

enough discretion to make sure nothing in that shutdown ends up weakening our ability to perform the missions we need performed or puts our troops in any additional danger.

In conclusion, let me offer an observation. In the last few weeks, on more occasions than I can count, I have witnessed Senators and Congressmen, even those in the blogosphere—the commentators, the talking heads, the so-called experts—doing exactly what, in my view, is wrong with Washington; that is, they are playing the blame game. They are holding a press conference and pointing fingers at everybody but themselves. It is going on all over the place. I am not singling out one person or one party, but we have seen that way too much. The truth is, the folks it is hurting are the American people.

Our democracy is designed in such a way and has a track record where we all know it will work, and it will work great, and it will get the job done. We represent people and we can get in here and debate hard and fight hard and have our differences, but at the end of the process we have votes, we make decisions, and then we move on.

Right now, for whatever reason, this is a problem in both Chambers. It is not just in the Senate. Not just one party is at fault. But for whatever reason we are seeing a breakdown in the system. That is not good for the country. Tonight we are talking about our troops, and certainly it is not good for them.

I could easily spend the next 10 minutes at my desk blaming the Republicans for where we are tonight. I know they have said we had not passed anything. That is not true. We passed extensions six times to keep the government running. But I don't want to get into all that because I could spend 10 minutes talking about how awful and terrible the Republicans are, and then I could turn right back around and spend the next 10 minutes talking about how terrible the Democrats are.

If we would be honest with the American people, both are to blame. I cannot stand here in good conscience and blame just one person or one party. The fault lies with all of us.

Right now, because of the partisan bickering, because of the breakdown, we are using our military as a pawn in this budget fight. That is something we should never do. We are not helping anyone. This is not good government. We are not doing our citizens and our people any favors by doing this.

I hope tonight, before we go out of here, we would pass something—again, whatever bill it is. I am not hung up on who has to be the lead sponsor or what the number of that bill has to be. I hope we will pass something that will make sure our troops get paid on time and that takes care of our Active Duty, the Reserve and the Coast Guard, and it also gives the Secretary of Defense enough discretion to run his department as it needs to be run. Under the

circumstances, I think that is not even close to too much to ask. I think that is perfectly within the bounds of reason. I hope and pray tonight before we leave we could all agree to do that.

By the way, if we did put that on the Senate floor and didn't load it up with lots of agenda items, if we put that on the Senate floor in a clean fashion, I think it would sail out of here probably unanimously. I cannot speak for the House, but my guess is we would see the same result down there.

EXTENSION OF MORNING BUSINESS

Mr. PRYOR. My understanding is we have other Senators who may be on the way to speak, so I ask unanimous consent the period for morning business, for debate only, be extended until 9 p.m., with Senators permitted to speak for up to 10 minutes each, with the majority leader to be recognized at 9 p.m.

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

Mr. PRYOR. Mr. President, while we are awaiting other Senators, I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The assistant bill clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

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

Mr. KYL. Mr. President, throughout this day a lot of our constituents back home have been watching the debate. I wonder maybe if they are a little frustrated. I talked earlier this morning about throwing rotten apples at each other. There has been a lot of that today. I am not going to do that tonight. I suggested this morning one of the things we could do while we are waiting to see whether an agreement can be reached to fund the government over this fiscal year is to try to shed some light on the process which undoubtedly is a bit confusing to people: What exactly is it that we are arguing about, how did we get here, and what do we have in the future.

We talked a little bit this morning, and what we are talking about today, and what we are hoping to achieve tonight, is an agreement that would determine how much we will spend to fund the Federal Government for the next approximately 6 months through the end of September, which is the end of the fiscal year that begins each October 1.

That is an important proposition. It is important enough that there has been a lot of very difficult debate about that, as people have seen over the last several days, and certainly today. It appears there is still a bit of a deadlock over exactly how much money should be saved in the last 6 months of this fiscal year.

But when we have concluded this particular debate and determined how

much we are going to spend to fund the government through the end of September, we are going to turn to some even more important issues, and they are going to require our concentration, our reaching across the aisle to talk to each other, to the other body, and both bodies of the Congress to speak to the President. We are going to have to listen to the American people and try to reach important understandings because then we are talking about funding the government for the entire fiscal year for 2012 and also trying to figure out what to do with the President's request to extend the debt ceiling.

As I mentioned this morning briefly, extending the debt ceiling is a little bit like going to your credit card company and saying: All right, I have used up all of my available credit, but I want to buy something else. Will you let me spend a little more on the credit card? That is what the President has asked Congress to do, to extend the debt ceiling. We will have a robust debate about that.

Let me see if I can put what we are doing here in this context. At least for the year 2011, which we are halfway through, we will have reduced spending by a pretty dramatic amount, somewhere in the neighborhood of \$40 and \$50 billion. I don't know exactly how much until we are done, but when we add that to what we call around here the baseline, and multiply it by 10 years, we get substantial savings. Just on the \$10 billion we saved earlier this morning, over 10 years that \$10 billion equates to \$140 billion saved over the 10-year period. So we are talking about substantial money.

But that probably pales in comparison to what we are going to need to save in the entire budget for the fiscal year 2012. There is no shortage of problems that have attracted our attention—for example, the trillions of dollars in unfunded liabilities coming from the mandatory spending side of our ledger, in addition to the way that we are trying to save money just to keep the government running. By mandatory we mean the programs such as Medicare, Medicaid, Social Security, some veterans spending, and so on.

I talked about the estimate of hitting our debt limit. The Treasury Secretary estimates we will hit that debt limit—in other words, the amount we borrowed on our credit card and cannot exceed; that is the total amount of the U.S. legal debt—no later than May 16 of this year. So May 16, the President says we need to address the debt ceiling. If you are not keeping track, the current debt limit is about \$14.3 trillion. So we are going to be pressing up against \$14.3, in other words, and we are going to have to borrow more money if we are going to spend more in the next year.

Republicans have offered a variety of ideas. I want to alert my colleagues to what some of these ideas are so we can begin thinking about them and hopefully acting on them in the runup to

the debate about what to do about the debt ceiling.

There is very little enthusiasm around here for increasing the debt ceiling if we do not also do something to constrain future spending, because we do not want to come up against the debt ceiling every few years or months. We need to decide this is going to be it, we are not going to incur any more debt. In fact, we are going to begin to lower the debt. But to do that, we will have to constrain ourselves in some ways to rein in our appetite for spending.

One of the ways to do that almost passed about—well, a few years ago in the Senate here; I have forgotten the year. But it failed by one vote. That is the balanced budget amendment. A lot of people think that would be a good way for Congress to tie our hands so we cannot spend more than we take in. Every single Republican has cosponsored a balanced budget amendment. We hope we will get a lot of support from our friends on the other side of the aisle as well, because it clearly would require the Federal Government to live within its means each year, as most American families have to do.

There is also something that I believe is also a very good idea, and that is a constitutional spending limit. In other words, you do not have to require that the budget is balanced if you limit spending to, in this case, 18 percent of the gross domestic product. The advantage of that is there will be a desire on the part of everyone who wants to spend more money to have a more robust economy, because every percentage of growth or every dollar of growth in the gross domestic product means more money you can spend at the Federal Government level. So I would imagine if we wanted to spend more money at the Federal Government level, we will be supporting regulatory policies that do not wipe out whole industries such as the coal industry, we will support tax policies that promote growth, that try to keep tax rates at a lower level, and do not punish companies here in the United States so they have to move operations abroad, and so on.

In other words, these are things we can do to promote economic growth that mean we have a bigger GDP. If you have a bigger GDP, then you can spend more money at the Federal Government level. But if you do not have a bigger GDP, then you cannot; we can only spend 18 percent of the GDP under this proposal.

And that, by the way, is about the historic average of what we have spent. In the last year and a half, unfortunately, we have gone way above that. We are spending around 22 percent of GDP. It is going up to 24 or 25 percent. That is not sustainable, and almost everyone agrees.

Another idea that is sponsored by Senators CORKER and MCCASKILL, a Republican and a Democrat, is the—they call it the CAP Act. That CAP Act

would cap both mandatory and discretionary spending. It would put all government spending, in other words, on the table. It would not just take the discretionary spending we are talking about tonight to keep the government funded, we would also include all of the other spending.

Beginning in the year 2013, the CAP Act would establish Federal spending limits that, over 10 years, would reduce spending to 20.6 of the gross domestic product. Calculated a little differently, that is an average of the last 40 years of spending. What it would do is create a glide path by which we could gradually reduce the spending so you do not have to do it all at once.

I mean the reality is, if we try to be too strong here in the way we are going to reduce spending, we are not going to be successful because people will not stand for it. Have you already seen the debate yesterday and today: Oh, my goodness, you are going to cut money from this and that? We cannot do that.

There will always be resistance to reducing spending.

So it has got to be done, in my view—I think both Senators CORKER and MCCASKILL agree—it has to be done in a way that Members also agree to each year, rather than simply deciding this is too hard, we are going to give up. And, of course, since it is only statutory, we could give up. We can waive it by 60 votes and say: Too hard. We are going to give up. So it has to be at levels that are tough, but over a 10-year period gradually we can reduce.

It is a little bit like going on a diet. You did not get the weight you have overnight, and you are not going to lose it overnight. It makes more sense to do it in a way that keeps you healthy, keeps a consensus around here, but for sure gets us to the goal we want to achieve so that our kids and grandkids do not have to pay for all of the things we have purchased.

This CAP Act, by the way, has a lot of good provisions, such as a definition of emergency spending so we cannot game it every year when we decide we want to spend more. If we just say, well, this is emergency spending, then we do not have to count it in our calculations.

I would like to see more dramatic reductions. I know other people would too. But, as I said, this is the kind of Main Street proposal that should attract a lot of attention on both sides of the aisle.

These are three ideas: the balanced budget amendment, the constitutional spending limit, and the statutory CAP Act. There are a lot of other good ideas. And we, frankly, are going to have to have a good debate about these ideas, because I will predict there is no way the debt ceiling will be increased without Congress adopting some of these constraints and the President signing those into law so we will know that in the future we do not have to keep raising the debt ceiling.

The last point I wish to make is there are two big reasons why we are

trying to reduce the deficit. First, we all know we cannot keep spending what we are spending. The interest on the national debt, in a little over 10 years, is going to approach \$1 trillion a year. It is over \$200 billion this year. It will be close to \$250 billion next year. It keeps going up about \$60, \$80 billion a year, to the point that in the tenth year, it is \$900 some billion. Think about that. You want to spend money on education. You want to spend money on health care. You want to spend money on defense. Sorry, we have to spend it on interest on our national debt. This is money we are paying to the Chinese or to anybody else who happened to purchase American debt. But it is going to crowd out spending in other areas that we want to spend money on. That is not good. And as a result, we have got to get this spending under control while we still have an opportunity.

But there is a second reason it is so important, and that is, the more money, in effect, that is sucked up by governments—that includes the Federal Government—the more money out of the economy the Federal Government demands, the less money there is for private sector growth and investment. And it is, of course, in the private sector where most of the new jobs are created. That is why we need to leave more money in the private sector. We are not reducing Federal spending in order to engage in some big austerity program to try to punish people by providing less for them, and so on. We are doing it to create more prosperity. The whole idea is prosperity.

I ask unanimous consent for a couple more minutes of time.

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

Mr. KYL. In other words, the idea here is to spend less money at the Federal Government level, thereby allowing more for the private sector to invest in job creation, thereby growing the economy, making us a more wealthy nation, and helping our families and job creators in the process.

I have cited a Wall Street journal op-ed many times. I will close with this: It is an op-ed that was written by Gary Becker, George P. Schultz—he was Secretary of three things including Treasury—and John Taylor, who is a Stanford economics professor. The three wrote an op-ed in the Wall Street Journal. I will quote two short paragraphs. They start out by saying:

Wanted: A strategy for economic growth, full employment, and deficit reduction—all without inflation. Experience shows how to get there. Credible actions that reduce the rapid growth of Federal spending and debt will raise economic growth and lower the unemployment rate. Higher private investment, not more government purchases, is the surest way to increase prosperity. When private investment is high, unemployment is low.

Above all, the federal government needs a credible and transparent budget strategy. It's time for a game-changer—a budget action that will stop the recent discretionary

spending binge before it gets entrenched in government agencies.

And they conclude by saying:

We need to lay out a path for total Federal Government spending growth for the next year and later years that will gradually bring spending into balance with the amount of tax revenues generated in later years by the current tax system. Assurance that the current tax system will remain in place—pending genuine reform in corporate and personal income taxes—will be an immediate stimulus.

I think this is an excellent strategy for a long-term growth policy. It is predicated on the fact that Congress will work in the short term, i.e. tonight, to reduce the spending for the remaining 6 months of this fiscal year.

We will then begin work on a budget that will reduce spending over the course of the next 12 months and, in the context of the debt ceiling debate, will also act on other programs to constrain government spending. It could be a balanced budget amendment, a constitutional spending limit, the CAP Act I talked about, or any other idea people can bring to the Senate and House floors and get passed here, to begin to constrain the spending, not just so we will have the money to spend in the government on the things we want to do, but also so we can free up the great energy of the private sector so investment can once again flow, people can be hired, we can have economic growth and a real sense of prosperity in this country in the years to come.

That is the challenge we face after the agreement is reached tonight. I know you share my hope that an agreement will soon be announced and we can then move on to the other items I am talking about here this evening.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Colorado is recognized.

Mr. UDALL of Colorado. Mr. President, I rise tonight, as so many of my colleagues have through this long day, to urge all of us to join to prevent a government shutdown.

We have all expressed a growing amount of frustration here with what I would characterize as politics as usual under the dome of this great Capitol, in which we are so fortunate to serve. But it sure seems like these are the kind of politics where the goal posts get continually moved, and no amount of civility can seemingly overcome the impasse that is unfolding down the corridors in the House of Representatives.

I know the Presiding Officer operates in this way, and the American public operates in this way, and they expect us to work together. They expect us to pass an appropriations bill that funds our government. But it appears as though some unrelated policy riders that are not about appropriating money but are about setting policy are leading to an impasse that could lead to an unnecessary and costly shutdown of government operations and services.

Last night—I do not know where the Presiding Officer was—my colleague Senator BENNET was down here. He

highlighted how petty the situation has become. He pointed out if you and I went to Applebee's for dinner tonight, and we had a \$20 dinner for two, and then we had a fight over the bill, we would be fighting over 4 cents.

Well, I have some news. It looks like today we got an agreement that we reached on the actual numbers, but now the House wants to add some controversial policy riders into the mix. It is as if that same check arrived when we were at Applebee's and after finally agreed on who is going to pay the 4 cents, but we are now arguing over whether the waitress, who is a hard-working American, should receive health care.

I have to say, I think people watching this are scratching their heads. I sure am. We all are facing an impending government shutdown. As I have said, some Members seem to want to inject very controversial policy issues into the debate. These issues have divided us for too many years.

We ought to have that debate elsewhere. It is forcing this shutdown on the American people. Some people who are standing their ground think they are doing something about the deficit. I am often the one highlighting how disturbing our long-range fiscal picture has become.

But what is equally frustrating is the disservice being done to the American public by the current debate. Not only are we taken off the beat from addressing our real fiscal imbalances, which would be the debate we need to have on the 2012 budget or on the longer term challenges the Simpson-Bowles commission pointed out, but we are now focusing on women's health issues. I don't understand. We have a tentative agreement to cut billions from current spending levels, but the Speaker of the House seems to continue to demand that we ought to focus on nonbudget issues. These are hot-button issues. Why we would insert them into an unrelated budget debate when there is so much at stake is beyond me.

I understand we want to show the American people we are serious about deficit reduction. I am, I know the Presiding Officer is, and I know the American people are. But in Colorado, people see straight through this latest ploy to inject nonbudgetary issues into the debate. It is politics as usual.

I know we have felt a little better recently. We have had 13 straight months of private sector growth. We have added 1.8 million jobs during that time. But our economy is still very fragile. Way too many Americans, way too many West Virginians, and way too many Coloradans are struggling.

I have no doubt that a government shutdown at this time would have a counterproductive effect on our recovery.

Don't take my word for it. Listen to what top business leaders of all political persuasions are saying. The Business Roundtable president, John Engler, former Governor of Michigan, a

Republican Governor, said businesses would face the dangerous "unintended consequences," where interest rates could rise because of a shutdown and we would have turmoil in our financial markets. Forecasters at Goldman Sachs have warned that a shutdown could shave off growth in our GDP every single week. CEOs of all stripes all over the country have warned about a shutdown's impact on confidence in the U.S. economic recovery. The Presiding Officer and I know that confidence is what we need. That is what is really lacking in many respects.

A shutdown would actually prevent what we need to address our long-term growth and fiscal balance. In other words, if we get the economy growing again, we would have more tax revenue, and we would see that gap between what we are spending and bringing in narrow.

I can't help but think in the context of this debate about my uncle Stewart Udall. I have talked to the Presiding Officer about the effect men like his father had on his upbringing and his values, his public service commitment. But Stewart Udall, my uncle, father of my cousin, Senator TOM UDALL, wrote a book called "The Forgotten Founders" that focused on the settling of the West. I bet it would apply as well to West Virginia. The theme of the book was on how the West was settled, how it was built. He made a strong case in his book that the people who came out West were not looking to get into gunfights or range wars, regardless of what the Hollywood movies suggest. They wanted to start a new life and in a new country, pursuing what we now call the American dream.

My uncle Stewart pointed out that when we watched those Hollywood movies, it was the people standing on the sidewalks watching the mythical gunfight who were really the people who built the West. They were looking to work together. They weren't looking to get into fights. They were looking out for each other. It didn't matter what one's political party was.

To me, the American people today are standing on those board sidewalks watching the same senseless gunfights and range wars. These are the people who matter. These are the people who will ultimately be hurt and affected by a shutdown.

I know I was hired by the people of Colorado and sent to the Senate to come here and work together and solve some very difficult challenges facing this country. That is why today I introduced the Preventing a Government Shutdown Act of 2011. This bill was originally a Republican idea. It is meant to ensure that the American people are not unfairly subjected to the effects of a government shutdown simply because some Members of Congress want to make a political point and pursue persistent squabbling over the budget. The bill would ensure that Federal appropriations continue at last year's funding levels as a bridge to

keep the government running until a compromise could be reached for the remainder of the fiscal year. Once Congress is able to reach a bipartisan agreement to fund the government for that fiscal year, then the automatic funding under my proposal would stop and it would be replaced by the enacted bill.

I know there are some who say: Wait a minute, the Congress is charged with passing appropriations bills that reflect strategic planning, current functional needs, and create stability. What I am suggesting is that the Preventing a Government Shutdown Act would create a safety valve that would ensure that partisan shutdown politics don't punish the American people and destabilize the economy going forward.

It seems as though a vocal minority wants to be combative, almost for the sake of being combative—let's fight for the sake of fighting. But in this case, in these delicate and fragile economic times, that is not a helpful thing to do, to put it mildly. I think the mature thing to do would be to have a piece of legislation in place that would eliminate that kind of irresponsible behavior moving forward.

As I come to a close, I have to think the American people are amazed at this, if they have time because they are busy providing for their families. We have to settle down here. We have to act as adults. We need to work collaboratively toward a budget solution. We have to reduce the debt and the deficit. The Presiding Officer has been on point on that as well as on this. But you won't find anyone more committed than I to that cause. Let's reach it in a way that protects our senior citizens, veterans, students, and border security—I could go on with a long list of important functions the Federal Government provides—and let's do it in a way that slashes spending but doesn't harm our fragile economic recovery or divert our attention on divisive social issues.

We can't afford a government shutdown. We just flatout can't afford a government shutdown. I will be disappointed, to say the least, if the bipartisan deal that is before us—it is in our hands—is undercut by contentious, unrelated issues that only serve to divide us rather than to bring us together.

One thing we can agree on is that our military personnel deserve better than this. We have young people fighting in two wars as I speak. We have young men and women serving all over the globe in over 50 countries. The last thing our soldiers, sailors, airmen, and marines need is to worry about whether they will be able to pay their bills. Military families have already done more than their share. Now we are asking them to do even more. That is simply unacceptable.

I know we can find a solution to this particular situation. We worked together in the Senate with Senator HUTCHISON and a bipartisan group of

Senators to introduce the bipartisan Ensuring Pay for Our Military Act. This bill, S. 724, would ensure that our military servicemembers would not have interrupted pay in the event of a shutdown. We need to pass that bill if we don't get the job done tonight.

Three days ago, I wrote a letter, joined by close to 18 of my colleagues, including the Presiding Officer, to Mr. BOEHNER. I know Speaker BOEHNER well. He and I served in the House together. I urged him to work with all of us to avoid a shutdown. I will stay here the rest of this day, all night, whatever it takes. I am here to urge all of us, both Chambers, let's sit down together. Let's reason together. Let's use common sense together. Let's find a compromise. That is the American way. I know that is why I was elected to the Senate. People in Colorado know I work across party lines. The Senate could set that example right here tonight. We have numerous examples of us working together across party lines.

I had to come to the floor tonight. I know the night is growing on. I had to come down here and urge Senators in this great body, the world's greatest deliberative body, to find a common-sense compromise to keep our government funded, keep our economy focused upon, and move our country forward. That is job 1.

I thank the Chair for his attention and his willingness to work with me and the spirit with which he serves West Virginia.

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

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The bill clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. UDALL of Colorado). Without objection, it is so ordered.

Mr. MANCHIN. Mr. President, when I was Governor of West Virginia, we grappled over the budget like every State, every Governor and every legislature, every senator and every delegate. But when the deadline arrived, people came together and we did our job—Democrats and Republicans, business and labor, progressives and conservatives—and we enacted a balanced budget every year without failure. It is part of our constitution. It is who we are.

I have only been in the Senate for 5 months, and I have never seen anything quite like this. I never could have imagined anything quite like this. But I see so much opportunity if we start talking and working together. We are outspending our revenues by hundreds of billions of dollars every month. They tell us our revenue estimates will be about \$2.2 trillion this year, but our expenditures are expected to be over \$3.7 trillion.

I believe everybody we speak to, and everyone who is listening to us, can un-

derstand we have a problem. But yet we are grappling over this tonight: a budget that should have been done 6 months ago.

This is a budget crisis. It is not a social crisis. And to put all of this into the mix right now is wrong. Instead of all of us coming together, Republicans and Democrats, with a commonsense budget compromise, we face a shutdown of the government not over how much to cut but over what social issues we agree or disagree on.

On many of these social issues, I will be the first to admit I am probably more conservative than most on my side of the aisle. I am pro-life, and I am proud of it. But this is a budget crisis, and I have said that. This is not the place or the time for that. There will be a time and a place to vote on these issues, but not when they jeopardize the paychecks of our brave men and women in uniform, which the Presiding Officer so eloquently explained is what is at risk. That is wrong. The Presiding Officer knows it is wrong, and we all know it is wrong, no matter what side of the aisle.

Our dear friend, the Senator from Arkansas, was speaking about the cooperation we all should have reaching out across the aisle, not putting blame, because we are all at fault and we will all be looked at as the culprits. The bottom line is, we need to come together and fix this. The American people expect that from us. The people back home in Colorado and also in West Virginia expect that from the Presiding Officer and me, and it is what is right for the Nation.

That is one of the reasons I and so many of my colleagues here have said we are going to give up our salary. We call it the no work, no pay pledge. That no work, no pay pledge is pretty much universally understood. In West Virginia, when you do not have a good day's work, you should not expect a payday.

I can say it is not my fault, and the Presiding Officer can say it is not his fault, and everybody could, but we are all part of this, and we have to put the pressure on. But I have to tell you, as my father would tell me all the time, he said: Joe, whatever your problems are, try it without a paycheck and you will compound them rapidly.

I am going to be sending my paycheck back to the U.S. Treasury to pay down our debt. Many others will be donating them to charity. We will be standing with the American people, our military men and women, who will pay a heavy price for their elected government's failure to finish a budget, unless a commonsense agreement is reached tonight. And I believe it will be. As we have a few precious hours left, I still am a very optimistic person.

With that, there are some of our colleagues who have talked tonight about passing a piece of legislation, even if we do not come to an agreement, that our brave men and women, who are serving all over the world to protect us to live in freedom, will be paid.

To my friends on the Republican side of the aisle, I want to say, there are many instances where we might agree on social issues and some where we might disagree. That is the healthy part of our democracy. It is what makes us so unique. I assure you, there is a time and a place for everything. There is a time and a place for those votes. But not tonight. Today is not that time. Our deadline is here and rapidly approaching, as you can see.

My hope and prayer is that tonight we will do what is right, we will come together as Americans, and we will agree to a commonsense budget that is the first step to putting our fiscal house back in order. That is why the people of West Virginia sent me here. I took that oath of office not just to represent the Democrats on my side of the party or the Democrats in West Virginia, I took that oath of office to represent everybody in West Virginia: Democrats, Republicans, all different walks of life. I am going to do everything I can to make sure they understand I am here for them.

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

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The bill clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

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

EXTENSION OF MORNING BUSINESS

Ms. STABENOW. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the period for morning business for debate only be extended until 10:30 p.m., with Senators permitted to speak for up to 10 minutes each, with the majority leader to be recognized at 10:30 p.m.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection?

Without objection, it is so ordered.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Texas is recognized.

Mrs. HUTCHISON. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent to add Senators LEAHY, MERKLEY, and BOXER as cosponsors to S. 724.

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

Mrs. HUTCHISON. Mr. President, this brings to 77, out of 100 Senators, who are now sponsoring this bill. Our bill, S. 724, is very simple. It just says if there is a government shutdown, our military will be paid their full pay on time.

This bill is the very least we can do to assure every military family that they do not have to worry for one minute whether their mortgage is going to be paid, whether their car payments will be paid, or whether they will be able to get over this hump without thinking that there might be a halving of their pay, or that it might be delayed.

I am especially concerned, of course, about those who are overseas, but their families are at home, because if the mom or dad is overseas and there is a glitch somewhere, they are not here to help. I think it would be unthinkable that we would go to midnight and not have taken care of these families and assured them that everything is going to be fine.

I want to say that I hope there is an agreement, and I have heard the rumor that there is an agreement. If there is one, I know that it will include military pay. I believe that. If, for any reason, that agreement does not happen in the next 3 hours, or if the agreement doesn't include military pay—which I don't think will happen—I think both Houses of Congress want to serve our soldiers and their families, but I will be here until midnight, and I am going to make sure that whatever happens, either S. 724, with 77 sponsors in the Senate, is passed, or that we have an agreement that both Houses have before them that will assure that the military pay is handled in that other agreement.

So we are going to be here for 3 more hours and make sure that the will of the Senate, which is very clear with 77 sponsors, is met.

I want to just mention again that there was a Web site put up early this morning by just one woman who was very concerned about this issue and heard about my bill in the news. Her name is Hope Guinn Bradley. She is from Hawaii. I do not know her. She has started a social media network like I have never witnessed in my life. We now have over 1 million support hits on her Web site, called Ensuring Pay for our Military Act of 2011. In one day, she has accumulated 1 million support sentences, or messages, for what she is doing.

If you would go to that Web site and do nothing else but read those comments by people who are supporting our military and who are clearly in the support of our military—you know, I would like for the military people to see it just so they understand how much America appreciates them and what they do because they are saying to the people here in Washington, DC: You take care of our young men and women who are fighting for us. You better do it or there will be consequences.

Are they right? Absolutely. I have spoken a couple of times today. I want to make sure that we have the letters from the military organizations that have been written in support of S. 724. There is one from the Iraq and Afghanistan Veterans of America that wrote a wonderful letter. I ask unanimous consent that it be printed in the RECORD along with two other letters to which I will refer.

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

IRAQ AND AFGHANISTAN

VETERANS OF AMERICA,

Washington, DC, April 7, 2011.

Hon. KAY BAILEY HUTCHISON,
248 Russell Senate Office Building, Washington,
DC.

DEAR SENATOR HUTCHISON: Iraq and Afghanistan Veterans of America (IAVA) strongly supports S. 724, the Ensuring Pay for Our Military Act of 2011. This bill ensures that all members of the Armed Forces will continue to receive the pay and allowances they have earned despite any lack of interim or full-year appropriations.

Our men and women in uniform protect our nation and continue to do so despite budget disagreements in Washington. The members of our Armed Forces are essential to the defense of our nation and must be treated as such.

Many young service members and their families are dealing with multiple deployments and often live paycheck to paycheck. Military families should not be asked to bear further financial stress in addition to fighting the war on terrorism. This legislation protects the men and women who protect us.

If we can be of any help in advancing S. 724 please contact Tim Embree at (202) 544-7692 or tim@iava.org. We look forward to working with you.

Sincerely,

PAUL RIECKHOFF,
Executive Director.

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

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

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

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

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

Sincerely,

RICHARD A. JONES,
Legislative Director.

MILITARY OFFICERS ASSOCIATION OF AMERICA, April 8, 2011.

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

DEAR SENATOR HUTCHISON: On behalf of the 377,000 members of the Military Officers Association of America (MOAA), I am writing to urge you to cosponsor S. 724, the "Ensuring Pay For Our Military Act of 2011," recently introduced by Senators Bob Casey and Kay Bailey Hutchison.

Recent media stories stating servicemembers may not be paid in the event