

this debate and we will not give in. The access to these critical services is so important to so many young women in this country. I told the story and I will tell it again. A few days ago I heard from a young woman in my State who, at 18-years-old, had to leave an extremely abusive family situation, out on the street on her own. She had cervical cancer that runs in her family. The only way she was able to get the medication and care she needed was through title X Federal funding through clinics in her State.

She and 5 million others in this country depend on that, and we are going to take this away at the 11th hour, in order to get an agreement? Not on my watch. Not on the watch of millions of American families in this country who know that access to women's health care is basic to them and their families and their communities. What kind of country are we, that at the 11th hour on a debate like this, the issue remaining is about women's health care? I find that stunning.

Families across my State are hurting. They have lost their jobs, they are worried about getting a pink slip, their home prices have dropped, they are worried about making their mortgage, and this debate now has come to this? An issue of access to title X funding for preventive health care for women? We need to focus on the economy. Yes, there are going to be some budget cuts in this that are going to be extremely hard for me and others who care about investing in education and jobs, but we know we have to come to an agreement. But we will not let women be used as pawns in this debate at this 11th hour. We are not going to allow this debate to end by cutting off funding for health clinics across America that are often the only place for low-income women.

In my State of Washington over 100,000 patients depend on these clinics to provide prevention. Over 3 million Americans do nationwide. We are not going to let the threat of a shutdown make us fade away. Women are going to stand tall, and men with them, across the country, to say: Not on our watch. Women are not pawns.

I yield the floor.

#### RECOGNITION OF THE MINORITY LEADER

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The Republican leader is recognized.

Mr. McCONNELL. Mr. President, I am going to proceed in my leader time.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The Senator has that right.

#### GOVERNMENT SHUTDOWN

Mr. McCONNELL. Mr. President, the American people have heard a lot of excuses over the past few days as to why it is that we are staring at a potential government shutdown here in Washington.

Democrats are saying the holdup is over social issues. This plays nicely into the political strategy they have decided on to distract people from their own fiscal recklessness.

Republicans say the holdup is over the need to reduce Washington spending—that Democrats, including the President, would rather see the government shut down than to allow a reduction in the size and scope of Washington that is perfectly reasonable by any objective standard.

Those are the competing messages. And generally speaking, people will probably agree with the party they tend to vote for. But whichever side you come down on, two things are not in dispute in this debate: First, that the whole reason we are in this mess is that Democrats abdicated their responsibility to keep the government funded through this year. And second, that Democrats have rejected the only plan out there that keeps the government open—the bipartisan troop funding bill—for no apparent reason.

The President says he will veto it, but does not say why. And Democrats in Congress would not vote for it, even though it funds the Defense Department and keeps the government operational and makes reasonable cuts in spending.

In other words, what Democrats are saying at this point is that they had rather see the government shut down either because they would not accept a modest amount of spending cuts that fall well within the range of what Democrats previously described as reasonable, or because they would not reinstate a longstanding policy related to one American city that Members of both parties, including Presidents of both parties, have approved repeatedly in the past.

The majority leader said yesterday that this particular provision relates to an issue that we have been unable to reach agreement on for 40 years. My response is that this is actually one of the few areas of agreement both parties have agreed about on this issue for years.

Let's be very clear about this: if the government shuts down, it is either because Democrats are pretending that a previously noncontroversial provision is suddenly out of bounds. Or they refuse to take another baby step in the direction of balancing the government checkbook, something we know the American people want. Neither reason is worth a shutdown especially when neither side actually wants one. And that is why I believe there will be an agreement here shortly. I have been in many negotiations over the years. I assure you, these are not unresolvable issues.

So my suggestion this morning is that both sides sit back and give the negotiators a few more hours to work this out.

Let Senator REID talk with his conference. Let the Speaker talk to his. And let's just hold off on the specula-

tion and the back and forth for a little while here. Both sides are working hard to reach the kind of resolution Americans want.

A resolution is within reach. The contours of a final agreement are coming into focus. There is virtually nothing in the troop funding bill Republicans in the House passed yesterday that will not be included in a final package.

Let's not disrupt and derail that agreement.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The Senator from Illinois.

Mr. DURBIN. Mr. President, let's make it clear where we are at this moment in time. There is an agreement. There is agreement on the budget number. It was an agreement reached between the President with Speaker BOEHNER and with Senate Majority Leader REID—an agreement on the spending cuts for the remainder of this year. It was reached last night at the White House.

Then it fell apart, not because of a change of heart when it came to the number but, rather, because of the insistence of the House Republicans that they would not let us keep this government functioning, they would not let us pass a budget resolution for the remainder of this year, unless we were prepared to virtually devastate the title X family planning program.

Let me ask you something: In the big national debate in the last election over the future of our country and what we would do with our deficit, how many times do you remember that issue coming up? Exactly. None. This issue over title X has been brought in by the House Republicans at the last moment. It has virtually no impact on government spending—virtually none.

Yet they insist on it. Why? It is because of some problems within the House Republican caucus. The Speaker of the House, JOHN BOEHNER, whom I know and respect and like, is surrounded by lean and hungry colleagues challenging his value, his resolve, and his leadership.

This House power struggle has now reached a point where we face a government shutdown and a slowdown on whether we are going to provide basic health care access for women across America. First, understand, not one penny, not a penny in title X funds can be spent on abortion, other than the strictly limited provisions of the Hyde amendment, which have been the law of the land for decades, agreed to by virtually all Republicans and Democrats.

It is about access to cancer screening, it is about pap smears, breast screening, it is about screening for infectious diseases. Here is what it means: If we cut off the funding, as the Republicans ask, for women to have access to affordable health care for their basic health, it is not, as the Senator from Arizona says, just a matter of whether they will knock on the next

door down the street at a doctor's office, it is whether they will have any care at all.

This is the lowest priced health care for people who struggle to survive day by day. If we fail to provide that health care, we endanger their health and we run the risk that without access to family planning, they will have unintended pregnancies and, sadly—sadly—even more abortions in this country.

If you believe, as I do, personally, that we should try to reduce the number of abortions in America, how can you do what the House Republicans are asking us to do and close down access to family planning? In my State of Illinois, it is estimated that if title X were eliminated, we would have a 24-percent increase in abortions in the State. I do not want to see that.

I consider myself a person who is personally opposed to abortion but believes it is up to a woman and her doctor and her family and her conscience. But for goodness' sake, should not women, rich and poor alike, have access to family planning? That is part of what this debate comes down to.

I would say to my colleague over here, Senator MCCONNELL, the Republican leader, he blames us for not coming up with a spending bill for this year and putting us in this mess. My memory is a little better than his. I remember, in December, when we brought the spending bill to the floor, he objected to it. He objected to it, even though the spending targets in that bill were exactly what he had asked for before the Senate Appropriations Committee. That put us into this current showdown.

Here is what I think we should do: Let's not close down this government. Let's face this decision responsibly. Let's say to the millions of committed Federal employees across America who are basically keeping America safe, making sure our planes are safe in the air, tending to the business of this great Nation, that they can come to work because the government will not close at midnight.

Let's acknowledge that we have agreed on the amount of deficit reduction, the amount of spending cuts, and move forward. But let's also agree, let's agree to save for another day all those other debates about all those other issues, whether it is the EPA or title X.

There is plenty of time and opportunity for Senators and House Members to give speeches until they are red in the face over these issues and to call for a vote. But let's not close down the government of the United States of America over the access to women's basic health care. That is what the House Republicans are insisting on. It is the wrong fight at the wrong time.

It is important for us to step up and step forward and understand that if we do not invest a modest amount in preventative health care so women can learn their health status before small problems become large problems, so

women can plan their family future, so people understand what their health status is, if we do not invest in that preventative care, we will pay dearly for that not only in terms of dollars spent but in terms of human suffering. That is something we should rise above.

That is something we should care about enough to put aside and say keep the government open. My plea now to Speaker BOEHNER is: You have fought the good fight. We are at the 11th hour. Do not let us reach the depths of despair by closing down our government and sending a message across the world that there is something wrong with this American form of government.

There is nothing wrong with it. There is nothing wrong with it that people of good faith, responsibly stepping forward and accepting their duty in the House and Senate, cannot cure by agreeing today. Let's do it. In this hour of decision, let's get it done.

Senator KERRY spoke yesterday at our Senate Democratic caucus lunch. JOHN, I still remember your words of what an embarrassment it will be to the United States if our government is shut down. In the eyes of the world, so many people respect this great Nation and I am glad they do and I do too. But to allow a government shutdown at this moment in our history is a sad commentary. Let us not shut down the Government of the United States of America over the question of whether women will have access to affordable health care and preventative health care across the United States.

I yield the floor.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The Senator from Texas.

Mrs. HUTCHISON. Mr. President, I think that everyone—or virtually everyone in the Senate—does not believe we should shut down the government. The question is, What are the negotiations? I am not privy to them and neither is anyone on this floor about what are still the sticking points.

We all believe it is our responsibility to assure that government does not shut down and to come to an agreement because this is a 6-month bill—this is to the end of the fiscal year—that we are trying to negotiate. It is a very small part of the big picture, which is, we must get the deficit down, which is projected to be, under the current budget that has been put forward, \$1.5 trillion.

That is wrong. That is what we ought to be addressing. We ought to be looking at the numbers we can bring down so we start getting this budget deficit down so our debt starts coming down and we can see an economy that is thriving through private sector job creation.

That is what we ought to be doing. But because there is so much debate and because there is such disagreement about what is holding up the agreement for that 6-month plan, there is something that is gaining momentum in this country that I want to assure everyone knows about.

I was notified of it this morning through an e-mail into my Web site. It was from a woman I do not know. She said: My husband is Active Duty in the Navy, and I just wanted to let you know there is a Facebook campaign supporting S. 724. Please click the link below because there are 437,000 people who have signed on that they agree with us. This is what Americans think about military pay being cut.

Because S. 724, that was put forward by myself and Senator CASEY who came on board, which now has 58 sponsors, is about making sure no matter what happens in the next 12 hours, no matter what happens with the government shutdown, is that there be no question in the minds of our military and their families that they will be paid on time because there is no question they are going to come to work. I do not want 1 day or 1 hour of delay in the payment for our military. We have about 100,000 people in Afghanistan today putting their lives on the line, wherever they are in that country, and we have 47,000 in Iraq.

For the people back home—and I have already heard from one wife who has a 1-year-old child whose husband is in Afghanistan, who says: Thank you for remembering that we have mortgages to pay, and our husbands are not here to help us or do anything about it.

So I wish to say we have now, in the hour since we got this note, we went on the Web site. The Web site is called Ensure Pay for Our Military Act of 2011, which is also the name of our bill. It now has 639,212 people who have signed on in support of this Web site.

The people of our country know there is one option we do not have; that is, to pass a freestanding bill that will assure whatever the other disagreements are, that our military pay will be on time for the work that is being performed. America understands that. I am asking the Senate to join.

I ask unanimous consent for cosponsors to be added to my bill: Senator PRYOR, Senator BOOZMAN, Senator BENNET, Senator BAUCUS, Senator ISAKSON, Senator KIRK, and Senator JOHNSON.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Without objection, it is so ordered.

Mrs. HUTCHISON. That brings the total to 58. Senator CASEY has been a wonderful supporter in this. He is the lead cosponsor.

Mr. President, 58 Senators have stepped to the plate and said: This is not an option, for us to equivocate for 1 minute.

I am waiting to get two more cosponsors, which will show that we have 60 and that we want to act as a Senate. I am hoping that Senator CASEY and I can get the ability to bring up our bill and pass it. It is very simple, very clear. Military pay for those who are serving our military in civilian capacities will not be delayed. They are going to report to work, and they need to have peace of mind because the mortgages they have may be on direct

lines to the mortgage companies, that they are going to be covered. That is the very least we can do as we are arguing about whose fault it is going to be if we have a shutdown. We need to say: It is our first priority not to have a shutdown, and we need to be able to come to agreement, and we need to take further action—I hope we can do it very quickly—of saying we are going to assure, with this simple bill, that our military will be paid.

If we send this to the House of Representatives, my guess is they, too, will pass it.

Mr. DURBIN. Will the Senator yield?

Mrs. HUTCHISON. I yield.

Mr. DURBIN. I ask unanimous consent to be added as a cosponsor of the legislation.

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

Mrs. HUTCHISON. Mr. President, that makes 59.

Mr. WARNER. Will the Senator yield?

Mrs. HUTCHISON. I yield.

Mr. WARNER. I ask unanimous consent to be added as a cosponsor as well.

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

Mrs. HUTCHISON. Mr. President, Senator WARNER is 60. We now have the ability to pass this piece of legislation. Whatever happens on this floor, we have 60 votes that commit us to supporting our troops and assuring them that there is no equivocation in this Senate for having their pay on time. They will be doing their duty in Iraq, and they will be doing their duty in Afghanistan. It is my great hope that we also will have the ability to assure their families so there is not 1 minute of stress added to what they already have in their lives.

I thank those who started this Facebook and the grassroots movement that has brought us to over a half million people in a few hours. This is a true grassroots movement. I thank those who started it.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from New York.

Mr. SCHUMER. Mr. President, I rise to speak about the crisis we have. I guess I ask my Republican colleagues: Please, don't shut down our government. A shutdown will hurt all Americans—our businesses, our middle-class families, our servicemembers who could see their paychecks delayed. It will hurt this economy. Eight percent of mortgages are FHA guaranteed. None can be issued that are FHA guaranteed starting tomorrow. Housing is one of our largest industries, and it has been on its knees. This will put it on its back. IRS checks that are mailed, where the refund is mailed back, will stop. That is billions of dollars that would be circulating in the economy that will not happen.

We Democrats have been listening to the people. We want to avoid a shutdown and have met all of the Republican demands on the spending side.

Last night at the White House Speaker BOEHNER said to the President: If you go with me, it is \$78 billion in cuts. That will satisfy me.

The President said: We will get to that number.

We have moved in every direction Speaker BOEHNER has asked. We believe there should be cuts. There is tremendous waste in government. I think any Democrat who ignores the lesson of those who voted, the lesson of the last election, makes a mistake. The people did want government to cut out the waste and to shrink, but they didn't say cut everything. They didn't say use a meat ax. I didn't have a single person tell me—and I met a whole lot of tea party people—to cut cancer research, cut loans to students who are going to college because the American people have wisdom. Cut the things that are wasteful and hurt the middle class but grow the things that help the middle class achieve a better life. That is what the President has tried to do when he said: We are going to out-educate, out-build, out-innovate. That is what we are trying to do.

There are a lot of tough cuts in our proposal, some that I don't like. Every Member on this side will be able to find things they seriously don't like, but at the same time we have gone to a level, about as high as we can go, that doesn't cut our seed corn, our future, a growing economy for our people and their children.

On cuts, we are in a good place. So why didn't we come to an agreement? Why, after Speaker BOEHNER offered a number and the President accepted, why are we still here today worried about a shutdown that will hurt so many? The answer is simple: the so-called extraneous riders. These additions, which have nothing to do with deficit reduction, are standing in the way. Why are they standing in the way? Because a minority of the House—perhaps even a minority although a large number of Republicans—insists that they be there. They are the hard right of the Republican Party. They are the same people who have said: We cannot give an inch on their H.R. 1 bill, which did cut our seed corn, did cut loans to colleges and cancer research. Now they say they have to insert these extraneous riders dealing not with abortion—the Federal Government can't fund abortion because of the Hyde amendment—but rather about women's health, about who, not how much, should get the payments to do chest screenings and blood tests and cancer tests for women. That battle has been raging for a long time, decades. It has nothing to do with reducing the deficit.

So why is it there? Let me show why on this little chart, this little pictorial representation. Speaker BOEHNER has said: "No daylight between Tea Party and me."

Let me repeat that because these are his words: "No daylight between Tea Party and me."

Does he have the exact same views as the tea party? Obviously not, but he is

pulled by them. He has a choice. He can listen to the tea party and shut down the government, or he can take the very difficult—and I admit it is difficult; I believe Speaker BOEHNER is a good man; I like him; I think he is a decent, honorable man who is caught between a rock and a hard place—alternative which is to take the mantle of leadership and tell those on the hard right they cannot run the government completely.

They will have influence—they already have—but they cannot run the government completely. They certainly can't impose their social ideological agenda on a budget process, frail enough as it is. These riders are the straw that breaks the camel's back and causes the shutdown.

Speaker BOEHNER is trying to say today it is not the riders, it is the budget numbers; but that is belied by two facts: No. 1, he offered a number to the President last night and the President accepted, \$78 billion in cuts. No. 2, if it isn't the riders, as my colleague from Washington State said, take them off the table. Tell the tea party and others that this is not the time or place. There will be a debate on this issue. We can guarantee that. Even if we didn't want it to happen, it would. Our colleagues on the other side of the aisle would make sure. But not here and not now; not when continuing the government with all the ramifications is at stake.

What we have is a flea wagging a tail wagging a dog. The flea is the minority of House Republicans who are hard right. The tail is the House Republican caucus. The dog is the government. That flea is influencing what the dog does. More than influencing, right now it is determining. It is sad.

Leadership is tough. Frankly, when either party goes to the extremes, they don't do the right thing. When Republicans go to the hard right, when Democrats go to the hard left, my experience is they lose politically. Much more importantly, they do what is wrong for the country substantively. We are a country that governs from the middle. We are a country that believes in compromise. We are a country of what the Founding Fathers profoundly weaved through the Constitution: checks and balances.

It says two things: When the people want change, a new group will come in, and they will certainly have an effect. Our government, our structure of government the Founding Fathers created, is not ossified. They also said they won't control everything. That is the beauty of our government.

We in the Senate are the cooling saucer. That is what we are doing here. We are performing our function. It is a function that the Founding Fathers wished us to perform, some of whom, I might note, come from the State of Virginia. In any case, we have a serious issue ahead of us.

I say to Speaker BOEHNER: Please, tell the tea party folks they are going

to get some of their way but not all their way. They will not get their way on these extraneous riders related to women's health. The battle for whether the government shuts down goes on inside Speaker BOEHNER's head.

When people ask me: Are we going to shut down?

I say: Look inside Speaker BOEHNER's brain and see what is going on there. I am sure there is a lot of torment and tumult. I sympathize with the situation.

This is a time for leadership, and if leadership emerges, this government, on which so many people depend, will not shut down.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from South Dakota.

Mr. THUNE. Mr. President, the American credit card is maxed out. We continue to add about \$1 trillion or \$1.5 trillion to that credit card every single year to where it is now at \$14 trillion. The amazing thing is, right now it is about noon, and between now and midnight tonight when this continuing resolution expires, if nothing is done the government would shut down. We will add more than \$2 billion to that debt. In a 12-hour time period between noon and midnight tonight, we will add another more than \$2 billion to that \$14 trillion debt that is growing by the hour.

We have a crisis in this country. We have had experts tell us, such as the former Chairman of the Federal Reserve, Alan Greenspan, that there is a 50-percent probability that we will see a debt crisis in the next 2 to 3 years.

Interestingly enough, there was a story in the Wall Street Journal this morning that says:

Europe's central bank became the first monetary authority in a major developed economy to raise interest rates since the global financial crisis struck, a sign that an era of cheap credit is coming to a close.

It goes on to say the ECB increased its benchmark by a quarter point to 1.25 percent.

Now, if we started to see an upward tick in interest rates, it would have a profound impact on the deficit and on the debt because the experts also tell us—the Congressional Budget Office and others—that for every 1 percentage point increase in interest rates, it would cost about \$140 billion every single year.

To put that into perspective, the interest on the debt in the year 2015—if we stay on our current trajectory, will exceed the amount we spend for defense. So we will be spending more on interest on the debt than we actually spend defending this country in 2015. That is assuming we did not see any kind of an increase in interest rates. If we were to see, as I said earlier, as much as a 1-percent increase in interest rates, that adds \$140 billion every single year in interest costs to finance the debt. This is a serious situation which requires serious action.

We have in front of us a continuing resolution to fund the government be-

cause we did not get the work done last year. The Democratic majorities in the last year did not pass a budget, did not pass a single appropriations bill. So we are doing the unfinished work of last year. We are in the now sixth continuing resolution which, as I said, expires tonight at midnight. If nothing is done, the government would shut down, but there is an alternative. Of course, the best alternative would be to pass legislation that passed the House of Representatives earlier this year—it was voted on in the Senate and was defeated—that cut \$61 billion from discretionary spending and would take us back to 2008 levels.

Just to remind my colleagues, in the last 2 years discretionary spending has increased 24 percent. That is if we do not include stimulus money. If we add stimulus money, it was 84 percent. We have seen discretionary spending increase in the last 2 years by 24 percent at a time when inflation in this country was 2 percent. So we were spending at a rate that was literally more than 10 times the rate of inflation.

I do not think the American people would think it is unreasonable—when we are running \$1.5 trillion deficits every year, when we have a \$14 trillion debt—that we ought to be able to go back to 2008 spending levels. That is what the House bill did that failed in the Senate. So that triggered a negotiation, which is ongoing.

My point very simply is, there is a solution in front of us now that would prevent, at midnight tonight, the government from shutting down, and it would also fund our troops through the end of this fiscal year, which ends on September 30. So all we have to do in the Senate is—the majority leader, all he has to do is call up that House-passed bill, we move that, and it would fund the government for another week until the negotiators can come to a final conclusion on a longer term funding resolution that would take us through to the end of the fiscal year.

There is a very simple answer to all this. So there is a big debate about that particular short-term funding resolution. They say, well, maybe it cuts too deeply. All the cuts that are in that short-term funding resolution are cuts that have been agreed upon largely by both sides, by both Democrats and Republicans, and it is to the tune of about \$12 billion, which is significantly less than the number both sides have agreed we ought to cut from the budget this year.

As I said, it also would fund the military. It is important we fund our troops, that we not put our military at risk of not having the funding that is necessary for them to conduct their very important duties when we are trying to fight two wars, and perhaps three. So it would fund the military through the end of this fiscal year.

So why will it not be picked up and passed by the majority leader in the Senate? Well, according to our colleagues on the other side, it is because

of these ideological riders, this rigid partisanship, this insisting upon things that just absolutely do not have any support in the Congress.

Well, I want to point out something. In 2009 the other side was singing a very different tune because at that time they were passing a big spending bill, and at that time President Obama and then-Speaker PELOSI loaded such riders onto a government funding bill similar to the one now being negotiated. A senior Democratic aide is saying: Well, they are not comparable. Well, many of the same provisions—in fact, one of them was an abortion provision that was included in that particular spending bill. It goes on to say—and this is quoting a Democratic aide later on:

There is a difference between including riders on a bill when they are supported by a majority of the Senate and just need a vehicle and including riders on a bill because a minority is trying to ram through something that would not have support on its own.

Well, just to point out, the rider that was added by the House Republicans on the short-term spending bill is a ban on taxpayer funding of abortions in Washington, DC. It would affect one city in the country. Interestingly enough, it is a position that has been supported repeatedly by the leadership on the other side. The majority leader, Senator REID, has voted for this very ban 10 times since 1995. The majority whip, Senator DURBIN, has voted for this very ban 9 times since 1995. Believe it or not, the President of the United States, when he was a member of the Senate, voted for that ban twice, and he, as President, signed legislation that includes that ban.

So to suggest this is something that lacks majority support just does not pass the smell test. You cannot make an argument that it is about ideological riders that do not have majority support when you have people on both sides, by large majorities, voting for these particular riders. I think you cannot argue that this is an ideological battle because these are things that have been passed before right here in the Senate.

I think most of these—a lot of legislative things, a lot of things that get funded in government are an expression of someone's ideology. Now, there are some of us who happen to believe the taxpayers in this country should not be supporting abortion; that taxpayer funds should not be going to support abortions.

The broader debate about funding for Planned Parenthood is not just ideological, it is a funding issue because they have received somewhere on the order of over \$300 million a year in taxpayer funds. So when you are looking at ways to trim government, you are looking at every area of the government. You are by definition making decisions that in some cases may be based on someone's ideology. The fact is, you cannot argue with a straight face on the floor of the Senate that

this short-term funding resolution ought to be held up over a couple of riders that have broad support by Members on both sides and have countless previous votes in support of those.

So I would suggest to my colleagues in the Senate that a shutdown at midnight tonight can be avoided very simply. All it requires is for the majority leader to pick up the bill that passed the House of Representatives yesterday; a bill that, as I said, funds the government for another week until our negotiators can come to that final conclusion, that funds the military through the end of the fiscal year, and that includes a couple of provisions that have been supported numerous times by Members on both sides in the Senate.

A shutdown is totally avoidable, but it is completely up to the majority to pick up that legislation and pass it. We cannot afford to wait to deal with out-of-control spending and debt for the reasons I just mentioned. Over 40 cents of every dollar we spend at the Federal level is borrowed. As I said before, we have seen discretionary spending increase by 24 percent over the past 2 years. What the House Republicans have proposed in terms of spending reductions, I think by any definition—I think the American people would find it to be very reasonable. It represents literally less than 2 percent of total Federal spending.

At a time when most Americans are tightening their belts, most small businesses are tightening their belts, families are having to make hard budget decisions, at least in Washington we ought to be making decisions in the best interest of getting this country back on track so we do not spend money we do not have and we are living within our means and not saddling future generations with an enormous debt, which is not fair to them and which, by the way, also has a profound impact on the economy.

Everybody makes the argument up here that somehow if we reduce Federal spending it is going to hurt the economy. Well, I would argue the opposite. If we do not get Federal spending under control, it is going to hurt the economy because you are going to see these kinds of impacts. You are going to see interest rates start going up. You are going to see inflation start going up. You are going to have people not making decisions about hiring out there in our economy because they do not believe Washington, DC, has gotten the message about getting spending and debt under control.

So I would argue to my colleagues that we have a solution, a very simple solution in front of us. It certainly does not necessitate at midnight tonight the government shutting down. I do not think that is in anybody's best interests. I do not know of anyone on this side of the aisle who wants to see that happen. All we are saying is, it is high time this government started to live within its means, started to stop

spending money it does not have, started putting us on a fiscal path that will ensure that this country is around for future generations of Americans, and that we do not have young people in the future carrying around an \$88,000 debt, which is what their debt will be in a few short years if we do not take steps to get Federal spending and Federal debt under control.

So I urge my colleagues—the Senator from New York got up and said: Please, Republicans, don't shut the government down. I would say to my colleagues on the other side: It is very simple. If the majority leader just picks up the House-passed bill, passes it, this crisis is averted. The negotiators can continue their discussions on a longer term solution which it sounds like they are very close to coming to a conclusion on. That is all it would require. It is a very simple solution.

I hope my colleagues will do it, and we can make sure the government continues to function, but that we start to get spending and debt under control.

Mr. President, I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Massachusetts.

Mr. KERRY. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that I be added as a cosponsor to S. 724.

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

Mr. KERRY. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that I be permitted to proceed for 15 minutes.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Indiana.

Mr. COATS. Mr. President, reserving the right to object—and I do not intend to object—but I am just wondering if the Senator from Massachusetts would be willing to amend his request to allow subsequent Republican speakers to also have 15 minutes to make their remarks. So if the Senator would agree to amend that request, I will not object.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Virginia.

Mr. WARNER. Mr. President, reserving the right to object, this is a critically important issue, and I think a lot of us all want to speak. I just want to make sure—I have been presiding and waiting for some time as well. I hope we do not start rearranging all the rules here so we all get a fair chance to speak.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection to the request from the Senator from Massachusetts?

Mr. COATS. Mr. President, I continue to reserve the right to object. If the Senator is willing to amend his request, I will not object. But if he is not, then I agree with the Senator from Virginia. There is a long list of Republicans and Democrats who would like to speak.

Mr. KERRY. Mr. President, I withdraw my request.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The request is withdrawn.

Mr. KERRY. Mr. President, that is sort of an indication of the kind of

problem we have around here, which is the ability to accommodate a simple request that used to be accommodated around here all the time.

Let me say very quickly, what the Senator from South Dakota just said is a massive oversimplification of what is happening. The President of the United States made it very clear, we are not going to fund the government week to week to week to week. It costs more money. It is a completely incompetent way to fund the Government of the United States of America. People need to make plans. People need to let contracts. People need to be able to know how much they are going to be spending, how much can they hire, who can they hire. That is an incompetent way to manage the United States.

The President made it clear, we have already done two short-term fundings of the government, and he said we are not going to do it again. It is time to reach an agreement. It is time to show the maturity and the capacity to be able to do the business of our Nation. They are just asking for another delay. But they are not just asking for that, they have also put their ideological wish list into that particular request.

This is a dangerous moment for our economy and for our country. Frankly, it is an embarrassing moment for the Congress of the United States. It is an embarrassing moment, I think, for the American people, who have to watch their Congress struggling to do what we were sent here to compromise and find a way to do the business of our country.

There is a reason we are standing on the precipice of this argument. I believe we can still get an agreement in these next hours. I believe we may well get that agreement in these next hours. But what a show to get there. How extraordinary it is that for the first time since the 1990s, when, incidentally, the Republicans ran the House—does it ring a bell? That is the last time we had a shutdown in the U.S. Congress, and here we are back again with the same threats, the same need to do brinkmanship that puts an ideological wish list on the table, that you cannot pass any other way, to try to force it down the throats of Americans at the last minute by threatening to shut down the government.

I have to tell you, in China, they have to be laughing at us right now. They have to be clapping. How terrific that the United States of America cannot make a decision. Boy, does that send a wonderful message to businesses all around the world: They can't make a decision. They can't decide an energy policy. They can't decide an infrastructure policy. They can't fix their schools. They can't do anything, and now they can't even get a budget. That is a hell of a message around the world. While we are running the world preaching the virtues of democracy, people have to be scratching their heads and saying, That is what we are going to get?

This is not because both sides of the political aisle cannot agree about a plan for cutting the deficit. This is not about the deficit. We only have to listen to Speaker BOEHNER and to the President, the majority leader and others, and add up the math. It is beyond dispute that Democrats have agreed to make the largest budget cuts in American history in discretionary spending. It is also beyond dispute that we have agreed to travel far more than halfway. We are at about 73 percent of what they requested in terms of spending reductions.

Last night, the President of the United States sat with Speaker BOEHNER and said, I agree to your number. This is not about the number. We agree with the number, providing we can also look beyond discretionary spending and look to the larger budget, which is the way we ought to be doing budgeting for the United States. We have compromised. We have agreed to well more than what is reasonable with respect to some of these reductions.

So this is not about making cuts to the deficit. That is not what it is about. America needs to understand that. In a negotiation, there is always a back and forth. There is a give and a take. But we are at this extraordinary moment in American history where a small group of people seems to be intimidating their own leadership.

I keep hearing about what a tough position the Speaker is in. He is not in a tough position. He is the Speaker of the House of the United States of America. It is a job he always wanted. It is a job he wants to have. He asked for it. His position is no tougher than anybody else here who has to make a cut on these kinds of issues. What are you for? But he is allowing this small group, a minority within a group—maybe a minority of a minority, I don't know—to dictate and they are saying, Oh, we have to do this. We have to take America right up to the brink, right up to the edge, and show the world we are not able to do our business in a quiet and responsible and thoughtful way.

Rigid ideology is threatening to shut down the Federal Government of the United States. Let's not play games and pretend with some short-term stopgap measure when the President has said we are not going to do that anymore. It is no way to run the government and it costs more money. They are doing this with impunity because all the voices of moderation and common sense—all the voices on the other side of the aisle who say we don't want to shut down the government—and they really don't. I know some of our colleagues on the other side of the aisle. They get it. They don't want to do this. But either they are not being listened to or something has happened over there where there is a level of anarchy within the institutional process of the Congress that is dictating where we are.

So why is it that 100 percent—100 percent—of the cuts we are being asked to

make are coming from only 12 percent of the budget? There isn't an American who will sit there and say, What do you mean? You mean only 12 percent of the budget is up for grabs, and they are taking 100 percent of their cuts from the 12 percent of the budget? That doesn't make a lot of sense. It doesn't make a lot of sense. Defense spending at the Pentagon: Are you telling me that every system we are buying over there, the procurement process of the Pentagon is so perfect that we can't make some cuts? But they are not trying to cut defense. That is not on the table.

Everybody knows the big items of our budget deficit are Medicare, Medicaid, and Social Security. Those aren't on the table. They are not being considered. How can they say this is not ideological when the only things that are being cut in their proposals are the very things some people have been trying to cut for 40 years? They have opposed them as a matter of principle their entire political life and they can't get them any other way, so now they are trying to jam them down the American throat by saying we are threatening to shut down the Government of the United States.

This isn't about the budget deficit. If it were, we would have made the largest cuts in American history because we have agreed to those cuts. Every single one of us understands why we are in the predicament we are in. Yes, we have a huge budget deficit and huge debt. I can't get over how quickly my colleagues on the other side of the aisle are able to forget about how we got here. When President George Bush became President, we had a path toward a \$5.6 trillion surplus. We had balanced the budget. We did what we needed to do. Then they came in and passed two huge tax cuts for the wealthiest people in the country that they didn't ask for and didn't need, and all of a sudden we had a deficit. Of course, it was because they gave tax cuts on the credit card. Then we had two wars, one of which was a war we never had to have—the war in Iraq at a cost of \$1 trillion. That is our deficit. Then they had all their cronies guarding the financial system with the foxes guarding the chicken coops. The result was Wall Street ran away with American economic interests, and we had the housing crisis and the Wall Street crash—the greatest loss of wealth in modern times. As a result was the deficit and the debt went up. When President Obama came into office we were losing 750,000 jobs a month. They forget that. They forget their complicity in that.

So we are where we are now. The fact is this fight—do my colleagues know what they have been trying to do? They have been trying to shut down the government if they don't get Environmental Protection Agency restraints which they weren't able to win otherwise. They have about 65 different ideological wish list items now being reduced, but that is what the fight has

been about for these last weeks. Folks, we had that debate. It is fresh in our minds.

This week the Senate debated Senator MCCONNELL's amendment to cut off EPA's authority under the Clean Air Act. It lost. Three other amendments with similar approaches had up-or-down votes. Each one of them failed. The process worked. Amendments were debated and votes were counted.

So now it is do it or we will shut down the government. I don't remember a lot of Americans voting for dirtier air or water they can't drink or longer droughts for farmers but now they are saying the government is going to be shut down if we don't handcuff the EPA.

We have been here before. In December 1995, one of the reasons that the Federal Government shutdown was the Republican attempts to include a "... excessive number of anti-environmental riders." And here we go again. The Budget Committee chairman, Senator CONRAD, reports that last night in the middle of the night, the other side put mountaintop mining riders on the table. What does that have to do with reducing the deficit?

And that is just the start of this ideological excess. Planned Parenthood, we are fighting over whether Planned Parenthood can get any money from the Federal Government for cancer screenings for low-income women.

We had that debate over here. We voted on the House budget to kill Planned Parenthood. It lost. It lost overwhelmingly. Senate Republicans opposed it. So now the gang from the House say defund Planned Parenthood or we shut down the government. Strip Planned Parenthood of money it uses to provide lifesaving, preventative care to millions of women each year or we shut down the government.

Is this about abortion? No. They want to prohibit Planned Parenthood from receiving any Federal funds, including Medicaid—a proposal that would cut 1.4 million women off from their health care provider.

This isn't even good fiscal policy—the preventative care saves taxpayers dollars in the long run. Every dollar ends up saving \$3.74 of health-related costs to Federal and State governments.

We are talking about women like Jennifer, a woman from Boston who credits Planned Parenthood with saving her life. She had little money and no doctor. She went to Planned Parenthood for a checkup, and the doctors found a precancerous condition of the uterus. She says now, "Because of Planned Parenthood's early intervention, I was able to have two children and a healthy life." But today, here we are—here is the choice they are ramming down our throats: defund that care or shut down the government.

Last year, both the House and Senate Appropriations Committees did their job. However, in December 2010, the Republicans objected to even considering



this year's budget and forced us into this situation.

That is ideology that has nothing—nothing—to do with balancing the budget.

So if a small ideological group shuts down the government over all this, what happens? What happens?

Well, for all the talk here about jobs and the economy, you would think somebody might be thinking hard about that, especially now that our economy is starting to create hundreds of thousands of new jobs every month.

So just yesterday, one of our leading economists said: "The economic damage from a government shutdown would mount very quickly. And the longer it drags on, the greater the odds of a renewed recession."

Goldman Sachs analysts say a shutdown will cost the economy \$8 billion every week. The Business Roundtable, whose companies account for \$6 trillion in annual revenues, forecast increased sales and hiring by businesses over the next 6 months, but they say even a short shutdown would put that in jeopardy. "I don't think any of the CEOs would welcome a government shutdown," said Ivan Seidenberg. Even Speaker BOEHNER says, "if you shut the government down, it'll end up costing more than you'll save." The Republican economist Mark Zandi, says a shutdown would not only "disrupt a wide range of government operations and significantly cut the output of government workers, but the hit to confidence could be serious . . . it could easily undermine confidence as questions grow about policymakers' ability to govern. This would be fodder for a new recession."

A new recession because ideologues continue to object to the compromises necessary to pass a budget? But here we are hours away from shutting down the government over abortion.

And folks, that is the big danger—that the actions of these ideologues will stop the recovery.

But it has a human face too.

Just yesterday I read an e-mail from a constituent of mine named Tim. He lives in Norwood, MA, and he is a Federal employee at Homeland Security working in Boston. On March 26, he and his wife moved into their first home. Now, if the government shuts down, he will be furloughed. He is worried that he won't be able to pay his mortgage and he is terrified about the consequences this will have on his credit rating.

I have no idea whether Tim is a Democrat or Republican, but I know he didn't vote in November to not be able to do his job or pay his mortgage.

But that is what he is worried about this morning. He is one of 800,000 families that will not be able to go to work and do their jobs. I heard one of them asked yesterday about it and about all the talk that after the shutdown she will get paid, and she said, "Tell my two-year-old he can eat retroactively."

But why isn't the job getting done? Because of issues wholly unrelated to the deficit.

And what does it mean to the country?

Well, the last time we had a government shutdown, they told us that at the NIH the scientists doing the research on cancer and cures had to go home. They couldn't work. The only person deemed essential was the guy who came in to feed the lab rats so they would still be alive when the government came to its senses.

Did anyone vote last November for us to stop researching cures to diseases? I don't remember that being a part of the tea party platform. But here we are.

At the height of filing season, IRS processing of tax refunds for returns could be suspended. So families who have been waiting for their refund checks won't get them.

During the spring home-buying season, 15,000 homeowners could be prevented from getting a new home loan every week.

We talk about honoring our men and women in uniform and those who have served our country, but we know that during the last shutdown more than 400,000 veterans saw their disability, pension or educational benefits delayed.

We talk about honoring our seniors, but more than 100,000 new Social Security claims were delayed in 1995.

We say we care about the disabled, but during the last shutdown services to 1.2 million people with disabilities were interrupted.

And that is just the immediate consequences of a shutdown. But what about the long term? What happens when the world watches a small group of ideologues making it impossible to pass a budget for 1 year? We are preaching democracy all over the world and we can't make our own work. Our economic competitors are going to take advantage of this opportunity to strengthen their economy at our expense.

Does it make businesses more likely to invest here, or go invest in China and in Latin America where governments are racing ahead investing in infrastructure and energy to own the markets of the future? They are going to laugh all the way to the bank.

But instead here we are, about to shut down the government—and willing to slam the brakes on the investments and the research and development we need to make so America doesn't fall behind other countries. While we have these ideological fights, we eat America's seed corn today, even if it means going hungry tomorrow.

This is about ideology. This is the takeover of our national dialogue by people who actually want to shut down the government—for them, it is a goal not an unintended consequence.

Don't take my word for it. Just listen to them.

Representative RON PAUL of Texas said: "I don't think it would hurt one bit"; and that "life would go on without the Federal government."

Representative LYNN WESTMORELAND of Georgia said the Republicans are

simply "listening to the American people" and doing what they want.

Now, I will grant you that Congress needs a "jolt" but it should not be a jolt that causes a government shutdown. It should be a "jolt" to do the job that we were elected to do.

There is a better way. We can balance our budget and we can grow our economy to benefit everyone and we can do both at the same time. How do I know? Because many of us were there when we did it before. We tackled a budget deficit and created jobs at the same time. And we didn't do it by cutting our budget to the bone.

In the 1990s we grew our way to a stronger economy under the Clinton economic plan. We invested in the workforce, in research, in development, in new industries. As a result, we saw the longest economic expansion in history, creating more than 22 million jobs and generating unprecedented wealth in America, with every income bracket rising. And working with Republicans, we came up with a budget framework that put our Nation on track to be debt free by 2012 for the first time since Andrew Jackson's administration. Of course, it didn't work out quite that way, what with huge tax cuts, two wars and the worst economic downturn since the Great Depression in the 8 years that came before these last 2 difficult and divisive years.

We can do it again. But it is going to take a serious dialogue within the Congress about our fiscal situation, discretionary spending, entitlements, and revenues—a dialogue that is long overdue. We need to work towards a long-term solution to reduce both our current budget deficit and our staggering debt. We will need to reduce Federal spending and make appropriate changes to our entitlement programs to meet the fiscal challenges facing our country.

But that is not what is being debated here today. That is not what the House ideologues are doing. And it is not what the Senate is supposed to be doing. I have been here 27 years. I know that the world's greatest deliberative body can still be a decisive one. But we are not today.

Before we entered into this show-down with the clock ticking towards a shut-down, Senator INOUE and I were going to be in Boston for the groundbreaking of the Edward Kennedy Institute dedicated to the study of how to make the Senate work as an institution.

Ted Kennedy knew what the Senate could do when we made this place work. He understood the differences of 100 Senators from States as different as Alaska and Hawaii, California and South Carolina, Ohio and Oregon. He embraced different accents and different world views even as he was proud of his own. He became living, legislating proof that a most fiercely independent, plain-talking, direct and determined partisan could resolve the hardest issues, staking out common

ground with those they disagreed with on almost everything else.

Ted knew that the historic breakthroughs in American politics have been brokered not by a mushy middle or by splitting the difference, but by people who had a pretty healthy sense of ideology. Ted Kennedy and ORRIN HATCH were a powerful team precisely because they spent a lot of time opposing each other. But he knew that they were opponents, never enemies; that they could be friends in life even as they were foes in politics. And again and again, over and over, when this ultimate odd couple found things they were willing to fight for together, arm in arm, all of us in the Senate leaned in and listened—and followed them.

Make no mistake. Were Ted Kennedy serving in the Senate today he would be down on the Senate floor—red faced, fists pounding the bully pulpit—exhorting his colleagues that it is wrong to balance the budget on the backs of working people, that Senators should stop the political gamesmanship, and that we need to get back to doing the business of the American people.

But he would be doing something else, too. He would be working the cloakroom quietly pulling aside Democrats and Republicans. He would be reading the rhythms of the institution. He would be appealing to the better angels of the Senate's nature—because as deeply as he believed in the issues, Ted believed just as deeply in the capacity of his colleagues, at critical times, to put country ahead of party.

Ted Kennedy would be proud of today's groundbreaking for the Kennedy Institute for the Senate. But I know he would be insistent too that we have to break new and common ground in the institution that is the U.S. Senate itself.

Generations of young Americans to come will come to the Kennedy Institute and learn to understand what the U.S. Senate was intended to be.

But 100 Senators don't need to wait that long. We can do what Ted Kennedy and Bob Dole and so many other Senators of both parties used to know how to do—which is find common ground and insist on common sense.

We don't have to shut down the government. We don't have to continue the ideological bloodletting. We can do better than we are doing. The question is whether we are going to get back to work and ensure that the great center of American politics holds once again. Our country deserves that—and nothing less.

Mr. President, I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Indiana.

Mr. COATS. Mr. President, I join the Senator from Massachusetts in saying also we don't have more time on this. We all want more time. Each of us would like to spend more time on this important issue, but we want to give everyone the chance to speak and this is why we have the limitation.

I think it is important to put this whole issue in perspective. People are

saying, Well, the clock is ticking and we are 12 hours or less away from having to shut the government down. Well, yes, the clock is ticking. But the clock that has been ticking year after year on the mounting debt and fiscal crisis that is going to take this country into bankruptcy if we don't do something about it. That clock is ticking a lot faster than the clock is ticking on this debate.

Let's put this debate into the perspective of the larger picture. In the last 3 years we have added over \$4 trillion to our debt—\$4 trillion plus in the last 3 years. This country is on an unsustainable spending binge. People throughout the year in 2010 expressed their views about the egregious, reckless spending of this Congress, and they sent a new Congress here to do something about it.

Because the other party that was in control in 2010 didn't pass a budget, didn't do anything about it when the time ran out on September 30 at the end of the fiscal year—we are at this point today because we have had to have these continuing extensions which we are trying to do something about, and I hope we can resolve this. I don't want a shutdown any more than anybody else does. But people have to put this in perspective. What we are dealing with here is a request put out by the Republicans—because there is no request from the President of the United States and there has been no request from the other party as to what the package should be to deal with this—and that request requires and asks for a reduction of 1.6 percent of the total amount of spending that is going to take place in 2011—1.6 percent.

If you are the head of a family or an individual making \$50,000 a year and you find out you are running yourself into bankruptcy, that amount you would have to come up with to save, to start the process of getting your financial situation back in order is \$800. If you are making \$100,000 a year, what we are asking for is a \$1,600 equivalent cut in the spending. If you are a business making \$1 million a year and the boss comes and says we are spending way more than we take in in our revenues and this company is going to go bust and everybody is going to get released from employment as a result of that unless we make a start in moving forward in dealing with our fiscal crisis, and we are going to start by cutting \$16,000 out of the \$1 million, that is the equivalent of what we are doing here. Yet, we are talking as if this is doomsday, this is cataclysmic: These are the greatest cuts in the history of the Senate.

We have a timebomb, a debt bomb, ticking away out there that is going to take the country down into second tier or third tier status, at best, or we are going to have the bond markets do it for us if we don't start. This isn't just a Republican plea. Democrats, the President's own commission, headed by Erskine Bowles, who was the Presi-

dent's Chief of Staff, has said there has been no more predictable collapse facing America than this one and we need to do something about it now.

What we are trying to do about it now is simply do something that wasn't done for 2011, for the 2011 budget, with a modest 1.6-percent cut so we can move to what we need to do, and what we need to do is address the whole picture. As the Senator from Massachusetts said, we have to deal with more than this 12 percent of the discretionary spending for 2011.

We have to put mandatory spending on the table, defense spending on the table; we have to look at tax reform as a way to grow our economy. There are a whole range of things we have to do. We have one plan in place that has been put there for us to at least begin to start the debate on what we need to do—get this thing out of the way so we can start that debate, and that is the Republican plan put forward by House Member PAUL RYAN, the head of the House Budget Committee. That is the comprehensive plan we ought to be working on. We can't get to that plan because we are dealing with this 1.6-percent fix to the problem that exists for 2011. It is 2012 and 10 years beyond that needs to be addressed and needs to be addressed now.

This country is facing as serious a debt crisis as we have ever had. Leading economists, Republicans and Democrats, liberals and conservatives, those from Harvard and those from Stanford and every college in between and every institution and entity that has studied this problem, say we have to do something and we have to do it now or it is going to be done for us, and the results of that will be a lot worse than if we start to address it now.

Governors and heads of businesses and heads of families all across America know exactly what we are talking about because they have already had to make these tough decisions. They are already implementing what is necessary to get their fiscal house back in order. It is not just Republican Governors; it is Republican and Democratic Governors. Why aren't we listening to Andrew Cuomo? Why aren't we listening to Jerry Brown? Why aren't we listening to Mitch Daniels and other Governors, including Governor Walker from Wisconsin and Governor Kasich from Ohio? Why are we not looking at what they are doing? At least they are stepping up and doing it.

Here we are, arguing over the extreme nature of a 1.6-percent reduction out of a \$3.7 trillion budget. Revenues are coming in at \$2.2 billion for a \$1.5 trillion deficit and we are talking about a 1.6-percent cut out of all that, as if this is doomsday if we don't raise—even come halfway, or a little more than halfway to this.

Putting this in perspective I think is necessary for us. We have all the focus on this little, small grass fire happening over here when there is a five alarmer across the street. That is the



fiscal house of America. Are we doing this because we are green eyeshade people and we don't like the way government functions and we want to take things away from people? No. We are doing this to save this country—to save the benefits available to those who are under Medicare, to save the benefits available to those under Medicaid, and other provisions. We are trying to keep these programs from collapsing and we are trying to keep this country's fiscal house from collapsing or burning up. Instead of fighting a little grass fire, we have a five alarmer over here and we have a little truck with a hose trying to put out that grass fire. Let us reconcile this and pass this now so we can get to the issue we have to get to.

This whole thing about riders and about the largest tax cut in American history is a pebble in a pond of what is necessary for us to go forward and deal with the crisis that is before us. It is going to rest on all of our shoulders. It is going to reflect on all of us, Republicans and Democrats, liberals and conservatives, if we stand here and fiddle while our fiscal house burns to the ground and collapses.

As I said, one way or another, this will happen. It may happen sooner or later. If you listen to Erskine Bowles and a former colleague, Senator Simpson, and to the President's own commission, and if you listen to any analyst who has looked at this, they say it is totally unsustainable. If you don't do it and start the process, the bond market and the interest rates will do it for you. It will fall on all of us for not stepping up to the plate and getting it done.

We have 11 hours to get this done. Let's pass this now and make the decision to go forward and let our yeas and nays be recorded. Let the American people decide which side they want to be on on this particular issue.

I think, given the results of the last election and the awareness of the American people, clearly they have come to the conclusion that the government is too big, it is growing too fast, it is spending too much money—money it doesn't have—and it is borrowing money at a rate that is putting us into severe jeopardy in terms of our creditors and what their demands will be in the future. When 40 cents of every dollar is borrowed, you cannot continue on that course without dire consequences.

I believe the challenge before us today is to wrap up this negotiation and wrap up the issue that deals with the remaining months of 2011 so that we can immediately begin—and whether it means canceling the recess or whatever, I am more than happy to participate in that—to work on the necessary decisions and changes and debate that have to take place regarding our long-term future. If we fail to do that, we are going to reap the negative consequences.

My time is about to expire. I simply plead with my colleagues, let's get past

this little nothing of a skirmish here and keep this government functioning and get to work on what we have to do. We hope to have competing plans, but if not, let's go forward with the Ryan plan and get a yea or nay on it and let the American people decide whether it is the right way to go.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Virginia is recognized.

Mr. WARNER. Mr. President, I wish I could say I was rising today to just debate some of the normal issues we talk about. Like most of my colleagues, probably, I rise today a bit embarrassed—not a bit but really embarrassed that we are here under these circumstances.

People across Virginia cannot understand why we can't get this done. I had the honor of serving as the Governor of Virginia. I am a Democrat, and I had a two-to-one Republican legislature. We got things done. We compromised. We found that common ground that now seems to be viewed as a bad place to be.

Mr. President, I agree with the Senator from Indiana that whatever number we agree on today, that doesn't take us very far when you have a \$1.6 trillion deficit and a \$14 trillion debt. If this debate is showing anything, it is that there is not going to be a way to get there unless we can frame this in a bipartisan way. I agree with the Senator from Indiana that we ought to take the framework of the Simpson-Bowles plan and put it forward. There are a group of Democrats and Republicans who are trying to do that, and a lot of other Members would like to be part of that as well.

We ought to take one lesson from this debate—that we are not going to solve the bigger problem unless we can start on a bipartisan basis. We have heard this morning back-and-forth about what is holding this up. I am not in the negotiating room. I wish I were. I don't know what is holding it up. I know, as somebody who has followed this debate pretty closely, that for the weeks of this discussion, it seems to have been focused on, can we at least take some small step toward attacking that deficit and cutting spending.

It seems to me from every bit of the press reports I have read—I would like to say I have an insider's view, and many of the Senators are trying to figure out what is going on, but from all the press reports, it seems that, until the last day or two, this has been about cuts, and there has actually been agreement on the number and size of this first step of cuts. But now we have these other issues. I think, as some of my colleagues have said, there will be time to debate those issues, but why in the heck would we roll the dice with not just 800,000 Federal employees but millions of Americans who rely on some level of continuity to have these extra social issue divisions right now?

I heard some of my colleagues say earlier that, well, we have to shut it down for a weekend, and that won't be

too much of a problem. Well, you don't have to worry about the Federal employees.

Lord knows, anybody who puts a red herring—I appreciate Senators HUTCHISON and CASEY making sure our troops are going to get paid. I am proud of that. Regardless, I think Senators and Congressmen should not be paid, either, if we shut down, and I promise not to take any salary if we are shut down. But just even for a weekend, what do you tell the motel owners, the restaurant workers, the private sector folks who are relying this weekend on people coming to Washington to see the cherry blossoms? You may say that is small ball, but that is people's lives—not Federal workers but the private sector workers. What about the defense contractor who says that if we shut this down, he is going to lay off 70 folks starting next week? What about the shipbuilder in Norfolk who is living paycheck to paycheck and says they don't know whether they are going to see private sector dollars from their private sector employment, whether they are going to get paid or not? What do you say to our soldiers who are fighting in Iraq and Afghanistan to try to spread democratic government if the greatest democracy in the world is going to shut down not over trillions of dollars' worth of differences but over some issue that may or may not have been introduced at the eleventh hour? I don't get it.

The notion somehow that this will send a good signal of fiscal discipline—I am proud, as my friend the Senator from Tennessee said, that we have spent more time in business careers than we have in our political lives. But what business hates the most is uncertainty. The markets hate uncertainty the most.

Portugal, yesterday or the day before, said they need a bailout from the European Central Bank. The notion that we are out of the woods in terms of a macrofinancial crisis is not true. The situation in Europe is very uncertain. The situation in the Middle East is obviously very uncertain. It would be the height of irresponsibility if we were to kind of once again rock the bond markets with the fact that the American Government would shut down over some extraneous issue. I don't get it.

The economists whom we have talked to have said that you can see up to a .2 percent decline in economic growth if we even shut down for a few hours. Frankly, it would end up costing us more than we save because shutting down operations and starting up operations, as any business leader or any government person who actually runs something knows, costs more money. People may say two-tenths of 1 percent, and we struggle for half a percent of growth here and there with all of these policies we try to promote—that is billions and hundreds of billions of dollars to our economy.

Just as we started to see a little bit of good news with the job numbers last month, just as we started to see the beginnings of an economic recovery, are we going to show that we can't even continue to operate the government for the next 6 months, and are we going to shut it down, at least based on press reports, on extraneous issues that don't have to do with deficit reduction?

If we can't get through this challenge, what happens when we move from the small-ball issues to the issues Senator COATS and my colleagues and friends, Senators CARPER and CORKER, all want to be part of—and the Presiding Officer—and how will we take on that \$14 trillion debt, to which we add \$4 billion every day that we fail to act, if we can't solve this problem in a way that focuses on making the cuts and letting the government continue to operate, not simply for the sake of 800,000 Federal workers but for countless millions in the private sector who depend upon that certainty, and move on to the question of how we find, I believe, the bipartisan solution that I hope and pray is at least around the framework of the Simpson-Bowles approach, which puts everything on the table—revenues and cuts—and recognize that we need to put the country back on the path of economic prosperity.

I hope the negotiators realize this is bigger than the small issues—bigger than 73, 78, or whatever number they finally determine. We will send a signal by our actions today whether we are willing to then move forward to take on the much bigger issue, which is where we have to start.

I will close with this. If there is anything we have learned from this effort, it is that if we start with guns ablazing at each other, we are not going to be able to take on the real issue that confronts us—the national security crisis that Chairman Mullen has said is the single biggest threat to our long-term economic stability based upon the rising debt.

I yield the floor and hope and pray we will come to a solution.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Tennessee.

Mr. CORKER. Mr. President, if the Chair will please let me know when there is a minute left, I would appreciate it.

I rise to speak about the current issue. I am always glad to speak after my friend from Virginia, whom I have enjoyed working with on so many issues. I appreciate the work he is doing now to try to deal with the bigger issue we have to deal with.

I will not waste a lot of emotion or say things that might—look, we are involved in a powder puff right now. We are dealing with a small amount of dollars. We add \$4.1 billion a day to the deficit—\$4.1 billion a day. So probably, with the negotiations we are involved in today, maybe we are separated by 1 day of deficit spending.

I know there has been a lot of talk about what might happen with the gov-

ernment shutdown. I don't believe that is going to happen. I believe that when we come in on Monday morning, an agreement will have been reached. I am not going to waste time on the Senate floor talking about all the bad that might happen in this country because I cannot believe that, over the small ball we are dealing with right now, we are going to have a government shutdown. I think we will resolve this over the next few hours or maybe sometime over the weekend possibly. Maybe there will be a minor disruption this weekend. I have faith that this will be worked out.

What I want to spend time talking about is the fact that we do have a crisis that is looming. I don't think it is this weekend, and I don't think it is over a continuing resolution that goes for the rest of this year. I hope we are actually able to move beyond majoring in the minors, which is what is happening now, to majoring in the majors; that is, talking about trillions of dollars in less expenditures, not billions of dollars. Each day that goes by, with the \$1.5 trillion deficit we have, we are spending \$4.1 billion that we don't have.

I am convinced that negotiators on both sides of the aisle very soon will work out their differences, and when Monday morning rolls along, the government will be operating.

To me, the big picture is this: We have a debt ceiling vote that I think will be coming up sometime between Memorial Day weekend and the July Fourth recess. To me, that is the opportunity we have to really do something great for our country.

I know Senator WARNER alluded to the Gang of 6. I know there are a number of people on both sides of the aisle who are working toward a long-term solution.

CLAIRE MCCASKILL and I have offered the Cap Act, which is gaining momentum and has a number of Republican cosponsors. We picked up another Democratic cosponsor yesterday. It is very simple. It would keep us from doing the kind of thing that is happening right now.

One of the things that is most fascinating is today—and I know you just came from State government, Mr. President—today we are dealing with last year's business. The thing that is most frustrating for those of us who come from the business world or who come from State government or who have been a mayor, in this body, we never know where we are going. We are always debating issues that should have been resolved a long time ago.

What we need to do in this body for this country is to figure out where we are going over the longer haul and then both sides of the aisle need to sit down together and figure out how we get there. We need to somehow create a fiscal straitjacket where we know—we know we are at an all-time high with spending today relative to our economic output. We had the same thing

back in 1945 and, candidly, even in the eighties. We got up to levels that were higher than they should have been. We have the ability to get back to the norm. We know that. We have to make some tough decisions to do that.

The CAP Act is a 10-page bill. Basically, it says we will go from where we are today in spending over a 10-year period to our 40-year historical average of 20.6 percent of our GDP. There are a lot of people in this body—and I am not going to point fingers—who use the word “extreme.” There is nothing extreme about this. It is common sense. It puts everything on the table.

What is fascinating to me is that today we are debating minor amounts of cuts in discretionary spending. Everybody in this body knows that if we cut all discretionary spending—discretionary spending, by the way, includes defense—if we cut all discretionary spending, including defense, we still could not balance our budget. What we need to do as a body is look at everything—all the entitlements, all the mandatory spending, and we need to cap Federal spending relative to our economy and take it down to the 40-year average over the next 10 years.

I think everybody in this body is aware that would save our country per projected policy \$7.6 trillion. By the way, I think it would force us as a body to have the discipline to take up many of the issues on which the gang of six is working. We already had PAUL RYAN from the House show us that it can be done, and there are people who criticize that, and that is fine. There are multiple ways of solving this problem.

The problem we have is politicians in Washington do everything they can to avoid making a tough decision. Back home, what we want to do is get the pain out of the way. Let's make the tough decisions so we can have blue sky in front of us. Here everybody wants to wait until the next election and hopefully move beyond their own election to deal with the tough issues with which we have to deal. That is just the way this body is.

It is amazing, here we are in April dealing with last year's business. Again, both sides are involved in that. I am not pointing fingers. But if we had a plan that we adopted, a statutory bill where we agreed we were going to go from where we are to where we need to be, our 40-year average—not extreme, over a 10-year period—it would force us to sit down and in a bipartisan way look at the big picture.

Everybody knows cutting discretionary spending is small ball. Let me say, that is powder puff. It is powder puff. We have our Nation at stake, and we are sitting here yelling at each other, saying things we should not be saying to each other that take us nowhere over powder puff. It takes us no place. I feel as though here our Nation is getting ready to have a fiscal crisis at some point—in a year or two—and we are all here trying to score points with each other over something that at

the end of the day and in the scope of things are important, certainly, but there is no question that today we are majoring in the minors.

I hope we can get by this and move beyond this without creating even further divides between the two sides and people saying silly things about who is to blame and who is not to blame. It is silly. It is beneath us. The American people have to be watching us with embarrassment. I am embarrassed.

This is the most dysfunctional place I have ever been a part of in my life because, again, we never know where we are going. It is a privilege to serve, do not get me wrong. It is a privilege to represent and get involved, but it is dysfunctional because we major in the minors. We can cut all the discretionary spending and not get where we need to go.

Senator KERRY from Massachusetts, a State very different from Tennessee, agreed that we have to deal with mandatory spending. We have to deal with entitlements. We want those programs to exist for our seniors down the road. We want them to exist for these pages, and we know on today's course, it cannot happen. We know without dealing with them, we cannot solve our country's fiscal issues.

Let's move beyond this episode that is beneath us, that is silly, that is small ball, that is powder puff. Let's move beyond this over this weekend and reach an agreement. The cuts we are making are the biggest cuts that have been made, and I applaud people on both sides of the aisle who are trying to get us there. No doubt it will pass through the budget for a decade. It could be \$300 billion or \$400 billion in savings. That is great. But we all know we need to be dealing with \$7 trillion or \$8 trillion over that decade. If we do not do that, we know that our country's fiscal future is in great jeopardy, and we lose in that the ability to display American exceptionalism that all of us want to see us do.

I hope we will stop talking about Republicans and Democrats. Candidly, I hope we will talk about the future or something else because this debate is almost beneath us.

I see my time is up.

I yield the floor to my great friend from Delaware who has been a sensible advocate on so many issues.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Delaware.

Mr. CARPER. Mr. President, first, I say a special thanks to Senator CORKER, not just for what he said about the issues we are facing on the path forward but the nice words he said about his friend from Delaware. It is a pleasure to serve with him. I thank him for introducing the concept of tele-town-hall meetings. We do that a lot in Delaware. I learned that from him.

The President has been likening the squabble going on here to a family squabble between a husband and wife. He said what husbands and wives usu-

ally do is figure out their differences, find middle ground, compromise, and work them out.

One of the things I love to do when I go up and down my State is to talk with people who have been married a long time—I am sure this happens to the Presiding Officer—50 years, 60 years, 70 years. I like to ask them what is the key to being married 50, 60, 70 years. I get some funny answers and some great answers as well. I am sure the Presiding Officer does too.

One of my favorite answers is a couple said to me: Two Cs.

I said: What is that?

They said: Communicate and compromise.

There is a little theme going on here with a former Governor of Virginia, Senator WARNER, a former mayor of Chattanooga, Senator CORKER, and a former Governor of Delaware. I want to continue with that theme.

I go home at night to Delaware. I take the train home, and I come back the next morning. This morning, I was walking on the platform to catch my train. One person said to me: You all are acting like a State legislature in the Senate.

I said: No, that is not the way we act in Dover, DE. When I was Governor, we had a Democratic senate, as we have here, we had a Republican house, as we have here, and we had a Democratic Governor for those 8 years. Yet we managed to work out our differences, to communicate and compromise and to be able to balance our budget 8 years in a row, cutting taxes 7 out of those 8 years, adding tens of thousands of jobs, which was no mean feat in our State, and to get ourselves a triple A credit rating for the first time in the history of our State. That is what you can do when you communicate and compromise in good faith.

At the end of these negotiations—I think largely taken in good faith. I have a lot of respect certainly for our own leaders and a healthy respect for the Speaker of the House, with whom I served briefly. I think he is an honorable person and a guy who tries to do what is right.

The President said—and I heard this from pretty good sources—the President said to the Speaker of the House: We will take your number. We will agree on the spending cuts. We may think it is a little too much focus on domestic discretionary spending, not enough on defense, not anything on entitlements, nothing on the revenue side. It is not a balanced package, but we will take your number. This ended up not so much a discussion over how we are going to further reduce spending in this fiscal year. The discussion is over things I think we addressed already in this body this week on whether the Environmental Protection Agency should be allowed to comply with the Clean Air Act, as ordered by the Supreme Court, to reduce pollution or are we going to tie their hands with some kind of a special rider on what

should be a continuing resolution to fund the government?

We have had four bites out of the apple this week. None of the amendments to tie the hands of EPA and their ability to enforce the Clean Air Act has been adopted. What we are now trying to do with our friends in the other body is somehow put in the legislation as a rider language that would fly in the face of what we already decided here.

A second point. As a former Governor, I was active in the National Governors Association. One issue I worked hard on with George Voinovich from Ohio when he was Governor was legislation that said we do not like Federal mandates. States do not like Federal mandates that say you have to spend money on something or you cannot spend money on something or you have to raise revenues this way or raise them in that way. We did not like that.

Congress actually passed and President Clinton signed legislation on unfunded mandates. We do not do it nearly as much as we used to. One of the riders is to tell the District of Columbia what they can and cannot do with their money—not with Federal money but what they can and cannot do with their money. In my mind it is a violation of the unfunded mandate law, certainly in spirit if not in truth.

One of the issues we appear to be divided on is whether Federal money should be used for family planning. I think we all agree we should work toward having fewer abortions. I think almost everybody agrees we would like to have fewer abortions. One way to make sure we have more abortions is to reduce the money set aside for family planning. It is counterintuitive. If you want fewer abortions, cut funding for family planning. That makes no sense to me. I hope we will walk away from making that bad decision.

Again, I go back to the comments of our friends from Virginia and Tennessee who preceded me. This is a speed bump ahead of us. We are talking about how to come up with \$4 billion, \$5 billion, \$6 billion in savings for the rest of this fiscal year. How about when we are looking for \$4 trillion of savings over the next 10 years? That is the tough negotiation. It all has to be on the table. It cannot just be discretionary spending on the domestic side. We can eliminate it entirely, but we will still have a big budget deficit. Defense has to be on the table. Last year, there were \$402 billion in cost overruns on major weapons systems. That is up \$42 billion from 10 years ago. Defense and entitlements have to be on the table. Revenues have to be on the table.

We have been given a roadmap—not a perfect roadmap, but a roadmap—by the deficit commission, chaired by Erskine Bowles and Alan Simpson.

The last thing I want to say is, coming down on the train today, I read the business section of the New York Times. There is actually some pretty

interesting stuff in there. One of the things they reported on was the retail numbers for last month. Most analysts thought they would be down, but they are up.

I was at an auto dealership this past weekend in Milford, DE, talking about car sales. They are not flat. They are up. It was not just that dealership but throughout my State and the Nation. Two years ago, 9 million trucks and vans; last year, up to 11 million; next year, 13 million. Credit is available again and things are moving in the right direction.

Every Thursday, as the Presiding Officer knows, we have a number from the Department of Labor. It is new unemployment filings, how many people have filed a new claim for unemployment. We get it every Thursday. If we go back to the end of 2008, I think the top number in 1 week was 660,000 filings, people filing for unemployment, new claims at the end of 2008. Yesterday, for last week, we are down to 380,000 to 390,000. We saw jobs numbers created, new jobs for March, 220,000 private-sector jobs being created. We are going the right way.

Finally, the economic recovery is beginning and we need to strengthen it. One of the best ways to undermine it—one of the worst things we can do—is to add uncertainty, add unpredictability. I am not sure who said this. Maybe it was JOHN ENSIGN who said this before. One of the things businesses need and want, that markets need and want is certainty and predictability.

One of the reasons big companies are sitting on the sidelines—a bunch of them still are—and not hiring people, even though they are sitting on cash—is unpredictability. What are we going to do with the budget, not just short-term runup, but for the 10-year plan, the \$3 trillion, \$4 trillion, \$5 trillion in savings? What is the Supreme Court going to do with health care? Are they going to throw it out or fix it and make it even better? What are we going to do about energy policy? What are we going to do about tax policy? What are we going to do about transportation policy? All those are uncertainties.

We can begin to resolve the budgetary uncertainty by agreeing on a reasonable spending reduction plan for the balance of this fiscal year and go to work on the much tougher problem, and that is how to take \$4 trillion out of our debt in the years to come.

Last thing I want to say is that a couple of us have been working on this in the Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs Committee. What we are beginning to do is to use our committee's jurisdiction to look into every nook and cranny of this government to ask this question: How do we get better results for less money? How do we get better results in domestic spending, how do we get better results in defense spending, and how do we get better results for less money in entitlement programs? And frankly, with the tax

expenditures as well. How do we get better results?

I call it getting rid of a culture of spendthrift and replacing it with a culture of thrift. Above and beyond all the other stuff we are doing, we need to do that as well. Because everything I do, I know I can do better. I think the same is true of all of us. Everything we do, we can do better, and the same is true of Federal programs. The question we have to ask as we look to every one, as we look in every nook and cranny of the Federal Government, is to ask this question: Can we get better results for less money or at least better results for the same amount of money or not much more money? For a lot of them, the answer is: Yes, we can. For us, the challenge is to do that.

With that being said, I yield back my time. I see my friend from Nevada is here, and I am sure he is anxious to agree with everything I have said, and I welcome that.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Nevada.

Mr. ENSIGN. Mr. President, I say hello to my good friend from Delaware. He made some very good comments. I want to follow up and talk about this debate we are having.

The Senator from Tennessee, Senator CORKER, talked about the need to forget about whether you are a Republican or a Democrat and think about what is best for the country, and that is what we should be doing right now.

People around the country understand we have a serious debt problem. Spending has been run up under Republicans and Democrats. People can blame whichever party they want, but the reality is we now have a \$14 trillion national debt. This year alone, \$1.6 trillion is how much more we are going to spend than we take in. That is 40 cents, or a little over 40 cents, out of every dollar we are spending this year we are borrowing from countries like China. That is such a dangerous thing to do, because we are now dependent on other countries and our economy is on very shaky ground. Everyone in this body understands this is completely unsustainable.

Let's look at the path the President has set us on as far as his budget is concerned. If we took up his budget, this year alone we will spend about \$250 billion in interest on our national debt. That is kind of like having a credit card and you are spending \$250 billion in interest on that credit card. If we follow the President's plan over the next 10 years, that \$250 billion will go to almost \$900 billion a year. That is more than Social Security, more than Medicare, and more than national defense. That is why this is completely unsustainable.

So now we are in a debate over a few billion dollars compared to trillions of dollars? It is a drop in the bucket. That is why I believe it is important for both sides to get this behind us so we can focus on the much larger issues.

I have a 100-percent pro-life voting record. I believe very strongly that life

is precious; that God created each of us in his image, and that life should be protected. But we have to face reality. The Democrats are in control of the Senate and in control of the White House. There is no way they are going to allow Planned Parenthood, which is the largest abortion provider in the United States—and I disagree with what they do—the Democrats will never allow us to defund Planned Parenthood while they are in charge. So we have to look at what we can do. What is achievable?

Right now, I think one of the biggest moral issues we face in this country is the debt. What we are doing to our children and grandchildren is handing them a country they cannot afford. The taxes will have to be too high. We could default on our debt and end in a depression which is worse than the Great Depression simply because this body, the body on the other side of the Capitol, and the White House have spent too much money for too long. We have spent money we do not have.

Next year's budget and the debt ceiling are much bigger issues than we are dealing with here. We don't need to shut down the government. We just need to sit down, make the compromises necessary so we can move this process forward and get to the much larger issues on spending and debt.

We have seen in the news that Portugal, Greece, and Ireland have had serious problems. They have actually had their debt downgraded to almost junk status. One of the countries is actually considered junk bond status. The others have now had their bonds seriously downgraded. What does that mean? That means they are paying higher interest rates.

Yesterday, the EU raised their interest rates. The European Union raised their interest rates because of fears of inflation. Here in the United States, our Federal Reserve is keeping interest rates low. But we know inflation is coming, and eventually they are going to have to raise interest rates because of inflation and overspending by the United States. What does a rise in interest rates mean to the average American? It means that the home mortgage is going to go up.

Remember, a lot of Americans have these adjustable rate mortgages. So the next time they refinance those mortgages, their payments will be higher. They are already having trouble meeting these payments.

What does that mean for job creation? The small business owner who wants to get a loan will have to pay higher interest rates. That affects the cost of capital and whether they may be able to even start a business in the first place. It will hurt job creation right in the middle of this very little, very delicate bit of job recovery that we are having in the United States.

This spending and the debt is not some esoteric argument. It is real and it affects real people's lives. It isn't

something we can put off for another 3, 4, 5 years. We must deal with it now. We know that entitlements are the biggest part of the budget. Yes, discretion is important. We have to deal with discretionary and we have to deal with defense. We overspend in defense in so many wasteful programs, but the big issue is going to be entitlement spending.

Congressman RYAN put out a very bold budget the other day—the first person to come forward with a bold proposal to deal with entitlement spending in this country. The President's debt commission put out a proposal, but the President, unfortunately, ignored his own debt commission and didn't put any of their recommendations in his budget. But both Republicans and Democrats are going to have to deal with this spending problem—this spending binge we have been on—otherwise we are not going to have the same United States of America we have all been enjoying our entire lives. We are literally going to become an economy that cannot exist the way we exist today because we cannot afford it. Our debt will literally collapse the economy of the United States.

A recent study came out, done by two incredible economists named Rogoff and Reinhart. These are viewed by both sides of the aisle as well-respected studies. They studied sovereign debt over the last 200 years of about 64 countries. What they found is any time the debt reaches 90 percent of the economy, or 90 percent of the GDP, it causes a net decrease of about 30 percent of economic growth going forward.

Those are numbers. But what does it mean? It means a loss of jobs. In the United States, we have over a million jobs that will be lost, that would otherwise be created. So this is real stuff. Where are we in the United States? Currently, we are about 94 percent of GDP. So we are already there, and it is going to get worse and worse.

That is why this debate we are having over spending is so critical, and critical that we get it under control. We need to forget about which party is going to have a political advantage. I am one of those Senators—and there are quite a few of us—who is not running for reelection. Everybody in this body needs to forget about whether they get reelected and do what is right for the country. It is so critical right now that we put our country first.

House Republicans have sent over a proposal that would do a couple of things. One, it would fund the troops. Let's not let our military come to work and not get paid. That would be ridiculous. Let's at least fund the troops and pass this 1-week spending proposal that would fund the government. It does cut \$12 billion out. The only significant rider in there is the DC abortion rider that says DC can have funds to provide abortions. This is something that was in law and that President Obama signed, in a bill that

many Democrats on the other side have signed, so it should not be that controversial.

In the meantime, since we have agreed on the spending number, we can work out some of these other controversial things in the next week. I believe that is the right thing to do to keep the government open, so people can continue to get their paychecks, so people can continue to visit national parks, and on and on and on. I think we all know the problems if the government shuts down.

I think it is critical that we start doing what is right for the country instead of what is right for somebody's reelection. Let's sit down and make the serious and tough choices so we can put this country on the right path.

Mr. President, I yield the floor.

#### RECESS

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senate stands in recess until 2 p.m.

Thereupon, the Senate, at 1:10 p.m., recessed until 2 p.m. and reassembled when called to order by the Presiding Officer (Mr. BLUMENTHAL).

Mr. LAUTENBERG. Mr. President, I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

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

#### BUDGET NEGOTIATIONS

Mr. LAUTENBERG. Mr. President, it is my understanding we are now in morning business. I ask if there is a time constraint when making speeches.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Senators are limited, under morning business, to 10 minutes each.

Mr. LAUTENBERG. Thank you, Mr. President. We are facing a moment in the issue that all Americans are looking at and wondering: What is happening here? What is going to come about? What are we going to do?

But I wish to remind everyone, in 1773, a tea party was held in Boston Harbor. It was to protest a yoke of oppression that hobbled the start of freedom in our new Nation and that new Americans wanted removed. Those here then wanted the liberty to choose their own customs and their way of life.

While that was 238 years ago, we again struggle to keep a fringe group from taking away the rights of a majority of American citizens who treasure choices they are free to make in our democracy. Although these attacks are marked in the cloak of fiscal responsibility, it is very clear that this group, unlike our forebears, is determined to restrict the freedoms most Americans choose to protect.

So while we are not latter-day Paul Reveres, we sound the alarm for the

American people to beware. I come to the floor to warn every parent and grandparent to beware for the well-being of your loved ones. If you want your children and your grandchildren to have the best health care American research can produce, beware.

If your chest swells with pride when your 2-year-old repeats numbers or words learned at a Federal Head Start schoolhouse, beware.

If your child suffers when toxic air overwhelms them and they are gasping for a breath of fresh air, beware. Look at your family, and if you have a son or a daughter anxious, ready, and able to go to college and you cannot afford to help, beware.

If you are a woman dependent on Planned Parenthood, where every year women receive tests for breast or cervical cancer that could endanger their health and maybe their lives, beware.

If you are a retiree who believes Medicare is freely available to help you live longer or function better, beware. Watch out. Tea party Republicans have seized control of the House of Representatives and will use their power to eliminate current services to children, adults, and retirees from the government, as promised.

They are continuing to brew a toxic tea, a sleight of hand trick to push pain on America's most vulnerable citizens, as we look at this placard: "House GOP Brewing a Toxic Tea for Americans."

Across our country, millions are worried sick about losing jobs, losing homes, and losing an established way of life for their children's futures. What do the tea party Republicans propose? Cut their programs to protect the wealth of the richest among us. But tea party Republicans do not want to solve problems. Instead, they are trying to use the budget process to push an extreme ideology that they believe is the only way others should live their lives. Do it their way or no way.

They are willing to shut down the government to prove a point, to change the condition we have operated so well under for many years. They are willing to sacrifice America's financial standing to impose their extreme views on millions who do not agree with these radical extremists.

They refuse to step up, compromise, and move ahead, so America can continue leading the world as it has been. The President and the Senate Democrats have come to the negotiating table with a responsible plan that protects our country's fragile economy, economic recovery, and invests in our future.

But the toxic tea Republicans in the House would rather recklessly shut down the government than budge off their foul scheme. Last week, they stood outside the Capitol and chanted: "Shut it down. Shut it down." That was their mantra, shut down the government.

When Speaker BOEHNER told them to prepare for a shutdown, they gave him