



United States
of America

Congressional Record

PROCEEDINGS AND DEBATES OF THE 112th CONGRESS, SECOND SESSION

Vol. 158

WASHINGTON, TUESDAY, SEPTEMBER 11, 2012

No. 121

Senate

The Senate met at 10 a.m. and was called to order by the Honorable RICHARD BLUMENTHAL, a Senator from the State of Connecticut.

PRAYER

The Chaplain, Dr. Barry C. Black, offered the following prayer:

Let us pray.

Eternal God, the source of our being, on this 11th anniversary of September 11, we pause to remember how You sustained us even through life's tragedies. Recalling the deaths and the injuries, the heroism, and the patriotism, it is easy for us to be thankful for Your presence and power. Continue to guide this land we love on the labyrinthine path to greatness, protecting it from dangers seen and unseen, as You heal its doubts and divisions. Use our Senators for Your glory as our Nation seeks to truly be the land of the free and the home of the brave.

We pray in Your sacred Name. Amen.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The Honorable RICHARD BLUMENTHAL led the Pledge of Allegiance, as follows:

I pledge allegiance to the Flag of the United States of America, and to the Republic for which it stands, one nation under God, indivisible, with liberty and justice for all.

APPOINTMENT OF ACTING PRESIDENT PRO TEMPORE

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will please read a communication to the Senate from the President pro tempore (Mr. INOUE).

The legislative clerk read the following letter:

U.S. SENATE,
PRESIDENT PRO TEMPORE,
Washington, DC, September 11, 2012.

To the Senate:

Under the provisions of rule I, paragraph 3, of the Standing Rules of the Senate, I hereby appoint the Honorable RICHARD BLUMENTHAL, a Senator from the State of

Connecticut, to perform the duties of the Chair.

DANIEL K. INOUE,
President pro tempore.

Mr. BLUMENTHAL thereupon assumed the chair as Acting President pro tempore.

RECOGNITION OF THE MAJORITY LEADER

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The majority leader is recognized.

VETERANS JOBS CORPS ACT OF 2012—MOTION TO PROCEED

Mr. REID. I move to proceed to Calendar No. 476, S. 3457.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The clerk will report the motion. The legislative clerk read as follows:

Motion to proceed to Calendar No. 476, S. 3457, a bill to require the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to establish a veterans jobs corps, and for other purposes.

SCHEDULE

Mr. REID. Mr. President, the first hour will be equally divided between the two leaders or their designees. The majority will control the first half and the Republicans will control the final half. At 11 a.m. there will be a moment of silence in observance of the 11th anniversary of the attacks on September 11, 2001. The Senate will recess from 12:30 p.m. until 2:15 p.m. for the weekly caucus meetings. At 2:15 p.m. there will be a cloture vote on the motion to proceed to S. 3457, the Veterans Jobs Corps Act.

MEASURES PLACED ON THE CALENDAR—H.R. 8, S. 3522, S. 3525

Mr. President, I am told there are three bills at the desk due for a second reading.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The clerk will read the titles of the bills for a second time.

A bill (H.R. 8) to extend certain tax relief provisions enacted in 2001 and 2003, and to

provide for expedited consideration of a bill providing for comprehensive tax reform, and for other purposes.

A bill (S. 3522) to provide for the expansion of affordable refinancing of mortgages held by the Federal National Mortgage Association and the Federal Home Loan Mortgage Corporation.

A bill (S. 3525) to protect and enhance opportunities for recreational hunting, fishing, and shooting, and for other purposes.

Mr. REID. Mr. President, I object to all three bills that were read for the second time.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The objection having been heard, the bills will be placed on the calendar.

COMMEMORATING SEPTEMBER 11

Mr. REID. Mr. President, just a short way from this Chamber, in S-209, we have been meeting for many years as a Senate Democratic leadership to discuss the issues of the week. We just finished a meeting there, and part of the discussion today in that meeting was what happened 11 years ago at the exact same time we were meeting there. I can remember that so clearly. I will never, ever forget that. It is implanted in my mind so clearly. I was the first one to get to that meeting, and Senator Breaux from Louisiana came in and said: There is something going on in New York. Let's turn on the TV. And we did. Senators started coming in. It appeared an airplane hit one of the towers, and we were wondering why it would have done that. Something was obviously wrong.

Senator Daschle was the leader at the time. He started the meeting, and the TV was off. The meeting was just getting started, and someone came in to take Senator Daschle out of that meeting. He came back very quickly and said: There is a plane headed for the Capitol, and we all have to evacuate the Capitol—everybody. The alarm went out and people were rushing down these halls leaving. I can remember leaving that room over here and looking out the window and seeing the smoke billowing from what we

● This "bullet" symbol identifies statements or insertions which are not spoken by a Member of the Senate on the floor.



Printed on recycled paper.

S6075

learned is now the Pentagon. It was on fire; a plane had hit it. There was still one plane in the air, and that was headed for the Capitol. As I have indicated, even though that was 11 years ago, I remember the sight as if it were yesterday. We have many meetings in that room, and I often think of what transpired that morning as I looked out toward the Pentagon.

Over the last decade, our country has begun to heal from the wounds of that terrible, terrible attack. It was attacks by terrorists. The scars remain. The scars are deeper with some than others, but no matter how many years pass, we will never forget the thousands of innocent people who died in New York, Pennsylvania, and across the river here in Virginia. There were mothers and fathers, sons and daughters, brothers and sisters, spouses and friends. All they were doing was their jobs, and others were just catching a plane to go visit loved ones or on a business trip. It is good that we pause each year to pay tribute and to remember, and that will occur here on the Senate floor, as I previously announced. There will also be a ceremony out in front of the Capitol.

The memories of that dark day in our shared history are painful, but they give me hope as well. They give me hope because on September 11 and during the difficult months that followed, Americans showed the world that our unified Nation can fight back against darkness and fear. Democrats were not alone in fighting back. Republicans were not alone in fighting back. We were all fighting back together in the face of great evil, and that is what it was. There were so many who rushed forward to show great courage, enormous dignity, and kindness.

Today we pause to remember the firefighters who rushed into the World Trade Center knowing they might never come out, and a lot of them didn't come out. We pause to remember the police officers and rescue workers who hurried to the scene, combed through the debris, and shepherded New Yorkers to safety. Some of them gave their lives that day. We pause to remember the bravery of the members of our Nation's Armed Forces, our intelligence community, and Foreign Service, as well as the sacrifices of their families. They have borne the burdens of war for more than a decade. They have given their blood, sweat, and too often their lives in the effort to crush al-Qaida, bring Osama bin Laden to justice, and keep America safe. We pause to remember the unbreakable spirit of those valiant people and certainly the United States of America.

RECOGNITION OF THE MINORITY LEADER

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The Republican leader is recognized.

9/11 REMEMBRANCE

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, in the course of a lifetime, one always remembers those moments of national grief and anxiety. They don't happen very often. From my parents' genera-

tion, it was: Where were you when you heard about the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor? When I was a young man and my friend the majority leader was a young man, it was: Where were you when you heard about the assassination of President Kennedy? For the current generation, it was, of course: Where were you when you heard about 9/11?

As the majority leader has indicated, it was for us here at the Capitol kind of close up and personal, if you will. I recall being late that morning, and as a result of not yet having gotten to work, I saw, as millions of Americans did, the second plane go into the second building in real time. As the majority leader has indicated, the building was subsequently evacuated. People scattered around town, and at the end of this horrendous and frightening day, we all gathered on the steps of the Capitol to sing "God Bless America." It was one of the most uplifting and unifying moments in the history of our country. I think it is safe to say that we are, as a nation, even though we have our political differences, together and stronger in the wake of what happened.

In what is now a time-honored tradition, later this morning we will gather on the Capitol steps to mark a solemn anniversary of the 9/11 attacks. It is fitting that we remember the thousands of innocent men and women who died that morning 11 years ago and that despite our political differences, we remember the unity and resolve we all felt that day. In the days and weeks that followed the horrific attacks on our homeland, we were united by a common grief and outrage. Some wondered what the future would bring, but 11 years later I think I can say that America is stronger than it was on 9/11.

Today we honor the sacrifice of those who died that day and the millions who have stepped forward to defend the Nation in the Armed Forces and intelligence services in the years since, especially those who have given their lives in that service. On 9/11 we showed the world that America does not shrink from a challenge, and every day since courageous men and women have humbled us through their courage and sacrifice on our behalf. Today is the day to show them our deep gratitude and to renew our commitment to live lives worthy of their sacrifice.

RESERVATION OF LEADER TIME

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Under the previous order, the leadership time is reserved.

MORNING BUSINESS

Under the previous order, the next hour will be equally divided and controlled between the two leaders or their designees, with the majority controlling the first half.

The Senator from Illinois.

REMEMBERING 9/11

Mr. DURBIN. Mr. President, it is difficult to come to the floor of the Senate on this anniversary of 9/11 and not

reflect on your own experience. I was in the same room as the majority leader, HARRY REID, just a few steps from the Senate Chamber when we witnessed the second plane on television crashing into the World Trade Center and realized it was no accident, and then the black smoke billowing over the Mall from the Pentagon suggested we were under attack.

As we evacuated this building and rushed outside, standing, the crowd around, not knowing which way to turn, was looking for a safe place to go. No one knew. Some tourists came up to me and said: We are new here. Where are we supposed to go next? There was no place to tell them to go. We knew Union Station was nearby and the Metro station not far away, but there was no other place to turn.

I might add parenthetically that the decision was made shortly thereafter to build the Visitor Center. It took us years to do it. It is an underground facility which is safe and I am glad we have it. It has been used every single day and is an important addition to the Capitol.

President George W. Bush faced that extraordinary challenge as Commander in Chief and President of the United States to deal with 9/11. There were some aspects of his response which I may have disagreed with, but I certainly commend him still for his leadership in that anxious moment after the tragedy of 9/11. I especially wish to thank him and commend him for reminding us time and time again when he was President that our enemies are not the people of the Islamic religion nor those of the Sikh religion; our enemies are those who corrupt religion in the name of terrorism.

Many people of the Muslim faith in America—good, patriotic Americans—face discrimination simply because those who were perpetrators of 9/11 claim to have shared that religion. It is a good day to be reminded of the thoughtful leadership of George W. Bush in telling us our enemy is not Islam; our enemies are those who corrupt the religion in the name of terrorism.

I also received a note over August from two friends of mine who live in New Bern, NC, Ed and Beth Edmundson. I met them several years ago in Chicago when their son Eric, who is a veteran of the U.S. Army and served in Iraq, was hospitalized in that city. What a story. Eric Edmundson had been serving our country and was injured. During the course of his injuries and subsequent treatment, he became quadriplegic. After months and months of effort, the Veterans' Administration basically told his family there was no place to turn. They said to his father: You are going to have to buy him a wheelchair and find a place for him in a nursing home facility. Eric was a young man, obviously, and married with a little baby at home. His dad and mom showed the kind of courage and love which touches our hearts.

Ed Edmundson said: My son, in his twenties, is not going into a nursing home. I will not let it happen. I am going to find a place that will treat him.

He ended up finding on his own the Rehabilitation Institute of Chicago, which is one of the best hospitals in the world. Eric was a patient there, going through rehabilitation from his injuries he suffered in Iraq. That is when I met his parents. They invited me to come see him. I did, and I promised I would return. I did a few weeks later just to visit, and they said: Eric has a gift for you. Eric, who would smile but didn't speak, was sitting in his wheelchair. His father and mother came over to his side, each grabbed an elbow, stood him up, and Eric took three steps. It was an amazing, emotional moment without a dry eye in that hospital room. They put him back in his wheelchair and his dad said: My son is going to walk out of this hospital in his full dress uniform. He said: Can you make it? We would like to have you there. I said: I wouldn't miss it. Many of us were there. The mayor of the city of Chicago, many elected officials, and all the news cameras were there to watch this heroic young man walk out of the Rehab Institute of Chicago—just a few steps—but in his full dress uniform with a smile on his face. He went home to New Bern, NC. His father literally left his business, the father and mother moved in with Eric, his wife, and baby and tried to make a life for him. The wonderful organizations and people in that community built a home that was wheelchair accessible for the whole family. I went to visit him there in North Carolina. They were taking Eric hunting. He was involved in many things in rehabilitation. They sent a card, a family card with pictures of all of them, and it is a joy to see it.

One of the last things Eric's father asked me to do was to look at a piece of legislation Hillary Clinton introduced but was not passed. It was called the Caregivers Act. The Caregivers Act said if a disabled veteran comes home and has the loving care of a member of the family and can stay home, we should try to help that member of the family by providing them with the training they need to take care of their disabled vet at home, give them a respite with visiting nurses or people from the VA so they can have some time to themselves, and if there is an economic hardship on the family, give them a monthly stipend so they can continue in their home.

I called Senator Clinton and asked her if I could take up the bill now that she was off to the State Department. She said: Please do. I did. Thanks to the great support of Senator DANNY AKAKA and Senator PAT MURRAY, we passed it. The Caregivers Act is now helping literally hundreds of family caregivers across the United States care for their disabled veteran at home. It is helping the Edmundson family and other families I have met in Illinois.

I tell that story because when we talk of the real cost of 9/11, it is not only the massive tragedy of the lives that were lost on that day and the families affected by those lives and those wonderful first responders who risked and gave their lives, but it is also the lives of the men and women in uniform who served us well, many of whom are carrying the scars of war for the rest of their lives—a lifetime—who still will always need our commitment and further devotion to make sure they are taken care of. The Edmundson family in North Carolina comes to mind immediately and so many others just like them as a reminder of what we need to do, the obligations we have as a government to the people who have served us so well in the military.

We have a bill that is coming up and I hope we can, in that same spirit, consider it on a bipartisan basis and pass it. It is an effort to give returning veterans a better chance to get a job. It is a disappointment—more than that, it is a disgrace—that many of these veterans come home and find themselves unemployed and sometimes even homeless. This Veterans Job Corps Act, which is coming before the Senate this afternoon, should pass with an overwhelming vote. This bill is fully paid for, and it is a bill Senator MURRAY has brought to the floor along with the leadership of Senator BILL NELSON of Florida, who has been especially dedicated to this proposal.

President Obama first mentioned it in his State of the Union Address. It includes several veterans employment initiatives such as the improved one-stop shop centers for job searching and smoother State certification and licensing. It authorizes \$1 billion for the Veterans Job Corps over 5 years and \$900 million to employ 20,000 veterans in conservation resource management, historic preservation projects and public lands, and \$100 million for COPS and SAFER grants to hire veterans to serve in capacities as police and firemen. Iraq and Afghanistan veterans are given preference for all these positions.

The bill creates a pilot program to improve veteran job searches by providing veterans with access to the Internet and computers to assist them. It also provides military transition assistance programs to eligible veterans and their spouses at sites outside military installations to make it easier to find a job. Rather than the current uneven State-by-State approach, the bill requires all States, as a condition for receiving veteran employment and training funding, to consider military training and experience when granting State certifications and licensing.

How many times have we heard about this? I sure have. Someone who served in the military, driven vehicles, been involved in some technical capacity, and then they come out and have to start from scratch, all over again, in each of our States to qualify for certification for a good-paying job. Let's take into account that they have been

trained by the best military in the world and give them credit for the experience and training they have in the military and this bill does that.

Also, the VA will ensure each State receives funding for at least one disabled veterans outreach program specialist and one local veterans unemployment representative for every 5,000 square miles. That is not too much. It is too little, frankly, but it is an important start.

This bill is paid for and it is a good bill. I hope we can pass it this afternoon in the spirit of 9/11, remembering, sadly, the victims who lost their lives that day and the first responders who gave everything they could give to try to save them; but also remembering those men and women, many of whom were inspired by 9/11 to enlist in our military, to risk their lives—and many gave their lives—over 6,500 to date. It is a reminder that we have an ongoing moral obligation to stand behind those veterans.

I might also add there is a lot of talk about the deficit and cutting spending, and I know that has to happen. I was on the Simpson-Bowles Commission and I understood that if we are going to bring our deficit under control, we have to cut spending, look to real entitlement reform, and raise revenue. If we don't do all three, then, frankly, we will not achieve our goal.

We have seen a budget proposed by the House Republican budget leader, Congressman PAUL RYAN of Wisconsin, the Republican nominee for Vice President, which, unfortunately, does not reach that goal because he preserves tax cuts for the highest income people in this country instead of asking for some sacrifice, some effort that they pay their fair share. He extends spending in the Department of Defense at beyond wartime levels, despite the fact that President Obama has successfully brought the war in Iraq to a close and is doing the same in Afghanistan. We can't do those two things and reach real deficit reduction in a meaningful way and in a timely way. Unfortunately, Congressman RYAN's budget does not pass the basic test of arithmetic.

When we consider important spending such as this veterans job corps bill, I hope we find ways to pay for them to offset, and that when we talk about deficit reduction, we never do it at the expense of our veterans and we never do it at the expense of our national security. I hope we do it honestly, acknowledging the fact that when it comes to the Pentagon, there are areas where we can save money and not compromise our security in any way whatsoever.

I thank the Presiding Officer for presiding at this historic moment. I will mention that at 11 o'clock the House and Senate Democrats and Republicans will gather on the east front for the commemoration of the 9/11 anniversary. We will be in session on the floor. I will be here asking for a moment of

silence as they will at the same time outside.

It is a somber day in Washington as we recall this great national tragedy, but it is a day of great hope because we saw how America responded on a bipartisan basis and the great people who stepped forward and showed such extraordinary acts of courage since that day.

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

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The clerk will call the roll.

The 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 ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Without objection, it is so ordered.

WIND PRODUCTION TAX CREDIT

Mr. UDALL of Colorado. Mr. President, I return to the Senate floor to pick up where I left off when Congress adjourned 1 month ago and that is to continue with my daily efforts to urge this Congress, our Congress, the House and the Senate, to extend the wind production tax credit. I rise before the Senate to discuss an industry that has created tens of thousands of good-paying jobs for American workers and has contributed billions of dollars—literally billions of dollars—to our economy.

I think the Presiding Officer knows this, and all our colleagues should know this: This is an industry that will be in grave trouble if we in the Congress don't act soon—I actually mean immediately—to extend the wind production tax credit.

We return this week to Congress in the wake of really sobering news about recent layoffs of American workers in our wind industry, largely due to our congressional inaction on the wind production tax credit.

I want to be very clear: The wind industry has already begun firing American workers because we have failed to extend the wind production tax credit. It is that simple. You ask: Why? Well, the PTC has been a driver of the wind industry's enormous expansion in the United States, as well as the growing investment in American workers that we have seen in the last several years. This critical tax credit expires at the end of the year, and if we do not vote to extend it, manufacturing facilities may shut down, thousands more Americans will lose their jobs, and the negative economic ripple effect—this is not a positive ripple effect; this is a negative ripple effect—will be felt in communities all across our Nation.

Now, let me be clear in a further way. It has already happened; this is not conjecture. In my home State of Colorado, workers who had good-paying jobs in the wind industry just a month ago when I stood here no longer do. That is right. Over 100 Coloradans were let go of their jobs in the Colorado wind industry just in the last

month. There are more job losses projected to follow. That is sobering to all of us.

On a more upbeat note, I come to the floor to talk about the production tax credit, and each time I have come to the floor I focus on a particular State because there is good news all across our country when it comes to wind energy. Today I want to focus on Vermont where the wind industry has grown faster than in many larger States. As a matter of fact, Vermont has the second highest rate of new wind installations of any State in 2011, growing over 650 percent. That is right, 650 percent growth in Vermont.

Vermont has numerous installed wind projects and wind manufacturing sites throughout the State that currently power over 11,000 homes and enough wind power potential to provide 160 percent of the State's current electricity needs.

One of America's leading wind energy production companies is NRG Systems, which is based in Chittenden County, which is up in the northwestern corner of Vermont. For 30 years, NRG Systems has been a fixture in Vermont's energy and technology industry, and it serves the wind industry in particular by providing developers, utilities, and turbine manufacturers with the tools they need to measure the wind. But with the looming end of the PTC, NRG's future growth in Vermont is uncertain.

This is very clear because for the first time in their history, NRG has had to lay off workers in Vermont, not once but twice this year. Their very capable CEO, Jan Blittersdorf, described these firings as "deeply unfortunate, though necessary . . . to preserve our future in the face of a deeply unstable wind-energy industry."

NRG's orders are off 50 percent from just a few years ago because of our inaction. The uncertainty about wind energy's future has encouraged them to look overseas for new opportunities, which then means we hasten the departure of good-paying jobs for skilled American workers who already are ready to go.

So the point I am trying to make—and I see my colleague from Vermont has joined me; I look forward to hearing his remarks—the wind industry needs certainty. NRG is an example of a company that needs certainty. We can lead the world in sustainable, smart energy, but we have to extend the PTC to stay on track.

As I have said for all these weeks I have been coming to the floor, this is not just about my home State of Colorado. I love my State of Colorado. I think we are the best State in the Union. But our country at large is threatened by the broad losses of jobs if we do not extend the production tax credit.

I am not going to stand by idly and observe the outsourcing of American jobs. I do not want to cede the leadership in the clean energy future to any

of our foreign competitors. That is why I keep coming back day after day to urge my colleagues to work with me to pass the production tax credit.

It is pretty simple. The production tax credit equals jobs. We ought to pass it as soon as possible. It is common sense. We have support from both sides of the aisle.

I mentioned my great friend, Senator SANDERS. He has joined me. I also want to mention the esteemed chairman of the Judiciary Committee, the senior Senator from Vermont, Senator SANDERS' colleague, was unable to join us this morning, but he is a strong supporter of the PTC, and he will be making a statement as well.

So let me close by urging all of us, as soon as possible, to extend the wind production tax credit. Let's not let party affiliation or partisan politics interfere with what is right. Without the wind PTC, more Americans will be out of work, and we will have further neglected our duty to pass common-sense policies that help American workers build a better future for themselves and their families. Every day we do not act is a day that more companies like NRG Systems in Vermont are forced to lay off workers in our country. These companies are then looking overseas for better opportunities. That is just flat-out unacceptable.

Mr. President, I conclude. I want my colleagues to know I will be back on the floor tomorrow to talk further about this opportunity but also this threat. I will be back to talk about jobs, our economy, the need for America to lead in the clean energy space, and the need for Congress to take action today.

I thank the ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore for his attention.

Again, I want to acknowledge the great leadership of my friend from Vermont. I look forward to hearing his remarks on this important production tax credit.

With that, I yield the floor.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The Senator from Vermont.

Mr. SANDERS. Mr. President, let me begin by thanking Senator MARK UDALL for his continued focus on ensuring that Congress extends the production tax credit. Senator UDALL has been down on the Senate floor time after time after time on this important issue, and we all owe him a deep debt of gratitude. I thank the Senator very much.

I also want to thank him for his very kind words about the NRG company. We hope when the Senator visits us in Vermont, he will see it. They are a cutting-edge company. They are an extraordinary company, and we are very proud of the work they have done and are doing, and we are cognizant of the problems they are facing today, the layoffs they have had to experience because Congress has not passed the production tax credit.

Mr. President, as you know, this important incentive, the production tax

credit, moves us forward in a direction that we must go in terms of producing safe, sustainable energy by providing a 2.2-cent-per-kilowatt-hour incentive for wind energy produced.

Let's be very clear—and I think a lot of people, perhaps, in Congress and certainly all over the country do not fully grasp this. I think some people still think wind is some kind of cute fringe technology which is not very significant in the United States of America. So let's be very clear: Wind accounts for 35 percent of all new electric-generating capacity installed in our country over the last 5 years, more new electricity capacity during that time than nuclear and coal combined. Let me repeat that. Wind accounts for 35 percent of all new electric-generating capacity installed in our country over the last 5 years. This is not some untested fringe technology; it is mainstream.

Wind today is producing electricity at very competitive rates. According to the Department of Energy, wind is producing electricity from between 4 to 7 cents per kilowatt hour. That happens to be far cheaper than electricity produced by new nuclear plants. Today the United States has over 48,000 megawatts of wind, and Texas alone has over 10,000 megawatts. Iowa and South Dakota have achieved the milestone of getting 20 percent or more of their electricity from wind. Once again, this is not a fringe technology. This is a technology that is growing and is cost effective.

In my State of Vermont, we are home to leading wind companies such as Northern Power in Barre and NRG Systems in Hinesburg. These companies sell wind energy products globally and create good-paying jobs in the State of Vermont. The wind industry supports over 470 manufacturing plants nationally and some 78,000 jobs from one end of our country to the other.

If Congress fails to act on the wind tax credit, we could see a hemorrhaging of some 37,000 wind energy jobs in the next year. We have already seen wind job losses in Vermont due in part to the uncertainty. If one opposes the production tax credit, this is what they are saying to construction workers who want to build wind farms next year: Sorry; you are out of work. In the middle of this severe recession, we should not be saying that.

Those opposing the wind credit say Congress should "not pick winners and losers." Unfortunately, for many decades, for better or for worse, Congress has picked winners and losers. That is just the simple reality. One big winner is the fossil fuel industry, which is set to receive over \$113 billion in subsidies over the next 10 years. So when folks come to the floor and say: We do not want to pick winners and losers, we do not want to give tax breaks and tax credits for wind or solar, the truth is that in a 10-year period, the fossil fuel industry will receive over \$113 billion in subsidies.

These subsidies include rather incredible loopholes, such as allowing BP

to take a tax writeoff for the cost of cleaning up their disastrous oilspill in the gulf. Many of these tax subsidies for Big Oil and coal corporations never phase out and never expire.

Another big winner in terms of support from the Federal Government is the nuclear power industry. They get tens of billions of dollars in Federal research and development. They get risky multibillion-dollar Federal loan guarantees for new plants, and they get the Federal Price-Anderson liability insurance program, which has been conveniently extended for over a half a century.

I raise these points to suggest that what we are asking for is fairly modest compared to what the fossil fuel industry and the nuclear power industry receive. It is absurd that Congress continues huge subsidies for the fossil fuel industry, for the nuclear power industry, and yet is resisting providing support for safe and sustainable energy such as wind.

If we are serious about job creation and putting construction workers back to work, if we are serious about reversing global warming and cutting back on greenhouse gas emissions, we must be investing in the growing sustainable energy sector. At a modest cost compared to the huge subsidies for fossil fuels and nuclear, an extension of the production tax credit can provide wind energy companies the certainty they need to invest in job creation in America.

I wish to congratulate Senator UDALL for his excellent work and his leadership on this issue. I look forward to working with him and all of my colleagues so that we extend the production tax credit and create a more level playing field for sustainable energy.

With that, I yield the floor.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The Senator from Indiana.

CYBER SECURITY

Mr. COATS. Mr. President, 11 years ago this morning, September 11, 2001, nearly 3,000 of our citizens lost their lives in a senseless act of terrorism that would change the course of America forever. That fateful Tuesday morning changed the way we think about life in America. It changed the way we travel. It changed the way we govern. It changed all of our lives, with some, of course, sacrificing much more than others.

From the first responders who ran into the crumbling buildings and wreckage 11 years ago today to the Navy Seals who brought bin Laden to justice, to the thousands of men and women in uniform who continue to defend our freedom, countless Americans and their loved ones have served and sacrificed in the fight against terrorism for now more than a decade.

The tragic events of September 11 have also resulted in a more vigilant Nation and a more prepared and proactive defense and security operation for the American people. The attack highlighted several vulnerabili-

ties across State and Federal Government that had been ignored for too long, and many of those have been addressed and remedied.

In the aftermath of this tragedy, Congress put aside political partisanship and worked together with the administration and its departments to strengthen our national security and intelligence efforts. Yet today we face another major potential attack on our country different from those we faced before, but just as dangerous and threatening.

It is not a hijacked plane or a bomb, although that remains a significant threat, but it is rather a cyber attack, an attack using the interconnected Internet that governs some of our most critical infrastructure. This type of an attack comes across the wire or through the air targeting a system and taking it down, which would have a dramatic impact on our country.

As a member of the Senate Intelligence Committee, I know that the threat of a cyber attack is real and far reaching. A major attack on our cyber systems could shut down our critical infrastructure, our financial systems, our communications systems, our electric grids, powerplants, water treatment centers, transportation systems, refineries, and other interconnected critical infrastructure that allows us to run our economy and protect the safety of Americans.

Every day American businesses are victims of cyber intrusions. The threat and sophistication of these attacks is growing as we speak. Earlier this year FBI Director Robert Mueller warned that, in the near future, "the cyber threat will pose the number one threat to our country."

The reason I came here today, in addition to acknowledging the sacrifices of those that were made on September 11 and the sacrifices that have been made by tens of thousands if not millions of Americans since then and the kind of effort that has been put in place that will hopefully prevent us from such an attack in the future, is to address a failure on the part of this Congress and administration to respond to this most imminent and threatening attack through our cyber network.

The week before the August recess, particularly in an election year, will, of course, be filled with partisanship here in Washington. But we hit a low point this year in adjourning for the August recess as we rushed to vote to consider a cyber bill, which did not convey the wishes of any of us who had worked for weeks and months to try to put something together that could gain bipartisan support and consensus.

I voted to move forward with the bill, despite my concerns with the legislation, so we could keep it alive over the August recess and return here with this session reopening in September to address this threat. With precious few weeks left before the election and the precious few weeks left after the election and before the end of the year, I

did not believe we could possibly leave here without putting the protections in place that are necessary to provide adequate defenses against a cyber attack on our critical infrastructure.

One-fifth of the Senate, both Republicans and Democrats, met every day for weeks to iron out our differences on this cyber security legislation. We recognized that our national security was at stake. And despite some genuine disagreements, we all participated because we thought we could find—and had to find—common ground; not just common ground among the two political parties, but common ground between industry and government as well.

Industry plays a critical role in this effort. With the active participation of 20 Senators representing both parties and key committees of jurisdiction, we came close. Unfortunately, politics threw a wrench in our plans before a negotiated settlement was reached. I remain hopeful, though, and I plan to keep working with my colleagues to find the right balance between government and industry, standards and incentives, free markets and national security.

I was frustrated to discover that after sitting on the sidelines rather than working with Congress on this critical debate, the President had signaled his desire to regulate cyber security by executive fiat. No one can do this alone—not one party, not government, or industry, and certainly not by executive order, which on its best day cannot begin to provide the robust incentives and information sharing required to achieve sufficient collaboration.

Congress must act to add cyber to its to-do list. I recognize that Congress and this administration have a long list of remaining items to address before the end of the year: the Defense authorization bill, the looming so-called Taxmageddon, which includes the scheduled increase in the current income tax rates, the alternative minimum tax patch, the estate tax, the research and development tax credit, other tax extenders, the fix for physician Medicare reimbursement, the impact of the across-the-board cuts through sequestration, and another impending debt ceiling. All of this is before us with just a little bit of time left. But what needs to be near the top or at the top of this list is cyber security legislation that provides flexibility, preserves personal liberties, and protects our country from a widespread cyber attack. Let's learn from the lessons of September 11 and not wait for a major strike before we act.

Let's work together, Democrats and Republicans, Congress and the White House, government and the private sector, to make our country a safer, more prosperous place. I urge my colleagues to continue to work in a bipartisan manner to bring forward a responsible and balanced cyber security bill. The responsibility falls on all of us. We

know this threat is ongoing and real. We know we need to act. And rather than acting alone, I call on the President to join with the Members of this Chamber and work together to do the right thing, to cast aside partisanship and put the security of our country above political security.

There is a lot of focus and emphasis on the election that lies before us. That is natural. But when we are facing a threat as imminent and as potential and as real as this, we must do everything we can to transcend the politics of the day, and to look at the policy that needs to be put in place to make our country safer and protect our citizens.

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

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. MANCHIN.) The clerk will call the roll. The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. DURBIN. 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 TO OBSERVE THE ELEVENTH ANNIVERSARY OF THE ATTACKS ON SEPTEMBER, 11, 2001

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the Senate will observe a moment of silence in recognition of the 11th anniversary of the attacks on September 11, 2001.

(Moment of silence.)

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Illinois.

Mr. DURBIN. Mr. President, at this moment, the majority leader, Senator HARRY REID, and the Republican leader, Senator MITCH MCCONNELL, are gathered on the east front steps of the U.S. Capitol along with Members of the House of Representatives. It is a bipartisan gathering to commemorate the 11th anniversary of the terrible tragedy of 9/11.

On that date the gathering was more spontaneous but reflected a feeling of unity, which all of us felt in light of that national tragedy. Toward the end of that gathering 11 years ago, Senator BARBARA MIKULSKI suggested that Members sing "God Bless America," and they did. Today, during the course of this ceremony, there will be a moment of silence, prayer, as well as the singing of "God Bless America" to celebrate the great effort that has been made by so many to keep America safe and to mourn the loss of those who lost their lives on 9/11.

We remember today all of those who were lost and all those who suffered in the terrorist attacks on America. In their honor may we work to keep alive that sense of unity we felt on that day, and may we do our best to serve the loved ones they left and the Nation they loved.

Mr. President, I yield the floor, and 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. HELLER. 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. HELLER. I ask unanimous consent to speak as if in morning business.

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

Mr. HELLER. Mr. President, today we come together on the floor of the Senate to remember and honor the victims of September 11, 2001.

Only 11 short years ago on this day, enemies of freedom and equality attacked the United States and murdered thousands of innocent people. From this attack, our Nation grew stronger. United by our flag and our beliefs, America rose to defend the homeland and take the battle to our enemies. And it has not been easy. No, it has been a long 11 years of combat in Afghanistan and Iraq.

But our military and its leaders have brought the mastermind of the 9/11 attacks, Osama bin Laden, to justice. And for a decade, America has been safe from the next round of attacks that we all thought were imminent 11 years ago.

None of this could have been accomplished without the brave men and women of our Armed Forces.

On 9/11, the mission of our military changed overnight. Those already enlisted knew they would be heading for war, and many more joined our military knowing that they too would be headed for combat.

From the events of 9/11, the best of America was reborn. A new generation of Americans dedicated to service and preservation of freedom was called to action because of 9/11. These Americans were among the first on the ground in foreign countries. They toppled a dictator, liberated a nation of women and children from an oppressive regime, and brought to justice Osama bin Laden.

Today our overseas operations fighting the war on terror continue. But for many of these soldiers, their tour of duty is over and they are coming home. They are coming home to family and friends and those who love them, but also to a stagnant economy and record high unemployment.

Today, unemployment amongst post-9/11 veterans is 9.8 percent; 192,000 post-9/11 veterans are unemployed, and 443,000 9/11 veterans are not even participating in the labor force. The policy of this Nation to grow the economy is failing these brave men and women who have fought to protect our freedoms—including economic freedoms.

This week the Senate will take up a bill that will provide \$1 billion over 5 years to hire 20,000 veterans. I am proud to support this measure and hope we will have the opportunity to debate it and other job-creating measures before we return home at the end of this work period.

Since coming to the Senate, job creation has been my No. 1 priority. I will

support taking up and debating any measure relating to this issue, especially those that affect veterans. That is why I was proud to reach across bipartisan lines to work to pass the VOW to Hire Heroes Act, and know there is more work to be done. However, it is stunning that we are at this point.

After a \$1 trillion stimulus, bailout after bailout, a new government-run health care program that will raise taxes on all Americans, it is time to look our veterans in the eyes and ask: Is this working? Are this administration's policies working for thousands of unemployed Nevada veterans who have come back from their service to find their homes underwater and their jobs lost in this great recession?

It is not working. The bill we are taking up this week is an acknowledgement that the policies of the past 4 years have not worked. As a result of the failed policies of this administration, Nevada veterans cannot find a job.

Our veterans deserve better. They deserve a good-paying job. That is why I will support this measure that we will hopefully take up this afternoon. But I also know there is much more we can do to provide veterans the opportunities they deserve. In addition to supporting cloture on the motion to proceed to this bill, I will also be filing my Veterans Small Business Protection Act as an amendment. I introduced this legislation, along with Ranking Member BARR of the Veterans' Affairs Committee, to ensure that widows and dependents of servicemembers killed in action are not alone to run a small business while grieving over the loss of a loved one.

Congress has provided numerous benefits to our Nation's veterans who own a small business—sole-source contracting, low-interest loans, and other resources, in order to help these small businesses grow and to create jobs. My legislation closes a large gap in Federal law that does little for those who owned businesses before their activation and were killed in the line of duty. As a Member of Congress, we must honor our Nation's fallen as well as ensure that the loved ones they leave behind have the same economic opportunities as afforded to that veteran. It is a small token that we can provide to those who gave the ultimate sacrifice for liberty.

I hope we will have the opportunity to offer amendments this week as we debate the veterans job corps legislation and encourage my colleagues to support my veterans small business bill.

In closing, our Nation owes a debt of gratitude to our Nation's veterans, and Congress must fulfill the promises and commitments that have been made to all of them. This week the Senate will continue to work toward providing veterans with a good-paying job, and I support that goal. But if we are going to help small businesses create jobs for veterans and all Americans, we must

change the policies coming from Washington, DC, because it is not working.

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

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

The assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. NELSON of Florida. 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. NELSON of Florida. Mr. President, I want to go ahead on this Veterans Jobs Corps bill. I had anticipated I would be speaking after the chairman of the committee, Senator MURRAY, but I will take the liberty of going ahead, and then with her comments coming as the chairman of the committee, which normally it would be the reverse. And I thank Senator MURRAY for her leadership in all of these veterans issues, but particularly the issue of unemployment among veterans when they come home from the war. Especially among veterans who are age 24 and less, the unemployment figure is even higher.

It is appropriate on this particular day, September 11—11 years ago today—with the fact that those terrorists hijacked the four commercial airlines, causing the crashes at the World Trade Center, at the Pentagon, and in a field in Pennsylvania. What was happening also that morning was that police officers and firefighters and emergency personnel rushed to respond, and many lost their lives in attempts to save others.

The events of that morning mobilized American forces like we had not seen in years. One of the first mobilizations was our U.S. military. They were called to serve bravely in remote corners of the globe.

Eleven years later, the mastermind of 9/11, Osama bin Laden, was taken down, we now have an al-Qaida that is severely diminished, and we are bringing our troops home from that part of the world.

But for the troops, when they come home, the fight is not over. There is another fight when they get back home to America. It is a different type of battle.

The unemployment rate among veterans returning from Iraq and Afghanistan was just under 11 percent in August. It is higher for those who are younger. This problem is likely to continue to grow as we draw down in Afghanistan, as we have already drawn down in Iraq.

It is worth noting that there have been steps made in the right direction. This past summer we passed legislation that will help veterans get Federal occupational licenses when their military training matches the civilian requirements. That was a bill I had the privilege of sponsoring. It passed the Senate unanimously. It was passed by the House overwhelmingly. It was sent down and it was signed into law. Last

year we passed the bill granting tax benefits to companies that hire wounded warriors. But we have to do more.

So we filed this legislation that the chairman of the committee, Senator MURRAY, will further explain. This legislation is to create a Veterans Jobs Corps. It is modeled after the Civilian Conservation Corps of the 1930s. The Veterans Jobs Corps would put veterans back to work restoring and protecting America's public lands and waters. The bill would also create opportunities for veterans to serve as police and firefighters and first responders.

We have had some success on this with smaller scale projects, such as the Veterans Fire Corps pilot program at the U.S. Department of Agriculture, which trains veterans to fight forest fires. In fact, it has been so successful that folks who run these programs say they can hardly keep trainees in the program because they are picked up for full-time employment so fast. So we are expanding this idea from this pilot study that has been so successful. We are expanding it now in the Veterans Jobs Corps.

Ten percent of the money in this bill will go to hiring veterans with specialties, such as those with the specialty of military police going into civilian law enforcement and those with the specialty of medics to be firefighters and first responders.

Not only will this bill help protect our communities, but the Veterans Jobs Corps will help address the Federal maintenance backlog. The National Park Service has deferred maintenance totaling over \$11 billion. This backlog has been caused by the gradual shifting of funding to the operations budgets of the Park Service at the expense of everything else.

For example, at the Civil War battlefield in Fredericksburg, VA, a \$42 million backlog in maintenance is preventing the upkeep of that vital piece of American history.

I am happy to say that a number of organizations have stepped forward to support this bill. The American Legion, the Military Officers Association of America, the Iraq and Afghanistan Veterans of America, and the National Association of Police Organizations—all of them support this legislation.

One of the greatest honors I have in this job as Senator is getting out to meet and to greet current members of our military all over the globe and to thank the veterans back here at home for their service to our country.

When you meet some of these folks, both young and old, they have already done the tough, tough job, and then they come home and they have tough times as well. These folks are hard working, they are highly trained, highly disciplined, extremely skilled. We need to give them as many opportunities as possible to succeed when they get back home here in America.

It is up to us to stand by our soldiers, sailors, airmen, marines, and coast

guardsmen. I want to urge the Senate, when we vote today at 2:15, to grant the motion for cloture so we can take up this bill and quickly pass it so those who have fought bravely for our Nation can find employment when they come home.

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

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The bill clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

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

Mrs. MURRAY. Mr. President, we just heard the Senator from Florida talk about the very important piece of legislation that is in front of us. I wish to thank him for being the lead on this and all the work he has put in it and the passion he has had to make sure our veterans in this Nation have what they need when they come home from these wars.

Last Friday we were again reminded of the difficult employment picture our Nation's veterans continue to face. In the monthly unemployment rate for August, we saw across the country there were 720,000 unemployed veterans. It is a number that includes over 225,000 post-9/11 veterans, many of them who have served multiple tours in Iraq and Afghanistan and have sacrificed time and again for our safety.

This should not be the case. Our veterans have what it takes to not only go out and find work but to excel in the workforce of the 21st century. In fact, the characteristics that our veterans have and exemplify read like the job qualifications you might find at any major company or small business, and that is because they have leadership ability, discipline, technical skills, team work, and the ability to perform under pressure—no question.

They have those skills because as a country we have invested in training them. We cannot and should not let that training or the millions of dollars we have invested in these men and women go to waste. In far too many instances, however, that is what is happening. Too often on the day our servicemembers are discharged, we as a nation pat them on the back, thank them for their service, but we do not give them a helping hand in the job market. That has to end.

The Senate has taken bipartisan action in the past to begin to change the way our veterans do transition from the battlefield to the job market. We were able to pass the VOW to Hire Heroes Act, which I coauthored. That was signed into law last year. Importantly, that law transforms the way we provide transition training to our servicemembers when they leave the military. It includes a provision that in my home State and across the country is providing thousands of dollars in tax credits to businesses to hire our vets.

In addition to that bill, we have also worked to build partnerships with the private sector in order to tap into the tremendous amount of good will that our companies have for our returning heroes. Sometimes this is as simple as working with a company to show them the easy steps that can help bring veterans on board, such as ensuring that they are advertising their job openings with local veterans service organizations and on their local military bases or having veterans in their own H.R. department with whom veterans can identify when they apply for work or having someone on staff who can help translate the experience of veterans into the work that company does.

Time and again, big companies such as Amazon and Microsoft or a lot of smaller businesses I have seen tell me these steps make an impact. But beyond those steps, it is very clear more needs to be done, particularly when the unemployment rate among young veterans who are ages 18 to 24 continues to hover around 20 percent. Action has to be taken because 20 percent is one in five of our veterans who cannot find a job to support their family; one in five of them who does not have an income to provide stability; one in five of them who does not have the work to provide them with the self-esteem and pride that is so critical to their transition home.

This is a problem that manifests itself in homelessness, in broken families, and far too often in our veterans taking their own lives. It is a problem that neither the veterans themselves nor government alone can solve. But it is also one that we have to do everything we can to address.

Here in the Senate, that means a bipartisan, all-hands-on-deck strategy. That is exactly what the Senator from Florida is putting forward. Senator NELSON has put forward the veterans job corps bill. What this bill does is, over the next 5 years, it will increase training and hiring opportunities for all our veterans who are using successful job training programs in the country.

It is going to help hire qualified veterans as police officers and firefighters and first responders—by the way, at a time when 85 percent of law enforcement agencies had to reduce their budgets in the last year. It is going to help train and hire veterans to help restore and protect our national, State and tribal forests, our parks and our public lands—at a time, by the way, when we face a \$10 billion maintenance backlog for our public lands. It is a backlog I have seen at home personally in my home State of Washington.

Because training and hiring our veterans has never been seen and never should be an effort that divides us along partisan lines, the veterans job corps bill takes good ideas from both sides of the aisle. In fact, our bill will provide veterans with access to the Internet and computers to help conduct job searches at one-stop centers

and other locations. This is an idea championed by Senator TOOMEY. It is going to help guarantee that our rural and disabled veterans have access to veterans employment representatives. This is a bill that is championed by Senator TESTER, who is presiding over the Senate this morning. It is a good idea. We put it in this bill.

It is going to increase transition assistance for eligible veterans and their spouses. That is a bill that was introduced by Senator BOOZMAN of our committee.

It will require consideration of a veteran's training or experience gained while they are serving on Active Duty when they seek certifications and licenses. That is a bill that is cosponsored by Democrats and Republicans alike. This bill says all good ideas are welcome.

Our veterans need all the help they can get. It is fully paid for in a bipartisan way. It has been endorsed most recently by the National Association of Police Organizations. But there are also a lot of veterans service organizations that stand behind this bill as well. They do so because they know that helping veterans find employment is absolutely critical to meeting many of the challenges they face when they come home.

Our veterans do not ask for a lot. Oftentimes, they come home and do not even acknowledge their own sacrifice. My own father never talked about his time fighting in World War II. In fact, I never saw his Purple Heart or knew he had a wallet with shrapnel in it or a diary that detailed his time in combat until after he died and my family gathered to sort out his belongings.

But our veterans should not have to ask. We should know to provide for them. When my father's generation came home from the war, they came home to opportunity. My father came home to a community that supported him. He came home to college and a job. It was a job that gave him pride and a job that helped him start his family, and one that, of course, ultimately led me to starting my own. That is the legacy of opportunity this Senate, in a bipartisan way, has lived up to for today's veterans.

I urge our colleagues to build on the successes we have had in passing bipartisan veterans employment legislation. Veterans returning home from across the country are watching us. They certainly do not have time to let politics block their path to a job that will help them serve their community. Surely, this is a bill that is something we can show them that we can come together on no matter how close or far away we are from an election.

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

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mrs. MURRAY. I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

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

RECESS

Mrs. MURRAY. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate recess until 2:15 under the previous order.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the Senate stands in recess until 2:15 p.m.

Thereupon, the Senate, at 12:24 p.m., recessed until 2:15 p.m. and reassembled when called to order by the Presiding Officer (Mr. WEBB).

VETERANS JOBS CORPS ACT OF 2012—MOTION TO PROCEED—Continued

CLOTURE MOTION

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report the motion to invoke cloture.

The legislative clerk read as follows:

CLOTURE MOTION

We, the undersigned Senators, in accordance with the provisions of rule XXII of the Standing Rules of the Senate, hereby move to bring to a close debate on the motion to proceed to calendar No. 476, S. 3457, a bill to require the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to establish a veterans jobs corps, and for other purposes.

Harry Reid, John F. Kerry, Bernard Sanders, Kent Conrad, Al Franken, Tom Udall, Christopher A. Coons, Mark Begich, Patty Murray, Bill Nelson, Amy Klobuchar, Thomas R. Carper, Robert Menendez, Jim Webb, Kirsten E. Gillibrand, Jeff Merkley, Jack Reed.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. By unanimous consent, the mandatory quorum call has been waived.

The question is, Is it the sense of the Senate that debate on the motion to proceed to S. 3457, a bill to require the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to establish a veterans job corps, and for other purposes, shall be brought to a close?

The yeas and nays are mandatory under the rule.

The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk called the roll.

Mr. DURBIN. I announce that the Senator from South Dakota (Mr. JOHNSON) and the Senator from Virginia (Mr. WARNER), are necessarily absent.

Mr. KYL. The following Senators are necessarily absent: the Senator from Illinois (Mr. KIRK) and the Senator from Florida (Mr. RUBIO).

The yeas and nays resulted—yeas 95, nays 1, as follows:

[Rollcall Vote No. 191 Leg.]

YEAS—95

Akaka	Burr	Crapo
Alexander	Cantwell	DeMint
Ayotte	Cardin	Durbin
Barrasso	Carper	Enzi
Baucus	Casey	Feinstein
Begich	Chambliss	Franken
Bennet	Coats	Gillibrand
Bingaman	Coburn	Graham
Blumenthal	Cochran	Grassley
Blunt	Collins	Hagan
Boozman	Conrad	Harkin
Boxer	Coons	Hatch
Brown (MA)	Corker	Heller
Brown (OH)	Cornyn	Hoeven

Hutchison	McCain	Sanders
Inhofe	McCaskill	Schumer
Inouye	McConnell	Sessions
Isakson	Menendez	Shaheen
Johanns	Merkley	Shelby
Johnson (WI)	Mikulski	Snowe
Kerry	Moran	Stabenow
Klobuchar	Murkowski	Tester
Kohl	Murray	Thune
Kyl	Nelson (NE)	Toomey
Landrieu	Nelson (FL)	Udall (CO)
Lautenberg	Portman	Udall (NM)
Leahy	Pryor	Vitter
Lee	Reed	Webb
Levin	Reid	Whitehouse
Lieberman	Risch	Wicker
Lugar	Roberts	Wyden
Manchin	Rockefeller	

NAYS—1

Paul

NOT VOTING—4

Johnson (SD)	Rubio
Kirk	Warner

The PRESIDING OFFICER. On this vote, the yeas are 95, the nays are 1. Three-fifths of the Senators duly chosen and sworn having voted in the affirmative, the motion is agreed to.

VOTE EXPLANATION

• Mr. WARNER. Mr. President, a military career is one of the most honorable professions that our young men and women can pursue, and each of us is indebted to our veterans for their service.

In this challenging economic time, it is more important than ever that we do what we can to connect well qualified veterans not just with jobs, but with careers. Our veterans demonstrate the skills, knowledge, leadership and professionalism that allow them to excel in almost any career field if they are given the right opportunities.

How we treat this generation of military veterans who have served in Iraq and Afghanistan will influence the next generation of young men and women who might consider a career in our military. Unfortunately, we sometimes fall short when it comes to connecting veterans with jobs, and some veterans struggle to find careers that allow them to achieve their full potential.

That is why I have been involved for several months now in a unique partnership of U.S. utility industry leaders to actively recruit and employ returning veterans. Troops to Energy helps our veterans successfully transition from military service into civilian careers in the utility and engineering industries.

Some reports show that a staggering 29 percent of veterans between the ages of 18 and 24 who served in Iraq or Afghanistan were unemployed last year. That is more than three times the national unemployment level and unacceptably high.

We must do better.

That is why I support the Veterans Jobs Corps Act of 2012, which will create additional opportunities for veterans to transition into career fields in which their military skills are readily transferrable.

I am not able to vote on this important legislation today because I am attending the funeral services for a dear friend, but I want the record to reflect

my strong support for this legislation and for our military men and women, their families, and our veterans.●

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

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. FRANKEN). Without objection, it is so ordered.

FINANCIAL CRISIS

Mr. SANDERS. Mr. President, there has been, appropriately enough, a lot of discussion about our \$16 trillion national debt and our \$1 trillion Federal deficit. This is, in fact, an enormously important issue, and it is an issue that Congress must address. But it must address this crisis in a way that is fair to the middle class and to working families and our seniors and our kids. It is an issue that must be addressed, but it must be addressed fairly.

When we talk about the deficit and the national debt, it is important to remember how we got to where we are today. We can simply go back 10 years or so to January 2001 when President Clinton left office and President Bush assumed the Presidency. At that particular moment in history, in January 2001, I hope everybody remembers not only did this country have a \$236 billion surplus, all of the projections for the future at that point were that that surplus was going to grow and grow and grow. In fact, at that point, this was one of the great debates taking place in Congress: What do we do with all of that money? How much do we give back in tax breaks? How much do we put into Social Security? That was the debate in January 2001.

So before we discuss how we go forward in deficit reduction, with a trillion-dollar deficit, it is important to remember that, and it is important to remember how we got to where we are today.

How we got to where we are today really, in a significant way, is not complicated. President Bush assumed office and within a few years we were fighting not just one war in Afghanistan but another war in Iraq. I hope the American people appreciate that many of the “deficit hawks”—the people who tell us: Oh, gee, we have to cut Social Security and Medicare and Medicaid and nutrition and education; we have to cut, cut, cut, cut—when asked to pay for those wars had nothing to say.

PAUL RYAN, Mr. Romney’s Vice Presidential nominee, chairman of the House Budget Committee, voted for the wars but forgot to pay for them. Nobody knows exactly how much these two wars will end up costing, but the guess is that by the time we take care of the last veteran 70 years from now, those wars may run up over \$3 trillion, and we did not pay for them to the tune of one penny, all put on the credit card, all added to the deficit.