Mr. REID. Mr. President, I ask for the yeas and nays.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there a sufficient second?

There appears to be a sufficient second.

AMENDMENT NO. 2717

Mr. REID. I have an amendment to the instructions at the desk.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report.

The assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

The Senator from Nevada [Mr. REID] proposes an amendment numbered 2717 to the instructions of the motion to commit.

The amendment is as follows:

In the amendment, strike ''8 days'' and insert ''9 days''.

Mr. REID. I ask for the yeas and nays.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there a sufficient second?

There appears to be a sufficient second.

The yeas and nays were ordered.

AMENDMENT NO. 2718 TO AMENDMENT NO. 2717

Mr. REID. I have a second-degree amendment at the desk.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report.

The assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

The Senator from Nevada [Mr. REID] proposes amendment numbered 2718 to amendment numbered 2717.

The amendment is as follows:

In the amendment, strike ''9 days'' and insert ''10 days''.

CLOTURE MOTION

Mr. REID. I have a cloture motion at the desk.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The cloture motion having been presented under rule XXII, the Chair directs the clerk to read the motion.

The assistant legislative clerk read as follows: Senators.

CLOTURE MOTION

We, the undersigned Senators, in accordance with the provisions of rule XXII of the Standing Rules of the Senate, hereby move to bring to a close debate on S. 1845, a bill to provide for the extension of certain unemployment benefits, and for other purposes.

Harry Reid, Jack Reed, Kirsten E. Gillibrand, Sheldon Whitehouse, Barbara Boxer, Brian Schatz, Robert P. Casey, Jr., Thomas R. Carper, Elizabeth Warren, Patty Murray, Mark Begich, Sherrod Brown, Jeff Merkley, Angus S. King, Jr., Charles E. Schumer, Bill Nelson, Christopher A. Coons.

## REPEALING SECTION 403 OF THE BIPARTISAN BUDGET ACT OF 2013—Motion to Proceed

Mr. REID. I move to proceed to Calendar No. 298, S. 1963.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report.

The legislative clerk read as follows:

A motion to proceed to Calendar No. 298, S. 1963, a bill to repeal section 403 of the Bipartisan Budget Act of 2013.

ORDER OF PROCEDURE

Mr. REID. I ask unanimous consent that the mandatory quorum required under rule XXII be waived for the cloture motions just filed and that Wednesday, February 5, 2014, count as an intervening day.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection?

Without objection, it is so ordered.

Mr. REID. I want to take a moment to explain where we are. Over the last few months, we have been struggling to find a way to help some desperate people in our country. It is hard to find a way to convince our Republican colleagues that these people are in a desperate situation and to join with us in extending unemployment insurance benefits for 1.6 million of our fellow citizens.

Last month, we tried to pass a bipartisan bill that would simply extend those benefits on a short-term basis for 3 months. All but a few Republicans voted against proceeding to that measure. Republicans complained that we had not paid for the extension, so we offered them a paid-for 11-month extension. Every Republican voted against the cloture motion, every Republican, and all but one Republican voted against cloture on the bipartisan 3-month extension. So today we are trying yet again, offering an amendment that extends unemployment benefits for 3 months and pays for that extension, not a disputed, controversial extension and certainly not a controversial pay-for. Our alternative also includes something that Senator COBURN has been talking about for several months, an amendment to prevent millionaires from getting unemployment benefits, because it has happened. A person won a lottery and still got unemployment benefits.

Thursday, we are going to vote on cloture on that amendment, one that is paid for and would take care of this issue for lots of people. After that have we will vote on cloture on the bill, as amended. In the meantime, I am pleased to continue discussions with Senators about setting up votes on the relevant amendments.

The Republican leader's proposal is an absolute absurdity. I don't know why they just don't come out and say we are not going to do this, we are not going to extend unemployment benefits. But they have alternating amendments, and they want amendments related to—George Mitchell, who was the Democratic leader for a period of time that I served here, a wonderful human being, his statement was don't depend on the Republicans; they will break your heart every time, and that is what they are doing. They are breaking our hearts, and 1.6 million people, their hearts are broken.

The main proponent of this bill has been JACK REED of Rhode Island. JACK REED and I have a contest—I wish we didn't—and that is which State, Rhode Island or Nevada, has the highest unemployment number.

We care about this greatly, but others care about this. I am sure there are some Republicans who care about it, but why are they hung up on this foolishness that they can only do it if one time they have alternating amendments? They wouldn't take 20 amendments.

There are a handful of Republicans who tried very hard and worked in good faith with Senator REED of Rhode Island. But the problem is they have no control over the tea-party-driven Republicans who make up most of this Republican caucus.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Rhode Island.

Mr. REED. We are at a critical moment. It has been 38 days since the emergency unemployment compensation expired, forcing now not 1.6 million but 1.7 million Americans off an economic cliff and also draining $2.2 billion from State economies, and this is according to estimates based on data from the Department of Labor and the Ways and Means Committee Democrats. This has had a huge impact on families and a huge impact on the economy throughout this country.

Congress should be doing everything to focus on creating jobs and improving our economy. This week we have an opportunity to do that. That is why we should vote to renew unemployment insurance and help put more Americans back to work.

Restoring these benefits is an imperative. We must do it. We have to act with a sense of urgency. People are out there every day looking for employment. They are doing everything they can to support their families and themselves. While this modest level of support helps them stay afloat, what they really want is a job. So our constituents, who are trying so hard and doing what they need to do in order to provide for themselves and their families, are looking to Congress to uphold its end of the bargain.

Many of our constituents are running out of options. The rent is coming due. The telephone bill is coming due, and without a phone they can't actively compete for work. There is no way employers can get hold of them.

College tuition is coming due for middle-aged people who are out looking for jobs, for their children, and some people who are paying their way through college. They are being squeezed from all sides, and the expiration of these benefits is hurting not only them but it is hurting our economy overall.

Time is of the essence. It has been 7 weeks since Senator HELLER and I introduced a bipartisan short-term plan that was designed to provide immediate relief. We tried different permutations of extending these benefits, provisions the other side said they wanted, but to this point without success.

I must say that I have found not only Senator HELLER but many of my colleagues on the other side both thoughtful and willing to contribute—Senator COLLINS, Senator COATS, Senator PORTMAN, and so many others, who are

sincere in trying to get this done. But what we have to do is get over this 60-vote threshold, at least to provide this immediate relief of 3 months to our constituents.

Again, the face of those unemployed in this downturn is a bit different than in the past. We are hearing and seeing more and more middle-aged workers who have worked all their lives and for the first time are confronted with unemployment. They sent out hundreds of resumes. They sought job interviews, many times unsuccessfully. They are squeezed because they are trying to support parents at the same time they are trying to support children who are in college or young adults who are at home.

This is a tremendous toll on people who have worked hard all of their lives. They are simply asking us to step up, as we have done consistently in the past, and give them some modest support while they search for work.

We are 1 month into 2014 and still debating a 3-month fix. At some point, we will reach the point where the retroactive benefits will be greater than the benefits going forward for the 3-month fix. That is not a place we want to be, not for people who have worked hard. The only way to qualify for unemployment insurance is to be working and then, through no fault of your own, to be dismissed from your work—and you still have to look for work. That is the whole program. So it is not right.

I think we have to move forward, and we have done this on a bipartisan basis three times under President Ronald Reagan, five times under George W. Bush, with overwhelming majorities on a bipartisan basis, no question. In fact, most times they were completely unpaid for. It was emergency spending, not only because people needed the emergency aid, but it is a great form of economic support to our economy.

The CBO estimates that if we fail to extend for the full year these benefits, we will lose 200,000 jobs over 2014, at a time when our first priority should be to put more jobs in the marketplace.

We have a plan today that is short term, 3 months, retroactive to December 28. It is fully paid for by extending pension smoothing for 4 more years.

In addition to paying for these benefits, it will reduce the deficit by $1.2 billion over 10 years, so we have a mechanism that not only helps people but also goes to the issue of the deficit, which is another pressing concern, particularly to my colleagues on the other side of the aisle.

This offset has been used before. It passed 79 to 19 as part of the 2012 MAP–21 transportation bill. This is a noncontroversial pay-for. It has been proposed by Members on both sides of the aisle with various proposals requiring pay-fors.

We have an urgent need, a very short-term focus, and a noncontroversial pay-for, and I will urge my colleagues, let's support this, let's move this. If there is work to be done on the architecture of unemployment insurance, if there are other collateral issues or issues that could be thrown into the mix, let's get this done and then let's focus on those issues.

This amendment also incorporates a measure that Senator COBURN has proposed that would bar millionaires, individuals making over $1 million, from qualifying for unemployment insurance. This measure has been unanimously supported 100 to 0 in this Chamber, so we thought we would go ahead and put that in as an additional measure that would be embraced by everyone in the Chamber.

This is an issue that has huge support among the American public. There is a FOX News poll that says over two-thirds of Americans support and want Congress to act now to extend unemployment insurance.

Let me again thank my colleagues on the other side who have worked very sincerely and very diligently to come up with a solution. I say to them: Thank you. I appreciate it.

My concern is helping—as their concern is—those constituents who are getting increasingly desperate. We share this. Now what we have to do is find a pathway forward.

I hope, because of the short-term nature of this bill, because of the noncontroversial pay-for, that we can get this done, and then I think we can embark on a much more expansive review on a much more expansive set of issues with respect to UI and other issues that have come before the Chamber. It is time to vote—vote aye—to get this measure passed.

With that, Mr. President, I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from New Hampshire.

2012 BENGHAZI ATTACK

Ms. AYOTTE. Mr. President, I come to the floor today to talk about the attack on our consulate on September 11, 2012. I am here to talk about the fact that four brave Americans were murdered that day by an act of terrorism. One of those murdered was our Ambassador to Libya when those four Americans were killed at Benghazi at our consulate.

I really want to talk about what I believe is a pattern of misinformation, misimpressions, and, frankly, misleading the American people about what happened there and, during an election season, what was represented about the attack on our consulate on September 11. Let me walk through some of the situation and the tangled web that was woven here.

First of all, right after this attack occurred—we know that on September 16 Ambassador Susan Rice appeared on behalf of the administration on every major Sunday television show, and during that time people rightly wanted to know what happened. This was a big deal. An ambassador had been murdered, along with three other Americans in Libya, where we had gone in to remove, working with our NATO partners, Qadhafi and really had established alliances with Libya. So here we have a murdered Ambassador on September 11, and that day Ambassador Rice, during the context of a Presidential election, went on every Sunday television show, and when she was asked about what happened on that day, she blamed it on the spontaneous reaction to a hateful video.

Recently, the Senate Select Committee on Intelligence did some very good bipartisan work looking at what happened with regard to the attack at the consulate. That report contains something very telling. That report found that ''contrary to many press reports at the time, eyewitness statements by U.S. personnel indicate there were no protests at the start of the attacks.'' In fact, the then-Deputy Director of the CIA received an email sent from the CIA's Chief of Station in Tripoli to him on September 15—4 days after the attacks occurred—and in that email the Deputy Director of the CIA, Mike Morell, was told the attacks were ''not an escalation of protests.'' Not an escalation of protests.

Why is that important? It is important for many reasons because what ends up happening during this period is that Ambassador Rice is going on the Sunday shows to talk about this. She is designated to do this on behalf of the administration. We have always wondered why. Why did she go on, as opposed to Secretary of State Hillary Clinton or perhaps then-Secretary Panetta, the Secretary of Defense? But she is sent that day onto the Sunday shows, and on those shows she said this was a direct result of a heinous video—protests that came as a result of this video.

Yet the day before, the then-Deputy Director of the CIA had already gotten an email from the people on the ground—eyewitness statements. There were survivors, people who survived this attack and who were interviewed to find out what happened. As you would in any situation where you have had a terrorist attack or a murder case, you are going to talk to the eyewitnesses on the ground. So there were eyewitnesses, and they were spoken to. As a result of those eyewitness interviews, the day before she goes on those Sunday shows, the Deputy Director of the CIA is told that there was not an escalation of protests, that what has been reported is not the case. Yet she went on the show and said that anyway.

What is even more troubling is that this information is communicated to the Deputy Director of the CIA, and somehow there are talking points prepared that don't reflect this information. Moreover, somehow this information that was given to the Deputy Director of the CIA was not given to the President—or, I don't know, maybe they didn't like the story they received because during that period of time, if we look at this, on September 11 the President gave many media interviews

during this period. It was during a Presidential election.

On September 18, which is 7 days after the attacks on the consulate, 2 days after Susan Rice went on the Sunday shows, the President is on the Dave Letterman show. We have all watched the comedy show, the Dave Letterman show, and Dave Letterman asks the President about the attacks in Benghazi. On that show he talks about the video, this heinous video being a cause of what happened and the attack at the consulate. Yet, on September 15, the then-Deputy Director of the CIA already had some information that said this is not an escalation of protests. There were interviews done of the survivors on the ground. Yet on the Dave Letterman show a week later—in fact, 3 days after this information is received by the Deputy Director of the CIA—we have the President talking about the video.

But it gets worse. Nine days later—9 days after the attack, so on September 20—the President gives another interview at the Univision Town Hall. This is 5 days after the Deputy Director of the CIA is given this information, apparently coming from the survivors. And what does the President say?

> What we do know is that the natural protests that arose because of the outrage over the video were used as an excuse by extremists to see if they can also directly harm U.S. interests.

That is what he says when he is asked about the attacks on our consulate.

So here we are 9 days after the attack, 5 days after this information is given to Mike Morell, the then-Deputy Director of the CIA, and yet we have another interview on ''The View,'' another popular show, 13 days—almost 2 weeks after the attack on the consulate, and again the President of United States talks about this being about the video and a reaction to the video.

So here we have the work that was done on this—clear misinformation about what happened that day and a very troubling pattern in the context of an election, where on those Sunday shows Ambassador Rice made sure to tell everyone Al Qaeda has been decimated because that was the narrative during this time period, that Al Qaeda has been decimated. So if this was a terrorist attack, that would be problematic to that narrative.

In fact, we had testimony before the Senate Armed Services Committee from then-Defense Secretary Panetta. When he testified before the Armed Services Committee, he said clearly:

> There was no question in my mind it was a terrorist attack.

In fact, he said:

> When I appeared before the committee 3 days afterwards, I said it was a terrorist attack.

Secretary Panetta made clear he knew from the beginning this was a terrorist attack. Yet the President, on September 12, even though the day of it he said, ''We won't tolerate any act of terror''—he is asked directly by the interviewer, Mr. Kroft from ''60 Minutes,'' ''Mr. President, this morning you went out of your way to avoid the use of the word terrorism in connection with the Libya attack. Do you believe this was a terrorism attack?'' The President said, ''Well, it's too early to tell exactly how this came about, what group was involved, but obviously it was an attack on Americans.'' The President refused then to call it what it was, what his own Secretary of Defense knew—that it was a terrorist attack—because, of course, we know the narrative at the time was that Al Qaeda had been decimated, and if it was a terrorist attack, it didn't quite fit with that narrative.

In fact, recently the President gave an interview on FOX News with Bill O'Reilly—on February 2—and this is what he said when he was asked about the attack on the consulate:

> We revealed to the American people exactly what we understood at the time. The notion that we would hide the ball for political purposes when a week later we all said in fact there was a terrorist attack taking place the day after I said it was an act of terror, that wouldn't be a very good coverup.

I guess the President, when he told Mr. O'Reilly that, forgot about the interview he had given on ''The View,'' which was almost 2 weeks after this event—13 days after it.

Almost 2 weeks later he was asked by Ms. Behar:

> I heard Hillary Clinton say it was an act of terrorism. Is it? What do you say?

Well, no act of terrorism then. He doesn't acknowledge it. He said:

> We're still doing an investigation. There's no doubt that [with] the kind of weapons that were used, the ongoing assault, that it wasn't just a mob action.

This is in the context, of course, where his Secretary of Defense said he knew right away it was an act of terrorism. In fact, he came to the Armed Services Committee 3 days after and said it was an act of terrorism. Yet, again, within a week he isn't saying it was an act of terrorism when he is directly asked if it was an act of terrorism.

In this recent interview with Mr. O'Reilly the President talked about the security at the consulate. In fact, there was a strong report recently done by the Senate Intelligence Committee on a bipartisan basis. In fact, one of the issues they raised deep concerns about is that the State Department should have increased its security posture more significantly in Benghazi based upon a deteriorating security situation on the ground and that the threat reporting on the prior attacks against westerners in Benghazi—and there were many cables leading up to this too that had been made public—warranted there was sufficient warning that security should have been increased at the consulate.

The President acknowledged that in his recent interview with Mr. O'Reilly, where he said:

> In the aftermath what became clear was that the security was lax, that not all the precautions that needed to be taken were taken.

That is certainly confirmed by the bipartisan Senate Intelligence Committee. So if that is the case, why is it that Ambassador Susan Rice was on the Sunday shows on September 16—she is sent on the shows to talk about what happened that day, and she responds in this fashion to this question directly and specifically asked by Chris Wallace in that interview:

He says:

> Terror cells in Benghazi had carried out five attacks since April, including . . . a bombing at the same consulate in June. Should U.S. security have been tighter at that consulate given the history of terror activity in Benghazi?

What is her response? Well, we obviously did have a strong security presence.

She was on several shows—ABC with Jake Tapper; she was on ''Face the Nation'' with Bob Schieffer. During the course of those interviews, she was asked about the security at the consulate, and she described the security at the consulate that day as significant and substantial. What was the basis for that? Did anyone give her information that ''security was significant, substantial and strong'' that day? Because there was absolutely no evidence of that. In fact, everything in this investigation has shown that security was absolutely lax at that consulate, unacceptably so given the prior history of intelligence at the consulate, given the prior attacks that had been made on the British and on the Red Cross, and unfortunately this really was a death trap.

So in the context of an election, why is she—and the President as well—not only pushing the video story but also saying that the consulate security was strong, it was substantial, it was significant, when there is no evidence to support that? It all goes to the contrary.

There has been a lot of discussion about the video. Ambassador Rice goes on the Sunday shows and she talks about the video. She talks about the causal effect of the video in terms of the attacks on the consulate. What she essentially says is this: This was a direct result of a heinous and offensive video which was widely disseminated and which the U.S. Government had nothing to do with and which we have made clear is reprehensible and disgusting. And we have also been very clear in saying that there is no excuse for violence, that we have condemned it in the strongest possible terms.

This ''direct result of a heinous and offensive video,'' which she said on all those Sunday shows and which the President then also talked about in the interviews: 1 week later on David Letterman; the interview, 9 days after the attack, on Univision; and the interview almost 2 weeks later on ''The View''—why are they still talking about the video?

From the beginning, I have thought the talking points were fascinating. These talking points were created for dissemination. Ambassador Susan Rice was given these talking points, she said she relied upon them, and there are serious deficiencies with these talking points.

Even so, I challenge people to find any reference to a video in these talking points. I have looked and looked, and I couldn't see the word ''video'' in these talking points anywhere. Yet we have Ambassador Susan Rice, on behalf of the administration, on September 16 on every Sunday show, talking about the video. We have the President of the United States on David Letterman 1 week later, then 9 days later, after the attack, on Univision, and almost 2 weeks later, 13 days later on ''The View'' talking about a video. Yet there isn't a reference to a video in these talking points. I have never understood. Where did the video story come from? Do you think we will ever get the answer? I think we deserve an answer to that, especially now.

Because of the recent Senate intel report, we know that the Deputy Director of the CIA, the day before Ambassador Rice first appeared on those Sunday shows to tell this story, received this email which reported that the attacks were ''not/not an escalation of protests.'' So if it is not an escalation of protests—let's look at these talking points again. These talking points do not refer to a video. We are not sure how that story got told.

Why is it that the talking points that went out say: Available information suggests that the demonstrations in Benghazi were spontaneously inspired by the protests at the U.S. Embassy in Cairo and evolved into a direct assault against our U.S. diplomatic post in Benghazi and subsequently its annex and that they were participating in violent demonstrations. Why wasn't what they learned the day before taken into account in terms of what was represented to the American people? I think a bigger question is, How is it that the Deputy Director of the CIA can receive relevant and important information and that information never gets to the President of the United States as late as 9 days later? On September 24, on ''The View,'' he is still talking about this video. Yet it turns out the video never had anything to do with this. It really raises so many questions in terms of the tangled web of this whole situation.

I have yet to talk about what was an incredible change in these talking points, which was the removal of the reference to Al Qaeda. Before they went through various modifications, the original set of talking points talked about Al Qaeda or the potential of Al Qaeda-affiliated groups being involved in these attacks. Of course, that now has been confirmed by the bipartisan Senate Intelligence Committee report recently revealed. But at the time, the reference to Al Qaeda was removed from these talking points. It was removed from these talking points, and Ambassador Rice was free to go on the Sunday shows on September 16, and she said Al Qaeda had been decimated. Imagine if the talking points kept the reference to Al Qaeda. Do you think she would have gone on every Sunday show and said Al Qaeda had been decimated? I would hope not because it was not true that Al Qaeda had been decimated, as evidenced by the attack on our consulate.

So we still don't know who removed the reference and what happened with these talking points. But what really troubles me is the Deputy Director of the CIA, through the Senate Intelligence Committee report, received this email on September 15 which said the attacks were not an escalation of protests. He worked on these talking points. He was part of the group who actually had feedback on the talking points that went out the door. Yet somehow this wasn't included.

The Al Qaeda reference was removed, and apparently no one, even after receiving the actual eyewitness interviews of what happened on the scene, ever thought to go to the administration—the President of the United States—and correct him: By the way, we are not sure this video really pans out, that it is a demonstration and that this is a protest in response to a video. Somehow that doesn't get up the chain of command? We have big problems if this kind of information is not getting up the chain of command. Why those representations were made when there was intel that contradicted it has never been answered.

Finally, and most of all, the President said he was going to bring the individuals who committed these attacks to justice. Yet no one has been brought to justice. The families who lost loved ones deserve to have these terrorists brought to justice. And what we have seen in some of the reports—the intelligence committee itself essentially identifies that more than 1 year after the Benghazi attacks, the terrorists who perpetrated the attacks have still not been brought to justice.

The intelligence community has identified several individuals responsible for the attacks. Some of these individuals have been identified with a strong level of confidence. So why hasn't anyone been brought to justice? Why haven't we pursued this to pick up the people who committed these terrorist attacks and to hold them accountable? The victims deserve justice, and they have not seen justice. I hope we will get those who murdered our Ambassador and three other brave Americans on September 11, 2012, and bring them to justice. It is totally unacceptable that has not yet happened.

We have seen press reports of people like Abu Khattala—reported to have established Ansar al-Sharia, an Al Qaeda-affiliated group, and identified as a prior commander of this group—identified by witnesses as being there that night during the attacks on our consulate, and yet we haven't picked him up or anyone else. In fact, he is sitting at cafes, and press in the United States are able to find him, interview him, talk to him, and yet we haven't brought him or anyone else in. There have been news reports that there may be a secret warrant for him, but he hasn't been brought in. Where is the attention to this?

I have talked about this tangled web which has been woven, which is really troubling in terms of the misimpressions and misleading nature of how this has been represented to the American people. But I hope we will all focus on bringing the people who committed these terrorist attacks to justice because the victims of these terrorist attacks deserve justice.

The terrorists who committed these acts against our consulate need to know that we are coming after them and that we are going to hold them accountable. If you commit a terrorist attack against our country, you should not be in a position to be out drinking coffee in a cafe. You need to be held accountable.

We need to send a message to other terrorists: Don't mess with the United States of America, because right now they are getting the opposite message with no one being held accountable for the terrorist attacks on our consulate on September 11, 2012.

Mr. President, I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Texas.

FOREIGN POLICY

Mr. CRUZ. Mr. President, I commend the Senator from New Hampshire for her stirring remarks on the terrorist attacks in Benghazi and urge that we pay heed to the words she said. It is striking—the Senator from New Hampshire has said more about that terrorist attack than our Commander in Chief has ever said.

We are at a time where Tolkien's classic ''The Hobbit'' is one of the best-selling, most popular movies in the country. ''The Hobbit'' is a fantasy story. In Washington, we were visited with fantasy last week in the President's State of the Union Address. I would like to talk about the contrast, concerning foreign policy, between the fantasy presented to the American people and the cold, hard realities of the dangerous world in which we live—which is only getting more and more dangerous.

In his State of the Union Address last week, President Obama gave some revealing clues as to how he believed the United States should interact with the rest of the world.

On the whole, his remarks encourage Americans not to worry too much about international challenges. He suggested the situations in Syria and Iran are being definitely managed by American diplomats; that Al Qaeda is now a regional nuisance that can be outsourced to surrogates; that our relationship with Israel is defined by the

Palestinian peace process, which will also be resolved in short order through American diplomacy; and that our interest in Ukraine is to express support for the abstract principle that all people should peacefully participate in their own governance. In this rosy scenario, difficult challenges such as the deadly terrorist attacks on Benghazi on September 11, 2012, or the long and painful ordeal of Pastor Saeed Abedini in an Iranian prison simply do not exist.

I wish we all lived in the utopian world President Obama painted last week. But in just a week, numerous news reports have come out to suggest that picture belongs far more in the world of fantasy than reality. In the interests of being honest with the American people—which I wish our Commander in Chief had done—I would like to contrast reality with what we were told last week.

On Syria, in the State of the Union Address, the President claimed:

> American diplomacy, backed by the threat of force, is why serious chemical weapons are being eliminated, and we will continue to work with the international community to usher in the future the Syrian people deserve—a future free of dictatorship, terror, and fear.

That is truly a rosy scenario. Yet, what is the reality? On Sunday, just 4 days after the President delivered the State of the Union Address, Secretary of State John Kerry reportedly told a congressional delegation that the administration's Syria policy is on the brink of collapse. Syria's chemical weapons are purportedly being destroyed through the intervention of Vladimir Putin in what was a major diplomatic victory for the Russian strongman. But we have learned in recent days that this process has not proceeded as promised. The Syrians have ignored their deadlines and only 4 percent of the stockpiles have been eliminated, undoubtedly because Assad knows there is no compelling reason for him to comply. As for what the Syrian people deserve, after 3 years of rudderless U.S. policy, over 130,000 are dead, millions are refugees displaced across the region, and the oldest Christian communities on the planet are threatened with extinction. Assad is entrenched and Al Qaeda is in control of the opposition. Sadly, as a result of the President's mismanagement, today we have no good options in Syria. Yet not a word of that made it into his State of the Union Address.

On Iran, the President claimed:

> It is American diplomacy, backed by pressure, that has halted the progress of Iran's nuclear program . . .

The reality is quite different. No enriched uranium has been destroyed—not a pound—and no centrifuges have been dismantled. The Iranians quickly refuted the President's claim in the State of the Union, announcing, quite publicly, that they have not halted their progress in the slightest. America's closest ally in the region, the nation of Israel, has called this a ''very, very bad deal.'' Indeed, Prime Minister Netanyahu has referred to it as a ''historic mistake.'' Yet the President proceeds on and the Senate refuses even to allow a vote on reimposing sanctions to prevent Iran from acquiring nuclear weapons capability. There has been no renunciation of Iran's State sponsorship of terrorism that killed Americans in Lebanon and in Saudi Arabia and in Afghanistan and in Iraq. The mullahs have gone on a hanging spree, executing some 40 people in the first two weeks of January alone. Meanwhile, billions of dollars are flowing into the country, both through relaxed sanctions and Iran's reemergence as a legitimate business partner because of this administration's misguided deal. Indeed, Iranian President Hassan Rouhani might almost be forgiven for publicly gloating that ''the Geneva deal means the surrender of the big powers in front of the great nation of Iran.'' I wish he was not speaking the truth. That reality did not emerge on the House floor last week.

On the House floor, the President claimed:

> If John F. Kennedy and Ronald Reagan could negotiate with the Soviet Union, then surely a strong and confident America can negotiate with less powerful adversaries today.

The reality is the claim that we are negotiating with Iran from a position of strength and confidence is a blinkered view of reality because it isn't even clear our President is negotiating towards actual victory. Capitulation is not victory. President Obama announced in the State of the Union that in order to keep negotiations going, he would veto any additional sanctions Congress might pass to pressure Iran to actually stop pursuing nuclear weapons—a position that is supported not only by his current administration, but expressly by his former Secretary of State Hillary Clinton. Iranian Foreign Minister Javad Zarif has good reason to announce publicly he has no ''fear'' of Congress. When Ronald Reagan negotiated with the Soviets, he did it from a clear, strategic perspective of ''we win, they lose,'' standing for U.S. national interests. He was facing an existential threat that he defined as ''the Evil Empire.'' There was no danger or misunderstanding of what the goal was or who was going to be doing the surrendering. As a result of his leadership, the Cold War was won without firing a shot. Today, on Iran, we are tragically repeating the mistakes of the past—in particular, the mistakes of the Clinton administration—in relaxing sanctions on North Korea for the same empty promises that they would cease developing nuclear weapons only to have North Korea use the billions of dollars we sent to them—or allowed to go to them—to develop nuclear weapons. The difference is the North Korean leader is motivated by staying in power, which means some form of rational deterrence is hopefully possible. In Iran, the supreme leader has made clear his desire to destroy the nation of Israel and as a result of the billions of dollars going to Iran right now, the risk is unacceptably high that we discover the same thing that happened in North Korea happened in Iran, except that we discover it because Iran, in pursuit of Jihad, detonates a nuclear device over Tel Aviv or New York or Los Angeles. Not a word of that was acknowledged in the President's speech.

On Al Qaeda, President Obama claimed:

> While we have put Al Qaeda's core leadership on a path to defeat, the threat has evolved, as Al Qaeda affiliates and other extremists take root in different parts of the world—in Yemen, Somalia, Iraq, and Mali, and we have to keep working with partners to disrupt and disable those networks.

The reality is that whatever path Al Qaeda is on, it does not currently appear to be towards defeat. The recent assertion by a State Department spokeswoman that Ayman al-Zawahiri is the only core Al Qaeda member left and that thus the threat has been decimated by the President is demonstrably false. For starters, Zawahiri is no mere abstract threat. He explicitly called for attacks on the United States on September 10, 2012, the day before the terrorist attack that claimed the lives of four Americans in Benghazi, including the first U.S. ambassador killed on duty since 1979. Zawahiri is actively involved in directing Al Qaeda groups that are active in Syria. But core or not core—whatever that means—the reality is that Al Qaeda has been at war with the United States for more than two decades and the attacks of September 11, 2001, are only the most spectacular of a series of attacks and attempted attacks launched at us. Trying to parse this threat to make it seem less deadly, to make it seem like less of a threat to Americans, will not make it so. We need to confront what attacked us in 2001. We cannot defeat radical Islamic terrorism when the President seems unwilling to utter the words ''radical Islamic terrorism.'' Indeed, the recent Senate Select Committee on Intelligence documented that what attacked us in Libya in 2012 is the very same thing that attacked us on September 11, 2001. We should not aim simply to disrupt or to disable Al Qaeda terrorists. We should aim to defeat them.

On Israel, in the State of the Union, the President had one mention of Israel in that speech. He said:

> American diplomacy is supporting Israelis and Palestinians as they engage in difficult but necessary talks to end the conflict there; to achieve dignity and an independent state for Palestinians, and a lasting peace and security for the State of Israel—a Jewish State that knows America will always be at their side.

The reality is sadly much different. Over the weekend, we saw a diplomatic spat play out in the press over allegations that Secretary of State Kerry is actively working behind the scenes to

encourage European countries to threaten Israel with boycotts if the Israelis don't agree to whatever framework Mr. Kerry will propose in two weeks. Rather than threats from the U.S. Secretary of State, and rather than tweets from National Security Advisor Susan Rice criticizing Israel, instead, the United States should stand unequivocally with our friend and ally, the nation of Israel. We should reaffirm Israel's unique status as a strong, democratic ally in the Middle East, a uniquely Jewish State, and that the United States appreciates the excruciatingly difficult security situation in which Israel finds itself with the threat of a nuclear Iran, and that the United States will vigorously defend Israel from attacks, from international institutions, from legal onslaughts, and from attempts to undermine Israel's economy through punitive boycotts, and that the United States is unshakably committed to preserving Israel's security, regardless of the status of the peace process.

I commend to my colleagues the recent remarks Canadian Prime Minister Stephen Harper gave in Israel. Those are the remarks of an ally standing strong with Israel and appreciating the incredible value that Israel provides to our national security and to peace in the world. I wish our President could speak with a fraction of the clarity and solidarity with Israel that the Canadian Prime Minister recently provided.

On Ukraine, the President claimed:

> In Ukraine, we stand for the principle that all people have a right to express themselves freely and peacefully and to have a say in their country's future.

The reality is the day after the State of the Union, Ukraine's former President said that the country teeters on the brink of civil war. Protesters have been brutally tortured and murdered. Indeed, one opposition leader described how he was recently crucified. The Ukrainian people's constitutional rights have been trampled. This former Soviet republic has been wrenched away from a proposed trade agreement with the EU and a path towards membership in NATO and instead thrust back into Russia's sphere of influence by a corrupt and autocratic leader, depriving the United States of an important economic and security partner.

We need to tell this story. We need to look for concrete actions we can take right now to demonstrate real support for the opposition, to demonstrate real support that Ukraine is welcomed by the West, and that we will not accede to Putin's efforts to reassemble the old Soviet Union and place Ukraine under its domination.

We can start by immediately offering a free-trade agreement to Ukraine and partnerships to help them build natural gas infrastructure so they need not remain dependent upon Russia, which uses natural gas to blackmail them, and we could immediately release exports of liquid natural gas from the United States in conjunction with helping with that infrastructure.

Surely, the people gathering in the frozen snow of Maidan Square, crying out for the freedom of the West, deserve more from the leader of the free world than mere blandishments about abstract universal rights.

If you are standing in the frozen streets of Kiev, being beaten, bleeding—naked, as one opposition leader was—and yet standing proud for freedom, empty generalities from the President do you very little good.

On Benghazi, the President claimed nothing. We all remember last fall, during the debates in the Presidential election—just over 1 year ago—when the President emphatically stated no one cared more about the terrorist attack that happened in Benghazi than he did. Yet in the year and a half that has followed, the word ''Benghazi'' seems never to leave his lips. The reality is we have four Americans murdered in a preventable attack, and that is what the Senate Intelligence Committee concluded in a bipartisan manner; that this was preventable by Al Qaeda terrorists, and more than 16 months later, no one in Washington or Libya has been held accountable.

Congress and the American people, and particularly the families of the fallen, deserve the answers that only a joint select committee of Congress could get. Yet, sadly, the majority leader and Democrats in this Chamber are blocking a joint select committee. ''What difference does it make,'' former Secretary of State Hillary Clinton asked. It makes all the difference in the world to ascertain the truth.

I will note, even though he said not a word about Benghazi in the State of the Union, he was forced to say something this week when he was interviewed by Bill O'Reilly. Before the Super Bowl, when Bill O'Reilly asked him about Benghazi, what is striking—and I would urge everyone to go and watch and listen to what the President said—Bill O'Reilly asked him: Did Secretary of Defense Leon Panetta tell him that night that the attacks were the works of terrorists? Mr. O'Reilly asked that question, and yet the President, over and over and over, refused to answer a simple yes or no, did Leon Panetta tell him it was the act of terrorists. He did not want to answer that question, and indeed he did not.

For those of us who have spent some of our career in a court of law, the technical term for his answer was ''nonresponsive,'' and were a judge there, he would have directed the President to answer the question that was put to him; nor did the President say one word about why the talking points were scrubbed to eradicate any mention of terrorism and the Al Qaeda affiliates involved.

We need accountability. We need accountability for those four brave Americans who lost their lives to terrorism and need to know why no one has been held accountable in the State Department, nor have any of the terrorists who committed that attack been brought to justice.

On Saeed Abedini, the American pastor brutally imprisoned in Iran, President Obama in the State of the Union Address said nothing. The reality is an American citizen has been wrongly imprisoned in Iran for more than 1 year simply for professing his Christian faith. All of us are blessed to live in a land where the Constitution guarantees us religious liberty. Yet a Christian pastor, going to Iran, professing his faith, was thrown in a pit of a jail.

There is no more compelling evidence that the Supreme Leader in Tehran represents the very same repressive Islamist regime today that he has for so many years and that his goal is not peaceful rapprochement with the West but the preservation of his own power.

The President of the United States should be standing and demanding Pastor Saeed Abedini's release, not making his captors into diplomatic partners. Indeed, it is notable, in the midst of our negotiations in Geneva, the nation of Iran transferred Pastor Saeed Abedini from one horrible prison to an even worse prison, where they keep their death row, where they send people to die, and he did so on the anniversary of Iran's taking Americans hostage—what is referred to in Iran as ''Death to America Day.'' That was not accidental. That was meant to thumb their nose at our Nation, and the President—instead of standing for an American wrongfully imprisoned for preaching his Christian faith—the President instead chose, in the State of the Union Address, to say not a word.

The President concluded his speech on foreign policy by saying:

> Finally let's remember that our leadership is defined not just by our defense against threats, but by the enormous opportunities to do good and promote understanding around the globe—to forge great cooperation, to expand new markets, to free people from fear and want. And no one is better positioned to take advantage of those opportunities than America.

The reality is, if this past week has proven anything, that American leadership is not defined by global opportunities to do good and promote understanding. American leadership is defined by defending and promoting the values that have made our Nation great.

We do not do this by ignoring unpleasant realities, refusing to acknowledge the terrorist attack in Benghazi, sending administration officials out to claim it is not a terrorist attack but the result of an Internet video or refusing to stand for an American wrongfully imprisoned in Iran for preaching his Christian faith, and we do not do this by refusing to admit failure but by standing and facing our challenges, accepting responsibility for our actions, and speaking out with a clarion voice for the freedoms we enjoy—freedoms that should be the aspiration of every man and woman on the planet.

Leading from behind does not work. As a result of this administration's misguided foreign policy, the world has become a much more dangerous place

in the last 5 years. U.S. national security interests have been endangered dramatically. We see nations such as Russia increasing their sphere of influence, while the threats to the security of men and women throughout America grow and multiply.

Standing strongly with like-minded allies and encouraging others to seek freedom is not disinterested do-gooding; it is vital work that will promote the security and prosperity of the United States of America, something I believe is ultimately in the interest of all mankind.

I wish, when the President of the United States stood on the floor of the House of Representatives to address the Nation and to address the world, that when he spoke of foreign policy he had not embraced a foreign policy fantasy that disregards the cold, hard reality of the dangerous world we live in and the consequences of receding U.S. leadership.

Thank you. I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Minnesota.

EMERGENCY UNEMPLOYMENT COMPENSATION EXTENSION ACT

Ms. KLOBUCHAR. Mr. President, I rise to address two issues. The first is what is before us. That is the Emergency Unemployment Compensation Extension Act. The second is something that should be before us; that is, the confirmation of the U.S. attorney for Minnesota. This will be the third time in a few days that I have spoken on this issue, which I will continue to do so until this gets done.

I rise in support of the Emergency Unemployment Compensation Extension Act. I know we are making progress on a proposal that extends Federal support for emergency unemployment compensation for 3 months and is fully offset.

I have spoken about the need to extend Federal support for unemployment insurance, and I would like to thank Senator JACK REED and Senator DEAN HELLER for their bipartisan leadership on this issue.

Unemployment insurance provides a critical lifeline. Workers pay into the program so it will be there when they are looking for work. Unemployment insurance helps families pay the mortgage or rent and put gas in the tank. Federal support for unemployment insurance is crucial for those Americans who exhaust their State-funded benefits and are still looking for work.

Throughout my time as the Senate chair of the Joint Economic Committee, I have focused on the continuing problem of long-term unemployment. Last month, I issued a Joint Economic Committee report that makes the clear economic case for extending Federal support for unemployment insurance, which keeps those Americans afloat, those Americans who are continuing to search for work.

The long-term unemployment rate now stands at 2.5 percent, nearly twice as high as when these benefits expired during the last recession.

We already know the consequences of allowing the Federal benefits to expire are not good. At the end of last year, 1.3 million workers lost all unemployment benefits, and another 3.6 million jobless workers could lose their benefits this year.

In my home State, roughly 9,200 people lost benefits at the end of last year and about 65,000 workers could lose their unemployment insurance by the end of this year.

Now is not the time for Congress to cut off extended unemployment insurance for those people who have been actively looking for work for more than 26 weeks.

These are not the people, as you know, who benefited from the uptick in the stock market over the last few years. They do not have stock portfolios. They are not checking the stock rate. They have not noticed that it has gone down a little bit recently, and they have not noticed that it went up all last year. They are just trying to put food on their table and keep a roof over their head. They are people who live in our States and who are our neighbors.

I have heard from countless Minnesotans who are sharing their stories with me about how unemployment insurance is a lifeline for their families and that ending Federal support for the long-term unemployed would be devastating.

I am sharing some of these letters because they tell the stories of hard-working Americans who are doing their best to look for work and support their families.

Linda from Little Falls wrote:

> Dear Amy,
>
> Please, please, please fight to extend the emergency unemployment past the end of the year. My husband and I are both still unemployed, by no fault of our own, and are both over 55. We are having a very difficult time finding employment, and to stop this program would be devastating for us and many others that we know. My husband was at his job for 37 years and they closed the doors, and I made more than some of the more junior people in my office, so I was let go first.

Think of that: a couple, the man working at his job for 37 years, the woman more senior at her job saying she was let go because she made more money than others in the office.

She ends by saying:

> Please help to get this extended. I feel like the people who are still left jobless are being forgotten!
>
> Thank you. . . .

Second letter, Donna from Prior Lake. She says this:

> . . . Having worked for over 30 plus years of my life, I am currently unemployed. I have applied for over 300 positions during the last 6 months. I do not expect a handout but I was really disappointed when I found out that I could no longer receive unemployment insurance after the 28th of December. . . .
>
> It's not that I am not trying to work, or that I am not looking for a position, but I am 55 years old and my full time job right now is to find a job. I am looking for temporary, full time, part-time, contract work. I would like to know that my congress people are doing the same for me. Donna.

Thirty-plus years of working. She is 55 years old. She has applied for over 300 positions. That is who we are talking about here. These are the people we are talking about when we talk about this kind of long-term extension of unemployment. It is something I hope my colleagues will keep in mind as we move forward and get this done and get this passed.

ANDREW LUGER NOMINATION

Now I would like to turn to another matter. The only thing these two have in common is they are both kind of victims of stalled-out situations of gridlock. The second one is about one person, but it is not really about one person, it is about a system of justice and it is about a decision on the part of the United States, part of our Founding Fathers, the part of our Congress that is going way back, that we would have a U.S. attorney in most States in this country, that we would have a U.S. attorney who would be charged with enforcing the Federal laws, that the Congress would have a role in deciding who that U.S. attorney would be, that the President would recommend, would appoint someone, and then the Congress has the job of simply deciding if that person is qualified or not for the job.

But it is not even just about one person or one system of government, it is also about the people who work in the U.S. attorney's office, in the case of the district of Minnesota, over 100 people, over 50 people who are prosecutors working in the office who deserve to have a full-time leader in the U.S. attorney's job.

For 2½ years, 888 days—I counted each day—Minnesota has not had a full-time U.S. attorney. It is a modern-day record. During those years, from August 2011 to August 2013, B. Todd Jones was responsible for doing two jobs. He was the Minnesota U.S. attorney, and as those of us involved in the long vote in this Chamber that lasted over 8 hours remember, he was also the Acting Director of the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives. They had not had a full-time confirmed Director for 7 years. So he went in after the mess with Fast and Furious and was willing to be the Acting Director. At the same time he was the U.S. attorney for Minnesota. As you can imagine, there was a lot of work and cleanup to do at the ATF. That was where he was focused for most of his time.

Meanwhile, the U.S. attorney's office in Minnesota kept going. But at some point after 2½ years, you cannot keep going on your own. Over the summer, the Senate finally confirmed B. Todd Jones as Director of the ATF, leaving the Minnesota U.S. attorney's position finally open for good. Even before the confirmation of B. Todd Jones, Senator FRANKEN and I, upon the recommendation of our bipartisan U.S. Attorney Advisory Committee, had already recommended Andy Luger, Assistant U.S.

Attorney, to fill the position. That was 197 days ago.

In November, President Obama nominated Andy Luger to become the new U.S. attorney. The Judiciary Committee approved his nomination unanimously on January 9. Our colleague from Texas, Senator CRUZ, had no objection to this nomination. We had no objections on the committee, which is saying a lot, because we have a lot of different people from different backgrounds and different political views on the committee.

Usually when people speak on nominations on the floor, it is because they are fighting to get someone through because there is an objection. This is not at all the case in the case of Andy Luger, who is trying to be the U.S. attorney for Minnesota.

What has happened in past cases with U.S. attorneys? Over the past 20 years, 4 Minnesota nominees to be U.S. attorney, appointed by Republican and Democratic Presidents alike, were confirmed within a day of when they passed out of the committee. During this timeframe, all of the nominees were confirmed within an average of 9½ days of being voted out of committee.

It has been 26 days since Mr. Luger was approved by the committee. It is time that we do the right thing by quickly confirming him to make sure that Minnesota has its highest law enforcement officer in place.

I want to thank Senator GRASSLEY for his help on this. He actually also has a U.S. attorney who is pending for the District of Iowa.

Why is the U.S. attorney important? I thought our pages would be interested in this fact, because we are going to be talking a lot about the U.S. attorney over the next few weeks if this keeps going on. The position of U.S. attorney is a law enforcement post that the Founders regarded as so vital that they created it during the very first Congress in the Judiciary Act of 1789. This is the same act that created the Attorney General and the structure of the Supreme Court and the lower courts. According to the act, each judicial district would be provided with:

> a person learned in the law to act as attorney for the United States . . . whose duty it shall be to prosecute in each district all delinquents for crimes and offenses cognizable under the authority of the United States, and all civil actions in which the United States shall be concerned . . .

The U.S. attorney is a position so necessary that President Zachary Taylor appointed Henry Moss—this is a name you may not have heard of before—to the post within 2 days of Minnesota becoming a State. So back then somehow they are able to get it done in 2 days. Now, we have been waiting 888 days. But in 2 days they were able to get a U.S. attorney in the job when Minnesota first became a State.

Since 1849, the District of Minnesota's 31 U.S. attorneys have upheld the rule of law, the Constitution, and the rights of our State's citizens and tirelessly pursued justice on their behalf. This quick action by President Taylor and the speed with which the Senate has confirmed past U.S. attorneys for Minnesota shows how much our government has historically valued this position.

These people have not been used as pawns in some kind of a fight over other issues, they have simply been confirmed. We have simply gotten it done. I think we can all agree, given what we have seen with the heroin cases that are on the rise all over the country in the last few months—this has certainly come to our attention in Minnesota. In Hennepin County alone, 60 opiate-related deaths in 1 county in our State in just 6 months of the year. So I think we can all agree that the importance of this position is no less important than it was in 1789 when this job was created.

Since the founding of the country, we have recognized the great authority placed in the hands of U.S. attorneys to uphold the rule of law, to protect our freedoms, and to exercise their power responsibly and only for just ends. A 1935 Supreme Court decision called Berger v. United States has gained iconic status for Justice Sutherland's description of a prosecutor's duty to follow the rule of law, serve justice, and play by the rules. Justice Sutherland so aptly wrote:

> The United States Attorney is the representative not of an ordinary party to a controversy, but of a sovereignty whose obligation to govern impartially is as compelling as its obligation to govern at all; and whose interest, therefore, in a criminal prosecution is not that it shall win a case, but that justice shall be done.
>
> As such, he is in a peculiar and very definite sense the servant of the law, the twofold aim of which is that guilt shall not escape nor innocence suffer. He—

And we could say he or she for the modern day.

> —may prosecute with earnestness and vigor—indeed, he should do so. But, while he my strike hard blows, he is not at liberty to strike foul ones. It is as much his duty to refrain from improper methods calculated to produce a wrongful conviction as it is to use every legitimate means to bring about a just one.

That is the kind of statement that rings as true today as it did nearly 80 years ago. The men and women in the Minnesota U.S. attorney's office exemplify the professionalism, high ethical standards, and unwavering commitments to the rule of law and public safety that we expect of prosecutors. They work to protect public safety by focusing on offenders who harm our communities: terrorists, the ''worst of the worst'' violent criminals and drug traffickers, and major financial fraudsters.

They also work closely with local law enforcement to ensure local and Federal resources are used efficiently and effectively to prevent crime and lock up criminals.

For example, the office won a conviction in a $3.65 billion Ponzi scheme case, the second biggest Ponzi scheme in U.S. history. Now this case was originated when, in fact, they had a full-time U.S. attorney. Most of the prosecution did take place when they had a full-time U.S. attorney in the office. Of course, with a major case like this, you would want a full-time U.S. attorney there to make critical decisions.

Also the office has an ongoing terrorism investigation that has led to charges against 18 people for aiding the terrorist organization al-Shabaab—8 of whom have been convicted, some receiving sentences of up to 20 years in prison.

So at some point, as that investigation continues, one wonders why the United States of America would want to have an office overseeing and prosecuting major terrorist cases without having a full-time U.S. attorney. I do wonder if this would ever happen in New York City or in the city of Chicago. I hope people keep this in mind as they look at the situation.

Other major accomplishments of the office include Operation Highlife, a major drug trafficking investigation involving more than 100 local, State, and Federal law enforcement officers that resulted in 26 indictments, 25 guilty pleas, and sentences of up to 200 months in prison.

Operation Brother's Keeper, a successful investigation and prosecution of a RICO case involving a regional 200-member gang, took 22 dangerous criminals off the streets. This does not sound like a case that should be handled by an office that does not deserve a full-time U.S. attorney. That would be the prosecution of a RICO case involving a regional 200-member gang.

Or how about Operation Malverde, which received national attention, and was a prosecution of 27 defendants associated with a Mexican drug cartel, including the apprehension of the cartel's regional leader, and sentences as high as 20 years in prison.

The office also recently played a key role in shutting down a major synthetic drug seller in Duluth. This head shop was a major problem. They went after this head shop. They prosecuted the owner. The owner was recently in his house and was found to have over $700,000 in plastic bags hidden in his bathroom. They won that case.

These are just a few of the major cases that office has worked on in recent years. I will be telling you more in the days to come.

After 888 days without a full-time boss, these hard-working people deserve a leader, and Mr. Luger is the right person for the job. Again, I am not up here speaking about this because anyone in the Senate objects to Mr. Luger for the job.

It is time we vote on Mr. Luger's nomination. In the past, as we know, U.S. attorney nominations have simply gone through on voice votes, without much hurrah, within a few days after they go through the committee. Mr.

Luger is a dedicated public servant and has the breadth of experience, strength of character, and commitment to justice that makes him a well-qualified candidate to serve as Minnesota's next U.S. attorney. I have no doubt that he will uphold the principles Justice Sutherland sought in that opinion in a U.S. attorney. I urge my colleagues to support Mr. Luger's confirmation and to finally give the Minnesota U.S. attorney's office and its hard-working prosecutor the full-time U.S. attorney they deserve.

I yield the floor and I suggest of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

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

THE FARM BILL

Mr. FRANKEN. Mr. President, I am very pleased that we were able to vote on and pass a badly needed and long-overdue 5-year farm bill today and that we are finally on the verge of enacting the legislation into law with the President's signature.

With one in five jobs in Minnesota connected to agriculture, passing this bill has been a top priority of mine. I have been working on it for over 2½ years, along with a large number of my colleagues, and I have gone all around Minnesota talking to farmers and businesses. They tell me not only did they want a 5-year farm bill, but they needed a 5-year farm bill so they could plan for the future. Well, we finally have gotten it done.

There are so many important pieces to this bill, and I want to speak about a few of them today.

When I meet with farm leaders and visit farms all across Minnesota, I hear over and over about the importance of providing farmers with a strong safety net. There is a lot of uncertainty when it comes to farming. Once a farmer puts his crop into the ground, the crops are vulnerable to drought, to too much rain, to disease, and different kinds of pests and to other natural disasters. In 2012, for example, we witnessed a terrible drought that devastated the Nation's corn and soybean crops and forced ranchers to cull their livestock.

All of these safety net programs in the bill are important because they protect our farmers and ranchers, and they also protect American consumers by making sure families have a reliable, domestically produced supply of food.

The bill provides disaster assurances for livestock producers. It contains a dairy program so our dairy producers have the certainty they need. It contains a sugar program to help protect our sugar growers, American sugar growers.

Minnesota is home to a large number of beet sugar growers, and the sugar industry provides thousands of good-paying jobs, American jobs, and billions of dollars to the economy of our region. I fought to make sure we kept this vital program in place.

This bill also includes crop insurance so farmers have certainty with respect to their planting decisions.

One of the things the farm bill does, which was very important to me and to so many people, is to link the crop insurance program to conservation. Minnesota farmers are good stewards of the land and understand how critical conservation is, and so do our hunters and our anglers. With this provision in the farm bill, when our farmers receive the crop insurance benefits, they also agree to implement conservation practices that are good for our land and for our water.

In addition to a strong safety net in the conservation provisions, the bill also contains many provisions that are very important to Minnesota agriculture. For example, I pushed to include provisions to support beginning farmers. With the average age of farmers in Minnesota approaching 60, we need to invest in a new generation of farmers and ranchers. That is why the beginning farmer and rancher program has been a priority of mine. This important program will support training and education for beginning farmers, and it will help new farmers overcome the steep financial hurdles they often face when starting.

I am also very proud of the comprehensive energy title of the bill, which I helped to author. The energy sector in agriculture produces jobs and supports rural communities in Minnesota and across the country. The energy title includes programs such as the Rural Energy for America Program—or REAP—which provides farmers and rural business services with loans and grants so they can invest in energy efficiency and renewable energy to reduce their energy bills.

It also includes programs to help rural America develop advanced biofuels that will help wean the Nation off of foreign oil. It also includes programs to help move the Nation away from a foreign petroleum economy, the way products are increasingly made out of homegrown renewable biomass. Those are only some of what I fought for in the bill. The bill does all of these critically important things while also reducing the deficit by billions of dollars.

Like all bipartisan compromises, the bill is not perfect. In particular, I am not happy with the cuts to the nutrition program on which so many low-income families rely. I am somewhat relieved in the end these cuts were closer to what was in the original Senate bill than the draconian cuts the House of Representatives had called for and passed in their bill. I appreciate the tough job, though, my colleagues had on their hands to arrive at a final compromise.

At the end of the day, this is an incredibly important piece of legislation that I and many colleagues on both sides of the aisle have been working to get over the finish line. I am pleased we have finally come together to pass a bipartisan 5-year farm bill that will make needed reforms and give farmers the certainty they need to plan for the future. The bill we passed will not only support rural America but our entire Nation.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Ms. WARREN). The Senator from Wyoming.

Mr. BARRASSO. Last week President Obama came to Congress and delivered the State of the Union Address. He admitted that under the Obama economy too many Americans are still out of work. The President didn't admit that his policies were to blame, but he did promise to act. He said: ''Wherever and whenever I can take steps without legislation to expand opportunity for more American families, that's what I am going to do.'' What the President promised all of us he promised the country last week.

I believe the President could start by coming clean about how his health care law is hurting jobs and harming middle-class Americans.

Just this morning, the Congressional Budget Office put out their estimate that the President's health care law will reduce the number of full-time workers by 2.3 million people by the year 2021. That includes people who will lose their jobs, people who will have their hours cut, and mostly people who will decide not to work. This is one of the perverse incentives in this terrible law. It actually encourages able-bodied people to not work. We are already faced with the lowest labor force participation rate we have seen in 35 years and this number they have come out with—over 2 million fewer jobs in our economy. When we were debating the health care in the Senate and the CBO came out with their estimate based on the way they read the law before it went into effect, they said this could negatively impact jobs and the economy to the tune of 800,000. Now we are at 2½ times that many—over 2 million fewer jobs—and as a result specifically of the health care law. We should be doing all we can to increase labor force participation. The health care law actually pushes it in the opposite direction.

The Congressional Budget Office also said this morning that the health care law will provide health insurance to 2 million fewer people this year than previous estimates had expected. One of the main reasons Democrats insisted they needed to pass this law in the first place was to cover uninsured people. Now the Congressional Budget Office doesn't even expect it to do the job the Democrats intended it to do very well.

The law is raising costs, it is hurting middle-class Americans, and not even helping the people the Democrats told us it was going to help in the first place. President Obama promised last week to act and to do something to

create jobs. What we see is this health care law is actually reducing jobs and reducing the number of people working. There are other things the President could do to help create jobs. The first thing, though, would be to work with Republicans to help repeal the health care law and come up with reforms that will actually work.

He could also look at a number of the options on the energy front that would help the private sector create jobs—no government money needed.

The President says he wants to do things that don't require legislation. Without any legislation at all, the President could approve the Keystone XL Pipeline and expand opportunity for thousands of American families.

Over the past 5 years, a small number of lawyers, consultants, bureaucrats, and environmental activists have made a living over haggling about the pipeline. Meanwhile, the President has turned his back on middle-class people who are in need of jobs, desperate need of jobs—people living in Montana, South Dakota, Nebraska, other States.

TransCanada submitted its application for a permit to build the Keystone XL Pipeline more than 5 years ago. Ever since, President Obama has wasted America's time and money grasping for excuses in order for him to be able to reject it.

The State Department's latest environmental review confirms yet again that the pipeline shows no significant environmental impact, and it will support more than 42,000 jobs. Last summer, the President sneered at those jobs. He said they were just ''a blip relative to the need.'' For out-of-work Americans, those jobs are more than a blip. For them, this is more than a pipeline, it is a lifeline. It is way past time for President Obama to quit stalling and to finally do the right thing for those Americans.

They say the definition of insanity is doing the same thing over and over and expecting different results. Yet the Obama administration has been doing the same thing over and over.

We have had a draft environmental impact statement. We have had a supplemental environmental impact statement, we have had a final environmental impact statement, then we have had a draft supplemental impact statement, and Friday we had the final supplemental environmental impact statement.

People at home listening to this would say why would it take 2 years—and it did, it took 2 years—to go from the supplemental draft environmental impact to the draft supplemental environmental impact statement. It makes no sense at all. This is the fifth report by the State Department and the conclusion is always the same. They could do this report another 5 times or another 50 times. The result is still going to be the same. It is a simple cost-benefit analysis. The cost is no significant environmental impact. The benefits are at least 42,000 jobs and a chance to reduce our dependence on overseas oil.

Now that the complaints from the far-left environmental extremists have been debunked, what do they say? According to the news reports, some will have protests and some are planning lawsuits. The Washington Post had a story this Sunday entitled ''For pipeline, the 'gut check' moment.'' It talked about some of the fanatical anti-energy protesters who refuse to accept the science. They want to pressure the President and Secretary of State Kerry to make sure these jobs never get created. This is one good quote: ''Neva Goodwin, co-director of the Global Development and Environment Institute at Tufts University and a contributor to Kerry's past campaigns, said that she will be opposing the pipeline in another way.''

The article quotes her as saying: ''I am working with an informal network of political donors that will be pushing Kerry to do the right thing.''

Political donors and activists on the left are committed to killing this pipeline, regardless of the science, regardless of the middle-class jobs, and regardless of what is in the best interests of the country.

I find it astonishing that former Energy Secretary Steven Chu said yesterday, on this very point, what about the science, what about the cost-benefit analysis. President Obama's former Secretary of Energy said yesterday: ''The decision on whether the construction should happen was a political one, not a scientific one.'' So much for the President of the United States saying the decision would be based on science.

The President's activist base will be mobilizing and fighting against good American jobs. So what does the administration itself say? It says it wants to wait for some more opinions.

The White House Chief of Staff said Sunday that the President wants officials from the Environmental Protection Agency, the Energy Department, and other agencies to tell him what they think. I know what the former Secretary of Energy thought. He said the decision on whether the construction should happen was a political decision, not a scientific one.

You don't need to look any further. Look at the history of the project. TransCanada applied to build this pipeline more than 5 years ago. The Obama administration has set deadlines and said it would make a decision. First, it was the end of 2011; then it was after the election in 2012; and then it was at the end of 2013. That is what President Obama promised Republican Senators when he met with us last March. The administration has missed every deadline, broken every promise. It is interesting because the last time the Senate voted on the subject, 17 Democrats joined every Republican to support the pipeline.

The Obama administration is still trying to find a way to evade and to avoid having to make a decision. This really ought to be embarrassing to an administration. President Obama was elected to make decisions. The science is settled. The President should be embarrassed when his former Secretary of Energy says the decision on whether the construction should happen was a political one and not a scientific one.

Any objections have been heard; they have been answered. There are no more excuses. It is time for the President to make up his mind. Is he going to follow the science or just the politics? He should approve the Keystone XL Pipeline. He should do it now. He should do the job he was elected to do so middle-class Americans can do the jobs they desperately want to do.

Madam President, I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Vermont.

Mr. LEAHY. Madam President, what is the parliamentary situation?

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The motion to proceed to S. 1963.

Mr. LEAHY. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent that I be allowed to speak for up to 10 minutes as in morning business.

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

SUPPORTING LAW ENFORCEMENT OFFICERS AND FIRST RESPONDERS

Mr. LEAHY. Madam President, last week, Attorney General Eric Holder appeared before the Senate Judiciary Committee for a regular oversight hearing. I appreciated the Attorney General's cooperation and willingness to appear before the Committee to discuss a variety of important matters. His testimony reminded us of the Justice Department's central role in carrying out the policy of Congress to support our Nation's law enforcement officers and first responders.

There is one vital program that provides support to the families of fallen law enforcement officers and other first responders, and that is the Public Safety Officers' Benefits Program—the PSOB. I am proud to have authored legislation that has expanded and improved the PSOB in important ways so that we honor the sacrifices made by our law enforcement officers and first responders. From my Hometown Heroes Survivors Benefits Act to the Dale Long Public Safety Officers' Benefits Improvement Act, I have fought to make sure that all of the families who have lost an officer or first responder are honored. We got those laws passed to honor the service of these dedicated first responders and we exercised considerable oversight to make sure the program was administered fairly and efficiently. We wish we didn't need the PSOB program because it is a reminder to Americans about the dangers law enforcement officers face every day. But because they do face those dangers, we need the program. I thank the Attorney General for his leadership and commitment to making this program more responsive to Congressional intent and more effective for grieving families.

Sadly, in 2013, the National Law Enforcement Officers Memorial Fund reported that 111 law enforcement officers in the United States were killed in the line of duty. This preliminary data reflects an eight percent decrease from the number of officer fatalities in 2012, and amounts to the fewest line of duty deaths in more than five decades. This trend is good news, but Congress must not let up on its effort to increase officer safety. Every single line-of-duty death represents enormous tragedy for the families but also for the communities of these officers.

For decades, Congress has been steadfast in its support of law enforcement officers, and has traditionally maintained policies to increase officer safety and well-being. Until recently, Congress has acted decisively in support of those who dedicate themselves to protecting their communities. As someone who had the privilege to serve in law enforcement for 8 years, I am so proud of what we have done in the past. But now, for some reason, there are some in Congress who do not believe the support of law enforcement officers and first responders can be a Federal responsibility. I disagree. I remain committed to fighting for all of our State and local law enforcement officials.

Last fall the Senate Judiciary Committee reported two important bills to support our Nation's law enforcement officers. Both bills would help protect the lives of law enforcement officers. Both have been approved in this body for immediate passage by every single Democratic Senator. Unfortunately, there are some Republican Senators who continue to obstruct passage of both bills in the Senate. I worry that some are putting ideology ahead of the safety of our law enforcement officers.

More than a decade ago, a Republican Senator from Colorado, Senator Ben Nighthorse Campbell, and I joined forces—again, because both of us had a law enforcement background—and we authored the Bulletproof Vest Partnership Grant Act. We worked across the aisle to get both Republicans and Democrats to support us, and we created a grant program that has assisted State and local law enforcement agencies in purchasing more than 1 million protective vests.

In fact, Madam President, I remember a police officer who testified before the Judiciary Committee telling us how much he loved law enforcement, but what he loved even more was his family, his parents, his wife, and his children. When he talked, he said: I came within a second of never being with them again. He said: This is what saved me. He pulled up from under the desk a bulletproof vest and we could see the slugs stuck in it. He said: I was ambushed and had a cracked rib, but later that day I saw my family. Without this vest and the Bulletproof Vest Partnership Grant Act, I never would have seen my family again.

Between 2000 and 2010, the Bulletproof Vest Partnership Grant Act has been reauthorized three times by unanimous consent. Bulletproof vests have saved the lives of more than 3,000 law enforcement officers. These are officers who put their own lives on the line. They do not stop to say: Wait a minute, how did people vote on the bulletproof vest act? They respond when they are called.

Unfortunately, since 2012, a few Republican Senators have blocked passage of this bill and thwarted the vast majority of senators who want to see this program reauthorized so that it can continue to save the lives of those who keep our communities safe. There is no dispute that the Bulletproof Vest Partnership program saves lives. In testimony before the Senate Judiciary Committee in February 2012, the Government Accountability Office noted that since 1987, bulletproof vests have saved the lives of more than 3,000 law enforcement officers. I am disappointed we can't all come together to promote the safety of our Nation's law enforcement officers who put their lives on the line every day to ensure our safety. It is our duty to support them and I call on all senators to stand with them and pass this important legislation.

Madam President, I remember walking down the street in a town in Colorado and a police officer in uniform walked up to me and asked: Are you Senator LEAHY? I said: I am. He tapped his chest, and you could hear the thunk, thunk of the bulletproof vest, and he said: I want to thank you, and I want to thank Senator Campbell. That is all he said. I was choked up listening to him.

The Judiciary Committee also reported the National Blue Alert Act. This is a bipartisan bill. It passed the House of Representatives by an overwhelming majority of Republicans and Democrats. The National Blue Alert Act would create a national alert system to notify all State and Federal law enforcement agencies with critical information when an officer is injured or killed in the line of duty. I am a proud cosponsor of it. It is sponsored by Senator CARDIN and Senator GRAHAM, a key Democrat and Republican. This bill would help apprehend a fugitive suspected of seriously injuring or killing a law enforcement officer and who is fleeing through multiple jurisdictions. It defies common sense that any senator would object to this legislation, which contains no fiscal authorization and is universally supported by law enforcement leaders across the country.

In recent weeks, some Senators have expressed concern for the safety of law enforcement officers in the context of the Senate confirmation process. I do not question that these Senators are as concerned as I am about the safety of law enforcement officers, but I invite those who have expressed concern before the cameras for the well-being of law enforcement officers to come here and support the two bills I have discussed today and end the needless obstruction of this proven commonsense legislation. Do your press conferences, if you want. Say you are in favor of law enforcement. Who is going to be against law enforcement? But then prove it. Let us get these passed.

I am proud that every Democratic member has supported it, and most Republicans do. Those few who are opposed, let us vote. In the coming weeks, as the Senate moves closer to recognizing our Nation's fallen law enforcement officers during National Police Week in May, I intend to come to the floor to seek unanimous consent to pass these long-stalled bills. If Senators want to oppose them, fine, vote against them, but they ought to be willing to join me on the floor and explain those objections to the thousands of law enforcement officers and families who will soon gather in Washington to honor those who have made the ultimate sacrifice in service to their fellow citizens.

Our law enforcement officers risk their lives every day to keep us safe. They deserve a Congress that does more than just talk about their service. They deserve protection.

One of the saddest days I ever spent as State's attorney was going to the funeral of a police officer killed in the line of duty. It was a snowy day in Vermont. The snow was falling gently from the sky, and there were several miles of police cars—their blue lights reflected against the white snow. Such a peaceful scene—but not for the family of that police officer. I said to myself that I would do everything I could to protect them, and I appreciate those Republicans and Democrats who have joined me on this. We cannot bring back a fallen officer but we can and we must work together to protect the next one who may come under fire. I call on friends from across the aisle to join all the rest of us, and your fellow Republicans who have already joined, to protect law enforcement officers. Let us immediately reauthorize the Bulletproof Vest Partnership Grant Act, and let us pass Senator CARDIN and Senator GRAHAM's National Blue Alert Act.

We have many—I know in my office—who have worked on this. I will mention Matt Virkstis, whose background is at the Vermont Law School, that some in this body are well aware of, such as our distinguished Senate Parliamentarian. But I also appreciate all those police officers—and I have no idea what their politics are—who come in to say thank you to those of us who have supported the Bulletproof Vest Partnership program. It is such an easy thing to do. It should be noncontroversial. Let us get back to the days where, when we have something noncontroversial, we just pass it. Together we can honor the service of those who keep us safe.

Madam President, I yield the floor.

I see my dear friend is here, so I will not suggest the absence of a quorum. I yield the floor, and I yield back the remainder of my time.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Indiana.

THE DEBT AND DEFICIT

Mr. COATS. Madam President, I returned to the Senate in 2011 to tackle what I believed to be the greatest challenge facing our country, and I have devoted much of my first 3 years in this returned term on working to achieve a debt reduction agreement that would put our Nation on a path to fiscal health and fiscal responsibility.

I have been involved in discussions for endless hours and days and months with my colleagues on both sides of the aisle—Republicans and Democrats—with the administration and with outside groups over trying to put together a long-term deficit and debt reduction plan that will put us on the path to fiscal health, to finding a way forward to deal with our ever mounting debt.

I am committed to working with my colleagues and the administration on this issue because I believe, ultimately, the most important thing we can do for the future of our country, for future generations—the most important legacy we can leave during our term of service here—is to solve our Nation's fiscal crisis.

Recently, we have heard relatively little about this. Despite efforts which have been ongoing for the last 4 to 6 years, we have not come to a resolution; we have not come to an agreement which puts us at the beginning of a path to resolve this problem. Yet each year it mounts. Our debt dramatically increases. We continue on deficit spending.

Even though we have made a few efforts to reduce deficit spending to half of what it has been—at least for this coming year, based on the sequester and the implication of that—it is also clear that this is temporary. It is also clear that whether we reduce it in half or not, the other half still amounts to more than half a trillion dollars of excess spending, driving our debt higher and higher.

I am privileged to serve as the senior Republican Senator on the Joint Economic Committee. We spend a fair amount of time looking at the projections for the future and how they ought to shape our actions here in the Congress, as well as how we should work with the administration in terms of dealing with this issue.

The Congressional Budget Office is a nonpartisan group who deals with numbers, not with politics—at least they are not supposed to. They bring about their annual ''Budget and Economic Outlook,'' which was released today. Looking at it is shocking. Never has my conviction been stronger than today when I read this outlook which has just been released. It addresses issues important for all of us. I am going to talk about just the top 10. But if this is not a siren call to us to refocus our efforts on this issue, we are going to regret to the end of our lives not having taken action to begin the process of getting this country's fiscal health and responsibility back in order.

Again, this is the Congressional Budget Office—a nonpartisan group established by this body to deal with numbers and give us facts and projections from economists who give us the opportunity then to look at how we shape policies.

I was stunned by the CBO report, and I would like to share the shocking findings. I hope every Member of Congress will look at this. I am going to distribute it on behalf of the Joint Economic Committee so we have access to this. But it ought to send a shock wave through all of us, and it ought to provide us with the courage and the will to step up and do what I think we all know we need to do.

Finding No. 1. The national debt has exploded over the last several years. Gross Federal debt in 2014 is projected to reach $17.7 trillion, which is a figure larger than our entire economy and an increase of over $7 trillion in just the last 5 years under this President.

Point No. 2. CBO projects cumulative deficits from 2014–2023 to be $1 trillion larger than last year's projection for the same time period.

Last year was startling enough. Now we learn—after 1 year of sequestration, holding down spending, and speeches on this floor saying we are getting control of this, CBO comes along and says the cumulative deficits from 2014 to 2023 will be $1 trillion larger than they thought just last year. So while we are congratulating ourselves for holding down spending, we are told we are adding $1 trillion more than was projected and anticipated last year.

Now we are dealing with the so-called Affordable Care Act—yet to be proven to be affordable. CBO says that ObamaCare will reduce the number of full-time workers by 2.3 million people through 2021. At a time when this was sold as a plan to put Americans back to work, as something that would reduce our deficit because we would get control of out-of-control health care spending, we are told by the Congressional Budget Office that the number of full-time workers will decrease by 2.3 million. This is a significant increase from the last estimate of 800,000 during the same time period. So we have gone from an 800,000 projection not that long ago to 2.3 million.

Point No. 4. Mandatory spending—particularly our health and retirement security programs—is crowding out all other priorities. The Congressional Budget Office once again has said that as we look at our total budget, the mandatory spending continues to crowd out all other spending priorities.

This figure stood out and stunned me because it is the first time I have seen such an extraordinary jump in the mandatory spending percentage of our total spending.

On mandatory spending, CBO says interest on the debt is projected to consume 94 percent of all Federal revenues 10 years from now, squeezing out funding for all other priorities. Squeezing out? Eliminating. We are entering the season when interest groups from our State come with many creative and innovative ideas as to how they could better spend or spend more money on their particular programs.

They come in and say, ''We are here to encourage you to increase spending for medical research at the National Institutes of Health'' or, ''We are here to have you understand how important scholarship grants, Pell grants, and others are for enrollment of students in our States'' or, ''We are here to talk about the need to improve our infrastructure, to pave our roads and fill potholes and build and repair and establish new infrastructure for the movement of water, sewage treatment.'' On and on it goes. We can go right down the list of literally hundreds of requests as to how tax dollars ought to be spent to better improve our States, to better improve our health, to better improve our education, to better improve a whole range of things, including support for national security.

I have to look them in the eye and say: Every year we have a smaller pot of money percentage-wise of our budget to apply to all these discretionary spending programs which Congress has to approve every year.

I say: I am really not here to argue about whether money for the National Institutes of Health is more important than money for education grants or money for infrastructure development or any other endeavor in which the Federal Government is involved.

Every year all of these are going to be faced with less money to fund these programs. Some of them ought to receive less and some of them ought to be closed and the waste and fraud ought to be eliminated. Nevertheless, there are essential functions that need to be funded, and they won't be able to be funded adequately and will continue to shrink as the mandatory spending runs out of control.

But to think that of all the revenue—all the tax dollars that come into the Treasury 10 years from now, 94 percent will be spent on programs we have no control over and won't be available for any of the things I mentioned and dozens—if not more—of programs. It is simply unsustainable. Ninety-four percent. Six percent left to provide for our national security and national defense, our institutes of health, education, infrastructure development, manufacturing innovation, research and development—you name it.

CBO also said Social Security is in jeopardy. They project that Social Security ''will continue to run cash flow deficits every year during the next decade.'' And the disability insurance trust fund will be insolvent by 2017. That is 3 years away.

Let me repeat that. The Congressional Budget Office said that at the current rate the Social Security disability insurance trust fund will be insolvent in 3 years.

They also said mandatory spending on health care programs is exploding.

We have heard it said on this floor and we have heard it mentioned in the State of the Union Address and by the administration numerous times, that we are getting control of our exploding health care costs through the Affordable Care Act. In 2013 the Federal Government spent $861 billion on Medicare, Medicaid, and other major health care programs. This year the collective cost is expected to reach $933 billion and then nearly double by the year 2024 to $1.8 trillion. I don't call that getting control of our health care costs. Yet this mandatory spending part of our budget will continue to grow to the point where we simply have no money left for any other function of government.

All this, of course, is based on interest rates and the assumption as to what they will be. CBO says interest on our debt is set to double. Annual interest payments on the national debt are estimated to more than double over the next 10 years from 1.3 percent of our gross domestic product in 2014 to 3.3 percent of GDP in 2024. And we know from the past that estimates of what will happen with interest rates will drive that rate higher, particularly as our fiscal crisis gets more desperate.

Point No. 8. Again, the Congressional Budget Office says: We have a spending problem and not a taxing problem. Projected revenues will exceed the 40-year historical average of gross domestic product this year and outpace growth in our economy over the next 10 years.

So they say the problem isn't too little revenue. That is going to continue to pour in here as we continue to raise taxes. But you can't raise taxes fast enough or adequate enough without, one, destroying our economy or limiting our economy, but, secondly, to keep pace with the spending, which will hit its projected average of 20.5 percent this year and over the next 10 years outpace economic growth to a greater degree.

CBO notes that ''after 2024, the long-term trajectory of spending will drive up debt to nearly unprecedented levels.

Let me repeat that. This is a quote from the Congressional Budget Office: ''After 2024, the long-term trajectory of spending will drive up debt to nearly unprecedented levels.''

CBO suggests that such an upward path would ultimately be unsustainable.

Point No. 9. Labor force participation will continue to decline over the next several years. CBO projects that labor participation will drop to 62.5 percent by the end of 2017, fueled in part by the mandates in the Affordable Care Act and negative impact on job creators as a result.

Point No. 10. The Congressional Budget Office suggests that even these dire projections may be overly optimistic. CBO projects real economic growth of 3.1 percent, which is notably higher than private sector and IMF estimates of 2.4 percent to 2.8 percent. CBO says that it ''would probably trim its projection of GDP growth'' in 2014, based on late-2013 data. So the numbers we are dealing with today may be overly optimistic. As dire as this report is, it may be that we are underestimating the damage that will come from our inability to control spending and put us on a path to fiscal health.

This isn't another siren alerting Washington to the stark reality of our country desperately needing a real debt reduction agreement; this is, a five-alarm fire. Our fiscal house is engulfed in flames. The question is, When are we, who have been given the responsibility by the people we represent, going to have the courage to stand and do something about this, to put out this fire?

We cannot overlook the fact that our Nation is facing record deficits as far as the eye can see. We are careening on an unsustainable, unstable fiscal path. We need all hands on deck to address this now—not tomorrow, not after the next election. How many times have we heard, after this next election, we need to dig down and roll up our sleeves and take on this challenge. We need to do this now because the threat is now.

A credible, long-term plan to reduce our debt and put our country back on a path of fiscal health and economic growth and opportunity is the only way we can preserve the America we enjoy today or have enjoyed in the past. It is the only way to preserve that for future generations. So I think we have a generational responsibility that is as important as any we have faced before.

Many say our legacy rests on what we do here. Whether that is true, we certainly will be measured by what we do or what we don't do relative to this particular crisis. Again, this is not a Republican conservative standing and saying: This is how I see things. I am simply reciting how the entity we turn to, the Congressional Budget Office—a neutral body which just does the math and then draws conclusions from it—actually, we draw the conclusions; they put the numbers down. This is what the Congressional Budget Office has told us. These are stunning numbers, much more than any of us anticipated. I think there has been a little lull of us thinking: Well, we have things under control. We had sequester; that was kind of messy, but it did save some money. Now we have a budget. We are going forward and back to regular order.

What is regular order? Regular order is continuing to spend more than a one-half trillion dollars more than we bring in, in revenue. Raising taxes, according to CBO, is not going to solve the problem; that just hinders economic growth.

So those of us on both sides of this body who have worked to address these issues now, not later; those of us who have worked with the administration—and I was part of a small group working with the administration over a 7-month period of time with the President directly and with some of his top advisers to try to put something in place, as modest as it was or as it seemed to end up being—and we were not even able to complete that. That burden, that responsibility, that legacy rests on our shoulders. That duty rests on our shoulders, to acknowledge these facts, acknowledge these numbers, and to understand what impact it is going to have on the future of this country, our children and grandchildren, everybody's children and grandchildren, and perhaps even our generation.

So I will be distributing this report from Republicans on the Joint Economic Committee. I am hoping our report sends out yet another alarm, and we will not simply rest on the fact that we have made a baby step here in terms of getting some control over our spending. But as we turn around—akin to a little grass fire over here that we put out across the street while the five-alarmer is burning away, blazing away, and we are saying we will deal with it later. We can't deal with it later. We must deal with it now.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Connecticut.

Mr. MURPHY. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent to engage in a colloquy with the Senator from Hawaii for up to 20 minutes.

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

COLLEGE AFFORDABILITY AND INNOVATION ACT

Mr. MURPHY. Madam President, I am on the floor with my colleague Senator SCHATZ from Hawaii to talk about our recent introduction of a piece of legislation entitled ''The College Affordability and Innovation Act of 2014,'' which we introduced along with our good friends Senator MURRAY of Washington and Senator SANDERS of Vermont.

By way of framing the conversation we will have today, I wish to speak about one particular college that maybe paints a picture of the crisis we are in today with respect to the mounting cost that confronts kids and families when they want to get a college education and the variety of outcomes—the frankly surprising and often shocking variety of outcomes—that students are getting when they show up at the doors of institutions of education, particularly institutions of for-profit education. Corinthian College is a school in California—not a small one but a pretty big college. It has about 100 campuses in 25 different States. Let me give some statistics about Corinthian College. After about a year, over half of the students who enroll drop out. When they are finished with their education, whether it be to a degree or not, about one-third of all students who go to Corinthian default on their student loans. If 56 percent isn't a bad enough number in terms of 1-year dropout rates, after 4 years, only 6 percent of all the kids who walk in

through the doors of Corinthian College get a degree—6 percent of those kids.

Affordability isn't an argument in favor of this school either. For a legal assistant degree, they charge $28,000, but down the street at a community college a person can get that same degree for $2,500. They have a 35-percent default rate, a 6-percent 4-year graduation rate, and degrees that can cost 14 times as much as comparable local schools.

Guess what. The Federal Government rewards this school with $1.6 billion in Federal aid every year and $500 million in Pell grant money every year. So this example, which frankly can be repeated over and over, especially in the for-profit world, speaks to the challenge we have.

We have done a very credible job over the course of the last few years in keeping down the interest rate we charge students who want to take out loans to go to school. No one has worked harder on this issue inside this body and outside this body than the Presiding Officer. But we also have to have a concurrent conversation about the sticker price of college because it can't be enough that we are facilitating student borrowing; we actually have to try to engage in a real effort, using Federal leverage, for the first time perhaps in our history of Federal higher education policy, to push the cost of tuition down in the first place. That is what the College Affordability and Innovation Act seeks to do.

As Senator SCHATZ will talk about, there aren't a lot of issues that are much more important to the middle class than the cost of higher education. We both know that. We have partnered on this piece of legislation in part because not only are we not that far away from the time in our lives when we were in college, but we are paying back our student loans and saving for our kids' education, so we get how much of an annual budget can be taken up in paying for both prior and saving for future college. So we attack this problem in two ways—and I will just briefly speak about the first way and then I think the Senator from Hawaii can speak a little bit about the second method.

First, we think it is time for a little bit more innovation when it comes to the way in which college is structured. There is no magic to the fact that today one has to sit in a classroom for 4 years, taking a requisite amount of credits, in order to get a degree. There is a lot of interesting innovation happening out there where a small subset of schools are saying: Wait a second. Maybe there is a different way to do it.

For instance, maybe we should award a degree based on the competencies a student gets, regardless of whether the student needs 2 years or 3 years or 4 years to get that degree or, for instance, maybe we should give students who show up at their freshman year of school with prior learning more credit for that, whether they got that experience studying at a high school or in the work force or in the military. Some students don't have to start as a freshman; some students can start as a sophomore or a junior.

Maybe it is a renewed effort to consolidate graduate programs with undergraduate programs. I think President Obama is right; one doesn't need 7 years to become a lawyer in this country. It doesn't make a lot of sense that one has to essentially spend 10 to 15 years in education and training to become a doctor. We can consolidate graduate and undergraduate programs.

But whatever we do, we have to admit that one of the easiest ways to reduce the cost of a degree is to reduce the time it takes to get a degree. So the first part of our bill focuses on giving some grants to a small number of schools to build out the right way to do competency-based degree programming or initiatives to give greater credit for prior learning or consolidations of graduate and undergraduate degrees.

We introduced this piece of legislation because we think it is time to start having a real conversation about what the Federal Government can do to control and lower the price of college education. It is breaking the bank for families. We can do something about it. If we didn't have any tools at our disposal, maybe this wouldn't be a worthwhile conversation, but we give out $140 billion in Federal aid every year, and it is about time we start demanding some accountability for that money, whether it is accountability for cost or accountability for quality. It doesn't make sense for taxpayers to be sending $1.6 billion a year to a school with a 6-percent graduation rate, a 38-percent loan default rate, and prices that are simply not competitive in the landscape of college education.

I am pleased to be on the floor with my colleague Senator SCHATZ, and I am happy to turn the floor over to him.

Mr. SCHATZ. Madam President, I thank the Senator from Connecticut for his partnership on this legislation. He has been a real friend and a true partner. We are happy to have the support of Senator MURRAY from Washington as well as Senator SANDERS. They have been working on this issue for a long time.

This is the middle class issue of our time. It doesn't just belong to college-aged students; it belongs to all of us. Senator MURPHY spoke about how important it is for those of us who have young children and are beginning the process of trying to save for our children's college education, but it also belongs to the grandparents' generation. So many people are thinking about whether they can help their kids to ameliorate their existing student loans or their grandkids to be able to afford college.

As Senator MURPHY mentioned, we spend almost $150 billion in some form or fashion on Federal financial aid for institutions of higher learning, and that is good. That is a matter of national strategy. That is about the American dream. That is about the premise that the President talked about in his State of the Union Address, which is that if people work hard and play by the rules, they can move up the economic ladder. Higher education is one of the best ways to do that. It always has been in the United States of America. But here is the problem. The Senator from Connecticut talked about an individual example, but let me give the aggregate data.

Over the last 10 years, we have spent 20 percent more and we have gotten 25 percent less. We are spending 20 percent more and we are getting 25 percent less. That means that although our investment in higher education and theoretically in college affordability has increased, the net cost for students has gone up by 25 percent. We now have more than $1 trillion in student loan debt. It is the second largest source of debt, to mortgage interest, and it has now outpaced credit card debt.

This is a real crisis not just on the consumer level but as a matter of economic strategy for our Nation, because to the degree and extent that young people or people who want retraining or people who want to get a culinary degree or become a master carpenter or who want to become an architect or a doctor start to evaluate higher education and decide it is not a good value anymore, that doesn't just impact their individual family or their individual community but it impacts our national economic strategy.

College is no longer affordable to many people, and that is despite the fact that we are spending more in raw dollars and in inflation-adjusted dollars than ever before.

Senator MURPHY talked about the innovation portion of this legislation. We also have an accountability portion of this legislation. Here is the basic premise: As an institution of higher education, if you are a for-profit, if you are a not-for-profit, or even if you are a public institution, it is not the Federal Government's job to determine what your mission may be. And certainly if you are a private for-profit, we are not here to dictate your organization's mission. But a for-profit institution has no special right to Federal funding. If you are going to receive billions of dollars in Federal subsidies, we think it is reasonable, as we endeavor to reauthorize the Higher Education Act, that we tie some reasonable public policy strings to those dollars.

All we are saying is that we want institutions of higher learning—and especially their leadership—to wake up every morning and not think first about profits, not think first about how they are going to market to find more customers, but to think about access and affordability. And what we are saying is that different institutions may have different missions. A community college has a different mission than a

training institute, and a 4-year institution has a different mission than a graduate institution. That is all fine, and that is why we have established in this legislation an independent commission, comprised of experts, to determine what matrix of incentives and possible penalties would be appropriate for each institution.

But here is the bottom line: We are spending more and getting less, and we are spending $150 billion. This system is not working, and we are pleased to have the support of several of our colleagues. We are going to be enlisting the support of many others.

I am looking forward to continuing the conversation with the Senator from Connecticut.

Mr. MURPHY. I thank Senator SCHATZ.

Here is another statistic to think about: It was not so long ago that we ranked first in the Nation with respect to 25-year-olds to 35-year-olds with college degrees, and that was not only a source of immense pride for this country but really the genesis of our economic greatness—that we turned out more college-educated young people than any other country in the world. In a very short period of time we slipped from 1st to not 2nd or 3rd or 4th but to 12th. We are now 12th in the world with respect to the number of 25- to 35-year-olds with college degrees.

Part of the reason for that is that a lot of other countries have caught up to the United States. But the crisis in this country is no longer just a crisis of access. That was the buzzword for a long time, that we needed to increase access to college. We now have a crisis of completion in which millions of students are starting school and not finishing for a variety of reasons but largely because of the astronomical cost.

Today the majority of students are not graduating in 6 years. So the issue about affordability is not just about attracting more kids into the doors of college—because I will tell you, as I am sure Senator SCHATZ does, I talk to a lot of kids who graduate high school and do not apply to schools in my State because they are scared off by the cost and they do not believe they are going to be able to put together the family resources to pay for it—but we also are losing a generation of workers because it is taking young people now 6, 7, 8 years to complete a degree, and often many of them are never completing that degree while still taking on loan after loan after loan and getting stuck in the worst possible situation whereby they have thousands of dollars in debt and no certificate to bring into the workforce.

So our effort is an effort to address cost because we care about access, but it is also an effort to address cost because we care about completion, and that is one of the big problems we have in our system today.

Mr. SCHATZ. I think the Senator is exactly right about that one. Let me give you some data. In 2011 only 38 percent of undergraduate students in a 4-year institution graduated on time. So when you think about the cost of college, you think about the per-year cost. But if it is taking 6 or 7 years, then the per-year cost is not as important as how realistic it is for you to finish on time. Just to be clear, those data could be skewed by the fact that there are part-time students and all the rest of it. That is not what we are talking about here. It is simply hard to finish on time.

But there is hope on the horizon. For instance, the University of Hawaii has undertaken a program called 15 to Finish. The basic idea is that students, especially in their freshman year, need to know that they need those 15 credits. They need to get help from their counselors so that by the time they are in their sophomore year, they are well on their way to completing their major of choice in the 4-year period of time.

The challenge now is that given that legislatures have cut funding to institutions of higher learning—and as a result you have fewer counselors and fewer people to assist in the student services office—oftentimes you do not get real counseling with respect to what you need until it is too late, and then you find that you are on a 5- or 6-year plan. Your family may not have made the financial arrangement that puts you in a position to be on the 5-year plan.

From a revenue standpoint, if your mission as an institution—for-profit or not-for-profit—is just to fill those seats and to generate those dollars, then that does not matter to you. But the challenge we have right now is that the institutions—the publicly traded ones—have pressures to generate profits. But even the not-for-profits and even the public institutions—the Universities of Hawaii and the Universities of Connecticut—have had their funding reduced by the legislatures. So their CFOs are trying to figure out new revenue streams, and as long as they can keep enrollment up, that enables them to go back to their legislature and say: We are in the black.

What we are saying is that is not good enough. We are not asking you to be in the black. We certainly understand the need to be fiscally responsible. We certainly understand the need to generate tuition revenue. But here is the thing: The point of higher education is for students to be able to move up that economic ladder, and to the extent that not only is it not accomplishing that goal, but it is actually doing the opposite for some of our students, they end up with a mountain of debt and either no degree or a degree that they find does not make them employable in the marketplace. That is a national shame. That is why we have to address this issue.

The good news is we believe we are spending a sufficient amount of money on the Federal level so we can effectuate these changes just by saying: If you want to receive Federal dollars for your institution of higher learning, then we are asking you to focus on access and affordability.

I want to give one last piece of data because it actually shocked me, even as much as I have been working on this issue. The for-profit institutions comprise about 12 percent of the students and 30 percent of the Federal dollars. Madam President, 12 percent of the students and 30 percent of the Federal dollars.

So while there are institutions that are for-profit that are doing great work and there are not-for-profits and public institutions that have to do a lot better, let's call it like it is.

One of the major challenges here is we have to wrap our arms around undue profits and publicly traded companies that are generating profits and spending Federal dollars on marketing to students and not providing very much in the way of value.

Mr. MURPHY. Let's be clear as to what we are talking about here. We believe we are talking about a pretty light hand of accountability in the sense that we are really going after the true outliers. The Senator talked about the work happening at the University of Hawaii or the University of Connecticut. We do not imagine that any flagship university is going to run afoul of these accountability standards. I, frankly, do not believe many public universities at all are going to run afoul of these standards. We are really talking about the handful of outliers that have just absolutely abysmal retention rates, graduation rates, default rates, or tuition increase rates.

We are also talking about, we think, a pretty nuanced process to try to bring those schools around before they lose eligibility for funding. Our bill says that if you are not meeting these standards, you have a pretty long period of time in which you would be on probation with no practical effects, in which you could set upon an action plan to improve your affordability or outcomes. Then if, after that period of time, you still were not hitting your benchmarks, then you lose 10 percent of your Federal aid, then 20 percent, and then finally, in the fourth or fifth years, you would become ineligible. That is plenty of time for a university to correct. But if a school that is starting out with a 6-percent graduation rate cannot improve that over 5 years, why on Earth would we continue to send $1 billion to that school when it could be used for students who are attending schools that care a lot more about quality education?

Mr. SCHATZ. I think the Senator is exactly right. We had the Senator from Indiana talking about debt and deficits and making sure we spend every Federal dollar intelligently. Right now, we are simply not spending this money in the most efficient and efficacious way possible. That is what this legislation is about.

Senator MURPHY and I talked about how it might have been a little more

politically satisfying in the short run to put hard caps on college tuition and precipitous goals that would have been very easy for us to articulate. But the fact is, given that you have different institutions with different missions and you have great work being done at the community college level, at the certificate level, and at the 4-year and at the graduate level, we wanted to account for the different missions, and we wanted to make sure we did not create the kind of incentive program that, for instance, would prevent an institution from wanting to take a kid in who is from a lower income area and maybe, statistically speaking, is more likely to default on his or her loan.

We really want, as a matter of policy, to focus on access. So it is access; it is affordability; it is the consistency with the mission. But here we are spending $150 billion—more than we ever have—on this national priority, and our results are worse than ever. So the status quo cannot stand, and I am really looking forward to working with my colleague on this important issue.

Mr. MURPHY. As we wrap up our time on the floor, when my great-grandfather came to this country, he knew that without a college education he could get a job pretty easily that would be able to put food on the table, have decent health care for his family, even provide him with a little bit of a pension that would take care of him. His son, my grandfather, followed him into that same profession, working for a ball bearing factory in New Britain, CT.

While those jobs still exist, they are getting rarer and rarer. For the next generation to succeed, we know they need access to a college degree. They are not getting that access to completion because we have been woefully inadequate in using the tools at our disposal at the Federal level to try to put pressure on colleges to deliver on both affordability and outcome.

We hope the introduction of the College Affordability and Innovation Act will allow us to open a new front in the debate on higher education to promote the idea of reducing the sticker price of college.

I thank my colleague for joining me, and I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Rhode Island.

Mr. WHITEHOUSE. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent to speak for about 15 minutes, perhaps as many as 17 minutes.

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

CLIMATE CHANGE

Mr. WHITEHOUSE. Madam President, I come to the floor today for the 57th consecutive week that the Senate has been in session to urge my colleagues to wake up to what carbon pollution is doing to our atmosphere and oceans.

I have described Congress as surrounded by a barricade of lies. Today I will be more specific. There is not just lying going on about climate change; there is a whole carefully built apparatus of lies. This apparatus is big and artfully constructed, phony-baloney organizations designed to look and sound as if they are real, messages honed by public relations experts to sound as if they are truthful, payroll scientists whom polluters can trot out when they need them, and the whole thing big and complicated enough that when you see its parts, you could be fooled into thinking it is not all the same beast. But it is, just like the mythological Hydra—many heads, same beast. So this speech is going to be about that beast.

A recent research article published by Dr. Robert Brulle, a professor of sociology and environmental science at Drexel University, describes the beast.

He joins a tradition of scholarship in this area, including work by Naomi Oreskes, Aaron McCright, and Riley Dunlap, each of whom has studied the forces behind climate denial; and David Rosner and Gerald Markowitz, who explored chemical and lead industry campaigns to deceive Americans about the dangers of those products.

The intricate, interconnected propaganda web and funding network of this climate denial beast encompasses over 100 organizations, including industry trade associations, conservative think tanks, and plain old phony front groups for polluter interests. It has even co-opted media outlets, a phenomenon I chronicled in an earlier speech about the Wall Street Journal editorial page becoming a tool of polluter propaganda.

So let's take a look at this climate denial beast, and how polluter money and dark money flows through its veins. This chart from Dr. Brulle's report shows the complex interconnection of the beast's major players. The green diamonds are the big funders, the Koch-affiliated foundations, the Scaife-affiliated foundations, the American Petroleum Institute, and so on.

The blue circles are the who's-who of climate denial groups: the Heartland Institute—they are the group that compared folks concerned about climate change to the Unabomber, to give you a sense of what sort of people they are—the American Enterprise Institute, right here, the Hoover Institution, the Heritage Foundation, the Cato Institute, the Mercatus Center, to name just a few.

The purpose of this network, to quote the report, is ''a deliberate and organized effort to misdirect the public discussion and distort the public's understanding of climate.''

To misdirect and distort. The coordinated tactics of this network, the report shows, and I will quote again, ''span a wide range of activities, including political lobbying, contributions to political candidates, and a large number of communication and media efforts that aim at undermining climate science.''

That is the beast. Big money flows through it, more than half a billion dollars. The Drexel University report chronicles that from 2003 to 2010, 140 foundations made grants totaling $558 million to 91 organizations that actively oppose climate action. It looks like a big beast to build just to propagate climate denial. But if you look at carbon emissions from fossil fuels, which in 2011 EPA estimated to be over 5.6 billion metric tons of carbon dioxide—so take 5.6 billion tons of carbon dioxide and then multiple that by the social cost of carbon, the economic and health costs that the polluters cause and inflict on the rest of society, which OMB recently set at $37 per metric of $CO_2$—5.6 metric tons of carbon dioxide emitted, $37 per metric ton of $CO_2$ on the social cost of carbon. Just 1 year's emissions will cost roughly 200 billion—with a B—dollars. So the stakes are pretty high for the polluters. If they were to pay for the harm they are causing, half a billion dollars through the beast, over 7 years, to get away with $200 billion of harm every year is a bargain.

More than that, a lot of this machinery was already built. The beast did not spring up at once full grown, it grew over time—in industry-fueled campaigns to obscure the dangers of cigarette smoke, of acid rain, of ozone depletion. Who knows. There are probably parts of it that go back to the benefits of requiring seat belts and airbags in cars.

Looking back on the effects of these industry-funded campaigns of denial, we see that real people were hurt. But the denial machinery stalled action and made the wrongdoers money. It worked. So now the climate denial machine, the beast, is calling plays from the same playbook and even using many of the same front organizations.

So who is behind this base? Unfortunately for the proponents of transparency, a large portion of the funding is not traceable. Much of the money fueling the beast is laundered through organizations which exist to conceal donor identity. Some of the organizations examined by Dr. Brulle get over 90 percent of their money from hidden sources. Indeed, more than one-third of these organizations get over 90 percent of their money from hidden sources. The biggest identity laundering shop is Donors Trust and Donors Capital Fund. Indeed, it is by far the biggest source of funding in this web. These twin entities reported giving a combined $78 million to climate denier groups between 2003 and 2010, and they refused to identify their funders.

According to the Drexel report, the Donors Trust and Donors Capital funding operation does double duty. It is the ''central component'' and ''predominant funder'' of the denier apparatus, and at the same time it is the ''black box'' that conceals the identity of contributors.

Interestingly, anonymous funding through Donors Trust and Donors Capital fund has grown in tandem with disclosed funding from fossil fuel polluters declining, anonymous dollars up,

disclosed dollars down. As we see here, Donors Trust and Donors Capital donations to the beast went from 3 percent of all foundation funding in 2003 to more than 23 percent in 2010.

At the same time, for example, the Koch brothers' affiliated foundations declined from 9 percent of all foundation funding in 2006 down to 2 percent by 2010. The same is true for other polluter-backed foundations. The ExxonMobil Foundations wound down its disclosed funding of organizations in the climate denier network and basically zeroed out by 2007.

It makes perfect sense. Why would the Koch brothers and ExxonMobil come under fire for obviously funding climate denial when Donors Trust and Donors Capital creates a mechanism for polluters to secretly fund the base?

Plus, the phony-baloney front organizations within the beast can pretend they are not funded by polluter money. Everybody wins in this identity-laundering charade except the public, obviously, whom this elaborate construction is designed to fool.

The product of the denial apparatus is a complex ruse to delegitimize the science that supports curbing carbon emissions, foisted on the American people with all of the financing and fantasy of a Hollywood blockbuster production. Here is Dr. Brulle describing what you see when you look behind the actors who appear in the media spotlight. I will quote.

> The roots of climate-change denial go deeper . . . Just as in a theatrical show, there are stars in the spotlight. In the drama of climate change, these are often prominent contrarian scientists or conservative politicians. . . . However, they are only the most visible and transparent parts of a larger production. Supporting this effort are directors, script writers, and, most certainly, a series of producers, in the form of conservative foundations.

Frankly, this apparatus is a disgrace. When the inevitable happens, and the impact of climate change really starts to hit home, people will want to know—Americans will want to know, people around the world will want to know why, why we did not take proper steps in time. It is not as if there is not enough scientific evidence for us to act. Why not? This denial operation, the beast, will then go down as one of our great American scandals, like Watergate or Teapot Dome, a deliberate, complex scheme of lies and propaganda that caused real harm to the American people and to our country, all so that a small group of people could make more money a little longer.

The fact that one of our great political parties is in on the scheme will be to its lasting shame. There is an old hymn that says, ''Turn back O man, forswear thy foolish ways.'' It is time for our denier colleagues to turn back and forswear their foolish ways. If they do not, there will be a day of reckoning and a harsh price to pay.

Every day, more and more Americans realize the truth, and they increasingly want this Congress to wake up. They know climate change is real. As the President said in his State of the Union Address:

> The debate is settled. Climate change is a fact.

Sir Winston Churchill once said this:

> Owing to past neglect, in the face of the plainest warnings, we have now entered upon a period of danger. . . . The era of procrastination, of half-measures, soothing and baffling expedients, of delays, is coming to its close. In its place we are entering a period of consequences. . . . We cannot avoid this period; we are in it now.

Well, we are now in a period of consequences. We have got to break the back of the beast and break the barricade of blandishments and lies that the beast has built around Congress. This campaign of denial, this beast, is as poisonous to our democracy as carbon pollution is to our atmosphere and oceans. With money and lobbyists and threats, it has infiltrated itself in an unseemly influence in our government. For the sake of our democracy, for the sake of our future, for the sake of our honor, it is time to wake up.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Utah.

INTERNATIONAL TRADE POLICIES

Mr. HATCH. I wish to take a few minutes to talk about our Nation's international trade policies. Specifically, I wish to discuss efforts to renew trade promotion authority, or what we call TPA. The most recent authorization of TPA expired nearly 7 years ago. Since that time, Republicans have, by and large, expressed support for renewing it.

In August 2010, U.S. Trade Representative Ron Kirk testified that the Obama administration needed TPA to conclude ongoing trade negotiations. However, after that time, little was done to move the ball forward on renewing TPA. In September 2011, Minority Leader MCCONNELL and I offered an amendment on the Senate floor to renew trade promotion authority for President Obama.

Unfortunately, despite strong support from the Republican caucus, a number of Democratic Senators actively opposed our efforts, and it received virtually no Democratic support. As a result, our efforts failed.

In March 2013, then-Acting USTR Marantis again expressed the administration's support for renewing TPA and pledged to work with Congress to get it done.

In June 2013, United States Trade Representative Michael Froman, during testimony before the Senate Finance Committee, formally requested on behalf of President Obama that Congress renew TPA.

Throughout most of 2013, I worked with Chairman BAUCUS and Chairman CAMP of House Ways and Means to craft a bipartisan bill to renew TPA, one that could pass through both Houses and the Senate. We introduced our bill in January.

Last week, in his State of the Union Address, President Obama asked Congress to pass TPA legislation so his administration could complete negotiations on two very ambitious and important trade agreements. While I thought President Obama could have spoken more forcefully on this matter, his call for TPA renewal was clear and unambiguous. Yet so far the call appears to be going unheeded—or should I say among Democrats in the Senate.

Why is TPA so important, trade promotion authority? I think some additional context is necessary.

The administration is currently in the midst of negotiations on the Trans-Pacific Partnership, or TPP, an Asia-Pacific trade agreement that is currently being negotiated between the United States and 12 other countries, including some of the world's largest economies, such as Japan, Canada, and Mexico.

The Asia-Pacific region represents more than 40 percent of the world's trade and, as a group, TPP countries represent the largest goods and services export market for our country, the United States of America.

On the other side of the world, the United States is negotiating a bilateral trade agreement with the 28 countries of the European Union. This is called TTIP. The United States and the EU generate over half of the world's economic output. Total goods trade alone, however, between the United States and the EU amounts to over $1 trillion a year. Investment flows represent another $300 billion a year on top of that.

Together, these two trade agreements have the potential to greatly expand access for U.S. products in the foreign markets around the world. Most importantly, they would help to grow our economy and create jobs at home.

These two separate trade agreements and negotiations represent what is the most ambitious trade agenda in our Nation's history. While everyone knows that I am a pretty outspoken critic of the Obama administration, I believe the administration deserves credit on this front. But if these negotiations are going to succeed, Congress must approve TPA.

Because of the unique structure of our government, our country needs TPA. Our trading partners will not put their best deal on the table unless they know the United States can deliver on what it promised.

TPA empowers our trade negotiators to conclude agreements and provides a path for passage in Congress. That is why every President since FDR has sought trade promotion authority. No economically significant trade agreement has ever been negotiated by any administration and approved by Congress without it.

Put simply, if Congress does not renew TPA, the TPP negotiations and the TTIP negotiations with the European Union will almost certainly fail. That is why it is so disconcerting to me to see how some of my colleagues across the aisle have responded to the

President's call for TPA renewal. TPA is one of the few issues where both parties can and should be able to work together to achieve a common goal.

I know that I, along with my Republican colleagues, stand ready and willing to work with the administration to approve TPA as soon as possible. I think I have a reputation of working across the aisle and bringing people together. This is one I want to bring people together on—and I shouldn't even have to argue about it, but I do.

I believe the bipartisan bill Chairman BAUCUS and I recently introduced to renew TPA would receive strong bipartisan support in the Senate if it were allowed to come up for a vote. Indeed, I am confident that the vast majority of my colleagues would join me in supporting the bill, both Democrats and Republicans.

The problem is Republicans are not in the majority in the Senate. It is the Democrats who control the agenda. Unfortunately, the President's call to renew TPA does not appear to be a priority for some of the Democrats, certainly the leadership of the Democrats.

The question is, Will Senate Democrats work with the President on this issue? I don't know the answer to that question, but I have to say that things don't look very good to me. Instead of robust support for the President and his trade agenda, the response we have seen from some Democrats has ranged from awkward silence on TPA to outright hostility. Needless to say, I am extremely disappointed by this.

The issue is fairly simple. If we want to grow our economy through trade, Congress must approve TPA and do so soon. The President can play a unique and key role. By forcefully advocating for TPA renewal, he can help turn some of the skeptics in his party around.

Recently, the Financial Times published a powerful editorial which outlined the need for TPA and the role the President must play for TPA to succeed.

According to the editorial:

> Twenty years ago, President Bill Clinton pulled out all the stops to push through approval of the controversial North American Free Trade Agreement with Mexico and Canada. He was able to squeak through a narrow victory by deft lobbying of lawmakers and a willingness to make a strong case for globalization to the American public. Mr. Obama is lagging behind his predecessor on both counts. The case for TTIP and TPP are both strong. The time for Mr. Obama to make these arguments has arrived. He has every incentive to succeed. Failure to secure [TPA] would be a grievous blow to his presidency.

I understand there are some powerful critical forces that leave some of my friends on the other side of the aisle to oppose international trade. However, let's be clear: If we fail to approve TPA, we will be doing our Nation and our economy a great disservice. International trade is good for our country. It is one of the few tools Congress has to grow our economy that does not add to the Federal deficit. As I mentioned, Senator BAUCUS and I, along with Chairman CAMP, have negotiated and introduced a bipartisan, bicameral TPA bill. It is, in my opinion, the only TPA bill that stands a chance of getting passed in both the Senate and the House of Representatives.

My colleagues on the other side of the aisle have a choice. They can either work with the Republicans to pass our bill and empower our country to complete these important trade agreements, or they can throw up more roadblocks and cast more uncertainty on the President's trade agenda.

As I stated, Republicans stand ready to work with President Obama on these issues and to help these trade negotiations to succeed. For the sake of our country and our economy, I sincerely hope my Democratic colleagues and friends in the Senate are willing to do the same.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Kansas.

Mr. ROBERTS. Madam President, I come to the floor to discuss the recent report by the Congressional Budget Office, the CBO, which contains updated estimates of the insurance coverage provisions of the Affordable Care Act, also known as ObamaCare.

It was just on Sunday the President told Bill O'Reilly of Fox News—in front of all America on Super Bowl Sunday—that his health care bill is working. Today, the Congressional Budget Office has changed that tune. We learned from the report that ObamaCare will now cost us $2 trillion. People may recall President Obama told the country his bill would cost less than $1 trillion. We also learned that we are expected to lose—expected to lose—2.5 million full-time jobs over the next 10 years. Finally, the CBO says exchange subsidies under the ACA will reduce incentives to work.

Let me go over that again. President Obama told the country his bill would cost less than $1 trillion. Now the CBO says it will be $2 trillion. We are expected to lose 2.5 million full-time jobs over next 10 years. Finally, CBO says exchange subsidies under the ACA will reduce incentives to work.

If this is working, what does ''broken'' mean to this President?

As I am reading this report and accompanying reaction, the most recent updates sound hauntingly familiar. In fact, I believe this is something that I and my colleagues spoke about every day during the debate on health care reform. We questioned at that time whether the CBO estimates accurately reflected the impact of ObamaCare on the American people, which leads to why I am on the floor as of this evening. This is about accountability, folks.

During the debate, we questioned whether the scoring done by the CBO was fraught with gimmicks or an unrealistic belief that Medicare would achieve significant savings in the future.

I have serious concerns with the accuracy of the scoring done on ObamaCare and its portrayal of the impact of this legislation versus the stated benefits for the American people.

We cannot keep doing this. There are people's lives at stake, people's lives that we are dealing with. The CBO projections during the health care reform debate seemed to significantly underestimate the negative impact of ObamaCare. Because of those projections, supporters were able to jam it through—one vote, everybody knows about that vote—and now the American people have to pick up the tab on the CBO's errors.

I am calling for hearings in the Finance Committee, upon which I sit, to demand CBO come before the committee and explain to the Congress and the American people why and how its scores, which led to the passage of ObamaCare, did not tell the whole story. This is about accountability for past actions, and we must ask the question, the difficult question, an unfortunate question: Was this political? Were the books cooked?

CBO needs to take the responsibility for the differences between their projections and the most recent updates just released as of this morning. We must have accurate estimates on the costs and benefits of the legislation so we can do our jobs. This shouldn't be about politics or gaming the system. This is about people's lives, and it is our responsibility to get that right. Let the hearings begin. Let the CBO provide answers. The CBO must answer this Congress and America.

I yield back the remainder of my time, and 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. DONNELLY. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

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

## MORNING BUSINESS

Mr. DONNELLY. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate proceed to a period of morning business with Senators permitted to speak for up to 10 minutes each.

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

## PROTECTING INDIGENOUS PEOPLES

Mr. LEAHY. Madam President, on December 22, 2004, the United Nations General Assembly adopted a resolution declaring the beginning of a second International Decade of the World's Indigenous People. As we enter the final year of this international campaign we should remind ourselves of the importance of protecting indigenous populations and take stock of what has