

Marines all over the world are now focusing on the loss of their fellow marines. They are grieving their loss. Details are emerging, but at this time we don't know everything. The area has been blocked off. As I indicated, it was quite a big explosion. We will follow this news very closely. I will do whatever I can going forward to support the U.S. military and the families of the fallen marines.

It is very important we continue to train our military—it is so important—but one of the things that has happened due to the sequester is we have cut back on our training and maintenance. That is the way the sequester was written. The bill that is on the floor—we hope to pass today—helps that a little bit. At least for the next 6 months it will allow the military some degree of ability to move things around a little bit. We call it flexibility, which is good. But we have to be very vigilant. This sequester should go away.

We have already cut huge amounts of money in deficit reduction, which is not appropriate. Our military cannot train and do the maintenance that is necessary. These men and women are marines who are training in Hawthorne, and with the sequester, it is going to cut stuff back. I hope everyone understands the sacrifices made by our military. They make significant sacrifices by being away from home, their families, and their country. The sequester needs to go away.

THE BUDGET

Mr. REID. Mr. President, for 4 years, the first priority for the country and Congress has been to improve the Nation's economy and strengthen the middle class. Our efforts have paid off. It has pulled us out of the great recession; however, unemployment is still too high. Over the last 36 months, businesses created 6.4 million new jobs—good new jobs—but the economy is not back to full strength.

During the Bush years we lost a lot including our Treasury. When he took office, we had a surplus over 10 years of \$7 trillion. The 10th anniversary of the war in Iraq is today. That war cost us more than \$1 trillion, and we are paying for the loss of life and all the injured in many different ways. We cannot take chances with our recovery. We are pulling out of the mess economically that the President created by all the taxes and a war that was not paid for. We must renew our investments that have always made America strong, such as innovation and job training, education, preventive health care, new roads, bridges, dams, water systems, sewer systems.

To meet our country's long-term economic goals—including the deficit—we must enact policies that support a strong and growing middle class, and that is why this week the Senate will pass, as I indicated earlier, a budget, crafted by one of the most wise Senators ever to serve in this body, PATTY

MURRAY of Washington. "Wise" is the word I chose perfectly for her because it does fit. The work she and her committee have done fully replaces the harmful sequester cuts I have just talked about with balanced and responsible deficit reduction.

The policy outlined in her budget—our budget—will save hundreds of thousands of jobs and safeguard communities by keeping police, air traffic controllers, meat inspectors, and firefighters on the job, but first we must avoid self-inflicted wounds so we can build on the success over the last 3 years. The Senate budget will continue the progress by creating new jobs, repairing crumbling roads, bridges, and train workers for high-skilled jobs. These investments are paid for by eliminating the loopholes that benefit the wealthy of America and the most profitable corporations.

I had the fortune to serve in the Senate with a man by the name of Bill Bradley, who is one of America's great alltime basketball players. I, of course, always wanted to be the athlete he was. I admired him so much and enjoyed my friendship with him. He came out today—this Rhodes Scholar and brilliant man—and said we need to eliminate \$1 trillion in taxes that are unfair and unnecessary. He said that. In addition to that, our budget also makes nearly \$1 trillion in responsible spending cuts across the Federal budget. Meaningful deficit reduction requires shared sacrifice which includes contribution from the wealthiest among us.

If someone owns a profitable corporation that ships jobs to China or India, Democrats in Congress cannot stop them. Go ahead and ship them. But we can keep them from getting the tax break for outsourcing, and that is what we want to do. If they are successful enough to own a second home or yacht, more power to them. That is wonderful. That is an American success story. But Democrats in Congress do not feel we should subsidize these tax breaks for their vacation home or their boat. Ending these wasteful giveaways makes sense to most people. An overwhelming majority of Americans—including a majority of Republicans—support this balanced approach.

In the last 2 years, we have reduced the deficit by \$2.5 trillion. The Senate budget continues this effort without jeopardizing our economic recovery or breaking our promises to seniors and veterans. This budget keeps Medicare strong for today's seniors and preserves it for our children and grandchildren.

PATTY MURRAY is qualified to be budget chair for a number of reasons, not the least of which she was the chair of the supercommittee. She had 12 Members of Congress—6 Republicans and 6 Democrats—arrive at a grand bargain. She was pulled back because a week or so before they were ready to make their decision—which would have been spending cuts and revenue—we got a letter from virtually every Re-

publican saying: No thanks. No revenue. So that failed.

She is qualified in many different ways to lead this committee. Her budget reflects Democratic values, and it honors the belief that success doesn't trickle down from the top; it grows out in the middle class. The Ryan Republican budget introduced earlier this week reflects an entirely different set of priorities—skewed priorities Americans have rejected time and time again. This is the third go-round. President Obama was reelected basically for a number of reasons but not the least of which is the Ryan Republican budget. They are at it again.

The Ryan budget would hand out more budget-busting tax breaks for the wealthy to pay for these wasteful tax breaks. It would end the Medicare guarantee. It would rob 50 million Americans of affordable health insurance. It would raise taxes on middle-class families. To appease the tea party, the Ryan Republican budget would risk lives and risk the recovery, and that is just too high a price to pay.

I was stunned this morning. A Republican Congressman writes an op-ed piece—I don't know if it was in the Times or the Post—saying that the Ryan Republican budget isn't good enough for the tea party and that it should be even more stringent. That is what we are faced with.

The work done by Chairman MURRAY reflects the priorities of the American people, not the wackos referred to also in the op-ed page of the Washington Post today by a person who has won a Nobel Prize for economics.

RESERVATION OF LEADER TIME

Mr. REID. Would the Chair announce the business of the day.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the leadership time is reserved.

DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE, MILITARY CONSTRUCTION AND VETERANS AFFAIRS, AND FULL-YEAR CONTINUING APPROPRIATIONS ACT, 2013

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the Senate will resume consideration of H.R. 933, which the clerk will report.

The legislative clerk read as follows:

A bill (H.R. 933) to make appropriations for the Department of Defense, the Department of Veterans Affairs, and other departments and agencies, for the fiscal year ending September 30, 2013, and for other purposes.

Pending:

Reid (for Mikulski/Shelby) modified amendment No. 26, in the nature of a substitute.

Toomey amendment No. 115 (to amendment No. 26), to increase by \$60 million the amount appropriated for operation and maintenance for the Department of Defense for programs, projects, and activities in the continental United States, and to provide an offset.

Durbin amendment No. 123 (to amendment No. 115), to change the enactment date.

RECOGNITION OF THE MINORITY LEADER

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The minority leader is recognized.

THE BUDGET

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, last week I noted that the Senate Democratic budget was one of the most extreme, most unbalanced pieces of legislation we have ever seen, one that would never balance, ever, and one that would have a devastating outcome on the middle class.

I said that its centerpiece is a \$1.5 trillion tax hike that would be the largest in American history. Some on the other side have argued with this \$1.5 trillion figure. They say their budget only contains a \$1 trillion tax hike, which is a stunning and telling admission in itself. Just months after Democrats got hundreds of billions in new taxes, they now freely admit their intention to hit Americans with another \$1 trillion in tax hikes. But in reality, it would be more than that since their budget envisions \$1.5 trillion in new revenue. While the Democrats' math may be fuzzy, their intentions are unmistakable. Their massive tax hike would cost average middle-class families thousands in lost income and lost opportunity. And despite that massive hit to working families, the Democrats' budget would still not ever—ever—balance.

But that is just one of the reasons this budget is so destructive to the middle class. Take spending for example. Americans know that a good way to create jobs and increase economic growth is to balance the budget and put our massive national debt on a path to elimination. Yet the Senate Democratic budget would actually increase spending by more than \$½ trillion—increase spending by \$½ trillion.

Put another way, Democrats want to take another \$½ trillion out of the economy, on top of all of the money they would take out with their tax increase, and put it in the hands of Washington bureaucrats and politicians to spend or waste as they see fit. And their budget would balloon the debt by 42 percent, increasing every Americans' share to a whopping \$73,000. They want to grow the government at the expense of the economy, and that is not the way to create jobs or get the private sector moving. In fact, by some estimates, this budget could result in more than 600,000 lost jobs if enacted.

Of course, the Senate Democratic budget won't prevent Medicare and Social Security from going bankrupt. It is not going to prevent Medicare and Social Security from going bankrupt.

So here is what we would get with the Democratic budget: No. 1, a massive tax hike and thousands less for middle-class families—a massive tax hike; No. 2, \$½ trillion more in big-government spending; No. 3, 42 percent more debt, with each American owing \$73,000; No. 4, more than 600,000 lost jobs.

Here is what we won't get: We won't get balance, just more and more unbalanced tax hikes. We won't get the kind of deficit reduction our country needs, just more spending to enrich the Washington establishment at the expense of Main Street. We won't get more jobs or a better economy or sensible reforms to prevent Medicare or Social Security from going bankrupt. And we certainly won't get a balanced budget.

Not only does the Senate Democratic budget never balance—ever—but top Washington Democrats now say they simply don't care about balancing the budget anymore. They just don't care about that. Well, Americans do care. A party that once cared about hard-working American families seems to have gone off the leftmost edge of the reservation with this budget. DC Democrats' priorities are just so far removed from the actual needs of middle-class Kentuckians and Americans who continue to struggle in the Obama economy.

I appreciate that the Senate majority has finally decided to put its ideas on paper. It took 4 years—4 years—to get a budget from them, and we now know why it took so long: because their ideas are so unbalanced and so extreme, so destructive to the economy Americans want us to fix.

We can help foster the conditions necessary to make the economy healthier and create more jobs but only if Washington Democrats finally reach across the aisle to address America's real concerns in a truly balanced way. I hope that will ultimately happen because it is time to start making divided government work for the American people who elected it, and it is time to grow the economy, not the government.

PRESIDENTIAL VISIT

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, this week President Obama will travel to two of our closest allies—Israel and Jordan. His visit will come at a moment of great importance for each of our governments.

I join in conveying a message of congratulations to Prime Minister Netanyahu in having formed a new government, in restating our determination to use all available means to prevent Iran from acquiring a nuclear weapon, and in pledging to work with Israel to meet the regional challenge caused by civil strife within Syria. The fighting in Syria has produced refugee flows of at least 1 million people into Iraq, Turkey, Jordan, and Lebanon. Also of concern to Jordan, Israel, and other allies in the region is the flow of foreign fighters into Syria, especially the al-Nusra Front.

During his visit, I hope the President makes progress in working with our allies to address these threats that have developed while Bashar al-Asad remains in power and to begin the important planning to address the challenges that will come with his fall, such as how best to secure chemical weapons stockpiles.

None of these threats or challenges can be addressed with simple, easy answers, but I fully support America working with Prime Minister Netanyahu and King Abdallah to craft original strategy that serves all of our national interests.

Mr. President, I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from New Hampshire.

Ms. AYOTTE. Mr. President, I rise today to discuss something of deep importance to me and, I believe, to our country.

Last night the majority leader of the Senate came to the floor to speak on the continuing resolution, which is essentially the only bill we will consider this year to fund the government. It is over \$1 trillion in taxpayer money. He came to the floor and propounded a unanimous consent request that only contained a handful of amendments that could be brought to the continuing resolution. Many germane and, in my view, reasonable amendments that had been advanced and brought to the attention of both sides well in advance were denied an opportunity for a vote on the floor. Because of that, I objected to the consideration of the continuing resolution and the unanimous consent request.

Frankly, I think that when we are spending over \$1 trillion in the only funding bill we are going to vote on, essentially, this year—appropriations bill—we should be allowed to have votes on amendments, particularly germane amendments, as many of my colleagues have had, and my own amendment, which is one that would strike funding for, essentially, a missile to nowhere, which will never produce a missile program or a product our military will ever be able to use.

My amendment is very straightforward. The amendment would strike funding for the Medium Extended Air Defense System Program, called the MEADS Program, by \$381 million—These funds were appropriated for this program—and would actually transfer the funds to the operations and maintenance portion of the defense budget so the money could be used for our men and women in uniform for things they actually need as opposed to \$380 million for a missile to nowhere for which we will never get a result.

When we are almost \$17 trillion in debt, it is truly shocking that we would continue to spend money on a program the Army says it does not want. In fact, in the Defense authorization last year, the Armed Services Committee actually prohibited funding for the MEADS Program. This is something that was passed unanimously on a bipartisan basis last year in the Defense authorization bill that prohibited any further funding for this missile to nowhere. Yet it got included in the appropriations, in this continuing resolution, despite the fact that we are not going to get anything our warfighters can use from \$380 million of spending.

In fact, when Secretary Hagel was asked about whether the Pentagon