

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.

I find it somewhat unusual that many of our Republican “deficit hawks,” who stand here on the floor of the Senate every day and tell us how deeply concerned they are about the deficit all voted for huge tax breaks for millionaires and billionaires to the tune of \$1 trillion over a 10-year period.

Well, you do not give huge tax breaks to the rich and not offset it if you are serious about the deficit and not being hypocritical. Many of my Republican friends, during the Bush years, voted for the insurance company-written Medicare Part D prescription drug program, written by the insurance companies and the drug companies. It is going to cost us about \$400 billion over a 10-year period.

How did we pay for that program? Oh, I guess we did not pay for it at all. Our deficit hawk friends voted for that program, which was good politics, I guess. They forgot to pay for it. Add another \$400 billion to the deficit.

It is important to understand that today, in the midst of this horrendous recession, the issue is not just cuts, cuts, cuts. The issue is that right now, today, at 15.2 percent, revenue as a percentage of gross domestic product is lower than at any time in the last 60 years. Because we deregulated Wall Street—Republicans wanted that; some Democrats wanted that—we allowed investor banks to merge with commercial banks, to merge with insurance companies, and, as a result of the illegal behavior on Wall Street, we were driven into this recession: mass unemployment, businesses go under, less tax revenue comes in, and, at 15.2 percent, revenue today as a percentage of GDP is the lowest it has been in 60 years.

So those are some of the reasons that today we are experiencing a trillion-dollar deficit and a \$16 trillion national debt. My Republican friends will say: Well, you know, Bernie, be that as it may, yes, maybe we should have paid for the wars; maybe we should not have given tax breaks to billionaires when the rich are doing very well; maybe we should have paid for Medicare Part D; maybe we should have not deregulated Wall Street. But be that as it may, that is water over the dam. We are where we are right now. We have got to go forward on deficit reduction.

So what are their ideas? Well, Mitt Romney has not been as clear as I think he should be about his ideas. But we do have a blueprint from our Republican friends in the Ryan budget. As you know, Congressman RYAN is chairman of the Budget Committee. He presented a budget. It was passed by the Republican House. Here is some of what the Republican budget is about.

What the Republicans want to do is to make cuts to Social Security and to raise the retirement age. I want to say a word about Social Security right now. It is an issue I feel very strongly about. I think a lot of Americans do not know this. Social Security, because it is funded by the payroll tax and not the general Treasury, has not contrib-

uted one nickel to our deficits. Social Security today has a \$2.7 trillion surplus and can pay out all benefits owed to all eligible Americans for the next 21 years. In my view, it would be wrong, it would be deeply wrong, to consider cuts in Social Security as part of deficit reduction, because Social Security has not contributed a nickel to the deficit. But our Republican friends support cuts in Social Security. And many of them over a period of years want to move toward the privatization of Social Security.

The Ryan budget would end Medicare as we know it in a 10-year period. What does that mean? What that means is that in 10 years, if you are 70 years of age, you would be given a voucher for \$8,000, as I understand the number. Let's assume that an individual, a 70-year-old, 75-year-old individual walks into a doctor's office, and the doctor says: Joe, Mary, I am sorry to tell you this, but you are dealing with cancer. We are going to have to send you to a hospital. There are a whole lot of treatments you are going to have to undertake. Those treatments are going to cost you tens of thousands of dollars, if not more. That individual then goes to his or her insurance company and says: I have \$8,000 to buy an insurance policy.

What do you think that insurance agent is going to tell that individual when that person is facing tens and tens of thousands of dollars of medical bills? That insurance company's function is to make money. They are not going to say: Oh, sure, give us the \$8,000 so we can spend \$50,000 on health care costs for you. It is not going to happen. That insurance company is going to say: There is the door. Try somebody else. That is going to happen to a whole lot of people.

You can think of what the end of that story is. The end of the story is, if that family, that individual, does not have any money, he or she is going to go to their kids. If they do not have any money, the outcome is not going to be good, because that person simply will not have the treatment he or she needs.

The Ryan budget proposes to cut \$770 billion over a 10-year period from Medicaid. That would result in at least 14 million Americans losing their health insurance and would also cut nursing home assistance in half, threatening the long-term care of some 10 million senior citizens. Many people do not know that. Many people say: Well, you know, Medicaid is for the poor. It is certainly true that millions of low-income kids, deservedly, through the Children's Health Insurance Program, get their health insurance with significant help from Medicaid and State money. But what people do not understand is that Medicaid is also a major contributor toward nursing home care.

I want the average middle-class family to understand that if their mom or their pop develops Alzheimer's or some other very difficult situation, cannot

stay at home, cannot stay with their kids, has to be put in a nursing home, which is pretty expensive, understand that all over this country, Medicaid is putting money into making sure that elderly people can stay in nursing homes with some degree of dignity.

But it is not just Social Security or Medicare and Medicaid our Republican friends are going after. In my State of Vermont, and I am sure in Minnesota, we have lower income working-class kids who no longer can go to college because college is too expensive. We have other young people who are graduating college \$25,000, \$50,000 in debt, unable to find jobs which help them pay off that debt.

In my view, the Pell grant program, which is the major way in Washington we help low and moderate-income kids—I think that is too low; we are not helping enough kids with enough resources. But the Ryan budget would slash Pell grants by about 60 percent next year alone. So if you are a parent or you are a young person in college, that is how they intend to balance the budget.

In the midst of this horrendous recession, older people, lower income people are struggling. It is very easy to forget here in the confines of the Senate, but there are millions of Americans today wondering how they are going to feed their kids tonight, who open the refrigerator, there is no food in that refrigerator, who depend upon food stamps. Half of the food stamp money goes to the elderly and children. They want to make devastating cuts in food stamps.

My main point is pretty simple. The deficit is a serious issue and we have got to address it. But it would not only be immoral, it would be bad economic policy to move toward deficit reduction, to move toward a balanced budget, on the backs of millions and millions of seniors and children and working families who today, as a result of this terrible recession, are already struggling to keep their heads above water. You do not balance the budget on the backs of the most vulnerable people in this country. That is bad economic policy. That is immoral. There are ways to move forward which can achieve the same goals but without hurting people who are already in pain.

What we do not talk about too much in Congress is who is winning and who is losing in the current American economy. I want to bring forth a few facts that I think the American people and my colleagues should be familiar with. That is, No. 1, in America today we have the most unequal distribution of wealth and income of any major country on Earth and worse in America today than at any time since the 1920s. We have in America today—and people should check it out; they may not believe me when I say this. You have got one family, the Waltons of Wal-Mart fame, one family owns more wealth than the bottom 40 percent of the American people. One family owns more wealth than the bottom 40 percent.

And our Republican friends say: That is not enough. We have to give those people, billionaires, even more tax breaks. Today the top 1 percent owns about 41 percent of the wealth of America. The bottom 60 percent—that is a significant majority of the American people added all together—own about 2.3 percent of the wealth of America: Top 1 percent, 41 percent; bottom 60 percent, 2.3 percent.

Common sense and decency would suggest that when a few people have incredible wealth, when a few people are seeing their incomes and their wealth grow rapidly while the middle class is shrinking and poverty is increasing, common sense and common decency suggests that you ask the people on top whose effective tax rate is the lowest in decades to start paying their fair share of taxes before you cut Social Security, before you cut Medicare, Medicaid, education and nutrition programs.

Right now, about one out of four major profitable corporations is paying zero in taxes. We have had instances which I have portrayed here on the floor of the Senate of some of the most profitable corporations in America in a given year paying nothing in Federal income taxes, and, in fact, getting a rebate from the IRS.

Well, before you tell the elderly and children that they have to experience cuts when they cannot afford it, maybe you say to corporate America: Sorry, we are going to end the loopholes you currently are enjoying. Every single year we are losing about \$100 billion in tax revenue because corporations and wealthy individuals are stashing their money in tax havens in the Cayman islands, Bermuda, and elsewhere. They are “patriotic” Americans who love this country so much they are stashing their money abroad in order to avoid paying taxes in this country.

Maybe before you cut education, maybe before you cut back on infrastructure, we make sure that we do away with these tax havens and these tax shelters for millionaires and billionaires and large corporations.

Lastly, we have tripled military spending since 1997. Right now the United States is spending almost as much as the rest of the world combined. We spend over 4 percent of our GDP on the military. Our friends in Europe—many of the countries there provide health care to all of their people, educational opportunities stronger than we do to our people—are spending 2 percent. We are spending twice as much in GDP on defense. Maybe it is time to take a hard look at a lot of the waste and inefficiency that currently exists in the Defense Department.

On my Web site, sanders.senate.gov, we have a whole list of ways that we can bring in revenue, where we can make cuts which are fair, which protect the middle class and working families and the most vulnerable people in this country.

I am going to do everything I can to make sure we do not go forward in

terms of deficit reduction by punishing people who are already hurting and then giving more tax breaks to millionaires and billionaires. That is bad economic policy. That is immoral. It is not something we should be doing.

I yield the floor, and 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.

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

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

MISSILE DEFENSE

Mr. INHOFE. Mr. President, several of us have talked about the tragic terrorist attack on America 11 years ago today. I think we all remember where we were and what we were doing at the time. I remember so well going up to New York to Ground Zero and seeing the people who were involved and talking to the families of some of the firemen who lost their lives. As tragic as that is, I have to ask the question: Is there any doubt that those terrorists, if they had the ability to send a weapon over to the United States, would do that?

I look back sometimes wistfully to the days of the Cold War when it was the USSR and the United States. They were predictable and we were predictable. But it is different. Such concepts as mutually assured destruction at that time were somewhat meaningful and were very effective. It is not effective now because we are dealing with people who want to die. It is a different environment altogether.

On this 11th year, on this particular day, when I think about President Obama's first budget 4 years ago, he did a lot of things I thought were very destructive to our military, and I have talked about that on the floor several times. He did away with the F-22, the only fifth-generation vehicle. He did away with our lift capacity of the C-17. He did away with the future combat system. I think people are aware of that, but something people may not be aware of that happened in that same budget was doing away with the Poland site of the ground-based interceptor.

Think back to the decision that was made in this country that we had to prepare ourselves for Iran having the capability of a weapon that could be sent all the way over to the United States. We have ground-based interceptors in Alaska, all the way down to southern California. So anything coming from the west I feel very comfortable about, but coming from the other direction, coming from Iran, that is not the case. So we recognized some 6 or 7 years ago that we were going to have to have some kind of a ground-based interceptor that would take care of a missile coming from the east. I was part of that. So we did that in both the Czech Republic and in Poland. The Czech Republic had to be willing to

have a radar site and Poland had to be willing to take on Russia, which didn't want them to have this capability, and we put a ground-based interceptor in Poland to take care of anything coming from that direction. We did that, but in his first budget President Obama did away with it. They tried to say that maybe that was not an accurate assessment, but the 2007 NIE—National Intelligence Estimate—concluded that Iran could develop an intercontinental missile capability by 2015. Less than a year later DOD stated in its April 2010 report on Iran's military that they sent to Congress—and I remember this very well:

With sufficient foreign assistance, Iran could probably develop and test an intercontinental ballistic missile (ICBM) capable of reaching the United States by 2015.

That is totally consistent with what they said back in 2007.

In place of the third site, the Obama administration pitched a new missile defense plan, the European Phased Adaptive Approach with an incremental deployment of sea, land, and air versions, and so forth. One thing we all agree on is that the SM-3 Block IB is a short- to medium-range defense mechanism. The SM-3 Block IIA is short to medium range. The one that would take the place and would have the capability of the ground-based interceptor in Poland is the SM-3 Block IIB. That is still a concept. It is on the drawing board. We know Iran is going to have that capability by 2015 and they say maybe a deployment date by 2020. That leaves the United States of America and Europe unprotected for 5 years.

Now, although I say unprotected, there is some level of protection there. They talk about the AEGIS ships; however, in subsequent budgets the President has cut the AEGIS ships in their capability and the number of missiles that they carry to the point where it leaves us still unprotected—not just us but also Europe.

Fast-forward to today and DOD's April 2012 report, the report on Iran, which, again, states:

Iran has boosted the lethality and effectiveness of existing systems with accuracy and improvements and new submunition payloads. Iran may be technically capable of flight testing an intercontinental ballistic missile by 2015.

Secretary Panetta confirmed this. He is the Secretary of Defense. He said earlier this year on “60 Minutes” that he believes Iran would be able to produce a nuclear weapon in about a year, and then it would take them another 1 to 2 years in order to put it on a deliverable vehicle. Again, that is around 2015, leaving a 5-year gap between the date when our interceptors become operational and the date that Iran fields a nuclear ballistic missile capable of threatening Europe and the United States.

In this year's budget request President Obama cut \$250 million from the THAAD system procurement, procuring 36 interceptors instead of 42. He

cuts THAAD fire units from 9 to 6 and cut \$175 million in AEGIS. Again, that is part of the system that would replace the ground-based interceptor in Poland that is already under construction. The SM-3 procurement would be delayed, procuring 29 SM-3 Block IB interceptors instead of 46; in other words, dramatically cutting down our capability at the same time that there could be no doubt in anyone's mind from what I said that 2015 is a realistic date when Iran would have the capability of not just the weapon but a delivery system.

Additionally, the President has failed to plan or program enough AEGIS ships in the budget to provide full coverage. In other words, they can move them around. They have a good rocket capability. I have been supportive of the AEGIS system, but he is cutting down on the number of them. Those should just be there for the protection of Europe and not the protection of the United States.

At the end of President Obama's now infamous meeting with Russian President Dmitri Medvedev on March 26 of this year, President Obama said—not knowing that the mic was open:

On all these issues, but particularly missile defense, this can be solved, but it's important for him [incoming Russian President Vladimir Putin] to give me space.

That is President Obama's words. He continues:

This is my last election. After my election, I have more flexibility.

Thinking back 11 years ago at the tragedy that immediately killed 3,000 people in that horrible terrorist attack, again, I ask the same question I asked a few minutes ago: Is there any doubt in anyone's mind that a person would hesitate to come over on a well-orchestrated terrorist attack on America and use a system delivered on some type of vehicle to the eastern part of the United States? I say no. I can't imagine anyone believes that is not a possibility.

As tragic as 3,000 people being killed was, it doesn't take much of an imagination to look at any type of missile hitting a major American city. We wouldn't be talking about 3,000; we would be talking about 300,000 or even 3 million.

I think this is the day, on the 11th anniversary, that we need to take the warning we received 11 years ago and look into the future not just for ourselves—in my case, for my 20 kids and grandkids. We cannot subject ourselves. We need to take care of this horrible gap in our defense of an incoming missile coming from the east as quickly as possible.

I yield the floor and 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. ENZI. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

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

WATCH THE HELPERS

Mr. ENZI. Madam President, since this is a day of remembrance of 9/11, when I started my day this morning, I picked up a book I read from time to time. It is called "One Simple Act" by Debbie Macomber, and it is about gratitude and being generous. The very first paragraph I picked up happens to be about 9/11. It says:

Watch the Helpers

After the bombing of the twin towers at New York's Trade Center, the nation was stunned. Parents didn't know what to say to their children. They'd seen such evil things on television that even adults couldn't put the events into any kind of context. When a few parents wrote to Mr. ROGERS, the beloved children's television personality, to ask for advice, Fred Rogers said, "Tell them to watch the helpers." What wise advice. I've thought about his answer many times. When tragedy hits, don't focus on the faces of pain and horror. Let your eyes follow those who are rescuing, feeding, healing, sweeping, comforting, and rebuilding. On 9/11, it was the selfless firefighters who took center stage. They will be remembered long after the evildoers are forgotten.

What good advice: Watch the helpers.

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

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

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

CONGRESSIONAL REVIEW ACT

Mr. HATCH. Madam President, I rise today to speak to an issue that threatens the very viability of the U.S. Senate.

Last July the Obama administration, using the flimsiest of arguments, granted themselves the authority to waive the Federal welfare work requirements. Whether or not what the Obama administration intends to accomplish with these waivers is good welfare policy has been the subject of robust debate.

I am not here to argue the merits or lack thereof of the underlying welfare policy goals of the Obama administration. What I am here to do is to make a plea to my fellow Senators: as Senators, we simply cannot let this action stand.

If we fail to stand together as Senators in defense of our constitutional duty to be the ones to draft legislation, we might as well pack our bags and go home because we will have opened the door for this administration and future administrations to unilaterally decide they can waive precedent, congressional intent, and actual legislative language on which Senators have scrupulously debated and compromised.

If we do not stand together as a Senate, we will be ceding our authority to the executive branch. The longstanding implications of this could possibly ex-

tend to welfare, Medicare, Medicaid, disability policy, child welfare, and Social Security Programs. Allow me to elaborate.

According to the Obama administration, because section 1115 of the Social Security Act allows them certain waiver authority over section 402 of the Social Security Act, which deals with a State's welfare plan, and section 402 cites section 407, then the administration has waiver authority over section 407, which enumerates State welfare work requirements.

This doesn't make any sense.

I have been a leader in the Senate on welfare for nearly two decades. I helped draft and manage the floor during the 1996 overhaul of welfare. Five years later, I worked across the aisle with John Breaux of Louisiana and others to craft the so-called tripartisan proposal for welfare reauthorization. The Breaux-Hatch proposal became the basis for the Senate Finance Committee bill that was marked up in the summer of 2002.

Much of the work Senator Breaux and I accomplished made its way into the Personal Responsibility and Individual Development for Everyone bill—the so-called PRIDE bill—that was reported twice out of the Senate Finance Committee.

In all that work on welfare, not once—not one time, not ever—was there any discussion of allowing States to waive State work requirements. If anyone had raised it, Republican or Democrat, they would have been laughed out of the room—and for good reason. The crux of the deal and the most integral feature of the 1996 act was to give States flexibility to design their own welfare programs but also require them to meet meaningful performance measures. The idea that anyone would contemplate allowing States to waive these performance measures would have been preposterous, even ludicrous.

So allowing the executive branch the authority to waive welfare work requirements has never, ever been a part of any discussion of welfare reform.

The concept of the executive branch having the authority to waive the 1996 welfare work requirements also did not occur during the previous two administrations. It just never came up because no one thought it was possible.

The administration likes to point to a 2005 letter from Governors in support of the PRIDE bill as justification for their unprecedented action, but what they fail to note is that this letter was not sent to President Bush, it was sent to Members of Congress, who, the Governors correctly believed, were the only ones with the constitutional authority to give the States flexibility.

This point bears repeating: Until the July 12 informational memo to States, no one ever thought the executive branch could waive welfare work requirements. I would even venture to speculate that the Obama administration itself does not seriously think it

had the authority to waive welfare work requirements, and here is why I suspect this is the case.

One of the few bipartisan bills that was actually enacted during the 112th session of Congress was legislation I wrote with my partner on the Senate Finance Committee, Chairman BAUCUS. This legislation—the, “Child and Family Services Improvement and Innovation Act”—included a provision I drafted that allowed the Department of Health and Human Services the authority to grant certain child welfare waivers. It specifically allowed HHS to waive provisions included in Title IV-E of the Social Security Act. Congress gave HHS that authority because the Congress had been asked by States for flexibility to waive certain provisions of Title IV-E and because, just as everyone assumed the executive branch could not waive section 407 of the Social Security Act, no one believed they could waive Title IV-E of the Social Security Act.

But if we go and look up section 402, just as there is a reference to section 407 contained within that section, so, too, is there a reference to Title IV-E. If the administration really believes in their heart of hearts they have carte blanche to waive whatever is even mentioned in section 402, why did they have to wait around for Congress to give them that authority? The answer, of course, is the Obama Administration never had the authority to begin with, and I believe even they know that to be true today.

The real issue, beyond the rhetoric, is that if the Senate lets this action stand unchallenged, if the Senate does not speak as one body, united, then our inaction will embolden this administration—and future administrations, I might add—to bypass the constitutionally mandated job of the Congress to enact laws whenever it suits their pleasure or political aims—in other words, to take over the legislative function.

The Congress does not have many tools in our toolkit to thwart administrative overreach, but one of those tools is the Congressional Review Act. The CRA, as it is referred to, allows for Senate fast track authority to disapprove a rule that is submitted from an agency in the event an administration attempts to circumvent the CRA by issuing other forms of guidance that should have been submitted as a rule. The Government Accountability Office, which has standing with our Senate Parliamentarians, can determine that an agency action meets the definition of a rule as established by the Administrative Procedures Act and that therefore the CRA applies.

Last July Congressman DAVE CAMP, chairman of the Ways and Means Committee, and I asked the GAO to determine whether the so-called guidance to States submitted by the Obama administration was a rule and applicable to the CRA. Last week Chairman CAMP and I received word the GAO had deter-

mined that the welfare waiver policy was, in fact, a rule and subject to the CRA. This week both Chairman CAMP and I will introduce resolutions of disapproval under the CRA for the administration's welfare waiver policies. The House will mark up and pass their resolution this week. The Senate can act, under fast track procedures which limit debate during the week of October 1, 2012.

I have taken the floor today to ask that the Senate pass my resolution of disapproval on a unanimous vote.

It is imperative that we send the executive branch the unambiguous signal that the Senate's ability to craft legislation—to do the work tasked to us by the Constitution—will not be trifled with by this or any other administration. If the Senate does not speak with one unified voice on this issue, then I firmly believe we will have forfeited our relevance in future debates over welfare, Medicare, Medicaid, foster care, and Social Security, just to mention a few.

If any administration can capriciously deem themselves to have unlimited waiver authority over anything mentioned in provisions referred to in section 1115, then the Senate is, for all intents and purposes, irrelevant. Sure, we can have our debates and develop our expertise and write our laws, but, colleagues, that won't mean a hill of beans if an administration can come along and just waive everything we have worked so hard to get right. Colleagues and friends, we just can't let that happen.

I know that many in this Chamber support President Obama. I know also that many of these same Senators wish he had not taken this action. But as Members of what I still believe is the greatest deliberative body in the world, we have to put partisanship aside for the greater good of the Senate. If Senator Byrd were sitting here today, I cannot imagine he would allow this to happen. And I can't imagine anybody on the other side will allow this to happen.

We have to send as strong a signal as possible that administrative overreach will not stand; that no matter what our political persuasion, the Senate stands together and we will speak with one voice to say in no uncertain terms that we will not be ridden roughshod over, that our constitutional rights as lawmakers will not be trampled on, and that we will do everything in our power to preserve and defend these rights.

To that end, I urge colleagues to support my efforts to stop this unprecedented executive overreach. Support the resolution to disapprove. Support the Senate. Let's stand up for this body. Whether you are a Democrat or a Republican, we have to make it clear to the other two branches of government that we have certain rights and we have certain powers that no President and no court can overrule. It is important that we stand up on this issue. If we don't, I hesitate to say

what could happen in the future. It ain't gonna be pretty. All I can say is that this is an important issue, it is one every Senator in the Senate ought to consider important, and we ought to set partisanship aside and do this in the best interest of the Senate and in the best interest of our legislative ability to act.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. BROWN of Ohio). The clerk will call the roll.

The assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

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

ROMNEY-RYAN BUDGET

Mr. HARKIN. Mr. President, I come to the floor to talk again on the devastating so-called Ryan budget—which, of course, is now the Romney-Ryan budget. I will speak about that very shortly, but I also want to focus some attention on how the Ryan budget is preventing us from getting a farm bill this year. We have a farm bill we passed in the Senate, but the House can't get it done. Earlier this year the Senate passed a bipartisan farm bill. It had broad support from Republicans and Democrats, all the farm groups, consumer groups, and environmental groups. With all of that support, one would think it would be easy for the House, but the House has not followed suit. Unable or perhaps unwilling to bring the farm bill to the House floor, they similarly refuse to take up the Senate bill. As a result, our farm policy has languished at a time when farm country is literally burning up because of a drought.

As I understand it, the House is going to adjourn this week and go home without taking any action on a farm bill and leave our farmers and ranchers in the lurch when all the House needs to do is take up the Senate-passed bill, pass it, send it to the President, and he will sign it. Again, we passed the bill here with Republicans, Democrats, all the farm groups, consumer groups, and environmental groups supporting it. We even made a \$23 billion contribution to reducing the deficit in the farm bill.

Well, it seems worth noting that one of the reasons the House can't act is seemingly because of the Ryan budget, which, of course, we know is just a proposal. The House has passed it. I think they voted on it 34 times, if I am not mistaken.

The Ryan budget calls for draconian cuts to our Federal nutrition programs; that is, the SNAP program, otherwise known as food stamps. It helps low-income families and families with maybe a modest income. Maybe they lost a job and are in transition and need support for 1 or 2 months before they get back on their feet. It helps with summer feeding programs for kids, feeding programs for low-income

elderly, and feeding programs that go to daycare centers. In other words, we have an abundance, and we are going to use this abundance to help make sure no one goes to bed hungry and people have adequate nutrition in our society.

Well, the Ryan budget made a draconian cut in the nutrition programs. Many of the House Republicans are saying they will not support a farm bill that doesn't have those draconian cuts, which I am proud to say the Senate bill does not have.

I hasten to add, as the former chair of the Senate Agriculture Committee, I long advocated cutting wasteful agricultural spending. For years I led the effort to get rid of direct payments, which the Senate bill does finally, and contributes, as I said, \$23 billion in deficit reduction. So I think this situation shows what the Ryan budget is. It is emblematic of the Ryan budget.

Not only is the Ryan budget devastating for working and low-income Americans, but its insistence on cutting benefits for low-income Americans is getting in the way of setting commonsense policy for our farmers and ranchers as well. It is remarkable that so many people in the House in the middle of a drought would say: I am not going to vote for a farm bill that is important to our farmers and ranchers; I will not vote for it unless I can cut nutrition benefits for tens of millions of struggling Americans.

That is what the House Republicans are saying: They will not vote for a farm bill that will help our farmers and ranchers and is supported by every major farm group, all the consumer groups, the environmental groups, and it is supported in the Senate by a lot of Republicans. It is a bipartisan bill supported by the ranking member of the Agriculture Committee, Senator ROBERTS of Kansas, former chair of the Agriculture Committee in the House. We passed that bill and yet the Republicans in the House are saying unless we have these draconian cuts to nutrition programs they will not pass the farm bill.

That is the kind of "my way or the highway" attitude of the tea party Republicans in the House. If they can't have it their very narrow way, they will not let the rest of the House act. They will not take up a bipartisan bill passed by the Senate.

Well, it is stunning what the House is refusing to do in refusing to pass a farm bill. All I can hope is that someone over there comes to their senses and gets that farm bill through before they adjourn and go home.

Now, since we recessed around the 1st of August and just came back yesterday, our colleague on the House side, Congressman PAUL RYAN, has become the Vice Presidential nominee for the Republican ticket under, of course, Governor Romney, who has the nomination for President. Congressman PAUL RYAN is not an unknown entity and not an unknown quantity. He has been around a long time. He has been

chairman of the House Budget Committee, and he has put forward the so-called Ryan budget twice.

Well, what is a budget? A budget is a blueprint. It is like in order to build a house, one has to have a blueprint. Well, a budget for a city council is a blueprint for what they want to do for the city. A State budget talks about how the State is going to move. It is forward looking. What are we going to do in the future? The Federal budget is the same way. It is our blueprint. It is a blueprint for how we are going to move our country forward.

We have the Ryan budget. I think it is fair for us to take a look at that blueprint and let the American people know just what is in that budget. We face a fundamental choice in this year's election: Are we going to restore, rescue, and rebuild a struggling middle class or are we going to ship even more of our wealth and advantages to those at the top at the expense of the middle class?

Well, Republicans made it clear where they stand. They did so when nearly every Republican in Congress voted for the Ryan budget plan, and Governor Romney embraced the Ryan budget as "marvelous." As I said yesterday, that is not exactly a word I think most Americans would use to describe something they liked, but I suppose if one is having tea at the Ritz and they are in that class of Americans, well, they might use the word to describe it as "marvelous."

At the very centerpiece of the Ryan budget is a dramatic shift of more wealth to those at the top. It targets huge new tax cuts for those at the top. Here is what it would do: \$265,000 more per year for someone making over \$1 million a year in income. That is on top of the \$129,000 they are already getting from the Bush tax cuts. The Ryan budget would extend the Bush tax cuts and put \$265,000 on top of that \$129,000, which comes to around \$400,000 a year if someone is making over \$1 million a year.

We are going to hear a lot this fall about entitlements and cutting entitlements. Oh, we have to get a handle on entitlements. When they talk about entitlements, mostly Republicans talk about those programs that go to help people who are at the bottom rung of the ladder. They are talking about things such as the SNAP program, the nutrition assistance program or they are talking about job training programs or maybe title I. I will talk about education in a minute.

What about this entitlement? This is an entitlement: If a person is making over \$1 million a year, under the Ryan budget they will be entitled to over \$400,000 a year in tax cuts. What about that entitlement? No one wants to talk about taking away that entitlement, but that is an entitlement.

The Republican tax cuts would total \$4.5 trillion over 10 years. Well, how do they pay for it? They don't want to say, but budget and tax experts under-

stand this game very well. The Republican budget would partially offset these tax cuts by making deep and Draconian cuts that undergird the middle class and essentially the quality of life in the country—everything from education, student grants and loans, law enforcement, clean air and clean water, food safety, medical research, highways, bridges, and other infrastructures.

Lastly, the Republicans offset these new big tax cuts for those at the top by actually raising taxes on the middle class. You heard me right. The Ryan budget would actually raise taxes on the middle class. The Nonpartisan Tax Policy Center estimates that under the Republican plan middle-class families with children would see their taxes go up on an average of more than \$2,000 a year.

The bottom line is the Ryan budget does not reduce the deficit. The Ryan budget has a deficit for the next 28 years. The savings they gain is by cutting all of these programs that undergird the middle class and by raising taxes on the middle class. Basically, the lion's share of that is going to go into tax cuts for the top wealthiest Americans.

The truth is Representative RYAN is not interested in balancing the budget. Even under the best assumptions his budget would not balance until 2040, 28 years from now. As I have said, Mr. RYAN is obviously an acolyte of former Vice President Cheney who once said in a kind of unguarded moment that deficits don't matter. Remember that? Vice President Cheney said that. Obviously, George W. Bush and his administration took that to heart because we had the biggest deficit in history for the 8 years George W. Bush was President.

RYAN doesn't care about deficits. He only cares about tax cuts for the wealthy. They just believe if we give more and more to the top, it will magically trickle down on everyone else. We know that doesn't work.

The Romney-Ryan Republican plan is extreme and unbalanced. I am not making this up. You don't have to take it from me. Even former House Speaker Newt Gingrich criticized the House budget. He called it "rightwing social engineering." That is what Newt Gingrich called it, "rightwing social engineering." Newt got that one right.

The aim of Representative RYAN is to use the deficit crisis as a pretext for degrading and dismantling everything from Medicare and Medicaid to education, environmental protection, workplace safety, medical and scientific research, and on and on. Again, he doubles down on the theory that if only we give more to those at the top, it will magically trickle down.

Today I would like to focus specifically on the devastating impact of the Romney-Ryan budget on education. It is an unprecedented assault on education funding and a grave threat that this poses to school reform efforts across the United States.

I have the unusual perspective on this issue as both the chair of the appropriations subcommittee that funds our Federal education programs—and I might point out that for the last 23 years I have either been the chair of that appropriations subcommittee or a ranking member; I have been on that subcommittee since 1985—and I am also now the chair of the Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions Committee, which authorizes the education programs, and I have been on that committee since 1987. I have served under distinguished chairmen such as, Senator Kennedy, Senator Kassebaum, Senator Jeffords, Senator Gregg from New Hampshire, and Senator ENZI. Now I chair it. So for all of these years I have been on both the authorizing committee and on the appropriations subcommittee.

I must say I have been heartened by the exciting work being done in schools across the country to improve the quality of instruction for our students to close the achievement gap and graduate more students who are both college and career ready. Forty-five States and the District of Columbia have collaborated to create high-quality, common education standards, common core standards. The Obama administration's Race to the Top initiative has jump-started ambitious State-level reforms to turn around the Nation's lowest performing schools. In the HELP Committee, which I chair, working with Senator ENZI this year, we reauthorized on a bipartisan basis the Elementary and Secondary Education Act. Positive changes are happening in America's schools. However, it is wishful thinking to continue to expect improvements if we continue to lay off tens of thousands of teachers, increase class sizes, and reduce instructional time.

As I said, Senator ENZI and I worked very hard to get a reauthorization of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act through our committee on a bipartisan basis, but we have been unable to get it on the floor, so we will have to do it again next year. But if we look to the Ryan budget, we will be laying off tens of thousands of teachers and we will increase class sizes and reduce instructional time. Is that where we want to go as a country?

As I said, this plan, which has been embraced by Governor Romney, would cut nondefense discretionary spending by 18.9 percent in fiscal year 2014—not this upcoming fiscal year but the next fiscal year. Let's take a look at what a cut that size would mean for Federal education programs. Let's take a look at title I. People ask: What is title I? It is the cornerstone of the Federal Government's support for elementary and secondary education in this country. The purpose of title I—and, by the way, it has been in the law since 1965; a great society program, I might add, which has done a world of good for our schools all across America. The purpose of title I is to help all students, especially those from disadvantaged

backgrounds, meet high academic standards. Title I money goes to more than 90 percent of the Nation's school districts. Schools have a lot of flexibility with title I funds, but they use the money mostly to pay the salaries of teachers and teachers' aides who are helping students in danger of falling behind.

Under the Romney-Ryan budget, more than 10,000 schools across the country could lose their title I funding in fiscal year 2014. More than 37,000 teachers could lose their jobs. Not only would this hurt students, it is going to put more people out of work.

This title I program is about \$14.5 billion a year. It is a national program. What we basically said in 1965 and we have said every year since is that elementary and secondary education is basically a local and State function. But we want to come in and help those areas that have low tax bases, a high proportion of underprivileged kids and low-income families. We want to come in and help them because there is one thing we know: A poorly educated child in one State will not necessarily grow up to be a burden in that State; that child can move to another State. So as a national policy, we said in 1965 and we have every year since, under Republican Presidents and under Democratic Presidents, Republican Congresses and Democratic Congresses, we have said title I is an important national program. Under the Ryan budget, if enacted, more than 10,000 schools would lose their title I funding.

Let's take a look at another important education program—one particularly close to me—and that is the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act. Again, this has been in the law since 1975. The funding for this is about \$11.6 billion a year. Again, under the Romney-Ryan budget, States could lose funding for approximately 25,000 special education teachers, aides, and other staff serving children with disabilities, again, in the year 2014—25,000 just in 1 year, the year 2014. This is special education teachers.

Again, I wish to remind everyone, and I have said many times here before, that States are required to provide a free and appropriate public education to students with disabilities. A lot of people say this is a Federal mandate. This is not a Federal mandate; it is a constitutional mandate. Even if the Federal Government didn't provide one nickel to any State for IDEA, the State would still have to provide a free, appropriate public education because the courts have decided that if a State provides a free public education for its students, it cannot discriminate. Before they said they couldn't discriminate on the basis of sex, national origin, race—*Brown v. Board of Education*—and under *PARC v. Pennsylvania*, another case, they said we can't discriminate on the basis of disability. We can't say we are going to collect taxes from all these people, but this family with the kid with a disability,

they are out, and that kid doesn't get an education. We said that is unconstitutional, and I think all would recognize that. So States have a constitutional requirement, if they provide a free public education, to provide that free, appropriate public education to kids with disabilities. Even if Federal funding was cut, the States would still have to pay for it. They have to educate their students with disabilities.

If the Romney-Ryan budget were to pass, then what would happen is we would offload this cost of education to the States. What would happen? State and local taxes would go sky high. States and communities would still have to pay their special education teachers. If they are not getting enough from the Federal Government, they will have to find their own tax revenues to make up the difference. Just keep in mind, under the Romney-Ryan budget, approximately 25,000 special education teachers would not be funded under IDEA in 2014. Think about that.

Let's turn to higher education. Since 1972, we have provided what has been known as Pell grants, named after former Senator Claiborne Pell. Pell grants are for students who want to go to college. They qualify for these grants because of low income. Another one of those terrible entitlements, right? If a person is low income and they want to go to college, they get a Pell grant. It has been a lifesaver for so many families who otherwise could not afford to send their kids to college.

As we all know, a college education now is more important than ever. New jobs in every industry from manufacturing, construction, health care, and public health administration require workers who have the skill and the education. Look what happened in the recent recession. Workers with a college education have led the economic recovery. People with a bachelor's degree or better have gained 2 million jobs since the end of the recession. Meanwhile, workers with only a high school diploma or less have lost more than 230,000 jobs. There are over—I just saw it printed today—about 2 million jobs in America that are there but are not being filled because of lack of qualification for workers. That is education. So one would hope the Romney-Ryan budget, which they tout as being for creating jobs, would put a high priority on getting people into college, but it does just the opposite. In fiscal year 2014, nearly 10 million students could see their Pell grants fall, on average, by more than \$1,000. Again, under the Romney-Ryan budget—this is an average, the current average award is \$3,831. Under the Romney-Ryan budget in 2014, in one fell swoop it would go down to \$2,599. For some students, that cut could mean the difference between whether they pursue higher education or not.

Let's go to the other end of the education spectrum. I started out talking about elementary and secondary and

high school and then I talked about college Pell grants. Let's look at preschool. Back in 1992, the Council on Education Funding, consisting of mostly CEOs from large corporations, came out with a study and a report on education as to what did business in America need in the future looking at education. They spent 2 or 3 years having hearings, investigating, and doing all that kind of stuff. This is a report from the business leaders of America. What did they say in that report? They said education begins at birth and the preparation for education begins before birth. The whole finding was we need to put more into preschool education. That was 20 years ago.

Last year, the U.S. Chamber of Commerce—20 years later—came out with another study. This is the U.S. Chamber of Commerce. These are not social scientists; these are businesspeople. The U.S. Chamber of Commerce report said we have to put more money into preschool education. We, at the Federal level, have been doing that through a program called Head Start. We have had Head Start, I think, if I am not mistaken, since about 1968. High-quality, early childhood education has been proven to save taxpayer dollars in the long run by reducing the cost for welfare, special education and, might I add, criminal justice—read that “jail time.” One of the highest correlating factors—in fact, if I am not mistaken, the highest correlating factor for people who are incarcerated in our prisons is the lack of a high school education.

Under the Romney-Ryan budget, up to 200,000 low-income children and their families could lose access to Head Start—again, in fiscal year 2014. I am not talking about over the next 10 years, I am talking about in 1 year. We have about 970,000 children in Head Start today. In 2014, 200,000 would leave if the Romney-Ryan budget were to happen. That is their blueprint. I have to keep reminding folks, that is their blueprint for where they want America to go. This is where they want America to go.

Let me talk about a related topic, and it has a lot to do with education; that is, childcare funding. The Child Care and Development block grant provides subsidies to low-income families to help pay for childcare. These are families who are working, who are looking for work, and they depend on these subsidies to do so; otherwise, they wouldn't be able to work. By this point, it will come as no surprise that the Romney-Ryan budget would force approximately 95,000 low-income children across the country to lose access to high-quality childcare in fiscal year 2014.

I think we get the picture. The Romney-Ryan budget is a devastating assault on education at all levels. Childcare—and a lot of these components have education—Head Start, elementary education, secondary education, title I, IDEA, special education, Pell grants for college, all devastat-

ingly reduced—again, not over 10 years, in year 2014.

I am struck by the fact that this budget of Mr. RYAN's is being proposed at a time when America's competitors are surging forward. China has tripled its investment in education and is building hundreds of new universities. Even in times of austerity and shrinking budgets, smart countries don't turn a chainsaw on themselves. They continue to invest in the future. And the most important investment in the future is an investment in education.

In the months ahead, Congress will likely focus on reducing the deficit, and this is appropriate. Certainly any strategy for solving our fiscal crisis must include sensible spending cuts, but we should not jeopardize our long-term economic growth and recovery by slashing education. We have a saying out in farm country: You don't eat your seed corn. Our children today, they are our seed corn for the future. You do not throw them on the trash heap.

On their own, the Romney-Ryan budget cuts to education defy common sense, but put in the broader context of their budget plan in its entirety, these cuts are not just ill-considered, they really smack of class warfare. The Romney-Ryan budget demands nothing whatsoever—not one dollar—from the wealthiest and most privileged people in America. Essentially, the Romney-Ryan budget is Robin Hood in reverse: It robs from the poor and gives it to the rich.

So let's get this straight. The American people need to know this. This is their blueprint. Under the Romney-Ryan budget, we have devastating assaults on education. Last night I covered health care. Others will cover other topics. The Senator from California covered transportation and infrastructure.

So again, under this plan, the United States—under Romney-Ryan—should set aside \$4.5 trillion over the next decade for tax cuts, with most of it going to the wealthiest 2 percent, but under the Romney-Ryan budget we cannot afford to sustain funding for public education.

In addition, congressional Republicans specifically want to take away the \$2,500 American opportunity tax credit used by so many middle-class and modest-income families to help cover college costs. Again, because of Republicans' determination to further lower tax rates for the wealthy, many other middle-class college tax benefits are at risk. This is outrageous. This approach does not remotely reflect the priorities and values of the American people. We cannot—we cannot—be dragged backward into a winner-take-all society where the privileged and powerful seize an even greater share of the wealth even as our middle class is struggling and declining. For nearly half a century, robust Federal investments in quality public schools and access to higher education have been a

critical pillar undergirding the American middle class. The Romney-Ryan budget takes a jackhammer to that pillar.

Going back to the 1930s, the American people have supported and strengthened a uniquely American social contract. That social contract says that we will prepare our young and care for our elderly. That contract says that if you work hard and play by the rules, you will be able to rise to the middle class and even beyond. That social contract says that a cardinal role of government is to provide a ladder of opportunity so that every American can realistically aspire to the American dream. In one fell swoop, the Romney-Ryan blueprint budget would rip up that social contract. It would replace it with a survival-of-the-fittest, winner-take-all philosophy that tells struggling, aspiring Americans and their communities: Tough luck, you are on your own.

As President Clinton said in his speech last week: There are two philosophies at work here—the Romney-Ryan blueprint budget, which says: Tough luck, you are on your own; if you win the lottery, you are OK; if you do not, too bad, or the philosophy being proposed by President Obama and so many of us here: that we are all in this together, the rising tide lifts all boats, that we have a social contract that we have adhered to for nearly 80 years now. We will invest in our young and care for our elderly. We will make sure there is a ladder, a ramp of opportunity for the middle class.

The “tough luck, you are on your own” philosophy of the Romney-Ryan budget is not the kind of America that my parents wanted or that they built for their children. It is not the kind of America that my neighbors in Iowa and across this country want to see.

So in the weeks ahead, our Nation faces an absolutely fundamental choice. I repeat: Are we going to rescue, restore, and rebuild the middle class or are we going to continue to shift even more wealth and advantages to those at the top, at the expense of the middle class?

Accumulation of riches by the wealthiest in our society is not the same as wealth creation by a society. If we are truly interested in creating wealth in our society, we should be investing in education, making sure there is a ladder or ramp of opportunity by making sure the benefits of our society go to those with new ideas and new information, and those people may be kids from very low income families, they may be kids with disabilities. That is true wealth creation of a society—not just giving more to people at the top.

So, again, the Romney-Ryan budget makes exactly the wrong choice. I disagree with that budget. America remains a tremendously wealthy and resourceful nation. Again, when you listen to what the Romney-Ryan budget is, when you look at it, it is sort of premised on the fact that we are busted,

we are broke, we cannot afford childcare, we cannot afford title I, we cannot afford Pell grants, we cannot afford it, we are broke, but we can find tax breaks for the wealthiest.

We are not broke. America remains the wealthiest society, the wealthiest country the world has ever seen. We have the highest per capita income of any major nation. So it kind of begs the question, does it not: If we are so rich, why are we so poor, why are we so broke? Because there has been a misallocation of capital, more and more going to fewer and fewer, not enough being used to educate our kids, provide a good college education, make sure we have the highest qualified teachers in all of our schools, that we have the best principals, that we can have a school system that is second to none in the world. That is the kind of America that we should have and that we can afford to do. We can afford to do this if we have the right blueprint. The Romney-Ryan budget takes us down the wrong road.

The middle class is the backbone of this country. We have to rescue, restore, and rebuild it, and we need leaders who have the backbone to do that for our middle class. It is not the Romney-Ryan budget.

Last night I spoke about the devastation on health care. I discussed what would happen in education. Next I am going to come to the floor and talk about what is going to happen to working families, what is going to happen to people in America when we take away some of the protections they have so they do not get injured, they do not get sick, so they can show up for work every day healthy. So we are going to look again at that devastation. Others will come to the floor and talk about the infrastructure and what that means for America.

Well, I do not often agree with Newt Gingrich, as people know, but he was right. This is rightwing social engineering. We do not need that in America. Mr. Romney and Mr. RYAN have put their stamp of approval on it. The American people need to know what is in that budget, and we intend to tell them between now and the time we adjourn and go home.

With that, I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. BENNET). The Senator from Maryland.

Mr. CARDIN. Mr. President, I thank Senator ENZI for his patience in allowing me to speak for a few minutes in regard to the 11th anniversary of September 11. I ask unanimous consent to speak as in morning business.

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

ELEVENTH ANNIVERSARY OF 9/11

Mr. CARDIN. Mr. President, I rise today to join my colleagues in commemorating the 11th anniversary of September 11, 2001. The tragedy of 9/11 is forever seared in our Nation's consciousness. The attacks in New York, Pennsylvania, and Virginia were intended to crush the American spirit

but instead galvanized it to new strengths.

After 11 years, the memories are still raw and the pain is real. It is for the 3,000 people who perished that day that I stand here on the floor of the U.S. Senate and ask everyone: Never let go of those memories.

On that day, terrorists showed their utter lack of humanity; we responded by showing the best side of ours. We suffered a grievous loss on that day, but we must remember that we are a strong and determined nation and we will defeat those who want to do us harm.

Many of those responsible have been hunted down and brought to justice. In the case of Osama bin Laden and many others, justice was brought to them. Now there is no doubt that those who wish to do harm to America know they do so at their own peril.

Today, it is clear our men and women in uniform and our intelligence community will never rest. They will never waiver. We have come a long way since September 11, and we owe so much to those men and women and the families who support them. Today, we join to show the world that our Nation is united and resolved to defend our freedom and safeguard our liberty against any enemy.

We also take time to remember those who perished on September 11 and to remember their families with a special prayer. We reflect on the heroism of the firefighters, police officers, medical workers, city officials, and ordinary citizens who gave their own lives trying to save others.

Each of us has been affected by 9/11. On September 11 we showed the world a brand of resilience that could only be made in America. In the minutes, hours, and days after the attacks, Americans showed their amazing propensity for compassion, sacrifice, and selflessness. Charity, voluntarism, and a reawakening of the American spirit guided us through those weeks directly after the attacks. Men and women waited in lines for hours to give blood, children donated their savings to help with relief efforts, communities sponsored clothing drives, and different faith groups held interfaith services. Our response showed the world that Americans have an unquenchable love of freedom and democracy.

Now, 11 years later, I stand before you, always remembering that stunningly clear day that was to be forever ingrained into our national identity. My prayers are still with those who suffered, those still suffering, and those we lost. But time has taught me that the way to honor the victims of 9/11 is to come together as we did in the days and months after 9/11. On that day, we were truly united. September 11 was not an attack on Blacks, Whites, Christians, Jews, or Muslims or on conservatives or liberals. It was an attack on all of us, and we came together accordingly. We helped our neighbors and we helped strangers. We reaffirmed our

commitment to justice and the rule of law. On that day we were reminded that the best parts of our American character will forever trump any opponent.

So as I stand before you today, I encourage all Americans to nurture the best parts of our common American character. What is that character? It was the selflessness and courage of a New York City firefighter running into a smoking tower and up the stairs when everyone else was running down. It was the composure, confidence, and decency of bystanders helping perfect strangers. It was the sense of country that caused many to answer the call of duty and enlist in the war on terror.

It was the faith people showed in their fellow citizens that allowed for empathy, not hate to define us afterwards. On this day, let's not only mourn for those we lost but let's vow to them to be as good as they would expect us to be.

Mr. President, 9/11 was intended to bring this country to new lows but instead we achieved new highs. Keep the memories of 9/11 in our hearts and let them guide our actions, actions that show each other and the world how good we are and how good we can be.

Archibald MacLeish wrote, "There are those who will say that the liberation of humanity, the freedom of man and mind, is nothing but a dream. They are right. It is the American dream."

Surely 9/11 was a nightmare horrific. As horrific and cruel as it was, it cannot extinguish the dream.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Wyoming.

Mr. ENZI. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent to speak as in morning business.

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

TRIBUTE TO WENDY GNEHM

Mr. ENZI. Mr. President, I have often said how blessed I am to have found a group of people who are strongly committed to the future of Wyoming, the West, and the United States to serve on my staff. If being a Senate staff were an Olympic event, I have no doubt I would be the coach of one of the Senate dream teams. I believe they would be the gold medal winners. I am that proud of them.

Today I wish to express my appreciation to one of my long-time staffers who will be returning home to run a business in Wyoming. She is Wendy Gnehm, and although we are going to miss her, we are also proud of her decision to return home to raise her family with her husband Ed, because there is no better place for families and children than Wyoming. We wish them both the best and we are confident as she is that they have made the right decision.

Although Wendy has been part of my staff for quite some time, her family, her husband's family, and my own family have been close for a lot longer than that. Wendy's mother Sharon was

the one who first introduced me to Diana, now my wife, on a blind date in Denver when Sharon was in town looking for a bridal gown.

It was not long thereafter that Diana was looking for one too, which means we knew Wendy's parents long before she was born. So we have known Wendy for all of her life. I remember when Wendy was in high school. She set her sights on coming to Washington to serve as a page in the House of Representatives. It was a difficult goal, but with her determination, her abilities, and her good grades she was able to make it happen.

Wendy's time in Washington as a page must have given her the idea of coming to college here, which she then began to pursue in earnest. So when the time was right, I agreed to write her a letter of recommendation to the George Washington University, as an alum and Wyoming liaison for the school. I was glad to be of help, but Wendy's credentials spoke for themselves and soon she was headed back to Washington, DC, to attend one of the finest schools in the country.

Later, when I came to Washington to serve in the Senate, I had a swearing-in reception for friends and extended family to mark the beginning of this new and great adventure in my life. And of course Wendy was there. It was at that reception that she met the son of my college roommate, Skip Gnehm, and they started to date. Their romance blossomed while she served as an intern for me, and it started to occur to them and to Diana and me how all three of our families could soon be permanently intertwined. What a great gift for all of us. Soon Wendy was looking for a wedding gown of her own and she and Ed were married.

Not long after their marriage, Ed and Wendy moved to Kuwait to work. They absorbed a great deal of knowledge about the culture and the way of life in the Middle East. When they returned to the United States and made their way back to Washington, DC, I learned that Wendy was looking for a job. At the time I happened to be looking for someone who could help me handle constituent mail and services. She was quickly promoted to legislative assistant specializing in the foreign relations field. I could not think of a better individual to take on those responsibilities than Wendy. I was right. Wendy has been a great help with those difficult issues ever since. She did so well, in fact, that I did not hesitate to expand her responsibilities to include defense, veterans affairs, transportation, and the Judiciary Committee agenda when the opportunity presented itself. Wendy has worked on so many issues of importance over the years—defense, with the focus on the United States Air Force and missile communities, to helping start the Air Force Caucus, veterans health, United Nations reform, Cuba travel, immigration, gun rights, to name a few.

She is now my senior legislative assistant, a title and post she has earned

with her hard work and determination to make a difference. As my senior legislative assistant, she has been a captain in the legislative office and she has always made herself available to help guide and direct our efforts as a legislative team. She is also there to provide some good advice on the issues that are coming up and how we can best focus our efforts to obtain the results we are working together to achieve.

Now she and her husband are packing up and moving to Sheridan, WY, where Wendy grew up. They will be running a business there and providing some good jobs to the community and some support to the local community economy. It is a restaurant, so they will be providing some good food to people in the area too. Although we are sorry to see them go, we could not be happier that they are returning to Wyoming. I always tell the people from Wyoming who come to work for me: Enjoy your Washington experience and learn all you can every day you are here. Tomorrow, when you find yourself married with children, do not hesitate to start looking for a way to get back home.

As I said, and it bears repeating because it is one of life's great truths: There is no better place to raise your family than Wyoming, where you were born, where your roots are strong, and your family is nearby to give you the love, guidance, and support that helped to make you the person you are today. Of course, it is no surprise that the place that is calling Wendy home is one of the most beautiful on Earth—Wyoming.

In the years to come, Wyoming will teach Wendy's children all about being individuals, trusting in your instincts, about facing the future with confidence and faith. It is a great lesson to be learned, and there is no better place to learn it than the great outdoors and open spaces and magnificent mountains of Wyoming, where life is centered around being a part of the great splendor and creation of God, and with a strong sense of community.

For team Enzi, this was a good-news, bad-news moment. The bad news is we are losing a very special staffer, a good friend, and a member of our extended family, someone who has given so much to everyone she has known or worked with here in my office. The good news is we are not only gaining a constituent who knows us and understands the work we do every day, Wyoming is gaining another family that will forever define for others what is so great about being from the West.

Diana and I send our best wishes to Wendy, Ed, and their children, who must be looking forward to the opportunity to live the life that made Wendy what she is today.

Wendy, we could not be more excited for you and for the great opportunities that lie ahead as you begin the new chapter in your life, the great adventure of coming home to Wyoming. We

know we will miss seeing you every day, but when we are back home and traveling around in your area, we will expect to see you at our official functions and when we stop by your new business. May God bless you and be with you and your family. Good luck, Wendy.

I yield the floor

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from New Jersey.

Mr. LAUTENBERG. Mr. President, I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The bill clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

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

REMEMBERING 9/11

Mr. LAUTENBERG. Mr. President, today marks a time in America that must always in the future be remembered. It cannot be forgotten, because it was the worst day on American soil in modern times. The worst day. It was the attack on the World Trade Center in New York, Shanksville, PA, and the Pentagon.

These attacks put together such a horrific toll, we must constantly be reminded. And we are every day of the year. We are reminded how terrible this attack was. It was unimaginable, the pictures that we saw on TV. If anyone turned on the TV, on almost every station there was a picture of the strike at the World Trade Center, an airplane running into it. And the first thing that was thought—and unfortunately I was out of the country when this took place; I heard about it on the radio, and saw people in the country I was in weeping for this great America. We thought it was an accidental thing. We are not far from an airport, Teterboro Airport in New Jersey—maybe that it was an errant pilot, probably a single-engine airplane. Nothing could have been further from the truth. This was a designed attack on this building with all of the particulars that the terrorists had to have: How long would it take for the steel to melt, where is the best place to strike, what can the consequences of an attack such as this be? Unimaginable, as I earlier said.

In my home State of New Jersey, we lost the second highest number of lives of any State in the country. More than 700 people from New Jersey perished in this terrible onslaught. September 11, 2001, changed our country forever. We see it and we are reminded about it every day of the year. If you want to enter many buildings, you have to identify yourself; you want to get in an airplane, you have to identify yourself; you want to get in these buildings, you have to identify yourself. This is a habit that grew out of the fear of terrorism. We have over 200,000 people employed to protect us against a terrorist attack. Although it was 11 years ago,

few Americans will forget how that peaceful Tuesday turned into one of the most unpleasant days, most painful days, most heartfelt days on American soil. We still feel the pain and the sadness of that day. And when we think about it, the biggest price, of course, was paid by the families, the families who lost a son or a daughter or a husband or a wife or a grandparent or a friend or a neighbor. The loss was with excruciating pain. We lost nearly 3,000 American lives at the World Trade Center and in Pennsylvania and at the Pentagon—3,000 American lives in a single day. I am reminded, since I served in the Army during World War II, that Pearl Harbor had fewer casualties than did the attack that day; that it outdid the number killed immediately at D-day. It was a terrible tragedy that struck our country.

Forty-one States and territories and more than 90 countries lost at least a member, a person from that tragedy. Imagine, over 90 countries, 41 States and territories; and 343 firefighters and 60 police officers were among those who died as they answered desperate calls for help. These people were not present in the building, typically. They came to the building while the flames were there and the soot and the dirt was falling and the building collapsing. They went into those buildings to help people who were screaming and pleading for help. It has been 11 years, but many Americans are still sick and more than 71,000 Americans are still having their health monitored because of exposure to the dust, the asbestos, and to the chemicals that filled the air.

As we remember those we have lost, we have to let our grief serve as a reminder of our resilience and to rebuild our strength. While the scars of 9/11 may never fully heal, we take some comfort in knowing that in our fight back, we have, in some ways, confirmed our fight against terrorism. Osama bin Laden will never take another innocent American life. But we have to remember that although bin Laden's influence has been eliminated, there are lots of people who want to follow in his footsteps in plotting against America.

The everyday lives of all Americans have changed forever. We now live in a state of constant vigilance to prevent another attack. I remember not too long ago, we used to have announcements that this is an orange color day or a green day or whatever, denoting the risk of an attack from a terrorist organization or an individual. Because of 9/11, over 200,000 Americans go to work every day at the Department of Homeland Security to protect us at airports or at buildings or gatherings where we have to show an ID to gain entry. So that day made a huge difference in the way we function. It costs time, it costs money, and it costs inconvenience. Nothing, however, as I earlier said, compares to the loss of a loved one.

We are determined now to remain diligent and strong, despite the face of

terrorism that is frequently depicted these days. As Americans gather today in tribute to those we lost, we have to remember to keep alive the memories of these Americans who perished for being in the place they were in and not for anything they did wrong. So we have to resolve to continue the work of keeping our families safe, our communities strong, and to be reminded about that, we still see the direct result from that attack, with 71,000 people, including more than 8,000 from New Jersey, who are currently being monitored for health conditions that resulted from the 9/11 World Trade Center attacks. That is 70,000 people who are having their health monitored and more than 14,000 responders and 2,500 community residents who are currently sick and receiving treatment from the World Trade Center Health Program. Many have perished, and we passed a law to offer compensation and health care for those who are still suffering from the results of that terrible day.

With that, let me just say I think we have to remember we must stay strong. Unfortunately, there cannot be any relaxation. When we see the Olympic games or the Super Bowl or days that mark pleasant competition and bonding and youth and energy, we remember those days over 11 years ago.

It is hard to take much consolation, except we know one thing; that we cannot stop protecting our citizens, our people, wherever they are in the world—wherever they are in the world. We have seen attacks take place on foreign soil from people who don't know who they are; perhaps some knowing they are American travelers or American diplomats. But there is, again, little satisfaction until one day the world turns more sensible and respects human life. We hope that is a situation that is forever reflected upon and never forgotten.

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

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

RYAN BUDGET

Mr. ENZI. Mr. President, I came over earlier to speak and talk about a dedicated staff person of mine who is moving back to Wyoming, but I had to wait about 30 minutes while I listened to the Senator from Iowa talk about a Romney-Ryan budget. There is no such thing. Governor Romney hasn't put forward a budget for this group. Congressman RYAN, of course, was the chairman of the Budget Committee in the House, and he was obligated to do a budget. He did a budget—something the Senate hasn't done.

I don't think we can complain about a budget when we have gone 3 years without a budget. There is a timeline

for a budget around here. We are supposed to have a budget finished by April 15 of each year, but we have gone 3 years with no budget.

The President submitted his budget to us, and that is what we are supposed to work from in the Budget Committee. I am on the Budget Committee, and we have had a little discussion in the Budget Committee. We haven't gotten to do the budget debate on the floor, which is one with unlimited amendments, but we have gotten to vote on the President's budget. At least Congressman RYAN got some votes for his budget. The President's last two budgets have been voted on by this body and there hasn't even been a single Democrat who was willing to vote for that budget—not a single one. The President couldn't persuade one person from his party to go along with the plan he had for this country.

You know what would happen in a corporation if the chairman of the board or the president presented a budget to his board of directors and they rejected it unanimously. He would be looking for a new job. I think I have heard some suggestions along that line.

Do we want to continue with out-of-control spending? That is what a budget controls. That is where the caps are put on and it lays out what is the most we can spend. We actually ought to be doing that, as we used to do it, where there were multiple-year caps, and we would be stuck with the far-out caps we projected. It is time we had a balanced budget around here.

I applauded the President when he named a deficit commission. That was a great thing. I was a cosponsor on a bill that came before us, and we didn't have enough votes to pass that bill, but the President went ahead and did a deficit commission and he appointed two outstanding people to chair that budget commission—Erskine Bowles, who was the Chief of Staff for President Clinton, and Alan Simpson, who was a long-time Senator from the West, a member of the revenue committee—and they did some diligent work with the commission and came up with a plan. They actually came up with a plan for how we could save America.

I heard the Senator from Iowa say: Some of these people who are talking are talking like we are broke. You know what. We are pretty close to broke. When the national debt is the same as the gross national product, we are in trouble. In the United States, every man, woman, and child owes a shade over \$50,000. We have been seeing the riots in Greece and Italy. In Italy, they only owe \$40,000 per person. In Greece, they only owe \$39,000 per person. Yes, we are the most resilient country in the world, and that is why we have a little bit of breathing room. But it is not inhaling time. It is time to figure out what we are going to do about it.

I did expect, after the President appointed this deficit commission and when they came back with a report—

and it didn't have enough to force us to have a vote, but it was a report that would solve the situation—I thought for sure at the State of the Union speech the President would paint the same bleak picture they painted in order to get the deficit report they got. But instead, he promoted another stimulus.

Had he painted that same bleak picture and at the end of his speech said, I am not telling you tonight how to solve it, but in 2 weeks, when my budget is delivered to the Senate, you will see what the deficit commission said we ought to be doing and we will do it. I think that by about May of that year, we would have hassled through that situation, and we would have adopted most of what they had in that. It would not have been easy. There would have been a little bit of pain, but it would have had a lot of gain. I think, by this point in time, the President would have been a hero—instead of hearing the question: Are you better off now than you were 4 years ago?

We can't continue the out-of-control spending we have had. Let me give an example of what we are doing. We are doing it without a budget, but here is what we are doing. The highway bill, that is one of the most important bills—everybody admits—for America. We have to have transportation in this country, and the highway bill is one of the major ways we do that. It creates jobs because people go out and build the roads or repair the roads, and it makes a difference.

But here is how we funded the highway bill: In the Finance Committee, I suggested we needed to increase the tax on gasoline. That is the tax that funds the highway trust fund, which is the sole source of money for building the highways before. But we haven't raised that since 1993, and it ran out of money.

The deficit commission President Obama appointed suggested we needed to raise the gas tax 5 cents a year for three consecutive years if we wanted to build highways. In the Finance Committee I said, I am going to put in something a little bit more modest to see if we have any support for it. I am going to put in something that just deals with inflation on the gas tax.

I was told we wouldn't have a vote in the Finance Committee on it—and we didn't have a vote in the Finance Committee on it. And when it came to the floor, we did not have a vote on that on the floor because we weren't going to raise any taxes. Well, let me tell you what the bill does: There is a tax increase in the bill. We just didn't talk about it. I talked about it, but not many people talked about it. There is a tax increase in the bill. There is a tax on any private pension fund in America. That goes into a trust fund, supposedly.

I have a little problem with what we call trust funds around here, because I don't have trust any of them. That is going into a trust fund so that if a

company goes out of business, the people who were promised a pension will get at least 60 percent of what they were promised. That is what that tax is for. That is why we do the tax on private pensions. The Pension Benefit Guarantee Corporation guarantees that people will get a portion of what they were promised in a private pension, and so we raised the tax to make sure that would be there. Then, before it got there, we diverted it, we stole it, we stripped it, and we put it in the highway bill. And we didn't just take 2 years' worth. That is how long the bill covers highway construction. It says in the next 2 years all the highways that we will build and how much they will cost. But from the Pension Benefit Guarantee Corporation tax that we increased, we took all of that for 10 years to build 2 years' worth of highways. I don't know of anybody who would consider that to be good financial management. Highways are essential, but that is not good financial management. We have to stop this trend. And we particularly have to stop stealing from trust funds.

There is one other source of trust fund in there I am particularly sensitive to. There is an abandoned mine land fund. This is a fund that was set up where coal mines in the West would get an additional tax—which we agreed to and the companies agreed to. Half of that tax would stay with the State where the coal was mined, and the other half would go to the eastern States to reclaim abandoned mines. It is a good idea. Well, Wyoming mines most of the coal in the United States, so Wyoming gets most of that money. There is a little provision that they stuck in there to affect Wyoming—and I don't think ought to be the sole source of revenue for funding all the highways in the United States, but they took that abandoned mine land money and said that would go into this highway fund. That is a trust fund too. We heard about it at 2:00 in the morning the day before we voted on this bill, and it was a total shock to us that they were giving this to the trust fund that was billed as a massive coalition between the East and the West, between companies and between miners who relied on the companies that went out of business for their health care. And abandoned mine land money takes care of that, too. But they said, Well, for Wyoming we think you get too much money, so we are going to strip out the half that you were promised and didn't get for years and years and years while they took care of their own problems. That is in there too and that is in there for a 10-year period for 2 years' worth of highway construction.

So when we say that America is not broke, America is not broke. But it isn't fixed either. It needs to be fixed, and it needs to be fixed legitimately, upfront, telling the people exactly what we are doing. There is going to have to be a lot of things that have to be done in order to do it.

I have suggested one way it can be done—and I have tried to cut things before, and I know that if we try to cut a single program, any single program—and we have to cut a lot of programs—that program will inundate Washington with a few good examples of what that program has done, even though audits of it say that is not what happened. But those people will flood here, they will talk to their Senators, we will feel sorry for them, we will approve the program, and we will continue the program. It is almost impossible to cut a program around here. It is hard to cut the amount of increase that program gets, let alone make an actual cut to a program or—Lord help us—eliminate a program altogether.

So what are we going to do? I have a 1-percent solution. That is to take 1 penny out of every dollar the American government spends and eliminate that, cut that, save that—1 penny out of every dollar. People across America, when I talk to them about this, say, I have personally had to make a bigger cut than that. I could make 1 percent; the government ought to be able to take 1 percent. And if the government made 1 percent for between 5 and 7 years, our budget would balance. That is a lot of discipline, but it is a little pain for a lot of gain. And I am pretty sure if we were able to do that, at the end of 1 year people would say, You know, that didn't hurt that badly, and we ought to go for 2 and speed this thing up. Because I don't know how much time we have before interest rates go up, and when interest rates go up, they can use up all of the revenue we have from taxes to pay the interest on the loans we have out there. We have tremendous debt out there, and we had better start taking care of it. I have looked at some ways to do that, and I will share those at another time.

But I hope I don't hear a lot about the Romney-Ryan budget here on the floor when there hasn't been a budget presented and voted on by the other side. You have got to have the courage to make some cuts. You have got to have the courage to put forward a budget that is on a track—a track somehow to getting us back to solvency. And it better happen pretty fast.

So I think I am going to feel sorry for whomever gets elected President, and perhaps whomever is going to be in this body and in the House next year, because it is not going to be a pleasant task. We are going to have to buckle down and do the right thing.

I got to meet earlier with the new Prime Minister of Italy, and I was very impressed with him. He was talking about what he has to do right now to pull them out of their deficit. Remember, we owe \$50,000 per person. They owe \$40,000 per person. They are taking the hard steps. He has laid out a plan, he has talked to the people involved. Over there they have strikes whenever they get upset with the government. He had to talk to some of the labor

unions. He said, I talked to them and they went out on strike for 2 hours. Of course, usually a minimum strike is 3 days over there, so he felt pretty good about that. But he said with the changes that he has to make—and it was a reflection on what we are looking at too—probably none of the people will be there next year. Those in the cabinet who were sitting next to him were a little bit shocked to hear that. I think if he does the plan, people will appreciate the way he is saving their country and they will put him back in again.

But we are looking at some difficult times and we need good solutions. It is going to mean working across the aisle to make sure that gets done. Our time is short. But this is the most resilient country in the world, and the rest of the world is relying on America.

I yield the floor.

THE PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Colorado.

Mr. UDALL of Colorado. Mr. President, I came to the floor to commemorate the events of 11 years ago on September 11. But I want to respond to my friend and fellow westerner Senator ENZI from Wyoming. I appreciate the sentiments and the tone of his remarks. I respect greatly his financial acumen. We know the training Senator ENZI has, and I appreciate his call to action hopefully as soon as possible.

I would like to stay in Washington and continue to work on the Simpson-Bowles architecture. I know my colleague from Colorado, Senator BENNET, has spent a great deal of time as a member of the Gang of Six plus two crafting legislative language to put the Simpson-Bowles recommendations into effect.

I did, however, want to set the record straight as I read it and as I understand it, which is that we have had a Budget Control Act that many of us voted for last year which in effect is a budget for 2012 and 2013.

I ask unanimous consent to have the documentation of the Budget Control Act printed in the RECORD.

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

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

BUDGET CONTROL ACT CONTAINED BUDGET FOR 2012 AND 2013

SEC. 106. SENATE BUDGET ENFORCEMENT.

(a) IN GENERAL.—

(1) For the purpose of enforcing the Congressional Budget Act of 1974 through April 15, 2012, including section 300 of that Act, and enforcing budgetary points of order in prior concurrent resolutions on the budget, the allocations, aggregates, and levels set in subsection (b)(1) shall apply in the Senate in the same manner as for a concurrent resolution on the budget for fiscal year 2012 with appropriate budgetary levels for fiscal years 2011 and 2013 through 2021.

(2) For the purpose of enforcing the Congressional Budget Act of 1974 after April 15, 2012, including section 300 of that Act, and enforcing budgetary points of order in prior concurrent resolutions on the budget, the allocations, aggregates, and levels set in sub-

section (b)(2) shall apply in the Senate in the same manner as for a concurrent resolution on the budget for fiscal year 2013 with appropriate budgetary levels for fiscal years 2012 and 2014 through 2022.

PUBLIC LAW 112-25—AUG. 2, 2011

Mr. UDALL of Colorado. The language reads:

... the allocations, aggregates, and levels set in subsection (b)(1) shall apply in the Senate in the same manner as for a current resolution on the budget for fiscal year 2012 ...

That language is duplicated below in the next paragraph for 2013.

I think I hear my friend from Wyoming suggesting that the process the Senate periodically uses to determine a budget is helpful and follows regular order, and I agree. But the Congress in the last 2 years has been at loggerheads. There have been more impasses in the last 2 years than I remember in my 12 previous years. But we do have a budget in place. It is a budget that reduces Federal spending and is a downpayment on the hard work we have to do going forward.

The Ryan budget was promulgated by Congressman RYAN. I was elected the same year as Congressman RYAN to the House. I have respect for Congressman RYAN and his constituents; I just happen to disagree with his priorities. His budget proposal sets priorities; it is a template. And if you really study what Congressman RYAN includes, there are concerns that I have that I think are reflected by not just members of my caucus but many Americans: The plan lacks balance, and it doesn't balance at least until 2040, which is not how it is advertised.

Why? There is no contribution from revenue. There is an increase in defense spending. And in my opinion, it requires extraordinary and unsustainable cuts to government services. In fact, the Federal Government would be cut in half. I don't think there is anybody who thinks that is a realistic goal.

President Reagan's economic adviser Bruce Bartlett was pretty tough on the Ryan plan. He called it a monstrosity, and pointed out that the Ryan plan is backed up by make-believe numbers and unreasonable assumptions.

I ask unanimous consent to have printed in the RECORD the statements of Mr. Bartlett.

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

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

FORMER REAGAN ECONOMIC ADVISOR
BARTLETT ON RYAN BUDGET PLAN

Distributionally, the Ryan plan is a monstrosity. The rich would receive huge tax cuts while the social safety net would be shredded to pay for them. Even as an opening bid to begin budget negotiations with the Democrats, the Ryan plan cannot be taken seriously. It is less of a wish list than a fairy tale utterly disconnected from the real world, backed up by make-believe numbers and unreasonable assumptions. Ryan's plan isn't even an act of courage; it's just pandering to the Tea Party. A real act of courage would have been for him to admit, as all

serious budget analysts know, that revenues will have to rise well above 19 percent of GDP to stabilize the debt.

Former Reagan Administration Economic Advisor, Bruce Bartlett, Capital Gains and Games Blog, Imbalanced Budget: Ryan Gives Wealthy a Free Pass, April 11, 2011.

Mr. UDALL of Colorado. In conclusion, I want to again underline that I find, as always, in Senator ENZI someone who is thoughtful, practical, and pragmatic. And I heard in his comments a call to action where everything would be on the table, including providing for greater solvency of Social Security and Medicare, for cutting spending and ending duplication, but also for looking for additional revenue, which I think we all agree we can start to do by simplifying the Tax Code, reducing rates, and then taking a look at individual tax rates.

Mr. President, I was here 11 years ago. It was a very similar day to today; a beautiful fall day, low humidity. For us Coloradans, low humidity is something we expect in all cases, with bluebird skies. But it turned into a terrible day with terrible events, and I thought I would reflect on what they mean for our country 11 years later.

These attacks are forever etched in our collective memory. We lost 3,000 fellow Americans. It was a diverse cohort of Americans. Every religion was represented, every race, and every region. It was something that even as I try and think about it again, I am almost overwhelmed.

But we also have another memory associated with that day; and that was the amazing, beyond belief, selflessness and bravery of our first responders and the men and women of uniform as well as the resolve of whole communities who came together to help and comfort one another. Late in that day, lawmakers came together on the U.S. Capitol steps, as we did today, to say, We stand united.

During this time, Americans seeking some good to come out of these acts of sheer evil looked to each other and to their leaders in Washington to contribute to a greater cause of unity. At such a dark time, we saw the very best of America: a Nation, a community, and a people willing to stand together in the face of adversity that we didn't initially understand or comprehend. That strength of unity brought us together, and over the last decade we have made great strides in combating the evil of terrorism.

We owe a debt of gratitude, a deep debt of gratitude to those on the front lines of that battle. Intelligence officers, our men and women in uniform, and countless others have relentlessly pursued our enemies who seek to do us harm. We must honor their sacrifices.

That brings me to this point. Every time a veteran is unemployed or has injuries that are not well treated or finds himself or herself in a place so dark that suicide seems like the only way out, we failed in our most solemn duty. We must provide the best possible health care, services, and benefits

to those few Americans who are willing to risk anything and everything for us. We should be ashamed of anything less.

That is why it is fitting today, on the anniversary of 9/11, that the Senate voted to move forward on legislation to help post-9/11 veterans find jobs. Congress and the administration have been focused on helping these vulnerable veterans find jobs. We passed legislation. The President has championed initiatives providing tax incentives and grants to businesses hiring veterans and offering veterans job training programs, but still the unemployment rate for veterans of the Afghanistan and Iraq wars remains higher than for the general population and much higher for veterans age 18 to 24. That simply is not acceptable. We can and we must do better.

The bill we are going to consider, the Veterans Job Corps Act of 2012, is a solid step in the right direction. We all recognize the obstacles that veterans face in translating their military experience into civilian jobs. We know that is the case. This commonsense legislation will attempt to smooth this transition by connecting veterans with good-paying jobs that fit their skill sets and provide our communities with opportunities to hire veterans as firefighters, police officers, to work in the public safety sector—to work in any sector. When our veterans believe in themselves, they are up to any charge; they are up for any mission.

I have the great privilege—as does, I know, the Presiding Officer—to serve on the Armed Services Committee. I also serve on the Senate Intelligence Committee. As a member of those committees I urge all of us to pass this bill as soon as possible. There is still time. We could perhaps offer it tonight. I could offer a unanimous consent request. We need to do this—and I am completely serious, Mr. President—to provide our heroes with a small measure of what we owe them for their incredible service and sacrifice.

As I think more widely, as I consider what I have heard at home from Coloradans far and wide, passing this bill alone is not enough. Looking back at the days and months after September 11, I cannot help but admire our Nation's resolve and the sense of togetherness we had in facing a shared challenge. But I also cannot help but be well aware that 11 years on we are now a nation at odds. Partisanship is at an all-time high, congressional gridlock prevents even commonsense ideas from winning the day, and middle-class Americans just wonder when businesses will have the certainty they need to begin hiring again.

For me, it seems a powerful argument and a powerful insight that a better future for our country can be and is, if we will hear it, grounded in our Nation's deep-seated respect for the courageous feats and sacrifices of those who answer the call of duty. Our military men and women have done their job. The public safety officers in the

city of Aurora, back in July when we experienced such a terrible shooting, have done their job. Now it is, here in the Congress, time for us to do our job. It is not too late for us to harness the gratitude and the admiration that we have for those who have given everything for the United States and come together once again to do right by the Nation they have fought so hard to secure.

As we remember the events of September 11 and honor those men and women in uniform who fought so hard to keep America safe, we must recognize that our actions, not just our words, in the months ahead may be the greatest way to show our appreciation for their sacrifice.

Let's employ the doggedness of our military men and women, that doggedness that they exhibit on a daily basis in order to address the shared challenges of our time, to work together and to cast aside the partisan differences that stand in the way of our future prosperity. The American people deserve no less.

Ms. COLLINS. Mr. President, I rise today to discuss an amendment I recently filed with Senator LEAHY to the Veterans Jobs Corps Act of 2012. We filed this amendment to ensure that veterans service organizations are provided access to Federal surplus property as we intended when we introduced the FORVETS Act of 2010. This law provides that veterans service organizations should be categorized as eligible nonprofit, tax-exempt organizations that may acquire surplus personal property for the purposes of education or public health.

Unfortunately, the General Services Administration has interpreted this law in the strictest of terms. In its published guidelines, veterans service organizations may acquire the surplus property for the purposes of education or public health but with minimal flexibility in what an educational or public health service may be. For example, acquiring a van to transport a disabled veteran to a doctor's appointment may not be considered an eligible use for a veterans organization under current guidelines.

This amendment makes the legislative modification necessary for GSA to carry out the original intent of the FORVETS Act of 2010.

The National Association of State Agencies for Surplus Property, NASASP, has identified the need for this legislative modification to ensure that veterans service organizations are able to receive surplus equipment to enable them to better provide the critical services they offer for our Nation's veterans.

Veterans groups whose work enhances the lives of countless veterans every day benefit from access to these goods just as other service organizations do. Many veterans organizations offer career development and job training assistance to our Nation's veterans, yet often lack the computer equipment

needed to best assist our veterans in the often difficult transition from military service to the civilian work force.

These are just a few examples of the needs that veterans service organizations have. This amendment is one way to say "thank you" to those Americans who have worn the uniform and to the families that supported them. In these challenging fiscal times, the need for excess federal property to be used for job training, rehabilitation, and other important assistance to our veterans is greater now more than ever.

I urge my colleagues to support the inclusion of this amendment to the Veterans Jobs Corps Act of 2012.

Mr. President, since 2004, active duty military suicides have more than doubled, and the problem only continues to get worse. The Army recently reported that in July of this year 38 of its soldiers took their lives, a rate of more than one per day. This is a tragedy of the highest magnitude and it is something that the Congress and the American people must not ignore. Action is needed now, and we must take every practical step that we can to help the military reverse this disturbing trend. Not only are we losing dozens of America's finest each month, squandering precious talent that our Nation needs, but today's soldiers are tomorrow's veterans, and the crisis of mental and behavioral health that the epidemic of suicides represents foreshadows a troubling prospect for the future.

In Afghanistan, we have invested billions of dollars and devoted some of the military's best minds to protect our soldiers and give them the tools they need to reduce the threat of an improvised explosive device attack. Unfortunately, we have only devoted a fraction of the same resources or creativity to suicide prevention, even though through early June 2012 military suicides had outpaced the number of combat deaths in Afghanistan. It is estimated that more than 250 soldiers, sailors, airmen, and marines have taken their own lives this year.

There is substantial evidence that prescription drug abuse is a major factor in military suicides. In its January 2012 report *Army 2020: Generating Health and Discipline in the Force*, the Army found that 29 percent of suicides had a known history of psychotropic medication use including anti-depressants, anti-anxiety medicine, anti-psychotics, and other controlled substances such as opioids.

Active-duty drug use was a factor in more than a third of suicides where drug use could be determined and a factor in two-thirds of suicide attempts. The Army's report recommends the establishment of a military drug take-back program to help combat prescription drug abuse in the ranks. Given that more than 49,000 soldiers were issued three or more psychotropic or controlled substance prescriptions last year and an estimated 3,500 soldiers illicitly used prescription drugs, it's time we act on this recommendation.

At present, only the Drug Enforcement Administration has the inherent authority to conduct a drug take-back program. The Secure and Responsible Drug Disposal Act of 2010, however, provided the Attorney General the flexibility necessary to delegate similar authority to other agencies to conduct a drug take-back program. Thus far, however, the Attorney General has declined to act, and neither the Attorney General nor the DEA has provided mechanisms or authority to the military to establish its own drug take-back program.

Senator LIEBERMAN and I, building on work done by Senator MURRAY, wrote the Attorney General in July of this year to request his support for efforts to reduce military suicides by allowing military treatment facilities to conduct controlled substance take-back and destruction programs.

Senator LIEBERMAN and I understand that accountability of drugs must be strictly maintained and that these drugs must be prevented from being misused, abused, or from entering the black market. We are confident, however, that an accountable drug take-back program could be established at military treatment facilities with sufficient safeguards put in place to prevent diversion, misuse, theft, or loss of returned drugs. Military treatment facilities are unique, and the military has established successful accountability programs for handling nuclear weapons, conventional weapons, and classified materials. We have no reason to doubt that an appropriate degree of accountability could be established in a drug take-back program.

Excluding the military from conducting drug take-back programs has a detrimental effect on the military's ability to reduce controlled substance abuse in the Force, decrease non-medical use of prescription drugs, prevent diversion of controlled substances, and limit the possibility for accidental overdose and death for our servicemembers or their family members. Providing this authority will give the military one more tool in its efforts to reduce suicides.

The loss of even one servicemember to a potentially preventable suicide involving controlled substance abuse or misuse is unacceptable. For that reason, Senator LIEBERMAN and I filed this amendment to the Veterans Jobs Corps Act. I urge my colleagues to support inclusion of this amendment in this legislation.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

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

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. BROWN of Ohio. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

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

REMEMBERING 9/11

Mr. BROWN of Ohio. Mr. President, today we remember September 11, 2001,

11 years ago, a Tuesday like today was, a beautiful day like today was, but a day of horror incited by a hateful ideology. We, of course, cannot afford to forget what happened, but let's remember what can happen when Americans come together.

On this national day of remembrance we honor those who lost their lives 11 years ago, the daughters and sons, mothers and fathers, sisters and brothers from various walks of life and avenues of faith. We honor the families of the victims. We honor the survivors. We honor the courageous civil servants and first responders, most of them union members, who lost their lives and suffered illnesses because of their selflessness. We salute the servicemembers and their families who sacrificed so much since these tragic events.

More than a decade later we all remember where we were on that clear Tuesday morning. I remember feeling the fear and uncertainty when gathering my staff at a location near the Capitol. Regardless of where we were on that fateful day, whether speaking English with a Brooklyn accent or as a first generation American learning English as a second language or those of you from the Midwest who perhaps speak with a bit of a Midwestern accent—although Midwesterners do not have an accent—we all came together. Regardless of where we worked—in a manufacturing plant in Cleveland or a farm near Lima—we came together. This is this spirit or solidarity we reaffirm today.

Today we must come together again and focus on moving forward as one nation in spite of our differences.

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. BROWN of Ohio. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent to dispense with the quorum call.

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

SECOND ANNIVERSARY OF THE CHEVROLET CRUZE

Mr. BROWN of Ohio. This weekend, I believe it was Saturday, I was in Lordstown, OH, celebrating the 2-year anniversary of the first Chevy Cruze that came off the Lordstown GM Chevy plant line. I was there the day the first Cruze came out. The first three cars—painted red, white, and blue—represented the determination of workers and that company and the Nation to succeed to bounce back, despite national naysayers who were willing to stand idly by while our economy stalled.

We read it in newspapers, saw it on television, heard it on the radio how some elected officials not only wanted to turn their back on an industry that has provided middle-class wages, college educations, homes, and cars to millions of Americans, but a number of elected officials wanted to bet against the American automotive industry.

During the height of the economic crisis, when American manufacturing was sputtering—and the Presiding Officer knows the statistics because he paid attention in his State of Alaska, which is not so much a manufacturing State but a State that contributes a lot to manufacturing. The Presiding Officer knows what has happened in this country. From 2000 to 2010, we lost 5 million manufacturing jobs. That was one-third of all the manufacturing jobs in this country. Six thousand plants closed in the United States in that decade. Since 2010—and more on that in a moment—because of the auto rescue and because we have a Federal Government that is willing to enforce trade laws, we have seen a growth of 500,000 manufacturing jobs, the first time we have seen month-to-month manufacturing job growth for almost every month for 2-plus years. It is the first time since 1999 this country has actually seen any manufacturing job growth.

Some said: Let the industry go bankrupt. A Presidential candidate said—I believe his words to Detroit were along the lines of drop dead; that wasn't something we wanted to do, to do anything to help that industry. They were willing to let the auto industry go bankrupt and then see what happened.

Some of these naysayers thought it was OK to bail out Wall Street. They thought it was OK to pad the salaries of reckless bankers who drove our economy off the cliff. It wasn't the nonunion autoworker in Marysville who built the Honda, it wasn't the Chrysler autoworker in Toledo who built the Wrangler or the Liberty, it wasn't the Chevy autoworker in Lordstown who built the Cruze, it wasn't the autoworker in Defiance who built the engine or the glass worker in Crestline who made the glass for the Chevy Cruze or the aluminum worker in Cleveland or the steelworker in Middletown who caused the collapse of the economy and the problems with the banks. In many ways, they were blamed by the people who bet against America, who were willing to say it is OK to pad the salary of reckless bankers, even though they are the ones who drove the economy off the cliff.

They rallied against rescuing autoworkers in places such as Holmesville, Waverly, Middletown, and Youngstown. The easy road—and it wasn't the easy road by a long shot—isn't always the right path, not when this many jobs are at stake, paying these kind of wages, strengthening this middle-class.

The Chevy Cruze represents what was at stake. Three days ago, when I was in Lordstown, we marked the day of the 2-year anniversary, how resilient we can be when we make decisions not based on politics but what is best for the country. Plain and simple, the auto rescue was the right choice.

Last year, the Cruze was elected the Car of the Year by the North American Dealer Association. Now it is the best-selling compact car in America. My

daughter drives one. My wife traded in her 6-year-old Pontiac Vibe and bought a Chevy Cruze. Just a few short years ago, 1,000 workers in Lordstown were laid off. Today, nearly 5,000 workers build one of the fastest selling small cars in the country.

For people such as Glenn Johnson, who is the local President in the Lordstown assembly plant, the politically unpopular decision to save the auto industry was about saving the livelihood for hard-working families in Ohio and in the Midwest. Two years later, we are moving forward. GM profits are up. GM has been profitable for 10 consecutive quarters. None of the naysayers thought it could possibly happen. None of the naysayers were willing to invest in GM and to find private capital. It only happened because taxpayers stepped forward because the government was willing to understand and recognize that this mattered for our country.

GM has announced plans to make a \$200 million additional investment in Lordstown, where they have added a third shift to produce the Chevy Cruze. Chrysler has invested tens of millions of dollars in Toledo. Honda has invested tens of millions of dollars in a new model in Marysville. Ford has invested tens of millions of dollars in Cleveland. All three American auto companies and the major U.S. auto transplant Honda have all made major investments in Ohio since the auto rescue. The Cruze epitomizes how essential the auto industry is in Ohio.

The engine for the Cruze is made in Defiance, the transmission for the Cruze is made in Toledo, the brackets are made in Brunswick, the glass for the Wrangler is made in Crestline, the sound system for the Cruze is made in Springboro, the underneath steel for the Cruze comes from Middletown, the exposed steel comes from Cleveland, the seat frame comes from Lorain, the seats are made in Warren, and the aluminum for the Chevy Cruze Eco comes from Cleveland. The car is assembled by 5,000 workers in Lordstown, OH.

This success story goes far beyond one State. In my State alone, hundreds of thousands of jobs are associated with the auto industry. There are 120,000 Ohioans who are directly employed by automakers, dealers, and supply chain parts manufacturers. We know even with that success and even with the success of enforcing trade laws, which have turned into—as a result of enforcing trade rules, we have a new steel mill in Youngstown. More tires are made in Findlay and more aluminum is made in Heath and Sidney, OH. More steel is made in Lorain and Cleveland.

Because we have enforced trade rules, that doesn't mean we don't need to do more. The economy is still not what it should be. Our unemployment rate from 2 years ago went from over 10.5 percent to under 7.5 percent, but it is clearly still not enough because far too many workers in Ohio, Alaska and

America and all over are underemployed or unemployed.

We are moving in the right direction. Since January of 2010, after a full decade of manufacturing job loss from 2000 to 2010, where 5 million manufacturing jobs were lost, we have gained 500,000 manufacturing jobs in those 2 years.

Supporting America means valuing workers. It is patriotic to support America's middle class. When it comes to protecting American workers and supporting American manufacturers and boasting America's middle class, we still have much to do. We have made major progress in the last years. We have much to do. We have no choice but to move forward.

MORNING BUSINESS

Mr. BROWN of Ohio. I ask unanimous consent that 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.

REMEMBERING 9/11

Mr. INOUE. Mr. President, I rise in memory of an unspeakable tragedy that shook our great Nation free of the belief that we are an untouchable force in the modern world, 11 years ago today.

Eleven years ago today an unspeakable tragedy shook our great Nation free of the belief that we are an untouchable force in the modern world.

Today, as we honor the nearly 3,000 innocent men, women, and children who lost their lives at the World Trade Center, the Pentagon, and in a field in Shanksville, PA, we must remember more than the pain and rage that followed the events of that Tuesday morning.

I cannot help but compare that day to the morning of December 7, 1941, when Imperial Japan attacked Pearl Harbor, killing more than 2,400 sailors, soldiers, and civilians, and plunging our Nation into World War II.

The bombing of Pearl Harbor moved me to put on the uniform and join thousands of my brothers in a fight that spanned across Europe and the Asia Pacific.

Like Pearl Harbor, the events of September 11 forced our Nation to send troops into Afghanistan, and later it was used to help justify the invasion of Iraq.

More than 6,000 of our brave men and women have died fighting in those countries, and, like World War II, the loss of life and American resources is staggering.

These attacks on America, the wars that followed, and the aftermath where we searched for hope and dealt with the pain of loss, altered our national consciousness and fortified us for the future that we continue to work hard to build.

To move forward, we must recognize that September 11 was a painful re-

minder that America must remain ever vigilant to the threats posed by foreign forces and those who abhor the freedom and equality that defines our great Nation.

But most importantly, we have to understand the role America plays in the global community, and we must be respectful of our place and work hard to use what we have been blessed with to ensure that peace and good will reign, regardless of our differences.

I speak from experience when I say that no matter the justification and no matter the final outcome, no nation, no people, escape from war unscathed.

Mr. LEAHY. Mr. President, eleven years ago today, on a crisp early autumn morning much like today's, I was at the Supreme Court for the semi-annual meeting of the Judicial Conference when I got word of the first attack of 9/11. I quietly informed Chief Justice William Rehnquist, who was presiding over our meeting. Soon afterward we heard a muffled "bump," followed by a report that a car bomb may have gone off across town at the State Department. Of course, we later learned that this had been the sound of another plane, as it slammed into the Pentagon.

I remember later that day, evacuating my staff from the Russell Senate Building. I remember crossing along the West Front of the Capitol as two fighter jets streaked up the Mall. I remember the unnatural stillness of a big city in shock, similar only to what I saw as a law student at Georgetown, when a pall descended over Washington after the news that President John F. Kennedy had been killed.

At this morning's meeting of the Judicial Conference in that same room where we met 11 years ago on this date, several participants offered reflections about this somber anniversary.

I noted that much of what holds our country together in times of crisis is the integrity of the three branches of our constitutional government. In recent times, for temporary political gain, there too often has been the temptation to tear down our foundational institutions, undermining the public's faith and confidence in our system. Over time, that cannot help but erode that foundation. I pointed out that this was why, the day after the attacks 11 years ago, each and every Senator made the effort to be in his or her seat in an unmistakable gesture of unity of purpose. We knew that we had to reopen this emblem and pillar of American democracy, and I was proud to be in my seat representing Vermont when the Senate convened for business that next morning.

Over this past decade, as Americans we have gathered each year on this date to remember the thousands of innocent lives that were taken so casually and so callously on that terrible morning. We also remember and honor the brave first responders and military servicemembers who have lost their lives protecting and serving our country. It has been more than a year since