

the PTO, I did prefer the independent funding stream approach.

Senator COBURN's amendment may have been the better approach, but I voted to table the amendment because it could well have permanently sunk this enormously important legislation. Sending the bill back to the House with new language that the House has rejected and says it would reject again would have, at best, substantially delayed the reform effort and, at worst, stymied the bill just when we were reaching the finish line. And this bill is important it can help our economy at a critical juncture and can even result in my state of Colorado getting a satellite PTO office, which would be a major jobs and economic driver. I also worked with colleagues on both sides of the aisle to include important provisions that will help small businesses. None of this would have been possible if we amended the bill at this late stage.

I remain committed to working with colleagues in the coming months and years to make sure that PTO gets the resources it needs to do the job that Congress has asked it to do.

Mr. REID. Mr. President, I move to reconsider the vote by which the bill was passed, and I also move to lay that motion on the table.

The motion to lay on the table was agreed to.

MORNING BUSINESS

Mr. REID. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate proceed to morning business until 6:10 p.m. today and that Senators, during that period of time, be permitted to speak up to 10 minutes each.

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

PROVIDING FOR RECESS SUBJECT TO THE CALL OF THE CHAIR

Mr. REID. I ask unanimous consent that upon the conclusion of the joint session, the Senate stand in recess, subject to the call of the Chair.

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

The Senator from Montana.

REMEMBERING 9/11

Mr. TESTER. Mr. President, on Sunday, this Nation will pause to remember a painful day in American history.

On September 11, 2001, I was glued to the radio in my pickup on a long drive back home to Big Sandy. It wasn't until I stopped at a Billings restaurant that I finally saw on TV what I had heard about all day. The pictures were surreal.

Although the attacks of 9/11 weren't America's first test of uncertainty, all of us knew this Nation would change forever.

In the hours and days and weeks following the attacks of September 11, 2001, Americans, neighbors, and perfect

strangers joined together to fill the streets despite their differences. They poured out their support. They redefined the United States of America. I knew then that this great Nation would overcome. Events that unite us will always make us stronger. I was reminded of that on May 2, when Navy SEALs found and brought swift justice to Osama bin Laden, prompting spontaneous celebrations across Montana and the rest of the country.

We must never lose sight of our ability to find common ground and work together on major issues that affect us all. We have much more in common than not, and we should never forget that. It is what built this country. It is what made this the best Nation on Earth, and we need to summon that spirit again as we work to rebuild our economy.

Over the past decade, we have been reminded of some powerful truths that we can never afford to lose sight of. We can never take the security of this country for granted. There are and, sadly, always will be people out there bent on destroying what America stands for, taking innocent lives with them. They are always looking for the weakest links in our security. They are trained and well financed. But our Nation's troops, our intelligence agents, our law enforcement and border security officers are even better trained.

I am particularly concerned about weaknesses along the Montana northern border with Canada. Up until recently, only a few orange cones in the middle of a road protected the country from terrorism. Unfortunately, the days when orange cones did the trick are behind us.

I have worked on the Homeland Security Committee to improve this Nation's security, and things are better than they were a decade ago. We are still working to achieve the right mix of people, technology, and know-how to secure the northern border.

We have also been reminded that America's military can achieve anything asked of it. This comes with a cost. Similar to so many folks of the greatest generation after Pearl Harbor day, hundreds of Montanans signed up to defend our country after 9/11. I stand in deep appreciation for the men and women who, in those dark hours, stood for our country. I thank them and their families for their service, their sacrifice, and their patriotism.

In the years since 9/11, American forces have paid a tremendous price in Iraq and Afghanistan in lives and livelihoods. Until only a few years ago, veterans had to fight another battle at home trying to get access to the benefits they were promised. Too many veterans are still fighting for adequate funding and access to quality health care services that they have earned. As one veteran said, "The day this Nation stops taking care of her veterans is the day this Nation should stop creating them." I couldn't agree more.

Montanans are reminded that some out there are still willing to invade our

privacy and trample on our Constitution in the name of security and freedom. Measures such as the PATRIOT Act, which I have consistently opposed, forfeit some basic freedoms. Some lawmakers aren't stopping there.

In the House, a bill called the National Security and Federal Lands Protection Act would allow the Department of Homeland Security to waive laws and seize control of public lands within 100 miles of the border, even if that means closing off grazing lands, shuttering national parks, and trampling on the rights of private land owners. That would have an enormous impact on the whole of Montana. If bad bills such as that are turned into law, America loses.

Our Constitution is a powerful document, and terrorists want nothing more than to watch our rights crumble away by the weight of our own policies. We can, and we will, remain strong. But we must do it with respect to our rights and freedoms.

Today, as on Sunday, my prayers are with those Americans who have died at the hands of terrorists on and since 9/11 and for the tens of thousands of troops still on the frontlines in Afghanistan and elsewhere and for the families of thousands of American troops who have died in service to this country since that terrible day.

My wife Charlotte and I stand with all Montanans in saying thank you to the members of our military, present and past, especially those who have come home with injuries, seen and unseen. This Nation will never forget your sacrifices.

Ms. MURKOWSKI. Mr. President, many of us remember exactly where we were on the morning of September 11, 2001. We will never forget the footage from New York as the towers fell, from the Pentagon as fire raged, and from Pennsylvania, where United flight 93 was grounded in a field. We questioned who would do this, if another attack was coming, and if we were safe in our own country anymore. The tragedy suffered by our nation on that day left us with important lessons to learn, improvements to make, and a renewed sense of urgency towards the future of our society and national security.

On that Tuesday morning, we were victims of a terrible attack that killed 2,961 American citizens, destroyed \$15 billion of property, and launched us into a battle we continue to fight. The actions of the terrorists also sparked the spirit of a nation united. It left us with a resolve to regroup, rebuild and recover while renewing our country's reputation as a world leader and symbol of freedom.

The impacts of 9/11 were not lost on Alaskans. Although thousands of miles away at the moment of attack, Alaskans sprung into action to help their countrymen in any way possible. Some deployed to Ground Zero, some sponsored fundraisers or blood drives, and some to this day are serving their country in the ongoing operations in

Afghanistan, Iraq and around the world.

Today, we pay homage to our fallen heroes. On Sunday, I will join my fellow Alaskans in honoring those courageous first responders at the 2011 Alaska Fallen Firefighter Memorial Ceremony and 9/11 Remembrance in Anchorage. We will remember firefighters and other first responders who gave their lives on September 11, 2001 and since then. To them, emergency response was far more than a job—it was a vocation they felt was worth risking their lives in the face of incredible danger.

I urge Alaskans to join with all Americans across the country to serve their neighbors and communities on what Congress has deemed Patriot Day.

Mr. GRASSLEY. Mr. President, our Nation will soon observe and reflect on the 10th anniversary of the terrorist attacks on September 11, 2001.

A decade after vicious terrorist attacks killed thousands of innocent people and caused immeasurable grief to victims and survivors, America has shown the world that 9/11 may have changed life as we knew it, but it has not changed America's commitment to freedom, liberty and the pursuit of happiness.

The national tragedy tapped an overwhelming sense of solidarity and sacrifice among Americans from across the country. Consider the selfless acts of courage and patriotism from the moment the hijackers commandeered three airplanes on that clear September morning 10 years ago: from the passengers aboard United flight 93, to the first responders who reported to the World Trade Center and the Pentagon, and the heroes who serve on the front lines from within the Nation's military and from behind-the-scenes in our intelligence and counterterrorism operations.

Thanks to the allegiance of public servants and private citizens, our men and women in uniform and our captains of commerce and industry, the United States of America continues to serve as a beacon of hope, freedom and opportunity to the rest of the world. Those who sought to undermine the exceptionalism of the American people underestimated the resiliency of the American people.

Consider the recent protests across the globe, where after decades of oppression, the people of Tunisia, Egypt and Libya have thrown out autocratic regimes in the pursuit of self-government, economic opportunity, higher standards of living and personal freedoms. The 10th anniversary of 9/11 offers Americans and our friends around the world the opportunity to embrace the common threads that tie us together.

For more than two centuries, the United States has attracted millions of newcomers to live and work in the land of opportunity. Generations of Americans have scaled the ladder of eco-

nomic and social mobility, enjoyed the freedoms of press, speech and religion, and embraced the ups and downs of entrepreneurship, risk-taking and innovation. Unleashing the power of the individual has served as a catalyst for economic growth and prosperity for the last 235 years.

Along the way, the United States evolved as an economic, cultural and military leader in the world. The 9/11 terror attacks dealt a devastating blow to America and all of humanity. And yet, 10 years later, America still stands as the shining city on the hill. Despite the economic downturn, America still bears the promise of better days ahead. Despite high unemployment and unprecedented public debt, the American dream still serves as the magical elixir that ultimately defines the Nation's resiliency and bone-deep belief in the goodness of America.

That bone-deep belief in the goodness of America flows through the veins of those called to serve their country in the U.S. military, including one of Iowa's own hometown heroes who lost his life in the line of duty this summer. Jon Tumilson enlisted in the Navy after graduating from high school in 1995. A 35-year-old Navy SEAL from Rockford, he was one of 30 Americans killed in one of the deadliest attacks on U.S. forces since 9/11. My wife and I were able to pay our respects to this fallen Navy SEAL at his funeral in August. The long-time Iowa Hawkeye football and wrestling fan left behind family members and loved ones, including his beloved Labrador retriever named Hawkeye. The black lab led family members into the school gymnasium for the service and proceeded to lie next to the casket of his owner. They say a picture is worth a 1,000 words. The image of Tumilson's dog lying next to the flag-draped casket brought three words to mind; loyalty, loss and love.

I honor the memory of the many Iowans who've died in military service since 9/11, and all the soldiers and veterans who have served their country to protect U.S. national security and preserve our American way of life.

May their sacrifice remind us of their bone-deep belief in America's goodness. We must keep their legacy and love of country close to mind as we work to put America back on the right track towards economic growth and prosperity.

(At the request of Mr. REID, the following statement was ordered to be printed in the RECORD.)

• Mr. ROCKEFELLER. Sunday is September 11. It will be 10 years after thousands perished in the worst terrorist attack the United States has ever seen. It was a day America lost fathers, mothers, sisters and brothers, and it was a day we will never forget.

With that historic date approaching, I think that it is imperative that we honor the tremendous bravery of our public safety officials. Every day they are on the front lines in one of our Na-

tion's most pressing battles—protecting our neighborhoods, our communities, and responding fearlessly when tragedy strikes. And it is around this time every year that we particularly remember their bravery in responding to one of the most horrific tragedies of all.

The best way to honor our first responders is to make sure we are giving them the tools they need to be successful, to be safe and to do their job in a way that does not expose them to needless dangers. Right now, it is unimaginable, but we are not doing that. When it comes to public safety communications, these everyday heroes don't have the networks they need and depend on.

Too often first responders lack the interoperable networks that are essential to providing an effective response in emergencies. They lack the ability to communicate with one another, with other agencies and across different city and state lines. This hampers our ability to respond to crisis. Whether that crisis is a terrorist attack or natural disaster, it puts lives in unnecessary danger.

Shouldn't a firefighter be able to wirelessly download a floor plan of a burning building before running into it? Shouldn't a police officer be able to receive an immediate digital snapshot of a dangerous criminal? And shouldn't an emergency medical technician be able to receive life-saving medical information on a patient following an accident? If the average American traveler is able to wirelessly pull up a map to route a summer road trip why shouldn't our first responders be able to utilize the same type of technology to save lives?

Far too much time has passed for Congress to not act. That is why I have been working, side by side with the Commerce Committee's ranking member, Senator KAY BAILEY HUTCHISON, to pass S. 911, the Public Safety Spectrum and Wireless Innovation Act. This bipartisan legislation would implement a nationwide, interoperable wireless broadband communications network for our first responders.

It would set aside the 10 megahertz of spectrum known as the "D-block" for public safety to support the network and help foster communications for our first responders across the country.

It would also give the Federal Communications Commission the authority to hold incentive auctions based on the voluntary return of spectrum. These auctions, in turn, will provide funding to support the construction and maintenance of a public safety network and will free up additional spectrum for innovative commercial uses. In an industry that has created 420,000 new jobs over the past decade, this bill is crucial to that continued growth.

In short, this bill marries much needed resources for first responders with smart commercial spectrum policy. It can keep us safe—and help grow our economy. That is why this legislation has the support of every major public

safety organization across the country including in my State of West Virginia. It is also why this bill has strong support from governors and mayors across the country and why we have the support of our President and the administration.

This week, as we come together as a nation to remember and honor the lives lost on 9/11, I also urge my colleagues to support the Public Safety Spectrum and Wireless Innovation Act. And to those who say we cannot afford to do this now, I say we cannot afford not to. Because this effort is about saving lives. But if this reason is not compelling enough, it is important to know this: this legislation pays for itself. According to the nonpartisan Congressional Budget Office and even the industry itself, incentive auctions will bring in revenue well above what funding public safety requires, leaving billions over for deficit reduction. This is a win-win-win.

In closing, let me say that we have a once-in-a-generation opportunity to provide our public safety officials with the spectrum they need to communicate when tragedy strikes. And with voluntary incentive auctions we can pair this with funding.

Let's seize this moment. This is not Republican, this is not Democrat. It is quite simply the right thing to do. Let's do something historic—together.●

Mr. CARDIN. Mr. President, today I join my colleagues in commemorating the 10th anniversary of September 11, 2001. I remember that morning so vividly. It was stunningly clear and beautiful with a crispness in the air that hinted that fall was just around the corner. And then, with a sudden ferocity, the airliners crashed into the World Trade Center, WTC, the Pentagon, and Somerset County, PA. Barely 2 hours elapsed between the first hijacking and the collapse of the North Tower of the WTC, 2 horrific hours that forever changed our Nation and the world.

We mourn the lives that were lost in New York City, here in the Washington metropolitan area, and in Pennsylvania. The emotional trauma of those losses affected each and every American. Millions of us remained glued to our TV sets, watching unbearable images of death and destruction.

We remember the 3,000 people who perished on 9/11. The attacks spared no one: Blacks, Whites, Christians, Jews, and Muslims; the young and old; parents, children, siblings; Americans and foreigners—all these and more were among the victims. The attack was not on one ethnic group, but on a way of life. It was an attack on our freedom and our dedication to its preservation.

We honor the selfless actions of our first responders, including firefighters, police, paramedics, and other emergency and medical personnel, all of whom did not hesitate to answer the call of duty and demonstrated extraordinary bravery and courage in our hours of need.

We also honor our brave service men and women who have taken the fight to the terrorists on foreign soil. We must never forget our country's solemn obligation to our service men and women, our veterans, and their families.

There is no question that 9/11 and the days that followed were difficult ones. But they were also among our proudest ones. It brought out the best of the American spirit. Men and women waited in lines for hours to give blood, children donated their savings to help with relief efforts, communities sponsored clothing drives, and different faith groups held interfaith services.

On 9/11 and in the days and months that followed, Americans stood together. Our response showed the world that Americans have an unquenchable love of freedom and democracy. It showed American resilience, vigilance, and resolve.

Much has changed since that day in September. The 9/11 attacks propelled our Nation into a new kind of warfare, unlike any war we have ever fought. They exposed the scope, depth, and utter ruthlessness of the al-Qaida network. And the attacks revealed gaps in our national security. Evolving threats required new tools.

I am proud of how far we have come in addressing the challenge presented by al-Qaida or other terrorist organizations. While our security networks are far from perfect, in the decade since the 9/11 attacks, we created the Department of Homeland Security to streamline and better integrate the Federal departments and agencies responsible for protecting us. U.S. intelligence and law enforcement at all levels have become much more aggressive in pursuing terrorist threats at home and abroad. These measures have been largely successful.

And let us remember arguably our greatest success against al-Qaida: President Obama's bold stroke to bring Osama bin Laden to justice. The raid was the result of painstaking intelligence gathering and analysis and thorough planning, and it was a remarkable display of our Special Forces capabilities and the extraordinary heroism of our men and women in uniform.

The end of al-Qaida is in sight. Their future is bleak. They have far less global impact than they used to. They cling to an outdated and empty ideology, with little mainstream influence in the Muslim world. Indeed, the recent Arab Spring demonstrates that people in Middle Eastern countries—especially young people—are more interested in freedom and democracy than in being susceptible to al-Qaida's repressive ideology.

Even as al-Qaida becomes more and more marginalized, evolving state- and nonstate-sponsored threats to our Nation's security persist. One of our greatest challenges will be securing cyberspace. The Internet has grown into one of the most remarkable innovations in human history. But it carries risks.

Our current system allows hackers, spies, and terrorists to gain access to classified and other vital information. Today's cyber criminals, armed with the right tools, can steal our identities, corrupt our financial networks, and disrupt government operations. Tackling cybersecurity in a meaningful way will fill one of the last holes that exist in our national security regime.

As our government moves to extinguish the remnant of al-Qaida and address new threats, we must strive to maintain a careful balance between protecting our Nation and protecting our civil liberties. Commemorating 9/11 should remind us of what makes us unique as a nation. Our country's strength lies in its diversity and our ability to have strongly held beliefs and differences of opinion, while being able to speak freely and not fear that we will be discriminated against by our government or our fellow citizens.

After the 9/11 attacks, I went back to my congressional district and made three visits as a Congressman. First, I visited a synagogue and we prayed together. Then, I visited a mosque and we prayed together. Finally, I visited a church and we prayed together. On that day in September, Americans banded together, regardless of our personal belief or religion.

My message that day was clear: we needed to condemn the terrorist attacks and to take all necessary measures to eliminate safe havens for terrorists and bring them to justice. But my other message that day was equally important: we cannot allow the events of 9/11 to make us demonize a particular religion, nationality, creed, or community. In these trying times, we cannot let our society succumb to the temptation to scapegoat one group.

We did it before—with the Palmer Raids following World War I, the internment of 120,000 Japanese-American citizens during World War II, and the McCarthy-era witch hunts. These were shameful events of our history. We must strive to live up to our Nation's highest ideals and protect our precious civil liberties, even when doing so is difficult or unpopular. We must always remember how we stood united on 9/11 and showed the world the depth of our commitment to "E Pluribus Unum." Out of many, one.

Our many faiths, origins, and appearances should bind us together, not break us apart. They should be a source of strength and enlightenment, not discord and enmity. All of us belong to smaller communities within the larger community we call the United States. Each community has an obligation to the larger community to promote the safety and well-being of each and every one of us. There is a mutual self-interest in preserving and nurturing our freedom.

September 11, 2001, was a dark day. We remember those who perished and mourn with those who lost family and friends. We honor those who responded and those who fought and continue to fight to keep us safe.

Archibald MacLeish wrote, "There are those who will say that the liberation of humanity, the freedom of man and mind, is nothing but a dream. They are right. It is the American dream." 9/11 was a nightmare. As horrific and cruel as it was, however, it can't extinguish the dream.

TRIBUTE TO DEBRA BROWN STEINBERG

Mr. LIEBERMAN. Mr. President, the attacks of September 11, 2001, certainly had a profound impact on all Americans. In addition to the sadness, anger, fear, and, ultimately, resolve, we all felt in the aftermath of the attacks, many were also infused with a renewed sense of patriotism and fellowship that inspired them to engage in public and community service. As we approach the tenth anniversary of this terrible tragedy, I would like to honor one individual who answered the call to service, and who has done so much to help victims of the attack, Debra Brown Steinberg.

Debra was in New York City on September 11, and from her apartment she could see the smoke pouring out from the World Trade Center. As she desperately waited for news about her stepson, she made an agreement with God: if her stepson would come home safely, she would work to help the victims of the attack. Thankfully, her stepson did come home safely, and Debra has more than fulfilled her promise.

Utilizing her sharp legal acumen and more than 30 years of professional experience, Debra has become a passionate advocate for the families of those who perished in the 9/11 attacks. A partner in the respected New York firm Cadwalader, Wickersham & Taft LLP, Debra was integral in putting together a consortium of law firms that have worked together to deliver pro bono services to 9/11 families.

Early on, Debra realized that, if her firm was going to give victims the assistance they truly needed, they would have to do more than simply offer free legal advice. Under her direction, the consortium has taken a holistic approach toward assisting the families; not just offering counsel, but also seeking to ensure they receive the services they need, and lobbying lawmakers and regulators to ensure that all victims have access to the Victim Compensation Fund. Debra has also represented many victims' families, pro bono, before the fund to ensure that they are fairly compensated.

Perhaps Debra's most amazing work has been her advocacy on behalf of some of the most vulnerable victims of the attacks: immigrants who were in the country illegally when their relatives were killed during the attacks on the World Trade Center. These individuals, as the U.S. Department of Homeland Security has put it, "share with all Americans a moment of loss and pain and pride that is now a defin-

ing part of our national history." However, because of their status, they were forced to cope with their pain and sadness in isolation, afraid to seek assistance or to offer their help for fear of being found out. Our Nation cannot help but feel a deep connection and commitment to this group.

Debra has worked tirelessly to assure that we live up to this commitment and to enable these victims to participate in rebuilding after the attacks. With her guidance, 11 of these spouses and children of innocent victims of the attacks have provided assistance to the Federal Government in its 9/11 related investigations and prosecutions. Debra also successfully represented these families before the Victim Compensation Fund to ensure that they received equal consideration. Finally, she has fought doggedly to ensure that these families can continue to work and live in the United States. Due in great part to her work, these family members have so far been able to stay in the United States and their cases are now being considered for a temporary visa that would allow them to live and work legally in the United States. Let us all hope that DHS is able to quickly conduct its review so that these families can leave the shadows and rebuild their lives.

Over the years, my office has had the privilege of assisting Debra in her efforts, and I have witnessed firsthand her dedication to assisting the families of 9/11 victims. Those she has represented are certainly lucky to have had her on their side. Given all that Debra has done, it's no wonder that the American Bar Association honored her with the prestigious Pro Bono Publico award in 2006. She has also received the 9/11 Tribute Center Award in 2009 and the Ellis Island Medal of Honor in 2007. Her work has also been recognized several times by my colleagues here in the Senate, as well as in the U.S. House of Representatives and the New York State Legislature.

Mr. President, I commend Debra Brown Steinberg for her commitment to assisting families of 9/11 victims. Her efforts truly personify the American values of fairness and patriotism. The U.S. Senate, and the American People, owe her our sincerest gratitude.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Texas.

TEXAS WILDFIRES

Mrs. HUTCHISON. Mr. President, I rise in morning business to talk about a situation in Texas, the wildfires and the drought.

Since we were mostly home during the August recess, I saw the floods in the Midwest and on the Missouri and Mississippi Rivers. I saw the hurricane that hit New York and all along the East Coast. At the same time, with all the extra water in the East, we have had as much as 60 days in parts of

Texas with no rain whatsoever. The drought is killing livestock. It is killing land. It is a sad situation. What has happened, of course, is, from that, the wildfires have been able to go farther than we have ever seen in Texas before.

Just in the past 7 days, the Texas Forest Service has responded to 176 fires, destroying nearly 130,000 acres. This year alone, over 2,000 fires have burned more than 2 million acres in Texas. We have high winds and drought conditions, which are a terrible combination in this instance.

Yesterday, the Texas Forest Service responded to 20 new fires, which consumed nearly 1,500 more acres. One of the hardest hit areas is Bastrop County, which is near Austin. I was talking to some of my constituents in Houston, which is not near Austin, and they were talking about seeing and smelling the smoke in Houston from these fires in Bastrop.

An assessment has been completed as of now that says 785 homes were completely destroyed, 238 homes have been reported lost as a result of other fires over the past 3 days, and the fires are so big that they are being photographed from space.

Senator CORNYN and I have asked the President to add the recent wildfires from just this last week to his previous disaster declaration from this spring, which did include wildfires. I want the people of Texas to know that Senator CORNYN and I are working together to get all the Federal help they need. I have been in contact with the State representatives from the area, the mayors, and the county judges to get the reports. So far they feel they have gotten the help they have needed. But now, in the aftermath, we will need to be part of any kind of disaster bill that goes through this Senate or is declared by the President.

It is my hope we can work through that next week and make sure we include these most recent fires along with the flood disaster relief that supposedly will come to the floor next week. So we are going to work on it and try to help these people. We can't replace the graduation pictures and the wedding pictures and the children's pictures that are lost. This is the human loss you see in this type of a situation. But we can certainly help these people rebuild, and that is what we want to do.

We are going to be on the job trying to help in every way we can, knowing there will not be a 100-percent replacement because the photographs and the personal items and grandmother's wedding ring may not be recovered, but we are going to do what we can, as Americans always do.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Illinois.

VOTING RIGHTS

Mr. DURBIN. Mr. President, this afternoon, we held a hearing in the