

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report the bill by title.

The assistant bill clerk read as follows:

Motion to proceed to the bill (S. 3254) to authorize appropriations for fiscal year 2013 for military activities of the Department of Defense, for military construction, and for defense activities of the Department of Energy, to prescribe military personnel strengths for such fiscal year, and for other purposes.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The majority leader.

Mr. REID. As I indicated this morning, we are trying to work our way through a number of issues. We thought we were going to be able to move toward the Carceri matter this evening, but we are still negotiating this matter, so we are going to have to do that at some subsequent time.

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.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Alabama.

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 Madam President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

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

THE SPORTSMEN'S ACT

Mr. SESSIONS. Madam President, I appreciate the vote we just concluded. I think what the vote said is that we want the bill on the floor to be in compliance with the Budget Control Act that was passed 15 months ago. This bill, even though it was not a lot of money, violated that. Senators have voted not to waive the budget and spend the money anyway. They decided we should comply with the budget.

I talked with Senator TESTER and Majority Leader REID and assured them that the fundamentals of this bill are good. I like what they have been trying to do with the Sportsmen's Act and I have been supportive of so many of the provisions in it.

We had several little problems. First and foremost, it attempted to spend more than the EKW Committee was entitled to spend under the Budget Control Act. Second, we have a blue slip problem with it. Thirdly, we have given the Interior Department Secretary the power to raise taxes unilaterally without a vote of Congress, and I think that is bad policy. All of those, however, compared to the many other provisions in the legislation are small, and we should be able to work them out. So I hope we can, and I will be working in that regard.

However, I do wish to say to my colleagues, this is the second bill that has had a lot of support on both sides of the aisle but has failed because they violated the Budget Control Act agreement on spending. Some on the other side might think they can simply say Republicans are obstructionists, they are killing bills just because they want to kill them and they don't like them.

That is not correct. Republicans want to deal with many of the issues before us, such as veterans jobs, such as issues important to sportsmen, and we are supportive of them, but we want them to be done according to the agreement we reached on spending limits last year, and that can easily be done. We spend almost \$3700 billion a year. We ought to be able to find \$14 million from waste, fraud, duplication—savings that can be utilized to pay for this new program.

What the bill suggests by the way it is written is that we have looked at all of the spending in the entire U.S. Government and we can't find \$14 million less valuable than to spend it on migratory bird conservation. I think that is not true. Of course we can find waste, fraud, and abuse right there. We can find other ways to consolidate programs to fund this. We have to honor the agreement we reached, because it looks to me as though we will soon be headed to some sort of late-night, end-of-the-session monumental bill, and it will be like what we had 15 months ago when the debt ceiling was increased and spending was limited and we promised to raise the debt ceiling but limit spending growth, basically. We voted on that. The majority voted for it. The President supported it. He signed it. It became law. Here we are now 15 months later, having had four bills brought to this floor that violated that spending limit. So we have to be careful. The American people are not going to be very confident, if we reach some sort of other spending limit agreement to avoid the fiscal cliff, that we won't, before the ink is dry, start violating it. After all, it only takes 60 votes.

I think it is a very important issue. I am the ranking Republican on the Budget Committee. When we make an agreement, I think we ought to adhere to it, and this is why we had difficulty with the bill.

I enjoyed working with Senator TESTER on it. I have had a good conversation with Senate Majority Leader REID. Hopefully, something can be worked out to fix this problem.

I thank the Chair and yield the floor.

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

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

MORNING BUSINESS

Mr. LEVIN. Mr. President, 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.

HONORING OUR ARMED FORCES

SERGEANT FIRST CLASS RYAN JAMES SAVARD

Mrs. SHAHEEN. Mr. President, today I wish to pay tribute to the heroic service of SFC Ryan James Savard, who was killed in action October 13 in Kunduz Province as part of Operation Enduring Freedom in Afghanistan. Sergeant First Class Savard was assigned to the Headquarters and Headquarters Company of U.S. Army Special Operations Command out of Fort Bragg, NC. He was killed while serving a sixth tour of duty—a remarkable accomplishment—after completing four tours in Afghanistan and one tour in Iraq in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom. He was a brave patriot who served his country with honor and distinction. He was a loving husband and a devoted son.

Ryan was born on February 27, 1983 in Salt Lake City, UT. When he and his family moved to Jefferson, NH, Ryan attended eighth grade at the Lancaster School and spent 3 years at the White Mountains Regional High School in Whitefield. After graduating from high school in Arizona, Ryan followed in his father's footsteps and enlisted in the Army. In fact, he completed his very first day of basic training on September 11, 2001.

Ryan began his 10 years of service repairing helicopters and then went on to earn great distinction in the Special Operations Forces as a Green Beret. In June 2004 he graduated from the U.S. Army John F. Kennedy Special Warfare Center, becoming a weapons sergeant in Company A, Third Battalion, Third Special Forces Group at Fort Bragg. Ryan rose steadily in this role, deploying three times as a senior weapons sergeant in 2008 and twice as a Special Operations Team Member in two tours beginning in 2010.

Ryan received a significant number of awards for his distinguished service, including three Army Commendation Medals, a Joint Service Achievement Medal, three Army Achievement Medals, a Joint Meritorious Unit Award and Meritorious Unit Commendation and three Good Conduct Medals. In addition, he was posthumously awarded a third Bronze Star Medal, the Defense Meritorious Service Medal and a second Purple Heart.

Ryan is remembered by those close to him as a true friend with an infectious laugh and an unmatched sense of humor. He was a great listener and an extremely hard-working young man. Ryan knew the type of commitment that was necessary to be a real friend and the type of commitment that was necessary to be the best soldier possible. His drive to succeed has left an indelible mark on his family, his friends, the State of New Hampshire and the Nation. We are extremely proud and deeply appreciative of Ryan for his willingness to serve and ultimately, to lay down his life, like so many others before him, in the defense of the freedoms that we as Americans hold dear.

Ryan has been laid to rest at Arlington National Cemetery. He is survived by his wife, Kayla, of Fayetteville, NC; his parents, SGM Garrett Savard and Marie Savard, of Lancaster, NH; his five sisters, Rachel, Rebekah, Virginia, Karen and Mariah; and his two brothers, Jedidiah and Garrett. This American hero will be sorely missed.

I ask my colleagues and all Americans to join me in honoring the heroic service of SFC Ryan James Savard.

HONORING OUR VETERANS

Mr. ENZI. Mr. President, each year on November 11, we come together as individuals and as a Nation to express our heartfelt gratitude to our veterans for the countless sacrifices they have made over the years on our behalf. Thanks to them, our Nation is strong and free, and our American way of life that we are so justifiably proud of continues to be protected and preserved. Although Veterans Day is over for this year, our appreciation for our veterans should never be over.

Specifically, I wish to honor our selfless men and women in the Armed Forces who have served and continue to serve in Operation Enduring Freedom. October 7th marked the 11th year the United States has been fighting the war in Afghanistan, and that is why the Senate recognized October 7th as Operation Enduring Freedom Veterans Day. Much has changed in the world and our lives in the last 11 years, but the United States remains committed to fighting for freedom in Afghanistan. More importantly—our brave military men and women have maintained their commitment to us. They fight to protect us, and to protect our freedoms. The war in Afghanistan is so physically far away; it can be easy to forget and get caught up in our daily lives. I ask every American to not forget our brave men and women are still overseas. I hope those courageous souls never fade from the hearts and minds of the people of the United States. In order to remember and honor the veterans' service in Afghanistan, the United States Senate recognized October 7th as Operation Enduring Freedom Veterans Day.

I want to thank Andrew Koenig, a Marine and native of Casper, WY, who reached out to my office with this idea of how to remind Americans of the war in Afghanistan we continue to fight. I thank him for his service and selfless dedication to all veterans and those currently serving.

Think of both October 7th and November 11th as a refresher of what it means to be an American. As you do, remember to take the first opportunity you have to thank a veteran for what we have received from their efforts. No one ever gets tired of being appreciated—especially our veterans.

The work our veterans began years ago continues today as our brave servicemen and women serve at outposts here in the United States and all over the world. Stationed far from family

and friends, they have made a commitment to each one of us that they will do everything they possibly can to keep us safe and protected from harm.

Our country is recognized for its freedom and this is due to the men and women who serve in our outstanding military. They are patriotic, compassionate and courageous and set an example for us all to follow. In word and deed our veterans have shown their great love for our country. We are very grateful for their service. Thanks to our country's veterans, the world is a much better place. God bless you.

PROMOTION OF GENERAL DENNIS VIA

Ms. MIKULSKI. Mr. President, on behalf of the Maryland Congressional delegation, I would like to take this opportunity to congratulate GEN Dennis Via on his promotion to four-star general officer and his assignment as the commanding general, U.S. Army Materiel Command. We note with pride that he is the first Army Signal Corps officer in history to achieve the U.S. Army's highest rank. We in Maryland remain indebted to General Via for his innovative and flawless leadership during the U.S. Army Communications and Electronics Command's move to Maryland's Aberdeen Proving Ground as part of the BRAC 2005 process. The Army and Nation are blessed by his extraordinary service in uniform.

RECOGNIZING THE MEMBERS OF THE ALASKA AIR NATIONAL GUARD

Ms. MURKOWSKI. Mr. President, I have the honor today to recognize three great Americans who valiantly risked their lives in the service of their country. SMSgt Christopher Widener, MSgt Brandon Stuemke, and SSgt Aaron Parcha are members of the Air National Guard from the State of Alaska who served as pararescuemen within the 83rd Expeditionary Rescue Squadron out of Bagram Airfield, Afghanistan. I'd like to tell you about some of the heroic actions taken by these men between the 12th and 14th of November 2010.

Senior Master Sergeant Widener, Master Sergeant Stuemke and Staff Sergeant Parcha are assigned to an Air National Guard unit that specializes in dangerous combat rescue missions. Pararescue specialists, or PJs, train to be inserted into the most hazardous and precarious situations to save lives. They learn to operate in extreme cold and harsh terrain. They train on some of the most cutting edge equipment and master complicated medical procedures. If that isn't enough, they prepare to do this job in the face of an enemy that, when they are plunged into the heart of a battle, can appear from any direction.

Their mission in the Pech River Valley of Afghanistan was to provide medical support to a United States Army

task force. The operation was entitled Operation Bulldog Bite and was aimed at uprooting a determined and well-equipped enemy in the Kunar Province in the northeastern region of Afghanistan. After the battle began and the Army unit sustained casualties, the 83rd Expeditionary Rescue Squadron was sent into action to help extract the wounded and dead. Each of the airmen was tasked to travel by helicopter and to be inserted by hoist to evacuate casualties. Accompanying the dangerous task of insertion from a helicopter came the barrage of enemy gunfire directed toward the PJs. Even before they touched the ground, the PJs were targeted with a hail of bullets. Each of these men cast away their personal safety and pressed on with their mission. The skilled airmen arrived at the location of the wounded troops and began to triage and treat the casualties. They spent several hours tirelessly preparing the severely wounded for evacuation and hoisting each up to a lifesaving helicopter transport hovering above. After evacuating the wounded, the pararescuemen continued their efforts by evacuating fallen warriors from the U.S. Army unit while still receiving enemy gunfire. To ensure success, Master Sergeant Stuemke even returned fire on an enemy position. Senior Master Sergeant Widener showed courage by shielding the casualty on his final hoist with his own body.

In all Senior Master Sergeant Widener, Master Sergeant Stuemke, and Staff Sergeant Parcha contributed to saving over 2 dozen American lives and ensure the return of several bodies of fallen comrades to their families. Their efforts ensured the United States Army unit supported could complete its mission, an operation that secured large stores of enemy weapons and munitions and significantly disrupted insurgent activity against coalition forces in eastern Afghanistan.

These men have been awarded the Distinguished Flying Cross for their actions. The award is the 4th highest decoration a member of our military can receive. I wish to thank these great men for their selfless service and dedication to our nation. They are all my heroes.

ADDITIONAL STATEMENTS

TRIBUTE TO JUDGE JEANNE BURCH

• Mr. WYDEN. Mr. President, at the end of this year the smallest county in Oregon is going to lose its biggest asset. Wheeler County Judge Jeanne Burch is retiring only because of Oregon law, which requires judges to retire at a certain age. In this case, the law is depriving my State of an exemplary public servant.

When she was appointed county judge in 1994, Wheeler County was close to bankruptcy. Since then, thanks to her