

pocket so they can do what they do best.

The government was also not responsible for the success of STS Coatings, a construction company based in the San Antonio area. The founder of STS Coatings, Cayce Kovacs, reports that she and her husband cashed in their savings to launch their business, which now has annual sales totaling more than \$3 million. As Ms. Kovacs recently said:

We were the ones sweating bullets over processing orders and paying our bills, making payroll—not the government. The government did nothing to help my business.

You know who else can say that? Another extraordinary Texan named Frank Scantlin, who founded Sunbelt Machine Works in Stafford, TX, near Houston, some 34 years ago. Frank tells a story that as a child he was so poor he sometimes couldn't even afford to buy shoes, and he had to quit school in the ninth grade in order to support his family. This is a quintessential American success story. Frank persevered and went on to create a business that now has almost 60,000 square feet of workspace and employs 90 people.

All these stories epitomize the American dream that has enticed immigrants from around the world to take a risk, leave everything they had behind, and come and make America their home. We were the one place in the world where they knew if they were willing to work hard and save, that hard work could be rewarded by success.

In the meantime, those of us who depend on those small businesses to create those jobs and prosperity could benefit as well. The owners of Sunbelt, STS Coatings, Pink Pockets, and Mayo Furniture understand their success was not inevitable, and it sure was not guaranteed by the Federal Government. They had to take the hard risks, they had to work overtime, and they had to overcome challenges that many times the government put in their way. In the end, as in so many great American success stories, their hard work and ingenuity paid off. They can, not government, declare with confidence that "I built this."

My office has received more than 250 of these stories since President Obama gave his speech in Roanoke. They are the type of stories that have made our country the beacon of prosperity and entrepreneurial energy for so many years. As one Texas business owner put it: "Rugged individualism is alive and well in the United States." I hope we remember that, and I hope the President of the United States remembers that as well.

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

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. FRANKEN). The clerk will call the roll.

The assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. KOHL. 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 remarks of Mr. KOHL pertaining to the introduction of S. 3427 are printed in today's RECORD under "Statements on Introduced Bills and Joint Resolutions.")

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

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

MOMENT OF SILENCE IN MEMORY OF OFFICER JACOB J. CHESTNUT AND DETECTIVE JOHN M. GIBSON

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the Senate will observe a moment of silence in memory of Officer Jacob J. Chestnut and Detective John M. Gibson of the U.S. Capitol Police.

(Moment of silence.)

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

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

MIDDLE CLASS TAX CUT ACT—MOTION TO PROCEED—Continued

Mr. MANCHIN. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent to speak for up to 10 minutes, and that following my remarks the Senator from Rhode Island be recognized to speak.

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

Mr. MANCHIN. Mr. President, I rise today to express my indescribable frustration and genuine disbelief that we are looking at two proposals that do not do enough to fix this Nation's financial problems—and both have been predicted by both respective sides to fail. I speak of the Bush tax cuts and how those of us in the responsible middle find ourselves caught between a rock and a hard place, with a vote that offers, truly, no real solutions.

It is no secret that I prefer fixing the problems this country faces, like most of my colleagues, and we all have different approaches. We are hurling toward \$16 trillions in debt, and for the first time since the World War II era our debt exceeds the output of our economy. Even our generals say the greatest threat this Nation faces is not a foreign power or a terrorist organization but the debt we have created ourselves.

We are staring down the barrel of insurmountable obligations for decades to come, and we are passing up a key opportunity to put this country in better shape for the next generation.

As you can see, and as West Virginians know, we urgently need to put our country's financial house back in order, and the people of West Virginia are tired of temporary solutions to our long-term problems.

As I have said so many times, I will work with both sides of the aisle, Democrats and Republicans, on a comprehensive solution that lowers tax rates, broadens our revenue base, closes loopholes, cuts spending, and reduces our debt, like the framework proposed by the Bowles-Simpson plan.

Unfortunately, neither of the proposals on the Bush tax cuts will solve our long-term debt and fiscal problems. At the same time, with our debt problems getting worse every year, we must come together to take responsible action and fair steps toward reducing our debt, even if they are only temporary.

Let's look at the two proposals that have been offered, one from my Republican colleagues in the House that, unfortunately, kicks the can down the road entirely and extends these tax cuts at a cost of \$400 billion. What people do not know is that even though it would extend tax cuts for the wealthiest—and this is what they do not know—it would actually get rid of some tax reductions for middle- and low-income Americans, such as the expanded child tax credit. That is tremendously unfair.

Another proposal from the Democrats here in the Senate, our side, would cost about \$250 billion, which is at least starting to move in the right direction to reduce our deficit, and it keeps the tax cut for more than 99 percent of all West Virginians and a high percentage in every State such as the Presiding Officer's.

When considering these two proposals, I kept two priorities in mind—putting our fiscal house back in order and restoring fairness to the Tax Code. So while I would prefer a bipartisan comprehensive solution, I will support the plan to keep taxes low on families that make less than \$250,000. According to the latest available figures from the West Virginia Department of Revenue, more than 99 percent of all West Virginians will get a break on their taxes under this proposal. And the wealthiest among us will pay the rates they did during Bill Clinton's Presidency, which was the greatest era of prosperity I can remember in my lifetime.

On the other hand, the proposal that includes extending the tax cuts for the wealthiest Americans carries a heavy price for this Nation. It is about \$150 billion more than the Democrats' proposal. Given our dire budget situation, this country cannot afford that. We simply have to prioritize and close the gap. The fact is we cannot keep trying temporary solutions to our serious budget problems. And the truth is,

these tax cuts will not restore confidence in our government or our economy to create good jobs or keep the ones we have. They certainly do not put our fiscal house back in order. What they will do is be used as fodder in political ads in the next 100 days against both sides. I cannot understand why we continue to take votes that are more about making one side look bad or worse than the other, or taking cheap shots, than actually solving the problems we have before us.

I will continue to work across the aisle on a comprehensive bipartisan plan, because when it comes right down to it these tax cuts simply will not fix the financial problems our country faces. I have talked to countless business leaders and laborers all over the State of West Virginia and all over the country. When I asked them what will encourage them not only to create the good jobs we need but to keep the jobs we already have, the answer is simple: Certainty. They need to be able to plan their next steps. They need to know their government is working as a partner, an ally, not as an adversary.

We did not pull these stunts in West Virginia when I was Governor. We were willing to get our hands dirty, to come to the table, to have a genuine and respectful discussion on the right direction for our State, and sometimes that led to respectful agreement to disagree. But in the least, we moved forward and made a decision. It has been nearly 2 years since the bipartisan commission on reducing our debt recommended a plan that people of all political stripes support. It is time to go back to that framework and provide this country with an honest solution.

In fact, the only thing that seems to be holding our feet to the fire right now is the sequester, which is becoming quite the scary term around here. For people who do not live and work in the Beltway, here is what the sequester is: If those of us in Congress cannot agree on a real, substantial plan to fix our finances, we will have to make some very painful cuts in some very important areas—our Department of Defense, our schools, and our domestic priorities such as veterans services and Head Start. Both Democrats and Republicans care about those issues.

So both Democrats and Republicans have some skin in the game when it comes to finding an agreement, because, let me tell you, the reason the sequester was put in place almost a year ago was in case we could not come up with an agreement on a big fix, one the so-called supercommittee was tasked to put forward. Well, they did not agree on the superfix and this is our penalty. I believe the greatest mistake we could make would be to walk away before the end of the year and not vote on a clear direction to fulfill the commitment and promises we made to the American people, which were that we would fix the country's financial problems or the sequester would go into effect. That is the biggest mistake

we can make as a Nation, letting the American people down.

So now a year after Congress has failed to reach an agreement, I am surprised to find some of my colleagues who voted for the sequester, knowing full well that Congress needs the threat of painful cuts before we can get anything done, are complaining about something they supported. I stand with those, including the President, who are drawing a hard line in the sand on our finances.

Like it or not, this painful sequester is the linchpin to a better government and a better agreement. It is the only way we are going to get something bigger. A better agreement will look a lot like the bipartisan comprehensive Bowles-Simpson framework, not the Bush tax cuts, because this country needs a real solution, because this country needs to come together on that solution, because if we cannot come together, there will be dire consequences for this country with or without the cuts in the sequester.

I sincerely hope and pray and will work for a compromise. But I believe the threat of a sequester might be the only thing that will force Congress to get its job done.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Rhode Island.

TRIBUTE TO OFFICER CHESTNUT AND DETECTIVE GIBSON

Mr. REED. Mr. President, before I begin my remarks with respect to the current debate, let me pay tribute to Officer Jacob J. Chestnut and Detective John M. Gibson of the Capitol Police, and to all of the Capitol Police officers, men and women who protect us each day.

I was here on that somber day when these gentlemen sacrificed their lives to protect innocent people in this building. Their example continues to sustain us and inspire us. They continue to sustain and inspire the Capitol Police officers who today are protecting us. We thank them all.

As my colleague from West Virginia commented, we are in the midst of a very serious debate with huge consequences for our country, our economy, our future. That is why I rise today in support of the Middle Class Tax Cut Act. This bill will extend the 2001, 2003, and 2009 tax cuts for the middle class through 2013. It will provide tax relief to every American, especially to those families who have struggled through this recession and this weak recovery, and restore some fairness to the Tax Code by letting the top marginal tax rates return to the Clinton-era levels.

If we do not extend these tax cuts for the middle class, the typical Rhode Island family of four could see their taxes raised by an average of \$2,200 in 2013. This is not fair to middle-income Rhode Islanders, middle-income Americans.

Unfortunately, I fear many, if not all, of my Republican colleagues will

block this bill because it does not extend additional tax cuts for taxpayers who make over a quarter of a million dollars. Instead, they will continue to press for a proposal that doubles down on the failed economic policies of the Bush era for a plan that gives more tax cuts to the wealthy, while eliminating middle-class tax breaks for families with children. Indeed, one of the astounding things about the Republican proposal is it will, if you look closely, actually increase the tax burden on middle-income Americans.

In contrast, the bill Democrats propose will benefit every single taxpayer in America. It is only when someone exceeds a quarter of a million dollars in income that their income in excess of the quarter of a million dollar threshold will be subject to the top two Clinton-era rates.

The Democratic plan will extend tax cuts for the vast majority of Americans. Only the top 2 percent of earners, approximately 2.1 million out of more than 100 million households, households that have disproportionately benefited from the Bush tax cuts for more than a decade, will see their top rates revert to Clinton era levels. They will get to maintain their benefits up to \$250,000, but after that, they will see an increase. This is the nature of our progressive tax system, one which for generations has spread the burden across income levels, making sure that middle-income Americans do not shoulder a disproportionate burden of the taxes that support this government.

One of the key facts we have observed, now for more than a decade, is that these Bush tax cuts have been very costly. They have been a primary driver of this deficit, in addition to unpaid conflicts in Afghanistan and Iraq and a prescription drug program that was not paid for.

At least with this proposal, we are beginning to try to reverse that trend in a principled way. The wealthiest, those who enjoy the greatest economic privilege in the country should shoulder some of the responsibility, and should shoulder some of the effort in order to help us begin to repair the deficit, which has grown as a result of these massively costly and ineffective tax breaks the wealthiest have enjoyed since 2001.

The Democratic bill will cost the Federal Government \$249 billion in lost revenue for a 1-year extension. The Republican bill will cost \$405 billion. So, again, if you are talking about trying to get a handle on the deficit, compare a bill for \$249 billion, which is expensive but significantly less than \$405 billion Republican plan that would do virtually nothing to restore fairness to our tax code or create jobs. I do not think our Nation can afford this \$405 billion Republican alternative. There has been a promise or a mantra that has been offered over the last decade that these Republican tax cuts create jobs, and that they would contribute to our prosperity. But what we have seen,

particularly over the 8 years of the Bush administration, is that these tax cuts for the wealthy did not create jobs. I believe the evidence we have shows that there is very little correlation between these tax cuts for the wealthy and job creation or economic prosperity.

Additionally, tax cuts for the wealthiest Americans constrain our ability to pursue policies that will boost growth in the near-term.

Indeed, if we do not have the resources to invest in the country, in our infrastructure, in our education, in the health of our people, we will not have the economic dynamism needed to be competitive and give our children the future they deserve. Frankly, like the future our parents gave to us. A future that previous generations were able to provide for because of Federal tax policies which were fairer, which were more progressive, and which allowed for significant investment and job growth.

In my State, with a 10.9-percent unemployment rate and a national unemployment rate above 8 percent, it is imperative that we embrace fiscal policy that creates jobs in the short-term but also recognizes the need for long-term deficit reduction.

Democrats have offered plan after plan that would preserve and create jobs in a fair and fiscally responsible manner. We press for policies that will provide more of an economic bang for the buck, policies such as the continuation of unemployment benefits and policies that provide relief to middle-class households. What we have to do is go forward, support this effort, begin the hard and difficult task of not only continuing to support middle-income families but begin to address the issue of long-term deficit reduction.

I hope my colleagues do not block this effort. I hope my colleagues do not once again decide that doing nothing is a viable alternative to helping middle-income Americans and helping our economy overall. Unfortunately, they have done that in the past. Earlier this month, the Republicans blocked a bill that cut taxes for small businesses that hired new workers. The bill was estimated to create 1 million jobs nationally and could have created about 3,500 jobs in my State, but Republicans filibustered.

Just last week, the Republicans blocked a bill that would have given tax cuts to businesses that brought jobs to the United States and closed tax loopholes for companies that send jobs overseas. Republicans blocked that also. I believe the record is clear. Democrats have been trying week in and week out to create jobs here at home, to make our tax system fairer, to give middle-income families a break, and to do so in a fiscally responsible manner. The vote on the Middle Class Tax Cut Act will be upon us shortly. I hope it will be a vote on which we prevail and go forward together and provide tax relief to middle-class Ameri-

cans. I think it will be a first step toward the larger issues that were alluded to by my colleague from West Virginia dealing with the potential of sequestration at the end of this year, advancing policies that will grow our economy while beginning to restrain our deficit and provide a more stable, more sustainable economic environment for all Americans.

With that, Mr. President, I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Wyoming.

Mr. BARRASSO. Mr. President, it has been more than 30 years since I was in medical school, but I still remember the day my classmates and I stood to recite the Hippocratic Oath. That is an oath which has guided doctors for centuries. At its simplest, it can be boiled down to a single phrase: First, do no harm.

I was reminded of that last week when Federal Reserve Chairman Ben Bernanke testified before the Senate Banking Committee, speaking about the approach Washington should take toward healing our sick economy. He said: Do no harm. Well, that is good advice for Senators and for Presidents, just as it is good advice for doctors. The problem is that we have a President in the White House and Democrats in Congress who don't believe it and don't act that way.

Day after day, as the President makes one policy decision after another, his policies do harm to the American economy and to the American people. Just look at how sick our economy has gotten since President Obama took office. The Federal Reserve projects that the gross domestic product will grow by as little as 1.6 percent this year. That is not nearly good enough to give us the healthy economy we need.

The other night, "CBS Evening News" opened with this summary: "This is the worst economic recovery America has ever had." That is what they said—the worst.

Every other President has been able to bounce back from tough economic times. Not President Obama. Why is that? Why is our private sector economy sicker today than it was when the President took his oath of office? The Economist magazine put it this way. It gave a characterization of the President as someone "who has regulated to death a private sector he neither likes nor understands." And I agree. Look at the President's own words. He said that while government bureaucrats were struggling, the private sector is doing just fine. Doing just fine? It has gotten worse. Because of President Obama's failed economic policies, more than 23 million Americans are now either unemployed or underemployed. I think those 23 million people would say to President Obama: Do no harm. We have now had 41 straight months of unemployment above 8 percent. Our economy created just 80,000 jobs last month—just 80,000 jobs. More people

last month signed up for Social Security disability benefits than got a job. That is not doing just fine.

Look at what else the President said recently about small business owners. He said:

If you've got a business, you didn't build that. Somebody else made that happen.

I know a lot of small business owners who would say they worked extremely hard to build their own businesses. Farmers and ranchers work from sunup to past sundown, and everyone in the family works to keep the operation going. The corner drycleaner is trying to keep his doors open in tough economic times. The florist is trying to avoid laying off another salesperson in the shop.

Where I live, in Casper, WY, most of the businesses we have are small businesses. They were started by men and women with dreams and with determination. These people aren't looking for a government handout, but they don't think their government should be hostile toward them. They work hard every day. They have worked hard to build their businesses and have tried to expand and create jobs in the community. President Obama doesn't seem to grasp that. That is why, instead of doing all he can to help small businesses, he is burying them under more regulations, under more redtape, and under threats of increased taxes.

Democrats here in Washington like to say they are in favor of creating jobs, but then they turn around and do the very things that hurt the people who create the jobs in this country. Washington has already put out more than 36,000 pages of new regulations just since January of this year. If small business owners could talk to the President, I think they would tell him they do not need more paperwork. They would tell him: Mr. President, do no harm.

The damage President Obama's policies have done to our economy so far is terrible, and it is likely to get worse. We know the President's policies are holding back our economy from the type of normal recovery we have had from other recessions in the past. Even worse, he is paying for his failed policies by piling an unprecedented amount of debt on future generations. Today, our national debt is \$16 trillion. In just 3½ years, President Obama has managed to waste more taxpayer money than any other President, in my opinion, in American history.

Previous Presidents understood the danger of spending more than we can afford. President John Kennedy said: Persistently large deficits would endanger our economic growth and our military and defense commitments abroad. President Kennedy made that statement 50 years ago—in 1962. At the time he made that statement 50 years ago, Washington's budget deficit that year was \$7 billion. So we have gone from \$7 billion 50 years ago to a projected deficit of \$1,200 billion this year—from \$7 billion to \$1,200 billion.

That is 170 times greater. Has anything else increased that fast in the past 50 years in terms of expenses on anything—a daily newspaper or a bottle of Coke, which would have cost 10 cents in 1962? Using this multiplier of 170 times, that would be \$17 today if it had increased at the same rate as our Nation's deficit. And gasoline was about 30 cents a gallon back then. It would have to be more than \$50 a gallon today.

Look at it a different way. The share of Washington's total debt that is owed by every man woman and child in America today is almost \$51,000. The President is saddling our children with debt to pay bills we can't afford for policies that don't work and for goals the American people don't support.

The President demonstrates no sincere interest in cutting government spending, even as the Federal Government has grown less efficient, less effective, and less accountable. The American people look at Washington's out-of-control spending and debt, and their message to President Obama is this: Please, Mr. President, stop doing harm.

Remember, President Obama has been quite clear. He doesn't respect small businesses, and he thinks the private sector is doing fine. He has increased redtape, increased bureaucracy, and he has mortgaged America's future to give taxpayer dollars to his campaign contributors—to companies such as Solyndra.

When he has borrowed all he can—lots of it from China—he still doesn't slow down his spending. He says he needs to raise taxes to spend even more. The President already raised taxes through his health care plan. He pushed through \$½ trillion in taxes and fees. He pushed his individual mandate tax to force people to buy insurance. Now he is pushing again to impose massive new tax hikes on millions of successful families and small businesses.

The additional damage President Obama would do to our economy with his proposals to raise additional taxes would be enormous.

Now, that is not only my opinion; others agree. The accounting firm of Ernst & Young did a study of the President's plan and found it would wipe out 710,000 jobs. Middle-class workers who keep their jobs would see their wages go down. And 2.1 million business owners would be hit with higher taxes. That means less money left to expand and less money left to hire additional workers. Again, you can't be for jobs and against the people who create the jobs.

In short, as weak as our economic recovery has been these past 3 years—the worst ever, as reported in the news—the President's tax increases would make matters worse. Just look again at the difference between President Obama and a different Democratic President—John Kennedy. John Kennedy said:

The largest single barrier to full employment of our manpower and resources, and to a higher rate of economic growth, is the unrealistically heavy drag of Federal income taxes on private purchasing power, initiative, and incentive.

This lesson from President Kennedy is lost on President Obama. The only solution President Obama seems to see is to raise taxes and to raise them most on the very people and businesses we need to lead us to prosperity and economic recovery. Remember the words President Obama used when he was running for President in 2008. He said that even if his tax increases led to less revenue for the government—that is what he said, even if his tax increases led to less revenue for the government—he would raise taxes anyway as a matter of fairness. Fairness? Fairness? What about doing what is best for the country? As an orthopedic surgeon, when someone came to me with a broken leg, I would try to fix it. You don't break someone else's leg so the two people would then be equal and both would have broken legs. The President is promoting his vision of fairness over good common sense.

The American people know those who work hard and take risks should be free to enjoy the fruits of their labor. They should not have to suffer more angry attacks by the President and by Democrats in Washington. The American way should be to promote success, not to punish it.

President Obama should abandon his misguided agenda to replace the long-held American value of equal opportunity with the President's own desire for equal outcomes regardless of effort. Before he makes things even worse, he should stop and he should do no harm.

Finally, I would like to address one last issue where I think the Democrats in Congress and the White House need to reverse course. Our country faces what has been called a fiscal cliff. Unless Washington acts in January, taxes will increase across the board—not just on small businesses but on middle-class families and even low-income people. Republicans in the House have already voted to approve long-term spending cuts. This month they will vote to stop the tax increases. And Republicans have a plan to create a healthier economy by making our Tax Code simpler, flatter, and fairer for all Americans. What happens next is in the hands of the Democrats in the Senate.

Financial experts have warned that if Senate Democrats do not act by the end of this year, they could create a worldwide recession. This is very serious harm. Democrats appear to be ready to do it. The Senate Democratic leadership has made clear that they would let the country go over the fiscal cliff rather than compromise on tax hikes. President Obama recently said the same thing. He said that if Congress passes reasonable regulation that keeps tax rates where they are—even temporarily, he said, while we sort out long-term tax reform—he would veto

that. He would raise everyone's taxes and risk another worldwide recession. I ask the President to look at what he is saying and stop threatening grave damage to America in reckless pursuit of his political agenda.

Mr. President, do no harm.

Those words that sum up the Hippocratic Oath ring true for so many people across America today, for people who believe, as Ronald Reagan said, that government should stand by our side, not ride on our back.

It is time for Washington to change direction, to lower taxes, not raise them; to reduce redtape, not increase it; to control our spending, not rack up more debt; to free the entrepreneurial spirit, not stifle it.

First, before all else, if we are to heal our sick economy, it is a time for Washington to do no harm.

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

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mrs. SHAHEEN). The clerk will call the roll.

The bill clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. BROWN of Ohio. 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. BROWN of Ohio. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent to speak as if in morning business for up to 10 minutes.

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

Mr. BROWN of Ohio. Madam President, I rise to speak about the need to extend middle-class tax cuts.

We have a broad bipartisan consensus that middle-class families should not see their taxes increase on January 1. We know that if Congress does nothing, then the taxes will increase for the broad middle class on that date. We have a broad bipartisan consensus that should not happen.

So while we have this moment of agreement, we should act swiftly to extend tax cuts for 98 percent of American families—about 99 percent of the people in my State—right now, today, this week, soon. But we will not because special interests and their allies in Congress are holding middle-class tax cuts hostage. Why? It is the same old song: In order to protect the interests of millionaires and billionaires. It seems the default button—certainly in the majority of the House of Representatives and far too many in the Senate—is, no matter what, protect the interests of millionaires and protect the interests of billionaires.

Let's be clear. Whether it is our plan where we immediately—today, this week, as soon as possible—grant tax relief for people who are middle class, every American will get a tax cut on their first \$250,000 worth of income. If someone is making \$1 million a year, they still get a tax cut on their first \$250,000. If someone makes \$10 million a year, they still get a tax cut on their first \$250,000. They are only paying

roughly 4 percent on every \$1 above \$250,000. So we have bipartisan agreement. Let's lock that in so the middle class will get a tax cut.

There is an old cliché that the definition of insanity is doing the same thing over and over, expecting different results. We have been in this policy shop before, when they sold us the same flawed economic policies based upon tax cuts to the wealthy trickling down to the middle class. I was in the House of Representatives in the first part of the last decade when President Bush came to us. We had a huge budget surplus. In fact, in 2001, we had the largest budget surplus in American history—surplus, not deficit. Look what we are dealing with now.

So what happened? Two wars, Iraq and Afghanistan. It was a bad idea to go into Iraq, a contentious issue. The intelligence wasn't right that Congress was given. Many of us voted against it.

But put that aside. Nobody paid for the war in Iraq. Then there were the tax cuts that went overwhelmingly to the wealthiest people in our society. Nobody paid for those tax cuts. Then there was the Medicare partial privatization prescription drug bill. Nobody paid for that. So we went from the biggest budget surplus in American history to the biggest budget deficit. At the same time, the economic geniuses of the time that were running the government didn't use the words "trickle down," but that is what it is. They said: If we cut taxes on the richest people of our country, all that wealth will trickle down to the middle class and to working families and the poor and everybody will get richer and the economy will take off.

We had 8 years of that experiment. What happened? Between 2000 and 2010, we lost 5 million manufacturing jobs under those economic policies of giving huge tax breaks to the rich. The fundamental tenet and central core of that policy was huge tax cuts for the rich. What happened? We lost one-third of our manufacturing jobs. It is only since we have begun to bring some more fairness with the Recovery Act, with Wall Street reform, with the auto rescue—especially important in my State—and other things we have done did we see the economy grow from 2010. The unemployment rate in my State in 2009 was 10.6 percent. Now it is 7.3 percent. That is not good enough, but it is certainly progress. There were 5 million manufacturing jobs lost between 2000 and 2010. Since 2010, almost every single month we have gained, in the aggregate, some 450,000 to 500,000 manufacturing jobs.

So this policy of cutting taxes on the wealthy was going to create prosperity. It didn't work that way. We went from a surplus at the end of the Clinton years to massive deficits at the end of the Bush years.

Let's be clear. We are talking about returning the tax rates for the top 2 percent of the Americans to the 1993 level, the same year President Clinton

balanced the budget. Opposition to our bill to extend the middle-class tax cuts says that if millionaires have to pay the same top marginal tax rate they did in the Clinton years, then job creation will suffer. But it doesn't make sense. We want to go back to tax rates for the richest people in our country to what they were under President Clinton. During that 8 years, jobs increased by 22 million in this country. During the Bush years, with low tax rates for the rich, we lost 5 million manufacturing jobs and had absolutely anemic economic growth. One doesn't have to be an economist to make this comparison. Look at tax rates during the Clinton years and the Bush years.

I don't want to blame everything on President Bush. That doesn't get us anywhere. It makes people quit listening. But I do want to learn from history. Look at the tax system we had during the Clinton years and the tax system we had during the Bush years and make the contrast about what happened: 22 million jobs created; not so good during the Bush years, with very anemic job creation.

For too many people in my home State, the recession didn't mean they had to delay buying a new yacht. Workers in Steubenville, in Norwood, and Norwalk were struggling to stay afloat. They struggled to make ends meet. Too many are still struggling. That is why we have a responsibility to the people in New Hampshire and the people of Ohio and all over to pass the Middle Class Tax Cut Act of 2012.

The median household income in Ohio is \$47,358. For those families, a \$2,000 tax cut means a whole lot. We know that 98 percent of Americans who would benefit from this tax cut are going to put that money back into the economy. This isn't trickle down. This is, someone gets a tax cut like that and maybe they can put a downpayment on a car, maybe they can help pay their son or daughter's way to community college, maybe they can do some remodeling in their house, maybe they can do some things around the house that they need to do or take their kids to a movie or go out to dinner once in a while. But that \$2,000 truly means a lot for a family with an income of \$47,000. That is why this legislation is so important.

We can't afford to stall on this important middle-class tax cut for the Americans who need it most. The middle class in our society has been beat up long enough, for 10 years, where wages have been stagnant, where people are too anxious about layoffs, where people simply haven't had the opportunity to do what they need to do to build this great country.

I ask my colleagues to support this legislation.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Rhode Island.

Mr. WHITEHOUSE. Madam President, tomorrow we will have the opportunity to deliver a little bit of tax cer-

tainty to the American people by advancing the Middle Class Tax Cut Act. This legislation would prevent tax rates from increasing for the vast majority of American families and would preserve an important tax credit that currently helps millions of students and families afford the costs of a higher education.

The Middle Class Tax Cut Act is the right thing to do for the middle class, and I intend to vote for it. The question is, Will it be filibustered—a tax cut for millions of hard-working Americans, filibustered simply to protect the wealthiest Americans from paying a fair share? We will find out.

This is not a new story. In 2001, when President George W. Bush decided to spend a large portion of the surpluses he inherited from President Clinton to cut tax rates across the board, many Democrats opposed it because the tax cuts were unfairly weighted toward the highest income Americans. As a result of this opposition, Republicans were forced to set the tax cuts to expire at the end of 2010.

As 2010 drew to a close, President Obama and many Democrats in Congress, including myself, supported extending the tax cuts for middle-class families but letting the lower rates on income above \$200,000 for an individual and \$250,000 for a family revert to the Clinton-era levels as was scheduled. Senate Republicans filibustered that effort, refusing to allow the middle-class tax cut without a tax cut for America's wealthiest. Not wanting tax rates to go up on middle-class families still struggling during the recovery, the President and Senate Democrats reluctantly agreed to extend all the tax cuts through this year, which brings us to now. Once again, these tax rates are set to expire.

I would like to keep rates low for middle-class families. Families in Rhode Island are still struggling in the aftermath of the mortgage meltdown on Wall Street, and this is not the time to raise their taxes. But I agree with President Obama that for reasons of fairness and to begin to address our deficit, it would be wise not to extend the Bush tax cuts for high levels of income.

Bear in mind in this discussion that the Middle Class Tax Cut Act would benefit even high-end taxpayers. When we protect the rates for the first \$250,000 in income, it is the first \$250,000 for somebody making \$1 million; it is not just the first \$250,000 for a family who makes \$100,000 or \$185,000. Whether someone makes \$100 million or \$185 million, they still get the first \$250,000 tax cut. If a family, for instance, makes \$255,000, they would only see an increase on the \$5,000 and only to the Clinton-era rates that were in effect during the 1990s when our economy was thriving. A family earning \$255,000 would pay an extra \$150 as a result of this bill. Extending the lower tax rates for income above \$250,000 for 1 year, as the Republicans have proposed, would

add over \$49 billion to our deficit. Even in Washington \$49 billion is significant money, money that would have to be borrowed and would add to our deficit problem.

Many of the same Republicans who voted in the name of deficit reduction to end Medicare as we know it—deficit reduction was so important to them that they voted on the Ryan budget to end Medicare as we know it and would put thousands of dollars in costs on our seniors—would support deepening the deficit with high-end tax cuts. There is a double standard here, and for most Rhode Islanders these are exactly the wrong priorities when it comes to deficit reduction.

In addition to the deficit concerns, we should let the tax cuts at the top expire just for fairness reasons. Loopholes and special provisions allow many super high-income earners to pay lower tax rates than many middle-class families. According to the nonpartisan Congressional Research Service, 65 percent of individuals earning \$1 million or more annually pay taxes at a lower rate than median-income taxpayers making \$100,000 or less.

Let me say that again so it sinks in. Sixty-five percent, nearly two-thirds, of individuals earning \$1 million or more a year—the vast majority of individuals earning \$1 million or more annually—pay taxes at a lower rate than median-income taxpayers making \$100,000 or less. Because of the loopholes, because of what the special interests have done, our supposedly progressive tax system is upside down to the point where 65 percent of those earning over \$1 million pay a lower tax rate than the median-income taxpayer making \$100,000 or less.

Earlier this year we voted on my Paying a Fair Share Act, legislation that would implement the so-called Buffett rule and ensure that multimillion-dollar earners paid at least a 30-percent overall effective tax rate. During debate on my Buffett rule bill, I cited an IRS statistic that the top 400 taxpayers in America in 2008 who earned an average of \$270 million each in that 1 year paid the same 18.2-percent effective tax rate on average that is paid by a truckdriver in Providence, RI.

The single biggest factor driving this inequality is the special low rate for capital gains, 15 percent under the Bush tax cuts. The special capital gains rate allows hedge fund billionaires to avail themselves of that so-called carried interest loophole and pay taxes at lower rates than their doormen, secretaries, or chauffeurs. If we let the tax cuts at the top expire, these rates revert to 20 percent instead of 15 percent. Now 20 percent is still a pretty low rate for someone making \$100 million a year, but more like what a family making \$100,000 a year pays.

Let's also be very clear about one thing: The proposal that Republicans prefer, the tax cut bill introduced by Finance Committee ranking member

ORRIN HATCH, would raise taxes. It would raise taxes on 25 million lower and middle-income Americans. It would raise taxes on those 25 million Americans still struggling in these challenging economic times. Republicans claim not to want to raise taxes, but the Republican tax bill would let very popular lower and middle-income provisions expire that would cost 25 million Americans an average of \$1,000 each. Under the Republican bill, 12 million families would lose part or all of their child tax credit, 6 million families would lose part or all of their earned income tax credit, and 11 million families would lose their American opportunity tax credit which helps pay for college. It provides a \$2,500 tax credit for higher education. That popular tax credit has already helped millions of students and their parents pay for college, along with Pell grants, another subject of Republican attack.

Extending the American opportunity tax credit, the college tax credit, through 2013 would cost about \$3.2 billion. Republicans believe we cannot afford a \$3.2 billion investment in higher education for middle-class Americans, but we can afford \$49 billion in continued tax cuts for ultra high-income earners. A \$2,500 tax credit might seem pretty small in comparison to the \$92,000 average tax break that millionaires, or people earning \$1 million a year, would receive from another year of high-end tax cuts, but that \$2,500 may make a much bigger difference in the life of that middle-class family with that child trying to get into a college they can afford than that \$92,000 would make in the life of somebody earning well over \$1 million a year.

Once again, look at the priorities here. Republicans fought to protect the tax loopholes and taxpayer subsidies for big oil. They fought to protect the carried interest tax loophole that lets hedge fund billionaires pay lower tax rates than their chauffeurs and doormen. They want to go after the child tax credit, they want to go after the earned income tax credit, and they want to go after the college tuition tax credit. Those are priorities that, like our Tax Code, for too many Americans are upside down.

I hope Republicans will join us tomorrow in voting to advance a measure that would keep taxes low for the vast majority of Americans, and I urge them to reexamine their proposal to raise taxes on 25 million low- and middle-income Americans.

I thank the Chair, and I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Michigan.

Mr. LEVIN. Madam President, many of our Republican colleagues argue that we can't extend tax relief for middle-class families unless we also extend tax cuts for the wealthiest. They argue without tax cuts for the wealthiest 2 percent, we will harm job creators and slow the economy. Their arguments rely on faulty assumptions, mistaken

beliefs, and misleading statements. Let's get to the facts.

It is a fact that every American taxpayer would receive a tax cut under our bill on the first \$250,000 of their income. It is a fact that compared to the middle-class tax cut act now before us, the plan the Republicans have put forward would increase the deficit by \$155 billion. It is a fact that the bill Republicans have put forward, despite their professed support for tax cuts, would raise taxes on the middle class by failing to extend the 2009 tax cuts for middle-class families, including the American opportunity tax credit and credits that help families with children.

What is unfolding on the Senate floor now is the culmination of a rigid Republican adherence to tax cuts for the wealthy as the supreme goal of public policy. Republicans have demonstrated a willingness to risk government shutdowns. They have demonstrated a willingness to risk grave economic damage, to risk rising taxes on the vast majority of Americans in pursuit of their highest priority: lower taxes on the wealthiest 2 percent of us. They want to risk all of that in service to an idea that has already proved a failure.

When historians look back at the Republican dedication to the tax cuts for the wealthy, they will find it remarkable that so many fought so long and so hard to go back to a failed policy. Income for the typical American family peaked in the year 2000, not coincidentally just before the Republican tax-cuts-for-the-wealthy mania reached its zenith.

A June study by the Federal Reserve found that the average middle-class family's net worth had fallen by 40 percent from 2007 to 2010. In 2010, the bottom 99 percent of income earners reaped just 7 percent of total income growth while 93 percent of all growth flowed to the top 1 percent.

As David Leonhardt of the New York Times reported on Monday:

The top-earning 1 percent of households now bring home about 20 percent of total income, up from less than 10 percent 40 years ago. The top earning 1/10,000th of households—each earning at least \$7.8 million a year, many of them working in finance—bring home almost 5 percent of income, up from 1 percent 40 years ago.

Perhaps this vast accumulation of wealth would arguably be acceptable if it had resulted in faster economic growth that produced new jobs and helped average Americans prosper. Indeed, since the time of President Reagan, America has been told that the rising tide lifting up the wealthy would lift all boats, and that the benefits would trickle down to all Americans. Our Republican colleagues today argue that we must continue the President Bush tax cuts for the wealthy or risk harm to the "job creators."

But the Republican emphasis on policies that are more and more generous to the wealthiest have utterly failed to spark economic growth or create the jobs we need. Their experiment failed.

The Bush tax cuts coincided with the slowest rate of job growth in American history. Economic growth, even before the financial crisis, nearly sent our economy into depression and was woefully short by historic standards.

The failure of the Bush policies to spur economic growth and job creation underlies the failure of another promise from supporters of tax cuts for the wealthy, the promise that those cuts would pay for themselves. Republicans backing the tax cuts of 2001 and 2003 painted those grand scenarios that grow so rapidly that it would yield increased tax revenue. But instead of growing Federal coffers, we got a flood of red ink.

So the policy of tax cuts for the wealthy failed as a fiscal policy. It added to our deficit. It failed as an economic policy, coinciding with weak growth and economic output and job creation, and it failed as a vital test of public policy in a democratic society because it failed the fairness test. Instead, it facilitated massive accumulations of wealth for a fortunate few while most Americans have struggled just to tread water.

Yet our Republican colleagues persist in their pursuit of their failed policy—persist, in fact, to the point that they are willing to force a tax increase on more than 90 percent of taxpayers and potentially send our economy tumbling back into recession in adherence to that failed policy.

We are not arguing against this policy of tax cuts for the wealthiest because we seek to denigrate success or to stoke class warfare, as some Republicans allege. We are arguing against these policies because they are broken, they have failed, and they are unfair. We should reject them lest they do even more harm. We should reject the Republican pursuit of tax cuts for the wealthy at all costs, every other consideration be damned. We should allow middle-class families to keep a few of their hard-earned dollars and pass the Middle Class Tax Cut Act. At a minimum we should vote tomorrow to overcome the filibuster threat and proceed to debate this singularly important issue.

Madam President, I yield the floor.

THE PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Washington.

VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN ACT

Mrs. MURRAY. Thank you, Madam President. I come to the floor this afternoon to talk about a very important bill, the Violence Against Women Act. It is hard for me to believe it has actually been months now since we first came to the floor to talk about this important legislation, which is why we are here again this afternoon: to try and pass a bill into law that has consistently received broad bipartisan approval. It is a bill that passed the Senate now almost 3 months ago by a vote of 68 to 31.

The Violence Against Women Act has successfully helped provide lifesaving assistance to hundreds of thousands of

women and their families. Every time we have reauthorized this bill we have included bipartisan provisions to address those who are not being protected by it. But here we are back on the Senate floor urging support for a bill that should not be controversial.

So, today, the women of the Senate and the men who support the Violence Against Women Act have come to the floor with a simple, straightforward message for our friends in the House of Representatives: Stop the games and pass the inclusive, bipartisan Senate bill without delay.

In the coming weeks we are going to be making sure this message resonates loudly and clearly both in the Nation's Capital and back home in our States because we are not going to back down, not while there are thousands of women across our country who are currently excluded from the law. In fact, for Native and immigrant women and LGBT individuals, every moment our inclusive legislation to reauthorize the Violence Against Women Act is delayed is another moment they are left without the resources and protection they deserve.

The numbers are staggering: 1 in 3 Native women will be raped in their lifetimes—1 in 3—and 2 in 5 of them are victims of domestic violence. They are killed at 10 times the rate of the national average.

These shocking statistics aren't isolated to one group of women: 25 to 35 percent of women in the LGBT community experience domestic violence in their relationships, and 3 in 4 abused immigrant women never entered the process to obtain legal status, even though they were eligible, because their abuser husbands never filed their paperwork.

This should make it perfectly clear to our colleagues in the other Chamber that their current inaction has a real impact on the lives of women across America who are affected by violence—women such as Deborah Parker.

Deborah is the vice-chairwoman of the Tulalip Tribe in my home State of Washington. Deborah was repeatedly abused starting at a very young age by a nontribal man who lived on her reservation. Not until the abuse stopped around the fourth grade did Deborah realize she wasn't the only child suffering at the hands of that assailant. At least a dozen other young girls had fallen victim to that same man.

He was a man who was never arrested for his crimes, never brought to justice, and still walks free today, all because he committed these heinous acts on the reservation and is someone who is not a member of the tribe. It is an unfortunate reality that he is unlikely to be held liable for his crimes.

Reauthorizing an inclusive VAWA is a matter of fairness. Deborah's experience and the experience of other victims of this man do not represent an isolated incident. For the narrow set of domestic violence crimes laid out in the Violence Against Women Act, trib-

al governments should be able to hold accountable defendants who have a strong tie to the tribal community.

I was very glad to see Republican Congresswoman JUDY BIGGERT and several of her Republican colleagues echo these very same sentiments last week. In a letter to Speaker BOEHNER and Leader CANTOR, the Republican Members explicitly called on their party leadership to end this gridlock and accept "Senate-endorsed provisions that would protect all women of domestic violence, including college students, LGBT individuals, Native Americans, and immigrants."

So today we are here to urge Speaker BOEHNER to listen to the members of his own caucus and join us in taking a major step to uphold our government's promise to protect its people. I was so proud to have served in the Senate back in 1994 with Senator BOXER, who is here with me today, when we first passed this bill. Since we took that historic step, VAWA has been a great success in coordinating victims' advocates, social service providers, and law enforcement professionals to meet the challenges of combating domestic violence. Along with this bipartisan support, it has received praise from law enforcement officers, prosecutors, judges, victim service providers, faith leaders, health care professionals, advocates, and survivors.

VAWA has attained such broad support because it works. Where a person lives, their immigration status, or whom they love should not determine whether perpetrators of domestic violence are brought to justice. These women across this country cannot afford any further delay—not on this bill.

Today the New York Times ran an editorial on this bill that gets to the heart of where we are. It began by saying:

House Republicans have to decide which is more important: Protecting victims of domestic violence or advancing the harsh antigay and anti-immigrant sentiments of some on their party's far right. At the moment, harshness is winning.

But the editorial pointed out, it doesn't have to be that way. It pointed out:

In May, 15 Senate Republicans joined with the chamber's Democratic majority to approve a strong reauthorization bill.

Finally, it ends with what we all know we need to take this bill forward: Leadership from Congressman BOEHNER.

Madam President, I ask unanimous consent that the letter be printed in the RECORD.

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

[From the New York Times, July 23, 2012]

DELAY ON DOMESTIC VIOLENCE

With Congress just days away from its August break, House Republicans have to decide which is more important: protecting victims of domestic violence or advancing the harsh antigay and anti-immigrant sentiments of some on their party's far right. At the moment, harshness is winning.

At issue is reauthorizing the Violence Against Women Act, the landmark 1994 law central to the nation's efforts against domestic violence, sexual assault and stalking.

In May, 15 Senate Republicans joined with the chamber's Democratic majority to approve a strong reauthorization bill. Instead of embracing the Senate's good work, House Republicans passed their own regressive version, ignoring President Obama's veto threat. The bill did not include new protections for gay, immigrant, American Indian and student victims contained in the Senate measure. It also rolled back protections for immigrant women, including for undocumented immigrants who report abuse and cooperate with law enforcement.

Negotiations on a final bill are in limbo. Complicating matters, there is a procedural glitch. The Senate bill imposes a fee to pay for special visas that go to immigrant victims of domestic abuse. This runs afoul of the rule that revenue-raising measures must begin in the House. Mr. BOEHNER's leadership could break the logjam—but that, of course, would also require his Republican colleagues to drop their narrow-minded opposition to stronger protections for all victims of abuse.

Unless something changes, Republicans will bear responsibility for blocking renewal of a popular, lifesaving initiative. This seems an odd way to cultivate moderate voters, especially women, going into the fall campaign.

Mrs. MURRAY. Today the effort we are beginning in the Senate is an effort that will continue for as long as it takes. It is a call for the same thing: Leadership. It is time for Speaker BOEHNER to look beyond ideology and partisan politics. It is time for him to look at the history of a bill that again and again and again has been supported and expanded by Republicans and Democrats. It is time for him to do the right thing and pass our inclusive, bipartisan Violence Against Women Act because the lives of women across the country literally depend on it.

I am delighted my colleague from California is here with me. She has been with us every step of the way in this bipartisan bill that we have moved forward. With the women and men who support us, we are going to continue to be loud and strong. We need to pass the bill, and Speaker BOEHNER needs to take it up for the women who are watching and waiting.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The assistant bill clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

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

Mrs. BOXER. Madam President, I am proud to follow Senator MURRAY in her call to pass the bipartisan Senate bill which would reauthorize the Violence Against Women Act. The Leahy-Crapo bill is the only bill that will protect all of the women in our country.

I well remember when Vice President BIDEN was then-Senator BIDEN, and in 1990 he wrote the Violence Against Women Act. I was in the House at the time. He asked if I would carry the House version of his bill. I was ex-

tremely honored to do that. We were able to pass small portions of the bill early in the 1990s.

But it wasn't until I came to the Senate that we actually passed the entire bill, and I think it was Senator SCHUMER, who was then in the House, who picked up the ball on the bill in the House. It got passed. Since then we have seen a decline in domestic violence of 53 percent. But even so, even while the law is working, we have to strengthen it because, as the Presiding Officer knows because she is a leader in this cause, every day three women are killed by their abusive partners. Let me say that again. Every single day, three women are killed by their abusive partners.

So in order to change this terrible statistic, we need to reauthorize the Violence Against Women Act, and we need to improve it to protect more victims of domestic violence. That is what the Senate did. I am very proud of the Senate. We passed the bipartisan bill with a vote of 68 to 31, with 15 Republicans voting in favor.

The Presiding Officer also worked hard to get the Transportation bill done. It was a very similar situation. The Senate had a bipartisan bill; it was a very popular bill. It had over 70 votes. The House was very slow to take up the measure, and we kept saying: Pass the Senate bill. Finally, they passed a small bill, and we got to conference, and we hammered it out.

But here is the thing: We don't have time on this bill. We need to ask the House to take a look at our bill and to understand how important it is that everybody be included in the Violence Against Women Act.

I am going to put up a chart that shows us how many people are left out of the House Violence Against Women Act.

(Mr. CASEY assumed the chair.)

Mrs. BOXER. Now, I say Mr. President, we can see that 30 million people are left out of the House Violence Against Women Act. That is why we have seen a number of colleagues in the House call for passage of a bill such as the Senate's bill, because we include everybody. It isn't fair to leave entire groups out of the protections of the Violence Against Women Act, and that is exactly what they do in the House.

The House bill ignores the wishes of law enforcement and excludes key protections for 4 million immigrants. It excludes 16 million LGBT persons from critical legal protections and services. More than 44 percent of LGBT victims who seek shelter are turned away.

The House bill would also prevent Indian tribes from protecting almost 2 million Native American women from their abusers. This is outrageous. It is an extremely outrageous omission, given that nearly half of all Native American women have been victims of domestic violence. Let me repeat that: Almost half of all Native American women have been victims of domestic violence. Yet among the 30 million left

out of the House Violence Against Women Act, we see the exclusion of the Native American community.

Despite the epidemic of sexual assault and dating violence on our college campuses, the House bill leaves out improved protections for more than 11 million college women.

The House bill would deny vital protections to women such as an immigrant woman who is my constituent who had been stabbed by her boyfriend 19 times while she was 3 months pregnant. During her ordeal, her boyfriend drove her from one part of town to the other, refusing to take her to the emergency room, even though she was losing consciousness and bleeding profusely.

Thankfully, the woman received medical attention, the baby was not lost, and she made a full recovery. This brave woman, despite her physical and emotional scars, fully cooperated with police and the prosecutor to eventually bring her abuser to justice. A women's shelter helped her get a U visa based on her cooperation with law enforcement, and she and her child were able to move on with a new life.

If we look at some of the most vulnerable people living in America today, in addition to our children—and I know what the Presiding Officer is dealing with in Pennsylvania, with an unbelievable, horrific, violent crime that took place on a college campus over a period of years—we know our children are vulnerable, and our immigrant women are extremely vulnerable, too, because they are scared they are going to be kicked out of the country and, therefore, their abuser knows that and puts them in a horrific situation, where if they go to the police to report the abuse on themselves and their kids, they may be kicked out of the country.

That is why we have the U visas. The U visas say: If someone cooperates with law enforcement, they will not be kicked out. So we have to include immigrant women and, by extension, their children in the 30 million who are left out. We have to add them back in.

The House bill fails to ensure that people such as Jonathon, a gay man who was abused by his partner of 13 years, receives full protection under the law and cannot be discriminated against.

When Jonathon did seek shelter from his abuser, he was refused by three L.A. area domestic violence shelters, none of which could give him a reason for excluding him. But he was left out because this community was not mentioned in the Violence Against Women Act. It is not mentioned in the House act, and Jonathon falls among the 30 million who are left out of the House act.

The House bill also leaves out students such as Mika, who was physically assaulted by her ex-boyfriend while she was in college in San Francisco. Her ex-boyfriend broke her phone, broke into her home, stole her belongings, stalked her at school, and severely beat her.

She got a restraining order against him but struggled to get her school to enforce that restraining order. She should not have had to struggle. She should have had the school on her side.

Sadly, only the Senate bill would help her, not the House bill. The House bill does not protect these women. Only the Senate bill ensures that all women, LGBT individuals, and college students are protected equally under the law, as well as Native American women.

The consequences of denying anyone the critical protections in the Violence Against Women Act are too great. When someone is bleeding on the floor, we need to help them in this great country. We do not want to start asking them questions. Are you gay? Are you straight? Are you an immigrant? Are you a college student? Are you a Native American? If someone is bleeding on the floor, we help them in this country. That is what America is about.

We see the compassion and the love every day in our country, and we saw it pour out in Aurora, CO, for an unspeakable situation. When there is violence, we have to help the victims. Only the Senate bill, the Senate Violence Against Women Act, the Leahy-Crapo bipartisan Senate bill, affords protection to all our people.

So what we are saying to Speaker BOEHNER is: Please hear our plea. This is not about the Senate saying it is any better than the House. What we are saying is, in a bipartisan way, we figured out a bill that will protect everybody, and we are asking Members to pick up that bill and pass it.

There are some technical issues—a blue-slip question. We have studied that. What did we find out? Those technical problems can be overcome in 5 seconds. So there is no reason why the House cannot pick up and pass the Senate bill.

The safety of women across the country, the safety of all our communities, is at stake, and it is time we pass it.

In closing, I would say this: Vice President BIDEN is a wonderful human being, and he could not sit back when he was in the Senate and see violence against women go on and on and on without any way to ensure that women could get into shelters, that women could get counseling, that law enforcement could be trained, that doctors could be trained, that nurses could be trained, and that we enhance the penalties for those who would harm another in a domestic violence situation.

He had tremendous foresight. In this bill, Senator LEAHY and Senator CRAPO have amazing foresight because they have strengthened this. We have cut back domestic violence by 53 percent. But we have a long way to go when three women a day are killed—killed—by their abuser.

Again, we have a very clear message for the House: Please join hands with us. Please, with all the politics and all the fighting and all the problems, there

are certain times when we should reach out to one another and protect the American people. This is one of those times. We have the bill. It is bipartisan. It works. Please accept it, and let's get on with our work.

Thank you very much.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Connecticut.

Mr. BLUMENTHAL. Mr. President, let me begin by thanking my colleague from California for her leadership over many years and her steadfast courage and vision on this issue; likewise, my colleague from the State of Washington who spoke before her, Senator MURRAY, for her leadership, as well and others in this body who passed VAWA, the Senate's version of that measure, S. 1925, by an overwhelming bipartisan margin, in fact, 68 to 31, back in April.

This measure truly is bipartisan, and it has commanded overwhelming support in this body and, more important, from across the American public.

In Connecticut, I hear again and again from men and women, members of all communities, that the Violence Against Women Act is an idea whose time came 18 years ago but continues to demand the kind of respect and support the Senate has given it.

Now is the time for the House to adopt the Senate bill because it is more inclusive and more effective. For a bill that works, as this measure truly does, to include more potential victims, to provide more tools of enforcement is absolutely appropriate and necessary at this point in our history.

Of course, I hear from Connecticut constituents such as Hillary from Fairfield, who tells me:

One in four women, worldwide and in the U.S. is at risk for violence at some point in her life. Men are at risk too, and VAWA supports provisions for men to be safe and healthy in their relationships as well. VAWA supports programs for both men and women perpetrators of abuse to get the help they need to stop the violence, and it ensures that women and their children have a safe place to go when in danger.

Susan from New Haven:

Reauthorizing VAWA sends the message that survivors of sexual assault, domestic violence, dating violence and stalking must have the tools to heal and reclaim their lives; that women and girls, our communities and our families, must be safe; that the next generation must be engaged in this effort—and that the evolution of our collective thinking on how to break the cycle of violence is a national priority. To send any other message is unconscionable. Congress must act swiftly. Renew VAWA now.

Renew VAWA is the message we carry to the House: Renew VAWA with the improvements and reforms we have wisely adopted in this body and continue a measure that has benefited 54,000—let me repeat that, 54,000—domestic violence victims in Connecticut alone, millions across the country, and has provided organizations in Connecticut nearly \$5 million in just the last fiscal year from VAWA programs.

These measures make a difference in people's lives. So often we can speak

and think in this Chamber without the kind of connection to individual lives, where we see legislation, our acts here, making a difference. This measure offers us the opportunity to make a difference by broadening and making more inclusive this measure.

It makes it more effective. I am proud it makes it more effective with an amendment I offered to prosecute criminals who use the Internet to intimidate, threaten, harass, and incite violence against women and children.

The use of the Internet is increasingly prevalent for these kinds of crimes. The legislation I introduced, included in the Senate's bill, enhances current law for the Internet age. That section of the bill is not in the House version. It should be. That is a reason I am urging the House to adopt the Senate version.

But it is also more inclusive in including lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender constituents—whom all of us have—in these protections.

LGBT Americans experience domestic violence at the same rate as the general population, but they often face discrimination in accessing services. In fact, a survey found that 45 percent of LGBT victims were turned away when they sought help from a domestic violence shelter. There is a real need—an unquestionable and immediate need—to improve the access and availability of services for LGBT victims, and our measure does it; the House version does not.

Over 800 constituents—and I welcome them in contacting me—have written me to urge that we preserve the LGBT provisions of the Senate bill as VAWA moves forward.

S. 1925 also includes protections for Native Americans that are absolutely vital. One of the invisible, unknown, unrealized, unacknowledged facts about this community is that nearly three out of five Native American women are assaulted by their spouses or intimate partners. One-third of all American Indian women will be raped during their lifetime. Those numbers alone should dictate the result. The members of the Tribal Council of the Mashantucket Pequot Tribal Nation and others across the country—the Mashantucket Pequots happen to be from Connecticut—have appealed to me to protect the tribal provisions in the Senate measure, not to waiver, not to relent to the House version.

Again, I urge the House to adopt our measure.

Protecting immigrant populations ought to be a given for the Senate. The House version of VAWA would “endanger the safety of noncitizen victims and society as a whole.” That is a quote from the International Institute of Connecticut, which has urged me to hold firm to support the provisions of the Senate bill and not surrender to the House and relent on protecting immigrants who need this help.

Again, I quote. The House version would “endanger the safety of noncitizen victims and society as a whole.”

VAWA symbolizes for our immigrants, those who come to this country, what makes America great. We protect everyone who needs it. We enforce the laws equally without discriminating against people as to their national heritage or origin or ethnicity or race or other background. Equal protection of the law is one of the unique constitutional principles of the American democracy and the American Constitution. Our landmark measure enhances and enforces equal protection of the law.

I hope this body stands firm. I hope the House understands that it is not one body being better than another. We are way beyond that kind of comparison at this point. It is one version of the same legislation, one set of provisions seeking a common goal, doing it better, more inclusively, and more effectively in the great tradition of the legislative process.

I urge the House of Representatives to put partisanship aside, to put aside any kind of cameral personal differences and take immediate action to support all in America who are victims of domestic violence and sexual abuse.

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

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

Mr. THUNE. Mr. President, I rise today to talk about the need to extend the current tax rates and to reject the tens of billions of dollars in higher taxes the President and Senate Democrats want to impose next year. I believe the upcoming vote or votes will be some of the most important votes the Senate holds this year.

As early as tomorrow, we will hopefully vote on tax plans that represent two competing philosophies. One plan, introduced by Majority Leader REID and supported by Senate Democrats and the President, proposes higher taxes on American entrepreneurs, investors, and small business owners.

The Democratic plan represents the philosophy that if only the government could raise enough money, Congress could somehow spend our way to prosperity. It is a viewpoint that holds that the Federal Government can spend hard-working American tax dollars better than they can. Rather than leaving the money in the private economy where it can be invested or spent by private citizens, this view holds that the government should instead bring these dollars here to Washington, DC, to redistribute them through the Federal bureaucracy. This philosophy was probably best articulated by the President recently when he said, "If you've got a business—you didn't build that. Someone else made that happen." In other words, no one is extraordinary by

virtue of their hard work and accomplishments. When someone works hard and succeeds, we should not celebrate that person as an example to others, we should instead take from him or her in order—again, as the President said—to "spread the wealth," to quote another of his lines.

I am hopeful that the tax-and-spend philosophy of the Reid tax plan, however, will not be our only option. I hope we will also have the opportunity to vote on legislation introduced recently by Senator HATCH and Minority Leader MCCONNELL. This plan takes a very different approach by following the view that now is not the time to raise anyone's taxes. This view holds that our American free enterprise system works best when government gets out of the way, leaving Americans free to pursue their hopes and dreams. One way we can leave Americans free to pursue their dreams is by not raising their taxes next year. And we especially should not raise taxes when Americans are struggling to get by.

Ironically, the view that we should extend current tax policy at a time when the economy is weak was articulated, interestingly enough, by the President just 2 years ago when he signed an extension of all of the tax rates. At that time, President Obama said that raising taxes would have "been a blow to our economy just as we're climbing out of a recession." Interestingly enough, real GDP growth when he made that statement was around 3.1 percent. That was the average when the President made the statement that if we raised taxes, it would have "been a blow to our economy." Well, real GDP growth this year is on a pace to average 2 percent and possibly less. Those numbers are consistently being revised and being revised downward. If it did not make sense to raise taxes when our economy was recovering, why does it make sense now to raise taxes as our economy is slowing? How does it make sense to raise taxes in an environment where over 23 million Americans are out of work or underemployed, when the unemployment rate has been stuck at over 8 percent now for 41 consecutive months?

The votes tomorrow are incredibly important—not because either plan is likely to become law immediately but because Americans deserve to know where their Senators stand when they go to vote this November. Do you stand for stable tax rates that encourage work and investment or do you stand for increasing taxes on the very businesses we rely on for job creation? Do you stand for a free enterprise system that rewards hard work and innovation or do you stand for making it more difficult for small businesses to grow and succeed? These are the important choices that will have a real impact on hard-working Americans and on our economy at large.

Consider the Reid tax plan. According to the Joint Committee on Taxation, this plan will impose a tax in-

crease on nearly 1 million business owners. Proponents of this increase are going to argue that it will only affect a small segment of our economy. Yet the Joint Tax Committee estimates that the President's tax increase in the Reid plan will hit more than 50 percent of all income earned by businesses that pay their taxes at individual rates. These are so-called passthrough businesses, and they apply to S corporations, partnerships, sole proprietorships, and LLCs. They are the ones who are going to see their cost of business go up next year for no other reason than the desire by the Senate Democrats to "tax the rich."

Small businesses, which accounted for two-thirds of the net new jobs over the last decade, will be particularly impacted by these tax increases. According to a survey of small businesses by the National Federation of Independent Business, 75 percent of small businesses are organized as pass-through businesses. NFIB also found that the businesses most likely to be hit by the Reid tax increases are those businesses employing between 20 and 250 employees. According to the U.S. census, the data that they collect, these businesses employ more than 25 percent of the workforce. So the million small businesses that, according to the Joint Committee on Taxation, will see their taxes go up under this proposal employ 25 percent of the American workforce and account for over 50 percent of all passthrough income. So you are going to see taxes go up dramatically on over 50 percent of pass-through income and on small businesses that employ 25 percent of the American workforce.

Does that make sense in this economy? It should be no wonder that the political party advocating this kind of tax policy has also presided over the weakest economic recovery literally since the end of World War II.

The impact of the Reid tax increase on small business will be bad enough, but unfortunately these tax increases will have significant ramifications for our entire economy. According to a study released earlier this month by Ernst & Young, the Reid tax plan would hurt our economy in the long term. According to Ernst & Young, the tax increases in the Reid plan would reduce economic output by 1.3 percent. This would mean \$200 billion less in economic activity if translated into today's economy. The Ernst & Young study estimates that the tax policies in the Reid plan would reduce employment by one-half percent, meaning roughly 710,000 fewer jobs.

The study estimates the Senate Democrats' approach will reduce the Nation's capital stock by 1.4 percent and investment by 2.4 percent, and this approach will reduce aftertax wages by 1.8 percent. So we will be reducing investment, costing the economy over 700,000 jobs, and reducing aftertax wages for hard-working Americans in this country. Yet here we are talking

about a tax increase that would do dangerous damage and harm to our economy.

I would say, these aren't partisan statistics compiled by Senate Republicans. These are the estimates by a respected accounting firm as to what will happen if we follow the tax policies proposed by Senate Democrats and the President. We will have less economic growth, fewer jobs, and a lower standard of living in the long run. These numbers simply confirm common sense. If we want individuals and businesses to spend and invest more, we shouldn't raise the amount of the income they have to pay to the Federal Government, and that is what this does.

We have major tax policy decisions to make, decisions reflected in the votes we will take tomorrow. Do we want to encourage capital formation in this country? In other words, do we want to encourage investors to put their capital at risk so that businesses will have money to make new investments? Well, by raising the capital gains tax rate from 15 percent to 20 percent for some investors, the Reid bill will make it less attractive to invest in our economy. According to an Ernst & Young study from February of this year, the top rate of capital gains will rise from 56.7 percent on January 1 of next year, after taking into account corporate, investor, and State taxes. This will be the second highest combined capital gains tax rate in the world among OECD and BRIC nations. America already has the highest corporate tax rate in the developed world. It appears as if the Senate Democrats are going for No. 1 when it comes to capital gains taxes as well.

If there is anything I can say that is positive about the Democrats' tax increase plan, it is that at least they rejected the President's proposal to nearly triple the tax on dividends paid by upper income Americans. Even Senate Democrats, who are not shy about raising taxes, understand the President's proposal to impose a top rate of over 40 percent on dividend income would be terrible for millions of seniors who rely on dividend-paying stocks and for those American companies that rely on dividends to raise capital.

Instead, the Reid bill would increase the top rate on dividends from 15 percent to 20 percent. I believe this tax increase is bad policy, but it won't be nearly as harmful as the President's approach would have been.

On another issue of critical importance, however, the Senate Democrats have decided to run to the left of this liberal administration, and this is on the issue of the estate tax, better known as the death tax. The Reid plan would impose a huge new death tax on family farms and businesses next year. Under current law, businesses and farms are exempted from the death tax on the first \$5 million of the value of an estate. Values above this amount are taxed at a top rate of 35 percent.

I believe we ought to completely eliminate the death tax, and I have introduced legislation, with 37 of my colleagues, to do so. But the current death tax treatment exempts the large majority of family farms and businesses from the tax. The Reid plan, however, would allow the death tax to revert to the provisions in effect before 2001.

This means, under the Reid plan, that family farms and businesses will face a top death tax rate of 55 percent on estates above \$1 million in value.

This is a massive death tax increase on tens of thousands of small businesses and family farms across America. In fact, according to the Joint Committee on Taxation, the Reid plan will increase the number of estates subject to the death tax in 2013 from 3,600 estates under current law to 50,300 estates under the Reid proposal.

According to the Joint Committee on Taxation, the Reid plan will subject 20 times more farming estates to the death tax in 2013—a 2,000-percent increase. The Reid plan will subject 9 times more small businesses to the death tax—a 900-percent increase.

If the death tax policy in the Reid plan were made permanent over the next 10 years, the number of small businesses subject to the death tax will increase from 1,800 to 23,700, and the number of family farms subject to the death tax would increase from 900 to 25,200. That is all data put together and reported out by the Joint Committee on Taxation.

The reason for this massive expansion of the death tax is because the \$1 million exemption amount is much too low, given the value of successful farms and small businesses today. I will use my State of South Dakota as a good example. Take family farms in South Dakota. According to the Department of Agriculture, the average size of a farm in my State is 1,374 acres. According to the USDA, the average value per acre of cropland in South Dakota is about \$1,810. This means the average value of a farm in my State is nearly \$2.5 million. So if you have a death tax law that only exempts \$1 million and has a 55-percent top rate on everything above that, imagine what that is going to do to the average farm in a State such as South Dakota. And South Dakota is not unique in that regard. We have seen land values rise across America's heartland, from Nebraska to Missouri to Montana.

Let's be clear: The Reid bill would subject many more families to a punitive double tax—the death tax—when a loved one passes away. It will make it much more difficult to pass family farms and businesses from one generation to the next. And we should never forget that most family farms are land rich and cash poor. Lots of assets, land values, and those sorts of things, but what you don't want to see happen is a family farm that can be passed on to the next generation have to be liquidated to pay the IRS because of a punitive death tax. That is precisely what

this policy, as proposed by the Democrats' plan, would do.

The USDA estimates 84 percent of farm assets are comprised of farm real estate. That is where most farm and ranch families have their assets. That means family farms don't have extra cash on hand to pay the death tax. Instead, they will have to sell off land or take on additional debt in order to pay these higher taxes. That is exactly what we don't want to see happen in this country.

I don't believe the President's proposal—which is a \$3.5 million exemption and a 45-percent top rate—is adequate, but it is much better than what Senate Democrats in the Reid plan have proposed.

Let me summarize, if I might. Tomorrow we are going to vote on the Reid proposal to raise taxes at a time when Americans are hurting and our economy is fragile. The Reid proposal will impose higher taxes of more than \$50 billion on successful small business owners and families. It will hurt our economy, reducing economic growth and job creation at the same time it lowers wages for hard-working American families. It will impose a new death tax of \$31 billion on 43,100 family farmers, ranchers, and small businesses.

We will also vote, I hope—I hope—on the Hatch-McConnell alternative plan to keep tax rates where they are, to prevent a tax increase on any American next year. In addition to keeping tax rates where they are, the Hatch-McConnell proposal provides instructions to the Finance Committee to report out fundamental tax reform legislation by 12 months from the date of enactment of the bill. The Hatch-McConnell approach is the correct approach: Prevent a tax increase now and move to fundamental tax reform next year.

Of course, extending current tax law temporarily is only a short-term fix. What is needed is comprehensive tax reform, much like the Tax Reform Act of 1986. Real tax reform will drive economic growth higher, will lead to robust job creation, and will result in more revenue to the Federal Government.

But real tax reform is going to require Presidential leadership, something that has, unfortunately, been lacking over the past 3½ years. Perhaps next year we will have a President truly willing to commit to tax reform, a President who is not content with simply releasing a 23-page framework for corporate tax reform.

But until we get to comprehensive tax reform, the least we can do now is to ensure Americans do not face a massive new tax hike during a weak economy. I hope we will get that vote tomorrow. I hope Senate Democrats will find their way to give us a vote on extending the tax rates for all Americans so that small businesses aren't whacked with a big tax increase next year, so that our economy doesn't get

plunged perhaps into a recession, and we don't see that unemployment rate tick even higher.

Those are the results, those are the outcomes, those are the types of things that are going to happen, according to all the independent analysis, with the tax proposal that is before us today.

Remember, there is always this idea that somehow, if we raise more taxes, we will be able to pay down more of the debt. Well, I have to say, it has been my experience that when there is money around Washington, DC, it gets sucked up and it gets spent. I think a lot of Americans would welcome the idea of seeing their taxes going to pay down the debt, but what we will see is a massive tax increase on Americans used to grow government here in Washington, DC. That is not what the American people want, and that is not what we in the Senate should be for.

Mr. President, I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Montana.

Mr. BAUCUS. Mr. President, Abraham Lincoln is quoted as saying:

I am a firm believer in the people. If given the truth, they can be depended upon to meet any national crisis. The great point is to bring them the real facts.

There have been a number of inaccurate claims over the past several weeks accusing Democrats of proposing tax hikes. Nothing could be further from the truth. So let me set the record straight, as Lincoln said, and bring them the real facts.

Democrats are proposing to extend a tax cut for 100 percent of taxpayers. Under the Democratic proposal, all taxpayers get a tax cut. Those lower income, those middle income, and those upper income all get a tax cut. Everyone does. Millionaires get a tax cut under the Democratic proposal, billionaires get a tax cut under the Democratic proposal, and all taxpayers who pay ordinary income tax are going to get a tax cut.

Why is that? It is very simple. Because even if your income is above \$200,000 for an individual or \$250,000 for a family, you are still getting a tax cut for your first \$200,000 of income or the first \$250,000 of income. So you are getting a tax cut. Everybody is getting a tax cut. I want to make that clear: All Americans get a tax cut under the Democratic proposal.

Even though the most wealthy are also getting a tax cut under the Democratic proposal, those on the other side of the aisle want to give an even greater tax cut to those earning above \$200,000 as individuals or \$250,000 as a couple. So let me repeat: Everyone gets a tax cut under the Reid bill. The other side of the aisle says: Okay, maybe that is so, but they want to give an even greater tax cut to those earning over \$250,000. That is the fact.

An awful lot of people think the Democratic bill does not cut taxes for those above \$200,000 and \$250,000. It does. It does. The facts are clear. The numbers don't lie. It does. Everyone

gets a tax cut. So there should be no question about that.

As I said, my colleagues on the other side of the aisle are threatening to oppose a middle-income tax cut, which actually is a tax cut for everybody. They say, oh, no, don't do that. They say, do that, but then add a greater tax cut for those top 2 percent of the wealthiest of Americans.

But let's go back and ask ourselves why are we here, in part? These tax reductions were instituted in 2001, at a time when our country had record surpluses. I think the total tax cut in 2001 was projected to be about—I may be off a little here—\$1.5 or \$1.6 trillion over 10 years, at a time when our Nation had a projected surplus of about \$3 trillion or up to \$5 trillion. I have forgotten exactly, but it was way above the 2001 tax cut. That is why, in large part, the 2001 Congress decided, well, we have these big projected surpluses, so let's give some of it back to the people. I voted for it.

That is why I voted for it. It made sense to me—with the great projected surpluses—to take a little less than half of that and give it back to people in terms of tax cuts.

But times have changed. In the wake of two wars that have cost over \$1 trillion, unpaid for—Iraq and Afghanistan—and also the 2008 financial collapse that very much hurt our economy, times have changed since 2001. As a consequence, our Nation now is faced with record debt, and we cannot continue to spend money we don't have. We have to put our Nation back on solid fiscal ground. So a lot has happened since 2001.

In addition, something else has happened, regrettably. Today, the average household income indexed for inflation is lower than it was when the tax cuts for the wealthy were put into effect. This means more people are making less money now than they were when these cuts were signed into law. Today, American families have less money to spend on their mortgages, gasoline, and groceries, for example. Actually, including benefits, Americans are not as well off as they were 10, 15 years ago.

These cuts were enacted in 2001 for all Americans. Those top two rates for the wealthiest 2 percent of Americans has cost future generations nearly \$1 trillion. I think it is bad economics to continue these highest income tax cuts without evidence they actually solve America's economic woes. They don't. It is especially bad economics when our Nation's debt has increased by \$10 trillion since they were first enacted.

Hard choices need to be made as we work to get our debt back to sustainable levels. We are all going to be asked to contribute. We need to make sure the most fortunate pay their fair share to deficit reduction as well. Again, they are already getting a tax break under the Democratic proposal. Everyone gets a tax cut under the Democratic proposal, but it is wrong to go further and say those making above

\$250,000 should be getting an even greater tax cut.

With a greater contribution from them, we could more easily work to get our Nation's debt down to manageable levels.

Some have argued we cannot let the tax rates expire for the wealthiest Americans—the top 2 percent—because they are “small business owners.” Let me address that and marshal the facts, as Abraham Lincoln would ask us to do.

Being wealthy is not the same as being a small business owner. One can be very wealthy in America but not be a small business owner. Some might have us believe there are 1 million small business owners earning over \$200,000 a year. How do they get that number? They get that number from an estimate prepared by the Joint Committee on Taxation, a bipartisan group that gives us accurate data—both Republicans and Democrats, Senators and House Members.

The Joint Committee predicts that in 2013 there will be about 940,000 taxpayers with some business income in the upper two tax rates. But that Joint Committee estimate isn't the number of small businesses. That is a different number. Instead, it is the number of all individuals in the top two rates who receive any amount of income, from a passthrough business or from rental real estate, royalties, estates or trusts. That number of 940,000 taxpayers does not tell us whether the taxpayer spent any amount of time actually working in the business or if that taxpayer is merely an investor sitting on the sidelines. In addition, that number does not tell us whether the income is from a large business or from a small business. It can be a large business passthrough. So that number of 940,000 doesn't tell us is it large or is it small. It does not tell us if the business actually even employs anybody. We don't know that. There are a lot of taxpayers at that bracket who don't employ anybody. They are not small businesspeople.

So that 1 million number being thrown around includes taxpayers who, for example, invest in publicly traded partnerships which can be purchased on the New York Stock Exchange similar to any other stock. They are not small businesses as ordinary Americans think them to be. The 1 million number also includes celebrities and sport stars who receive income from speaking engagements. They are not small businesspeople, but yet they are lumped into that same number. Americans wouldn't regard sports celebrities as a small businessperson. That is not right.

That 1 million number also includes best-selling authors receiving royalties for book sales. That 1 million number includes partners in law firms and hedge funds who receive their income as a share of a partnership distribution. They are not a small business. The 1 million number also includes

wealthy individuals who rent out their vacation homes for just a few weeks a year.

Both President Obama and Governor Romney would be considered small business owners in 2011 under this definition. I wouldn't think they are small businesspeople, Americans don't think they are small businesspeople, but they would be included in the definition the other side bandies about.

In reality, only a very small fraction of the top earners actually own or control or manage a business that is small and has hired anyone. I have forgotten the exact number, but it is a small number. It isn't sound fiscal policy to extend tax cuts for the wealthiest 2 percent of Americans just because a small portion of them have income from a business and a tiny portion of them manage a small business. But that is what some would have us believe. I don't have the number with me, but it is very small. There aren't very many at all.

Finally, the argument that higher taxes on the wealthiest hinders job creation is tenuous at best. Why do I say that? I say that because even the non-partisan Congressional Budget Office found that extending the high income tax cuts for those in the top two rates was the least effective way of creating jobs among a list of alternatives commented on by the Congressional Budget Office. As I recall, the top of the list were items such as payroll tax. If we cut the payroll tax, that is a big job creator. If we extend unemployment insurance benefits, that is a big job creator. Down at the bottom of the list of job creation on a dollar-for-dollar basis is extending the 2 percent top rates. That creates very few jobs, according to the Congressional Budget Office.

Actually, it hurts job creation, according to the Congressional Budget Office. Why? It found that extending the high income tax cuts actually reduces the gross domestic product and the number of jobs over 10 years. Why? Because doing so increases the deficit. The CBO said that actually extending the top two rates is a job reducer, not a job creator—a job reducer—because it would add to the deficit and, in doing so, all things being equal, would lose jobs.

So despite efforts to hide behind small businesses, the fundamental question is, What is fair? What is best for our country? Should we drive up deficits further, reducing growth as a result by extending the tax cuts for the top 2 percent? Don't forget, we are already reducing their taxes under the Reid bill. Should we tame our deficits by ending Medicare as we know it and cutting important social programs to the bone? The more those top two rates are extended, the more we have to cut someplace else. It is just mathematics. It is a choice we have to make in our country. There is no free lunch. We know that. We can't have our cake and eat it. Life is choices. Our fiscal situation needs choices. We have to decide

what makes the most sense or should we control our deficits through a balanced approach that thoughtfully cuts spending and ask the wealthiest 2 percent to contribute no more than they did 11 years ago? Clearly, as we reduce our debt and try to cut spending, there is no question about that. There is also no question that there has to be some combined income tax increase along with the spending cuts to be able to reduce our budget deficit.

The answer is clear: We should vote for Leader REID's bill and continue down the path toward responsible deficit reduction. I wish to make the point again, if it wasn't clear. The Reid bill reduces tax rates for all Americans, middle income and upper income, because we have a marginal rate system. The most wealthy have to pay in the 10-percent bracket, then they pay in the 15-percent bracket, then they pay in the 25-percent bracket, then they pay in the 28-percent bracket, all the way up to the top bracket today which is 35 percent. They pay in all brackets. So what we are saying is we are going to reduce your taxes; we are going to make sure you stay at those low rates for the next year so you, therefore, are going to pay less in income taxes, even if one is a billionaire.

Let's go with the Reid bill. It is fair. It is the right course. I hope the Senate adopts it and we get enough votes—60 votes—to get this passed.

I yield the floor.

Ms. COLLINS. Mr. President, today I have filed an amendment to extend for 1 year the individual income tax provisions of the 2001 and 2003 tax relief acts for all Americans, but with a surtax of two percent on those earning \$1 million or more, coupled with a “carve-out” to protect our nation's small businesses.

The Congressional Budget Office has warned us that the “fiscal cliff” created by the expiration of current tax rates on December 31, coupled with ill-advised and deep cuts in defense spending that would result from “sequestration,” would likely result in a recession in the first half of next year. It makes no sense and should be unacceptable to all of us to allow our country to go over this “fiscal cliff.”

I have long urged that we begin the debate on comprehensive tax reform aimed at creating a simpler, fairer, pro-growth tax code. I also believe that multimillionaires and billionaires can afford to pay more to help us deal with our unsustainable deficit.

My amendment would, therefore, impose a 2 percent surtax on millionaires, with a carve-out to protect small business owners who pay taxes through the individual income tax system. Our Nation's small businesses must not be lumped-in with millionaires and billionaires. The “carve-out” I am proposing would shield small businesses owners from tax increases intended to fall on the very wealthy.

These small business owner-operators are on the front lines of our economy, and of the communities in which they

live. The income that shows up on their tax returns is critical to their ability to create jobs, finance investment, and grow their businesses. Left in their hands, this income will lead to more jobs and buy the tools that help American workers compete.

Congress still could tackle tax reform this year but, unfortunately, this is not likely. That is why, in my amendment, I propose extending the current individual tax rates for all Americans through 2013, to give us the time we need to consider and adopt comprehensive reform that results in a simpler, fairer, pro-growth Tax Code. The surtax on the very wealthy, combined with protection for small businesses, will help us begin to deal with the deficit without harming the job creation engine of our economy—small business.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Georgia.

HONORING GHANA'S PRESIDENT JOHN ATTA

Mr. ISAKSON. Mr. President, I rise for a moment to express my sympathy and condolences to the people of Ghana and to the family of its President, John Adam Mills.

President Mills died in a military hospital today in Accra, Ghana, of throat cancer. Four hours after his death, the Vice President was sworn in as the new President of Ghana, a testimony to the democratization of that country and its leadership on the continent of Africa.

Ghana has been one of the shining beacons of light in Africa for its transition to business, trade, prosperity, and economic development. John Adam Mills deserves the credit for taking Ghana to the height it has gone to today.

Senator COONS from Delaware and I traveled to Ghana last year to meet with President Mills. We saw firsthand how he has developed a large-scale oil-producing country in Ghana, making that wealth come back to be reinvested in the people of that country. We visited the Millennium Challenge Compact that Ghana made with the United States of America to help her pineapple plantation producers be able to extend the life of their pineapple and export them into Europe for increased trade and agriculture in Ghana. We visited hospitals, where money from the oil and petroleum the country has discovered is now being reinvested in that country and in her people.

Today, with his tragic death, we also saw the light of democracy as the government made its transition, the Vice President ascended to the Presidency, and elections will be held later in the year for the next President of Ghana.

But it is important to pause as a tribute to President Bush and Condoleezza Rice, to President Obama and Hillary Clinton, our Secretary of State, who have worked tirelessly during the past decade and a half to work with the countries of Africa to develop. Americans have invested in PEPFAR, and we have reduced the growth of

AIDS. We have invested in malaria prevention, and we have reduced the growth of malaria. Nigeria is the last place on Earth where polio exists, and it is about to be eradicated because of the investment of the American people.

I have said oftentimes as the ranking member of the African Subcommittee that Africa is the continent of the 21st century for our country, and I think it is. I think the investment our taxpayers have made and the investment our last President and our current President and both Secretaries of State have made are paying great dividends.

But it is important for us to pay tribute to those bold, brave African leaders who ran for office to promote democracy, who served and reinvested the profits they made in their country's wealth and their people and shine as beacons of light for hope on what has been known in the past as the Dark Continent.

In this sad moment for the people of Africa, and particularly the people of Ghana, it is time for us also to rejoice on what democracy has made in that country, and what John Adam Mills did to produce that democracy and to make it work.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Maine.

Ms. SNOWE. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent to speak as if in morning business.

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

HONORING THE LIFE AND LEGACY OF DR. SALLY RIDE

Ms. SNOWE. Mr. President, I rise to pay tribute to the life and legacy of Dr. Sally Ride, the first American woman to enter space and who passed away, sadly, this week.

A truly extraordinary woman and an American icon and hero, Sally was a trailblazer who, with a steadfast fortitude and an insatiable spirit of exploration, accomplished what no other female in American history had before. When she rocketed into the heavens aboard the Space Shuttle Challenger on June 18, 1983, she also soared into the hearts of millions of Americans, including myself. Indeed, we recognized in her landmark achievement the realization of the quintessential American dream—that anyone, regardless of their gender, can succeed to even the greatest of heights, even if it is the stars.

I was fortunate enough to have been present at Cape Canaveral—along with my good friend and colleague then-Congresswoman BARBARA MIKULSKI—on that historic June morning when Sally took to the skies. I can vividly recall the palpable optimism and unabated excitement that saturated the air. At that point, I had been a member of the House of Representatives for 4 years and was 1 of only 23 women in Congress. You can imagine the tremendous amount of pride we all felt in witnessing such a watershed moment.

Indeed, it was a triumphant pinnacle in the fight to topple gender barriers and a progressive stride in the movement to shatter oppressive social norms. It was a bold response to those who could only see so far as to ask her before the flight, “Will you wear make-up in space? Do you cry on the job?” It was a bright beacon of hope to millions of young girls across the country, and indeed the world, who would come to recognize Sally Ride as the embodiment of their most fervent hopes and dreams.

I was very proud to be able to participate in a tribute at the Air and Space Museum as cochair of the Congressional Caucus on Women's Issues a month later to pay tribute to Dr. Sally Ride and the entire Challenger crew, where I expressed to them that “their achievement is America's achievement.”

In fact, in a testament to the depth of her remarkable character, Sally Ride lamented the unprecedented nature of her trip when she said:

It's too bad this is such a big deal. It's too bad our society isn't further along. It's time people in this country realized that women can do any job they want to.

She recognized rightly that while her excursion was extraordinary, it should not have been. Today, we nonetheless recognize that through her words she gave voice to countless women, and through her actions she gave the vision and courage to seize their dreams. That is the message Sally Ride engendered as an astronaut, as a professor, and as the founder of Sally Ride Science, her namesake company which strives tirelessly to inspire and inform students by providing them with innovative science programs and resources.

I had the opportunity to see Sally Ride last year. She was recounting with enthusiasm the work she was doing in working with so many young people across this country and sharing her commitment and her passion for education and for space. I was also privileged to have Sally as a neighbor of mine during her time working in Washington, DC.

Indeed, she was a pioneer and a true American icon whose inspirational journey into space will long serve as an example that we can accomplish anything we put our minds to. Perhaps even more importantly, she bequeaths to future generations a legacy that transcends her time unbounded by earthly ties. She leaves to us the omnipotent notion that we can and will do what is hard and that we will achieve what is great, regardless of who we are, and it will indisputably resonate for generations to come.

Leonardo da Vinci once observed:

When once you have tasted flight, you will forever walk the Earth with your eyes turned skyward, for there you have been, and there you will always long to return.

Well, today we fondly remember a woman who had her eyes turned skyward not only for herself but for the women of future generations who

would follow in her example and in her footsteps. We take comfort in knowing that the stars are now indeed where she rests, and we continue to firmly keep her family and friends in our thoughts and prayers.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. BENNET). The Senator from New Hampshire.

VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN ACT

Mrs. SHAHEEN. Mr. President, I rise today to join my colleagues who have been to the Senate floor earlier this afternoon to emphasize the importance of getting the House to act to pass the Violence Against Women Act. We have passed a bipartisan reauthorization in the Senate and now it is time for the House to do the same.

There are provisions in the Senate version of the bill that offer critical protections for survivors, Native Americans, immigrants, the LGBT community, and for students, young women on college campuses. It is that importance of protecting those victims on college campuses that I want to specifically address this afternoon.

According to the Department of Justice, 25 percent of college women—that is 1 in 4—will be victims of rape or attempted rape before they graduate within their 4-year college period. The Rape, Abuse, and Incest National Network reports that college-aged women are four times more likely than any other age group to face sexual assault. In addition, experts believe that rape and sexual assault are among the most underreported crimes, so that one in four could be even greater.

In the Senate-passed legislation, the Leahy-Crapo bill, there are provisions to address the challenges that young women face on college campuses. The legislation we passed here in the Senate requires schools that receive VAWA funds to do the following: State the policies and procedures that are in place to protect victims and provide prevention education for all incoming students. Many young girls arrive on a college campus to live on their own for the very first time. They are struggling to orient themselves in a new environment, and this makes them vulnerable. They need to be given clear guidance about what to do in case they become victims.

The legislation also requires institutions to implement a coordinated response both internal and external to the campus. This means that survivors are helped if they want to hold their attackers accountable, whether through a process that the university has set up or by bringing criminal charges and working with the police. This provision tells young women they are not alone; they are supported and their school will help them.

The third part of the provision that is very important in the Senate-passed bill is that it would require schools to provide training on domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, and stalking for campus law enforcement

and to members of the campus judicial boards.

Last week in New Hampshire my office spoke with Forrest Seymour, the sexual assault prevention coordinator at Keene State College, which is a small college with about 6,000 students in the western part of New Hampshire. Forrest said that all of these provisions in the Senate-passed bill are very important and necessary because universities need more guidance about how to best serve students who are victims of rape, dating violence, and stalking. This is especially important at small universities such as Keene where they have limited resources.

Training for campus law enforcement is critical because they are the first responders. School administrators who serve on campus judicial boards also need special training because word spreads very fast on college campuses about whether survivors should feel comfortable going forward. These processes need to be handled with appropriate sensitivity, and the training that is required by the Senate Violence Against Women Act will help make sure these young women feel safe.

The Senate-passed version of the bill will help young women like Harmony, who began her first year in college at Plymouth State University in New Hampshire in 2006. She was excited to be there. She made new friends, and she quickly became comfortable in her new surroundings.

Unfortunately, one night someone she thought was a friend took advantage of that trust and sexually assaulted Harmony. Harmony was ashamed and confused. She felt violated. She began to question all of her new relationships. She was scared all of the time, and she was sure everyone could tell she was a victim, so Harmony didn't tell anyone. She didn't know where to turn. She was scared that she would not be believed, and she even considered dropping out of school.

Fortunately, Harmony did finally reach out and found support. She graduated from Plymouth and now she works as a case manager for survivors of domestic violence in an emergency shelter helping other survivors through the most difficult periods in their lives. Harmony shares her story all over the country, encouraging victims to come forward, promising them they will be believed, they will be supported.

If Harmony has the bravery and the courage to make these promises to survivors, so should we. We owe it to the young and vulnerable women on college campuses across this country to pass the Violence Against Women Act now. It is time for the House to act. The session is running out. We need to see this legislation reauthorized. We need to see the Senate version reauthorized so we can guarantee to young women such as Harmony across this country that they will get the support they need.

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

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

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

AURORA, COLORADO SHOOTINGS

Mr. UDALL of Colorado. Mr. President, as does the Presiding Officer, I come to the floor this evening with a heavy heart. I know that as Senators and leaders we are expected to have words for every occasion, but what happened last Friday morning makes it very difficult to bring forth words that are appropriate. However, as I think of the Coloradans who were there whom we are so lucky to represent, their actions spoke louder than words. Their actions spoke very loudly on Friday morning in the city of Aurora.

I wish to focus on the actions of those brave, decent Coloradans who were victims in a variety of ways at the horrific movie theater shooting that took place there in Aurora. It cut short the lives of 12 people. It injured approximately 58 others. I rise to pay tribute to all of those people as well as to their families and their loved ones. I think I know the Presiding Officer, my colleague and my fellow Senator from Colorado, knows that, most importantly, we are here to state emphatically that Aurora will triumph over adversity in our State of Colorado to emerge stronger than ever.

From the time I awoke to the news of the movie theater shootings in Aurora early Friday morning, July 20, I, along with the rest of Colorado and our country, have experienced emotions ranging from deep, profound sadness to, frankly, utter outrage. Our State was just starting to recover from the devastating wildfires that destroyed hundreds of homes, forced tens of thousands to evacuate their communities, and scorched thousands of acres in our beautiful State of Colorado. With that in mind, none of us could have been prepared for the news of these mass shootings in one of our communities.

I know the Presiding Officer has three beautiful daughters. I have two children. I know that having loved ones stolen from us in such a tragic and violent fashion is something for which one can never be prepared. But it is during these times we are also reminded to cherish those all-too-brief moments we have with the people we love.

Although this heinous crime may have shaken us, it did not break us, and it will not break us. We will mourn those we have lost and those who were injured, and with them in mind we will heal and we will become stronger.

Sadly, this kind of tragedy is not new to Colorado. It was 13 short years ago that we learned of another mass shooting at Columbine High School on the western side of Denver. As a nation, we are reminded of more recent shootings at Virginia Tech; Fort Hood, TX; and

Tucson, AZ. These incidents may occur in one city or in one State, but they are national tragedies that tear at us all and then cause us all to tear up and cry together.

Like all Americans, my heart goes out to the victims and their families. I also remain hopeful—the Presiding Officer and I went to one of the hospitals—that the survivors are going to defy the odds on their road to recovery. We have been truly inspired by their stories.

I wish to take a moment and applaud the leadership shown by Colorado's public servants, from Governor John Hickenlooper, Aurora Mayor Steve Hogan, and especially Chief of Police Dan Oates and the Aurora Police Department. There are also other metro area law enforcement professionals who came to the scene almost immediately, including first responders, and medical professionals on site and at the number of hospitals where the victims were taken.

I think what is most notable is that they worked seamlessly to carry out the city's disaster plan and protect the victims from further harm. The police and firefighters arrived a mere 90 seconds after the first 9-1-1 call was placed. There is no question that lives were saved by the swift and coordinated action of Aurora's first responders.

I have to say that this incident shows what similar tragedies have before: that America shines brightest when the night is darkest, and that was literally the situation at midnight on Friday morning in Aurora.

We had the uplifting experience of hearing the stories of bravery coming out of Aurora. We marveled at those stories on Sunday. We start with the fact that at least four young men demonstrated the heights of heroism when they sacrificed their lives to protect their girlfriends from the hail of this gunman's bullets. One young woman had the courage to remain by the side of her wounded friend, calmly applying pressure to her friend's bleeding neck wound while dialing 9-1-1 with her other hand as the gunfire continued around her. Let me put it this way: Lives were saved Friday morning by those who did not let fear override their capacity to care for one another.

These experiences have underlined for me and our entire Nation that what makes us great and will help us endure this tragedy is our people. I saw that Sunday night, as did the Presiding Officer, while participating in a moving vigil in Aurora where our community not only mourned together but also held together during this most difficult time. Although the West is known for its rugged individuals, Colorado is also known for its rugged cooperators—people who help their neighbors in times of adversity. We saw that after the recent wildfires, and we see it again now.

President Obama's visit with victims and families on July 22—just Sunday—2 days ago in Aurora, provided comfort

and support to those in need and again reminded us that the sanctity and strength of family and community is what unites us in the face of adversity. Coloradans have seen that in the wake of this tragedy, our Nation has come together for Aurora and our State, and to my colleagues and anyone listening today, let me say humbly that we are grateful.

I wish to take a moment to say the names of the 12 people who were taken from us too soon. I know that later my colleague will share even more of their stories with us and with the Nation. Their families and friends have my commitment that we will, to honor these good people, these Coloradans, never forget them as the healing process goes on.

The 12 Coloradans, the Americans whom we lost Friday morning are Jonathan T. Blunk, Alexander J. Boik, Jesse Childress, Gordon Cowden, Jessica Ghawi, Micayla Medek, Matthew McQuinn, John Larimer, Alex M. Sullivan, Alexander Teves, Rebecca Wingo, and I think the hardest name for all of us to say is that of 6-year-old Veronica Moser-Sullivan. I smile in my sadness because I think the Presiding Officer has seen the photo of her with an ice cream cone in hand, delight on her face, ice cream on her nose. I guess maybe what we could do is take the time to enjoy an ice cream cone, maybe leave that ice cream on our nose for a little bit, and remember her.

In honor of these victims, I have submitted a resolution—S. Con. Res. 53—along with my colleague, the Presiding Officer, Senator BENNET. Congressman PERLMUTTER has filed an identical resolution in the House of Representatives. The resolution, among many things, strongly condemns the atrocities which occurred in Aurora; offers condolences to the families, friends, and loved ones of those who were killed in the attack and expresses hope for the rapid and complete recovery of the wounded; applauds the hard work and dedication exhibited by the hundreds of local, State, and Federal officials and others who offered their support and assistance; and last but certainly not least, honors the resilience of the community of the city of Aurora and the State of Colorado in the face of such adversity. I ask all of my colleagues in the Senate to support Aurora and support this resolution.

As we pay tribute to our fallen fellow Americans and the heroes around them, here is what I hope will come out of what can only be described as a senseless tragedy: We must harness the sense of community we feel this week and use it to create a lasting sense of collaboration in America and use it to solve our shared challenges in a measured, respectful, and thoughtful way. We can truly learn from those who selflessly gave of themselves during the chaos of the Aurora shootings and draw from it the strength to be better people, better family members, and, yes, even better legislators.

In Roman mythology, Aurora is the goddess of the dawn who renews herself each morning. At dawn on Friday, the chaos and the pain and the tragedy of the night before still lingered over that wonderful city of Aurora, but by dawn on the second day, signs of heroism, of recovery, of community began to shine through the darkness of the great Colorado city called Aurora.

As each dawn signals a new day, we owe it to the victims to rise to the occasion and renew our commitment to make this a better, stronger, and more perfect Nation.

Thank you, Mr. President. I yield the floor, and I note the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

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

Mr. BENNET. Mr. President, I would like to first thank my friend—and I do not mean that in the political sense, I mean it in the real sense—the senior Senator from Colorado, the Presiding Officer from Colorado, for his incredibly thoughtful remarks about the tragedy last week in Colorado. I cannot think of any more fitting place to be than here with the Senator tonight to have this conversation. So I thank the Senator very much for his words.

In just a few dark moments last week, in Aurora, CO, 12 innocent lives were taken from us—12 people, full of life and aspirations, loved by family and friends, and now 12 people remembered by an entire nation.

As the Presiding Officer said, thousands of Coloradans attended a vigil hosted by the city of Aurora on Sunday evening. We shared tears and prayers. We also resolved to support one another, to heal, and to always remember those who lost their lives on July 20, 2012. It is for that purpose that the Presiding Officer and I come to the floor this evening.

The first is Jonathan Blunk, age 26. Jon was a father of two who moved to Colorado in 2009, after three tours in the Persian Gulf and North Arabian Sea for the U.S. Navy. He was a certified firefighter and EMT. Jon lost his life protecting his friend Jansen Young from the gunman's line of fire. Jon shielded her from gunfire by pushing her to the ground while shots were fired. He was supposed to fly on Saturday to Nevada to see his wife Chantel Blunk and his 4-year-old daughter and 2-year-old son. Instead, his wife had to put up the dress her daughter had picked out to wear to the airport. She told her daughter that they would not see their dad anymore but that he would still love them and look over them. His daughter Hailey is comforted by calling her father's cell phone and hearing him on voice mail.

This is Alexander Jonathan "A.J." Boik, age 18. A.J. recently graduated from Gateway High School. He enjoyed baseball, music, and making pottery. A.J. was to start art classes at the Rocky Mountain College of Art and Design in the fall. He was described "as being the life of the party. AJ could bring a smile to anybody's face." He was a young man with a warm and loving heart.

This is Jesse Childress, age 29. Jesse was an Air Force cyber systems operator based at Buckley Air Force Base. He loved to play flag football, softball, and bowl. He was a devoted fan of the Denver Broncos, for which he secured season tickets. He was described by his superior officer as an invaluable part of the 310th family who touched everyone with whom he worked.

This is Gordon Cowden, age 51. Gordon was originally from Texas and lived in Aurora with his family. He was "a quick witted world traveler with a keen sense of humor, he will be remembered for his devotion to his children and for always trying to do the right thing, no matter the obstacle." Gordon took his two teenage children to the theater the night of the shooting, both of whom, thankfully, made it out unharmed.

This is Jessica Ghawi, age 24. Jessica was an aspiring journalist, most recently interning with Mile High Sports Radio in Denver, and went by the nickname "Redfield." She was hard working and ambitious, with a generous spirit and kind heart. When numerous homes were recently destroyed by Colorado wildfires, Jessica decided to start collecting hockey equipment to donate to the kids affected because she wanted to help.

This is John Thomas Larimer, age 27. John was a cryptologic technician with the Navy based also at Buckley Air Force Base—a job that requires "exceptionally good character and skills." Originally from Chicago, he was the youngest of five siblings and had joined the service just over a year ago. Like his father and grandfather, John chose to serve in the U.S. Navy. John's superior officer called him "an outstanding shipmate, a valued member of the Navy and an extremely dedicated sailor." Colleagues were drawn to his calming demeanor and exceptional work ethic. He was also known as an extremely competent professional.

This is Matthew McQuinn, age 27. Matt died while protecting his girlfriend Samantha Yowler by jumping in front of her during the shooting. Matt and Samantha moved to Colorado from Ohio last fall and worked at Target. He and Samantha were very much in love and planning their life together. Because of Matt's bravery, Samantha was only wounded in the knee and is expected to make a full recovery.

This is Micayla "Cayla" Medek, age 23. Cayla was a graduate of William C. Hinkley High School in Aurora and a resident of Westminster. She worked at Subway and was a huge Green Bay

Packers fan. Cayla would plan weekend activities around watching the games with her brother and father. She is remembered as a loving and gentle young woman.

This is Veronica Moser-Sullivan, age 6. Veronica had just learned to swim and attended Holly Ridge Elementary School in Denver, CO. She was a good student who loved to play dress-up and read. Veronica's mother Ashley Moser remains in critical condition at Aurora Medical Center. She was shot in the neck and abdomen. We pray for Ashley's recovery and strength in working through the passing of her daughter Veronica.

This is Alex Sullivan, age 27. Alex was at the movie celebrating his 27th birthday and first wedding anniversary. He loved comic books, the New York Mets, and movies. Alex was such a big movie fan that he took jobs at theaters just to see the movies. Alex stood 6 feet 4 inches and weighed about 280 pounds. He played football and wrestled before graduating high school in 2003 and later went to culinary school. Alex was known as a gentle giant and loved by many.

This is Alexander C. Teves, age 24. Alex received an M.A. in counseling psychology from the University of Denver in June and was planning on becoming a psychiatrist. He also competed in the Tough Mudder, an intense endurance challenge, and helped students with special needs. Alex was at the theater on the night of the shooting with his girlfriend Amanda Lindgren. When the gunman opened fire, Alex immediately lunged to block Amanda from the gunfire, held her down, and covered her head.

This is Rebecca Wingo, age 32. Rebecca, originally from Texas and a resident of Aurora, joined the Air Force after high school, where she became fluent in Mandarin Chinese and served as a translator. She was a single mother of two girls and worked as a customer relations representative at a mobile medical imaging company. Rebecca was also enrolled at the Community College of Aurora since the fall of 2009 and had been working toward an associate of arts degree. She was known to family and friends as a "gentle, sweet, beautiful soul."

Here is a photo of the gathering we had last Sunday night in Aurora. I believe, like you, Mr. President, that the early morning hours of July 20, 2012, will not be remembered for the evil that happened.

Scripture tells us "not to be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good." That is what the people of Aurora and Colorado have been doing since the first moment of this tragedy, and that is what we will continue to do.

In time, we will not remember the morning of July 20 for the evil that killed 12 innocent and precious people. Instead, we will remember the bright lives of those we lost and the families they leave behind. We will remember

the 58 wounded survivors, whose recovery bears witness to humanity's strength and resolve. And tonight, knowing that some are still in critical condition, we pray for their recovery. We will remember the heroic acts of everyday citizens, our first responders, and medical personnel who saved lives that otherwise surely would have been lost. We will remember the continuing generosity of those Coloradans and Americans who are donating blood in record numbers and raising funds to support the families in this trying time. And in time, because we are all Aurora, we will draw strength from the example set by one great American city and the faith of her people in one another.

Thank you, Mr. President.

I yield the floor.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. 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.

MORNING BUSINESS

Mr. BENNET. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent the Senate proceed to a period of morning business, with Senators permitted to speak therein for up to 10 minutes each.

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

HONORING OUR ARMED FORCES

TRIBUTE TO LANCE CORPORAL HUNTER HOGAN

Mr. JOHANNIS. Mr. President, I rise today to remember a fallen hero, U.S. Marine Corps LCpl Hunter H.D. Hogan. Lance Corporal Hogan was killed in action while supporting combat operations in Afghanistan on June 23, 2012.

Lance Corporal Hogan cultivated a desire to serve our Nation at an early age, and he followed in his father's footsteps when he enlisted in the Marine Corps on October 26, 2009. He, like so many young marines, could have pursued other opportunities outside of the military, but he instead chose to take an oath of service to our great country. He was rightfully proud of this oath and remained faithful to the mission and to his brothers in arms.

The Hogan family laid their marine to rest in York, NE, on July 6, 2012. Lance Corporal Hogan served with honor and valor having been awarded the Purple Heart, Combat Action Ribbon, Sea Service Deployment Ribbon, Afghanistan Campaign Medal, Global War on Terrorism Service Medal, and the National Defense Service Medal.

Hunter is mourned by his wife Brittney, his father, mother, grandparents, and so many others. I know his family is proud of him and will always remember his spirit and his quick

wit. His sense of adventure and his enthusiasm for rodeo, hunting, and fishing will also be fondly remembered. Hunter's passion for life and those around him allowed him to be the best marine he could be.

Strong marines are not possible without the support of family. Hunter's family chose a quote by Senator Paul H. Douglas to describe their young marine's passion for the Corps.

Those of us who have had the privilege of serving in the Marine Corps value our experience as among the most precious of our lives. The fellowship of shared hardships and dangers in worthy cause creates a close bond of comradeship. It is the basic reason for the cohesiveness of Marines and for the pride we have in our Corps and our loyalty to each other.

We hold our heads high when we speak of the strong tradition of military service in our great State of Nebraska. We are honored to call him one of our own, and I know Nebraskans across the State will provide his family with care and love during this very difficult time.

May God bless the Hogan family and all of our service men and women both home and abroad. LCpl Hunter Hogan, forever a marine, forever a cowboy, Semper Fidelis.

REMEMBERING OFFICER CHESTNUT AND DETECTIVE GIBSON

Ms. MIKULSKI. Mr. President, the nation is mourning the senseless loss of 12 people in Aurora CO, and the wounding of 58 people.

Today, we mark the sad anniversary of another tragedy that took place in the Capitol on July 27, 1998.

We remember Officer Jacob J.J. Chestnut, from Ft. Washington in my home State of Maryland and Special Agent John Gibson, of Woodbridge, VA, who gave their lives to protect the U.S. Capitol, all the people who work at and visit the Capitol, and to protect this building that is the symbol of freedom and democracy the world over.

Today, we honor the lives and heroism of Officer Chestnut and Detective Gibson. We also commend all the Capitol Hill police officers who put their lives on the line to protect democracy.

These two fine men were part of one of the most unique police forces in the country. They are excellent Federal law-enforcement officials who protect Members of Congress from crooks, terrorists, or anyone else who would want to harm us, and they also protect all the people in the building, whether it is a foreign dignitary or a Girl Scout troop from Iowa.

Second, they are also "Officer Friendly"—welcoming people and answering questions; and many have taken special language training to help visitors from around the world.

Third, many are also trained for other possible emergencies: to provide basic paramedic help in the case of an ill tourist, or to provide basic firefighting and help evacuate buildings in the case of fires.