

Here we go again, I guess is what people are saying. The President has now threatened to veto 11 of 12 appropriations bills, including Labor-HHS, which provides crucial funding for schools, medical research, and police. He said he is going to veto WRDA, which passed the Senate with 81 votes.

I am not alone when I say this latest veto threat of the farm bill rings kind of hollow. It rings hollow because Secretary Johanns went around the country giving lectures about the current payments system, what a bad deal it was. Yet the Bush administration had every opportunity to fix the issue of nonfarmers receiving farm payments. This is what Johanns loved to go around the country saying. Why don't they fix this? He is the Secretary of Agriculture, part of the Bush administration. Yet even though he has gone around and given PowerPoint presentations to this effect, he should have been giving a PowerPoint presentation of why the Bush administration hasn't done anything to fix it. It can all be done by changing regulations. You don't need to change the law.

What they now blame Congress for failing to do, they could have reformed—the “actively engaged” farming payments system—right now. That is what they talk about all the time. They talk about people in apartment houses drawing benefits. They can change it. The President can do that. He has the power to do that. We gave him the power to do that. We passed a bill 20 years ago that reformed the process. Yet an April 2004 study by the General Accounting Office determined the Bush Department of Agriculture's track record in implementing this reform was, at best, halfhearted, and that is being generous.

A problem exists in the farming payment structure. We have all heard of individuals who live in the city but claim they are farmers and receive a subsidy. The Bush administration could change that with a regulation. The farm bill begins to tackle that problem—a problem that exists, in large part, because the Bush administration has failed to address it.

Now, the President plans to veto a bill that reforms the payment process, while maintaining the President's administrative authority to act on it. This bill takes reform seriously. If President Bush were serious about it as well, rather than just looking at political points, he would do something about it. He has the power to do something about it.

RECOGNITION OF THE MINORITY LEADER

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The Republican leader.

VA-MILCON APPROPRIATIONS

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, we are now in the sixth week of the 2008 fiscal year, and the majority still

hasn't sent a single funding bill to the President for the 2007 fiscal year. It has been 20 years—20 years—since Congress has waited this late in the year to send a single appropriations bill to the President. The Veterans appropriations bill, for example, passed the Senate 2 months ago but is still sitting in Congress.

So why do our friends on the other side of the aisle continue to drag their feet on this very important measure? We know everyone agrees the bill is important and needed. We know our veterans have sacrificed for our country, and it is our duty—our duty—to provide for them. We know the bill holds wide bipartisan support, and the military construction part of the bill is important for providing housing, readiness, and improved quality of life for our troops. We also know the President will sign the veterans bill into law when he gets it. So why hasn't this bill been brought to the floor for a vote? Why haven't we had a vote on the veterans conference report? Shouldn't we put aside the gamesmanship and send this bill to the President so it can be signed before November 11, which happens to be Veterans Day?

The majority has decided it wants to tie the veterans bill, which will be signed into law, to the Labor bill, which is approximately \$9 billion over the President's request, which, of course, will be vetoed. Now, some have said \$9 billion is not much of a difference, but to put it into context, \$9 billion is more than the individual budgets of 33 of our States. It is more than the entire yearly budget for the FBI. It is more than the budget of the U.S. Coast Guard. More than that, this figure will serve as a starting point for next year's budget, and that will serve as the starting point for the year after that. In short, this increase will compound into \$120 billion in more Washington spending over the next 10 years.

To put this in context, for American taxpayers, for this same amount of money, we could have, instead, made permanent marriage penalty relief and permanent the expensing for small business and have increased taxpayers' standard deduction or we could have provided a 2-year alternative minimum tax patch.

So why attach a bill that overspends so dramatically it would not be signed into law and further postpone funding for our veterans? Our veterans deserve better. We shouldn't penalize them for the mismanagement and overspending of this Congress. We have a responsibility to send the veterans bill to the President at the earliest possible time. Providing funding to our veterans by Veterans Day, November 11, is still a realistic and attainable goal, and Congress should do it.

The election was 1 year ago. It is time to get serious about funding our veterans. We must remember our current force is composed entirely of volunteers, and they have earned our support. If our colleagues are serious, they

will bring the veterans bill to the floor. No gimmicks, no games. Let us get it done before Veterans Day.

I yield the floor.

RESERVATION OF LEADER TIME

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

MORNING BUSINESS

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Under the previous order, the Senate will proceed to a period of morning business for 60 minutes, with Senators permitted to speak for up to 10 minutes each, with the time equally divided and controlled between the leaders or their designees, with Republicans controlling the first half and the majority controlling the final half.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The Senator from Georgia.

RECOGNIZING THE GOOD WORK OF ED AND MARY ETTTEL

Mr. CHAMBLISS. Mr. President, it is a pleasure to rise today to recognize the work of some remarkable Georgians, Ed and Mary Etttel, of Marietta, who happen to be in the gallery this morning. The Etttels have worked together in their community to help touch the lives of our men and women in uniform. Guided by the Any Soldier Foundation, Ed and Mary send requested goods to our soldiers serving in Iraq, Afghanistan, Kyrgyzstan, Somalia, and Kosovo. Soldiers can go to www.ansoldier.com and request what specifically they need and want. Good people such as the Etttels are making sure these soldiers' requests do not go unnoticed.

Serving 4 years of Active Duty in the U.S. Navy and 22 years on Reserve Duty, Ed Etttel undoubtedly knows what it means to sacrifice for his country. However, his loyalties to his fellow men and women in uniform did not end with his retirement. Together with his wife Mary, and daughters Erin and Alison, the Etttels committed themselves to being a support group for those who are serving overseas today.

For the Etttels, many Saturdays over the past 2 years have been similar to last Saturday. The smell of pancakes usually welcomes 40 volunteers arriving at the Etttel's house at Sope Creek Farm. After breakfast, the volunteers pick a soldier's request from the Any Soldier Web site, take it into the inventory room, and pack boxes with food, magazines, school supplies, clothing, toys or Christmas decorations. They also include a handwritten letter of support to each individual soldier, thanking them for their service.

Because of the Etttels' community leadership and the help they have received from the other members of the Mount Bethel United Methodist Church in Marietta, volunteers have been able

to collectively send 496 boxes, weighing over 4 tons, to servicemembers in theaters around the globe.

One of the most fulfilling parts of the experience for these volunteers is how the soldiers respond. There have been countless thank-you and appreciation notes sent from the soldiers, letting them know how great it is that people back home support them and acknowledge the sacrifices they are making.

It is unclear whether the motivation behind the Ettels' generosity comes from Mary's history as a public servant in our school system, Ed's service to his country in the Navy as well as the Navy Reserve or if it is out of sheer gratitude for the Nation in which they live. It is clear the Ettels' appreciation for the troops and their love of country has been contagious among civic organizations, school groups, church groups, businesses, and fellow members of their community.

People such as the Ettels make this Nation the greatest in the world. I am proud to say such patriotic Americans live in my home State of Georgia. Words cannot express America's gratitude for our Armed Forces and their service and sacrifice for this Nation. As Veterans Day approaches, we should all remember to acknowledge those sacrifices, and I challenge all Americans to follow the lead of Mary and Ed Ettel in finding a way to say thank you.

IRAQ

Mr. President, I also rise today to discuss the progress we are making in Iraq. Over the past few months, we have witnessed some encouraging developments, and I think it is important to acknowledge the successes of our men and women in uniform and the successes of the Iraqi people in helping to secure their own Nation.

Since the troop surge was fully implemented, in June 2007, we have seen a steady decline in Iraqi civilian deaths, a decline in the number of bombings, and a decline in the number of incidents involving the most deadly form of roadside bombs known as explosively formed penetrators.

We have sent our forces into Iraqi neighborhoods in order to root out extremists and gain the trust and confidence of the people, and we are seeing encouraging results. Since the surge of operations began in June, the number of IED attacks per week has declined by half. U.S. military deaths have fallen to their lowest level in 19 months.

One year ago, Al Anbar was thought to be lost to the enemy. At the time, al-Qaida staged a parade in the city streets to flaunt its control. Last week, there was another parade in Al Anbar Province. Only this time it was a parade of Iraqi citizens and Iraqi forces who had reclaimed their homes and driven the terrorists out. Iraqi forces have now assumed responsibility for security in 8 of the 18 Iraqi provinces. Across the country, brave Iraqis are increasingly taking on responsibility for their own safety and security.

The improvements we are witnessing in Iraq further confirm the report

given by GEN David Petraeus, Commanding General of the Multinational Forces in Iraq, before Congress in September regarding the troop surge. While testifying before the Senate Armed Services Committee, he stated:

The military objectives of the surge are in large measure being met. In recent months, in the face of tough enemies and the brutal summer heat of Iraq, coalition and Iraqi security forces have achieved progress in this arena.

Our enemies see the changes underway and increasingly fear they are on the wrong side of events. Day by day, our forces are seizing the initiative from the enemy. Osama bin Laden, who is in hiding out of fear of U.S. forces, has publicly expressed concern about al-Qaida's recent setback in Iraq. In an audiotape, he talks about the mistakes al-Qaida has made and urges terrorists to overcome what he says are growing divisions in their ranks.

This return on our success in Iraq means we are slowly beginning to bring some of our forces home, and we are doing it from a position of strength. The military did not replace 2,200 Marines who came home from Al Anbar Province in September, and we will also bring home an Army combat brigade, for a total force reduction of 5,700 troops by Christmas.

While there is good news in Iraq, news that is important for the American people to hear, there are also remaining challenges we need to be realistic about. Parts of Iraq continue to be violent and difficult.

The terrorists are still capable of carrying out attacks that will dominate headlines, and the Iraqi security forces will continue to require U.S. support. Now is certainly not the time to give up, restrict funding, or set a surrender date, as some in this body have argued we should do.

As we continue to debate Iraq in the body in the coming months, I hope we can all acknowledge there has been real progress, and work together to ensure this progress is not wasted. That approach is clearly in the interests of all Americans and is in the interests of the Iraqi people as well.

As a member of the Senate Armed Services Committee and a Member from a State with a strong military presence, I am committed to supporting our troops and their families and making sure their needs are met.

Clearly our military has answered the call of duty and they continue to perform courageously, and I for one will do whatever I can to ensure they have the resources and equipment to continue executing their mission, and that their families back home receive the support and assistance that we owe them.

I yield the floor.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The junior Senator from Georgia.

Mr. ISAKSON. Mr. President, I am honored to join Senator CHAMBLISS of Georgia in paying tribute to Ed and Mary Ettel, my neighbors, as a matter

of fact, in East Cobb County, Marietta, Georgia. I live about a mile and a half from their home, and my son and daughter-in-law attend Mount Bethel United Methodist Church, where they are active members, a great church with a great minister, Randy Mickler, who does such a good job inspiring his congregation to do so many good things.

Ed and Mary do a tremendous service to our men and women in harm's way. I add my praise of them to the praise of Senator CHAMBLISS. I thank them for the example they set and the blessing they are to our soldiers.

I too want to talk for a second about Iraq, about the war in Iraq, and refresh some memories. Twice this year on the floor of this Senate, once before Memorial Day and once before the August break, we had heated 1-week-long debates of whether the United States of America should declare that we have lost and should leave Iraq. In fact, earlier this year, one Member of this body actually declared the war was lost. Well, as Senator CHAMBLISS has acknowledged, things have turned in Iraq. And they have turned because of the sacrifice of our young men and women fighting in harm's way. They have turned because of the determination of a President who understands the threat of terrorism around the world, and the agents of terror, and those who would harbor terrorists. Iraq is turning. We cannot declare victory in the sense of a declaration of it being lost was declared earlier this year, but we can declare and acknowledge that progress has been made and the country has accomplished a number of the enumerated goals we set out to accomplish when we went into Iraq.

In fact, if everyone will recall the President's speech 4 days before we went into Iraq, he established three goals for this country going into Iraq. No. 1 was to depose Saddam Hussein, and to find those weapons of mass destruction or their components that U.N. Resolution 1441 declared were there; second, to allow the Iraqi people to hold free elections and to write a constitution of their own, and establish a government of their determination; third was to train the Iraqi military to a capability of defending that new fledgling government.

Saddam Hussein has been deposed, was tried by a jury of his peers under Iraqi law. There are those who say we found no weapons of mass destruction, but they overlooked all of the components that we found, Scud missiles buried in the sand between Damascus and Baghdad, elements of sarin gas, 4 of the 7 mobile biological labs, 400,000 bodies in mass graves; all the signs, the tell-tale signs of the horror and the terror of mass destruction.

Goal No. 2, the Iraqis held free elections in 14 months, wrote a constitution, established the government. Mission accomplished there.

And then, No. 3, to train the Iraqi military sufficiently to sustain peace

for that fledgling government. We are not there yet, but we are moving so much closer. It should be noted that a few weeks ago, when all the press noted the British had left Basra and what a disappointment that was, nobody took note of the fact that it was the Iraqi army that replaced them, not the American army, not coalition forces but the Iraqi army, trained and capable of doing it.

Of the al-Qaida operatives who have been captured or killed in the last 6 weeks, the majority of them have been operations of Iraqi soldiers, not American soldiers. The fact is, goal No. 3, training an adequate and sufficient military to protect the fledgling government, is not at hand, but it is getting closer.

So it is time today, on the week before the Veterans Day holiday, and Veterans Day in this country, to pay tribute to the men and women who have sacrificed for this country, for freedom, and for the fight in the war on terrorism.

I carry with me a dogtag. This dogtag is SGT Mike Stokely's. Sergeant Stokely was killed in Iraq in September of 2005. I met his dad shortly after he had lost his son and, in fact, had lunch with his dad 3 weeks ago in Fayetteville, GA. I wanted to pay tribute to Mike and Noah Harris, another soldier from Georgia whose parents I have spent so much time with, and reflect for a moment on what they always tell me every time I see them. They said: Make sure you tell people that my son did not fight and die in vain, but what he sacrificed for is a country that seeks to end terror, end the threat of terror, and promote democracy around the world.

Well, to Bob Stokely, Mike's dad, to Lisa Harris, Noah's mom, I say: They did not die in vain. The evidence in Iraq across the board is proving that their hard work and their sacrifice has made a difference. If we can stay the course, support our troops, finish the training of the Iraqi military, the American forces can leave in large amount and leave the Iraqis to protect that free, self-determined government of their own.

It is time we acknowledge the success of our men and women in the U.S. military. It is time for us to say thank you for what they have done, and to look to the day that their effort makes us as Americans and the world a safer and a better place. Yes, the Iraq news is good. The war is not over. The progress is great, we need to stay the course, and finish the deal.

I yield the floor.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The Senator from Texas.

Mr. CORNYN. Mr. President, may I inquire how much time in morning business this side has remaining?

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The minority has 16 minutes remaining.

Mr. CORNYN. Mr. President, I join my colleagues from Georgia, Senators

CHAMBLISS and ISAKSON, in talking about the news from Iraq. It is important as we discuss the challenges we still face and that the Iraqi people still face in Iraq to talk about the complete picture. Unfortunately, while we have heard much of violence in Iraq, and the challenges that face us, we have not heard enough about the successes the American military and our Iraqi allies are meeting with in that country.

It wasn't that long ago that the surge General Petraeus, the counterinsurgency strategy that he is the architect of and which he has executed, was called a failure on the floor of the Senate. It is ironic, looking back, as sometimes it is helpful to go back and learn from history—and you do not have to go back very far, actually, just the summer and the spring of this year—when leaders on the other side of the aisle called the surge a failure.

The most ironic part of it is that General Petraeus, the commander of the multinational forces in Iraq at the time, said: We have not even started the surge yet, so let me have a few months.

Well, General Petraeus has now had a few months, and the surge has now had an opportunity to make a difference. In fact, there is much positive news to report. I have to think the biggest mistake the naysayers have made is to bet against the men and women of the U.S. military. That is always a mistake, because the American military men and women have demonstrated they can accomplish the goals they set out to do, and they are making a tremendous difference in Iraq in eliminating terrorist strongholds, as we continue to train the Iraqi military to take our place.

As I have always said, we all want to bring our troops home. The question is, are we going to bring our troops home based on conditions on the ground and the Iraqis' ability to secure and stabilize their own country or are we going to do it regardless of the consequences in a way that will create the potential for a failed state in Iraq, another terrorist haven, and encourage our sworn enemies in Iran and elsewhere, embolden them to think that America cannot be trusted and America will turn its back on our allies?

In May, one of our senior colleagues said the surge was supposed to bring stability essential to political reconciliation and economic reconstruction. But he said at the time: It has not and it will not. One short month later, the majority leader and the Speaker of the House, in a letter to the President, wrote: As many had foreseen, the escalation has failed to produce the intended results. The increase in U.S. forces has had little impact in curbing the violence or fostering political reconciliation.

We even bore witness to atrocious ads run by organizations such as moveon.org slandering General Petraeus before he even had a chance to come here and to report on the status of the surge in September.

Well, the numbers do not lie, to the dismay of many Americans. Some of my colleagues have chosen to conveniently gloss over and try to explain away the progress that has been made by General Petraeus's counterinsurgency strategy. Far from being a simple increase in troops, we learned General Petraeus's strategy was a new way to attack the enemy in Iraq, that is, utilize support from both local Iraqi citizens and tribal leaders to form an offensive against insurgent and terrorist groups, and the strategy has met with a resounding success.

It has become a common story, but one worth repeating, that Al Anbar Province, a Sunni stronghold, was virtually overrun and lost to American and Iraqi forces, because al-Qaida basically had its way with that region, had terrorized the people so much that they would not stand up and fight them and basically were being held as victims of terror.

Now the so-called Anbar awakening has occurred. Tribal leaders have come forward and volunteered their people to serve in the Iraqi police force and the Iraqi security forces. Now Al Anbar Province has essentially been rid of organized al-Qaida strongholds.

The Washington Post editorial page on October 14 recognized the decreased violence in Iraq and noted that evidence of a drop in violence in Iraq is becoming hard to dispute. In September, Iraqi civilian deaths were down 52 percent from August, and 77 percent from September. The Iraqi Health Ministry and the Associated Press reported similar results. We are thankful that American casualties are down as well.

Numbers recently released by the Pentagon corroborate the progress occurring in Iraq in and around Baghdad. The DOD reports terrorist operations are down by 59 percent; operations targeting Iraqi forces more than 60 percent; car bombs are down by 65 percent; casualties due to enemy attacks are down by 77 percent; and violence during this last Ramadan period was the lowest in 3 years.

But perhaps the most convincing evidence that things, good things, are happening in Iraq, is the fact that the Iraqi people are beginning to move back into areas they had previously left behind, hopeless that peace and security could ever be accomplished. According to recent news reports, even cab drivers are feeling it is safer to drive around Baghdad neighborhoods where sectarian violence once made it impossible for them to enter.

But perhaps the most telling story of increased security in Baghdad is one told by the Iraqi people themselves.

According to an Associated Press article from this past weekend, thousands of Iraqi refugees who previously fled their homes in Iraq for the relative safety of neighboring Syria have now returned to their home country. While it is easy for some skeptics to second-guess numbers and statistics pertaining to the security situation in

Iraq, it is nearly impossible to ignore the fact that thousands of Iraqis who not long ago were living as refugees in a foreign country now feel safe enough to come home. This reversal of refugee trends clearly indicates that there are good things happening in Iraq and around Baghdad.

The AP reports that “In a dramatic turnaround, more than 3,000 Iraqi families driven out of their Baghdad neighborhoods have returned to their homes in the past three months as sectarian violence has dropped.” The article goes on to quote one refugee who returned home to his neighborhood of Khadra. “In Khadra,” he said, “about 15 families have returned from Syria.” He said, “I’ve called friends and family still there and told them it’s safe to come home.”

Where there was once widespread fear among Iraqi citizens, we are now seeing something new—hope, hope for a better and safer future. Nothing confirms this more than the return of refugees and their testimony that it is becoming safer in Iraq. While not yet safe, no one is saying the job has been completed, but surely an honest, objective appraisal would acknowledge the improvements in the security situation as demonstrated not only by these statistics but by testimonials from Iraqis themselves.

These heartwarming accounts of families reuniting in neighborhoods, which not long ago had been written off as hopeless, and businesses opening their doors are important lessons for us all. The strategy employed by General Petraeus has worked and is continuing to work. The efforts of our military men and women who have put their hearts and souls into this mission are now paying dividends and producing results.

These security gains are not a fluke. What we are seeing is a direct result of a carefully designed strategy which includes ramped-up counterinsurgency operations, increased efforts to foster cooperation and reconciliation among local tribes, and our continued backing of the hard work of the American military and support for their families.

As we are presented with funding requests by the Pentagon to bring about a stable and peaceful Iraq, we are ensuring that our soldiers have the resources they need to bring peace and stability to a tumultuous land. My hope is we will not use the funding request from the Pentagon for continued support for our troops as another political football, as it has been used in the past, particularly in the face of such hopeful and promising news for which I would expect we would be grateful and thank our men and women in uniform and their families who have sacrificed so much to help bring this about, along with our Iraqi allies.

General Petraeus told reporters this past weekend:

In general, we think that there are no al-Qaeda strongholds at this point.

While he was quick to remind us that they are still a potent threat, his as-

essment of the progress in Iraq can be nothing but reassuring. I shudder to think of what would have happened had we listened to the naysayers months ago who said we have to withdraw all our troops, even before the surge was fully implemented. So far, we have voted 59 times on Iraq-related resolutions, most of which are nonbinding sense-of-the-Senate resolutions; 59 times we have voted even before the surge had a chance to be implemented. Now we see what a mistake it is to bet against the men and women of the U.S. military. Thank goodness those resolutions were not successful, and thank goodness our American soldiers, sailors, marines, airmen, and Coast Guard were able to carry out this new plan under the leadership of General Petraeus. We now see at least some hope in a land where hope was in short supply.

Although many of my colleagues on the other side of the aisle prejudged the surge strategy and continue to oppose our efforts in Iraq, some of whom call even today for cutting off funds to support our troops, we see now substantial evidence of progress. It is my continued hope these positive developments may yet change the tone of the national dialog on the global war on terror, including the campaign in Iraq. It is time for all Members of this body to take an objective look not through a political lens, not through a lens which sees only the next general election, but to look objectively at what our troops are accomplishing in Iraq. Instead of focusing only on the challenges, we should at least be honest enough to acknowledge the accomplishments, not the least of which are the indisputable gains in security made through their sacrifices.

I, for one, am proud to applaud the undeniable achievements of our troops in Iraq. Their hard work and tireless dedication have reminded us that a stable and peaceful Iraq is within reach. It is my fervent hope that my colleagues will join me in acknowledging and honoring the successes achieved by our military personnel and renew their support for them, their commander, and the counterinsurgency strategy that is bearing fruit and to always remember their families at home who wait for their loved one to return as soon as our mission is accomplished.

I yield the floor.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The Senator from Michigan.

GETTING RESULTS

Ms. STABENOW. Mr. President, I rise to respond to what has become a regular drumbeat in this Chamber in terms of the distinguished Republican leader and those on the other side of the aisle talking about how we have not accomplished anything this year, how the budget has not gotten done. It is important to continually remember what we have been dealing with as the new majority coming into the Senate

in January, laser focused on changing the direction and the priorities of the country, laser focused on getting things done for middle-class Americans who are counting on us, who feel squeezed on all sides and see prices increase on gasoline and health care and the cost of college, all those kinds of things that come down on Americans as they are working harder and harder every day, maybe facing the loss of a job or having lost a job, lower wages, and so on. Those are the folks we are fighting for every day and, I am proud to say, getting results.

It is important to realize what has been happening since January. Despite all of the lamenting on the other side of the aisle about not getting things done, what we have seen are 52 Republican filibusters so far this year—unprecedented, the number of times we have had to vote to stop a filibuster. By the end of this week, it will be 53 or 54. It will continue right on, as there are efforts politically to stop what we are doing to change the direction of this country and focus on those things middle-class Americans care about every day and want to see fixed. In spite of that, we are, in fact, getting things done.

One of the areas I am proudest of is our refocus in the budget on keeping our promises to veterans. We heard this morning that we need to pass a veterans budget. There is no question about it. There is no question about the fact that we not only need to, but we will. But we need to also remember that when we came in in January, last year’s budget wasn’t done yet. The previous majority didn’t get the budget done at all in 2006. When we came in and were left, frankly, with a budget mess, we made sure that in the process of keeping the Government going, public services going for the balance of the year, we addressed veterans first and foremost by placing dollars into what is called a continuing resolution because we know our veterans have not been getting the resources they need, brave men and women coming home from Iraq and Afghanistan every day who have not been able to get the health care they need, too many caught in unfortunate bureaucracies.

We heard about Walter Reed and those who are receiving military health care and then moving to the VA, and too many folks who are getting caught in that process and being hurt by the process. We have made veterans and keeping our promises to them and our military the highest priority. We addressed the issues that came up regarding Walter Reed and passed the Wounded Warrior provisions in the Department of Defense authorization that my senior colleague from Michigan, of whom we are so proud, Senator CARL LEVIN, helped lead. He led that, and we are making those changes.

In the budget—and I am proud to be a member of the Budget Committee, which has made sure this has happened