

That is what the deputy head of the mission in Cote d'Ivoire of the United Nations mission said.

Then: "We have credible reports of serious abuses being committed by Ouattara's side." That came from Corinne Dufka, a Human Rights Watch researcher based in Dakar, Senegal. It is raising very serious concerns.

Then further quotes. It goes on and on. I will enter all of these quotes into the RECORD.

But the bottom line here is that Ouattara's forces are the ones that were involved in Duekoue when they—the estimate they have right here is that—it comes from Patrick Nicholson, a spokesman for the Catholic aid agency Caritas, saying that an agency team in town last week on a routine aid mission had found a lot of dead bodies. "We estimate between 800 and 1,000 dead," Nicholson said in a telephone interview from Rome.

They are primarily killed by gunshot, though some of the wounds were made by machetes. I don't think they were killed in crossfire.

It is interesting, because the forces of President Gbagbo had left that area of Duekoue a week before all of that happened. So that had to have happened with those forces that were Ouattara's. Well, anyway, I am still quoting from this, which was printed in the Washington Post:

Ouattara's forces have also been accused of carrying out reprisal killings and extrajudicial executions of prisoners during their march to the capital.

Gbagbo's forces had vacated a week before.

We have pictures showing the French flags that were on the major massacre that took place and that was the one that took place on Monday night. I have already said all of this on the floor. We have talked about this and the problems.

One thing I haven't mentioned is one of the first things Ouattara did when he marched on Cote d'Ivoire in the south and on Abidjan is to turn to release all of the prisoners in one of the major Abidjan prisons—that is some 5,000 prisoners—and military sources loyal to the incumbent leader Gbagbo said the doors of the MACA prison—that is the big prison in that area—were opened by forces loyal to the President, Presidential claimant Alassane Ouattara, in the midst of an offensive aimed at Gbagbo.

Afterwards, they go into detail as to hearing the gunfire; in other words, releasing prisoners to fight against the sitting President.

Residents near the jail said thousands of youths streamed out of the prison, which had the capacity of 3,000 prisoners, but was believed to be holding over 5,000, into the neighborhood in Abidjan.

We heard gun fire early this morning and afterwards the doors of the prison were opened and prisoners were left shouting for joy.

That is something I have not had in the RECORD before.

One of the things I have to repeat that I have stated before—let me ask the Chair how much time I have remaining.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator has 1 minute remaining.

Mr. INHOFE. I request an additional 10 minutes.

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

Mr. INHOFE. I wish to speak about one of the testimonials in Duekoue.

I spot four pigs eating something dark in a charred courtyard. Standing by a newly dug mass grave, a UN soldier from Morocco is choking with rage and grief. I asked him if any of the dead are children. He nods and begins to sob, quietly, into his facemask.

This is something that has been happening again. We talked about this before. I don't want to abuse the time we have, but a few minutes ago I got a notice from somebody I happen to know and he says:

I must admit that it was very difficult. This day too—

we are talking about in the last few hours—

has been very confusing with the rebels parading in the streets stealing and dispossessing people of their goods. This is what makes it very dangerous because it is a no law zone. Hundreds of people have started leaving town avoiding the danger in Abidjan.

That is what is happening right now. The report we have now recently is that the Ouattara rebel army is deploying death squads, and I will read from this because I think it is very important that we get this down right, because I am going to make some accusations here that maybe have never been made in recent history on this floor.

I have just received devastating news about the situation in Cote d'Ivoire.

I have been told that there are "death squads" roving around the streets of Abidjan "disappearing"—

they used the word "disappearing" supporters of President Gbagbo.

Do they kill the supporters of President Gbagbo? Probably so, but they use the word "disappearing" because there is no accounting of it.

These death squads are led by soldiers of Ouattara's rebel Army. They have already killed 400 people in the last few hours.

I am talking about contemporary, right now.

If we do nothing, this soon will include the murder of President Gbagbo and his wife Simone. Ouattara's armed rebels are supported militarily by the United Nations and the French government. I call on UN Secretary General Ban Kee Moon and French President Sarkozy to condemn and halt immediately these "death squads." If they do not, I charge that they are complicit in allowing these death squads to operate freely on the streets of Abidjan.

It also calls for immediate cease-fire.

I will conclude and say that I remember well, because I was around when this happened, and when we knew—some people knew, we didn't know in advance, what was going to happen in Rwanda. President Kagame didn't know what was going to happen in Rwanda. Kofi Annan of the United Na-

tions apparently did know what was going to happen and elected not to say anything about it, so that they weren't warned and 800,000 mutilations later, we know what the genocide was all about. We know now. We know the death squads are there. The death squads have already killed, according to these reports, some 4,000 people in the last few hours.

If we don't do anything about it, I have in my own mind—I feel very certain that those death squads run by Ouattara's rebel army will reach the hiding place of President Gbagbo and his wife Simone and their family, and they, too, will be murdered. If we don't do anything, we have been warned that can happen. We can intervene and stop the death squads roaming around in Abidjan in the country of Cote d'Ivoire.

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

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The assistant editor of the Daily Digest proceeded to call the roll.

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

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

Mr. INHOFE. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent to be recognized as in morning business until such time as somebody else comes in and wants the floor.

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

BUDGET NEGOTIATIONS

Mr. INHOFE. Mr. President, I didn't get a chance to elaborate on the subject that was covered by the Senator from Texas, Mr. CORNYN. I think it is very important when we are faced with the shutdown of the government. I happened to be here in 1995, and I remember, frankly, it wasn't as bad as everybody said it was going to be. This is something that is totally avoidable now. We have an opportunity to do a 7-day extension that would take care of the military's needs, and I think it is important to do so.

I wish to also mention the vote that took place yesterday—the last vote; we had four—having to do with the over-regulation, I will call it, of the Environmental Protection Agency. The first three amendments before they came to mine were offered by Democrats for whom I have a great deal of respect. In each amendment, they made it clear that the author—all Democrats—thought it was not the place for the Environmental Protection Agency to do what Congress is supposed to be doing in terms of regulation of greenhouse gases.

The votes were overwhelming in terms of the fact that they didn't have Democrats supporting them because they were temporary fixes. The only real vote that took place was on mine.

I introduced legislation several weeks ago, in concert with my colleague over in the House of Representatives, FRED UPTON, to take out from the Environmental Protection Agency the jurisdiction of regulating greenhouse gases. We all know how it happened. We know that since 2003, Members of this Senate have introduced legislation to call for cap and trade under the assumption that catastrophic global warming is taking place from anthropogenic gases, and we have been able to defeat all of those.

So while there has been a real effort by this administration to regulate greenhouse gases and do it by legislation, when they finally realized that wasn't going to happen, that they were not going to be able to garner sufficient votes to pass a bill that would allow for a cap-and-trade system—by the way, the cap-and-trade system would have amounted to between \$300 billion and \$400 billion a year as a tax increase, which would have been the largest one in the history of this country.

When President Obama decided—in the wisdom of both the House and Senate—we were not going to pass anything that would be a cap-and-trade bill, he said: That is fine, we will do it through regulation.

That is how this whole thing started. So the effort was for the EPA to come up with an endangerment finding which would say that greenhouse gases—anthropogenic gases, methane—were dangerous to health. Well, this has to be based on science.

I remember asking the Director of the EPA, Lisa Jackson, whom I respect—I said: If you are going to have an endangerment finding, it has to be based on science. What would that be? Well, it was the IPCC, which, for the edification of anybody who is not aware, is the United Nations. They are the ones who started this whole thing, and they are the ones who would be in a position to try to force the regulation.

Anyway, the time has gone by now, and since that time, we have almost unanimity in this body and in the other body, also, that we don't think the EPA has the ability or the authority to regulate greenhouse gases and to do administratively what we refuse to do through our own bills we pass.

That is where we are today. One of the things I am thankful for is that my amendment got 50 votes. It was 50–50, pretty much down party lines. But the people who are voting against my amendment are saying: We want to have the EPA have this authority—the authority of overregulation of not just the oil and gas industry but all other industries also. The primary target for them would be fossil fuels.

The fact that we have oil, gas, and coal—by the way, there is a fairly recent finding by the Congressional Research Service that we have the largest reserves in the United States—recoverable reserves—of oil, gas, and coal of

any country in the world. This is not something you hear on the other side.

We have heard President Obama say several times that we only produce 3 percent of the oil and yet we use 25 percent or whatever it is. Those are proven reserves. The difference is that a proven reserve means you have to drill and prove it is there. But the government won't let us drill. I am talking about the east coast, the west coast, the gulf, the northern slope—83 percent of our public lands are off limits. If we were to open that up, we could be completely independent of the Middle East for our ability to run this machine called America. That is why this issue is very important.

I have already served notice, but I will do it again to make sure it is clear. While we needed 60 votes, we only had 50 votes. I am going to put that amendment on as many bills as come up so we have an opportunity for people to know the seriousness of this problem.

I suggest to you—and I will not name names—that if people, prior to this vote, would have called different individuals, the staff would have responded: Well, we don't know how our Senator will vote, but he will certainly take your comments into consideration.

Now we know because we have the votes in so that we can say which ones did vote for it, and anybody who didn't vote for my amendment is saying they believe the EPA should have that total control that we refuse to give it through legislation.

Anyway, it is not over yet. In fact, I think that was a major milestone, a victory. We now know who is for it and who is against it. I know there will be another 10 Members who will see the light and realize that we still—it is fine, I am for all of the above, for the renewables—wind, sun, thermal—as well as the fossil fuels. We need all of the above to become totally independent and be able to run this machine called America. That is what is coming up. I am happy we have taken the next step, and I look forward to making another step after that.

I yield the floor and suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The assistant editor of the Daily Digest proceeded to call the roll.

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

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

Mr. UDALL of Colorado. Mr. President, I rise at this late hour in the afternoon to join many of my colleagues who have come to the floor today to express growing frustration with the politics as usual in the Capitol. I say "politics" not "policy" because I think we should be focusing on policies that will get our country back on track.

I have to say, people who are watching the debate are witnessing poten-

tially an impending government shutdown that I think is needlessly being forced on the American people. That is whom we are, after all, here to serve. I know the Presiding Officer feels that strongly. I am not the first person to highlight how disturbing our long-term fiscal picture has become, but what is equally frustrating is the disservice being done to the American public by this current debate on our budget—a budget, by the way, for the second half of 2011. It is not a budget debate we need to have on 2012 or the longer term challenge the Simpson-Bowles Commission pointed out.

We ought to be focusing on supporting economic development and job growth. While we are doing that, I believe the Senate and some Members of the House of Representatives continue to seek sustained confrontation and seem to me to be interested in shutting down the government as a misguided statement that they are serious about debt reduction. It seems they want to pick a fight for a fight's sake while our people, the U.S. citizens, will be left to pick up the pieces from a shutdown.

The latest demands have not been about funding the government at all. I think we have common ground on what the number ought to be. The fight now seems to be on controversial abortion and climate change issues. I do not understand it. We have this tentative agreement to cut billions from current spending levels, but the Speaker of the House seems to continue to demand we ought to focus on controversial climate change issues.

These are hot-button issues. Why we would insert them in an unrelated budget debate when there is so much at stake is beyond me. I understand we want to show the American people we are serious about deficit reduction. I am. I know the Presiding Officer is.

In Colorado, people see straight through this latest ploy. What do abortion and climate change have to do with finding a compromise on keeping our government running? Nothing. They have nothing to do with that. It strikes me the debate has become increasingly ideological and increasingly about sending a partisan political message, one that leaves the American people paying the price.

We have had 13 straight months of private sector job growth. We have added 1.8 million jobs in that time. But our economy is still fragile, and way too many Americans, way too many Minnesotans, way too many Coloradans are struggling. I have no doubt a government shutdown at this time would create a counterproductive effect on our economic recovery.

Do not just take my word for it. I am a Senator from Colorado. Listen to what top business leaders of all political persuasions are saying. The Business Roundtable president, John Engler, a former Republican Governor of Michigan, said businesses would face the dangerous "unintended consequences," where interest rates could

rise because of a shutdown, and there could be turmoil in our financial markets. Forecasters at Goldman Sachs have warned that a shutdown could shave off growth in our GDP every single week. CEOs of all stripes have warned about a shutdown's impact on confidence in the U.S. economic recovery. The Presiding Officer and I know and Senators from across the country know confidence is what we need to build. That is what is lacking in many respects.

A setback of this nature, a shutdown would actually prevent the growth we tangibly need to address our long-term growth and fiscal balance—in other words, get the economy growing again. We will have more tax revenues and we will see the gap between what we are spending and bringing in narrow.

I cannot help but think, in the context of this debate, about my Uncle Stewart Udall, the father of Senator UDALL from New Mexico. He wrote a book called "The Forgotten Founders" that focused on the settling of the West. I should add he focused on the people who were there at the time the Europeans arrived.

The theme of the book was on how the West was settled, how it was built. It made the strong case that people coming out to the West—I think the Presiding Officer's home State, which is in the near West, might fit this characterization—people coming to the West were not looking to get into gunfights or range wars. They were looking to start their lives over to pursue the American dream.

Stewart pointed out that in reality, particularly when we watch those Hollywood movies, people standing on the board sidewalks watching the gunfights were the people who built the West, and they built the West working together, solving problems, looking out for one another. It did not matter what your political party was. It seems to me the American people are standing on one of those board sidewalks watching the same senseless gunfights and range wars right here in Washington, DC.

I know I was sent to Washington to work together and solve shared problems. I suggest this spirit I described is in stark contrast to this new kind of divisive politics that is brewing away in America. It is the kind of politics that furthers disagreement. It draws ideological lines in the sand, and it sows disrespect at the expense of shared interest and collective prosperity. The American people are seeing a disappointing example of that this week.

While a vocal minority seems to favor acrimony and combativeness which, in the end, will further slow our economy, many of us are doing what we can to do the people's business and try in good faith to prevent a government shutdown.

As the American people look on in amazement at this spectacle, I stand with them wondering if Members of

Congress will finally settle down, act like adults, and work collaboratively toward a real budget solution.

Yes, we have to reduce our government deficit and debt. One would be hard-pressed to find a Senator more committed to that cause than I am. Let's reach that goal. Let's reach it in a way that protects our senior citizens, our students, our veterans, our border security—I could go on with a long list. Let's do it in a way that slashes spending but does not harm our fragile economic recovery or divert our attention on divisive social issues.

We cannot afford a government shutdown. I will be disappointed, to say the least, if the bipartisan deal that is before us is undercut by contentious, unrelated issues such as abortion and climate change.

I wrote a letter 2 days ago to the Speaker of the House, Mr. BOEHNER, whom I know well, in which a large number of my fellow Senators joined me to suggest to him and urge him to work with us to avoid a Federal Government shutdown. I will stay here all day, all night, whatever it takes. I am here to urge my colleagues in both Chambers—I served in the House and I now have the great privilege of serving in the Senate—let's sit down together, let's reason together, let's be commonsensical together. Let's find a compromise. That is the American way. I know that is what propelled me to the Senate, my willingness to work across party lines. I think the Senate of the United States could set an example. There are colleagues on both sides of the aisle who have worked together, and we know the stakes are high.

That is the reason I came to the floor, to urge Senators of both parties to work together to find a common-sense compromise to keep this government moving forward and make sure our economy is focused upon and we produce as many jobs as possible. That is job one.

Mr. President, I thank you for your attention and for your interest. I yield the floor, and I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The bill clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

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

Mr. CARDIN. Mr. President, I take this time because we are now only literally hours away from a potential shutdown of government. I must tell you that my constituents are angry about this, and I join them in saying this should never happen. There is no reason why we should have a government shutdown.

We know the financial issues, and there have been good-faith negotiations. It is my understanding we have pretty much resolved the financial

issues. And, remember, we are dealing with 12 percent of the Federal budget. We need to get to the 2012 budget and get a credible plan to deal with the deficit. We all understand that. We are talking about the 2011 budget—the budget that started on October 1 of last year and will end on September 30 of this year. We are over halfway through that budget year.

There are differences between where the Democrats were and where the Republicans were. Everyone understood it couldn't be what the Republicans wanted or the Democrats wanted; that we needed to have good-faith negotiations. Those negotiations have taken place, and it is my understanding we have pretty much agreed on the dollar amounts and we are prepared to move forward.

But let me talk a little about what will happen at midnight tomorrow night. I have the honor of representing the people of the State of Maryland. There are almost 150,000 active civilian—civilian—Federal employees who live in the State of Maryland. I happened to bump into one of those Federal employees today who asked me a question. She asked me: What am I supposed to do if we have a government shutdown and I don't get a paycheck? I don't have any savings. How am I going to pay for my mortgage?

We already have too many people whose mortgages are in jeopardy because of the weakness of our economy, and now 150,000 Marylanders are in jeopardy of losing their paycheck as a result of the inability to resolve this year's budget.

I also happened to talk to people who run our Metro system here, and they told me if we have a government shutdown it will mean \$1 million less in the fare box, possibly every day, because of the number of people who won't be taking the Metro because they are not going to be going to work. A lot of Federal workers are not going to be going to work.

Guess what. They are not going to stop at the coffee shop to buy coffee or buy that lunch. They won't be patronizing the shops. It is going to hurt the small business owners who depend upon that business; depend upon the people who use their paychecks to do their cleaning or go to the different shops. It is going to hurt our economy. It is going to hurt innocent small business owners, just at a time that our economy is starting to recover.

I will give another example. A person contacted me today, one of my constituents in Maryland who happens to have an issue concerning the need for a passport to be issued. It needs to be issued rather quickly. We are going to try to accommodate that person to get it done by tomorrow. But suppose that call would have come in next week after there is a government shutdown and that person has travel plans that now may be disrupted because we cannot issue that passport. The list goes on and on of people who are going to be

hurt as a result of a government shutdown.

We know a government shutdown will actually cost the taxpayers more money. A shutdown costs taxpayers money. More money than the differences in our negotiations in the last couple of days will be lost. So don't tell the taxpayers of this country that we are having a government shutdown to save money. It will not save taxpayer money, it will cost them additional moneys. It will jeopardize our recovery, and individual people will get hurt as a result of the government shutdown.

What is the issue? We have already said the money issues—this is a budget debate—have been pretty well resolved. It is not the dollars. It is not the differences you heard—and the differences, frankly, were quite small compared to the size of our budget deficit and the gap between spending and revenues. The issue that is now being raised by the Republicans has nothing to do with dollars. It has to do with their social policies. It has to do with family planning. It has to do with the Environmental Protection Agency being able to enforce our environmental laws, the Clean Air Act. Does that sound familiar? It should because we debated those issues on the floor of the Senate yesterday, and we took votes on these environmental issues yesterday on the floor of the Senate, as we should do, debating these issues on their own individual merits.

It should not be included in the budget resolution for the remainder of this year. That is not the appropriate place for it. We are not here to debate the social agenda. Those issues should be done on the bills, the substantive bills that come forward.

You sort of get a little suspicious as these issues are being raised as to whether, in fact, those who are negotiating on the Republican side are sincere in trying to reach an agreement to prevent a government shutdown or whether they continuously move the goalposts and change the rules in order to bring about a government shutdown.

I must tell you, I was disappointed, as I heard Republican after Republican in the last couple of weeks talk about a shutdown might be good for the country; if we have a shutdown, so be it. Let's do it. Even some Republicans calling for a shutdown.

I understand there is a problem the Speaker of the House has in dealing with the members of the Republican caucus who belong to the tea party, and they are insisting he not compromise; they don't want to see any compromise. I understand that, but those Members do not control the process. We have a majority of the Members of the House and a majority of the Members of the Senate who are prepared to move forward with this compromise that will not only keep government functioning but will allow us to get on to the real issues of dealing with the deficit of this country by

looking at the 2012 budget. There we will be considering more than just the discretionary domestic spending cuts, we also can take a look at the other programs, including military and mandatory spending and revenues, and get a credible plan to deal with the deficit.

We have enough votes among the Democrats and Republicans to pass this compromise. We do not have to yield to the extremists on the Republican side in the House who do not want to see any compromise whatsoever, but what worries me is that perhaps the design is to close the government; that is what the Republicans want. I know Speaker BOEHNER got a standing ovation when he informed his caucus to begin preparing for a possible shutdown.

These are serious issues—like that Marylander I talked to today who may, in fact, lose her home if there is a government shutdown or that constituent who had planned a trip and found out that because their passport will expire shortly, they need to get it renewed before they are permitted to enter a foreign country and will need to get that passport tended to or lose the opportunity to travel, perhaps, for a family event or perhaps for business or the taxpayers of this country who are scratching their heads saying: What are you doing adding to the cost of government when I thought this was a debate about reducing the cost of government.

It is not about the dollars. If we have a shutdown of government—and I really hope we do not have a shutdown of government, but if we have a shutdown of government, it is not the dollar difference, it is the social agenda that the Republicans are trying to push through this document, that should not even be on this document, that they are now using as a reason to deny a compromise. It is the extreme elements within the Republican caucus who are saying let's have this government shutdown who will be getting their way.

There is still time remaining. I hope common sense will prevail. I hope people understand how serious a government shutdown is to our country, to our image internationally, to our ability to conduct business internationally, as well as our ability to provide the services to the people of this Nation who expect those services. We still have time. This is a democracy. Let the majority rule. I think we have the majority of Democrats and Republicans alike who want to bring this issue to conclusion, who know that we have a good compromise done right now that compromises the differences between what the Democrats would want and what the Republicans would want. That is how the process should work.

Yes, I am here—representing the people of Maryland, including a large number who work for the Federal Government and a large number who

depend upon the services of the Federal Government—to say let's get this done, not yield to the few on the Republican side in the House. Let's get this job done for the people of Maryland and for the people of this Nation.

I yield the floor and suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The bill clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

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

Mr. THUNE. Mr. President, tomorrow night at midnight, unless steps are taken, we will be facing a government shutdown. When I say steps are taken, steps are taken to avoid that. That can happen one of two ways: That could be an agreement that funds the government through the end of the fiscal year, which would be September 30 of this year, and there are negotiations that continue on dealing with that issue, or there could be a short-term continuing resolution that would take us through the next week that would enable those who are negotiating a longer term agreement to continue their discussions and hopefully to conclude a successful outcome to those discussions.

I want to remind my colleagues—and I believe I have been on the Senate floor a number of times speaking to this issue, but I think it bears repeating—why we are here, why we are in the middle of the sixth continuing resolution. This is the sixth short-term continuing funding resolution that we have had to live with since the end of the fiscal year, which was September 30 of last year.

The reason we are here is because last year the Democratic majority in Congress failed to pass a budget and failed to pass a single appropriations bill. They didn't fulfill the most fundamental responsibility that we have to the American taxpayers; that is, put together a budget that funds their government. So we have funded the government through these successive continuing resolutions. As I said before, we are now in the middle of the sixth short-term funding resolution which expires tomorrow night at midnight.

My colleagues on the other side have been coming to the floor and attacking the Republicans for wanting to shut down the government. I would say to my colleagues that nothing could be further from the truth. I think everybody here recognizes that no one benefits from a government shutdown. Frankly, the effort has been made in the House of Representatives to pass a long-term funding resolution that would take us through the end of the fiscal year, through September 30 of this year, but that failed in the Senate. We had a vote on that. It failed and there has not been, since that time, any meaningful effort made on the part

of the Democrats in the Senate to put forward a proposal that might, in fact, be able to pass the Senate and ultimately pass in the House of Representatives.

So we triggered these discussions between the White House and the leadership in the House of Representatives and the leader of the Democrats in the Senate. My understanding is those discussions continue. I hope they will reach a conclusion, a successful conclusion, but until that time happens we need to do something to make sure the government stays open beyond tomorrow night at midnight. So we will receive from the House of Representatives a piece of legislation that they passed earlier today, a continuing resolution that actually reduces government spending by about \$13 billion, discretionary spending, all cuts that have been agreed to by both parties, and also extends funding for the military through the end of the fiscal year.

There has been a lot of discussion about we need to provide some certainty for our military so they can plan. I agree with that absolutely. I met with members of our military, with our military leadership. It is important that we take care of the funding needs that they have through the end of this fiscal year.

So what did the House of Representatives do? They took a series of spending reductions which had been agreed upon, as I said, by both parties; they funded the military through the end of the fiscal year, through September 30; and they added a couple of provisions to that legislation that had been widely supported by both parties in the Congress.

There is a ban on abortion funding in the District of Columbia which has been supported by the Democratic leader, the Democratic whip on countless occasions. They included a provision that would prevent funding being used to bring detainees here and try them in the United States instead of at Guantanamo Bay. That is something widely supported. In fact the last time it was supported was when the Defense authorization passed late last year in December, and it passed by unanimous consent. So many of my Democratic colleagues are on record supporting all the elements that are in this continuing resolution that will be coming over to us from the House of Representatives.

The question then becomes, Who is it that is trying to trigger a government shutdown?

I am not here this evening to play the blame game. I do not think that serves anybody's interest, nor do I believe a government shutdown serves anybody's interests very well. I think the American people expect us to find solutions. They expect us to work out our differences but eventually to agree. I think that has certainly happened in the form of this continuing resolution that is coming over from the House of Representatives.

In fact, it passed the House today with 247 votes, including a number of Democrats. There were a number of Democrats who voted with the majority of Republicans in the House to pass a continuing resolution that takes on the issue of out-of-control Washington spending, which has been very clearly documented. We need to get spending under control.

We are adding to the Federal debt at a rate of \$4 billion every single day, which means by tomorrow night at 6:30—it is 6:30 tonight—tomorrow night 6:30 on Friday, we will have added another \$4 billion to the debt. That is the debt meter we are running. Every single day we add \$4 billion to the Federal debt that we pass on to future generations.

We are borrowing over 40 cents out of every single dollar the Federal Government spends. We cannot continue to do that. We will take in \$2.2 trillion this year, spend \$3.7 trillion. That is \$1.5 trillion in deficits in a single year. Add that up year after year after year and we end up with a \$14 trillion debt, which is where we are today. It is growing at \$1.5 trillion every single year.

So we have to get spending under control. I understand there is not a lot of appetite on the other side of the aisle for taking on Federal spending. In fact, many of my colleagues on the other side thought it was an ambitious proposal when they put forward an alternative to the Republican-passed bill that cut discretionary spending by \$61 billion. They put forward an alternative that cut \$4.7 billion.

That is the equivalent of the Federal debt we will add in the next 24 hours. That was their, I guess, idea about a serious effort to meaningfully address deficit spending and debts. The fact is, we have to deal with the issue of out-of-control spending.

Clearly, the continuing resolution, the short-term continuing resolution that passed the House, is coming to the Senate, takes on that issue, but does it in a way that cuts spending—spending cuts that, as I said, both sides have agreed to. It is a mystery to me as to why our colleagues on the other side would reject a proposal that includes spending cuts that have been agreed upon by both sides.

Frankly, if, in fact, it is true, in the reports I have read, that Democrats would accept somewhere on the order of \$43 billion in cuts for the balance of the fiscal year, this represents about \$12 or \$13 billion. So we are still considerably under what they have agreed to in terms of a total number, but with regard to the actual cuts that are suggested by the House-passed legislation, they are, by and large, cuts the Democrats have agreed with.

So we have agreement on these reductions in spending, we have a general agreement that we ought to fund the troops through the end of the year, and we have an agreement on the so-called riders—at least there has been agree-

ment in the past, broad bipartisan support. I would argue that the two particular provisions on this bill are provisions that are supported by probably 70 percent of people across this country.

So we have a piece of legislation that has broad bipartisan support, that has come over to us from the House of Representatives, and that would prevent a government shutdown at midnight tomorrow night. It is a great mystery as to why our Democratic colleagues would not accept that and do what I think is in the best interests of the American people; that is, at least get us into next week, where a final negotiation on the longer term continuing resolution can be concluded.

We have a problem in this country. We have a government that is spending way beyond its means. We have to start living within our means. We cannot continue to spend money we do not have. The efforts that are being made to reduce spending are long overdue. I hope they can conclude a successful agreement on a longer term resolution that would get us through the end of this fiscal year.

But I think it is important to point out, right here right now, that we have an opportunity to prevent a government shutdown, to fund our troops through the end of the fiscal year, and to reduce, in a meaningful way, spending, with spending cuts that have been agreed to by both sides in the form of this continuing resolution that was passed in the House this afternoon, with a large number, not a large number but a significant number of Democrats supporting it.

I would suggest to my colleagues on the other side, and I hope they will work with us to make sure we avoid a government shutdown, that we fund our troops and that we make a meaningful dent in out-of-control Washington spending. I would, again, as we approach that time tomorrow night at midnight, hope the leadership on the other side will take up that legislation that was passed by the House of Representatives, give us an opportunity to vote on it. I will submit there will be a large bipartisan vote in the Senate. If we do not have a large bipartisan vote, it will suggest that there are a lot of people who have changed their positions on the issues that are included in this piece of legislation because they are all things that many of us on both sides have supported and I suspect continue to support.

That will avoid that witching hour tomorrow night at midnight, where the government shuts down. They have given us an opportunity to vote on legislation that would do that. I hope we will take them up on that.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Missouri

Mrs. MCCASKILL. Mr. President, I think there are times around here that we lose sight about what real people are doing in our home States. I think we lose sight of the struggles, their

daily struggles, how they live their lives with integrity and honor every day and go to work.

Yesterday, we got a call in my office from a young lady. She was on her cell phone. She is a nurse, a nurse's aide at the VA hospital in St. Louis. She was on her break, and she was on her cell phone.

She talked to the young lady who answers our phone and said: I want you to tell the Senator that I have got kids, and I bring home the paycheck. The way I feed my kids is with my paycheck I get working here at the VA hospital, and I am scared. I am scared about what is going to happen if all of a sudden I quit getting my paycheck. I have no place to turn. I am a single mom, and I am very worried.

Then, she said: Would you hold on a minute? Then she handed her cell phone to someone else in the break room at John Cochran VA Hospital, and then that woman handed the cell phone to another woman. By the time this conversation was over, the young lady who answers the phone in my office had talked to half a dozen women who do not make a lot of money, who go to work every day caring for our veterans in a veterans hospital.

You know what they all said? Why is this happening? Why is this happening? If Latonya and her friends were here right now, I would say: You know what, that is a darn good question, why this is happening. This is not a game. This is not a game of ping-pong, where we are hitting the ball up and down this hall from the House to the Senate, fighting over divisive social issues that, frankly, our country has struggled with for decades and will continue to struggle with.

This is about running our government and about the money it takes to run our government. That is all it should be about. It should not be a time for us to argue about Gitmo. It should not be a time for us to argue about women's reproductive health. It should be about funding our government. We have many other occasions we can debate those issues and disagree. And reasonable people do disagree.

But now is not the time to debate those issues at the 11th hour, when Latonya is not going to get a paycheck to feed her kids. I am for cuts. I have been the odd man out many times in caucus fighting for cuts. I worked on spending cuts last year with Senator SESSIONS from Alabama. I continue to work with Senator CORKER about cuts.

I am somebody who said the original proposals that my caucus made were way too little. But you know what I am beginning to feel like? I am beginning to feel like I have been duped, because I thought that was what this was about. I thought it was about cuts.

Let's review the facts. The chairman of the House Republican Budget Committee and the Speaker of the Republican House said we need to cut \$32 billion out of the remaining budget this

year. I have to tell you the truth. I did not think that was unreasonable. I will admit, I am to the right of much of my caucus on some of this cutting stuff. But I did not think that was unreasonable. So I was glad when we went to the Republicans and said: You know what, we will cut. We will cut what you wanted to cut. In fact, we will cut more than what the House Speaker and the chairman of the House Budget Committee wanted to cut. That is where we are today. We have put more cuts on the table than they initially recommended.

I am beginning to realize this is not about cuts. This is about a much more extreme agenda that has to do with social policy, not about money. They keep moving the goalpost. What is the number? They keep moving the goalpost. We have gone more than halfway. In my neck of the woods, that is called a compromise.

We have the Republicans controlling the House, the Democrats control the Senate. That is why compromise is so important. What is wrong with a compromise? Let's do the compromise, fund the government, and get on with it, so Latonya can get her paycheck and the other women who work with her at the VA hospital can get their paycheck.

They will not take yes for an answer on cuts at this point. They want to make it about something else. Was the CR today just about military pay? No. No, it was not. I did notice one thing they did not put in the CR today. Why will the House Republicans not pass the bill we had asked them to pass to cut our pay if the government shuts down?

I will certainly not take a paycheck, and no one should take a paycheck. Why is that not being passed by the Republican House of Representatives? Why was that not put on the CR today? They want to, once again, pass something about moving people out of Gitmo, which has nothing to do with the budget for the rest of the year. When they were doing the Gitmo thing, why did they not put the pay for Members in there? Why did that not occur? I know the talking point is that—this is one of the talking points we are hearing from the other side: Well, you should have gotten this done last year. We can get it done today—we can get it done today.

We have gone more than halfway on a compromise. This is no longer about the cuts. This is not about the money; this is about an extreme agenda.

Latonya's paycheck and the paychecks of her friends in the break room at the VA hospital hang in the balance. Let's review what happened last year on the budget. The Republican Party participated in every Appropriations Committee in the Senate, and every Appropriations Committee passed a bill.

At the end of the year, that bill was brought to the floor because the appropriators believed the Republican appro-

priators were supporting the bills they helped write. In fact, those Republican appropriators stuffed that bill full of earmarks for Republicans. Hundreds of earmarks for Republicans were stuffed in that bill.

It was brought to the floor. I remember the night it was brought to the floor. It was in the lameduck. Then the Republicans decided they did not want to support it anymore. By the way, it was not as if passing anything around here was easy last year. If anybody was paying attention, it was about: Let's drag this out. Let's be stubborn. Let's make sure they have to get 60 on everything.

Is there blame to go around that the budget did not get done last year? Sure. There is blame that can go on both sides of this aisle. I am not here to say it was the Republicans' fault or the Democrats' fault. But certainly it takes a lot of nerve to say the only reason we do not have a budget is because the Democrats were not willing to pass a budget last year.

It was a little more complicated than that, if people will remember the facts as they occurred at the time. So it appears to me now that there are certainly a lot of people down the hall who want the shutdown. I was interested when I saw in the paper that when Speaker BOEHNER announced to his caucus they were preparing for a shutdown, he got a standing ovation.

Well, I can assure you, there are no standing ovations in our caucus. There are no standing ovations. I will tell you what, when I go to sleep tonight, I am going to be thinking about Latonya. I am going to be thinking about her kids and what she is telling them tonight and what not getting one paycheck means to that family. Just one paycheck can make the difference, can send a family down the path of getting behind on the mortgage, behind on the bills, and then not having a way to catch up. That is what we should be thinking about right now, not about those social issues that we disagree on and that we can debate and disagree on for many years, as we have for the last 40. But really, can we get a number? Can we make the goalpost quit moving? Can we agree on the cuts and then get on to the hard work? How embarrassing is it that we are fighting over literally a few billion dollars in difference.

If this is so much about cutting the debt—for another day, I want to talk about this, but, really, the Republican budget was released this week. Guess what it adds to the deficit over the next decade. The Ryan roadmap adds \$8.2 trillion to the deficit over the next decade. That is how serious they are getting about the deficit. It cuts taxes for a lot of wealthy people. It doesn't do much on the deficit.

I am all for cuts. I have stood for cuts. I will continue to stand for cuts. This government has to shrink. But what is going on right now is a political game. It is shameful. It should

stop. We should make an agreement on the numbers, move on, and make sure Latonya gets paid.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Wyoming.

Mr. BARRASSO. Mr. President, I rise as someone who lives in a State where we balance our budget every year, where the citizens of Wyoming and families all across the State live within their means, balance their budgets. They know what it means to have to live within a budget. That is why our State is one that currently today does not have a deficit, does not have a debt, a State where every year, by constitutional mandate, we balance our budget. It is time for Washington to take a lesson from Wyoming and balance its budget. This irresponsible spending must stop.

Here we are, a day from when it looks as if we may be dealing with a government shutdown, and I am ready to vote. I am ready to vote for a bill that already passed the House of Representatives early today. I am ready to vote to keep the government open and functioning, to make sure services are there. The bill passed the House. People who have studied civics in school realize that is how we make a law in this country. It passes the House, the Senate, goes to the President, who signs it into law. The bill has already passed the House. It is coming to the Senate. I don't know where other Senators are, but I am ready to vote.

I heard my colleague talk about a shutdown and who was rooting for a shutdown. It is no surprise to people who may be watching at home that it is former Democratic National Committee chairman Howard Dean who is rooting for a shutdown. The former chairman of the Democratic National Committee says:

I think it would be the best thing in the world to have a shutdown. He is the spokesman for the party of the other side of the aisle. That may be what he wants. I don't want to do that. I want to vote for the bill that passed the House. It is the only proposal that is out there. I haven't seen the Democrats offer anything. Even the New York Times said of the President that he was "silent for too long."

We have heard our previous speaker talk about the social issues. Let's remember that it is convenient amnesia for Democrats to talk about that specific issue because the President voted for and signed into law spending bills that included similar—actually the identical social issue in the past, the one he is opposing today. So did 49 current Senate Democrats. They also voted for a spending bill that dealt with that social issue. Why all of a sudden today it is different? I believe it has to do with what the former chairman of the Democratic National Committee said:

I think it would be the best thing in the world to have a shutdown.

Republicans are proposing solutions. What do we see from the other side of

the aisle? We see the senior Senator from New York saying, "I always use the word 'extreme.'" It doesn't matter what is proposed. He says, "I always use the word 'extreme.'" There are tape recordings of him saying this. He then said, "That is what the caucus instructed me to use this week." Regardless of how reasonable a proposal may be, regardless of the solutions that may be proposed, "I always use the word 'extreme.'" That is what the caucus instructed me to use this week."

I travel back and forth to Wyoming every weekend, visit with people and sit around at different locations, sometimes a morning breakfast group, sometimes it is people at lunch, dinners, community meetings.

I ask them: How many of you believe you have a life that is better than your parents had?

Every hand goes up.

Then I ask: How many of you believe your children will have a better life than you have right now?

Very few hands go up. That is the problem.

I ask them: What is the concern? Why do you believe you have a better life than your parents did but your children will not have as good a life as you?

The answer they give is the debt, the reckless spending in Washington—reckless, irresponsible, unsustainable. Yet, when we want to go ahead today, do cuts in spending, keep the military going, deal with the issue at hand, keep the government functioning so we can come back and continue to work on the debt and the spending, this body is not ready to vote.

I am ready to vote. I am ready to vote for the only proposal on the table—the one the Republicans in the House of Representatives passed today. That is real leadership. It is a plan. It will work. It is what the American people are asking for.

I have people from Wyoming coming to Washington all the time. They say: We realize things are tough this year. They come and explain a program that is good for people in the community, good for children, good for seniors—I met with six or seven groups like that today—good for students in school. They say: We know that all of us are going to have to deal with the realities of the facts, that we can't continue with this unsustainable spending where 40 cents out of every dollar we spend is borrowed, significant amounts from overseas. Our No. 1 lender is folks in China. I say: Is that your concern? That is absolutely the concern I hear around the State of Wyoming.

They see that the President of China comes over and tells America a few weeks ago that he wants the Chinese currency to be the currency of the future and the dollar to be the currency of the past. That is because he knows we have an addiction to spending, and it must stop. That is what I hear from people from Wyoming who come here as well. They say: We need to make sure we get the spending under control.

It seems reasonable to get back to the level of 2008 spending. That is the level many American families are living under. They balance their budgets. It is time for Washington to do the same.

I know the people in Wyoming. I have visited with a number through the week and in many communities last weekend—in Worland, Caspar, Laramie. What they are saying is, get the spending under control, and do it in a reasonable manner. But for someone to come from the other side of the aisle and say he thinks the best thing in the world to do is to have a shutdown and for another person to say he always uses the word "extreme" because that is what his caucus instructed him to use this week—that doesn't solve the problem. That doesn't let us find a solution. There is a solution on the table right now. It is a solution that has been proposed. This Senate ought to be voting on it tonight.

For the President to say he is going to veto it shows that the President is truly not engaged in this process. He has been silent too long, according to the New York Times. His budget that he has proposed, the Economist, a world-renowned, respected publication, called "dishonest." That is not the kind of leadership we need. We need someone in the White House fully engaged, taking an active role, and making sure we get back on a course that is responsible, that allows us to live within our means, as families know, because we have to stop spending money we do not have. Stop spending money we do not have. That is the way for Washington to behave in a responsible way, to make the difficult decisions necessary for the future of the country, to focus on the issues that affect families and their needs. Families who are trying to deal with kids and bills and a mortgage know what it means to have to live within their means.

When we see policies coming out of this administration that are ones making the pain at the pump even worse, as families are noticing they are paying \$700 on average more for gasoline this year than last year, that is money that is not available for other bills or for a mortgage or to help with their kids. Those are the issues they are facing, people trying to pay for their own health insurance, realizing the increased cost of the insurance because of the Obama health care law that passed way over the objections of the American people, crammed down the throats of the American people by the other side of the aisle.

The American people are saying: This is absolutely wrong. That is why I think we saw last November the election results we did across the country. That is why we see people continuing to stand up and speak out across the country. That is why people continue to go to townhall meetings and share their views about the problems happening in this country.

It is interesting. When I think of the great Presidents through the history of our country—we all have our favorites—I think of Ronald Reagan. He said that you can't be for big government and big spending and big taxes and still be for the little guy. We have on the other side of the aisle people who are for big government, big spending, and big taxes. They are not for the little guy.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Rhode Island.

Mr. WHITEHOUSE. Mr. President, I have been listening to the remarks of my friend from Wyoming. I noticed that he repeatedly indicated that what we needed to do in this building was to keep the military funded, to deal with the deficit, and to cut spending. It is my firm belief that if we were sent a bill that kept the military funded, that dealt with the deficit, and that cut spending, it would pass in the Senate very readily. Indeed, we have already agreed to \$73 billion in spending cuts. As Senator MCCASKILL said earlier, the problem is that the Republicans won't take yes for an answer.

The issue dividing us at this point is not the need to keep the military funded. We completely agree on that. It is not the need to deal with the deficit. We agree on that. Indeed, the last time we successfully dealt with the deficit, it was under the Democrats. Clearly, we have gone way more than halfway by agreeing to cut \$73 billion in spending. So as to those three points, the answers are yes, yes, and yes. So what is the problem?

The problem is two riders that are being insisted on in the negotiations, one of which would eliminate funding for Planned Parenthood and the second of which would gut the Clean Air Act—Planned Parenthood and the Clean Air Act. I thought this was about the deficit. I thought this was about solving our fiscal situation. The facts are a little different.

Here we are, mere hours away from the first government shutdown since Newt Gingrich forced one during President Clinton's first term. We are facing some 800,000 Federal workers being furloughed; millions more, including men and women in uniform, who will begin working without pay. Projects will grind to a halt. People working under government contracts will stop. There will be a real danger to our fragile economic recovery that is just starting to gain steam. Why take that risk?

In front of cameras all week, Republicans have been saying that despite these dangers, they will threaten a government shutdown because we need to tackle the deficit. The story behind the scenes is quite different. Even though the tea party has focused 100 percent of its cost-cutting fury on only 12 percent of Federal spending—only the nonsecurity, so-called discretionary spending—we agreed to the level of cuts Republicans wanted. Nothing on the revenue side, everything on

the spending side, and only from 12 percent of the budget, and yet we were still able to come far more than halfway to where the Republicans are, virtually within single-digit billions of dollars of agreement. Yet we still find ourselves without funding for the government beyond tomorrow night.

We have heard today that it has to do with the fact that we did not pass a budget last year. Well, we did not pass a budget last year, but we tried. As Senator MCCASKILL pointed out, she and I were on the floor when the omnibus spending bill came to the floor. It had been negotiated in a bipartisan fashion. It had come through all the different appropriating committees. It would have funded the government through September 30. We thought we had an agreement, and at the last minute all of the Republicans who had agreed to it changed their minds, literally while we were on the floor. The bill went down. One Republican Senator even took to the floor to gloat about the end of that bill.

So it is a little bit of crocodile tears to blame the Democrats for not having an appropriations and budget bill at this point from the side of the Chamber that took that bill down, that pulled their individuals who had participated in that bipartisan bill out of the deal, that filibustered it, and that shut it down. That is why we are here today. The minority party used its filibuster power, walked away from a deal it had already signed off on, and took down the spending bill. So here we are. It is important to stay somewhat close to the facts.

So now the Republicans are using the deficit concerns, which I think Senator BARRASSO said very clearly: Keep the military funded, deal with the deficit, and cut spending. That is what we are prepared to agree to do. But the bill we are being asked to agree to now is a Trojan horse. It is a Trojan horse that looks like a deficit bill, but inside it is filled with tea party ideology. It is filled with an extremist rightwing political agenda to do things like eliminate Planned Parenthood and give America's polluters free reign in violation of the Clean Air Act as it has been determined by the U.S. Supreme Court to apply. This is no longer about the deficit; this is about trying to force a very radical agenda down America's throats in a Trojan horse that looks like it is about the deficit.

What is it really about? Well, you do not have to go very far from this building. Just a few days ago, outside, you had the tea party ralliers, and what were they chanting outside of the Capitol? They were chanting, "Shut it down. Shut it down. Shut it down." That is what the tea party wants. That is why we are here. And, sure enough, when the Speaker went to his caucus on the Republican side and announced to them—to the people who are actually here making decisions in this Congress—that he was notifying the administrative staff on the House side to

prepare for a shutdown, what was the reaction? It was a standing ovation supporting the Speaker in that.

So on the outside of the building, you have the tea partiers chanting, "Shut it down. Shut it down. Shut it down." You have the extreme Members of the House Republican caucus out there with the tea partiers, egging them on, "Shut it down. Shut it down. Shut it down." They come back into the building. The Speaker says: We have to get ready to shut it down. They give him a standing ovation. They could not be happier about this. They load the bill up with things that have nothing to do with funding the military, nothing to do with cutting the deficit, nothing to do with bringing down spending, but instead accomplish ideological missions that the Republican Party has been on for years.

Mr. SCHUMER. Will my colleague yield for a question?

Mr. WHITEHOUSE. Absolutely. I yield for a question.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from New York.

Mr. SCHUMER. First, I thank him for his outstanding remarks. My question is this: Isn't it true we have had many, many Republicans in the House, Sarah Palin, Newt Gingrich, some Presidential candidates, erstwhile potential Presidential candidates, as well as even some of our colleagues here, Republicans, saying they want to shut down the government?

My question to the Senator is, I cannot recall a single Democratic elected official saying they want to shut the government down. My second question is, Doesn't that show something about who is itching for a shutdown or at least thinks they can use the shutdown to accomplish an agenda?

Mr. WHITEHOUSE. I agree with the Senator from New York. I cannot recall a single Senator expressing any desire for a shutdown. I have been present in our caucus meetings. Not one person has once said there is anything good about a shutdown.

We are all gravely concerned about what a shutdown would do to our fragile economic recovery. This is still about jobs, ultimately. We still have to grow an economy in this country. And when we shut down every government contract and put those people out of work, when we shut down every government project and put those people out of work, when we take paychecks away from government workers and when we furlough government workers, what does that do to the economy? Any economist will tell you it strikes a terrible blow. We recognize that, and that is why no elected Democratic official has said one good word about a shutdown.

That is very different from what we are seeing from the other side, where standing ovations, where chanting mobs, egged on by sitting Members of Congress, where public statements by candidates for President and by Members of Congress have all said that the shutdown—

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator's time has expired.

Mr. SCHUMER. I thank my colleague.

Mr. WHITEHOUSE. My time has expired. I thank the Senator from New York for his question.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Alabama.

Mr. SESSIONS. Mr. President, I thank the Chair and would share a few things.

If my Democratic colleagues would prefer not to shut the government down, then do not do it. The House, the Republican House, has passed a bill to fund the government, to fund the Defense Department, and the Senate, the Democratic Senate, has passed nothing. Indeed, the Democratic leadership proposed a bill that they said was worthwhile that would have reduced spending by \$4.6 billion. Ten Democratic Senators defected from the leadership position—a pretty gutsy thing to do on an issue as important as this.

Mr. WHITEHOUSE. Will the Senator yield for a question?

Mr. SESSIONS. I will be glad to yield for a question, although my time is limited.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Rhode Island.

Mr. WHITEHOUSE. I thank the Senator for his courtesy in yielding for a question.

Mr. SESSIONS. All right. Go ahead.

Mr. WHITEHOUSE. If, in fact, this is really about the deficit and if, in fact, this is really about reducing spending and if, in fact, this is really about ensuring the military remains funded, why is it necessary to have it be a non-negotiable condition of the bill that Planned Parenthood be zeroed out and that the EPA be prevented from enforcing the Clean Air Act? I do not see that there is any connection between those two requirements and the deficit, and I think, if the party were willing to give up those two demands, we could solve this very quickly. It is those two demands that are fouling things up and forcing a shutdown.

Mr. SESSIONS. Well, I appreciate the Senator's comment. I would like to respond to that. The House has sent over a bill that does not have those provisions in it—a 1-week extension, and it funds the military. It is available to be passed, also, and would allow further discussions and negotiations on how to complete the last of the year without affecting the military.

I just have to tell you, I have no desire to fund Planned Parenthood, the largest abortion provider in America. Maybe that is what you think Federal taxpayers ought to spend their money on, but I do not. But that is not the critical issue.

The critical issue is how much we spend. I certainly agree with that. The House has sent over legislation, both for the whole fiscal year and for a short term, to continue it. If this government is shut down, it will be because of

the Democratic Senate and the threat of President Obama to veto this legislation if it were passed. Why don't they bring it up for a vote? Perhaps it is because a number of Democrats who are uneasy about this reckless spending might feel that voting for this would be a good way to continue the negotiations and work through it and it might pass. So the President has now jumped into the middle of it and proposed to shut the government down.

And I do not appreciate my colleague—who is fine; we serve on the Judiciary Committee together—talking about that this is all extremist right-wingers. Give me a break. He said: They really have this secret agenda. They pretend it is all about the deficits. It is not about the deficits. It is about some extremist rightwing agenda.

He then launches into a full-fledged attack, as has Senator SCHUMER, on the tea party, some of the best people in our country who got terribly afraid for our Nation and went out and marched all over America—millions, tens of millions—who had never before done anything like that. I talk to them all the time. Are these bad people?

And let me tell you, Erskine Bowles, former Chief of Staff to President Clinton, chosen by President Obama to head his debt commission, came before the Budget Committee just 2 weeks ago, and he and Alan Simpson, his co-chairman, issued a written statement: We are facing the most predictable economic crisis in our Nation's history. "Predictable crisis" means we could be thrown back into another recession or a depression. When asked by Chairman CONRAD, our Democratic chairman, when this might happen, what did President Obama's chairman say? Two years, maybe a little before, maybe a little later. Alan Simpson piped up: I think 1 year.

Hopefully this is not so. Hopefully, we are not going to have a debt crisis in a year or 2 years. But these people who took testimony for weeks and months and provided their opinion on how to fix our debt, they say we are facing a debt crisis that could put us into a recession and surge unemployment, even though it is just beginning to come down a little bit. This is not a Republican-Democratic squabble. These are Democratic leaders who warned us.

Alice Rivlin headed the other commission with Pete Domenici, our former chairman of the Budget Committee. Pete Domenici, now retired from the Senate, said: I have never been more afraid for my country—one of the most eloquent orators I have ever heard in the Senate—never been more afraid for my country. When you have deficits—this year, we take in \$2.2 trillion and spend \$3.7 trillion—borrowing 40 cents of every dollar we spend, we are creating a nation at risk. That is what we are talking about.

So this past election, it was a big issue. All over America, candidates ran

for office, and the ones who were the big spenders, who were in denial about the danger the Nation faces, got shelved. Sixty-four Republicans got elected to the House—the biggest Republican victory in 80 years—over one issue, really. Spending, that is what it was.

When we came into the Senate they had only passed, when they had this supermajority in the House and in the Senate, a 5-month continuing resolution. The Democrats didn't pass a budget nor did they pass a single appropriations bill. So everybody knew that after this election, the funding level was going to be reduced. The American people had spoken.

He walks in, our majority leader, HARRY REID, and says, We will cut spending by \$4.6 billion out of \$3,700 billion we spent. Give me a break: \$4.6 billion out of \$3,700 billion that we spent is somehow significant? The House only recommended \$61 billion in the last 7 months, but that makes a difference. When you reduce the baseline, \$61 billion—and the interest you save—\$61 billion plus interest, it adds up to \$860 billion saved over a 10-year period. That is coming close to \$1 trillion in savings, by that one act. But when you spend on the upswing, likewise, you end up raising the baseline and surging spending and debt. That is why we have to get responsible, and when we do, we can make a bigger impact than a lot of people think.

I remain unhappy and stunned that my Democratic colleagues are in full-fledged attack on the good and decent people who stood up and complained about what was happening in Washington and now don't hesitate to attack the tea party as extremists. I object to that. I think it is wrong.

We are in a serious problem. I think many of my colleagues—I know many of my colleagues on the other side of the aisle have expressed to me that we need to do better, that we have to change the trajectory we are on. I think there is a real possibility for bipartisan action, but it is only a possibility. I actually have been fairly hopeful, but—we have had a lot of talk on the other side of the aisle, but I haven't seen anything moving—nothing—except the President's budget.

The Senator from Wyoming said "The Economist Magazine" called it dishonest. It is. What they said about it was it has been found false by five different fact checks. They say it calls on us to live within our means. The budget director said it will allow us to pay down our debt, when the lowest single deficit we are projected to have under the budget the President submitted to us is \$748 billion.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator's time has expired.

Mr. SESSIONS. I thank the Chair and yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Rhode Island.

Mr. REED. Thank you very much, Mr. President. We are on the verge of a

possible government shutdown, which is extraordinarily regrettable.

Controlling the deficit and paying down the debt is a critical priority of this country and must be done. It is a difficult challenge, but not insurmountable. We have done it before. In the 1990s I was a Member of the House of Representatives under President Clinton. We were able to push through an economic program that did not focus exclusively and entirely, as the Republican proposal does, on domestic discretionary spending. It looked across the board at not only domestic spending but defense spending. It looked on the revenue side. It also looked at some of our entitlement programs. The result from the 1993–1994 action of the Democratic Congress was that by 2000, when President Bush was sworn in with a Republican Congress, there was a projected multitrillion-dollar surplus. We were looking at robust employment.

I think it is sometimes difficult to listen to some of my colleagues talk about the deficit and President Obama when recognizing, under their leadership, President Bush and a Republican Congress, a surplus was turned into a huge deficit. In fact, President Bush doubled the national debt in 8 years. It had taken almost more than 200 years to accumulate a debt he doubled.

So we are here and prepared to make those reasonable and responsible decisions that will lead us forward to a balanced budget and, hopefully, to what we accomplished under Democratic leadership and President Clinton in the 1990s—hopefully—even some surpluses going forward. But it can't be done in 2 weeks. We can't undo what has taken place since 2000 in 2 weeks or 2 months. It is going to take a concerted, collaborative effort.

One of the problems we have had, frankly, is that the goalpost has been continuously shifting in terms of Republican proposals. My recollection is that last year the Republicans on the Senate Appropriations Committee insisted on a cut of roughly \$20 billion from the President's budget request for fiscal year 2011. Then, this year, the House Appropriations Committee, under Republican leadership, proposed initial cuts of \$33 billion from the fiscal year 2010 level. Days later, the Republican leadership decided that was not enough, so then it became more than \$60 billion, with cuts in everything from EPA water and sewer grants to the Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program to Head Start—programs that are critical to working families and communities. Also, these investments are critical at a time when our economy is just beginning to regain some of the economic traction it had before. We are seeing some encouraging employment numbers. We are seeing some increase in consumer demand. This Draconian approach to cuts could very seriously undermine the emerging—not yet complete—but emerging recovery.

In addition to the numbers that keep moving around, the proposal of the Republican House is studded with special interest riders—social policies, not fiscal policy. In fact, there is the impression sometimes that the deficit reduction claims are an excuse to try to advance not through the legislative process but through the appropriations process—through the threat of a shutdown—very conservative social policies. These policies should be debated. They should be voted upon. But to try to present them as nonnegotiable demands with the penalty for failure to heed to their demands the shutdown of the entire U.S. Government is, I think, inappropriate.

The President and Leader REID have been meeting with House Republican leadership continuously. There was a sense that a proposal of about \$33 billion in cuts from the appropriate baseline could be accomplished, but then that seems to keep moving again. This is unlike 1995 when we saw the last shutdown of this government by a Republican Congress. Again, this is becoming almost ritualistic. A Republican House is elected, and then within months there is a shutdown of the government. The 1995 shutdown lasted about 26 days. It cost about \$1.4 billion in essentially dead weight lost to the economy and to the government. We are on the verge of repeating that mistake.

Back in 1995, we weren't engaged in two conflicts with American service men and women engaged in Iraq and Afghanistan. We were not participating in a very volatile NATO operation involving Libya. We had yet to see the threat of international terrorism unleashed so dramatically on our shores as it was on 9/11. Again, if this government is shut down, there are thousands of civilians and civilian contractors who are part of our intelligence services that are at least in limbo as to whether they can continue to provide us the information and the insights we need to protect ourselves against a still existing and now clearly obvious threat. These are much more challenging times.

Indeed, for months now, in terms of a response to why the economy isn't growing, many of my colleagues have said, Well, it is the uncertainty of the Obama policies. That was the argument last year for the extension of the income tax cuts not only to middle-income Americans but to the wealthiest Americans. That uncertainty would breed a lack of investment, a lack of focus on job recovery. What could be more uncertain than shutting down the Government of the United States without any plan to bring it back and, indeed, without any clue as to what is the critical issue that must be addressed? At one point it is deficit; at another point it is social policy. That uncertainty I think could lead—I hope it does not—to a lack of confidence in our capacity to govern which will ripple through economic markets world-

wide, and which also I think could challenge perception of the United States as a coherent world leader.

There are some things that would unfortunately result from such a shutdown. We know military Federal pay will be delayed. In fact, uniformed military will be required to come to work, as they do, so dedicated to the service of this Nation, but their pay will cease the moment we shut this government down. Literally, there will be soldiers on the ground—sailors, marines, airmen in Iraq and Afghanistan—fighting and they will not be paid and their families at home will not receive those benefits. The Federal Housing Administration will not be able to endorse any single-family mortgage loan. So if you are ready to close on your loan next week, you have the downpayment and you are ready to go, because the FHA will be out of business. SBA-guaranteed loans for business working capital, real estate investment or job creation—for those things that are trying to move the economy—stopped, dead in their tracks. So if you are a small business man or woman, you are ready to expand your company and hire more people, sorry, the SBA is closed until further notice. The IRS cannot process tax refunds for those who are filing paper returns and are depending upon their tax refunds, as so many working families do, to get through the next several months.

We didn't get here overnight. In 1993, Democrats saw these same problems: a deficit that was prolonged and gnawing at the economic fabric of this country. We took deliberate action. It took several years, but within those several years, by the end of President Clinton's administration we saw a surplus, a robust employment situation, and the future looked very good to working families.

In 2001, as I indicated, President Bush came into office with a surplus, but after tax cuts that were unpaid for, two costly wars that were unpaid for, and an unpaid-for extension of our entitlement program in terms of Part D Medicare—the largest, by the way, expansion of government entitlements in many decades—we are now looking at a huge deficit.

President Obama came into office at a time when unemployment was, in my State, reaching beyond 12, almost to 14 percent. He was, I think, required to take appropriate action. With the Recovery Act, we were able to begin to restore some of the jobs. We have seen over the last year growth in civilian jobs, the private sector workforce, that we didn't see under President Bush. In fact, recent reports suggest over 200,000 jobs. Those are the kinds of numbers that have to be sustained, not undercut, and you don't sustain them by shutting down the government and shutting down agencies such as SBA and the Federal Housing Administration.

We are and have to work diligently. I hear my colleagues talking about

reaching out, collaborating, and I hope that is the spirit we embraced in the last several hours. But we have heard many other statements coming, particularly from across the Capitol in the other Chamber, about how we have to shut this government down, how we have to go ahead and make a point, not make sound policy. That is not going to lead us to a better future for American families.

I believe we have to be responsible. We have to recognize the problems before us will take months, if not years, to fully resolve, because it took years, not days or weeks, to accumulate. We have to respond to the troops in the field, not only to order them into battle but to support their families at home.

We have to be responsible to families all across this country and give them a chance to use their talents to contribute to this country. I urge responsibility at this moment, not a shutdown of the U.S. Government.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Alabama is recognized.

Mr. SESSIONS. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that of the 10 minutes allotted to this side, I be allowed to have 3 minutes and Senator MORAN 7 minutes.

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

Mr. SESSIONS. Mr. President, on the question of funding the Defense Department, it is a very serious matter. We need to handle that correctly. I will just recall for my colleagues that the House has sent legislation to us that would fund the government for an additional week, with a reduction in spending of \$12 billion, but that would fund the Defense Department for the rest of the fiscal year and take that matter off the table, guaranteeing there would be no disruption of the Defense Department.

We should do that. We should have already done that. Senator MCCONNELL, our leader on the Republican side, has said he will not support any more CRs unless we do fund the Defense Department. I have to suggest, however, that it appears to me our colleagues are using the Defense Department as a hostage and as leverage to the threat of shutting down, or partially shutting down, the Defense Department; the threat of that is used to sort of say that we are not going to cut spending anymore. So that is a fight we are in.

We have heard the discussion about riders, but the new CR the House sent to us today doesn't have those riders on it, and it is not a problem in that regard. I do think it is irresponsible for the President of the United States—the Commander in Chief—to threaten to shut down the government.

The Republican House has sent a bill over that funds the government and funds the Department. The threat to shut down the government is coming from the Democratic side. I don't think the people are going to be fooled. I do

believe the American people's voices will be heard. The amount of reduction in spending makes a difference in how much is saved over a decade.

Nobel Prize laureate Gary Becker; a superb economist, John Taylor; and former Secretary of State, George Schultz did a Wall Street Journal article recently, noting that under our spending—spending now is 24 percent of GDP—if the House bill that cuts spending by \$61 billion were passed, we would be spending 20.0 percent of GDP—a one-tenth of 1 percent reduction in spending from another calculation.

I yield to my colleague from Kansas. I am delighted to have him in the Senate.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Kansas is recognized.

Mr. MORAN. I thank the Senator for yielding.

Mr. President, I come here tonight one more time. I am a very short term Member of the Senate—only about 3 months. Every time I have spoken on the Senate floor, I have talked about the importance of reining in spending. With the crippling nature of our national debt and the belief that if we don't resolve these issues, the future of our country is at stake, it is really one of the primary motivations I have for serving in this Congress: to see that we turn this country around for the benefit of our children and grandchildren.

I think Kansans would say it is time for all Members of Congress to come together and fund the government. A shutdown demonstrates once again how we lack the ability or the desire to just use some common sense and reach a common goal. A primary function of Congress is to see that we appropriate the necessary funds to provide for government.

Today, it seems to me we have come to the point at which this issue needs to be rapidly resolved. We are down to just a few billion dollars—and certainly a billion dollars is a lot of money to Kansans and to me, but we need to resolve this issue so we can move on to the more dramatic and important issue we face as Members of the Senate, as American citizens—that being next year's budget and the future of additional spending down the road.

Tonight, in addition to saying let's resolve this issue, let's continue to fund the government, let's not pursue the strategy of a shutdown, I am here to express my genuine concern about the tactics that seem to be ongoing today, in which we, as the Senator from Alabama suggests, are holding hostage our service men and women and their pay.

We have had a lot of discussion in Washington, DC, about who is an essential government employee. I will tell you there could be no questioning the fact that our service men and women are essential government employees, and they will be working regardless of the consequences, regardless of the decision made here about the so-called shutdown.

From my view, it makes absolutely no sense—in fact, it is immoral—to ask our service men and women to serve in harm's way and have to worry about the paycheck that feeds their families—and, in fact, most of them live month to month, live paycheck to paycheck. The idea that while they are serving and sacrificing away from family, they would have the additional concern about whether the paycheck is going to arrive and be deposited in their accounts seems to me to be something beyond the pale, something we could never expect from a Congress of the United States of America.

So I am here one more time to say, yes, absolutely; let's get spending under control. The idea that we cannot go back to 2008 spending levels plus inflation—we can do that. Nobody should believe that we cannot accomplish that goal, and nobody should be using the service men and women's paychecks and their service to our country as a hostage or the idea of whether this government is shut down. Resolve this issue now and make certain we resolve it in a way that no member of our Armed Services, or their families, is harmed by the decisions we make.

This is an important decision. It is about the future of our country. The immediate concern is whether our service men and women understand that we value their service and that we will take every step to make certain they are not harmed by political inaction—the inability of us in Washington, DC, to resolve the issue of the continuing resolution.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The majority leader is recognized.

Mr. REID. Mr. President, I have a meeting at the White House. There will be no more votes tonight. We hope that we are able to have some good fortune at the White House. We are going through these issues.

As I indicated outside the door, I am not as confident as I was. The last 24 hours have not been kind to the American people. This is not a debate between Democrats and Republicans, it is a debate between Republicans and Republicans. They cannot determine how many social issues they want. The funding is pretty well taken care of, but that is not where we are.

We are here trying to fund the government at the end of the fiscal year based not on money but on social issues, some of which have been in this country for 40 years. We have not settled the issues in 40 years; we will not do it in a few hours. I am not optimistic. I hope things are better when I get to the White House and we can work it out.

What is going on is really too bad for the American people.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Oregon is recognized.

Mr. MERKLEY. Mr. President, I rise to share my deep concern that we are careening toward a shutdown of the government. Just a little more than 24

hours from now—tomorrow night—our government will shut down if this Chamber and the House Chamber cannot come together and put a simple continuing resolution on the President's desk.

There is a lot that we should be proud of. One is to be a nation that has been a light for the world, presenting the ideals of democracy in action and advocating for and defending human rights. We should be deeply pleased that we have fought for fair working conditions and economic opportunity for Americans across this great land. We should be proud of the tradition of public education that gives children an opportunity to fulfill their full potential. We should be deeply pleased of our history, advocating for freedom of speech, freedom of association, and freedom of liberty. All of these things are part of a legacy for our Nation, a part of what this Chamber has been about.

But we should not be pleased and we should not expect that this Chamber is now engaged not in those great and lofty ideals but in a very small argument over an extension of the budget for 6 months, and that we are so dysfunctional that we are risking shutting the American Government down for one of the few times in its history. That is not the model we wish to show to the world.

I am deeply frustrated by what has transpired since 2000. The first 11 years of this century—indeed, the first 11 years of this millenium—have not been kind ones for the United States of America. In 2000 we were running huge surpluses. I was back in Oregon as part of the legislature and very excited by the fact that we were paying down our national debt.

Economists were starting to debate whether we should pay it down in 3 years or 5 years; do we need to keep a substantial debt for some strange economic reason or should we pay the whole thing off. I was thinking, isn't that a great debate to have, because we are going to hand a debt-free nation to our children.

Mr. President, I think we all share the thought that there will be discussions tonight and we will not shut the government down. That is what this debate is about right now.

It goes back to the point that in 2000 we had a new President come in who decided that paying off the debt wasn't that important. No, President Bush said we should have bonus breaks, big giveaways to the wealthiest Americans, and he did so without paying for them in any other manner. Then we had a war launched in Afghanistan.

Instead of the President coming forward and saying we must sacrifice and pay for this war, it is important to our national security, he came forward and said: American citizens, please keep spending a lot of money in retail stores. That is the way you can participate in this. So the debt was greatly increased to pay for that war.

Then we had the President launch a war in Iraq—the same President, President Bush—and he proceeded to give away the Treasury to the wealthiest Americans. He decided not to pay for the war in Afghanistan. President Bush decided to launch a war in Iraq, on completely false premises, and to do so without paying for it.

Then we had Medicare Part D, which happened in that same 8-year period—a huge expansion of a government program that has and will indeed help many Americans, but it was not paid for.

Those four decisions doubled the debt from \$5 trillion to \$10 trillion, but doubling it was not enough. Indeed, the Bush administration did something else; they created a house of cards out of the most important financial document for every American family, the home mortgage. By deregulating retail mortgages, they allowed liar loans, undocumented loans. They allowed teaser rates, 2-year really low rates that mortgage agents used to talk people into subprime loans when they qualified for prime loans—steering loans that were regarded as such for steering families from prime loans into subprime loans.

Then they took all of those faulty subprime mortgages and packaged them into securities and allowed a new, unregulated form of insurance to back up those securities. Those were called swaps or derivatives. A \$50 trillion unregulated industry came upon the American scene, and those securities ended up in every financial institution around this Nation. This great house of cards, which corrupted the fundamental value of primary wealth for most Americans, and the humble fully amortizing prime mortgage—subprime mortgage—was turned into an instrument of mass financial destruction.

That financial destruction that was brought down on our house in 2008 and 2009 added another \$4 trillion to the debt. We went from \$5 trillion to \$14 trillion. That process continued this last December with a compromise that added another \$500 billion to the debt, a compromise I could not support because it added \$500 billion additional to the debt.

I had a lot of hope in January, 3 months ago, that we had a new group come in and we had a new Congress, the 112th Congress, and we were going to proceed to create jobs and do so by ending some of those frivolous giveaways, those massive oil and gas giveaways that line the bottom line of some of the deepest pockets in our Nation, those rules that prevent us from negotiating drug prices which results in our seniors on Medicare paying higher prices for drugs than seniors anywhere in the world, even though those drugs were invented right here, a potential savings of \$6 billion per year; those bonus breaks for billionaires, on top of \$100,000 per taxpayer, up to a million more for many taxpayers. Taking those bonus breaks away is a sav-

ings of \$50 billion a year; ending duplicative Pentagon programs identified by the Secretary of Defense, a savings of \$75 billion—all of these opportunities, and so many more, to bring our financial house into order.

But those hopes were soon dashed because the new team in the other House of the Congress did not decide to fight for jobs, did not decide to fight to get rid of frivolous programs. Instead they decided to lay out a plan that attacks the very communities that have been most hurt by the previous disasters because that meltdown, that mortgage meltdown that haunted us in 2008 and 2009, destroyed the wealth of basic Americans of their homes, homes lost enormous value, it proceeded to destroy jobs that those families counted on, huge job losses, it proceeded to wipe out their retirement savings. No wonder so many families today do not have confidence that their lives, the lives of their children will be better than their lives. For so many families—in fact, their current life is not better than their parents' life was because of these kinds of devastating decisions.

The new arrivals said: No, we are going to increase the harm. We are going to attack the community development grants that build community organizations. We are going to attack the heating programs that keep people from freezing. We are going to diminish the food programs that keep people from starving. We are going to attack women's health programs, programs that have nothing to do, by the way, with abortion, but preventive programs, screenings, Pap screenings, breast exams. We are going to wipe those out because of misguided ideological opinions. And now we find a bill that says we are going to dismantle Medicare. We find an attack on housing for veterans. These are not the things that will bring jobs to America. These are not the things that will rebuild America.

On top of all of these attacks on specific programs, my colleagues in the House decided to create a whole long list of ideological riders to add to the budget debate. I have a copy, 4 pages, of policy riders to H.R. 1. It goes on and on, everything one can imagine, from Job Corps centers to training for our unemployed Americans. It is a huge list. It defunds the Consumer Financial Protection Bureau that will guard against the corruption of mortgages I was discussing earlier. It attacks the EPA's ability to enforce the Clean Air Act. And so on. It is an unbelievable list all Americans should see to see what the true agenda is on the other side of Capitol Hill.

Now is the time to set aside these games, these ideological riders. Now is the time to set aside these attacks on the core programs that strengthen our communities. We are past the time to have the ability to do a simple 6-month extension of our programs in the United States of America so we can go

on to debate fiscal year 2012. But not everybody is ready for that serious debate.

We have been hearing a lot of chanting at rallies that they do want to shut down the government over these ideological riders. Indeed, on April 5, the Washington Post reported Republicans gave the Speaker—that is on the House side—an ovation when he informed them to begin preparations for a possible shutdown. They want the shutdown because they want this ideological fight.

After proceeding through devastating mistake after devastating mistake that increased our debt \$5 trillion in 2000—remember, it was heading down toward zero—to nearly \$15 trillion, we still cannot have a serious discussion. We have folks who want to shut down this government over these ideological riders.

We must return to understanding our role in the Senate and in the House in terms of the broad and challenging and important issues facing America—the issue of providing fundamental services, the issue of creating jobs, and the lofty goals of advancing democracy and human rights and civil rights around this planet.

Now is the time to set aside those shallow ideological games, focus on rebuilding our economy, and putting America back on track.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from New York.

Mr. SCHUMER. Mr. President, I rise first to salute my colleague from Oregon for his eloquent words and his passion. I know he has dedicated his life to making the lives of people better. That is why he feels strongly about how badly a government shutdown would affect average folks.

I agree with him. Simply put, there is no reason for a government shutdown—absolutely no reason at all. A genuine bipartisan compromise with significant and responsible cuts in government spending is in hand, but it is being vetoed by an extreme minority of the Republican Party. The tail is wagging the dog. The most extreme, the people least likely to compromise, the people, in general, with less experience in government and at least from their statements little respect for views not their own are dominating the House of Representatives.

Speaker BOEHNER is somebody for whom we all have a great deal of affection and sympathy. But the hour is nigh and leadership is called for. To allow this small group—relatively small group when we look at the expanse of our government—to dominate everything that is happening and hurt millions of innocent people is not leadership.

When the Speaker says there is no agreement on the numbers or the cuts, he means he is not ready to say so publicly. It is true I have not been inside the negotiating room, but I have heard all the details from my friend and colleague HARRY REID. I have heard the

details from those who have been negotiating.

The bottom line is, the number and what composes that number of cuts is virtually agreed to. The only reason there is not a handshake is Speaker BOEHNER and his representatives do not want it to appear the numbers are signed off on, for two reasons, in my opinion. One, they are afraid what these hard-right colleagues would say, and two, then it would focus everything on their true *casus belli*, which is the riders.

This is no longer about spending. The hard right in the House of Representatives wants to make this about ideology, injecting last minute ideological add-ons, such as limiting preventive health for women. We have a fiscal crisis in this country, not a social crisis.

Let's not gloss over what is going on. Republicans do not care about reducing the deficit; otherwise, they would not have paraded out a budget this week that ends Medicare for our seniors but protects trillions in tax breaks for corporations and millionaires. Care about deficit reduction, yes, you would want to cut Medicare, but you would also want to make millionaires pay their fair share of taxes because every dollar from the millionaire goes just as much to reducing the deficit as a dollar from Medicare cuts. When you do one and not the other, you do not care about deficit reduction. You may care about shrinking the government. You may wish there is no government at all. That is a perspective of some. But you do not care about deficit reduction.

One of the things that has not been made apparent is cutting government programs to many on the other side of the aisle is not in sync with reducing the deficit, and those two are too often confused.

Why are we here? Why are we on the eve of a shutdown of government which will hurt millions? It is because this hard right in the House of Representatives—some of them members of the tea party, others allies of the tea party—want to satisfy the agenda of the extreme rightwing. And if they do not get everything they want, they have made their desire clear. We do not have to make this up.

Here is MIKE PENCE, one of the leading Republicans in the House of Representatives, one of the leaders of the tea party caucus. What does he say? "Shut it down." That is what he wants. Either he thinks he is going to get his way by shutting it down—I grew up on the streets in Brooklyn and there were people who thought that just by bullying they could get their way. Shut it down if you do not do it all my way. Bullying does not work, and we will not be bullied. We will not hurt millions of people. We will not abandon our principles because the other side believes we will do whatever they want—falsely believes we will do whatever they want—because otherwise they will shut the government down.

We do not want to shut the government down. I have not heard a single

Democrat say what MIKE PENCE has said. But I have heard lots of Republicans—I heard Sarah Palin talk about the shutdown being a good thing. I heard Newt Gingrich talk about a shutdown being a good thing. I heard some of Mr. PENCE's colleagues, probably a dozen or so in the House of Representatives, saying "shut it down" is a good thing.

Have you heard a single Democratic elected official say it? No. That alone should tell you who wants to shut the government down or who is willing to shut the government down and who is fighting strongly against it.

They want to shut the government down if they do not get their way. As I said, I have seen people do things like that growing up on the streets of Brooklyn. You know what you learn? If you keep giving in and giving in, they ask for more and more. The way to deal with someone who is attempting to bully you is to stand up to them. We have gone so far in their direction. President Obama said to Speaker BOEHNER, it is reported: You have gotten three-quarters of what you want. Why don't you declare victory and go home?

We know why Speaker BOEHNER cannot do that. It is very simple. Because then there would be a rebellion among a key part of his constituency—the hard right, many of them, but not all of them freshmen in the House of Representatives. Most of them have very little experience in government. I dare say most of them do not know the consequences of a government shutdown or the kinds of cuts they are suggesting. But they come in with an ideological narrowness.

When either party lets the extremes dominate, they lose. When Republicans let the hard right dominate, they lose. Frankly, we learned our lesson as Democrats. When we let the hard left dominate, we will lose too because most Americans are somewhere in the middle.

This idea of shutting the government down or of applauding, a standing ovation when the Speaker informs them to begin preparing to shut the government down, I guarantee you it will backfire on the perpetrators, just as it did on Newt Gingrich in 1995. But that is political consolation, small consolation for the damage that will be done to individual people who will lose jobs, to the economy. Just one fact: FHA will not be able to issue any guarantees on new mortgages. FHA issues 80 percent—guarantees 80 percent—of our mortgages, including mortgages for the middle class, the bulk of mortgages. Middle-class people will not be able to take out mortgages. What does that do to our economy and the housing sector?

The Internal Revenue Service will not be able to mail out a good percentage of refunds. What does that do to the economy, when the money is stuck in Washington instead of going back to people who rightfully own it and who

will spend it in the stores and shops and on vacation?

There are other irresponsibilities. We have American troops fighting abroad. We want to make sure they are fully funded. A government shutdown will not do that. Colleagues on the other side are coming up with an unbalanced, short-term extension that funds the troops. Well, I say to my colleagues, if you want to fund the troops—not for 1 week—don't shut the government down. That is the best way to support our troops.

It is time for Republicans to be responsible. It is time for the majority of Republicans—whom I don't agree with on so many issues, but whom I know are mainstream and don't like this government shutdown—to stand up to those on the hard right, to accept the compromise we are so close to working out and drop the ideological riders so we can move forward.

We are at a crucial time in this country. We have had a rough few years. We are beginning slowly to climb our way out of it. This is risky. A government shutdown is risky. The shame of it all is that it is so easily avoided. All we need, again, is a little bit of strength and courage from the Speaker to tell the hard right in his party, yes, he will try to accommodate some of their needs, but he will not shut the government down; tell them, yes, we do have to cut government spending. And we Democrats—the vast majority of us—agree with that. We don't believe in cutting things such as cancer research or loans that go to students who are going to college, but there is a lot of waste in the government, there is a lot of excess, and we can wring that out without hurting people and reduce our deficit. We agree.

The proposals we have made, including \$73 billion below the President's proposal for this year, show we have put our money where our mouth is. But every time we come close to an agreement, Speaker BOEHNER—not on his own, in my judgment, but pulled by the tea party—pulls the goalposts back. He pulls them back on the numbers. Although we have gone so far, it is hard for him to do that any longer. But he also does it with these ideological riders.

We are at a sad moment. We are at a time when the continuation of this government—with the hard-working people who compose it—is right on the edge of closing, with untold damage to innocent people. I would ask my colleagues on the other side of the aisle, and in the other body—I would plead with them—let's stop the political games, let's stop the ideological posturing, let's stop thinking it has to be only my way and no one else's. Let's come meet in the middle with a reasonable agreement, keep the government going and move forward to do the things the American people have asked us to do.

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

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The bill clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

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

Mr. BENNET. Mr. President, I came to the floor the other night to talk about what I had learned in 2 years of townhall meetings in Colorado regarding our deficit and regarding our debt. What I said the other night was that people in our State, whether in red parts of the State or blue parts of the State, have a commonsense way of approaching this, and they have a three-part test they want to apply.

The first test is they want to make sure we actually come up with something that materially addresses the problem we face. They are tired of gimmicks. They are tired of tricks. They want us to sort this out. They know it will not be fixed overnight, but they want us to get started on it.

The second test is that we are all in it together. They are tired of the us-against-them conversation that happens in Washington. They are tired of hearing that one person's ox is going to be gored or one group of people's ox is going to be gored and everyone else will be left alone. Everybody wants to contribute to solving this problem.

The third test is they want it to be bipartisan. Because, frankly, they do not have confidence in either party on this issue and they want to see us working together.

That is it. We should be working toward that as a Senate and as a House. We should be having a serious conversation about how not to leave our children stuck with a bill of \$15 trillion in debt and a \$1.5 trillion deficit. I feel that keenly, as the father of three little girls myself.

But I think it is very important for the American people to understand the debate we are having right now. The threat that we are going to shut the government down has nothing to do with the broader conversation about our deficit and our debt. In fact, shutting the government down is going to make matters worse.

I said the other night that there is not a superintendent of schools—I used to be one in Colorado—there is not a city council or a mayor in Colorado, from the largest city to the smallest town, who would dream—who would dream—of saying to their constituents: We can't work this out, so we are going to close the government next week. We can't work this out, so we are not going to plow your snow next week or pick up your trash next week or educate your kids next week, not one local official in our State. The Presiding Officer knows this. He was a mayor. He would never have gone to his constituents and said: Oh, by the way, we are closing next week because we have a disagreement.

It makes no sense. Nowhere on the planet would that make any sense. To say nothing of the fact we find ourselves at a moment in the country's history when we are engaged in wars all across the globe, when we are now involved in a multilateral effort in Libya, when we have thousands of people—government employees—trying to help the Japanese weather this unbelievable tragedy they are facing, when we have economic competitors all over the globe trying to seek an economic advantage against the United States in the 21st century. Yet we are saying: Well, we are going to take a time out because we can't agree. We are going to pause, take a rest, close the government. The American people must think, well, you guys must be very far apart. That is why I brought this chart. I don't know the exact details here. Nobody does. The reports on the news tonight were that several billion dollars separated the negotiators. I have heard it ranges from \$5 billion to \$10 billion, or somewhere in there, so I picked the number \$7 billion, which is more than several. But that appears to be what divides the parties—\$7 billion. Seven billion dollars.

That is a lot of money. It is a lot of money. But look at it in the context of our deficit and our operating budget. Here is this line. You can't even see it. This line is the \$7 billion, right here. This is our deficit, and this is our operating budget—\$1.5 trillion, \$3.6 trillion.

I apologize, Mr. President, but I couldn't fit it on one chart so I had to have two made in order to show what the order of magnitude of difference is between what we are squabbling over here in Washington, and what our deficit looks like and what our operating budget looks like. That is it. That is it. That is it.

Do you know, this difference, if this were the city of Alamosa—and the former mayor is the Presiding Officer—and my State—which has roughly a \$14 million operating budget in the San Luis Valley—if they were saying we were going to shut down our government based on this difference, that would be like Alamosa saying, we can't figure it out because \$27,000 is what we are apart.

Mr. President, if you and I went to Applebee's tonight and we had their \$20 dinner for two, and then we had a fight over the bill, we would be fighting over 4 cents. That is what would separate us—roughly .19 percent of our operating budget.

I could even understand if the parties were saying we disagree, we disagree, let's keep negotiating. But I can't for the life of me understand how on those terms anyone could threaten a government shutdown, especially when we confront the dangers we confront today.

And so the answer is, it is not about our budget. The time we have consumed here is taking time away from the conversations that the Presiding Officer and I have been part of, that

people on the other side of the aisle have been part of, that the gang of six, a bipartisan group of Senators—three Democrats and three Republicans led by MARK WARNER and SAXBY CHAMBLISS—have been working on. That is what we should be doing. We shouldn't be threatening to close the government. I don't think we should be threatening to close the government under any circumstances, but certainly not when the economics are as thin as that.

I know there are people—and it is not all Republicans—there are some people in the House who feel the social issues they have attached to this piece of budget legislation are somehow more important than keeping government open or that litigating those issues in the context of trying to keep the government open is the right thing to do. I disagree. I think they should have a hearing. I think we ought to have a floor discussion about what we want to do with women's reproductive health or the other issues that are there. I am glad to have that debate. But don't threaten to shut the government down based on that.

So I will say again, as I said the other night, I encourage the leaders of both parties in both Chambers, and our President, to find a way to settle this, to find a way to work it out, to find a way to keep this government open at this moment when we have troops deployed all over the globe, and to live up to the standard of every single local elected official in my State, whether they are Democrats or whether they are Republicans, who are making tough choices in this budget situation but managing to respond to their constituents' priorities.

This week, in Colorado, they reached a budget agreement. The Governor is a Democrat, the Senate is a majority Democratic, the House is Republican. The Speaker of the House, who is a Republican, said this is the first budget I have been able to vote for in years because of the leadership of John Hickenlooper, our Governor, and the leadership of the Democratic and Republican Party there. That breeds confidence in people's work. I think if we can find a way to work together across the party lines in a bipartisan way and demonstrate that we can keep the government open, and much more important even than that, that we can create a path toward fiscal sanity in this country, I think the American people would cheer. Right now we have not given them very much to cheer about.

I see the Senator from Texas is here, and I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Texas.

Mrs. HUTCHISON. Mr. President, we have been talking for a long time today about this fiscal crisis. I don't think anyone is looking at the looming deadline tomorrow night as something that we want, to have government shut down. I hope so much that the President and Speaker BOEHNER and the

Democratic leader of the Senate, Mr. REID, can come to terms because we are so close to having an agreement on a continuing resolution until the end of this fiscal year—which is what we need. If anyone would run a business the way this government is being run, in 2-week continuing resolutions and 1-week and 3-week—it is not a way to run anything. It is not organized and you cannot plan. Certainly, we know taxpayer dollars are not being the most efficiently spent if we are going in 1- and 2-week increments.

The stakes are very high. I look back at the year 2000, and we had balanced budgets. We had a balanced budget in the year 2000. We had a balanced budget up until 9/11. That was only 10 years ago, and we ought to be able, as the U.S. Congress, working with the President, to say if we had a balanced budget 10 years ago, we cannot possibly be so far over the line that we cannot bring it back into balance. But to bring it back into balance we are going to have to look long term. We cannot do it on \$30 billion of difference from now to the end of the fiscal year's spending. The fiscal year ends October 1. We cannot do it. We have to have a 10-year plan; we have to have clear cuts in spending; and we have to start working toward a balanced budget in a responsible way.

I cannot say I agree with everything in it, but the House Budget Committee chairman, one of the Republicans in the House, has proposed a budget that would do exactly that. It would get us to nearly a balanced budget. Now we need to start talking about the plans he has put forward. The President has not been; Congressman RYAN has. We are going to change some of it, I hope. We should have the same goal; that is, to get to a balanced budget over a period of time, 5 to 10 years. But we certainly are not going to do it in the next 24 hours, talking about \$30 billion or \$36 billion going for the next 6 months.

I hope we will settle this issue so we can go to the long-term issues. The long-term issue is going to come up in about 1½ months when we are going to be called on to raise the debt ceiling. The debt is \$14 trillion. We are looking at a deficit this year alone of \$1.6 trillion. If we go with the budget the President submitted, \$3.7 trillion more, over \$14 trillion? No wonder the people of this country are up in arms. We need to listen to the people of this country who say stop doing business in Washington the way it has always been done. Stop it now and start cutting back on the appetite for spending so we will be able to have the balanced budget that we can see in our future.

What we are looking at now is the potential of a government shutdown. I hope it does not come to that, but there is one thing we ought to be able to do in this Congress, and that is at least protect our military who is serving in Afghanistan and Iraq and their families who are back home worried enough about them because of where

they are and who most certainly should not have another burden put on them of not knowing if their paycheck is going to come at the normal time of the month—the 1st and the 15th.

I have introduced S. 724. I ask unanimous consent to add Senator SESSIONS as a cosponsor.

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

Mrs. HUTCHISON. I will say that makes our 46th cosponsor of S. 724. It is a very simple bill. It just says if there is a government shutdown, the military will be paid. The Secretary of Defense will have the discretion to also pay the civilians and those who are serving our military so the food service in Afghanistan and Iraq will not be stopped because we have a government shutdown and the paychecks are not going to come.

I want to alleviate any fear on the part of any member of our military or one whose family is watching the debate on the House and the Senate floor, watching this play out and thinking: Am I going to be able to pay the mortgage on time? I want to alleviate that fear right now.

I hope we will be able to pass this bill that is gaining sponsors about every 15 minutes, as people start looking at the looming shutdown of government that will happen a little later than this tomorrow night if we do not have an agreement. I think all of us should put our military in the front of the line and say: They are going to show up for work. Let's assure them their pay will not be delayed. That is not the message they are getting right now, but I think we can assure they will get it.

I have a letter we just received from the National Association of Uniformed Services, which says:

On behalf of the more than 180,000 members and supporters of the National Association for Uniformed Services, I offer our full support for your legislation, S. 724, the Ensuring Pay for Our Military Act of 2011.

I ask unanimous consent to have this letter printed in the RECORD.

There being no objection, the material was ordered to be printed in the RECORD, as follows:

NATIONAL ASSOCIATION FOR
UNIFORMED SERVICES,
Springfield, VA, April 7, 2011.

Hon. KAY BAILEY HUTCHISON,
U.S. Senate,
Washington, DC.

DEAR SENATOR HUTCHISON: On behalf of the more than 180,000 members and supporters of the National Association for Uniformed Services (NAUS), I would like to offer our full support for your legislation S. 724, the Ensuring Pay for Our Military Act of 2011, a bill to assure that, in the event of a federal government shutdown, our nation's men and women in uniform would continue to receive their military pay and allowances.

The Ensuring Pay for Our Military Act would make available the necessary funds to prevent an interruption in pay for members of the military if there is a funding gap resulting from a government shutdown. The bill also includes a provision to authorize the Secretary of Defense to allow those who serve as DOD civilians or contractors in support of our men and women in uniform to continue to be paid as well.

The National Association for Uniformed Services thanks you for introducing legislation that demonstrates our nation's appreciation for those who serve in our Armed Forces. We look forward to working with you and your staff and deeply appreciate your continued support of the American soldier and their families.

Sincerely,

RICHARD A. JONES,
Legislative Director.

Mrs. HUTCHISON. Mr. President, I hope we come to agreement and do not shut down the government. We are so close to getting this temporary fiscal year—which we are already halfway through—finished, and let's take this off the books. What we ought to be doing right now is focusing on the 2012 budget that starts October 1, where we are having our hearings, and we are asking our questions, and we are trying to set our priorities with a lower scale of government. We are going to cut back way below what we spent last year and the year before, but we are going to prioritize our spending.

We had FBI Director Mueller testify before our Commerce-Justice Subcommittee of Appropriations to talk about the law enforcement needs of our FBI. I want to spend my time talking about the needs of the FBI and the other necessary functions of government; certainly, our armed services bill. I do not want to be talking about shutting down government in the middle of the fiscal year because we are not coming together on \$6 billion or \$3 billion—I don't know exactly where they are now, but it is not very much in the scheme of things. What we need to do is get this behind us, alleviate the fears of our military personnel, alleviate the fears of their families that they might have a hiatus in their paychecks.

We need to start thinking about the big picture, the big picture of what we must focus on, which is cutting spending so we can go toward a balanced budget and agree on a 5- to 10-year trajectory that will put us back in a fiscally responsible position for our country to have the credibility in the world we should have, for our children to be free of the debt for what we have used in government in this country. We don't need to pass that debt to our children if we are responsible stewards of both their lives and our taxpayer dollars.

We need to be the leaders that people expect us to be. The people spoke in very loud terms last November, that they do not want more spending. I hear it everywhere I go. I hear it in the airports, on the streets, when I am talking to people in informal meetings, the grocery store—people are scared to death of a \$14 trillion debt. It has never been so high in our country before.

I don't want that to be the legacy of this Congress and our generation. That is not the legacy we should have as leaders of the greatest country in the free world.

I implore the leaders of Congress and the President to get the continuing

resolution behind us so we can focus on the big picture; that is, the \$14 trillion debt that we are facing right now and doing the responsible cutting that will begin to cut back on the deficits, take down the debt, and address the issues that have not been addressed for all these years, once and for all.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Michigan.

Ms. STABENOW. Mr. President, I commend the Senator from Texas on her bill of which I am very proud to be a cosponsor, to make sure our men and women in harm's way continue to receive their compensation and support for their families if, in fact, there is a government shutdown. I am certainly going to continue to do everything I can to keep that from happening. I am unwilling to give up, and I know others are as well.

I commend the Senator, but I think this is very important. We need to send that message. We need to get this done and get the bill done.

Mrs. HUTCHISON. I say to the Senator from Michigan, she was one of the first to sign on as a cosponsor of this bill. I think that is the right thing to do. I appreciate her leadership.

I just got a note from my staff, and I also ask unanimous consent to add Senator SCOTT BROWN and Senator AMY KLOBUCHAR as cosponsors of S. 724.

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

Mrs. HUTCHISON. I thank the Senator from Michigan. I think we can do this together if we will come together and focus on those great young men and women in Afghanistan and Iraq serving right now and do something that is right for them regardless of whether we have to face a government shutdown for all the rest of us.

Ms. STABENOW. Mr. President, I could not agree more that we need to do this. I think it is important that the Senate take the lead as we did on another piece of legislation that our friend from California brought forward, and which was passed unanimously by the Senate, to set down a very important principle; that is, if we, those making decisions, cannot come together, then it should be Members of Congress not getting a paycheck. Our troops should be getting paid, but Members of Congress should see their paychecks stopped.

Unfortunately, under law right now Members of Congress would be the only ones whose paychecks don't stop. That is something we have passed in the Senate, to change that. Frankly, I found that to be pretty embarrassing. Then it became outrageous when we found out that the troops' paychecks might stop.

So it is important we send two messages: people who are responsible for making this decision take responsibility and their paychecks stop if it doesn't get done, but also we have to make sure the men and women in harm's way continue to have our sup-

port verbally and that we show it in our priorities as well.

I hope we are not going to see this happen. There is no reason for this to happen. We are talking about a shutdown that would not only affect many people around this country—families, small businesses—it would affect also the markets, our international standing. This is a very serious issue. People of good will can solve this.

We all know we have to be smart. We have to change the way Washington operates and cut the things that are not working and invest in the things that do. There is no question about that. We have to do that. In fact, we have agreed to major changes in that direction, but it is a challenge.

I just wanted to take a second because I think the toughest job in town today is the Speaker's. It is very clear that he has a very difficult job when people are giving a standing ovation for him when he is talking about preparing for a shutdown. We do not need this. That is not what we need.

What we need is to continue to have people of good will coming together, as we have just been talking about, in support of our troops and saying: We can complete this year's budget. We are halfway through the year. Let's just get it done.

What happens if it does not get done? It is not about us. It is not about us. We will be all right. It is not about us. It is about the people who are affected. We know, but let's just go through what happened back in 1995.

In 1995, there were 400,000 veterans who saw their disability benefits and pensions claims delayed—our veterans.

Again, we are talking about our troops. But in the last shutdown, 400,000 veterans had delays in their disability benefits and pensions. That ought to be a motivator for all of us to get this done. It would be outrageous if that were to happen again. There was approximately \$3 billion in U.S. exports that were delayed because they could not get the export licenses. That is jobs for us.

As we look at a time when we want to export our products, not our jobs, around the world, delaying that affects our jobs. We know hundreds of thousands of Medicare and Social Security requests were delayed the last time this happened.

For the first time in history, six States ran out of Federal unemployment insurance at the time, and small business loans, we know, could be stopped or delayed, as well as tax refunds for people who have been waiting for hard-earned dollars, stretching every penny to make ends meet.

So it makes no sense. It makes no sense to the economy, it makes no sense for families, for seniors, for veterans. We need to come together and get this done. We also need to make sure that whatever is done and what we have been fighting for, the majority has been fighting for, is that we not

one more time ask middle-class families and small businesses to be the ones who have to sacrifice.

In my State, our families, middle-class families, people trying desperately to stay in the middle class or to get in the middle class have been the ones hurt over and over—their jobs, losing their jobs or losing their incomes, with their houses underwater, trying to make ends meet, not sure right now if they are going to be able to have the kids continue to go to college. With gas prices going up like crazy, are they going to be able to even just get back and forth to work? Those are not the folks who should be, one more time, sacrificing, carrying the load. The same with people sending their children, grandchildren to war. Our middle-class families should not be the ones continuing to be the only ones sacrificing in order to deal with what is a national debt and the need to balance the budget and change the way we fund Washington, reduce spending, change the priorities.

What I am concerned about is that middle-class families and small businesses not continue to be the ones who get the brunt over and over. I think about this struggle the last couple of years in Michigan and what we have had to go through with our automobile industry and how proud I am of where we are now, but also the sacrifice that it took to get there.

We are making the best automobiles. We are winning all the awards. Our people are smart and skilled. We have the best engineers and the best skilled workforce, but a couple of years ago we had a horrible crisis. It took sacrifice from everybody to turn that around and some smart thinking.

Workers had to sacrifice—beginning pay cut in half; retirees, the company, shareholders, communities—everybody had to sacrifice in order to turn this around. But we did something else. We then said: While you are cutting back, we are going to invest in the future. We are going to invest in innovation. We are going to invest in those things that are going to allow us to grow and create more jobs and be successful.

After 2 years of a tremendous amount of hard work and everybody sacrificing, with some smart decisions and investments, we are turning it around, making a profit for the first time—each of our companies—since 1999. We are turning things around because people were willing to be in it together. That is what I am fighting for, because we know we have to change the way we do business and we have to cut the things that do not work and invest in the things that do. But everybody has to be in on this—everybody—not just some people who are being asked to give over and over, not just small businesses that did not cause what happened on Wall Street but cannot get the loans because of what happened with the crisis, holding on, trying to make it, trying to get the capital they need to keep the doors open

or to expand. They did not cause this, and yet we seem to find the same people over and over having to make the sacrifices. That does not make sense. I do not think it is American.

So what we are seeing now as we close in on the final decisions, people coming together, is a question of whether we are going to have everybody be a part of the solution or one more time asking the middle class and small businesses. We can come together and get this done if people want to do that. There is no question about it, that people of good will can get it done. I think that it is in everybody's best interests to do that on every single level.

But there is no question as well that we have very different priorities that are being debated today in our country. We saw that this last week in very stark terms, which goes to the whole question of, again, how do we solve our problems and is everybody in? Is every American going to be part of turning the ship around? That goes to the budget proposal this week that has added, in my opinion, insult to injury, which relates to the proposal coming from the House Budget chair to change Medicare as we know it; to change Medicare from an insurance plan for our retirees and people with disabilities to something that would be a voucher for insurance companies.

It is stunning to me, actually, in looking at this proposal, and extremely concerning to me, the ramifications of what is being proposed. Then what adds insult to injury is that the proposal is being made to unravel Medicare, do away with Medicare as we know it, raise the costs, the premiums, and the medical costs for almost every senior in the country—according to the Congressional Budget Office.

At the same time this same budget document would give over \$1.8 trillion in new tax cuts for special interests and the millionaires of the country—not the folks who have been working hard to try to make it, who have not gotten the big breaks, but one more round of big breaks for the people who have not felt this recession, the people who have gotten the special breaks, who somehow have not had to go through their house underwater, their income go down, worry about the kids, worry about the car, worry about the gas. The folks who earn over \$1 million got the special tax breaks—those interests that are doing extremely well in this country.

That is not how I view shared sacrifice in order to be able to solve the country's problems and get us out of debt and grow the economy, cutting Medicare for seniors, dismantling it, at the same time giving one more round of tax breaks for millionaires and the major special interests of the country.

That is wrong in my judgment. It is the wrong set of priorities, and it is worth debating, and we will debate that. It is interesting; I remember when we were passing health care re-

form, and we were focused on the fact that we had to make sure Medicare was healthy for the future and make some tough decisions so that it would be strong and there for seniors.

We took a look at overpayments for for-profit insurance companies. There are major overpayments, and we decided to cut those back. It was actually causing the majority of beneficiaries, the majority of seniors, to see their premiums go up because of some overpayments to a few. We decided that we would cut back on those insurance company overpayments, and we would instead focus on quality in Medicare, making sure seniors could go to the doctor and get their cancer screenings, their wellness visits without out-of-pocket costs and bring down the cost of medicine; that we would focus on ways to streamline, focus on quality and streamline the way that we cut costs.

According to the budget gurus, we were able to save, I believe, over 10 years, \$500 billion. It did not cut any benefits for seniors, but the other side of the aisle said this was terrible. It was terrible because we were focused on cutting overpayments to insurance companies.

Now we see this proposal that would dismantle Medicare, and it would cut what is the average amount a senior spends on medical care in a year, which is about \$15,000 a year. It would, instead, cut that amount down to \$6,000 a year and give it in a voucher to an insurance company. That is OK. That is a different set of priorities than I have and I know that you have, Mr. President.

So these are debates we are going to have, and they are important debates for our country. How do we go forward? How do we solve the budget deficit? How do we grow the economy? How do we create jobs? How do we make sure what we are doing is fair for everybody and keeps what works while cutting what does not?

Medicare is a great American success story. Do we need to make sure it is there for the next generation? Absolutely. Do we need to look at ways to streamline and cut costs? We have done that, and we need to continue to do that. Absolutely. We need to do that. But it is a great American success story. It has allowed a whole generation of older Americans to live healthy lives, play with their grandkids.

Now that I have two beautiful grandchildren who, by the way, are the most beautiful grandchildren in the world, just for the record—but now as I have my 3-year-old and 1-year-old and I look at the fact that I want to be healthy for a long time so I can be there for them, and what a wonderful gift as Americans we have given to seniors, that gift of Medicaid and Social Security so that they can be healthy and live in dignified ways in their own homes and be able to live long lives for their grandchildren and their great-grandchildren, that is something we should be proud of.

So as we go through this time, we have two kinds of debates. We have to deal with what is happening immediately, complete this 6-month—not 6-year, 6-month CR; I am talking about a 6-month budget—in a commonsense way, make sure that troops get paid, make sure we do not have any veterans losing their opportunity for disability benefits or pension benefits, and small businesses are not being delayed from getting their loans. In my judgment, we need to put down a marker saying if we cannot come together, that we are the ones who do not get paid, not the troops. Then the next step is to debate the vision of this country and where we go, what is important and what is not.

Should some Americans be asked to sacrifice in order to solve our problems and be stronger and compete in a global economy or should everybody be asked to do their part? People want to do their part, and they are willing to do their part. But we need to make that clear, that we expect everybody to be a part of the solution.

What I find most concerning today is that when we are in a global economy and we ought to be talking about the United States competing against China, the United States competing with Germany or India or Korea, we are not doing that. We are standing here on the Senate floor on a Thursday night talking about whether people will come together to complete a 6-month budget and make sure our troops can get paid. That is not the debate we should be having. We have precious time available to us. The debate we should be having is about how as Americans we will compete in a global economy and win. That is what we need to be doing. That is the debate I am anxious to have.

I hope we are not going to give up. I will not give up on what we need to do right now, to come together, get this done, avoid a government shutdown, and get on to the real business of creating jobs and competing in a global economy.

I thank the Chair.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mrs. HAGAN). The Senator from Minnesota.

Mr. FRANKEN. Madam President, I rise to talk about the disastrous consequences if my colleagues on the other side of the aisle continue to prioritize politics and posturing over what is best for Americans and our fragile economic recovery. We have 27 hours to convince them that shutting down the government should not be treated as a gimmick, that shutting down the government is a serious matter with serious consequences for almost every American. But before I go into the consequences and their impact on my constituents, I want to take a moment to reflect on how we got here, how we are now in a position where a government shutdown is 27 hours away.

One thing is certain: There is a lot of misinformation and confusion out there. A number of my friends on the other side of the aisle have been saying

that the Democrats and the President refused or failed to pass appropriations for fiscal year 2011. This is revisionist and confused history.

One of my colleagues, a new Member, said today:

Why was it that a few months ago, after the election but before the new Congress took over, when the President had both houses of Congress under control of his party, why did he opt not to pass a full budget for fiscal year 2011?

The Presiding Officer knows this is just not true. This isn't true. I have been hearing a lot of this.

We had appropriations legislation for the entire Federal Government ready to go. Democrats were in support of it. We were prepared to fund the government for the rest of the fiscal year. But, remember, it takes 60 votes to pass something like that in the Senate. There were 58 Democrats in the Senate last December, and there were 42 Republicans. So we needed some Republicans to pass a full budget for 2011—not many, but we needed two. We didn't get any. Not a single Republican agreed to support the bill. That is what happened.

For a while, we were told that a number of Republicans were going to support it. The bill had been negotiated on a bipartisan basis. But then, by all accounts, arms were twisted, and they were turned against the bill.

The minority leader said:

I am actively working to defeat it.

And he did. He killed it. That is the truth. And my friends on the other side of the aisle celebrated.

After they made clear that there would not be enough votes to pass the omnibus bill, my friend from Illinois engaged in a colloquy with Senator MCCAIN, asking:

For those who don't understand what just happened, did we just win?

Senator MCCAIN responded:

I think there is very little doubt.

Senator KIRK concluded the colloquy by saying:

I congratulate the Senator.

We really do owe it in these serious times to engage in debate where we are being honest with the American people. There is little doubt about who opted not to pass a full budget for 2011. It was not the President or the Democrats in the majority; it was my friends on the other side.

My friends on the other side protest that they do not want to shut down the government, and then they point the finger at us.

Yesterday, there was a rally for the tea party on Capitol Hill. Part of my delegation, MICHELLE BACHMANN, whom I like very much, said:

Democrats are trying to make it look like we want to shut the government down. We don't. They are trying to do that.

Silence.

That same day at the same rally, MIKE PENCE said to them:

It looks like we're going to have to shut down the government.

And what did the tea party crowd do? They started chanting: "Shut it down. Shut it down. Shut it down. Shut it down."

According to his own account, when Speaker BOEHNER told Republican colleagues in his caucus that he had taken steps to prepare for a shutdown, "I got a standing ovation."

There have been no standing ovations on our side about a prospective shutdown. Come on. We are trying to keep the government working. We desperately want to keep the government working.

Republicans are busy fighting ideological battles. For them, this is not about the deficit. It is not about the budget. It is certainly not about jobs. This is about ideology.

I was presiding today, and I had the opportunity to hear some of my colleagues talking about the bill the House passed today to fund the troops. We want to fund the troops if there is a shutdown. We do. There was all this sanctimonious talk about how Republicans want the troops to be funded, and the House had passed a bill to fund it. Do you know what was left out? That STENY HOYER, the minority whip in the House, the Democratic minority whip, had offered a bill to pay the troops if there was a shutdown, a clean bill, nothing attached to it other than that. It was voted down by Republicans in the House. What passed? A bill with a rider on it about abortion. I didn't hear that in all the sanctimonious talk.

Let's at least have an honest debate. Really, adding abortion? Look, I know there are people who have very strong, heartfelt feelings, obviously, on abortion on both sides. This is something we have been talking about for decades. Why put it a rider about abortion on legislation to pay for the troops and then go in front of this body and say: Democrats don't want to pay the troops.

This can't be about holding a gun to our heads and saying: You have to come down on this side of this issue that people feel so strongly about and have been debating for 40 years.

The Republicans in the House talk about the Constitution. They started this session by reading the Constitution. They left out some of the embarrassing parts, that a slave was three-fifths of a person. They left that out. But there are two Houses, and there is a President. But they don't want to compromise. They just want to put a gun to our heads. And it is in the form of abortion and in the form of global warming. Look, 99.6 percent of climate scientists in the world believe there is global warming and it is caused by human beings. The other .4 percent work for coal companies or oil companies or the Heritage Foundation. Then there might be another guy somewhere.

Why put a rider on this that is about ideology? This should not be an ideological debate. This is about getting

the deficit down and about our economy. We had 216,000 new jobs last month. It is fragile, but we are beginning to come out of this. This is not the time to shut the government down.

What it is going to do to people in my State, to seniors—every week, there are hundreds of seniors—how many a day—170 a day applying for Social Security. They are not going to be able to do that, people who just turned 65. There are people who are going to try to get FHA loans and won't be able to. There are farmers who want to put seed in the ground who will not have the Farm Service open. This is not the time to do this. This is going to mean 800,000 Federal employees laid off. What is that going to do to the economy?

Look, there are things in this that I don't like, but I am willing to swallow and do it.

They want to cut hundreds of millions of dollars in hunger programs, \$700-plus million to cut food for women, infants, and children. It has been analyzed, and because of that, the neediest kids will not get their allotted amount of fruits and vegetables that is recommended. And that is not just during the closing; that is what they want to do for the rest of the year and presumably beyond that.

At the same time, we were here last December, and they wanted to extend the Bush tax cuts. They insisted on it, not just to your first million dollars or your second million dollars, to your tenth million dollars, to your 13th million dollars, or to your 300th million dollars. The top 400 income earners in this country average over \$330 million a year in income. They would rather those women, infants, and children not get food, the food they need to be healthy. I don't like that. Boy, do I not like that. Boy, do I not like that. But I was willing to swallow that for whatever is in the compromise to keep the government going so we could go through the year, so we could keep the economy going, so we continue the job growth we have had.

They know how to keep the government going. Take the ideological stuff off. Let's not resolve abortion in 27 hours. We have had more than 27 years—37 years—since *Roe v. Wade*. Let's not put a gun to everyone's head and say we have to resolve *Roe v. Wade* in 27 hours. That is just plain inappropriate.

I think you know how I feel. I think we know which side gives standing ovations when it is announced the government may very well be shut down. I think we know which side's crowd cheers and chants when they hear there may be a shutdown. I wish it were not that way. I wish we were working together. I hope we are working together. I hope we are working together on Monday.

I yield the floor and suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

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

EXTENSION OF MORNING BUSINESS

Mr. DURBIN. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent that the period for morning business be extended until 10:30 p.m., with Senators permitted to speak therein for up to 10 minutes each, and I ask that the time for morning business be for debate only.

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

BUDGET NEGOTIATIONS

Mr. DURBIN. Madam President, I rise to speak in morning business, even though it is the evening—the nature of the Senate rules and procedure. During the course of the day, we have had a number of colleagues coming to the floor and talking about the looming shutdown of the Federal Government.

During the last several hours, as we have spoken, Majority Leader REID and Speaker BOEHNER have been meeting with President Obama. It is my sincere hope that it has been a productive and fruitful meeting and that they will report that we have found a way out of this difficulty. I certainly hope that is the case. But if it is not, if we are destined to see this government shut down tomorrow night at midnight, it is a sad commentary—one that most American voters will resent and be disappointed with, and understandably so. It basically says the leaders have not been able to reach an agreement. Fingers of blame will be pointed in both directions, and the public can reach conclusions about who is responsible.

From my point of view, having worked with Senator HARRY REID on this from the beginning, I attended many meetings and heard many reports. It has been a frustrating experience because the Speaker's position in the House has changed so often. The amount of money they wanted to cut from the budget, where it would come from, and the policy riders that were part of this conversation have been changing with each meeting. I know Senator REID is a patient person. I have watched him as my friend since we were both elected to the House in 1982, and as my colleague in the Senate now—and this is my third term. He is patient, but he has been frustrated because of these changing scenarios.

The most recent change is one that I find most troubling, which is that it appears the debate is no longer over deficit reduction or spending cuts. It really isn't about how much money we are going to cut during the remainder of this year. Most Americans thought that was what we were debating and negotiating. It turns out now that it

has devolved into a debate over policy questions that have nothing to do directly—maybe even indirectly—with the budget deficit we face and the money we are going to spend.

For example, Speaker BOEHNER has been insisting today that the Senate adopt a provision which removes the authority of the EPA when it comes to issues involving pollution. I disagree with that position, but I have to say to the Speaker that he should check the CONGRESSIONAL RECORD. It is not the most exciting publication, but if he looks at yesterday's CONGRESSIONAL RECORD, he will find that we spent most of yesterday debating this point.

Four different amendments were offered by Democrats and Republicans, including Senator MCCONNELL, the Republican minority leader, on this issue. We debated them for days and voted yesterday on the question of the authority of the EPA. There were four votes.

On the first one, there were seven Senators voting in favor of the change in that amendment. On the second amendment, seven Senators again. On the third amendment, 12 Senators voted in favor of the change. The fourth, offered by Senator MCCONNELL, was 50-50. At the end of the day none of them passed.

For Speaker BOEHNER to insist now that we include in our bill a provision that has already been debated in the Senate and rejected is fundamentally unfair and goes way beyond any question about deficit reduction and cutting spending.

The second item he raised is one that is even more puzzling. For some reason the Republican majority in the House believes the last election was a referendum on whether we provide medical services to women in America. We have the title X program—primarily for low-income women—that gives them access to basic health care, to the type of cancer screening and infection screening that we want all of the women in America to have access to. The House Republicans decided we should eliminate that Federal commitment and close the clinics, denying access to millions of Americans to basic primary health care.

How can that be in the best interest of our country and the costs that we incur to provide medical services? How can it be fair to these people, the men and women who use these clinics because they are accessible and affordable? They want to close them down. I don't recall that debate in the last election. I don't remember any candidate for the House or Senate saying: I want to go to Washington to close down access to health care for women, children, and men across America. That is, in fact, what they are saying now is the reason we need to close down the government. They think it is better to close down the government than to continue to give access to medical care to women under title X.

Planned Parenthood, which has a clinic in my hometown of Springfield,