

type of renewable energy because it slows down their tar sands business, their oil business, and their coal business.

In Nevada, the Koch brothers and their foot soldiers are meddling in many issues—really, too many to count. They have been trying to upend Nevada's open primary process. They have encouraged young Nevadans to stay out of the State's health exchanges. They fought attempts to raise Nevada's cigarette tax. They have used the State legislature to undermine labor unions. These are only a few examples of the Kochs' "Buy America" plan.

What the Koch brothers are doing in Nevada and all of the States that we talked about this morning is shameful. They are using their deep pockets and their shadowy organizations to try and buy a government that serves them, not the American people. They aren't even trying to hide it anymore. As one radical activist happily noted to the Washington Post, "the Koch brothers, they may write a check" to promote their ultraconservative ideology. They are writing more than a check or two. Charles and David and their allies are writing \$900 million worth of checks—\$900 million spent against rebuilding our Nation's roads and bridges, against a fair shot for all Americans, against raising the minimum wage, and against the hundreds of thousands of American jobs supported by the Export-Import Bank.

The Kochs have a lot of money to spend. They are using a tiny bit of it, which is huge amounts of money—about \$1 billion this election cycle—to do other kinds of things. They want to promote criminal justice reform. That is nice. I am glad they are on the right side of something—finally. That could be one reason they are interested in this—because they have been in the past prosecuted for doing things that have been illegal and criminal in the nature of prosecutors. They have fought back against these things.

We have been talking about the criminal justice system long before the Kochs got involved. That is well and nice that they are embracing reform now, but it does not negate the many bad things they are doing to hurt American families.

The Koch brothers' priorities are wrong for the middle class and they are wrong for all America. It is time that we let the Koch brothers know that our country isn't for sale. It is time that we let every power-hungry billionaire know they can't buy our government. Whether it is the city hall of Colorado Springs or the halls of Congress, you should not be able to buy America's democracy. The question is this: Are the Kochs going to buy America, because they are certainly trying to? It is up to every American to say no.

Mr. President, I note that there is no one else on the floor. So would the Chair announce the business of the day.

RESERVATION OF LEADER TIME

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

NATIONAL DEFENSE AUTHORIZATION ACT FOR FISCAL YEAR 2016—CONFERENCE REPORT

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the Senate will resume consideration of the conference report to accompany H.R. 1735, which the clerk will report.

The senior assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

Conference report to accompany H.R. 1735, a bill to authorize appropriations for fiscal year 2016 for military activities of the Department of Defense, for military construction, and for defense activities of the Department of Energy, to prescribe military personnel strengths for such fiscal year, and for other purposes.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the time until 1 p.m. will be equally divided between the two leaders or their designees.

The Democratic leader.

Mr. REID. Mr. President, our ranking member on the Armed Services Committee is here on the floor. He has done an exemplary job working with Senator JOHN MCCAIN to move legislation forward. I have followed his lead, and I am not going to vote for this conference report, as he is not going to vote for this conference report. I would say that the House had a vote similar to this one a few days ago, where they had more than enough votes to sustain a veto if the President does veto this, which he says he is going to do. I want everyone to know that as to Democrats who voted for this in the past, not all of them will vote the same way they did last time. But our Democrats have stated, without any question, if it comes time to sustain a Presidential veto, that will be done.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Rhode Island.

Mr. REED. Mr. President, I rise to discuss the conference report of the fiscal year 2016 National Defense Authorization Act, which we will be voting on in the next hour. This conference report is the product of months of negotiation and compromise between the House and the Senate. I want to commend Chairman MCCAIN, Chairman THORNBERRY, and Ranking Member SMITH for a thoughtful, inclusive and cordial process.

There are many provisions in this bill that provide the support we owe to our servicemembers and their families—the funding, authorities, and equipment necessary for our troops to succeed in combat; and significant and critical reforms to the military retirement, compensation, and acquisition systems—many of which I will talk about in further debate on this bill in the days and hours ahead.

However, I regret that I am unable to support this conference report because it shifts \$38 billion requested by the

President for enduring or base military requirements—the base budget, if you will—to the overseas contingency operations, or OCO, account, essentially, skirting the law known as the Budget Control Act, or BCA.

Again, this is a maneuver to get around a statute that was signed by the President, voted for by Congress, and which has imposed budget caps on every department. Central to that agreement was the significant consensus that domestic and defense discretionary spending would be capped. What this conference report does is violate that consensus by using OCO in a way that it was not originally intended to be so used.

This budget gimmick allows the majority to fully fund the Defense Department without breaking caps imposed by the BCA on both defense and non-defense spending. However, the OCO account provides no relief for nondefense departments and agencies, and that includes many agencies that are critical to our national security. Because of this device, I and nearly all of the Democratic conferees on the bill did not sign the conference report.

Abusing OCO, as this bill would do, is counter to the intent of the Budget Control Act. The BCA imposed proportionally equal cuts to defense and non-defense discretionary spending to force a bipartisan compromise to our ongoing budget difficulties. OCO and emergency funding are outside budget caps for a reason. They finance the cost of ongoing military operations or they respond to other unforeseen events such as national disasters. In my view, to suddenly ignore the true purpose of OCO and treat it as a budgetary gambit in order to skirt the BCA caps is an unacceptable use of this important tool for our warfighters in the field.

Adding funds to OCO does not solve—and actually complicates—DOD's budgetary problems. Defense budgeting needs to be based on our long-term military strategy, which requires the Department of Defense to focus at least 5 years into the future. A 1-year plus-up to OCO does not provide DOD with the certainty and stability it needs when building its 5-year budget.

Just to highlight how this OCO gimmick skews defense spending, consider the amount of OCO in relation to the number of troops deployed. Again, I think it is a useful metric because OCO evolved when we were deploying troops overseas—first in response to Afghanistan during Operation Enduring Freedom and then with respect to Iraq. And there is a correlation, at least in the minds of most people, between our efforts overseas with troops engaged and the size of OCO.

In 2008, at the height of our Nation's troop commitment in Iraq and Afghanistan and with approximately 187,000 total troops deployed, we spent approximately \$1 million in OCO for every servicemember deployed to those countries. Under this bill, we will spend approximately \$9 million in OCO