Most important, the American model is based on a certain kind of people—defined not by race but by virtue and by the willingness to take responsibility for our own lives. People fit to be Americans ask for blessings only from God. Because being Americans is not a matter of birth, we must practice it every day—lest we become something else.

The size of our continent, its fabulous wealth, its indescribable beauty, the ships, tanks and airplanes in our arsenal, are no treasure compared to the moral character of the American people. I pray to God that he will graciously help us preserve and protect that splendid moral base.

To Isabel and his beloved children, Malcolm, Matthew, Amy, and Paul, to his dear sisters, Jeannie and Carolyn, we thank you for letting him share so much of his life with us all. There is no question our world is better for the time he spent addressing the great issues of the day and we are grateful.

We can cherish our memories and stories of Malcolm knowing he would cast a wry glance and wonder why we were not spending our thoughts and our energy on a challenge that needed our attention. It is what he would expect of all of us. It is the example he left for us. It is his legacy.

So, today, godspeed, Malcolm. The Senate, Wyoming, the United States of America, has lost one of its most steadfast defenders.

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

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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 President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

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

DISAPPEARING MIDDLE CLASS

Mr. BENNET. Mr. President, I went back to the office and I saw my senior Senator sitting here at this late hour and I wanted to come down and keep him company. So I am glad to be here with you tonight, proud to be from the West tonight with two great Senators from Wyoming remembering Malcolm Wallop's service in this body. It was wonderful to hear their remembrances of him. I am glad we were here to share that being from the West.

Similar to the Presiding Officer, I spent most of August in our beautiful State—the most beautiful State in the United States, if I do say so myself—in townhall meetings, mostly in red parts of the State, but in red and blue parts of the State. They do not actually think of themselves that way, but that is how Washington would talk about it.

In the townhalls, I always start the same way. I say: Ask any question you have. Bring any criticism you have. I tell them I was an urban school superintendent for almost 4 years, it is impossible to hurt my feelings. It was beaten out of me a long time ago. Then we have a conversation.

This time, every single meeting started with somebody saying: What is wrong with you guys? Why can't you work this out in Washington, DC? We are struggling in the worst economy we have had since the Great Depression, and what we see are a lot of political games being played back there.

That is the version of the conversation I have heard now for 2½ years in our State.

Then, one of the things we get into at the very beginning is the fact that this is not a garden-variety recession that we are just coming out of. This is the first time—this last decade, not just this recession, the last decade—the first time in this country's history when median family income actually declined instead of going up.

Generation after generation after generation of Americans saw their income rise. Median family income is sort of shorthand for middle-class family income in this country. It is the backbone of this country, and it has fallen for the first time in a decade, as the cost of health insurance doubled on the people who live in Colorado, and the cost of higher education went up by 60 percent.

People are saying: MICHAEL, I have been at my job for this whole decade and I am earning less at the end of the decade than I was at the beginning of the decade. My costs of not ''nice to haves,'' my costs of critical things to move my family ahead to create stability for me and my small business—such as health care, such as higher education—have done nothing but skyrocket.

I am going to show you some numbers that are pretty scary that came out this week from the Census Bureau that reflect, in numbers, what I am talking about and reflect how profound the structural issues are that we face in our economy, structural that do not fit on the back of a bumper sticker or a political slogan or during a debate at night on the television set.

This week's Wall Street Journal, on Monday, had an article on the front page with the headline that reads as follows: ''As Middle Class Shrinks, P&G Aims High and Low.'' P&G is Procter & Gamble. There is not a more iconic brand in our country's history when it comes to the middle class than Procter & Gamble.

Here are some of the things they make: Crest toothpaste; Head & Shoulders shampoo; Tide detergent; Pamper's diapers—I am glad to be out of those in my house, by the way—Bounty paper towels; Downy fabric softener, Scope mouthwash; Duracell batteries; Charmin toilet paper; Bounce fabric softener—nobody needed fabric softener before there was a middle class in this country, but they make it—Mr. Clean; Pepto Bismol; Pringles; Swiffer brooms and dusters—we have that in our closet—Old Spice deodorant; Nyquil cough syrup; Puffs tissues; Ivory soap; Covergirl makeup.

That is what Procter & Gamble makes. That is what they sold to the great middle class in this country for decades. Here is this article that says Procter & Gamble aims high and low.

I ask unanimous consent that the article be printed in the RECORD.

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

[From the Wall Street Journal, Sept. 12, 2011]

AS MIDDLE CLASS SHRINKS P&G AIMS HIGH AND LOW

(By Ellen Byron)

For generations, Procter & Gamble Co.'s growth strategy was focused on developing household staples for the vast American middle class.

Now, P&G executives say many of its former middle-market shoppers are trading down to lower-priced goods—widening the pools of have and have-not consumers at the expense of the middle.

That's forced P&G, which estimates it has at least one product in 98% of American households, to fundamentally change the way it develops and sells its goods. For the first time in 38 years, for example, the company launched a new dish soap in the U.S. at a bargain price.

P&G's roll out of Gain dish soap says a lot about the health of the American middle class: The world's largest maker of consumer products is now betting that the squeeze on middle America will be long lasting.

''It's required us to think differently about our product portfolio and how to please the high-end and lower-end markets,'' says Melanie Healey, group president of P&G's North America business. ''That's frankly where a lot of the growth is happening.''

In the wake of the worst recession in 50 years, there's little doubt that the American middle class—the 40% of households with annual incomes between $50,000 and $140,000 a year—is in distress. Even before the recession, incomes of American middle-class families weren't keeping up with inflation, especially with the rising costs of what are considered the essential ingredients of middle-class life—college education, health care and housing. In 2009, the income of the median family, the one smack in the middle of the middle, was lower, adjusted for inflation, than in 1998, the Census Bureau says.

The slumping stock market and collapse in housing prices have also hit middle-class Americans. At the end of March, Americans had $6.1 trillion in equity in their houses—the value of the house minus mortgages—half the 2006 level, according to the Federal Reserve. Economist Edward Wolff of New York University estimates that the net worth—household assets minus debts—of the middle fifth of American households grew by 2.4% a year between 2001 and 2007 and plunged by 26.2% in the following two years.

P&G isn't the only company adjusting its business. A wide swath of American companies is convinced that the consumer market is bifurcating into high and low ends and eroding in the middle. They have begun to alter the way they research, develop and market their products.

Food giant H.J. Heinz Co., for example, is developing more products at lower price ranges. Luxury retailer Saks Inc. is bolstering its high-end apparel and accessories because its wealthiest customers—not those drawn to entry-level items—are driving the chain's growth.

Citigroup calls the phenomenon the ''Consumer Hourglass Theory'' and since 2009 has urged investors to focus on companies best positioned to cater to the highest-income and lowest-income consumers. It created an index of 25 companies, including Estee Lauder Cos. and Saks at the top of the hourglass and Family Dollar Stores Inc. and Kellogg Co. at the bottom. The index posted a

56.5% return for investors from its inception on Dec. 10, 2009, through Sept. 1, 2011. Over the same period, the Dow Jones Industrial Average returned 11%.

''Companies have thought that if you're in the middle, you're safe,'' says Citigroup analyst Deborah Weinswig. ''But that's not where the consumer is any more—the consumer hourglass is more pronounced now than ever.''

Companies like Tiffany & Co., Coach Inc. and Neiman Marcus Group Inc., which cater to the wealthy, racked up outsize sales last Christmas and continue to post strong sales.

Tiffany says its lower-priced silver baubles, once a favorite of middle-class shoppers craving a small token from the storied jeweler, are now its weakest sellers in the U.S. ''I think that there's probably more separation of affluence in the U.S.,'' Tiffany Chief Operating Officer James Fernandez said in June.

Firms catering to low-income consumers, such as Dollar General Corp., also are posting gains, boosted by formerly middle-class families facing shrunken budgets. Dollar stores garnered steady sales increases in recent years, easily outpacing mainstream counterparts like Target Corp. and Wal-Mart Stores Inc., which typically are more expensive.

P&G's profits boomed with the increasing affluence of middle-class households in the post-World War II economy. As masses of housewives set up their new suburban homes, P&G marketers pledged that Tide detergent delivered cleaner clothes, Mr. Clean made floors shinier and Crest toothpaste fought off more cavities. In the decades since, new features like fragrances or ingredient and packaging enhancements kept P&G's growth robust.

Despite its aggressive expansion around the world, P&G still needs to win over a healthy percentage of the American population, because the U.S. market remains its biggest and most profitable. In the fiscal year ended June 30, the U.S. delivered about 37% of P&G's $82.6 billion in annual sales and an estimated 60% of its $11.8 billion in profit. P&G says that Americans per capita spend about $96 a year on its products, compared with around $4 in China.

During the early stages of the recession, P&G executives defended its long-time approach of making best-in-class products and charging a premium, expecting middle-class Americans to pay up.

But cash-strapped shoppers, P&G learned, aren't as willing to splurge on household staples with extra features. Droves of consumers started switching to cheaper brands, slowing P&G's sales and profit gains and denting its dominant market share positions.

In late 2008, unit sales gains of P&G's cheaper brands began outpacing its more expensive lines despite receiving far less advertising. As the recession wore on, U.S. market-share gains for P&G's cheaper Luvs diapers and Gain detergent increased faster than its premium-priced Pampers and Tide brands.

At the same time, lower-priced competitors nabbed market share from some of P&G's biggest brands. P&G's dominant fabric-softener sheets business, including its Bounce brand, fell five percentage points to 60.2% of the market as lower-priced options from Sun Products Corp. and private-label brands picked up sales from the second quarter of 2008 through May 2011, according to a Deutsche Bank analysis of data from market-research firm SymphonyIRI.

P&G's grasp of the liquid laundry detergent category, led by its iconic Tide brand, also posted a rare slip over the same period as bargain-priced options from Sun and Church & Dwight Co. gained momentum. Even the company's huge Gillette refill razor market suffered, declining to 80.1% by May from 82.3% in the second-quarter of 2008, as Energizer Holdings Inc.'s less-expensive Schick brand gained nearly three points.

P&G began changing course in May 2009. After issuing a sharply lower-than-expected earnings forecast for the company's 2010 fiscal year, then-CEO A.G. Lafley said the company would take a ''surgical'' approach to cutting prices on some products and develop more lower-priced goods. ''You have to see reality as it is,'' Mr. Lafley said.

When the company's 2009 fiscal year ended a month later, P&G's sales had posted a rare drop, falling 3% to $76.7 billion.

In August that year, P&G's newly appointed CEO, company veteran Robert McDonald, accelerated the new approach of developing products for high- and low-income consumers.

''We're going to do this both by tiering our portfolio up in terms of value as well as tiering our portfolio down,'' Mr. McDonald said in September 2009.

To monitor the evolving American consumer market, P&G executives study the Gini index, a widely accepted measure of income inequality that ranges from zero, when everyone earns the same amount, to one, when all income goes to only one person. In 2009, the most recent calculation available, the Gini coefficient totaled 0.468, a 20% rise in income disparity over the past 40 years, according to the U.S. Census Bureau.

''We now have a Gini index similar to the Philippines and Mexico—you'd never have imagined that,'' says Phyllis Jackson, P&G's vice president of consumer market knowledge for North America. ''I don't think we've typically thought about America as a country with big income gaps to this extent.''

Over the past two years, P&G has accelerated its research, product-development and marketing approach to target the newly divided American market.

Globally, P&G divides consumers into three income groups. The highest-earning ''ones'' historically have been the primary bracket P&G chased in the U.S. as they are the least price sensitive and most swayed by claims of superior product performance. But as the ''twos,'' or lower-income American consumers, grew in size during the recession, P&G decided to target them aggressively, too. P&G doesn't specifically target the lowest-income ''threes'' in the U.S., since they comprise a small percentage of the population and such consumers are typically heavily subsidized by government aid.

At the high end, it launched its most-expensive skin-care regimen, Olay Pro-X in 2009, which includes a starter kit costing around $60. Previously, the Olay line had topped out around $25. Last year, the company launched Gillette Fusion ProGlide razors at a price of $10 to $12, a premium to Gillette Fusion razors, which sell for $8 to $10, and Gillette Mach3, priced at $8 to $9.

At the lower end, its new Gain dish soap, launched last year, can sell for about half per ounce of the company's premium Dawn Hand Renewal dish soap, which hit stores in late 2008.

Developing products that squarely target the high and low is proving difficult for a company long accustomed to aiming for a giant, mainstream group.

Conquering the high end is difficult because it usually involves a smaller quantity of products.

''We do big volumes of things really well,'' said Bruce Brown, P&G's chief technology officer. ''Things that are smaller quantities, with high appeal, we're learning how to do that.''

Likewise, the cost challenges at the bottom of the pyramid are also proving difficult, Mr. Brown said. Over the past two years, P&G has increased its research of the growing ranks of low-income American households.

''This has been the most humbling aspect of our jobs,'' says Ms. Jackson. ''The numbers of Middle America have been shrinking because people have been getting hurt so badly economically that they've been falling into lower income.''

Mr. BENNET. I wanted to read a few excerpts from it because I think it is instructive about what we are doing.

P&G's profits boomed with the increasing affluence of middle-class households in the post-World War II economy. As masses of housewives set up their new suburban homes, P&G marketers pledged that Tide detergent delivered cleaner clothes, Mr. Clean made floors shinier and Crest toothpaste fought off more cavities. In the decades since, new features like fragrances or ingredient and packaging enhancements kept P&G's growth robust.

What is happening now? For generations Proctor & Gamble's growth strategy was focused on developing household staples for the vast American middle class. Now, P&G executives say many of its former middle-market shoppers are trading down to lower priced goods—widening the pools of have and have-not consumers at the expense of the middle. That has forced P&G, which estimates it has at least one product—and you heard the list, so this won't be surprising in 98 percent of American households—to fundamentally change the way it develops and sells its goods.

For the first time in 38 years, for example, the company launched a new dish soap in the United States at a bargain price. P&G's rollout of Gain Dish Soap says a lot about the health of the middle class. The world's largest maker of consumer products is now betting that the squeeze on middle America will be long lasting.

If you needed any example of what our families are struggling with in Colorado every single day, here is a business plan that is modeled on a perpetually shrinking middle class by a company whose whole business model in their history was based on a rising middle class.

I will skip the next one in the interest of time. I will go right to the end. I want to show some numbers. This was the conclusion of the article:

To monitor the evolving American consumer market, P&G executives study the Gini index, a widely accepted measure of income inequality that ranges from zero, when everyone earns the same amount, to one when all income goes to only one person. In 2009, the most recent calculation available, the Gini coefficient totaled 0.468, a 20 percent rise in income disparity over the past 40 years, according to the U.S. Census Bureau. ''We now have a Gini index similar to the Philippines and Mexico—you'd never have imagined that,'' says Phyllis Jackson, P&G's Vice President of consumer market knowledge for North America. ''I don't think we typically thought about America as a country with big income gaps to this extent.''

I don't think we typically thought about America that way either. It is not who we purport to be or who we are going to be. In order to put us on a path that will actually produce a rising middle class again, instead of a division among the very wealthy at the top and the poorest of the citizens at the bottom, we are going to have to come together on some pretty serious choices.

I know there have been some who argue that this is all a problem that is caused by too many regulations, and I am the first to say we should only have the regulations that we need. Some say the threat of any revenue—even at a time when we are collecting less revenue as a percent of our economy than we have over the last 30 years—some are saying any revenue is choking off this recovery.

Let me show you something very surprising. This is high-tech Senate stuff. Here are some lines on a chart. I know people probably cannot see the detail at home. They can get it on the Web site. This blue line, from 1992 to 2010, which is about 20 years, represents what is called the productivity index. It shows that we have become far more productive as an economy over the last 20 years. It is not surprising that we have, and we have because we have had a technological revolution that has made us more productive.

See at the very end where the recession is, look what happened to the productivity index during our recession—because with every single month that went by we were losing jobs; American business was doing what they had to do, which was figure out how to get through the recession and get to the other end; how to ring out every efficiency they could, how to make themselves as productive as they could. They did and they have. We are much more productive today than we were here.

The green line is our gross domestic product, our Nation's economy per capita, the amount of money per person that our economy is generating. Here is an amazing fact. This is where we were before the recession. This is where we are today. Our economy is the same size today as it was before we went into the recession. We are producing about the same economic output as a nation that we were producing before we went into this downturn. I was shocked when I learned this number.

But look at this. Here is our employment level. Here is our employment level today. We have 14 million people unemployed, but we are producing about the same as we were before we went into this horrible recession.

That is a structural unemployment problem. That is not a problem that will be solved by slogans, and it is not going to be a problem that is solved by companies that have become much more efficient at what they do. It is going to be solved by companies that will be started tomorrow and the day after tomorrow—small businesses, venture-backed firms, people who are inventing the technology of the 21st century, the products and services of the 21st century, not the products and services of the 20th century. That is the only way we are going to put these people back to work. We could be investing in infrastructure too; that would help.

This line is median family income, which is what I started this conversation with. This is a terrible story. It is not just a sad story, it is a terrible story. That is that line for median family income. It was over $53,000 in 1999. It is $49,000 today. It is almost $4,000 less in real dollars in a decade.

I could have brought in another slide which shows that this trend has actually been going on a little longer than that. Think about that. It means half of the families in 1999 were earning less than $53,000, and half were earning more than $53,000. Today half are earning less than $49,000 and half are earning more than that.

These are folks who have done absolutely everything that anybody ever asked them to do. But I don't care whether you are a family or a business, it makes it very hard for you to make ends meet if that is the slope that you are on. I argue that we cannot consume one more decade of this new century, with economic policies that are leading us here, and expect to have a vibrant middle class. I want to be in an economy where Procter & Gamble has to change their business model to catch up with a rising middle class, not be in a position that they are in today where they believe they have to bet on a falling middle class.

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

Mr. BENNET. Sure.

Mr. SCHUMER. I compliment him on this outstanding speech. The hour is late and many colleagues have gone home, so I hope he will send this to every one of our colleagues. It has been a joy for me to stay and listen.

The only question I wanted to ask—and we talked about this last night at dinner—here is another interesting fact amid so many that my colleague brought up in this great speech.

If we look at that chart, from 1999 to 2007, before the recession hit, median income didn't go up.

Mr. BENNET. Exactly.

Mr. SCHUMER. That is a question we have to ponder. We need great minds like the Senator's to figure out the answer. If we just blame the recession and think it will come back up, it won't. The kinds of structural changes my colleague talks about are so needed if we are not going to have a continually declining middle class, even in a period of growth. Am I right about that assumption?

Mr. BENNET. I thank the Senator from New York. He is right about that. What he will see on another slide—not tonight—is that we were already on this decline. This is not news to people living in our States. It is not news to people trying to figure out how to make ends meet week by week. This is not news to them. It is not news to the people who came to my townhalls and said they cannot afford to send their kids to the best schools. They sent their first kid to the fancy school, but they cannot send their second kid there. They are upset that we are not getting done what we ought to be getting done.

What we see on this other chart is that this decline was happening already because the economy wasn't lifting all boats, and it was widening inequality terribly. I have things tonight that talk about that. Then the recession accelerated that decline. They lost 2.3 percent of median family income in the recession, which is more than any of the previous recessions, going back to the Great Depression. So that is how tough this is.

The Senator is right. If we keep doing what we have done for the decade that led us into this recession, if we go back to those policies and readopt those policies, and that is where we end up, we will continue to see this slide.

Mr. SCHUMER. I thank my colleague.

Mr. BENNET. I thank the Senator from New York. This gives a sense of the widening inequality that has happened. This is average income, which is different from median income. The amazing thing is, while middle-class income has been falling, and it fell throughout this 10 years, average income actually went up because a few people at the very top of the economy did incredibly well over this period of time. They have done incredibly well. This is the very top 1 percent of our earners who went from here to up here.

The top 1 percent saw that, and here is everybody else. This red line is 90 percent of the people in America. Their average income was flat from 1967 to 2006. That is 90 percent of the people who live in the United States. It is hard to see how people can get ahead under circumstances like that.

It is no wonder that we have these alarming numbers this week from the Census Bureau which show there are 46.2 million Americans now living in poverty. That is a 46-percent increase since 2000. I had to look to make sure I was reading that right. Since 2000, when 31 million people were in poverty, it has gone up to 46 million people in poverty today, and 22 percent of the children in the United States of America tonight are living in poverty. Over one-fifth of the children living in the United States tonight are living in poverty. And, by the way, as a former superintendent of the Denver public schools, I can tell you we are not doing ourselves any favors when the chances of a child living in poverty in this country graduating from college are roughly 9 in 100, which is what their chances are today. Ninety-one out of one hundred poor kids in the country can't expect to get a college degree; can't expect to be anywhere but on the margin of our democracy or our economy. I wonder what effect that will have on our median family income going forward.

This is the last slide, because I know the hour is late, and it is one that was in the Washington Post. I am not going to bother to describe the details, but you can find it on the Web site and it is worth looking at. It is worth looking at.

This red line—and it is the only thing I will talk about from this slide—shows what the bottom 90 percent—and it seems ridiculous to talk about the bottom 90 percent—what the 90 percent of earners in this country earned as a percentage of the income that everybody earned in the United States from before the 1920s to today, essentially. For the vast majority of time or some majority of time in the period from World War II—the end of World War II—until the present, the bottom 90 percent of earners earned roughly 70 percent of the income in the United States—a majority of the income, 70 percent of the income—for a long time. Now they are earning roughly 50 percent. The bottom 90 percent is earning roughly 50 percent of the income. That means, by the way, the other 10 percent are earning roughly 50 percent of the income. That is how it is distributed. It is a unique moment in the country's history, actually, uniquely unbalanced. In fact, we have to go back to 1928—the year before the market crashed, the year before Black Friday, the year before our financial markets collapsed and put us into the Great Depression—to find income disparity that looks like the income disparity we face today.

In my view, the 20th century represented a period in this country's history of limitless opportunity, limitless economic growth, limitless educational attainment. Our democracy succeeded in generating an economy that gave everybody a fighting chance. Maybe a definition of whether we are giving people a fighting chance is whether middle-class income is rising or falling. Now we are in a period where it is falling and we find ourselves in the position of producing the same domestic product we were producing before this recession with 14 million more people unemployed.

The economists tell us we have recovered, that we are in a recovery. The technical definition is that we are in a recovery because the technical definition is based on whether GDP is growing. That is a very cruel definition of recovery for the 14 million people who are unemployed. It is a very cruel definition of recovery for a middle class that is getting wiped out because median family income is falling.

Look, the people who live in Colorado, notwithstanding all of this, are optimistic. They are optimistic about their communities and they are optimistic about their families. It gets tougher and tougher, but they rise to the occasion. And you know what. That is what they are asking us to do. They are asking us to knock off the political games that seem to be only about Washington and seem to have nothing to do with the challenges they face.

Today was a good day here. I was pleased. It has been a long time. I was pleased to join my senior Senator and about 30 other Democrats and Republicans at an event to say it is time for us to think big about solving this country's fiscal challenges and that we are anxious to work together to do it. We are anxious to create a comprehensive plan to deal with it. We should be taking exactly the same approach on jobs.

Getting our fiscal house in order is incredibly important to encourage and inspire confidence in our markets and confidence in our businesses and confidence in our local economies. But our work won't stop there. We need to reinvent our Tax Code so it is driving innovation and driving a rising middle class. We need to reimagine our regulatory code so it is doing the same. We need to educate the children in this country so they can take on the jobs of the 21st century, because the jobs of the 20th century are not coming back. We will be waiting in vain for those jobs to come back.

The people in my meetings back in Colorado are demanding—that is the right way to say it, they are demanding—we work together. Our State is a third Republican, a third Independent, and a third Democrat, but they are Coloradans before any of that, and they are Americans maybe even before that, and it is time for us to meet their standard.

Tonight we had votes on the reauthorization of FEMA—our emergency agency—to respond to the incredible tragedies that have happened around the country. It got 62 votes and we were able to pass it. We had a vote on the transportation extension, the FAA reauthorization, and I think the vote was 92 to 6, with Democrats and Republicans moving this country forward. That is what we have to do in order to get this economy going again. The people in Colorado today are saying: We want more of that and less of the bickering, more problem solving and less finger pointing. My hope is that on an occasion such as today, when we actually have made some progress, no matter how limited, it may give us the chance to move forward together.

Mr. President, I appreciate the Chair's endurance and allowing me to speak on the floor tonight.

COMBATING AUTISM

Mr. MENENDEZ. Mr. President, I want to address a very important issue that is currently before the Senate. This past Tuesday I submitted a bill to the Senate—the Combating Autism Reauthorization Act, S. 1094—for a unanimous consent agreement. Since then, the Republicans have blocked this bipartisan bill from passing. The Health, Education, Labor and Pensions Committee reported this legislation unanimously on September 7, 2011.

My legislation is a simple 3-year extension of the Combating Autism Act, CAA, of 2006. This original legislation was passed out of the Senate by unanimous consent on December 7, 2006, and signed into law shortly thereafter. This landmark legislation included provisions relating to the diagnosis and treatment of persons with autism spectrum disorders, ASD, and expanded and intensified biomedical research on autism, including a focus on possible environmental causes. Additionally, it provides for detailed surveillance by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, CDC, of the increasing prevalence of autism spectrum disorders, ASD. The Act also reconstitutes the Interagency Autism Coordinating Committee to advise the Secretary, coordinate the federal response to autism and develop the annual strategic plan for autism research.

I am greatly disappointed that my colleagues on the other side are playing politics with this bill. On September 30, just a couple of short weeks from now, the programs authorized under the CAA sunset, and with them the myriad programs which have helped families better understand, treat and live with ASD. Now is not the time for politics. Now is the time to reauthorize the Combating Autism Act so families living with ASD can continue receiving the care and support they deserve.

NATIONAL POW/MIA RECOGNITION DAY

Mr LUGAR. Mr. President, September 16 is National POW/MIA Recognition Day.

Throughout history, American men and women have stood up to defend freedom by courageous and selfless service across the world. Today, 46,010 American men and women are actively engaged in uniform in Iraq with a total of 84,310 deployed to the region aboard ships at sea, on bases, and air stations in the region supporting Iraq operations. Mr. President, 98,900 military personnel are deployed in Afghanistan, with a total of 131,900 deployed to the region aboard ships at sea, on bases, and air stations in the region supporting Afghanistan operations. Others are engaged in Libya operations. All are fighting to ensure our security here at home, to protect the life and liberty of our friends and allies, and to promote American values.

Amidst the current economic crisis and countless other challenges, one thing is clear, members of Congress and the executive branch cannot become distracted from a commitment to ensure the return of POWs and MIAs at the end of hostilities. This commitment must continue through painstaking on-site investigations, diplomatic negotiations and complete examinations of records following a conflict.

As we look forward with resolve, I would like to recognize the work that the many POW/MIA organizations have done, led by the Department of Defense Prisoner of War/Missing Personnel Office, DPMO. The painstaking work of