

marked to the House budget resolution, the Paul Ryan budget resolution number. We cut funding by \$1.2 billion in budget authority discretionary numbers below the President's level. This bill comes in \$620 million below the 2011 enacted level, and it is even \$2.6 million below the House-passed level just adopted earlier this year, Chairman CULBERSON's bill in the House of Representatives.

The Senate voted by a vote of 71 to 26 for cloture to bring up this bill. This is the first of the working appropriations bills. I hope there are many others. The legislation is important. People may ask: How did we make the funding cuts to come in at the House level? The answer is, Chairman JOHNSON and I made some difficult decisions. We cut 24 separate military construction programs. A list is available in the report that accompanies this bill.

We made some very tough calls regarding spending that was proposed for Bahrain, for Germany, and for Korea. There was a worthwhile project proposed for the Court of Appeals for Veterans Claims. They wanted a brandnew building and a courtroom. That was denied outright. Those tough decisions—those 24 reductions denying a new Court of Appeals for Veterans Claims building—making those cuts necessary then brought us under the House level, as approved by the Paul Ryan budget.

I remind Members the legislation is endorsed by the VFW, AMVETS, Disabled American Veterans, Paralyzed Veterans of America, and the Iraq and Afghanistan Veterans of America. It had the unanimous support of Republicans in the subcommittee and in the full committee because it comes in at the House budget level. That is why I think it is necessary to move forward, especially as we talk about a budget crisis, in which checks may or may not go out. I very much hope they do. I think it is an important signal to send that the Paul Ryan-approved budget number, which is what this bill is at, goes forward, which ensures 2012 appropriated funding for our veterans and the military construction needs of our men and women in uniform.

With that, I yield the floor and suggest the absence of a quorum.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The clerk will call the roll.

The assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. JOHNSON of South Dakota. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

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

Mr. JOHNSON of South Dakota. Mr. President, what is the pending business?

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the question is on agreeing to the Vitter amendment.

Mr. JOHNSON of South Dakota. Mr. President, the Vitter amendment pending before the Senate is another at-

tempt to derail the progress we have made in a bipartisan fashion on the MilCon/VA bill.

The Senate has voted twice on this issue during consideration of this bill. At the outset of debate, the ranking member of the Budget Committee raised a point of order against consideration of this bill without prior adoption of a budget resolution. I made a motion to waive that budget point of order and the Senate voted 71 to 26 to cut off debate on the motion to waive. The Senate then agreed to waive the point of order 56 to 40.

Now we have an amendment that says none of the critical funding provided in the bill can be obligated in excess of a budget resolution that does not exist. The strictest interpretation of this means the VA can't spend money on benefits for vets, and our military can't construct new training, housing, or other critical facilities until we have a budget agreement.

I don't disagree that it is important to pass a budget, but the Senate has overwhelmingly voted to move this bill so as to not delay essential funding for our troops and vets while negotiations on the debt ceiling and budget continue.

I remind my colleagues this bill is \$618 million below the current level, \$1.25 billion below the President's budget request, and \$2.6 million below the House-passed bill. This is a responsible and bipartisan bill, and the pending amendment would stop all progress we have made. Therefore, I move to table the amendment No. 568, and I ask for the yeas and nays.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there a sufficient second?

There is a sufficient second.

The question is on agreeing to the motion.

The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk called the roll.

Mr. KYL. The following Senator is necessarily absent: the Senator from Arkansas (Mr. BOOZMAN).

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Are there any other Senators in the Chamber desiring to vote?

The result was announced—yeas 69, nays 30, as follows:

[Rollcall Vote No. 113 Leg.]

YEAS—69

Akaka	Franken	Menendez
Alexander	Gillibrand	Merkley
Baucus	Graham	Mikulski
Begich	Hagan	Murkowski
Bennet	Harkin	Murray
Bingaman	Heller	Nelson (NE)
Blumenthal	Hoeven	Nelson (FL)
Boxer	Hutchison	Pryor
Brown (MA)	Inouye	Reed
Brown (OH)	Isakson	Reid
Burr	Johnson (SD)	Rockefeller
Cantwell	Kerry	Sanders
Cardin	Kirk	Schumer
Carper	Klobuchar	Shaheen
Casey	Kohl	Stabenow
Chambliss	Landrieu	Tester
Cochran	Lautenberg	Udall (CO)
Collins	Leahy	Udall (NM)
Conrad	Levin	Warner
Coons	Lieberman	Webb
Cornyn	Manchin	Whitehouse
Durbin	McCain	Wicker
Feinstein	McCaskill	Wyden

NAYS—30

Ayotte	Hatch	Portman
Barrasso	Inhofe	Risch
Blunt	Johanns	Roberts
Coats	Johnson (WI)	Rubio
Coburn	Kyl	Sessions
Corker	Lee	Shelby
Crapo	Lugar	Snowe
DeMint	McConnell	Thune
Enzi	Moran	Toomey
Grassley	Paul	Vitter

NOT VOTING—1

Boozman

The motion was agreed to.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the motion to reconsider is considered made and laid upon the table.

Mr. JOHNSON of South Dakota. I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. JOHNSON of South Dakota. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

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

MORNING BUSINESS

Mr. JOHNSON of South Dakota. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate proceed to a period of morning business until 2:15 p.m., with Senators permitted to speak for up to 10 minutes each.

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

Mr. JOHNSON of South Dakota. I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. DURBIN. I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

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

CUT, CAP, AND BALANCE

Mr. DURBIN. Mr. President, we are going to move to a debate on our budget deficit, particularly on the debt ceiling we face on August 2. The proposal before us was enacted by the House yesterday on a virtually partisan rollcall, with one or two exceptions. The Republicans passed a proposal which they have characterized as cut, cap, and balance, and they will bring it to the floor of the Senate for consideration. It tries to project spending targets and cuts in spending for the years to come and also to include in the conversation the balanced budget amendment.

It is interesting, the way they approach it, because the balanced budget amendment is literally an amendment to the Constitution of the United States, and those of us who take our oath seriously—and I assume that is every Member of Congress and the Senate—understand that we are sworn to uphold this Constitution. In other