

as Acting Administrator and Principal Deputy Administrator of CMS have prepared her well for the challenges and opportunities she will confront in this position.

I thank her for her willingness to serve at this important time, and I look forward to working with her in the months and years ahead.●

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the question is: Will the Senate advise and consent to the nomination of William H. Orrick, III, of the District of Columbia, to be United States District Judge for the Northern District of California?

Mrs. BOXER. I ask for the yeas and nays.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there a sufficient second?

There appears to be a sufficient second.

The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk called the roll.

Mr. DURBIN. I announce that the Senator from Pennsylvania (Mr. CASEY) and the Senator from New Jersey (Mr. LAUTENBERG) are necessarily absent.

Mr. CORNYN. The following Senator is necessarily absent: the Senator from Tennessee (Mr. CORKER).

Further, if present and voting the Senator from Tennessee (Mr. CORKER) would have voted "no."

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. BLUMENTHAL). Are there any other Senators in the Chamber desiring to vote?

The result was announced—yeas 56, nays 41, as follows:

[Rollcall Vote No. 125 Ex.]

YEAS—56

Baldwin	Hagan	Murray
Baucus	Harkin	Nelson
Begich	Heinrich	Pryor
Bennet	Heitkamp	Reed
Blumenthal	Hirono	Reid
Boxer	Johnson (SD)	Rockefeller
Brown	Kaine	Sanders
Cantwell	King	Schatz
Cardin	Klobuchar	Schumer
Carper	Landrieu	Shaheen
Collins	Leahy	Stabenow
Coons	Levin	Tester
Cowan	Manchin	Udall (CO)
Donnelly	McCaskill	Udall (NM)
Durbin	Menendez	Warner
Feinstein	Merkley	Warren
Flake	Mikulski	Whitehouse
Franken	Murkowski	Wyden
Gillibrand	Murphy	

NAYS—41

Alexander	Fischer	Moran
Ayotte	Graham	Paul
Barrasso	Grassley	Portman
Blunt	Hatch	Risch
Boozman	Heller	Roberts
Burr	Hoeven	Rubio
Chambliss	Inhofe	Scott
Coats	Isakson	Sessions
Coburn	Johanns	Shelby
Cochran	Johnson (WI)	Thune
Cornyn	Kirk	Toomey
Crapo	Lee	Vitter
Cruz	McCain	Wicker
Enzi	McConnell	

NOT VOTING—3

Casey	Corker	Lautenberg
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The nomination was confirmed.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, there will now be 2 minutes of debate prior to a vote on the Tavenner nomination.

The question is, Will the Senate advise and consent to the nomination of Marilyn B. Tavenner, of Virginia, to be Administrator of the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services?

Mr. REID. I ask for the yeas and nays.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there a sufficient second?

There appears to be a sufficient second.

There is a sufficient second.

The clerk will call the roll.

The assistant legislative clerk called the roll.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Are there any other Senators in the Chamber desiring to vote?

Mr. DURBIN. I announce that the Senator from Pennsylvania (Mr. CASEY) and the Senator from New Jersey (Mr. LAUTENBERG) are necessarily absent.

The result was announced—yeas 91, nays 7, as follows:

[Rollcall Vote No. 126 Ex.]

YEAS—91

Alexander	Franken	Murphy
Ayotte	Gillibrand	Murray
Baldwin	Graham	Nelson
Barrasso	Grassley	Portman
Baucus	Hagan	Pryor
Begich	Harkin	Reed
Bennet	Hatch	Reid
Blumenthal	Heinrich	Roberts
Blunt	Heitkamp	Rockefeller
Boozman	Heller	Rubio
Boxer	Hirono	Sanders
Brown	Hoeven	Schatz
Burr	Inhofe	Schumer
Cantwell	Isakson	Scott
Cardin	Johanns	Sessions
Carper	Johnson (SD)	Shaheen
Chambliss	Kaine	Shelby
Coats	King	Stabenow
Coburn	Kirk	Tester
Cochran	Klobuchar	Thune
Collins	Landrieu	Toomey
Coons	Leahy	Udall (CO)
Corker	Levin	Udall (NM)
Cornyn	Manchin	Vitter
Cowan	McCain	Warner
Donnelly	McCaskill	Warren
Durbin	Menendez	Whitehouse
Enzi	Merkley	Wicker
Feinstein	Mikulski	Wyden
Fischer	Moran	
Flake	Murkowski	

NAYS—7

Crapo	Lee	Risch
Cruz	McConnell	
Johnson (WI)	Paul	

NOT VOTING—2

Casey	Lautenberg
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The nomination was confirmed.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the motions to reconsider are considered made and laid upon the table, and the President will be immediately notified of the Senate's action.

LEGISLATIVE SESSION

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senate will resume legislative session.

AGRICULTURE REFORM, FOOD, AND JOBS ACT OF 2013—MOTION TO PROCEED

Mr. REID. Mr. President, I now move to proceed to Calendar No. 73, S. 954.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report the motion.

The assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

Motion to proceed to Calendar No. 73, S. 954, a bill to reauthorize agricultural programs through 2018.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Mississippi.

DISTURBING BEHAVIOR

Mr. WICKER. Mr. President, I rise this evening to discuss a disturbing pattern of behavior, a culture of intimidation that continues to emerge from the Obama administration.

For the past few days, headline after headline has revealed one new controversy after another. In every case Americans are right to wonder what kind of leadership led to this and just how far this culture of intimidation goes.

Americans need to learn the extent to which this misconduct has occurred by the heavy hand of the executive branch of government.

The first indication was on Friday of last week, and it involved the Internal Revenue Service issuing an apology for targeting conservative groups seeking nonprofit status and treating conservative groups more harshly than other groups.

These groups were excessively scrutinized if they used the words "patriot" or "tea party." As we would later learn from the inspector general report, not only were these groups targeted, but senior officials knew about it for at least a year and made no report to the Congress. It has also been confirmed that confidential information about some of these groups was leaked to the liberal nonprofit group ProPublica.

The whole situation disgraces the basic constitutional freedoms to which every American is entitled. It is appalling that Americans have been deliberately targeted for IRS scrutiny based on their political beliefs or affiliations. No American should fear arbitrary government harassment simply because of the expression of his or her views.

The administration needs to be held accountable for its failure to protect Americans. An apology is not sufficient in this instance. An internal inspector general investigation talking about mismanagement errors will not suffice in this instance. The acknowledgement that mistakes were made and that changes, indeed, need to be made will not, in and of itself, rebuild the public trust that has been broken.

Particularly troubling is that the IRS is not the only agency in which these types of abuses have occurred. Americans are also right to be outraged by the news that Health and Human Services Secretary Kathleen Sebelius has been fundraising among the industry people she regulates on behalf of the President's health care law.

As reported in the Washington Post on May 10, Secretary Sebelius "has gone, hat in hand, to health industry officials, asking them to make large financial donations."

Presumably these donations are being collected in order to pay for an advertising campaign in the media, including television. Further investigation is necessary to determine the extent to which these solicitations constitute a conflict of interest. It is curious that the Secretary of Health and Human Services is seeking support from the health industry now when these affected parties were largely ignored or in many cases intimidated during the debate on the President's health care law.

Meanwhile, questions remain about the administration's handling of the September 11, 2012, terrorist attack on the U.S. consulate in Benghazi that left four Americans dead, including Ambassador Chris Stevens. During his recent news conference, the President tried to deflect serious concerns about altered talking points by calling it a political "sideshow." I do not think the American people are going to be convinced that it is a sideshow. The real sideshow is the President's attempt to distract from an unraveling narrative that began with the administration wrongly casting blame on an inflammatory YouTube video. Subsequent testimony from State Department whistleblowers, who came forward despite administration pressure, has only expanded the controversy surrounding the administration's apparent misrepresentation of the terrorist attack to the American people.

Let's not forget that it was President Obama who promised, after he took office, that his administration would be "the most open and transparent in history." It is increasingly clear that the President's rhetoric does not match this reality.

Whether these scandals continue to make mainstream news, our questions and inquiries will not stop until we get answers. The administration's conflicting storylines and blame games are inexcusable in the wake of serious allegations. In America, those in power are not above the law, and those responsible must be held accountable. A Member of this body on the other side of the aisle asked publicly on the radio this morning: What does it take to get fired in this town? A good question coming from the other side of the aisle.

What we are continuing to see is a culture of intimidation, a pattern of big-government heavyhandedness and overreach by the administration. What is lacking is credibility and integrity from those elected to serve.

Each scandal is distinct in its grievances but not isolated in its impact. A New Yorker article published yesterday by Amy Davidson noted "the Obama Administration's strange belief that if it can just find the right words, that reality will comply and bend to meet it—that its challenges are so extraordinary that the use of any exceptions built into normal processes should be regarded as unexceptional."

Americans deserve direct, straightforward answers, and they deserve the

facts. They deserve to know why the IRS deliberately targeted conservative groups and gave liberal groups a pass, why Secretary Sebelius solicited the health care industry to help implement ObamaCare, and why the administration downplayed the atrocities in Benghazi and pressured fact witnesses to stay silent. It time for the President and his inner circle to provide a full explanation.

Mr. President, I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Delaware.

Mr. CARPER. Mr. President, good evening.

THE BUDGET

While I was waiting for a chance to say a few words on the floor, I was on the phone and had a conversation with someone who has run a couple of very successful companies in our country. I do not know if he is a Democrat or a Republican, but it was an interesting conversation. We talked about how the economy is coming along, and we talked about how the companies he is especially interested in are doing. We sort of looked ahead.

One of the things I asked is, what do you think we could be doing here, where we are working in our Nation's Capital in the U.S. Senate?

He pretty much said there are three things we need to do. He said: You need to answer maybe three questions for us. One, can you govern in a divided Washington, a divided Congress? He said: No. 2, can you be—can we be as a nation—fiscally responsible? And the third thing he said was, can you provide some certainty with respect to the Tax Code to actually know what taxes are going to look like, not just this week or this month or just this year, but how about having some certainty going forward?

I think there is a lot of wisdom in what he said. As some other folks have been talking about here on the floor today, when we were not passing the Water Resources Development Act, a good bipartisan bill, I think a responsible bill, an encouraging step, if you will, but in between we have had other people speak and talking about one side or the other moving forward on a budget. Someone talked about other issues that are in the news these days.

I want to follow up on some of the earlier conversations today with respect to demonstrating that we can govern, that we can be fiscally responsible and we can provide some certainty with respect to the Tax Code. Folks who might be listening in to what is going on in the Senate this afternoon may or may not know the way the budget process works. Obviously this is budget 101.

In my old role as State treasurer and Governor of Delaware—in Delaware we have two budgets. Not one but two budgets. We have an operating budget and we have a capital budget, a brick-and-mortar budget. The brick-and-mortar budget is for schools, K-12, sort of postsecondary education; infrastruc-

ture: roads, highways, bridges, prisons, that kind of thing. But we have an operating budget as well. Here we only have one. For, gosh, I want to say about 30–40 years, actually, the way we are supposed to run our finances as a country basically called for the President to submit a budget, usually in February, one budget not two but one budget. The Congress is expected to come in and sort of pivot off of that budget and create what we call a budget resolution. The Senate passes a budget resolution, the House does. The idea is to be able to do that sometime in April, and hopefully by the end of April agree between the House and Senate on that budget resolution.

People think a budget resolution is a budget. But it is not. It is a resolution, a framework for a budget. It is not actually signed by the President. It is something we work out. It provides a foundation on which to pass a number of maybe a dozen or so appropriations bills that cover everything from agriculture to transportation.

The budget resolution provides a framework for any revenue measures we might need to pass as well in order to get us closer to a balanced budget or to meet some kind of responsibilities for running our country. But the idea is for the Senate to pass a budget resolution, the House to pass a budget resolution, and we create a conference committee and work out our differences.

For the last 4 years, our friends in the Republican Party delighted in accusing the Democrats of never passing a budget. What they meant was we never passed a budget resolution, that framework. I think of the budget resolution as a skeleton. The skeleton is the bones, if you will. But we put the meat on the bones when we pass the dozen or so appropriations bills, and whatever revenue measures are needed. That is the meat on the bones. Then eventually we have a full budget.

Right now, as our colleagues know, we passed in the Senate a budget resolution several weeks ago. It called for deficit reduction. It did not balance the budget over the next 10 years, but it further reduced the budget deficit and put us on a path to stabilize our debt, and to get us on a trajectory where debt as a percentage of gross domestic product is starting to come down—not as much as I would like, probably not as much as the Presiding Officer would like, but to get us headed in the right direction. It was a 50/50 deal, 50 percent deficit reduction on the spending side, 50 percent on the revenue side.

Actually, ironically, the last time we had a budget—1998, 1999, 2000, 2001 in the Clinton administration—Erskine Bowles, then the President's Chief of Staff and a woman named Sylvia Matthews, now Sylvia Matthews Burwell who is our new OMB Director, worked along with the Republican House, Republican Senate to come up with a deficit reduction plan in 1997 that led to four balanced budgets in a row.

Their deal, worked out with Republicans, was a 50/50 deal. Fifty percent of the deficit reduction was on the spending side, 50 percent was on the revenue side. Anyway, this year the Senate passed a budget resolution, passed with all Democratic votes, no Republicans. It is a 50/50 deal, half of the deficit reduction on spending, half on the revenue side.

Over in the House, they have a different approach. The Republicans in the House argue, with some justification, that they get more deficit reduction accomplished. You might quibble with some of their assumptions. They assume the repeal of ObamaCare. They also assume that even though they are going to repeal it, the \$1 trillion in deficit reduction that CBO, the Congressional Budget Office, says flows from ObamaCare over the next 10 years in the Affordable Care Act—even though they assume repealing ObamaCare, they still assume the \$1 trillion in deficit reduction. I do not know if that is entirely consistent, but that is part of their assumption. So they end up with deficit reduction that is dependent solely on the spending side. No revenues, it is all on the spending side.

So they passed their budget resolution. We passed ours. They passed theirs with almost all Republican votes, we passed ours with all Democratic votes. When that happens, the idea is to say, here is the Senate budget resolution, here is the House budget resolution. Why don't we create a conference committee—I used to think of it as a compromise committee—where some of the Senators, Democrat and Republican, gather together and work out the differences between the two budget resolutions. That is what people see us here to do.

The Presiding Officer knows I like to sometimes ask people who have been married a long time, what is the secret for being married a long time? I usually ask this to people who have been married 50, 60, or 70 years. I get some real funny answers. I got a great answer about a week ago. A couple has been married 55 years. I asked the wife and husband. I said to the wife: What is the secret to being married 55 years?

She looked at her husband, and she said, he will tell you that he can either be right or he can be happy, but he cannot be both. I thought that was pretty funny. He said something to the effect of, when you know you are wrong, admit it. When you know you are right, let it go. That is pretty good advice.

I think the best answer I ever heard to that question of what is the secret to being married a long time—I have heard this from a number of people. The answer is the two Cs, communicate and compromise. Think about that. The two Cs, communicate and compromise. I think that is not only the secret to an enduring union between two people, but I think it is also the secret to a vibrant democracy, communicate and compromise.

It is kind of ironic that our Republican friends, after beating us over the head for 4 years for not supposedly passing a budget—although if you looked at what we put in place, some of the legislation was law; we actually did have a budget. We had spending caps and directions to reduce spending in a lot of different categories. We saved in deficit reduction well over \$1 trillion as a result.

But, ironically, the very people who criticized us for not passing a budget have now, here in the Senate, made it impossible for us to create that conference committee, a compromise committee between the House and the Senate, and take the next logical step of reconciling the differences between the Senate-passed budget resolution and the House's.

It is not going to be easy to do that, but we need to get started. If you think about the way we spend money—I want to commend the chair of the Budget Committee. She has had some very sad losses in her family. We extend our sympathy there. I want to commend the Senator and her committee for taking on a tough job, one of many tough jobs she has taken on, and to give us a budget resolution that we can go to conference with. I want to have a chance to do that.

I want to mention this and I will yield. We had a bunch of Realtors in from Delaware. They wanted to talk about the budget and how we are doing. I explained that if you think of the Federal budget, think of it as a pie, think of it like a pizza pie or a chocolate pie, but think of it as a pie. The way I explained this is, over half of that pie is entitlement program spending. That is things we are entitled to by virtue of our age, our station in life, our service, Medicare, Medicaid, Social Security, some of our veterans' benefits. But over half of the budget of that pie for spending, over half of it is entitlement spending and it is growing.

Another roughly 10 to 15 percent of that pie is interest on the debt. With the debt growing, interest on the debt—thank God the interest rates are low right now or that would go through the roof. Interest on the debt continues to maybe creep up. If you add those two together, it is about 70 percent of the pie we are thinking about.

That leaves another 30 percent. What is in the remaining 30 percent? The rest of the whole Federal Government. About half of that 30 percent is defense. About half of that 30 percent is everything else from agriculture to transportation and everything in between—law enforcement, courts, Federal prisons, the FBI, education, housing, environment. Everything else is in that 15 percent.

The difference between the Senate-passed budget resolution and the House-passed budget resolution is the House would make some changes in entitlement spending. We do some of that as well. We do more to try to reduce spending. But the real difference is

what happens with that 15 percent of—we call it domestic discretionary spending. The other 15 percent in discretionary spending is defense.

But they would take, in their budget resolution in the House, that 15 percent over the next 10 years and take it down to roughly 5 percent—5 percent. That is everything in the Federal Government other than defense and entitlements and interest. That is everything else. That includes workforce development, starting with early childhood education programs, Head Start, all the way from kindergarten up to high school; programs especially promoting the education in STEM, science, technology, engineering and math, postsecondary education. It includes infrastructure; roads, highways, bridges, everything broadly defined in infrastructure. It includes investments in research and development that can create products and technologies that can be commercialized and sold all over the world. All of that stuff is the rest of 15 percent and it goes down to about 5 percent.

I do not think that is smart. I do not think that is smart for growing the economic pie because of things—the areas we need to invest in or look for. We need a world-class workforce. No. 2, we need terrific infrastructure, much better than our decaying infrastructure. The third thing we need is to invest in R&D that can be commercialized and turned into products.

In any event, we have a difference in priorities here. The Senate-passed budget resolution is not perfect, but I think it is a very good document and a good starting point. The Republicans have their ideas, some with merit, some not. But the next thing we need to do is we need to meet. We need to create that conference committee and we need to go to work and let the chair of the committee and her counterpart over here, Senator SESSIONS, do their job, along with their House counterparts. But they cannot do their job until Republicans in the Senate agree to form a conference committee and go to conference. We need that to happen. Rather than just talking about and pointing fingers at one another, we actually need to do that. We need to stop pointing fingers, join hands, and see if we cannot work this out.

I yield the floor again, with my thanks to Senator MURRAY for the leadership she continues to provide for all of us.

THE PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Washington.

Mrs. MURRAY. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent to speak for up to 10 minute as in morning business, and following me, the Senator from Rhode Island will speak for 5 minutes as in morning business.

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

THE BUDGET

Mrs. MURRAY. Mr. President, I want to thank the Senator from Delaware who spoke about the fact that we are

now 53 days since passing the Senate budget. We are pushing very hard as Democrats to keep this process moving and get our budget to a conference committee. I appreciate his coming out and explaining why that is so important. I agree with him.

We believe with all the urgent challenges we face today, there is every reason to get to work right away on a bipartisan budget deal. There is no reason to delay this until the next crisis. But we have come out here now seven times and asked for consent to go to conference to work on the budget with the House, and seven times the Senate Republicans have stood and said, no, we do not want to go to work on the budget.

Given how much Senate Republicans have talked about regular order over the last several years, we are rather surprised on this side that they are now resisting this very important next step in this bipartisan negotiation. By the way, it is not just Democrats who are saying they want to go to conference. There are quite a few Senate Republicans who are surprised, as we are, that they are not allowing us to go.

My colleague Senator McCAIN said blocking conference is “incomprehensible” and “insane.” Senator CORKER said that to “keep from appointing conferees is not consistent.” Senator FLAKE said he “would like to see a conference now.”

I sincerely hope the Republican leaders in the Senate will listen to the Members of their own party, because we have a lot of problems to solve and we have to get started. Our children today, young adults, need a world-class education to succeed in the global economy they are entering. Many of them are graduating in the next several weeks. Too many Americans are out of work yet or still underemployed. Our national infrastructure is quickly becoming an obstacle rather than an asset to our competitiveness.

We need to do more to responsibly tackle our long-term deficit and debt challenges and make our Tax Code work better for our middle class. The debate about all of those challenges couldn't be more important. We should start working toward a bipartisan budget deal that works for our families, our economy. We should do it as soon as possible and engage the American people in a thorough and responsible debate.

That is why I, frankly, was very disappointed to see that today, instead of meeting to discuss moving toward a bipartisan conference between the House and Senate, House Republicans are meeting to discuss what they will ask for in exchange for not tanking the economy a couple of months from now.

Instead of moving with us toward the middle and joining us at the table ready to compromise, they spent their afternoon debating what to write on a ransom note and saying if they don't get what they want, they are going to

allow the United States to default. That is an unprecedented event that would devastate our entire economy.

I think a lot of families across our country are very concerned that House Republicans haven't learned any lessons at all from the past 2 years, and that we are looking at more brinkmanship, more governing by crisis, and more harm for our American families and our businesses.

House Republicans are even telling us they are willing to put foreign creditors before our seniors, our veterans, and our businesses and claiming that somehow this plan will protect the economy.

That is absurd. A default is a default. If the Federal Government pays its foreign creditors—but defaults on its obligations to our families and our communities—the results are going to be catastrophic. Rating agencies would rightly see that as a serious abdication of our responsibility. Our fragile economy would be seriously threatened, and people across the country would lose their faith again in our government's ability to function.

Fortunately, I hope and think it will not come to all of that. Republicans have been saying default would be a “financial disaster” for the global economy and “you can't not raise the debt ceiling.” A few months ago, Republicans acknowledged how dangerous it would be to play games with the debt limit and how politically damaging it would be to play politics with the potential economic calamity and dropped their demands.

What has changed since then? Why are Republicans once again issuing this empty threat that does nothing more than rattle the markets and increase uncertainty across our country. Maybe the House Republicans think since we won't hit the debt ceiling until later than we originally expected, there could be less pressure to get a deal and more opportunity for them to extract some kind of political concession.

That is exactly the wrong way to look at this because even if we know they are going to reverse course eventually, the Republican strategy of holding our economy hostage and creating this uncertainty again and trying to push us toward another crisis has terrible consequences. All of us remember the summer of 2011 when extreme elements in the Republican Party demanded economically damaging policies, leading to a downgrade of our Nation's credit.

Economic growth and job creation slowed to a halt, consumer confidence plummeted, and out of that summer came sequestration. That was a policy that was meant to serve only as a trigger and, in fact, was only implemented because Republicans were focused on protecting the wealthiest Americans and biggest corporations from paying even a penny more in taxes rather than working with us on a deal to prevent sequester.

Now what do we have? Sequestration. It is forcing families and communities

across the country to cope with layoffs and cuts to services they count on, things such as childcare and public safety. Yesterday, we learned that DOD civilian employees, many of whom are veterans, by the way, are going to be furloughed.

We have to replace sequestration. We need to do it with a balanced and responsible deficit reduction plan, but we also have to stop lurching from crisis to crisis that allows those kinds of policies to be enacted. There is absolutely no reason to double down on an approach that has those kinds of effects on the families and communities we serve and on those who bravely served our country.

Contrary to what we are now, unfortunately, hearing from the House, I believe with more time to reach a fair and bipartisan agreement we have all the more reason for us to move to a conference quickly and get a budget agreement. Let's get to work. Our country's challenges—rather than a looming artificial deadline or crisis—should guide this debate, and it shouldn't be controversial. There are responsible Senate leaders on both sides of the aisle who agree.

I hope Senate Republicans will listen to members of their own party who are calling for a conference and bring us one step closer to negotiating a bipartisan budget deal in a responsible way instead of insisting that we run down the clock.

I know there are factions in our government that believe compromise is a dirty word and that getting a deal will not be easy, but I continue to believe it can and needs to be done because alongside those who refuse to compromise there are responsible leaders who came here to show Americans that their government works. It would be deeply irresponsible for the House to continue delaying a conference and for Senate Republicans to continue to cover for them, especially if they are doing it for political reasons or to keep the negotiations out of the public eye or to, what I have heard, avoid taking a few tough votes.

I urge Republican colleagues to reconsider their approach. Join us in a budget conference ready to compromise and work with us toward a bipartisan deal the American people deserve.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Oklahoma

Mr. INHOFE. Mr. President, it is my understanding that Senator REED is speaking next. I would like to ask that I be recognized as in morning business at the conclusion of his remarks.

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

The Senator from Rhode Island.

Mr. REED. First, Mr. President, let me rise to commend Senator MURRAY for her extraordinary leadership on the Budget Committee and in so many other ways in the Senate. She did a remarkable job in bringing together a

budget that responds to the urgent need we see in the United States today to create jobs, to strengthen the economic recovery and, in fact, to provide more momentum to this recovery, much more.

In my State of Rhode Island, despite certain gains, we are still at roughly 9 percent unemployment. This is unacceptable. We have to do more.

The first step on that path is to move this budget to conference. That is what Senator MURRAY has spoken about, and that is what is so critical. Fifty-three days ago, under her leadership, the Senate passed a budget. The budget invested \$100 billion in a targeted jobs and infrastructure package that would start creating new jobs quickly. And that is what my constituents need. Indeed, when I go back to Rhode Island that is what people are asking about: Where are the jobs?

The budget would begin, in this jobs and infrastructure package, to repair public roads, bridges, and help prepare workers for the 21st century. All of these things are essential to our present economic need for job creation, our future productivity, and our future ability to compete in an increasingly competitive global economy. Our budget path, as laid out by Senator MURRAY, would end the economically damaging sequester and make the tough and balanced choices we need for sound fiscal policies.

Now the House Republicans also passed a budget. The next step in regular order is to go to conference. Admittedly, the House Republican budget stands in stark contrast to our budget, and it is clear we have a lot of work to do to reach an agreement. For example, the House Republican budget calls for a total of \$4.6 trillion in cuts, it voucherizes Medicare, it would leave the sequester in place, and it calls for tax cuts that benefit the wealthiest Americans.

I believe these and other choices in the House Republican budget would be a very bad deal for the people of Rhode Island. These are the kinds of differences that must be and can only be resolved effectively in conference. Again, the first step to do that is to appoint our conferees, to go to conference, and to begin the difficult discussions and negotiations to provide the American public the answers they are looking for.

So it is past time we move to conference with the House. And I hope there is a real chance that Senate and House Democrats can negotiate a bipartisan agreement with our Republican colleagues in the House of Representatives, and with our Republican colleagues in the Senate that will move the country forward.

Unfortunately, despite the insistence over months and months and months by Republicans in the House and in the Senate that we go to regular order, that we pass a budget—that was the biggest problem they were talking about for many months, last year and

the year before. Now here we are looking for regular order, and they are looking the other way and block us from moving forward and conferencing the Senate and House budgets. That can't go on. We have to get to conference. We have to take the next step.

We can't delay. We have 11.7 million Americans out of work and looking for jobs. We have to address the sequester.

As Senator MURRAY just said, yesterday the Secretary of Defense announced hundreds of thousands of civilian personnel will be furloughed, civilian personnel that support from our military forces. That will not only disrupt their lives, which is the first great toll, but it will also disrupt the efficiency and the ability of the Department of Defense to fully and capably carry out its mission. These are critical issues.

We have to make sure, again, that the full faith and credit of the United States is not jeopardized by another manufactured crisis over the debt ceiling, which is once again on the horizon.

We have to deal very soon with all of these issues. The logical and appropriate step is to go to conference. We have a lot of work to do.

Let me also say I am encouraged that I have heard that Leader REID is prepared to call up for a vote the nomination of Richard Cordray to head the Consumer Financial Protection Bureau. This is critical because a well-regulated marketplace is not only good for consumers, it is good for companies. That is something that could add to this economic recovery, this certainty, this knowledge that consumers will have the information they need.

Also, I presume and hope that very soon we will have a vote with respect to the pending doubling of the student loan interest rate. Last year we avoided this by pushing it forward a year. We have another deadline facing us July 1. We have to make sure students don't face another crippling increase in interest rates they pay on student loans.

Student loans are a huge burden on the generations that are coming up. In fact, it could delay our economic progress by a decade or more as students can't buy homes and form households because they are saddled with the debt. So we have to work on that too. We just can't lurch from crisis to crisis.

The first thing to do, the immediate thing we should do, is to invoke regular order. Let's go ahead, let's go to conference. Let's start dealing with the issues that affect the people of America. Let's start serving their primary concerns—creating jobs and a stable economy—and doing that through regular order and the procedures that we have adopted and used for decades.

I yield the floor.

UNANIMOUS CONSENT AGREEMENT—S. 954

Mr. REID. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that on Monday, May 20, at a time to be determined by me, after consultation with Senator MCCONNELL,

the Senate proceed to the consideration of Calendar No. 73, S. 954.

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

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Oklahoma.

IRAN SANCTIONS IMPLEMENTATION ACT

Mr. INHOFE. Mr. President, it is very rare that we have an opportunity to do something that is in the benefit of our country in terms of our protection. It doesn't cost anything. If anything, it makes money, and it is something I am going to share. It is a bill I introduced today, which is S. 965.

Let me give a little background to let you know why we are introducing this bill and why the Iran Sanctions Implementation Act of 2013 is significant.

First of all, it is imperative that we know, because most people don't understand this, that Iran's source of revenue comes from oil exports. This is something that one of our fine Senators has had as one of his efforts, to come up with something that is going to effectively embargo the country of Iran.

We have a lot of countries, for example, that we don't import anything from, but they do have a very large supply of oil. To date, Iran is exporting about 1.25 million barrels of oil. That amounts to somewhere in the neighborhood of \$100 million a day or about \$3 billion a month.

The influence of Iran is something throughout the Middle East, and it ranges from Yemen all the way to Sudan, to Hamas, to Hezbollah, to Lebanon, and, of course, to Syria. One of the concerns I have had for a long period of time is that Iran—one of the things the President did that I think we are going to live to regret is 4 years ago he did away with our ground-based interceptor in Poland. And when this happened, that was set up to knock down missiles that might be coming from the east into the United States.

We have 44 ground-based interceptors on the west coast, and I am comfortable we can knock down anything coming from that way, but from the east, we don't. It would take maybe one shot—it would have to be a fortunate one—from the west coast.

Anyway, the reason I bring this up and why it is pertinent to the legislation we are introducing right now is that our intelligence has shown us since 2007 that Iran is going to have the bomb—the weapon, the nuclear capability—and the delivery system to send something from Iran by 2015.

If we had stayed with our effort to have the radar in the Czech Republic and the ground-based interceptor in Poland, we would be well prepared to protect ourselves. However, that is not the case. So I look at Iran—and a lot of people don't agree with this; I may be the only one who will say this—as the greatest threat we have in the Middle East. We all talk about Syria and the problems taking place in Syria—the 70,000 people who have been the victims

of Assad's barbaric slaughter of his own people—but we know that Iran—the Iranian security and intelligence services—is propping up the Assad regime by advising and assisting the Syrian military forces, providing essential, lethal military supplies and progovernment military.

I am going to read something now that I just received to quantify how much Iran is doing to assist Syria. This was in the *Economist* magazine. It said:

Iran reportedly sent \$9 billion to Assad to see it through sanctions on Syria.

In other words, several countries, including us, had sanctions on Syria, and this is one reason we were sending money over there. That tells us our sanctions on Iran are not nearly as tight as they should be. And that was in the *Economist*. So it is very serious.

Lebanese Hezbollah, Iran's proxy, is participating in a direct combat role aligned with Iranian strategic interests in Syria, and we know Syria provides crucial access to Iranian proxies that include Hezbollah, Hamas, and the Palestinian Islamic jihad. Iran is continuing an extensive, expensive, and integrated effort to maintain Syria as a base for fomenting future regional instability.

Iran is all in in Syria, as evidenced by the frequent presence on the ground in Syria of Iranian force commander Major General Qassem Suleimani. Suleimani is on the U.S. Treasury and U.S. Security Council's watch lists for alleged involvement in terrorist activity and proliferation of nuclear missile technology. So this is how serious that situation is over there.

A subordinate of Suleimani, Brigadier General Hassan Shateri, was a senior Iranian commander who was killed in the Damascus countryside. The death of Iranian generals on Syrian soil is a strong indication of Iran's commitment to the regime.

Further, we know Iran has supplied Syria with ballistic missiles and chemical weapons, and the Assad regime in Syria, which is presently the greatest threat to stability in the Middle East, is being propped up by Iran. Iran is able to do this because it earns \$3 billion a month in oil revenue. Now, if Iran—and this is a key point—did not have access to this money, its ability to influence the region would be significantly curtailed. In other words, they cannot pose a threat without their oil revenues.

So the reason we have the threat from and the problems we have in Syria is because of the money that is being sent to Syria, and the source of that money is oil revenue, and it shows that the effort we have made in Iran is not really enough because they have access to that many resources.

Fortunately, the international community has generally recognized this. Last year Senator KIRK of Illinois led the Senate in the consideration of sanctions against Iran's oil trade. At that time Iran exported 2½ million bar-

rels of oil a day, and Senator KIRK sought an outright global embargo against Iranian oil. During the debate, however, many members of the international community stated they would not be able to wean themselves off of Iranian oil quickly enough to comply with the sanctions without causing a significant shock to oil prices and, in turn, their economies. So these are countries that would like to have complied with sanctions against Iran, but they felt it was not in their best interests to do so. So the sanctions were amended to require the international community to significantly reduce its reliance on Iranian oil.

That legislation passed through the Senate, and Iran's oil exports have since fallen by about half. So instead of the 2½ million barrels a day going out, it is down to 1¼ million—about half. This is a significant reduction, but with the Iranian regime intent on harming the United States and our allies, we have to do all we can to tighten sanctions and more fully isolate them.

Our Nation doesn't import oil from Iran, and we haven't for a number of years. We embargoed them a long time ago. But despite our abundant untapped natural resources, we remain the largest oil importer in the world, and so we have a strong role to play in making the Iran oil embargo as effective as possible.

Natural gas has always been a major U.S. energy resource, but it was just a few years ago that the energy industry believed the United States was on the verge of becoming a major natural gas importer. Permits were issued and facilities were under construction to handle the massive amounts of natural gas we were expecting to import to meet the domestic energy demand. Then came the development of two critical technologies. One is horizontal drilling, and the other is, of course, something we have known about for a long time—hydraulic fracturing.

Hydraulic fracturing was actually developed in the State of Oklahoma—in Duncan, OK, where I will actually be this coming weekend—way back in 1949. By the way, it is very safe. There has never been a confirmed case of groundwater contamination using hydraulic fracturing. But when all this came about, all of a sudden we had a huge boom here in the United States. This is all on private land. I want to make that very clear. Because the oil and gas industry developed and perfected these methods, which are environmentally safe, we are now able to economically reach oil and natural gas in places we never thought would be possible, and production has skyrocketed.

Harold Hamm, who I think arguably is the most successful independent oil operator in America today, is from Oklahoma. He happens to be up in North Dakota right now, but he has been at the forefront of these technologies and has used them to unlock

the Bakken shale formation in North Dakota. And that is where he is actually at this time.

Before these practices were used there, oil development was expected to remain just a memory of the past, but with these technologies, he has turned North Dakota into one of the greatest economic success stories in the Nation. The change has been remarkable, and it occurred nearly overnight. North Dakota has grown its oil production by 300 percent, to 660,000 barrels of oil a day in just 4 years. The unemployment rate in North Dakota is 3.3 percent. Normally, we say 4 percent unemployment is full employment. Well, they are actually below full employment. His biggest problem right now is finding people to work. A driver in the oilfields makes \$100,000 a year. This is what is happening in North Dakota.

The promise of shale oil and gas development has spread well beyond North Dakota in recent years. It is happening in my State of Oklahoma, in Pennsylvania.

Let's put this chart up here. That is significant. I can remember until recently people were thinking everything has to be in the oil belt. All the oil production has to be west of the Mississippi. But look at it now. This is in the lower 48 States. The shale plays that are taking place now are in places, yes, of course, where we would expect it, in Oklahoma, but look up here. That is in Pennsylvania. That is up there at Marcellus. And we have opportunities all over. So it is completely all over the country, not just in the western part of the United States. Where oil and gas activities have historically been isolated to just a few regions of the country, such as Oklahoma and Texas, they are now all over the country. Because of these great domestic resources, I believe we can achieve domestic independence in a matter of months.

The use of hydraulic fracturing and horizontal drilling has caused domestic energy production to soar over the last few years. Production is now over 7 million barrels a day—40 percent higher than it was in 2008. But, as the Congressional Research Service recently confirmed, all of this production is on State and private land—none of it on Federal land. In fact, on Federal land, in spite of the boom that has been taking place, production has actually been reduced because of President Obama's war on fossil fuels. Production has actually been reduced on Federal lands, and that is kind of embarrassing because we can see on the second chart that a significant amount of our Nation's oil and gas resources are on Federal land, which are all but completely off limits.

This chart shows the Federal lands. They are not producing on any of these Federal lands, but look at the potential that is there and what we could do. It is incredible to look at. You can look at all of this land in the Montana west, in Alaska, offshore. The yellow land is

the Bureau of Land Management land, the orange is the Fish and Wildlife land, the light green is the Forest Service land, the dark green is the National Park Service, and the light blue is the Department of Defense. All of the Outer Continental Shelf is managed by the Federal Government, and oil is under many of these places, but the vast majority of it is locked up by the Obama administration and no one can get to it.

We know the resources are there. They are massive. Everyone has agreed it is there. The Institute of Energy Research recently issued a report based on the most recent, though outdated, government data about these off-limit lands and showed that if we enacted policies that allowed aggressive development of these Federal resources, the process would generate \$14.4 trillion in economic activity and would create 2½ million jobs and reduce the deficit by \$2.7 trillion, all over the next 40 years.

Why is this land locked up? One answer is because of President Obama. He has allowed his alliance with the environmental left to run roughshod over issues as important as encouraging stability in the Middle East through a full isolation of Iran.

If the President would lead, the United States, acting independently, without any assistance from any other nation, could singlehandedly offset all of Iran's oil exports by simply expanding our own domestic production on Federal lands.

This is why I have introduced this Iran Sanctions Implementation Act of 2013. My bill would require the President to establish Iranian oil replacement zones on Federal lands so that the production from these zones will reach the 1¼ million barrels of oil a day. This amount, 1.25 million barrels a day, is what Iran is exporting at the current time.

Here is the point. The reason we are talking about coming up with a very small amount is, if the President wants to continue his war on fossil fuels, that is fine, if he doesn't want to develop our potential public lands. But if he could take a very small amount, such as 1.25 million barrels of oil a day—and do it anywhere, give him the discretion as to where he wants to do this—it could be here if he wants to do it out in the West, or ANWR up in Alaska, it could be over there or offshore on the east coast. By the way, that is off the shore of Virginia, and Virginia wants to be able to develop that land.

This is enough oil to fully offset all current Iranian oil exports. If the President unlocks our energy potential and allows the production of an additional 1.25 million barrels a day in the United States, we would reduce our imports by the same amount. If we are not importing this oil to the United States, then other nations—these are the nations that are currently importing it from Iran—would be able to import it from those places where we no longer would have to.

There are friendly countries—Saudi Arabia, Kuwait—where we are actually importing oil. But they would be able to sell their oil to the other countries, our friends, such as Japan and other countries.

What we are saying is we have an opportunity here. When you look at these areas, you can see why it should be pretty easy for the administration to allow us to open one of these areas. The first one would be ANWR, this right up in Alaska. You can see four potential areas, the first being ANWR. The U.S. Geological Survey reported, in a 1998 study, the latest comprehensive study of its kind, that the oil reserves there are up to 16 million barrels of oil per day.

Imagine what we are talking about there. We are only talking about coming with 1.25 million barrels to offset the amount other countries are importing from Iran, to stop them from doing it. It doesn't require the President to make this area an Iranian oil replacement zone, but it would allow him to do it. This would provide enough oil to offset Iranian oil exports for about 12,000 days or about 35 years.

The second is the Rocky Mountain West—parts of Wyoming, parts of Utah, and parts of Colorado. In 2005 the RAND Corporation estimated that oil shale reserves in this area could be as high as 1.8 trillion barrels of oil.

The third is the Utica shale in Pennsylvania. Pennsylvania—I hear a lot about the Marcellus up there. We are talking about oil now. We are not talking about natural gas. We are talking about oil. But USGS estimated in 2011 that the reserves in this region are up to 940 million barrels of unconventional oil.

The fourth area is the Outer Continental Shelf. I mentioned North Carolina and Virginia. Their legislatures have all encouraged their production. They have a lot they can benefit from. Of course nationally—in national security we have a lot to benefit from, too.

With all those areas, if we stop the flow of oil from Iran, then we can stop the machine that finances Iran's nuclear weapons program. Many say that getting oil from the Rocky Mountains, Alaska, Outer Continental Shelf, will take years. By then Iran will not be a problem. But it doesn't take years to get it out.

I mentioned a while ago Harold Hamm, the person who is the biggest independent in the country. I called him up because I was going to be on a major television show one night and I knew they were going to challenge me. The President has always said it doesn't do any good to open up public lands because if you do that it could take 10 years before that could reach the economy. I asked him, I said: Harold Hamm, make sure you give me an accurate response to what I am going to ask you because I am going to use your name on national TV. Make sure you are accurate. If you had a rig set up right now, off limits on public land,

in New Mexico, how long would it take you to lift the first barrel of oil and get it into the economy?

He said, without a flinch: Seventy days.

I said: Seventy days? We are talking about 10 weeks, not 10 years.

So he described what would happen each day. You could do it in 10 weeks. We are talking about all of this could take place in 10 weeks.

By the way, I have to say no one has challenged me on this ever since I used his name and his speculation a few weeks ago.

I know this is a little bit complicated, but there is another reason. The reason I think the President would be willing to do something like this is we are not asking him to lift the restrictions on all of the public land. It would be great if he did that. Just think, we would be totally independent of any other country for our ability to develop our own energy. But we are saying find a zone where we can actually pick up an additional 1.25 million barrels a day. We can take that away from where we are currently importing it from friendly countries and allow them to export it to nations that are currently buying oil from Iran.

I think we have made it very clear that if you want to do something that is going to have the effect of stability in the Middle East, you have to get rid of Iran. As I said before, Iran is a direct threat to the United States once they reach what our intelligence says is going to be a nuclear capability and a delivery capability by 2015.

Over and above that, today we could stop them because 70 percent of their revenue comes from oil exports. We could stop the exports altogether with this legislation. That is something I certainly hope the President will look at. We are not asking for hundreds and hundreds of millions of barrels a day to be released from our Federal sources. We are asking only for 1.5 million barrels a day. On top of that, we don't have any obligation with this legislation to go any further. This would be something he could do that would provide stability in the Middle East and would keep Iran from funding the terrorist activity that is currently taking place by Asad in Syria.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. HEINRICH). The Senator from Connecticut.

MORNING BUSINESS

Mr. BLUMENTHAL. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate 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.

FOOD ALLERGY AWARENESS WEEK

Mr. DURBIN. Mr. President, Food Allergy Awareness Week recognizes how