts that primarily benefit big corporations and the wealthiest Americans. As a result of doing that, the funding for our troops, as well as for key domestic priorities, has been left to limp along under four continuing resolutions.

Yesterday, the Trump administration—and I wonder if they have actually looked at the President's budget—accused Democrats of holding defense spending hostage over arbitrary demands for lower priority domestic programs.

I am curious. What are the domestic programs the Trump administration considers a lower priority? Do they consider the services for our veterans that are lacking around this country—do they think helping our veterans is a lower priority? What about the funding to combat the opioid epidemic? Every single State represented by every single Senator here, Republican and Democrat alike, in every corner of our country, has been hurt by the opioid epidemic. Is the Trump administration saying that is a lower priority? How about investments in education for our Nation's children? Is that a lower priority? Is disaster relief for our communities that have been devastated by hurricanes—there are so many—a lower priority? What about replacing our crumbling bridges all across the country before people start dying in record numbers? Is that a lower priority?

The President puts before us a false choice, and it makes me wonder if he is actually seeing the budget his administration proposes. There is no reason we

can't fight for and fund both our military and other domestic programs. It is not an either/or choice. It has never been an either/or choice, whether we have had a Democratic or Republican administration.

One thing we do know is that operating under four continuing resolutions is no way to govern. I think it is time to get serious about reaching a deal.

Later today, the House is going to pass another Defense appropriations bill that will exceed the budget caps by \$73 billion, and they don't even know where it will be spent. But if you don't have a budget deal to raise the caps, this would be a false promise to our military because that funding level would trigger a sequester. It would force a 13-percent across-the-board cut on defense programs. It is not a serious bill; it is a messaging bill.

There are those who are going to tout it on the floor of the House, saying: Look what we are doing to raise it. Will they at least take a moment to say that it actually cuts our defense programs 13 percent across the board? I asked the Secretary of Defense what he thinks about that. He says it would be a disaster.

What we are doing is we have been substituting sound bites for substance. I think we are past the time for that kind of messaging.

The budget and the appropriations process are where we set our priorities as a nation and where we put those priorities into action. That has been our policy here in the Senate under Democratic and under Republican leadership for decades. Instead of doing this basic job, Congress and the President have put the Federal budget on perpetual autopilot, so it never gets done. It comes up, we talk about it, and it doesn't get done. It comes up again, we talk about it, and it doesn't get done. The can has been kicked down the road over and over again.

It makes me think of "Groundhog Day." We are coming up on Groundhog Day. Well, it is "Groundhog Day," plus a sequel, plus another sequel, plus another sequel and yet another sequel. Well, that may have been a funny movie, but this is real life for over 300 million Americans, and 100 Americans are entrusted to make their lives better.

Kicking the can down the road and playing "Groundhog Day" is corrosive and damaging to our Nation and to the American people in countless ways.

Certainly, my experience with a Republican administration and a Democratic administration, many times in the majority in this body and many times in the minority in this body—one thing I have learned, and many of my Republican colleagues tell me the same thing, is that you can't govern by continuing resolution. It is easy. It means you don't have to do your work. But neither the military nor our country can properly function under sequestration. They can't function if we don't do our jobs.

This week, we are taking another recess after this afternoon. I wish we would just stay here and get these bills passed. I am willing to. Vermont is a very nice place to be this time of year—great skiing, lovely place. I have kids and grandkids there, but I will stay here if it means we can get the appropriations bills passed, get us off this corrosive, wasteful continuation of a continuing resolution and sequestration.

The continuing resolution expires on February 8. That is 9 days from today. It is up to the Republican leadership in both Chambers to get serious about striking a bipartisan budget deal. I believe there is something we can do. Talking with both Republican and Democratic Senators, I think we could have a budget deal that would get 60 votes in the Senate. We could raise the caps. We could take care of defense but also take care of a lot of priorities we hear about when we walk down Main Street in the towns and cities we represent. These aren't people who have a partisan attitude; they just want to see the government work.

The States that have suffered from hurricanes and flooding want to see us help them as a nation. If their community is devastated by opioids, they want to see us do something about it. They would like to see the Federal Government do something about stopping the millions of opioids flooding into this country illegally from China. They are not coming across the wall; they are coming from China through the mail, through the post offices we all have in our communities.

Let's start to look at the real threats to America. You don't do it by sound bites; you do it by substance and hard work. There are many Senators on both sides of the aisle who are willing to do that hard work. We have unbelievably talented staff from both Republicans and Democrats who have been working very hard to get us there. Let's start doing that. Let's stop looking for the sound bite. Let's start looking for the substance. I am ready to. I have talked with key Members of both parties about this. It can be done.

I felt honored the other day when Senator Robert Dole, one the titans of this body—a Republican, a conservative Republican—asked me to be one of the two Senators to speak when he received the Congressional Gold Medal. We had a chance to chat first about how we used to do it. Without sounding like the old-timer talking about the good old days, what we would do is the Republicans and Democrats—key Members of both parties—would sit down and we would work something out because we could take each other's word for it. We set aside political posturing, and we did what was best for the country.

Senator Dole joined with Senator Moynihan—a conservative Republican and a liberal Democrat—and they saved Social Security. Senator Dole joined with Senator George McGovern—again, a conservative Republican and a liberal Democrat. As a result, millions of children were fed, others were fed, hungry people were fed in this country and in other countries. What a great humanitarian gesture. Both Senator Dole and Senator McGovern fought in World War II. Both had a distinguished military career. Senator Dole was severely injured. Senator McGovern volunteered to fly many, many missions beyond the number he was required to, even though so many planes in those missions were being shot down. But they came back and said: OK. We did that. Now what are we doing for the people we fought to save?

We should listen to people like that. We should listen to them. We would be a better Senate, we would be a better country if we did.

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

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The bill clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

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

Mr. TESTER. Mr. President, I wish to speak for 5 minutes.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator is recognized.

Mr. TESTER. Mr. President, I rise today on this 13th day of January to call out this body, the body of the U.S. Senate, for its dereliction of duty. Enough is enough. We need a long-term budget bill for all of America, including my home State of Montana, because that is what Americans expect because it is our job.

It has been 122 days since Congress has failed to pass a budget. What makes this even more egregious is the fact that we haven't done anything but continuing resolution after continuing resolution. There is no certainty in that. And even if we passed a long-term budget deal, it isn't even for that long of a term—through the end of this fiscal year, which is when it needs to be done by.

For the last 122 days, Congress has left community health centers, small business owners, America's families, Montana's families without the certainty of a long-term budget. During that time, Congress has instead settled for four short-term, crisis-funding bills that don't do what is necessary and that provide more uncertainty and more chaos.

I have heard a lot of folks say that government needs to be run like a business. There is no business that would put off what it is doing just because it is convenient. In my real life, I am a farmer. I know that you have to plan. I know that you can't go from month to month with uncertainty ahead of you because if you do, you will end up in a situation where it will put you out of business. You have to be able to

plan, whether it is for the seeds you buy or equipment maintenance or anything else in agriculture. It is the same way in any business, and by the way, it is the same way in government.

Unfortunately, the norm has been a month of funding in continuing resolutions, or 3 weeks, instead of coming to a point where we can fund things until the end of the fiscal year, which will give folks certainty, whether it is the military or our southern border or community health centers.

Why do I bring this up? It is because fully 10 percent of the citizens of Montana depend on community health centers for access to their healthcare. It is in some cases the only source of healthcare for these folks. I have had listening tours and roundtables and over a dozen different public meetings on healthcare over the last year, and I can tell you that these facilities are critically important.

So who cares? Why should we worry about that, because we have a continuing resolution. Why? Because these folks right now, if you go talk to them in the State of Montana and I think in any other State in the Union, they will tell you they are not sure whether they will keep their doors open. That does not provide the kind of certainty they need and the kind of access to healthcare folks in our country need, and Montana is no exception.

We cannot continue governing from crisis to crisis. Montana deserves better. America deserves better. We need a budget that goes to the end of the fiscal year, that provides the kind of certainty and security the American people elected us to do. Congress simply needs to do its job.

Mr. President, I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Pennsylvania.

HONORING DEPUTY MARSHAL CHRISTOPHER HILL

Mr. TOOMEY. Mr. President, I rise today to speak about two separate matters. The first is a very painful and difficult topic, but I feel it is important to address.

I wish to recognize, acknowledge, and honor the heroic life and legacy and sacrifice of one of Pennsylvania's finest: Deputy U.S. Marshal Christopher Hill.

On January 18 of this year, Deputy Hill was shot and killed while he was apprehending a fugitive in Harrisburg, PA. Christopher Hill lived in York, PA. He was only 45 years old. He was a husband and the father of two young children. He dedicated his life to serving and protecting first his country and later his community. He was an 11-year veteran of the U.S. Marshals Service. He was a former U.S. Army Ranger who had been deployed to Somalia. In 2014, Deputy Hill was one of the deputy marshals who helped capture a notorious cop killer in Pennsylvania, Eric Frein, who was the subject of one of the largest and longest manhunts in recent history throughout rural Pennsylvania.

The fact is that day in and day out for a very long period of time, Chris-

topher Hill put his life on the line for the rest of us. He did it as an Army Ranger in Somalia. He did it as a deputy U.S. marshal. I had the privilege of attending the memorial service for him recently. It was extraordinary to hear one after another of the people whom he had served with in various capacities speak about a truly extraordinary individual, a guy who was by all accounts humble and modest but absolutely dedicated with a passion to his family, to his community, and to his country.

Sometimes it is easy for us to forget the risks and sacrifices that are being taken by the men and women who wear various uniforms that represent the various organizations that defend and protect us. But I want to say to the people of Pennsylvania and to the family of Christopher Hill that we are never going to forget the bravery and the sacrifice and the service he provided for all of us.

TAX REFORM

Mr. President, another topic I wish to touch on this afternoon is a much happier topic; that is, the extraordinary consequences we are already seeing of the tax reform we passed just about a month ago.

Yesterday, I had a chance to tour a small- to medium-sized company in the eastern part of Pennsylvania—Easton, PA, which is where they are located. Sussex Wire is the name of the company. They have a very sophisticated technology whereby they take wire, and without heating it and without grinding it, they use a process that turns it into the shape and form that their customers require. It is a very sophisticated process. They can crank out tremendous volumes.

This relatively small business—I think they have 55 employees—is doing very well. It is manufacturing in Pennsylvania, in America. As a direct result of the tax reform we passed, their tax burden has been diminished, and that has, in turn, allowed them to speed up the hiring of five or six new workers—five or six people who don't have a job today, but they are going to have a job soon because Sussex Wire is hiring. Right now they are out looking for the folks who are going to expand their workforce, expand the ability of this terrific company to do even more.

The tax reform is also accelerating their ability to purchase new equipment. The new equipment they buy allows them to do more work more productively. It allows their workers to produce more of the little tools and devices that they produce. When workers produce more, when they are more productive, they can earn more income, and that is exactly what is happening at Sussex Wire. This is before we have had the opportunity to have all of these investments actually take place.

I am thrilled at how quickly we are seeing tangible benefits for the people I represent as a result of this tax reform.

Of course, it is not just Sussex Wire; it is happening all across America. It is

happening certainly all across Pennsylvania, and I hope we will hear about some of the examples tonight when the President gives his State of the Union Address.

At latest count, there are over 3 million American workers who have already gotten an increase in their compensation. Their employers have provided them either a pay raise or a bonus or a contribution to their pension plan or some combination of those things precisely because these businesses have more free cash flow as a result of lower taxes. Three million workers from almost 300 businesses, and since the last time I came to the floor and spoke about this phenomenon, there have been many more Pennsylvanians benefitting from this.

The employees of Home Depot, at 70 locations across Pennsylvania, are benefiting. Those employees—thousands, I suppose, altogether—are receiving \$1,000 each.

FedEx, which has a huge presence in Pennsylvania, has announced \$200 million in raises, \$1.5 billion in new investment in distribution hubs, and another \$1.5 billion that they are contributing to their employees' pensions.

PPG in Pittsburgh, PA, is spending \$50 million in new capital projects, in part because the Tax Code treats that investment better than our Tax Code used to, and it is encouraging more of this investment.

H&K Equipment in Coraopolis in western Pennsylvania is increasing its investments by 15 percent this year, again in response to this tax reform.

The Wall Street Journal reported over the weekend that manufacturing investment is already going up. It is already increasing. This is going to be very beneficial. First of all, it helps all the workers who produce the equipment in which companies are investing. Secondly, someone needs to operate this equipment, so when a company goes out and buys a new piece of equipment, new machinery, there is the job security or the new job being created for the person who operates it. Thirdly, there is the enhancement in productivity, which allows for higher compensation.

This is all happening at a time when our unemployment rate is relatively low. It is at an alltime record low for African Americans. It is low generally by standards of recent decades. This means that demand for more workers is going to translate into upward pressure on wages. I think we are already seeing it. It is very, very encouraging, and it is just a tremendous success for our workers.

I was very confident that this would be among the constructive consequences of our tax reform, but I will confess that I didn't realize it would happen so quickly. This is great news for Pennsylvanians, and it is great news for Americans.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Alabama.

TRIBUTE TO WILLIAM D. DUHNKE III

Mr. SHELBY. Mr. President, I rise today to pay tribute to a former staff member of mine, William D. Duhnke III, who dedicated over 20 years of his life's work to the Senate.

Prior to his time on Capitol Hill, Bill Duhnke served in the U.S. Navy as a naval officer and at the Commission on the Assignment of Women in the Armed Forces. Bill received his juris doctorate from Catholic University and a bachelor of arts degree from his home State university, the University of Wisconsin. In 1995 Bill Duhnke joined my personal staff to handle defense, foreign relations, and judiciary policy. He quickly revealed his high work ethic and innate ability to thrive when tasked with the most challenging of assignments.

After swiftly climbing the ladder in my office, Bill became my staff director and general counsel when I chaired the Senate Intelligence Committee and later the Senate Banking Committee, where he was general counsel and staff director. He also served as my staff director when I was the ranking member of the Senate Appropriations Committee, when the Democrats were in control.

As a former naval flight officer, Bill always brought a high level of respect and discipline to the workplace. Without hesitation, he was able to spearhead tasks and get things done. Not only was he a trusted adviser, but he was an esteemed manager across Capitol Hill, where he was duly respected. Bill is exceptionally smart and was always well versed on the issues at hand. I would be hard-pressed to recall a time when he was unprepared. I can't think of one.

I am certain that Bill will continue to operate in this manner in his new role as Chairman of the Public Accounting Oversight Board.

I have relied on Bill Duhnke's professional advice and leadership for 20 years, and I know he will be an asset as the Board works to improve audit quality and promote public trust in our securities area. I believe SEC Chairman Jay Clayton has made an excellent choice in selecting Bill Duhnke to chair the PCAOB.

I have no doubt that Bill has stepped into his new leadership position with ease. His intellect and experience ensure his future success in this role, and I am confident that Bill will remain an outstanding leader as he continues on this new path in his career.

It is my honor to offer my deep appreciation and gratitude to Bill Duhnke for his decades of hard work and dedication to the entire country. I am privileged to have had him on my staff for all of those years.

I yield the floor.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The bill clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

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

TAX REFORM

Mr. THUNE. Mr. President, the good news about tax reform continues to roll in—wage increases, better benefits, increased investment, and employee bonuses. So far, more than 250 companies have announced good news for their employees—pay hikes, increased retirement contributions, or bonuses, and the list continues to grow.

Last week, JPMorgan Chase, Disney, Starbucks, and FedEx all announced increased investment in American workers. JPMorgan Chase announced that it will raise wages for 22,000 workers, add thousands of new jobs, and open 400 new branches in the United States. It also plans to increase its lending to small businesses. Disney will invest in employees' education and provide employee bonuses. Starbucks is raising wages, increasing benefits, and rewarding employees with company stock. FedEx announced plans to expedite raises and invest \$1.5 billion to expand its FedEx Express hub in Indianapolis. It is also making a \$1.5 billion contribution to its pension plan. To top it off, yesterday ExxonMobil announced that, thanks in part to tax reform, it will invest an additional \$35 billion into the U.S. economy over the next 5 years. That means a lot of new jobs and opportunities for American workers.

Stories like this are why we made business tax reform a key part of the Tax Cuts and Jobs Act. Obviously, a huge priority was immediately lowering Americans' tax bills, which is why we lowered rates across the board, nearly doubled the standard deduction, and doubled the child tax credit. But our other priority was creating the kind of economy in which Americans can thrive for the long-term—an economy that would create good jobs, higher wages, and more opportunities.

So how do we go about doing that? Well, the only way for individual Americans to thrive is for American businesses and the American economy to thrive. So we took action to improve the situation for American businesses.

Prior to the Tax Cuts and Jobs Act, American businesses, large and small, were weighed down by high tax rates and growth-killing tax provisions. Plus, our outdated international tax rules left America's global businesses at a competitive disadvantage in the global economy.

The Tax Cuts and Jobs Act changed all that. We lowered tax rates across the board for owners of small and medium-sized businesses, farms, and ranches. We expanded the business owners' ability to recover investments they make in their businesses, which will free up cash that they can reinvest in their operations and their workers.

We lowered our Nation's massive corporate tax rate, which up until January 1 was the highest corporate tax rate in the developed world. We brought the U.S. international tax sys-

tem into the 21st century by replacing our outdated worldwide system with a modernized territorial tax system so that American businesses are not operating at a disadvantage next to their foreign counterparts. Now, just a month into the new tax law, we are already seeing the results.

Thanks to the new tax law, businesses are seeing a future of growth, and based on those forecasts, they are making plans to invest in their workers, raise wages, create new jobs, and invest in the American economy: AT&T, Boeing, Fiat Chrysler, Bank of America, Home Depot, Great Western Bank in my State of South Dakota, First Hawaiian Bank, SunTrust Bank, Comcast, American Airlines, Southwest Airlines, Humana, Visa, Nationwide Insurance, JetBlue Airlines. The list of companies announcing good news for American workers thanks to tax reform goes on and on and on.

Tech giant Apple announced that as a result of tax reform, it will bring home almost \$250 billion in cash that it has been keeping overseas and invest it here in the United States. That is good news for the American economy, and it is a direct result of the Tax Cuts and Jobs Act.

Before the Tax Cuts and Jobs Act, our Tax Code encouraged American businesses to keep cash overseas. The Tax Cuts and Jobs Act ended that. Now that we have altered the Tax Code to remove the penalty for bringing profits home to the United States, we can expect to see more companies bringing profits home and investing in the U.S. economy the way that Apple is doing.

We have seen a tremendous amount of good news this month, but it really is only the beginning. As the benefits of tax reform continue to sink in, we expect to see more growth, more jobs, and more opportunities for American workers, and we expect to see the kind of economy that will provide security and prosperity for Americans for the long term.

I yield the floor.

RECESS

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

Thereupon, the Senate, at 12:29 p.m., recessed until 2:15 p.m. and reassembled when called to order by the Presiding Officer (Mr. PORTMAN).

EXECUTIVE CALENDAR—Continued

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the question is, Will the Senate advise and consent to the Stras nomination?

Mr. BURR. I ask for the yeas and nays.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there a sufficient second?

There appears to be a sufficient second.

The clerk will call the roll.

The senior assistant legislative clerk called the roll.