

Hadiya Pendleton, a 15-year-old who was shot and killed by gang gunfire in Chicago. For Hadiya and thousands of other victims, my hope is we can break through the gridlock here in Washington to actually get something done to save lives.●

By Ms. COLLINS (for herself and Mr. KING):

S. 444. A bill making appropriations for the Department of Defense for the fiscal year ending September 30, 2013, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Appropriations.

Ms. COLLINS. Mr. President, I rise today to discuss two separate problems facing our Nation—the first is sequestration, which is underway now and indiscriminately affecting a wide range of programs. The second is the prospect of a long-term Continuing Resolution to fund the Federal government for the remainder of the fiscal year, also not the way we should be doing business. Both will result in damage to our military readiness.

In order to tackle these two separate but equally devastating problems, I am introducing two measures today.

The first bill, which I am pleased to join my colleague, Senator UDALL, in sponsoring, will help mitigate the consequences of sequestration by providing Department and agency heads additional flexibility in implementing the cuts. The second bill, which I am introducing with my colleague from my home state of Maine, Senator King, will fund the Department of Defense for the remainder of the fiscal year at levels approved by the Senate Appropriations Committee in the funding bill that was reported unanimously by the Committee on August 2, 2012.

As Deputy Secretary of Defense Ash Carter has repeatedly warned, failing to pass an annual defense appropriations bill and requiring the Pentagon to operate under last year's law will continue to lead to dangerous absurdities that have ramifications that last far beyond the six months left in this fiscal year.

Military readiness will suffer. A hollow force will be created. The Pentagon will be unable to increase production rates for existing weapons, start new programs, or sign multiyear procurement contracts that would provide significant savings for taxpayers.

When I questioned Deputy Secretary Carter on February 14, at a Senate Appropriations Committee hearing about what the continuing resolution means for the Navy and our domestic shipbuilding capability, he testified that:

We're in the absurd position where we're five months into the fiscal year and we have the authority to build the ships that we built last year and no authority to build the ships that we plan to build this year. That's crazy . . . and that has nothing to do with sequestration, by the way, that's the CR.

I have long argued that we need to bring the annual appropriations bills to the floor to be considered individually on their merits. I believe that CRs represent an abdication of our responsibility

and should be avoided altogether. But given where we find ourselves today, at the very least we should be able to come together to pass the full-year Department of Defense funding bill and the Military Construction/Veterans Affairs appropriations.

With regard to sequestration, we have known this day could arrive for a year and a half now. Yet, instead of working together to avert sequestration and replace it with a more rational alternative, the time has been spent jockeying for partisan advantage and engaging in a blame game. Last week, the Senate spent time voting against proceeding to debate on two partisan proposals that both sides knew beforehand were doomed.

The bill Senator UDALL and I are introducing today is a bipartisan effort to mitigate the harmful effects of sequestration. As a result of sequestration, vital priorities such as defense, education, transportation, and biomedical research, all face indiscriminate, meat-ax cuts. No distinction is made between high-performing programs and poorly performing ones.

The legislation we introduce today seeks to fix that. Instead of mindless across-the-board budget cuts, this legislation provides the heads of Federal agencies and departments with the flexibility to implement the savings targets required by the Budget Control Act until such time as a bipartisan agreement is reached to replace the sequester cuts or until Congress passes new appropriations bills for fiscal year 2013 that meet the sequester levels.

The bill requires these agency and Department heads to submit their proposals to the Appropriations committees of both the House and the Senate for approval.

This approval is an important step in the process because these Committees know the budget of each agency and can provide oversight of agency plans. This provides a strong incentive for each agency to put forth serious plans in order to avoid the across-the-board sequestration cuts that would otherwise take effect.

Let me emphasize that while our proposal is intended to mitigate the harmful and mindless across-the-board approach of sequestration, a comprehensive, bipartisan approach to put our fiscal house in order must remain a top priority.

I urge my colleagues to support both bills that we are introducing today.

AMENDMENTS SUBMITTED AND PROPOSED

SA 25. Mr. PAUL submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by him to the resolution S. Res. 64, authorizing expenditures by committees of the Senate for the period March 1, 2013, through September 30, 2013; which was ordered to lie on the table.

TEXT OF AMENDMENTS

SA 25. Mr. PAUL submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by

him to the resolution S. Res. 64, authorizing expenditures by committees of the Senate for the period March 1, 2013, through September 30, 2013; which was ordered to lie on the table; as follows:

On page 31, line 22, strike "IN GENERAL.—The Senate National" and insert the following: "RECONSTITUTION.—"

(A) IN GENERAL.—The Senate National
On page 32, between lines 2 and 3, insert the following:

(B) RULE OF CONSTRUCTION.—Nothing in this section shall be construed as extending or providing funding authority to the Working Group.

On page 35, strike line 2 and all that follows through page 36, line 3, and insert the following:

(1) DESIGNATION OF PROFESSIONAL STAFF.—
On page 36, strike line 14 and all that follows through page 37, line 2.

On page 37, line 3, strike "(C)" and insert "(B)".

On page 37, line 8, strike "(D)" and insert "(C)".

On page 37, line 10, strike "(4)" and insert "(3)".

On page 37, strike lines 13 through 22 and insert the following:

(2) LEADERSHIP STAFF.—The majority leader of the Senate and the minority leader of the Senate may each designate 2 staff members who shall be responsible to the respective leader.

On page 37, line 23, strike "(4)" and insert "(3)".

On page 39, strike line 3 and all that follows through page 40, line 2.

On page 40, line 3, strike "(d)" and insert "(c)".

NOTICES OF HEARINGS

COMMITTEE ON HEALTH, EDUCATION, LABOR, AND PENSIONS

Mr. HARKIN. Mr. President, I wish to announce that the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions will meet in open session on Thursday, March 7, 2013, at 10 a.m. in room 430 of the Dirksen Senate Office Building to conduct a hearing entitled "Safe and Supportive Schools: Lessons from the Field."

For further information regarding this meeting, please contact Leanne Hotek of the committee staff on (202) 228-6685.

COMMITTEE ON HEALTH, EDUCATION, LABOR, AND PENSIONS

Mr. HARKIN. Mr. President, I wish to announce that the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions will meet in open session on Tuesday, March 12, 2013, at 2:30 p.m. in room 430 of the Dirksen Senate Office Building to conduct a hearing entitled "Job Corps Budget Shortfall: Safeguarding Workforce Training for America's Disconnected Youth."

For further information regarding this meeting, please contact Anna Porto of the committee staff on (202) 224-5363.

ORDERS FOR TUESDAY, MARCH 5, 2013

Mr. REID. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that when the Senate

completes its business today, it adjourn until 10 a.m. tomorrow, Tuesday, March 5, 2013; that following the prayer and pledge, the morning hour be deemed expired, the Journal of proceedings be approved to date, and the time for the two leaders be reserved for their use until later in the day, and that following any leader remarks, the Senate proceed to a period of morning business until 11:45 a.m., with Senators permitted to speak therein for up to 10 minutes each, with the time equally divided and controlled between the two leaders or their designees, with the majority controlling the first 30 minutes and the Republicans controlling the second 30 minutes; further, that following morning business, the Senate

proceed to consideration of S. Res. 64; finally, that the Senate recess from 12:30 p.m. until 2:15 p.m. for the weekly caucus meetings.

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

PROGRAM

Mr. REID. Mr. President, there will be at least one rollcall vote tomorrow at 12:15 p.m. on the Paul amendment to S. Res. 64.

ADJOURNMENT UNTIL 10 A.M. TOMORROW

Mr. REID. Mr. President, if there is no further business to come before the

Senate, I ask unanimous consent that it adjourn under the previous order.

There being no objection, the Senate, at 6:32 p.m., stands adjourned until Tuesday, March 5, 2013, at 10 a.m.

CONFIRMATIONS

Executive nominations confirmed by the Senate March 4, 2013:

THE JUDICIARY

PAMELA KI MAI CHEN, OF NEW YORK, TO BE UNITED STATES DISTRICT JUDGE FOR THE EASTERN DISTRICT OF NEW YORK.

KATHERINE POLK FAILLA, OF NEW YORK, TO BE UNITED STATES DISTRICT JUDGE FOR THE SOUTHERN DISTRICT OF NEW YORK.