

being played with the debt ceiling, and as a way to get out of it, we did something we thought would never come to pass.

We said: OK, give us this ability to raise the debt ceiling so we can pay our bills and not become a third-world nation and not lose our credit rating even more than we have already lost it, and then we will look at deficit reduction. If the supercommittee can't come up with a deal, we will have these across-the-board cuts.

No one thought they would happen, and they are happening. And now what we hear is, oh, it is really no big deal. Our Republican friends are saying it is OK.

Maybe people watching this in their homes may not be touched by the sequester, but let me tell you who will be touched by the sequester, and let me make the argument that when these people are touched by it, we are all touched by it. This is one Nation under God, and when we hurt our people, we get hurt.

Seventy thousand children will not get Head Start. Is that supposed to be good for the country? Ten thousand teacher jobs will be lost. Is that supposed to be good for the country? How about 7,200 special ed teachers, teaching every day kids who have such a hard time just getting dressed in the morning? Is that good for America?

I would argue that this list is terrible for our country. Maybe you don't have a kid in Head Start. I don't. Maybe you don't know a special ed teacher. The point is that we are one country, and we do best when we help our most vulnerable.

How about this: 424,000 HIV tests conducted by the Centers for Disease Control will no longer happen. Is that good for the country, to have HIV-infected people walking around not knowing they have HIV? How about 25,000 fewer breast and cervical cancer screenings? Maybe it is not your wife or your sister or your mom, but somebody's sister or somebody's daughter is not going to find out she has breast cancer. Tell me how that is good for this country.

I am not even talking about the cuts to defense, some of which I think we can do but many of which don't make sense. I am just looking at the cuts to the most vulnerable people. Four million fewer meals will be served to senior citizens. Does that make you proud, Republicans? I hope you are proud. Programs such as Meals on Wheels are going to be impacted, and 600,000 women and children won't get nutrition assistance. There will be 1,000 FBI agents and other law enforcement personnel laid off or furloughed, and 1,000 criminal cases won't be prosecuted. Is that good for America? Maybe your family wasn't the victim of a crime. Maybe it is not your relative who happens to be a law enforcement officer. But this is one Nation under God, with liberty and justice for all.

How does it make sense for these cuts to go into effect when all we have

to do to avert them is reform the Tax Code and take away those juicy little tax loopholes companies that ship their jobs overseas get? How about asking someone who earns \$2 million a year to pay the same effective tax rate as their secretary? What kind of a country is this? You would rather have these kinds of brutal cuts to the least among us than just have a fair Tax Code?

In the last 40 years only one party balanced the budget, and that party is the Democratic Party. Bill Clinton and the Democratic Congress—the only party that ever balanced the budget. So spare me the lectures from my friends on the other side of the aisle about how they are the ones who know how to do it. No, they don't, because when you make these mindless cuts and people are furloughed and they have less money to spend, they don't go to the corner store and take their family for lunch or dinner. They don't spend as they would normally spend, and it is a trickle-down effect on this economy. As a matter of fact, Mark Zandi, the respected, nonpartisan economist, said it is going to take a half a point off economic growth at a time when we are not growing that robustly.

Here is the point. When President Obama inherited the job—because we elected him to it—he faced the \$1.2 trillion deficit of George W. Bush, who had turned the Bill Clinton surplus into raging deficits, and the deficits are down now to \$850 billion. So don't say we are not making progress. A Democratic President is making progress on the deficit. But let's do the rest of this deficit cutting wisely, in a balanced way. We have cut \$1.7 trillion in spending and, yes, \$700 billion in revenue. We have raised taxes on those earning a lot of money. But there are a lot more cuts we have made than revenue increases we have made.

So I come to the floor to say this is a self-inflicted wound. And if I hear anyone say: It doesn't really affect me, let me tell you that is not true because when our kids are hurt, we are hurt. When our health care system is hurt and people are walking around with diseases, we are all hurt. When our senior citizens don't get the meals, we are all hurt. Otherwise, what is the point in having a country if it is everyone for themselves? That isn't the greatness of America.

So I was proud to vote to avert the sequester. We had a majority vote before we left here for the weekend, but my Republican friends filibustered that. We had over 50 votes to get rid of the sequester, and the Republicans filibustered. Enough already. I hope they will come to their senses so we can do this deficit reduction in a serious way that makes sense.

CLIMATE CHANGE

Mrs. BOXER. Now I wish to talk about climate change. It is one of the most serious threats facing our Nation. All you really have to do is look out

the window to see it is already happening.

I would like to talk about a great thing that happened recently. When USA TODAY, the Nation's largest newspaper in print form—more people read that paper than any other. They announced in a front-page story last Friday, on March 1, that they are going to spend a year looking at the issue of climate change.

This is the front page. They show that the temperatures are going up. They talk about more asthma. But let's look at what they say because I am appalled that with all of this going on around us, we seem to have no way forward on this issue. I am going to be here every Monday after votes to talk about this, and I urge every Member of the Senate, Democratic or Republican, who cares about this issue to join me. We have to wake up the American people to the fact that this Senate is doing nothing. Even though I believe there is a majority for doing something, we don't have the 60 votes. So let's talk about it.

This is what USA TODAY says:

"Why you should sweat climate change."

More American children are getting asthma and allergies, and more seniors are suffering heat strokes. [Already] food and utility prices are rising. Flooding is overrunning bridges, swamping subways and closing airport runways.

We know this is true.

People are losing jobs in drought-related factory closings. Cataclysmic storms are wiping out sprawling neighborhoods. Towns are sinking.

And Congress does nothing.

USA TODAY:

This isn't a science-fiction, end-of-the-world scenario. . . . these scenes are already playing out somewhere in the United States, and they're expected to get worse in the years ahead.

People need to act quickly.

Climate change is not a place and time distant—it's here and now.

That is a quote from Kim Knowlton, who is a health professor at Columbia University, and this was shown in USA TODAY.

The most recent decade was the Nation's hottest on record.

This isn't a guess, this is the truth.

The most recent decade was the Nation's hottest on record, and 2012 was the hottest single year. The average U.S. temperature has risen 1.5 degrees Fahrenheit since reliable recordkeeping began in 1895—80% of that has occurred since 1980.

The economic costs of all these changes are enormous—not only for those directly affected but for the nation's taxpayers, who are stuck with the bills for disaster relief, national flood insurance and drought-related crop losses.

Now, what are we supposed to do about this? Clearly, scientists tell us there is too much carbon pollution in the air, and I will show you where it is coming from. The electricity sector gives us 34 percent of the carbon; the transportation sector, 27 percent of the carbon comes from there; the industrial sector, 20 percent; the agriculture

sector, 7 percent; residential and commercial building, 11 percent.

We know President Obama has done an amazing job in leading us, with Members here in the Senate, bipartisan. Senators SNOWE and FEINSTEIN worked so hard on this. He said it is time for us to get better fuel economy. Fuel efficiency is going to take carbon out of the air, and we are moving toward 55 miles per gallon. That is excellent. And we can continue to make great progress as we move toward plug-in hybrids—I drive one of those myself—and eventually electric cars. I can tell you, when you drive those cars, you don't visit those gas stations. It saves you money. It is a win-win. The environment gets cleaned up. You save money. It is all good.

We know the electricity sector is complicated, but what we want to do—many of us here—is to say: If you put a price on carbon, it will move us away from the dirtiest types of electricity production toward clean, clean electricity.

That is what we are trying to do. So Senator SANDERS wrote a very strong bill of which I am a cosponsor. It would put a price on carbon and we would take the funds we get from that price on carbon—I think it is \$20 a ton when you start—and it will bring in many billions. What we will do with it is 60 percent of it will go to the people to soften the blow of higher electricity prices until we have moved to clean energy. We have to move on this.

On residential and commercial buildings, I have a bill to move forward through the GSA, the biggest landlord in the country, and we can move forward with economies to those buildings by making sure the windows do not let in all that air or let all that heat escape, we can make those weather-related improvements and we can encourage them to move to solar and other ways. The industrial sector is the same. Once there is a price on carbon, they will move toward putting solar and the rest.

In closing, we have one self-inflicted wound called the sequester. We can get out of it easily by working together on deficit reduction in a balanced way and stop these mindless cuts that hurt the people of our Nation, the children of our Nation, the seniors of our Nation, law enforcement of our Nation—our busiest airports, trains, and the rest. We can avoid all that if we are smart and we say we want a balanced approach.

I believe if we recognize what USA Today is saying, which is we should sweat climate change because it is happening now, if we can come together we can move forward and do our part. We just heard, in the Environment and Public Works Committee—I am proud to chair it—we heard from four scientists. They were asked if we do nothing what will happen. They said parts of our Nation will not exist anymore. Imagine hearing people say no more Atlantic City, no more New Orleans. In Florida—you wouldn't recognize it.

That is the first answer. We did not even get to what happens in the West.

We know from Senators such as TOM UDALL what would happen to that beautiful State of New Mexico. It would become a desert environment; no more green, and the fires have already been starting. I am sad to say we have done little to nothing. I can only say this President has done whatever he could do. Any progress we have had has come from his executive orders and, I might add, the States.

My home State of California is moving forward, creating jobs in clean energy, moving forward, being a model, and I am going to support them and our Governor, Jerry Brown. He gets this. It doesn't take a degree in climatology to see what is happening to our climate—and it is happening. We understand it.

I saw a movie, "Chasing Ice." O God, if you have not seen it, I suggest you watch it. This is a great photographer who goes to four different places, including Montana, Greenland, Iceland, and Alaska. He puts these cameras up there to watch the glaciers. You see what happens over 2 years. These glaciers are disappearing. This is not some kind of cry for attention on my part. I love my grandkids, and I want them to have a planet that is habitable for them. They deserve that. They are going to look back to this time someday and say: My goodness, what were they thinking?

It is not too late for us. With USA Today leading the way, I think we can turn public opinion around and get going on this issue.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from New York.

(The remarks of Mrs. GILLIBRAND pertaining to the introduction of S. 443 are printed in today's RECORD under "Statements on Introduced Bills and Joint Resolutions.")

Mrs. GILLIBRAND. I yield the floor.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

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

EXECUTIVE SESSION

NOMINATION OF CAITLIN JOAN HALLIGAN TO BE UNITED STATES CIRCUIT JUDGE FOR THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA CIRCUIT

Mr. REID. Mr. President, I have been told the Republicans are not able to clear an agreement for consideration of the Halligan nomination. Therefore, I move to proceed to Calendar No. 13 and proceed in executive session to do that.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The question is on the motion to proceed.

Without objection, the motion is agreed to. The clerk will report the nomination.

The legislative clerk read the nomination of Caitlin Joan Halligan, of New York, to be a United States Circuit Judge for the District of Columbia Circuit.

CLOTURE MOTION

Mr. REID. Mr. President, I send a cloture motion to the desk.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. DONNELLY). The cloture motion having been presented under rule XXII, the Chair directs the clerk to read the motion.

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 nomination of Caitlin Joan Halligan, of New York, to be United States Circuit Judge for the District of Columbia Circuit.

Harry Reid, Patrick J. Leahy, Barbara Boxer, Benjamin L. Cardin, Robert P. Casey, Jr., Bill Nelson, Barbara A. Mikulski, Amy Klobuchar, Al Franken, Jack Reed, Sheldon Whitehouse, Robert Menendez, Kirsten E. Gillibrand, Richard Blumenthal, Max Baucus, Sherrod Brown, Dianne Feinstein

Mr. REID. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the quorum under rule XXII be waived.

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

LEGISLATIVE SESSION

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senate will now proceed to legislative session.

MORNING BUSINESS

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

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

TRIBUTE TO ROSSI RALENKOTTER

Mr. REID. Mr. President, I rise to recognize a milestone in Nevada history as my friend Rossi Ralenkotter celebrates 40 years with the tourism industry. As president of the Las Vegas Convention and Visitors Authority, LVCVA, Rossi has been influential in transforming Las Vegas into a globally recognized brand and an entertainment destination. I am proud to honor him today.

After moving to Las Vegas in 1951 and graduating from Bishop Gorman High School, Rossi served our Nation in the United States Air Force. Upon returning home to Southern Nevada, he entered the tourism industry. Las Vegas hasn't been the same since.

Rossi championed the use of research and data in developing advertising and marketing strategies for Southern Nevada. He helped establish the LVCVA's research department in the early 1970's.