

or so. I said: Do you know Brian? Almost everyone knows him. Almost everyone said the same exact thing: What a fine man.

As I spoke to him yesterday—he is expected to make a recovery—I wished him and his family the best during this difficult time for him and for all of us. I wish a speedy recovery to the Secret Service agent who was also injured yesterday.

But I thought the most memorable thing we had in our short telephone conversation was, he said: My job is to keep you safe. He was not referring to me, even though he and I were on the phone. He meant his job was to make sure everyone is safe. That was something I will always remember.

These brave men and women put their lives on the line every day, Capitol Police, other law enforcement agencies who work here in the Capitol. Why do they do that? Because that is their job.

So my thanks go out to every Capitol Police officer. We owe them a debt of gratitude.

CONTINUING APPROPRIATIONS

Mr. REID. I want to remind everyone listening that yesterday and today, the Capitol remains closed to most business. The Federal Government remains closed. In the newspaper today, it lists all of the layoffs. Today it has a graph of those in the administration area—not the legislative or judicial but in the administration. We have tens of thousands of public servants who are not furloughed, but they are working, including law enforcement officials, without pay. A number of people yesterday were out there risking their lives without pay. There are hundreds of thousands more, such as intelligence officers, to keep the Nation safe, who have been forced to leave their jobs, forgo their paychecks altogether.

Because of these furloughs, the Capitol Police, the FBI, and other Federal law enforcement agencies face additional risk, as they are asked to do their jobs with limited manpower and without the support they can typically depend on.

Congress owes it to them and to every American family to get past our differences, work through our disagreements, and work toward reopening the Federal Government. It is hard to comprehend what is going on. This is all because of President Obama's signature legislative issue that we were so fortunate to pass, to allow all Americans to have health care, as is the case in every industrialized nation in the world except our Nation.

We have as many as 45 million or 50 million people with no health insurance. I would hope my Republican colleagues understand the bill is 4 years old, it has been declared constitutional by the Supreme Court, it is in effect. Millions of people have gone on line this week to find out what they can do to have health insurance.

Mr. LEAHY. Would the leader yield for a question?

Mr. REID. Of course.

(Ms. HIRONO assumed the Chair.)

Mr. LEAHY. Madam President, the leader has noted a number of times that a small group in the House of Representatives has held up and closed the government because they want to do away with what they call ObamaCare, the Affordable Care Act. So my question to the Senator is, in all of these discussions they have had, the 40 times they voted, have they ever once come up with an alternative piece of legislation that would provide for your children, if they are in college, to be on your health care policy, or if you have a member of your family with a pre-existing condition such as diabetes or has gone through cancer, have they come up with any alternative or is it just: We want nothing?

Mr. REID. Madam President, to my friend, the most senior Member of the Senate, in today's newspapers and in commentary on television and radio, even Republicans, prominent Republicans, former chairs—I have in my mind, which I read today, two former chairs of the National Republican Party—said: We have got to be for something, not just against everything.

That is the problem we have. They are against everything. Against everything. As the distinguished Senator from Vermont said, what are they for? We know what they are against, but what are they for?

Mr. LEAHY. Madam President, I thank the distinguished leader, because I know in my State of Vermont, people are happy, if they have children going to college, that they can keep them on their health insurance. Or if they have a spouse who had breast cancer, for example, they can still get health care, or whatever—diabetes and so on.

I think the distinguished leader has answered, no, they want to do away with all of this, and nothing in return. That is a nihilistic approach that makes no sense.

RESERVATION OF LEADER TIME

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

MORNING BUSINESS

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the Senate will be in a period of morning business for debate only until 2 p.m., with Senators permitted to speak therein for up to 10 minutes each.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The President pro tempore is recognized.

Mr. LEAHY. Madam President, several people have spoken. I was touched so much by the Chaplain's prayer and by the words of the leader about our Capitol Police. The leader, in his young days as a student, served as one of the Capitol Police.

Because I am President pro tempore, I do have a security detail. But long before I had that, I made it a point to go—every time I would see a police officer on this campus, I would say: You keep us all safe. Keep yourself safe. We worry about you.

I am wearing this pin applauding them today. I think we have to know, tourists who come here, Members, staff—everybody is kept safe by these brave men and women. I asked those who are assigned to me to join me in my office for a silent prayer yesterday for the safety and the recovery of the officer injured, but also for the safety of all of those police officers.

They rush in. They rush in when there is trouble. They do not say: Oh, gosh, I am not getting paid. Or, gee whiz, I am supposed to go off duty in a minute. They rush in, no questions asked. They are extraordinarily well trained, one of the best trained police departments anywhere in the country. I think we owe them a debt of gratitude.

We have also heard a lot over the last few days here on this floor about the costly impacts of this needless government shutdown. It is needless. Of course, the solution to reopening the government is an easy one; the Senate has passed a resolution which would reopen the government while we work on a meaningful compromise to address our budget and our national debt. Because of a small radical group of tea party activists in the House of Representatives, they will not even vote on it.

The House of Representatives has decided on a different approach. The irony of their parochial, bit-by-bit funding proposal is not lost on the hundreds of Vermonters who were given furlough notices on Tuesday, or the veterans in Vermont and across the country who fear the long-term impacts of a government shutdown.

They are holding the government hostage, and with it the millions of Americans impacted by this shutdown. They wish to pick and choose little popular things and say: Here, we are for that. They don't want to stand and vote yes or no on actual appropriations, because if they do that they have to take a position. It is easier to vote maybe. If they vote maybe, they can go home and say: Oh, we are for medical research. We are for the veterans.

No, they are not. They voted to shut it down. We had a Member of the House of Representatives on television posturing to a group of veterans saying isn't it terrible the administration is closing off the veterans' memorial. One of the veterans caught them and said: No, it is not the administration that is closing it, it is you. It is you people, the small group of the House of Representatives that has closed it down.

Why don't they bring the Senate-passed resolution to the House floor for a vote? This vote would end the shutdown. Instead, a handful of extreme ideologists in the House are deciding—