

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 Madam President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

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

Ms. MIKULSKI. Madam President, I wish to echo the comments of my colleague from Missouri. I too invite Senators to come down. We are showing that we can govern. We have our appropriations bills here, and we have already disposed of 8 amendments—actually, I think we have disposed of more than 8 by now—but we have 22 amendments pending. If Members have an amendment, come and speak to it. If a Member has reviewed these 22 and opposes them, have your day, have your say, because that is what the Senate is—due diligence, due deliberation.

What we don't want is everybody—exactly as the Senator from Missouri said, who is the ranking member on Agriculture—coming at 5:30 or 6 or 7 o'clock and wanting to speak. I know the leadership on both sides of the aisle would like to move expeditiously and even, if possible, finish this bill tonight. I think we have agreed we are willing to work through the evening to dispose of amendments, but Senators have to speak on their amendments.

So, again, on my side of the aisle, I would really encourage Members, if they have an amendment, to come and speak to it. Regardless of the side of the aisle a Member is on, if a person opposes an amendment, come and speak on it as well.

Some of these are quite controversial. Again, we invite this due deliberation.

Everybody has worked hard. We have done a lot in appropriations. We have ended earmarks—a topic I know is of special interest to many of our colleagues. We have made significant cuts this year as a result of the continuing resolution and other agreements. But at the same time, the subcommittees have worked hard to follow the mission of what we are trying to do in this country: have a more frugal government.

I know in my bill we have paid particular attention on how to curb waste, and I will be speak about that shortly. But, again, I invite my colleagues to come to the floor.

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.

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 Madam President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

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

THE CALENDAR

Ms. MIKULSKI. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate proceed to the consideration of Calendar Nos. 206 through 210 en bloc, which are all post office-naming bills—in other words, naming post offices, if

they remain open, after distinguished Americans.

There being no objection, the Senate proceeded to consider the bills en bloc.

Ms. MIKULSKI. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent that the bills be read a third time and passed en bloc, the motions to reconsider be laid upon the table en bloc, with no intervening action or debate, and any related statements be printed in the RECORD.

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

OFFICER JOHN MAGUIRE POST OFFICE

The bill (S. 1412) to designate the facility of the United States Postal Service located at 462 Washington Street, Woburn, Massachusetts, as the "Officer John Maguire Post Office," ordered to be engrossed for a third reading, was read the third time, and passed, as follows:

S. 1412

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,

SECTION 1. OFFICER JOHN MAGUIRE POST OFFICE.

(a) DESIGNATION.—The facility of the United States Postal Service located at 462 Washington Street, Woburn, Massachusetts, shall be known and designated as the "Officer John Maguire Post Office".

(b) REFERENCES.—Any reference in a law, map, regulation, document, paper, or other record of the United States to the facility referred to in subsection (a) shall be deemed to be a reference to the "Officer John Maguire Post Office".

JOHN PANGELINAN GERBER POST OFFICE BUILDING

The bill (H.R. 1843) to designate the facility of the United States Postal Service located at 489 Army Drive in Barrigada, Guam, as the "John Pangelinan Gerber Post Office Building," ordered to a third reading, was read the third time, and passed.

FIRST LIEUTENANT OLIVER GOODALL POST OFFICE BUILDING

The bill (H.R. 1975) to designate the facility of the United States Postal Service located at 281 East Colorado Boulevard in Pasadena, California, as the "First Lieutenant Oliver Goodall Post Office Building," ordered to a third reading, was read the third time, and passed.

MATTHEW A. PUCINO POST OFFICE

The bill (H.R. 2062) to designate the facility of the United States Postal Service located at 45 Meetinghouse Lane in Sagamore Beach, Massachusetts, as the "Matthew A. Pucino Post Office," which was ordered to a third reading, was read the third time, and passed.

CECIL L. HEFTEL POST OFFICE BUILDING

The bill (H.R. 2149) to designate the facility of the United States Postal Service located at 4354 Pahoia Avenue in Honolulu, Hawaii, as the "Cecil L. Heftel Post Office Building," ordered to a third reading, was read the third time, and passed.

Ms. MIKULSKI. 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. THUNE. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Ms. KLOBUCHAR). Without objection, it is so ordered.

AGRICULTURE, RURAL DEVELOPMENT, FOOD AND DRUG ADMINISTRATION, AND RELATED AGENCIES APPROPRIATIONS ACT OF 2012—Continued

Mr. THUNE. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent that I be allowed to speak as in morning business.

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

WITHHOLDING TAX RELIEF ACT

Mr. THUNE. Madam President, I rise in support of S. 1726, the Withholding Tax Relief Act of 2011. I know we are currently debating several appropriations bills which we hope to be concluded sometime later today. But in that process, my expectation is that we are going to get an opportunity to vote on a couple of amendments that deal with the real issue I think that is on the minds of most Americans today, that is, jobs and the economy.

The bill I referenced, S. 1726, is identical to the measure that was introduced earlier this year by Senators SCOTT BROWN and OLYMPIA SNOWE and of which I and 28 of my colleagues on both sides of the aisle are cosponsors. Given that we may get a chance to vote on this legislation, perhaps in the form of an amendment to the bill that we are currently on later today, I want to say a few words as to why I believe this represents the right approach to spurring our economy.

I think there is a right approach and there is a wrong approach to getting people back to work in this country and getting the economy growing and expanding again. American businesses need access to capital. They need to be able to deploy their existing capital as efficiently and effectively as possible.

If we do not act, come January 1, 2013, 3 percent of contracts between private businesses and Federal, State, and local governments will be withheld. This means that dollars that could be reinvested by businesses in new equipment or new employees will instead be used essentially to give the IRS an interest-free loan.

The Joint Committee on Taxation estimates that permanently eliminating

this burdensome withholding requirement will allow taxpayers to keep an additional \$11.2 billion over the next 10 years. While 3 percent of a contract may not seem like a large amount, consider that for many businesses 3 percent could be their entire profit margin. In effect, the withholding requirement—if we allow it to take effect—will result in a large transfer of funds from local economies all across this country to the Internal Revenue Service.

Imposing this new wealth transfer makes absolutely no sense while our economy remains very fragile. The good news is that there is broad bipartisan support for repealing the 3-percent withholding requirement. The Obama administration's Office of Management and Budget last month released the President's jobs plan entitled "Living Within Our Means and Investing in the Future." On page 8 of this document it reads: "The President's plan calls for the Congress to remove burdensome withholding requirements that keep capital out of the hands of job creators." I could not agree more. Unfortunately, the details of the President's plan, as introduced by Majority Leader REID only provides a 1-year delay in implementation of the withholding provision.

American businesses need more than a 1-year delay. They need certainty. This is the reason that a long list of businesses and trade job groups support this legislation. In fact, the documents prepared last week by the House Ways and Means Committee lists 170 businesses and groups supporting repeal of the 3-percent withholding requirement. This diverse list includes groups such as the American Farm Bureau, the American Bankers Association, the Associated Builders and Contractors, the American Gas Association, the American Ambulance Association, to name a few.

It should be no surprise that this bill also enjoys broad bipartisan support. The House version of the bill, likely to be voted on next week, has 269 cosponsors, 62 of whom are Democrats. In the Senate bill, there are a number of both Republican and Democratic cosponsors.

The bill is fully offset by rescinding unobligated discretionary funds. This is the same offset we voted on in February when Senator STABENOW proposed it to pay for repeal of the 1099 reporting requirement. That vote passed by 81 to 17, with 34 Democrats voting aye.

To summarize, we have a bill before us we will soon vote on that will allow businesses to keep more of their own funds rather than sending them in advance to the IRS, that has broad bipartisan support, that is fully offset using an offset that is supported by a majority of both Republicans and Democrats in this Chamber. So why would we not want to enact this legislation as soon as possible?

I would note that this approach stands in stark contrast to the

ministimulus bill that is being proposed by the majority leader. The Reid bill goes in exactly the opposite direction. It would raise taxes on the private sector to pay for new spending on the public sector. Let's think about that for a minute. We all agree that the private sector creates the vast majority of jobs in this country. And since the beginning of the recession, there has been a decline of 5.4 percent of private sector jobs, or 6.2 million jobs lost. However, during that period, government jobs at all levels declined by less than 2 percent and Federal Government jobs increased by over 2 percent, or by 63,000 jobs.

So the Federal Government is getting larger at the same time the private economy is shedding jobs.

While we all want to find ways to help public sector employees, let me suggest that we need to do it without imposing new burdens on the private sector at a time when we should be focused on finding ways to promote private sector job creation.

The Withholding Tax Relief Act will do just that. This measure will promote job creation by allowing businesses to keep more of their capital, and it will send a message that Washington understands that promoting the private sector is the key to reviving our economy, not another government bailout.

Only 8 days ago, we voted in favor of the three pending free-trade agreements, votes that garnered broad bipartisan support, which we all agreed will stimulate the economy and grow jobs in this country. During my remarks as part of that debate on those agreements, I noted that we were setting a precedent I hoped would be able to continue in the coming weeks. I noted that instead of considering divisive and controversial measures, such as the President's new surtax on small businesses and job creators, we should be considering legislation that helps our economy and can actually become law because it has strong bipartisan support.

That was true of implementing legislation for the three free-trade agreements that the President will sign into law tomorrow, and it is true in the Withholding Tax Relief Act of 2011.

Let's take this opportunity to demonstrate that when we are willing to work together, we can enact legislation that will help spur economic activity and create jobs in the private sector economy. We can do this without new taxes and without new burdensome regulations. We can accomplish this simply by getting the government out of the way of American entrepreneurs. Let's help Americans in a free and open society do what they do best: take risks, create business opportunities, and grow our economy.

We don't need yet another stimulus bill, heavy with government spending; we need a little common sense. Passing the Withholding Tax Relief Act is a good place to start.

When these votes come up later today, I hope my colleagues on both sides will recognize the importance of stimulating and spurring economic activity in the private sector, giving our entrepreneurs in this country incentives to create jobs by keeping the tax and regulatory burdens low and move away from this notion and idea that the way to get the economy growing again is to spend more government money, come up with yet another stimulus plan, which we know doesn't work. We have seen that picture before. We know many of these same types of ideas were tried and they have failed.

Unemployment today is still over 9 percent. When the first stimulus bill was passed, the contention at the time was this would keep unemployment under 8 percent. Well, the opposite has happened. More people are unemployed since the stimulus bill passed. There are over 1.5 million more unemployed Americans than when it passed. We should recognize that those are not the correct for our economy. It is to get our entrepreneurs, our small businesses back out there investing their capital, buying new equipment, and creating jobs for American workers.

The way to do that is to make it less costly, cheaper, and easier for them to create jobs rather than harder. What has been happening in Washington lately is making it harder, not easier, because of the uncertainty created by tax policy and regulatory policy. Putting in place another withholding tax, having that to plan for, knowing that will take effect come 2013, and now layered on top of those other things—you have the new health care mandates, and many small businesses are saying they are not going to hire people until they know with greater certainty what the impact of the health care reform bill will be on them and their employees.

This is a clear winner, something that enjoys broad bipartisan support. The way it is paid for enjoys broad bipartisan support. I hope we will pass it and defeat what is the ill-conceived approach proposed by the majority leader, which is to try to put a tax on job creators, the people who are out there and have the capital to put people back to work, and to invest in more government spending, more government programs, all of which have proven that they don't work. Let's do what works and use a little common sense and get the American people working again.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Hawaii.

Mr. INOUE. Mr. President, as we continue to debate the three fiscal year 2012 appropriations bills, I want to take a moment to congratulate the managers of these individual measures, and to urge my colleagues to continue in the current bipartisan spirit as we seek to move additional bills in the coming weeks. Building on the progress we have made this week would make it

less likely that we will be forced to resort to an omnibus or year-long continuing resolution down the road.

The bills we are considering are both bipartisan and fiscally responsible. Senators KOHL and BLUNT worked together to produce an Agriculture bill that is \$2.2 billion below the President's request and \$141 million below the fiscal year 2011 enacted level. Senator MIKULSKI and Senator HUTCHISON have managed a Commerce-Justice-Science bill that is \$5 billion below the President's request and \$631 million below the fiscal year 2012 enacted level. Senator MURRAY and Senator COLLINS have crafted a Transportation, Housing bill that is \$677 million below the President's request and \$117 million below last year's level.

As noted by the leadership of the respective subcommittees, all three of these measures were approved by the full committee with overwhelming bipartisan support. These measures reflect the austere fiscal environment we face. They are consistent with the framework established by the Budget Control Act, which establishes a discretionary spending level that is \$7 billion below last year's level.

All of these bills present difficult choices. These bills are focused on a number of basic priorities: job creation, public safety, nutrition, housing, and transportation. Yet, despite the importance of these initiatives to the lives of every American, many worthy programs were either reduced or eliminated to meet our austere limits.

Some have argued that our national debt demands even further cuts in these vital areas. However, every credible nonpartisan analysis has concluded that any real solution to our fiscal problems lies with reforming mandatory programs and raising additional revenues, not cutting investments in roads, bridges, and public safety any further. But to date, the entire focus on deficit reduction has been on discretionary spending. Those who advocate further cuts must look elsewhere, even if it is more politically painful to do so. It is my firm belief that another round of ill-advised cuts to discretionary spending will quite simply put our Nation's security and economic future at risk.

In addition to the managers of these three bills, I thank the leaders on both sides of the aisle for their support in bringing these measures to the floor this week. As the House has not acted on the Commerce-Justice-Science or Transportation appropriations bills, the package we consider today is a creative bipartisan solution that enables all Senators an opportunity to offer amendments.

As always, the closer we get to regular order, the better our final legislative product will be. It is important that the Senate have an opportunity to debate these three measures and to focus on the matters that are germane to the bill.

When we complete action on this bill, there will be seven outstanding com-

mittee-reported Senate appropriations bills. It is my hope and my intention to move forward with additional appropriations measures when the Senate returns in November and demonstrate to the American people that Congress is able to complete its work in a responsible manner.

Once again, I commend the chairmen and the ranking members and their staffs for their fine work on this measure.

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

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

Mr. SESSIONS. Madam President, I want to take a minute to say I am pleased that one of my amendments to eliminate the categorical eligibility for food stamps concept has been called up.

I also look forward to calling up an amendment that's been referred to as the Medco amendment, which has real strong bipartisan support. It was an amendment that many people felt they needed to vote against when the patent bill came forward because they believed the bill would then be required to go back to the House. So, it failed on a 51-to-47 vote.

But I am confident that there is an overwhelming number who would prefer to vote for this amendment now, if we can get it accepted. It would not take a long time for us to consider it. I think it's an issue our members are familiar with. So I want to share my thoughts that it is very important to me, and I think perhaps it might have a majority vote on both sides of the aisle.

Basically, my amendment would say we want to prohibit the PTO from using any funds to implement a provision of the patent reform bill that would have the effect of deciding an ongoing civil litigation that is on appeal now to the court of appeals. The merits of the matter are being argued. I believe it is the kind of matter that clearly should be allowed to stand in the courts. But this law firm that apparently failed to follow the statute of limitations—and the courts ruled in their favor—is seeking to have the Congress overrule or shortcut the appellate process in this matter.

I wanted to say I look forward to debating the question of categorical eligibility for food stamps, where if you are approved for a number of other Federal programs, you don't have to make a formal application to qualify for food stamps. CBO has indicated that it could save as much as \$10 billion over 10 years if that hole in the program is closed.

And I would note that food stamps are the fastest growing major item in the budget by far. There is nothing

close to it. It has doubled in the last 3 years. It has gone from \$20 billion to \$80 billion in the last 4 years, a 400-percent increase. One in seven people are now receiving food stamps. Originally, it was 1 in 50 when the program started. Nobody wants to deny people food, but the program has not been looked at. We have not looked under the hood. I believe in this one reform that says if you want to get thousands of dollars in food benefits from the government, you ought to at least fill out a form and qualify according to the standards the Food and Nutrition Service sets. That is basically all it would do. Some of the programs, if you qualify for them, are now automatically accepting food stamp recipients. They have a lower qualification than food stamps do. For example, one person won the lottery and that was counted as an asset to the person rather than income to the person. He called and said: Do I still get food stamps, since I won a \$2 million lottery? They said: Yes, the money you received is an asset, and we don't count assets under this other mechanism. But they should count assets under the Food Stamp Program.

I thank the Chair, and I thank the Senator from Delaware, who is moving the bill and allowing me to share these thoughts. I do hope we can get agreement and move forward on the Medco amendment, along with the categorical food stamp amendment.

Ms. MIKULSKI. I would say to my colleague from Alabama, I am the Senator from Maryland.

Mr. SESSIONS. Excuse me.

Ms. MIKULSKI. But Delaware is next door, and we share the Chesapeake Bay and a whole lot of chicken farms, so that is OK.

I want to advise the Senator that his amendment 810 is pending, and I believe the leadership is negotiating on which group of amendments will be voted on in the next phase, which we hope we will be able to announce shortly.

The amendment which the Senator has on the Patent Office, is not a pending amendment. Again, that would be subject to leadership on both sides of the aisle determining what would be called up. So I suggest he stay in touch with the Republican leader, Senator MCCONNELL, and his floor staff, as they are talking with Senator REID. But the Senator's amendment 810 is pending and I know he debated it yesterday and I know our colleague from Michigan, Senator STABENOW, chair of the Agriculture Committee, commented on that.

I would just say to the Senator, because I believe him to be a compassionate conservative—a phrase we once used a decade ago—maybe not filing papers is one thing, but we do have 9 percent unemployment. Gosh, in my State, we are seeing people come to food banks who used to donate to the food banks. We are seeing an increase of people who have been laid off who either have no job or have taken now

part-time jobs. So one of the reasons the food stamp population is increasing is because of unemployment. Unemployment is increasing.

I look forward to working with the Senator on a bipartisan jobs bill, but we also want the Senator to be able to speak to his amendment; and, hopefully, because it is pending, it will be included in the voting.

Mr. SESSIONS. I thank the Chair. She is correct. She has allowed the food stamp amendment to be pending, and I am talking with staff on this side and the Senator from Maryland is not objecting at this point to that amendment. So I hope that will happen.

I just wished to emphasize that there are a number of Members who feel very strongly that this is a matter we have an opportunity now to fix; that is, we shouldn't be moving forward to intervene in an ongoing lawsuit. Under our rules, there is a way to get a special relief act, if somehow there is a miscarriage of justice that occurs in our American system—an individual special relief act. But it has certain procedures, and one of the key prerequisites of that is that your litigation must be exhausted. Then, if the courts can't give you relief, we might consider it under certain procedures.

So this litigation is ongoing, and that is why I am hopeful we can fix it.

Ms. MIKULSKI. Are we still talking about food stamps?

Mr. SESSIONS. No, I am talking—
Ms. MIKULSKI. I kind of got lost here.

Mr. SESSIONS. No, the Medco amendment. It was voted on in the House twice, and on the second vote the amendment passed by a narrow margin. Our Members did not want to amend the House bill, even though many opposed that particular amendment. So this would give us an opportunity to vote on it, and it would be germane.

Ms. MIKULSKI. I remember that very well. I remember it was enormously controversial. It was significantly confusing, and there was much to be said on both sides. I believe somebody missed a filing deadline by 24 hours.

Mr. SESSIONS. I think that is basically correct.

Ms. MIKULSKI. You were the Chair of the Judiciary Committee, so you are well versed on the patent issues. Why don't we turn it over to the leadership and see how it turns out.

Mr. SESSIONS. Fair enough. I just wanted, for the record, to indicate I was urging our leadership to make this matter pending.

I thank the Senator.

Ms. MIKULSKI. We will turn it over to that higher power.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Maine.

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

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

Ms. COLLINS. Madam President, at some point during consideration of the Transportation, Housing and Urban Development, and related agencies appropriations bill, I expect there may be a motion to recommit the bill to the Appropriations Committee. Therefore, I want to take this opportunity, as we are attempting to work out amendments and proceed to some additional votes, to give my colleagues some basic facts about our bill.

First of all, our appropriations bill took one of the largest percentage cuts to spending of any of the appropriations bills for fiscal year 2011. It is important to understand that our bill is nearly \$13 billion below fiscal year 2010 enacted levels. This funding level represents a reduction of nearly one-fifth in just 2 years. When disaster funding is not included, our bill total is \$55 billion. That is \$117 million below fiscal year 2011.

So I want to point out that this bill is a fiscally responsible bill. It is a bill that required a lot of tough choices. It is a bill that does not fund some programs to the level I would have liked to have seen them funded, but it recognizes the reality of a \$14.9 trillion Federal debt that is growing every day. Therefore, we have had to make tough choices. We cannot have the luxury of fully funding every program, even those programs that are very beneficial.

In the other cases, we put tough new restrictions on programs where we felt the taxpayers have not been getting their money's worth, and that includes some programs run by public housing authorities and the HOME Program, about which the Washington Post did an expose'. So we have worked carefully and closely with the inspector general of the Department of Housing and Urban Development to make sure there are new anti-fraud provisions and restrictions.

It is also important to understand that the \$117 million difference from fiscal year 2011 does not take into account the \$3.9 billion in one-time rescissions taken in fiscal year 2011 that were not available in fiscal year 2012. So when you compare the appropriations for programs spending, not including the offsets, our bill's appropriations are actually \$1.1 billion below the fiscal year 2011 enacted levels.

I have just given a great deal of different numbers, but my point is the same; that is, this is a fiscally responsible bill, it is a constrained bill. Our subcommittee's allocation was cut quite severely; thus, it was a real challenge, but it is a challenge we have to meet in these very difficult budget times. We don't have the luxury of fully funding even very worthwhile programs.

It has been a great pleasure to work with my colleague, Senator MURRAY,

to produce a bipartisan bill, and that is what we have done. But, again, our Transportation-HUD bill took one of the largest percentage cuts in spending of any of the appropriations bills that will be brought before this body.

Finally, I am very pleased we are bringing the appropriations bills to the Senate floor. None of us, in my opinion, want to see the problems we have had in the past couple of years where we have ended up at the end of the calendar year with a huge omnibus bill stacked on our desks, no one completely sure of every provision that is in the bill. That is a terrible way to legislate. It is much more responsible to bring the appropriations bills before the full Senate after they have had their careful consideration by the Appropriations Committee. We have extensive hearings and we have markups at both the subcommittee and the full committee level, but then the full Senate should have a chance to work its will on these bills.

I am pleased we have been considering these bills all week. We have had several amendments offered by Members on both side of the aisle, and we have had constructive debate. As my colleague from Maryland has pointed out, it has been a respectful, civil debate, and that is what the people of this country deserve.

I hope this is going to set a precedent where we will bring every single one of the appropriations bills before this body so that Members can work their will. It is the right way to legislate, and it avoids the spectacle of our having a multiple thousands of pages omnibus bill, which does not serve the people of this country well.

Madam President, I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. CARDIN). The Senator from Minnesota.

Ms. KLOBUCHAR. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the quorum call be rescinded, and I ask to speak as if in morning business.

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

TEACHERS AND FIRST RESPONDERS BACK TO WORK ACT

Ms. KLOBUCHAR. Mr. President, I rise today to speak in support of the Teachers and First Responders Back to Work Act.

Rarely is our economy discussed without mention of the more than 14 million Americans who are currently out of work and searching for jobs, but this statistic is really only the beginning of the story.

Two years after the recession officially ended or at least was at a place of stability, unemployment remains stubbornly high at 9.1 percent. When you factor those who are working part time because they can't find a full-time job and those who have stopped working altogether, that number

quickly climbs. In my home State, it is 2 points better, at 6.9 percent, but there are still too many people out of work.

It is my firm belief that the role of Congress is to promote the interests of the American people, and the American people have said loud and clear that we need to focus on initiatives that are about jobs, private sector jobs, jobs that pay people so they can support their families, jobs that strengthen our economy.

At a time when enormous budget shortfalls plague our States, many States have been forced to make tough choices, including cutting the jobs of those individuals on our front lines, law enforcement and educators.

In Minnesota, we have seen more than our fair share of crises in recent years, but we have also seen the value of effective emergency response. We all witnessed the critical work of public safety personnel during the minutes and hours following the 2007 bridge collapse in Minneapolis. That was just a few blocks from my house. During that emergency, the Minnesota first responders reacted swiftly and effectively, and they were aided by a strong local public safety network. What we saw that day was a true show of American heroism, a window into the courage, skill, and selflessness first responders practice day in and day out. They did not run away from this major bridge collapse—an eight-lane highway in the middle of the Mississippi River—they ran toward it. They dove in and out of that water, rescuing people from dozens of cars in that water. Thanks to their selfless efforts, while we lost too many lives, literally hundreds were saved because of that work. These men and women dedicate their lives to protecting our families, supporting our children, and serving the public. They perform critical jobs in our communities, jobs we cannot afford to lose.

I saw it again in Wadena, MN, a smaller town than Minneapolis, up in northern Minnesota. They had a tornado there that literally flattened a mile of their town. I was standing there in complete wreckage, a big high school where the bleachers were a block away, where there was nothing left of a public swimming pool. But not one person died in that town even though this was in a completely residential neighborhood. Do you know why? They got their siren out early. The teenage lifeguard at that pool, which had a dozen kids, got their parents there within 10 or 15 minutes, and she got the remaining kids in the basement across the street.

When I visited that town a few days later, I hugged a man whose entire agricultural business had been flattened. He saved his employees in a safe. He had always joked that since he didn't have a basement, they could go in the safe. That is what I remember.

What I remember most is the mayor and the sheriff and how people—despite being blocked from their houses, having their houses completely flattened,

losing everything they owned in the world, all they could do was hug those public officials and cry because they knew the planning they had put in place and the acts of the sheriff and the police and the emergency system had saved their lives. That is first responders at their best. That is public servants at their best.

That is why we need to pass the Teachers and First Responders Back to Work Act, which would support the hiring, rehiring, and retention of career law enforcement officers and first responders. I know State and local budget cuts have forced thousands of police officers and firefighters off the beat. This bill provides \$5 billion to keep police and firefighters on the job by creating or saving thousands of first responder jobs across the Nation through competitive grants to State and local governments.

The Teachers and First Responders Back to Work Act also saves or creates jobs through critical investments in education. A good education should be the basic right of every child. I know you know that in Maryland, Mr. President, as I know it in Minnesota. It is one of the very best investments we can make in our future as a nation.

My mom taught second grade until she was 70 years old. She had 30 second graders in her public school class. We lost her last summer, but what I will never forget is all of those students, who are now grown up, who came to the visitation, came to the funeral, and told me all those stories.

I always knew my mom had dressed up as a monarch butterfly when they had the unit on metamorphosis. She would wear a butterfly outfit, and she would hold a sign that said "To Mexico or bust." What I did not know was that she would go to that local grocery store, Cub Foods, and shop. When I first heard that story, I thought that was pretty funny and something that she would do. But what I finally realized was why she went to that store. Because I met the parents of this young man who had taken her class in the second grade. He had some pretty difficult disabilities. He went on and graduated from high school, and his job was to bag groceries at that store. She would go back every year to see that kid in her butterfly outfit so that he would remember that class. That is a public servant. That is what teaching is all about. It is something bigger than yourself.

Given the enormous budget shortfalls across the Nation, States and local school districts have been forced to cut back on education programs and services, often laying off needed teachers and other critical staff or raising additional revenue to cover the shortfall. As a result, two-thirds of States were forced to slash funding for K-12 education programs and services and are now providing less per-student funding than they did in 2008, and 17 States have slashed funding by at least 10 percent since 2008. In my State alone,

since 2008 we have lost 1,200 education jobs.

Cuts such as these hurt our children, but they hurt our communities too. We have to compete on an international stage. We are going up against countries that are actually upping their education funding, countries that are making sure their kids are learning incredibly difficult concepts in science and math and technology. We are not going to be able to accomplish that if they don't have schools they can learn in that work, if they don't have teachers with the expertise who can teach them these difficult ideas. That is why we need to pass the Teachers and First Responders Back to Work Act, which would offset projected layoffs, providing for nearly 400,000 education jobs and offering a much needed jolt to State economies.

It would also provide funding to support State and local efforts to retain, hire, and rehire early childhood, elementary, and secondary school teachers. It is a time when we recognize that educating our children is a shared responsibility.

Americans overwhelmingly support funding for teacher and first responder jobs. One poll showed that 75 percent of Americans support providing funds to hire police officers, teachers, and fire fighters.

But passing this bill is not right to do just because it is popular. It is right to do because it will have a positive impact on our children. As we know, we pay for this bill, and we pay for this bill in a way that shares the responsibility with those who can afford it the most.

This bill will move our economy forward without adding to the Federal deficit. With our economy struggling and 14 million Americans still out of work, the people in my State want Congress to put the politics aside and come together to move our economy forward and ensure that our communities stay strong and that our children remain safe. That is what they want.

It is time to step up and show some leadership. I believe we need to bring this debt down. I am one who believes we need to bring it down by \$4 trillion in 10 years, and I believe there is a way to do it with a balanced approach that doesn't do it on the backs of these kids in school and that doesn't do it on the backs of our people who need protective services, who need our police, who need our firefighters. What would we have done when that 35W bridge collapsed if there had not been firefighters and police officers there ready to dive in and save people? What would we have done if there had not been emergency workers ready to take them in after they were injured? What would we have done in Medina if we did not have a proper public siren system in place? Hundreds of people would have been killed. What would we have done for that kid I talked about with disabilities if my mom had not been his teacher and cared about him and went back to visit him again and again?

These are people who devote their lives to public service, and we have to show America that Washington is not broken; that, instead, we are willing to put the politics aside, we are willing to do something smart on the debt and bring it down to the place where we need to bring it, but we are going to do it with a balanced approach.

I urge my colleagues to vote for this important legislation. It is the decent and right thing to do.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Ohio.

AMENDMENT NO. 859

Mr. PORTMAN. Mr. President, I rise in support of amendment No. 859, which is a germane amendment to the underlying bill. It is one I introduced that would restore fairness, encourage competition, and prevent many States around the country from seeing cost increases in the price of guardrails. This amendment specifically addresses the Transportation bill we are talking about and addresses one of the new provisions in the bill this year that is a mandate that I think is not appropriate.

A lot of States have infrastructure challenges right now, and the last thing we should be doing here in the Congress is making it more difficult for States to pay for their infrastructure with the limited transportation dollars they have. With the fiscal crisis we have, we have to make sure now more than ever that States have the flexibility to meet the requirements from the Federal Government.

At a time when unemployment is over 9 percent and we have over 14 million Americans out of work, we should be doing everything we can to protect jobs. This amendment would hurt jobs, and this amendment I am offering would give States more flexibility to help keep some jobs.

There are countless miles of guardrails in our country, and many of those are manufactured in my home State of Ohio. Those manufacturers galvanize the guardrails to prevent corrosion, and they have two options on the process they use to galvanize the metal as well as two options with regard to the thickness of the zinc they use in the galvanization process.

In terms of the galvanization process, the first method is called continuous galvanization, where a company treats the flat steel with zinc and then fabricates the guardrail afterward. The second method is called batch galvanization, where the company dips the final product in a zinc bath after they have completed the fabrication.

In addition, there are two types of zinc thickness options for the guardrail. Type 1 requires a thinner coat of zinc, and type 2 requires a thicker coat of zinc, which increases the life of the guardrail. A lot of States around the country, including Ohio, require type 2, which is the thicker kind of zinc, for all of their guardrails, and that is due to the harsher conditions that cause

metal to erode more quickly. However, Ohio is one of those States that, although they require type 2, allow for continuous galvanization or the batch galvanization process—either one.

It was a great surprise to me to read the legislation before us. The underlying bill says the States are prohibited from using any kind of guardrail unless it is type 2, plus it is produced through this batch galvanization process. So it is a mandate. Again, it has never been in this legislation before. It says it has to be type 2, meaning the thicker type zinc, and has to be applied using a particular process, so it is micromanaging the process.

The life of a guardrail, as you can imagine, is entirely dependent on the thickness of the zinc but also on the environment into which it is placed.

There are 15 States that still approve type 1. These States have less extreme environments where corrosion occurs more slowly, and the extra thickness of zinc is not needed. Without this amendment, they would be forced to buy a more expensive product that they don't want and don't need. By the way, those States are Mississippi, Virginia, Delaware, Oklahoma, Missouri, Kansas, Nebraska, Iowa, New Jersey, Colorado, Utah, Texas, California, Montana, and Wyoming.

The U.S. Department of Transportation has weighed in on this issue. They have said:

Requiring all galvanized steel to meet type 2 could add unnecessary expense for many States where the added thickness of galvanization is not needed. We know that type 1 galvanizing will protect guardrail components in many locations for the typical 20-year life design. The extra cost of type 2 galvanizing may be unwarranted.

That is the U.S. Department of Transportation.

The Ohio Department of Transportation has said that while they only use type 2 materials, "ODOT does not have a preference as to how galvanizing occurs." They do not have a preference for a particular species of guardrail, as both have been found to have very similar properties to one another. They would prefer that their flexibility to use both kinds remains intact. That is the Ohio Department of Transportation. They don't want to be told they can't use the process many of them use now, which is continuous galvanization.

The primary manufacturer of continuous galvanization guardrails is Gregory Industries, located in Canton, OH. It was founded in 1896. It is a privately owned company currently run by the fourth and fifth generations of the Gregory family. These guardrails make up about 75 percent of the Gregorys' business, and about 99 percent of the guardrails they make are made through this continuous galvanization process that would be prohibited under the legislation. In addition, about 30 percent of their sales come from type 1 guardrails, which would be prohibited under the legislation. So the language

as it stands would be devastating for this one company and put 125 jobs in their Canton, OH, facility at risk.

By the way, the guardrails they produce are approved by the American Association of State Highway and Transportation Officials in a document called the M-180 that dictates what is acceptable and what is not.

The type of products the current language would prohibit, by the way, have been in use in all 50 States in the country, and the continuous process for galvanizing guardrails that would be prohibited has been around for 50 years.

The bottom line is that we should not give this Ohio company or any company an advantage. We should allow competition to determine this and let the States determine it. Why come up with a new mandate that micromanages this process at a time when we are all trying to save dollars and use them more efficiently? So this amendment seeks to strike the language that would limit the flexibility of States and place additional costs in cases where it does make sense to use type 1 or it does make sense to use this continuous galvanization.

I urge the Senate take a common-sense approach, and I urge all of my colleagues to support this legislation. I know my colleague may have some thoughts on this, but, in summary, I would ask through this amendment to strike the language that would limit the flexibilities of States and encourage support of amendment No. 859.

Mr. KOHL. I object to amendment No. 859 presented by my colleague from Ohio, the guardrail amendment. However, I wish to inform him that we are trying to work out our differences so we can move forward. For the moment I object to the amendment.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Chair is advised that it is not currently pending.

Mr. PORTMAN. I ask unanimous consent that the pending amendment be set aside, and I call up my amendment No. 859.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection?

Mr. KOHL. I object.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Objection is heard.

Mr. PORTMAN. I thank my colleague for his comments and look forward to working with him. Again, it is a simple amendment. It is a jobs amendment. It is perfectly germane to the bill. It is exactly the type of amendment that I think should not be blocked through this process.

I thank my colleague from Wisconsin.

I yield the floor.

Mr. KOHL. I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll of the Senate.

The assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered. The Republican leader is recognized.

Mr. MCCONNELL. I ask unanimous consent that the junior Senator from New Hampshire and I be allowed to engage in a colloquy.

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

AMENDMENT NO. 753

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, I thank my good friend from New Hampshire for the issue she has raised with regard to the proper way to treat enemy combatants. Her amendment, which we have been discussing off and on here on the floor today, has prompted predications of doom and gloom from our friends on the other side of the aisle, and a lot of very excited rhetoric.

To be clear, I would ask my friend from New Hampshire: Is it not true that the amendment she has offered does not apply to everyone—absolutely everyone—who might be generally labeled a terrorist?

Ms. AYOTTE. I thank our distinguished Republican leader, the senior Senator from Kentucky, for that question. That is correct. My amendment only applies to members of al-Qaida and associated forces who are engaged in an armed conflict against our troops and coalition forces and who are planning or are carrying out an attack against our country or our coalition partners. It does not apply to everyone who might be termed a terrorist, and it does not apply to U.S. citizens who are members of al-Qaida.

Mr. MCCONNELL. I ask my friend further, has the Congress authorized use of military force against al-Qaida and associated forces?

Ms. AYOTTE. I would answer, yes, it has. My amendment only pertains to enemy combatants against whom Congress has declared we are in an armed conflict. And because we are in an armed conflict with al-Qaida and associated forces, the Congress has authorized the use of military force to combat them, and that is why it is called the authorization for the use of military force.

Mr. MCCONNELL. I cannot recall a time when Congress has declared we are in an armed conflict, has authorized the use of military force against the enemy in that conflict, and yet the executive branch has a bias against using the military for interrogation and, if need be, a trial of these enemy forces. Can the Senator from New Hampshire recall such an occasion?

Ms. AYOTTE. No, I cannot.

Mr. MCCONNELL. Two days ago the President's top lawyer at the Pentagon defended the administration's decision for use of lethal force against an American citizen who was a member of al-Qaida. In doing so, he noted that using lethal force in such a case is perfectly appropriate because that person was an enemy combatant. Specifically, he said: Those who are part of the congressionally declared enemy do not

have immunity if they are U.S. citizens.

Does it not strike my friend from New Hampshire as inconsistent for the administration to authorize lethal force against a member of al-Qaida even if he is a U.S. citizen because he is part of an enemy force as declared by the Congress but, on the other hand, not to trust the military to try by military commission members of the same enemy force who are foreign nationals?

Ms. AYOTTE. It certainly strikes me as very inconsistent. It is especially odd given that the military commissions were enacted by Congress at the suggestion of our Supreme Court. They were passed on a bipartisan basis and were refined by the Obama administration to its liking. Yet the administration refuses to fully use them as they were intended.

Mr. MCCONNELL. The amendment of the Senator from New Hampshire to this appropriations bill makes clear that in the war on terror we remain at war with al-Qaida and associated groups, that these forces remain intent on killing Americans, and that in prosecuting this war, a higher priority should be placed on capturing enemy combatants, interrogating them for additional intelligence value and thereby targeting other terrorists. That is the purpose, as I understand it, of the amendment of the Senator from New Hampshire. In military custody, our national security professionals would have a choice of prosecuting enemy combatants in a military commission, detaining them under the law of war, and periodically questioning them for intelligence as new information is developed without them being all lawyered up.

Ms. AYOTTE. Yes, and yesterday some of our colleagues came to the floor to argue that my amendment would limit the choices available to our Commander-in-Chief in prosecuting terrorists.

I would ask the Republican leader the following: In January of 2009, did President Obama, when he first came into office, issue Executive orders ending the Central Intelligence Agency's detention program, ending the CIA's option for using enhanced interrogation techniques, ordering the closure of the secure detention facility in Guantanamo Bay, Cuba, prior to any study being done concerning how to dispose of the population of enemy combatants there—we now know that 27 percent of them are back in theater—and suspending military commissions?

Mr. MCCONNELL. Well, of course, the Senator from New Hampshire is entirely correct. President Obama has unilaterally restricted the tools available to him for combating terrorism, including by ordering the closing of Guantanamo Bay prior to having any plan for dealing with the population of the Yemeni detainees who are almost certain to return to the fight if they are released from Guantanamo Bay.

It seems that once the President shut down the ability of the CIA to detain enemy combatants and refused to transfer further detainees from Guantanamo Bay, that many of us were waiting for the obvious test case to come along in which a terrorist was captured outside Iraq or Afghanistan and needed to be interrogated and detained.

I know the Senator from New Hampshire is a member of the Armed Services Committee. Does she recall the case of Mr. Warsame, the Somali terrorist captured at sea?

Ms. AYOTTE. I do, and the Republican leader is correct that this test case shows that in capturing rather than killing terrorists, we can gain valuable intelligence. Instead of sending Warsame to Guantanamo, though, he was held and interrogated at sea for approximately 2 months. Then law enforcement officials were brought in to read Warsame his rights.

I wish to take a minute to address arguments that were made on the floor earlier by Senator LEVIN from Michigan, the chairman of the Armed Services Committee. He claimed that if my amendment were to pass, Mr. Warsame would escape justice because we wouldn't be able to prove that he was, in fact, planning an attack against the United States. I wish to point out that if that were the case, my amendment would not apply because my amendment applies to members of al-Qaida or affiliated groups who are also planning or have carried out an attack against the United States, so he would be able to be held fully accountable in the civilian court system.

I wanted to correct that because I think that leaves a misimpression that Mr. Warsame would not be or could not be held accountable under our law.

The second problem with the analysis of the Senator from Michigan is that it ignores what is going on here. The reason the United States had to take the unusual steps of holding Warsame at sea on a Navy ship and then flying him to the United States over the Fourth of July weekend is because of the administration's refusal to use the top-rate detention facility at Guantanamo Bay, Cuba, that we have there for long-term military detention. Because it refuses to use this valuable asset for new captures, the administration has gone to great lengths to treat these enemy combatants who are captured on an ad hoc basis instead of placing them in a long-term detention facility, which places an artificial time period on when we can interrogate these individuals and how long they will be available to gather information to protect Americans.

As the Republican leader has noted, the President's top lawyer at the Pentagon observed that members of al-Qaida are enemy combatants and that Congress has passed an authorization for the use of military force to treat them as such. We need to do that on a consistent basis and use the military

assets we have. We should not have an ad hoc, haphazard approach to treating enemy combatants. We should not Mirandize enemy combatants who are our military captures and then hold them on makeshift prison barges as if we were in the 19th century because the administration refuses to use Guantanamo Bay and then import them into the United States so they can be detained in our civilian court system, tried in our civilian courts, with the possibility that they could be released into the United States if they are acquitted or given a modest sentence, as nearly happened with Ahmed Ghailani.

Now is the time to keep the pressure on al-Qaida, whether in the tribal areas of Pakistan or in Yemen. Our law enforcement officials have done a tremendous job in contributing to the counterterrorism fight. But we cannot, for the first time in the history of this country, take the view of the Attorney General, which is that our civilian court system is the most effective weapon in our conflict with al-Qaida, because that is simply not the case.

Thank you, Mr. President.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Texas.

Mrs. HUTCHISON. Mr. President, I wish to thank the Senator from New Hampshire on behalf of the leader. She has brought to the floor an outstanding amendment that needs to be addressed because this is an issue that is certainly on a lot of people's minds, as to why we would be using our judicial system for enemy combatants. She has articulated it so well, as the former attorney general of New Hampshire, and we appreciate so much that she has brought this amendment. It is going to get a lot of support from the American people as well as Members of the Senate.

Thank you, Mr. President.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The majority leader is recognized.

Mr. REID. Mr. President, we have worked very hard to move through this first tranche of appropriations bills we have. Progress is being made but not nearly enough progress. I am going to move in just a minute to the Bryson nomination. But I want everyone within the sound of my voice to understand this cannot go on forever. People sometimes are unreasonable. We cannot have votes on all these amendments that have been called up. I hope everyone understands there has to be some give-and-take here, and we need to move through this. They need to be cooperative with the staffs, because when this matter regarding the Secretary of Commerce nomination is finished, we are going to have to make a decision as to whether we can continue working on this appropriations bill.

This was a noble experiment. I am part of it. I want it to work very much, but it can't work without the cooperation of all Senators.

I say to everyone listening, this is the way it has always been. I was a

member of the Appropriations Committee the first day I came to the Senate, and I managed many appropriations bills on the Senate floor. For every one of them, we had more amendments than we had time to vote on them. That is where we are today. But the only way we can finish them is to work through these amendments. We hope we can do that; otherwise, we will have a cloture vote either tonight or tomorrow to determine whether we want to finish these appropriations bills—all extremely important—Commerce-State-Justice, Agriculture, and, of course, the Transportation bill. It would be good for us to be able to get this done.

I heard Senator COLLINS, the Senator from Maine, speak about this a little earlier today, and she did an extremely good job of explaining why it is important we do this.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

NOMINATION OF JOHN EDGAR BRYSON TO BE SECRETARY OF COMMERCE

Mr. REID. Under the previous order, I move to executive session to call up Calendar No. 410, the nomination of John Bryson, to be Commerce Secretary.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report the nomination.

The assistant legislative clerk read the nomination of John Edgar Bryson, of California, to be Secretary of Commerce.

Mr. REID. Mr. President, there are 4 hours under the order previously entered. We are hoping all this time will not have to be used. I ask unanimous consent that 20 minutes remain, equally divided between the two leaders or their designees, regardless of any time consumed in quorum calls throughout the presentations made on this matter.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection?

Without objection, it is so ordered.

Mr. REID. I wish to congratulate my friend, the chairman of the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation, and the Senator from Texas, KAY BAILEY HUTCHISON. They both worked very hard in a fair way to move forward on this. It has been good for the Senate. When we confirm this nomination, it will be good for the country.

I don't think we will use all this time. I hope we can vote on this matter anywhere between 6:30 and 7:30 tonight, hopefully closer to 6:30.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from West Virginia.

Mr. ROCKEFELLER. Mr. President, I rise in strong support of John Bryson of California, whom President Obama has nominated to be his Secretary of Commerce.

Mr. Bryson's nomination comes at a very critical time for our country and for our economy. No one disputes the Secretary of Commerce is an impor-

tant part of the President's economic team. That person is now missing in the Commerce Department. Commerce has to do with jobs. There is nobody there. That dictates that we have a leader with strong, real-world experience. This position has been vacant since Ambassador Locke left for China in late July. It is stunning to think, with what the country is going through, we don't have a Cabinet Secretary who can attend to manufacturing and other kinds of jobs and job-related efforts that he will do. But because of the insistence of the minority—and I had no objection to this—we were unable to move this nomination until the trade agreements were finished. The trade agreements had to come forward and passed, that was done, and then it was OK to proceed to the Bryson nomination.

The Commerce, Science, and Transportation Committee confirmed Mr. Bryson by a voice vote. I recall no objections at all. Mr. Bryson will be an excellent Secretary of Commerce, and America is entitled to have a Secretary of Commerce on the job. Mr. Bryson possesses a rare combination of actual real-life business experience and a very broad intellect. As an executive, he has proven himself to be a talented executive and has shown his dedication to public service. He cares about public service. He has had to wait a long time to get this job, and he has been in and out of public service.

My colleagues should appreciate that Mr. Bryson's confirmation comes at an important crossroads for the country and for the Commerce Department itself. The challenges obviously are very important: high unemployment, a slow economic recovery. The Secretary of Commerce plays a major role in promoting jobs and our economy. But to do that, he has to be in place and on the job. If confirmed, as I believe he deserves to be, he will have to face these deep challenges and looks forward to so doing.

But I believe Mr. Bryson's experience provides him with the capacity to help restore jobs in manufacturing in America as the Secretary of Commerce. I have long fought for a stronger manufacturing sector in this country. Anybody from West Virginia would be crazy to do otherwise. Manufacturing has been hit hard all over the country during this past decade, losing one-third of its workforce, and the government's response has been piecemeal.

This needs to change. If the next decade is as bad for manufacturing jobs as the previous one, we are going to have very little left to work with of the manufacturing sector if we are trying to save it. This has grave national security implications and could cripple our ability to outinnovate and outcompete other countries. That is already happening.

In the Commerce Committee, we held three hearings on this issue this year; that is manufacturing, and we also included a field hearing, which happened