happiness is not an American right alone. Israelis, Palestinians, Poles, Russians, Iranians, Americans, all human beings deserve to enjoy the blessings of a culture of freedom and opportunity.

AUTOPILOT

Mr. LEAHY. Mr. President, I am disappointed that Congress has agreed to put government funding decisions on autopilot for the first 6 months of fiscal year 2013 through another continuing resolution. This means, in effect, that a half year's worth of hearings, briefings, and drafting of a dozen appropriations bills will have been for naught.

I recognize there are many factors at play this year as the clock ticks toward the end of a fiscal year and toward November. But continuing resolutions are no way to run a government, and the consequences for the American people's priorities, and for the agencies and the dedicated workers who implement our policies, will be dramatic.

The world does not stand still, and time does not stand still. Circumstances that should be reflected in our budget decisions are changing all the time. Budgets are about choices. Budgets are about setting priorities. Doing this carefully and thoughtfully through hearings, through fact-finding and through negotiations among the people's representatives in Congress is not an easy process, but it was not meant to be easy. Setting the process on autopilot is anathema to making the right decisions for our country.

As the veteran reporter David Rogers put it today in Politico:

> Continuing resolutions do only one thing well: 'continue.' They don't allow for new starts and typically set funding at the current rate enjoyed by an agency—with no room for new ideas.

In fact, it is worse than that. As chairman of the State and Foreign Operations Subcommittee I am particularly mindful of changes that have occurred around the world in the past year. The situation in the Middle East and North Africa is one of many examples. Our posture in Iraq and Afghanistan is changing significantly. Humanitarian crises in Syria and South Sudan are far greater than anyone envisioned 1 year ago. At a time when the Chinese are ratcheting up their strategic investments across the globe to advance their national interests, the United States is stuck in neutral.

I sympathize with the chairman and vice chairman of the Appropriations Committee and all the committee staff, who have worked hard to draft and report bipartisan bills. The State and Foreign Operations bill was reported on May 24 by a nearly unanimous, bipartisan vote. It has the strong support of Ranking Member GRAHAM, who worked closely with me in drafting it, as well as minority leader Senator MCCONNELL. With a day or so of floor time we could pass it and go to conference. That is the way it should be. Yet continuing resolutions are becoming increasingly common because they are a convenient and temptingly easy way to avoid hard decisions. Unfortunately, the American people lose, the country loses, and a great deal of time, effort and money are wasted.

FREEDOM OF EXPRESSION IN ECUADOR

Mr. LEAHY. Mr. President, several weeks ago I spoke in this Chamber about the assault on freedom of expression in Ecuador, where President Correa has sought to silence his critics including the Special Rapporteur for Freedom of Expression at the Organization of American States.

Last week, these attacks on legitimate expression reached a new height when, according to press reports, Ecuador's Secretariat of Pueblos, Mireya Cardenas, said the government is investigating Fundamedios to determine if the support it receives from the U.S. Agency for International Development—USAID—is being used to interfere in ''internal political affairs''. She specifically criticized Fundamedios for lodging complaints at the Inter-American Human Rights Commission. She also attacked USAID for supporting sustainable forestry, civil society organizations, and the development of local productive enterprises, which are designed to protect the environment and improve the livelihoods of the Ecuadoran people.

Mr. President, Fundamedios is a respected Ecuadoran nonpartisan organization that seeks to defend freedom of the press at a time when journalists and media organizations in that country are being vilified and threatened by officials of the very government that should be protecting them. It is similar to the conduct we have seen in Russia, Egypt, Azerbaijan, Venezuela, and other countries whose governments mistakenly equate legitimate advocacy by civil society organizations with unlawful political activity, as if Ecuador's political affairs are the sole province of those who the government approves of.

It is also important to reaffirm the indispensable role of the Inter-American human rights system, which has recently been targeted not only by President Correa, but also by the leaders of other Latin countries with weak and corrupt judicial systems who, in the name of ''reform'', seek to limit access to alternative fora for its citizens to obtain justice for abuses by government security forces. It is interesting that these same governments welcome the support of the OAS when it suits them, but campaign to weaken its mandate when it does not.

To make a bad situation worse, President Correa again recently attacked one of Ecuador's most respected newspapers. A few weeks ago, he said on TV that an editor with El Universo was ''sinister.'' And on July 28, he suggested that the editor of El Comercio was ''mentally ill'' and ''unethical'', for what appear to be nothing more than public comments made on the paper's website by readers who questioned presidential decisions.

On July 31, members of the police and the labor ministry, reportedly without a warrant, seized several items and information from the offices of the magazine Vanguardia for allegedly violating labor laws. The magazine's director, Juan Carlos Calderón, said the incident is an attempt to silence the independent press in Ecuador.

For those of us who want closer relations between the United States and other countries in the hemisphere, including Ecuador, and who believe it is everyone's responsibility to stand up for universal human rights of which freedom of expression is the most cherished, it is disappointing to see the path the Correa government is taking.

This is not about competing political philosophies, party affiliation, or national sovereignty. It is about protecting the right of Ecuadoran journalists and Fundamedios to be free of government interference, and of defending the constitutional rights of all of Ecuador's citizens. The country's first constitution, written in 1830, stipulated that ''every citizen can express their thoughts and publish them freely through the press.'' Its current constitution, just 4 years old, protects each citizen's right ''to voice one's opinion and express one's thinking freely and in all of its forms and manifestations.''

The people of Ecuador have a right to receive uncensored information. Sometimes that information is accurate, sometimes it is not. Everyone in public office knows that. Personal attacks and inflammatory charges by top officials weaken democratic discourse and have no place in a country with a long commitment to civil liberties.

HONORING OUR ARMED FORCES

CAPTAIN SCOTT PATRICK PACE

Mr. HATCH. Mr. President, today I rise to pay tribute to CPT Scott Patrick Pace, United States Army. Captain Pace returned with honor to his heavenly home on June 6, 2012. By all accounts, he lived a life of service, hard work, and faith.

While learning about Captain Pace's life, I was struck by the description of those closest to him. They repeatedly described the Captain as someone who ''strived to do well.'' As a youth, he faced obstacles which would keep many from pursuing athletics. However, as a testament to his character, Captain Pace pushed himself and overcame this hurdle by becoming an accomplished athlete in basketball and swimming. His coaches described him as someone who ''took responsibility for himself and the team but never blamed his teammates. He's the type of player every coach wants . . . in fact ever coach wants five of him . . . Scott was a coach's dream and a leader. He'll be missed dearly in this community.''