

Yet, more than 2 years into their term, the administration still has failed to send us these pending trade agreements for approval.

Our Nation's farmers, ranchers and many American workers are asking for them.

They know that new orders will be placed and business will flow from the agreements.

New jobs will be created.

Instead of spending hundreds of millions of dollars to try to create jobs, how about we sign agreements that will do it for us?

Approving trade agreements increases spending: zero. Not one penny. Congress simply says, "aye."

Perhaps that simply makes too much sense for Washington.

The bottom line is that increased trade is one of many opportunities that will help to ensure a bright future for American agriculture.

There are many reasons to be optimistic.

One need only consider the breathtaking advances in productivity.

I have long said that our farmers and ranchers can compete with anyone in the world on a level playing field.

It is nothing short of phenomenal that average corn yields are now 160 bushels per each acre of land compared to only 53 bushels just 50 years ago.

Frankly, it is difficult to keep pace with the new technologies transforming agriculture.

Consider this. Thanks to biotechnology and improved farming practices, last year, American farmers nearly doubled their soybean production from 1980 levels, with just a 10 percent increase in total acres planted.

And did you know, some farmers now use satellite and GPS technology to apply water and fertilizer where and when it has the greatest benefit to crops.

American agriculture truly is a remarkable success story.

It is true that we have big challenges ahead for agriculture. I say bring them on.

Our producers have faced down every challenge set before them and I am confident nothing will stand in the way.

That is, assuming the Federal Government does not wrap so much red tape around them as to suffocate their ingenuity.

There simply is no more resilient bunch than farmers and ranchers.

How many Americans would be willing to work hard often 7 days a week, only to leave any profit in the hands of Mother Nature?

Only those who recognize that living close to the land comes with its own rewards, and feeding the world is a higher calling.

I would suggest that agriculture is the very foundation of our country's rich heritage. Our Founders clearly understood and appreciated the importance of agriculture.

George Washington once said he knew of "no pursuit in which more real

and important services can be rendered to any country than by improving its agriculture. . . ."

Thomas Jefferson noted that "Agriculture . . . is our wisest pursuit, because it will in the end contribute most to real wealth, good morals and happiness."

National Ag Week is a good time to reflect on the rich agricultural history of this great Nation. It is a time to celebrate the exciting scientific advances and new opportunities.

One thing all my colleagues should be able to agree on: We owe our Nation's farmers and ranchers a sincere thank-you. Every time we go to the grocery store, we are reminded how little of our disposable income we spend in this great Nation because of the good work of our farmers and ranchers. We compare better in our country than just about any country in the world.

So we are grateful today for their good work. We say thank you to them for the food, fiber, and fuel that keeps our Nation strong.

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.

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

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

Ms. LANDRIEU. Mr. President, I would like to speak for about 10 minutes. I know Senator BINGAMAN is on the floor, and maybe other Members are coming to the floor to talk on other subjects.

REAUTHORIZATION OF THE SBIR AND STTR PROGRAMS

Ms. LANDRIEU. Mr. President, I guess we are technically still talking about our reauthorization of the SBIR and STTR Programs. Senator SNOWE and I have been working through the week to manage this bill on the floor, and I wish to again say how pleased I am with the progress we made this week. I know we have had about three or four votes on amendments, and there are others that are pending, but we have made progress. I truly appreciate the cooperation of all the Members.

This is a very important program. We have struggled, as I have said, for 6 years to get this program reauthorized. While everybody is running around fussing about programs that do not work, it is important for us to focus on those programs that do work, particularly those programs that work to create private sector jobs.

It is important for us to stay focused on reducing and, hopefully, eliminating our Federal debt and reducing annual deficits. That is going to be done when we do a couple of things all at one time. It is not going to be done by standing on the sidelines, slashing and

burning discretionary domestic spending only, particularly some of the best programs in America. It is going to be done by thoughtful cuts and eliminations of some programs that don't work, some thoughtful eliminations and cuts to the Defense budget. It is going to be done by raising revenues where appropriate to close some of the gaps and taking back some of the excessive grants to high-end taxpayers, particularly those making over \$1 million a year, in the view of this Senator. It is going to take some investments that can actually save taxpayer money in the long run, and cutting some mandatory programs.

We know—and I think it is becoming very clear to the American people—as this debate over the House CR and the debate over deficits and debt goes on, people are understanding this better and better. So one of the reasons I am personally happy to be on the floor this week is because I know the bill I am supporting and offering here to the Senate—hopefully getting to the House and then eventually to the President's desk—will create private sector jobs and close this deficit gap and begin to chip away, in a substantial way, at the debt. We need to grow our economy.

I have a chart I will put up in just a minute, but before I do that, I wish to show again a specific example of a program I am talking about so people will be very clear. Projects such as this were won by iRobot. This is just one example of the hundreds and thousands of small businesses that received either a contract or an award through this very important program.

DOD has the largest—over \$1 billion—portion of their research and development budget. Prior to this program, almost 100 percent of that money went to big businesses or to universities and big businesses. Small businesses were summarily overlooked. Regardless of whether they had good technology, they really weren't let in the front door. This program we are talking about reauthorizing for 8 years creates that door and opens it for the small businesses in Louisiana, in Colorado, in New Mexico, in New York, and that is why we are going to fight hard for this program, to get it reauthorized and to the President's desk.

Let me give one example. The DOD needed more reliable, cost-effective robotic devices for going into caves, checking and diffusing IEDs.

I don't think I have to explain to anyone listening or any Member of this Senate the challenges our soldiers face in Afghanistan. I have been to Afghanistan. I have not been in caves in Afghanistan, but I have visited our troops there. I have heard their stories. I have seen pictures and read enough books to know the frightening thousands of miles of caves and crevices our soldiers are having to go into to hunt down Osama bin Laden, who still has not been found and captured, and to protect our forces overseas.

We have been in some ways as a nation kind of caught off guard about the

terrorist attacks and military strategies using explosive devices. I guess we knew this could be a tactic, but, honestly, we did not have what we needed to protect our troops to win the battles.

So this program steps up and says: OK, this is what we need. Let's go out and see who has the best technology. Instead of spending billions and billions and millions and millions of dollars giving a contract to a big company and getting them to go through all the rigmarole to develop it—it is kind of an off-the-shelf technology almost, except that we develop the idea and give a small business the opportunity.

Unlike large businesses, these small firms approach the project unencumbered by past research and approaches. They start with a clean slate. They often have innovative approaches that would be challenged by conventional large businesses. They often attract researchers fresh out of a university, such as iRobot, which started with two MIT students and their professors. Ideas that started just off the MIT campus have turned into a company with a market cap of now \$400 million, with strong military and private sector sales.

My colleagues have probably heard of the private sector spinoff of the military robot, the Roomba, a product that vacuums while one is at work and has now sold over 5 million units in the United States. This is a different product than the IED robot I will speak about in a minute, but it is an example of one of these programs.

When our forces needed to go into caves and find IEDs, there was some technology that was developed in order to do that. The Navy has many examples. The Army has many examples. I am encouraged to see these outstanding opportunities.

This was in Bedford, MA. This is the iRobot I mentioned. I will get the chart for the IED explosive in just a moment. This is an example of some of the projects that have been funded. This is not just good for our soldiers, but obviously this company then became a company that went on to sell other products in the conventional market and created jobs along the way.

I know Senator BINGAMAN wants to speak on energy, and I am going to yield the floor and then come back later and put a few more things into the RECORD before this week ends so that when we come back in a couple of weeks, we will have built the strongest record possible for a vote as soon as possible on a program that works, that is cost-effective, that really creates some new technologies that help our soldiers overseas and help us vacuum our floors here at home and create American jobs in the process and help us to close this deficit and debt gap.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Pennsylvania.

BUDGET PROCESS

Mr. TOOMEY. Mr. President, I wish to share a couple of thoughts on the budget process that is underway and where we are with the continuing resolution we voted on this afternoon.

First, with respect to the CR, that was a tough vote for me. It was a tough vote because this is no way to run the government. We are here now dealing with business that should have been done last year. Unfortunately, last year the Senate didn't get its work done, didn't even do a budget, didn't go through the normal appropriations process. They started kicking the spending can down the road last year, and we are still in the midst of that. I am not sure how many continuing resolutions we have had at this point—three, four, five, six; I am losing track—but this last one for this next 3 weeks, frankly, is the last one I will vote for. This one I could support because it does sustain the lower level of spending as passed by the House. There are some tough cuts in that bill, but it is very necessary that we get serious about getting our spending under control. This is a small step in that direction.

I really want to urge my colleagues to bring an end to these 2-week, 3-week, short-term CRs. It is just kicking the can down the road. Let's resolve this. Let's get a funding measure in place that will fund the government for the remainder of this fiscal year and be done with it. We have serious work to do. We have a budget resolution we need to govern the spending that will occur for next year. We have process reform that we badly need. There is an awful lot that needs to be addressed, and this really just needs to get done. So I hope we will do that soon.

As we discuss the level of spending we are going to have in this CR that will continue from when the current one ends—hopefully, there will be just one more that will take us through the remainder of this fiscal year—it is very important that we get that level of spending down to at least the level that was passed in the House, and I want to talk about why.

I have looked at some of the individual cuts, and they are tough. They are going to make things difficult in many cases. But it is very necessary that we do this for the sake of beginning to restore some sense of fiscal sanity to get us on a sustainable trajectory.

One of the arguments I have heard from some of my friends on the other side of the aisle who have real concerns and objections in some cases to adopting a spending measure that does reduce spending—I would argue modestly over all—is that this will cost jobs; that if the government doesn't spend more than what is contemplated in the House-passed continuing resolution, we will lose jobs; that if we cut government spending, we will have lower employment. I am here to suggest that is

exactly backward. That is precisely wrong. In fact, it is the exact opposite.

At the point we are now, the more the government spends, the fewer jobs we will have. And the sooner and the more quickly we bring this government into some sense of fiscal stability, the more employment we are going to have and the more job creation we are going to have. I think for many people that is common sense, but it is not universally accepted here. I understand that. But consider this: If all we needed to do was have the government spend more money to create jobs, then recessions would always be a trivial matter because we would just crank up some government spending and everybody would be back to work and we would be fine. But we know that doesn't work. It has never worked. If that is what worked, frankly, the economy would be booming right now.

We have been spending on a scale we have never even contemplated before. As a percentage of GDP, deficit spending, total spending, by any measure—the spending is at a record high, and yet unemployment is persistently much, much higher than we had hoped it would be, much higher than it typically is at this stage in what should be an economic recovery.

It isn't just this experience we can look at. We can look around the world. Countries that have lived beyond their means and where the government occupies a big segment of the economy and spends a great deal, those are not the more successful economies. In fact, those are the least successful economies. They have persistently high unemployment, low economic growth, low job creation, and a low standard of living. I think this is all widely recognized but not entirely so here in Washington.

Of course, it is true that the government can always create a job. The government can have a program that instructs someone to go out and hire someone, give that person a wage and, bingo, they have created a job. Government can always do that. Of course, the problem is that in the process, the government destroys jobs in the private sector. That is because the money that is necessary to create that government job has to come from somewhere, and it always comes from the private sector unnecessarily.

When the money comes from out of the private sector and goes to the government for the government to create a job, that does several things. First of all, the government tends to allocate resources much less efficiently than free men and women do in the voluntary exchanges of the marketplace, so you get politically motivated allocation of resources rather than market-oriented allocation, and this is widely acknowledged to lead to lower investment returns, less efficient investment, and therefore less job creation.

This isn't just theory. There is plenty of empirical data on this issue. I wish to observe for my colleagues and talk