

possibility of compromise with Democrats for fear there will be a tea party revolt, but that is not a good reason to run away from budget negotiations. In fact, it is ridiculous. So today I am going to ask unanimous consent to name conferees so we can have a budget conference to try to work things out.

I hope, even though I doubt, my Republican colleagues in the Senate will not object for the sole purpose of giving cover to the House Republican colleagues who are certainly directed and guided by the tea party folks over there. If the Republicans are serious about reducing the deficit, we need to get to work, get to work sooner rather than later.

What is regular order? It means we do things the way they are supposed to be done—by the book, so to speak. So I am going to ask that consent soon.

SEQUESTRATION

Mr. REID. Let's talk about sequestration just for a brief time. I talked about it yesterday in the afternoon when the Senate convened. On Sunday, the Federal Aviation Administration implemented sequester furloughs. It will affect tens of thousands of employees. By Monday, yesterday, travelers were already experiencing delays at airports from coast to coast.

According to the Wall Street Journal, flights to New York airports were delayed more than an hour already because of those furloughs. Delays are also reported in Los Angeles and even Baltimore. The FAA assured us things will get much worse before the end of the busy summer travel season, as these arbitrary sequester cuts continue to affect airport staffing levels.

What this means is that every 2 weeks all FAA employees will have to take a day off. At peak travel times, almost 7,000 flights will be delayed every day, some of them by up to 3 hours. On the worst day we had last year because of weather-related issues, less than 3,000 flights were delayed. Now, every day, more than twice that number will be delayed.

These delays will be bad for business, they will be frustrating for families, and they will be devastating for the economy. But flight delays are not the only unintended consequence of these across-the-board cuts. It is not just FAA employees. It will affect 750,000 jobs across the country. It will shred the safety net that keeps millions of seniors, children, veterans, and needy families from falling through the cracks.

It will gut investment in education, medical research that helps America compete in the 21st century. More than 2,700 schools with large numbers of disadvantaged children will see their Federal funding slashed. Seventy thousand little boys and girls will not be able to do the Head Start programs. These cuts will put 10,000 classroom jobs at risk. They will eliminate extra help at

closing the achievement gap for 1.2 million underprivileged students.

More than 7,200 teachers and classroom aids who work with children with disabilities will lose their jobs because of the sequester. Some 33,000 college students will lose their work study jobs. I was a janitor for part of the time I went to school. It helped me pay my tuition. Things have changed over the years, but these jobs are still important, very important. They call them work study jobs.

We are putting the dream of higher education further out of reach for our poorest students if we keep this sequestration going. Families and businesses in every State will feel the pain of the sequester whether they fly or do not fly. But Congress could act now to reverse these cuts without adding a single dollar to the deficit. We can use the savings from wrapping up military operations in Iraq and Afghanistan to avoid the full brunt of these arbitrary cuts.

Right now, there is about \$650 billion in that fund. We could erase the sequester for the rest of the year, which is a fraction of the savings from winding down these two wars. Using those savings, Congress could avert the most painful and senseless sequester cuts, cuts to the FAA and programs that get homeless veterans off the streets, fund research to cure lethal diseases, and provide meals to needy seniors.

I only hope public outcry over long delays at airports will serve as a wake-up call to my Republican colleagues. We cannot put off action any longer.

UNANIMOUS CONSENT REQUEST— H. CON. RES. 25

Mr. REID. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate proceed to the consideration of Calendar No. 33, H. Con. Res. 25; that is, the budget resolution; that all after the enacting clause be stricken and that the amendment which is at the desk, the text of S. Con. Res. 8, the budget resolution passed by the Senate, be inserted in lieu thereof; that H. Con. Res. 25, as amended, be agreed to, the motion to reconsider be consider made and laid on the table; that the Senate insist on its amendment, request a conference with the House on the disagreeing votes of the two Houses, and the Chair be authorized to appoint conferees on the part of the Senate, with the appointment of the budget conferees being on the ratio of 7 Democrats to 5 Republicans, and there be no intervening action or debate.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Is there objection?

The Senator from Pennsylvania.

Mr. TOOMEY. Mr. President, the ranking member of the Budget Committee, Senator SESSIONS, is not available because he has a conflict at the moment. On his behalf, I object.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Objection is heard.

RESERVATION OF LEADER TIME

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Under the previous order, the leadership time is reserved.

MORNING BUSINESS

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Under the previous order, the Senate will be in a period of morning business for 1 hour, 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 half and the Republicans the second half.

ORDER OF PROCEDURE

Mr. REID. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that Senator TOOMEY be recognized for up to 4 minutes, that following his remarks the Senator from North Dakota, Ms. HEITKAMP, be recognized.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Without objection, it is so ordered.

SEQUESTRATION

Mr. TOOMEY. Mr. President, I thank the majority leader.

I feel the need to respond to the comments from the leader about the sequester that has gone into effect. I wish to be very clear. The flight delays that are occurring, the furloughs among air traffic controllers, and the shutting down of air traffic towers are entirely, utterly unnecessary. This is a willful choice being made by this administration in order to inflict as disruptive a process as possible on the American public and on our economy, all to further a political agenda. The political agenda is to attempt to convince the American people there are no circumstances under which we can ever cut spending at all.

If you question why I say this is a willful decision on the part of this administration, I would refer you to legislation Senator INHOFE and I offered prior to the beginning of the sequestration. This legislation, as you may recall, would have granted to the administration complete flexibility in how they achieved the savings of the sequester.

What we hear from the administration, administration officials, and White House spokespeople is that this is terribly unfortunate, but they have no choice and no alternative; the law requires that they make these cuts. However, when Senator INHOFE and I introduced legislation to explicitly grant them all the flexibility they could ask for, complete flexibility to find the most wasteful, most redundant, most unnecessary programs, and to cut there instead of cutting essential services, what did the administration say? They said: If you send us the legislation, we will veto it. They put

out a Statement of Administration Policy insisting that this was a terrible idea, to give them the flexibility to avoid exactly what they are doing.

I don't know how one can come to any conclusion other than that this administration wishes to impose this inconvenience, this disruption, and this cost on the American people and our economy. They have it within their ability to accept the device we were offering, which would have allowed them to avoid this entirely.

I am extremely disappointed the administration would choose to inflict this kind of harm to our economy, this kind of inconvenience to our travelers, all for the purpose of furthering a political agenda. This is no way to run this government.

What I would suggest we do is we revisit the legislation Senator INHOFE and I offered which would have avoided all of this, allowed us to cut some of the waste, excess, duplication, and avoid all of this inconvenience. This is entirely unnecessary, and it is unacceptable.

One of the proper functions of any executive, including the President of the United States, is to look throughout the spending over which he or she has control to find the lowest priority, to find the least necessary and least disruptive way to achieve the savings we need. We are running unacceptably large deficits. We have a huge debt that is already costing this economy the kind of growth we ought to have.

The very modest savings of the sequester could be achieved in a way that wouldn't be disruptive at all. The size of the Federal budget has more than doubled in the last 12 years. To suggest that it is not possible to find 2.5 percent savings is simply ridiculous. It is not true.

I urge my colleagues, let's fix this. We know how to do it. We have the tools available. Senator INHOFE and I offered. There are other ways, and I would be open to any number of them. We need to achieve the savings of the sequester, and we need to do it in a way that is not disruptive and that can be done.

I yield the floor.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The majority leader.

Mr. REID. Las Vegas is the destination resort of the world. I may get a little static from New York about that, but it is a place a lot of people wish to visit. We understand the importance of doing something about the lines at airports as the result of sequestration. But as I indicated in my remarks, I am also concerned about the little boys and girls who are knocked off Head Start—70,000 of them. I am also concerned about medical research. As I stated yesterday, Duke University is laying off 50 people. Duke does some of the most important medical research there is, dealing with dread disease. I am concerned about homeless veterans. The program will eliminate homeless veterans having a home. This is what sequestration does to them.

The reason sequester is taking effect is because Congress enacted it into law the Budget Control Act of 2011. The vast majority of Republicans voted for this. The Senate considered an alternative that would have altered sequester, and it would have done it with a balanced package. Republicans blocked it earlier this year.

We need to lessen the impact of sequestration. It is not as if we are blind to doing something about deficit reduction. We have already reduced the debt by about \$2.6 trillion.

My friend from Pennsylvania has a reputation for being very concerned about dealing with money, and I admire him for his tenaciousness in that regard.

What I have suggested here certainly seems reasonable. For 5 months, we do a timeout on the sequestration. During the 5 months, sequestration would be paid for with part of the \$650 billion that was in a pot that is a result of the money building up due to reducing the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan. During these 5 months, let's find a better way to go forward with our efforts to reduce the debt. I think this is reasonable, it would be fair, and it would give us time to do something.

Certainly with the debt ceiling coming up and other major issues we need to deal with, I think we should lessen not only the impact of the problems we have at airports around America, but also we should focus on little boys and girls and elderly men and women who are losing Meals On Wheels, their only hot meal of the day.

I think we should do that—look at this sequestration and take a timeout.

I recognize my friend from North Dakota, who is going to give her maiden speech. We are looking forward to hearing what she has to say.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The Senator from North Dakota.

FACING CHALLENGES TOGETHER

Ms. HEITKAMP. First, I wish to thank all of my colleagues who came here today to see me offer my first speech on the floor of the Senate. It is a great group, a bipartisan group, and I believe our new class is exactly that—a group of great people who are very bipartisan and very willing to work to solve America's problems. I am proud to be part of this freshman class in the Senate.

People here all think they know each other, and this is absolutely true, but sometimes it is a good reminder to tell people about from where you come. I wish to spend a little time talking about my home State because I think it speaks a great deal about how I believe, how I vote, and who I am.

I grew up in a small town in North Dakota. Many may think that means 90,000 people. No, it is 90 people. My family was one-tenth the population of that small town. When I was born, my mother had four kids, and the oldest was 2 and there were no twins. By the

time my parents were done having children, there were seven children in 9 years. My dad was a seasonal construction worker, and my mom was a school cook and a janitor. Think about those occupations.

My mom never let anyone be bullied. The worst thing a person could do, in my mother's eyes, was to pick on someone who couldn't defend themselves. We knew that was what our role would be throughout our entire lives. This is a value my six siblings and I carry with us.

From my dad we learned about community and building community. My dad built the smallest VFW chapter in the country. He returned from World War II and knew they needed a place to gather, to provide support for veterans and for each other, and that needed to be in his community. He built the ballpark, he built the fire hall, was chief of the volunteer fire department for years, head of the VFW, and was someone who believed in the community. He believed that when Mrs. Poster needed her sidewalk shoveled so she could go to church, it was our job. It wasn't someone else's job. We didn't look around to see who would come; we picked up the shovel and we went down there.

What do you learn from the place where you grew up? In Mantador, ND, as in communities all across this country, people gather at coffee tables usually at 7 o'clock, maybe 10:30 in the morning or maybe a little bit in the afternoon, and they talk about the problems of America. They talk about the problems of their community. There are many ideologies at that table—Democrats and Republicans; as we say in Mantador, there are Lutherans and Catholics; there are Green Bay fans and Vikings fans, which may be the most divisive issue. They gather together and solve all the problems of America, if we would only listen here in Washington, DC. More importantly, even though they have horrible fights, they get together and solve problems in their community. They figure out how to put up the Christmas lights on Main Street. They figure out how to fix the roof on the church, how to pass a school bond so they can expand classrooms.

All across America, people work together. That is the spirit, and that is what I learned growing up in a small town in North Dakota—that we can accomplish things if we keep our eyes on the goals, if we understand and appreciate that we all come from different places and need to work together. Sometimes we are not going to agree, but we need to move forward. We need to work together to move this country forward.

I wish to take a moment, and hopefully I won't get too emotional, but I want to think about this. We live in a country, an amazing country where the daughter of a school cook and janitor and a seasonal construction worker can