

Never convince them that they should take personal responsibility and care for their lives?

What would Mitt Romney say to veterans who do not owe Federal income taxes or receive a government benefit? We have seen the tape. He says: They are victims who could never be convinced to take personal responsibility for their lives. Mitt Romney must have known many who served in Vietnam during his period of maturity. Did he think of them who served in Vietnam as not doing their share, not taking personal responsibility?

I am a veteran. I take offense at that. These men and women risked everything fighting for our freedoms and our rights, and we ought to do everything we can to support them. These heroes know a great deal more than Mitt Romney about personal responsibility and sacrifice. Mitt Romney was simply saying what many in today's Republican Party truly believe. He has pulled back the curtain on their agenda. He has revealed the stark choice facing the American people. America deserves better than a Presidential candidate who dismisses the contribution that half—47 percent, to be more precise—of our fellow Americans make—they get derision and disrespect. That is hardly appropriate for a Presidential candidate to be saying.

He, after all, seeks the job that puts him in charge of the whole 310 million people in America. And yet he has the audacity to say these people are not worthy of honor, worthy of thanks, worthy of their contribution to this country? All this time it was thought that Mitt Romney just did not get it. But it turns out worse than that. He just does not care. He knows what he is saying, and he says it deliberately. He just does not care.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Colorado.

THE FARM BILL

Mr. BENNET. Madam President, I wanted to come to the floor today to speak on a different subject, which is to demonstrate my support for the Sportsmen's package compiled by Senator TESTER from Montana. I know the bill was discussed on the floor last night and the request to pass this package of bipartisan bills was objected to, which is horribly unfortunate. I hope we are going to have the opportunity to vote on the measure before we leave town.

Sportsmen and women are an essential part of the fabric of our country, the fabric of my home State of Colorado. This community supports millions of jobs and contributes billions of dollars annually to our economy, and they are often the drivers of our most important conservation initiatives across our rich landscape.

While serving on the Senate Agriculture Committee, I have enjoyed working with sportsmen to craft a re-

vamped conservation title in the farm bill. Some people forget that the farm bill conservation title is the largest single legislative vehicle for the programs and resources that help us conserve private land all across this country, all across the western United States. It enhances vital wildlife habitat across the country. Sportsmen have always played a vital role in crafting that bipartisan title. That was exactly the way they participated this time as well.

While it is not the reason I am here today—I want to talk about Senator TESTER's bill—I do want to take the chance to say once again that in my view the House of Representatives ought to pass the 5-year farm bill. We passed a bipartisan bill out of this Senate with well over 70 votes, Democrats and Republicans. On the committee we worked together for over 2 years to create the only bipartisan deficit reduction that has happened in this Congress in either the House or the Senate. We got rid of direct payments for producers, which was an important reform. We strengthened the conservation title, as I was saying earlier. There is absolutely no reason the House should not pass this bill.

Over the break, I traveled 2,500 miles around the State of Colorado, rural communities all over my State, and no one wanted to know what was going on in the Presidential election. No one wanted to talk about anything except why can't the farm bill get passed? There has never been a time in modern history that a committee in the House, in this case the House Agriculture Committee, passed out a bill in a bipartisan way and it cannot even get to the floor for a vote. That has never happened before. Something is wrong over there.

I can tell you that my farmers and ranchers in Colorado who are going through the worst drought in a generation want people to knock the politics off and pass this bill. Bipartisan, it is real deficit reduction, and it is a good bill. We are doing an incredible disservice, as I said to our farmers and ranchers, and also our sportsmen by failing to act on this bipartisan legislation.

There was a time in my life when I had the chance to live in Montana for a brief time, Senator TESTER's home State, and I thought of myself as a sportsman then. I used to fish a lot, chopped a lot of wood out there. These days I spend a lot more time on airplanes and chasing my three daughters to soccer games, but some day I will get back there. That brings me to the importance of the package, this package for our Nation's sportswomen and men. The provisions in Senator TESTER's bill represent some of the best bipartisan ideas out there to promote hunting, fishing, and recreational access, bills from both sides of the aisle that have been hanging around here for a long time and now need to get passed. The measure would require that 1.5

percent of annual Land and Water Conservation Funds go to provide public access to lands for hunting and for fishing. I am a huge supporter of the Land and Water Conservation Fund. This provision builds on the fine legacy of that program.

The bill also contains a provision that is homegrown from our sportsmen in Colorado. Section 103 provides certainty and parity for America's bow hunters, that they can cross National Park Service land with their bows to legally hunt nearby lands outside the park boundaries. This access is provided to hunters with firearms but not to hunters with bows.

I started working on this issue over 2 years ago when a Colorado bow hunter encountered a problem. After 14 years of trying, this particular hunter had finally drawn a license to hunt elk in the premium game unit in northwest Colorado. He scouted the unit, found the area he wanted to hunt and he was all set to go until Federal officials told him he could not cross a narrow strip, a very narrow strip, of Park Service land to hunt the BLM land next to it. This is despite the fact that hunters with loaded firearms can cross Park Service land legally and without applying for a permit.

The problem with this particular hunter is what brought this issue to my office. But the broader point of the provision is to provide access for our sportsmen and women. We know that we lose thousands of acres of land every day to development, some of it important wildlife habitat. We need to provide all Americans reasonable access to the land that we have set aside for preservation and wildlife habitat, bow hunters included.

That is why I was pleased to increase funding for the Voluntary Public Access Program when we marked up the farm bill. That is why I am proud to have worked with Senator TESTER to include this provision in his package that I hope we will be voting on soon.

The bow hunting provision was carefully tailored to ensure that hunting of wildlife within Park Service boundaries remains illegal. Yet the measure still provides reasonable access, which is so important to the sportsmen in Colorado and across the country.

I have received a letter of support for the Bennet-Tester bow hunting from Colorado stakeholder groups across the spectrum, including the Colorado Wildlife Federation, the Rocky Mountain Bighorn Sheep Society, Pheasants Forever, and the Bull Moose Sportsmen's Alliance, and the list goes on. I ask unanimous consent to have this letter printed in the RECORD.

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

DECEMBER 7, 2011.

Hon. MICHAEL BENNET,
Senator of Colorado, Russell Senate Office Building, Washington, DC.

DEAR SENATOR BENNET: The Credit Card Accountability Responsibility and Disclosure Act of 2009, PL 111-24, permitted concealed carry in the National Parks System

and National Wildlife Refuge System (NWRs). NPS regulations to implement the concealed carry provisions of PL 111-24 became effective on February 10, 2010 and included all firearms legal in the jurisdiction in which the park was located. Park Service regulations continue to exclude bow and arrows in the National Parks. In some locations this effectively limits bowhunter access to hunt other adjacent BLM, USFS or private lands that are otherwise open to hunting and can now be legally accessed through NPS or NWRs lands by firearms hunters.

36 CFR 2.4 d 4 allows the possibly of permitting for such access through NPS lands where it is otherwise impossible or impractical to make other access except through NPS lands. In 2009 one such request for permitting for Dinosaur National Monument was denied by the Park Superintendent, effectively denying practical bowhunter access to some BLM and state school lands. Firearms hunters may now access these lands across NPS lands without any requirement for permitting.

Similar access issues occur in several of Colorado's game management units bounding on Dinosaur National Monument. These situations likely occur at many National Parks and National Monuments both in Colorado and other states. Attempts to rectify this situation through an administrative rule making process in the Department of the Interior have been denied.

The undersigned sportsmen, representing several major sportsmen's groups and retailers in Colorado request that, barring any change in the DOI stance, legislative action be taken to give bowhunters with archery equipment equal rights in crossing NPS and NWRs as that enjoyed by those carrying firearms.

Sincerely,

Tim Mauck & Gaspar Perricone, Co-founders, Bull Moose Sportsmen's Alliance; Ivan James, Vice-Chairman for Legislation, Colorado Bowhunters Association; Robert Ong, President, Rocky Mountain Bighorn Sheep Society; John Smeltzer, President, Colorado Wildlife Federation; Dean Derby, President, Colorado Traditional Archery Society; Bob Hewson, Executive Director, Colorado Youth Outdoors; Robert Hix, Colorado Regional Director, Pheasants Forever, Inc.; Joel Webster, Director—Center for Western Lands, Theodore Roosevelt Conservation Partnership; John & Kathy Tidwell, Owners, Bear Creek Archery Inc; Michael Lewellen, President, Colorado National Wild Turkey Federation; John Gale & David Lien, Co-Chairs, Colorado Back Country Hunters and Anglers.

Mr. BENNET. The overall sportsmen's package from Senator TESTER is also widely supported, ranging from the Theodore Roosevelt Conservation Partnership to the Boone and Crockett Club to the National Rifle Association. The Tester bill represent a bipartisan package of commonsense bills that will benefit our Nation's sports men and women. I want to thank Senator TESTER for his leadership on behalf of the West and urge a "yes" vote.

I will simply close by saying it is my fervent hope that once this election is over, some 45 days from now, we will come back to this Chamber, Republicans and Democrats together, and work to avoid surfing over this fiscal cliff that will be so damaging to this economy.

People at home know something that people here have not yet figured out, which is even if you believe you are always right on your side or had a monopoly of wisdom on your side—which I do not, but some people seem to—even if you believed it, we cannot accomplish this meaningful deficit reduction without doing it in a bipartisan way. It is impossible to do it without doing it in a bipartisan way.

People at home actually want to see it bipartisan, frankly, because they do not believe in either party's go-it-alone strategy when it comes to the debt and deficit. So my hope is this election will clear the air, we will get back to work, and that before January we will have something convincing to say to the American public on this subject.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Colorado.

EMERGENCY WATERSHED PROTECTION PROGRAM

Mr. BENNET. Madam President, I see no colleagues have come to the floor, so I want to speak on one additional topic. I will be brief, because I understand we likely won't have an opportunity to address this issue before we leave town.

My colleague Senator MARK UDALL and I have been working to provide resources for the USDA's Emergency Watershed Protection Program, also known as EWP. The reason we have been doing this is that EWP resources help communities recover from wildfires, specifically watersheds that, after being burned, are unstable and risk harm to critical drinking water infrastructure and sometimes jeopardize human lives.

As many in this Chamber know, we had a number of devastating wildfires in Colorado this summer. In the communities of Fort Collins and Colorado Springs in particular, they are having trouble protecting their vital drinking water infrastructure as their watersheds recover. Despite a letter Senator UDALL and I authored to the appropriators, the House version of the continuing resolution did not contain this critical funding. That means the Senate won't be able to vote to help these communities recover. And while we are disappointed, we are going to continue to fight for these resources.

With that, Madam President, I yield the floor, and I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

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

FARM BILL

Mr. BENNET. Madam President, I see we have been joined by the Chair of the

Agriculture Committee, Senator STABENOW. She has just arrived, but I wanted to report to her that before she arrived I was talking about the need to pass a farm bill and the fact that, over the break, I had traveled 2,500 miles around the State of Colorado—in rural parts of our State on the west slope and on the eastern plains—and nobody wanted to talk about anything except why we can't get a farm bill passed. It makes no sense to them. They know it was completely bipartisan here in the Senate, and they know it is the only bipartisan piece of legislation with deficit reduction any committee of either Chamber has been able to accomplish.

In the case of Colorado farmers and ranchers, we are going through the worst drought we have had in a generation, and they want to know why Washington, DC, has a completely different set of priorities than they have.

There is still time for the House to pass this bill. This is the first time in modern history a House Ag Committee has passed out a bill—in this case a bipartisan bill, though not as good, I don't think, as ours, but a step forward—that hasn't come to the floor for a vote. They cannot even get a vote.

So while the Senator is here, I wanted to thank her, and I would also say to the ranking member of the committee if he were here, for their extraordinary bipartisan effort over the last 2 years that resulted in a very fine bill. I also think their work sets a model for the way we should be approaching our work in this Chamber.

I thank the Chair, and I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Michigan.

Ms. STABENOW. Madam President, first, I did come to the floor to talk about the urgency of the farm bill, but I also want to thank my friend and colleague from Colorado, who chairs our conservation subcommittee, for the tremendous piece of work on the conservation title in the farm bill. I thank him for all of that effort and also say to him I understand what is happening in Colorado. As he and I know, we passed disaster assistance—a permanent livestock disaster assistance program—in our farm bill, along with help for food growers in Michigan and other places.

We are totally committed in the short run to helping those who have the riskiest business in the world, which is farming and ranching in this country, but we also know what they want is the economic certainty of a 5-year farm bill. So I thank my friend for all of his efforts and in coming to the floor.

I want to say, for the record, there are 10 days until September 30—10 days until the farm bill expires and 16 million people in this country who rely on agriculture for their jobs or their livelihood are put in limbo. That is the reality of where we are.

We worked so hard, on a bipartisan basis in the Senate, to pass a farm bill,