

time say we support that service: We want to support you at home, but not enough to not have your kids have to miss 5 days of school because their teachers are furloughed or providers of other support services for educational personnel are furloughed for 11 days.

I am going to write Secretary Hagel, and I ask that all of my colleagues join with me in this matter in urging that the furloughs of these educators who educate the children of our military families be exempted from the process of sequestration.

While it begs the large question that the Nation confronts a \$16 trillion debt, I think most of us in this Chamber know that the only way we are going to get to a solution is if those of us on this side of the aisle find a way to make smart and sensible reforms to our entitlement programs. Our colleagues on the opposite side of the aisle are going to have to work with us to find ways to generate additional revenues; otherwise, we are going to keep coming back to the kinds of cuts we have seen in sequestration and in domestic discretionary.

We are on a current path that would take domestic discretionary spending from 16 percent of our Federal spending down to 4 percent. As a business investor, I would never invest in a business that spent less than 5 percent of its resources on its workforce and infrastructure.

So today I rise on the issue of making sure we actually honor those military families of whom we speak so often and make sure their kids get to go to school next year and don't have to lose valuable educational time because their teachers are furloughed. I hope my colleagues will join me on the letter to Secretary Hagel.

With that, I yield the floor, and I thank the Senator from Texas for his courtesy.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Texas.

OBAMACARE

Mr. CORNYN. Madam President, we have been informed that the Secretary of Health and Human Services has become a private fundraiser to raise funds from the very industry she regulates in order to implement ObamaCare. This raises all sorts of troubling concerns. There is an appearance of impropriety and a conflict of interest. There is an appearance that there is basically a shakedown going on—extracting money from companies she regulates in order to implement the President's health care law. This is certainly unethical—representing a conflict of interest—and possibly illegal. However, it has provided us a useful reminder about ObamaCare: that it represents one of the worst examples of crony capitalism that exist today. Unfortunately, that is true of a number of the administration's policies, but let me just explain what I mean.

When the private enterprise and the government become so intertwined as

to become mutually dependent, usually what that means is the people who can hire the most lobbyists, the best lawyers, and others, compete unfairly for government benefits.

The concern is that since Secretary Sebelius is going to be the one who doles out grants and other benefits under ObamaCare, there is the all-too-human temptation to favor those who have gotten you out of a crack and done you a favor.

Let's review how ObamaCare is supposed to work in the first place. The Federal Government is supposed to come up with its own definition of health insurance. What we own right now may not be good enough for the government and its standard for health insurance. It is demanding that private businesses offer their employees this Washington-approved insurance or they get penalized.

It is also demanding that some Americans—many Americans—pay for coverage they don't want, don't need, and may not be able to afford. The best example of that is young adults—sometimes called the young and invincible—who may not think they need comprehensive health care insurance. They may think, well, perhaps I need more of a catastrophic policy or something else that will take care of me if things really turn bad. As a result of ObamaCare, these young people will be forced to buy coverage they don't need. Many of them don't want it and can't afford it.

They will literally see their insurance premiums skyrocket because of a phenomenon known as age-banding. Age-banding is where older Americans cannot be charged more than three times what younger people can be charged. We all know that as we age, we utilize more health care services. Here again, younger Americans are being asked to subsidize their elders in ObamaCare.

One way to look at it is the Obama administration has decided that the purchase of an expensive government-approved product sold by certain private companies is a condition of American citizenship. For those who are American citizens and live here, they have to buy it. If they don't, they pay the penalty. That is one example of crony capitalism.

Private companies are turning into de facto public utilities, and Americans are forced to buy their products but only those products approved by the regulators here in Washington. It is the ultimate marriage of big business and big government, and it is bad for the American taxpayer.

Now Secretary Sebelius has gone a step further. She is using her leverage and power as a regulator over private companies to force them to fund ObamaCare. We all see what is going on. Secretary Sebelius is making the health care industry an offer they cannot refuse. After all, her agency regulates those companies and has enormous influence over their business operations.

Indeed, ObamaCare has expanded Health and Human Services' regulatory power so much, we could say it essentially amounts to a government takeover of one-sixth of the national economy. Anytime there is a dramatic increase in Federal regulation of bureaucratic authority, there will also be a dramatic increase in crony capitalism.

Health and Human Services granted a series of waivers from ObamaCare's annual limit requirements, which fostered the impression that certain companies, labor unions, and other institutions were getting preferential treatment. Why not treat all Americans the same rather than have the government pick winners and losers, with the temptation to pick their friends and political supporters and give them special favors?

We saw this also in the government-run bailout of the Chrysler Corporation when the company's secured bondholders received less for their loans than the United Auto Workers pension fund.

For that matter, we also saw it in the notorious Solyndra project. President Obama's entire green agenda energy policy is based on the idea that the Federal Government should be playing venture capitalist with taxpayer dollars. We all know that when Solyndra went bankrupt, the administration favored private lenders over taxpayers, which was a violation of the law.

But there are many other private companies that have received taxpayer funding for political or ideological reasons, and that is why we say that crony capitalism undermines public trust in government because not everybody is treated the same. The government—those in power—picks winners and losers, political favorites, friends, and family.

I have one final point. We learned about the Sebelius shakedown on the same day we learned that the IRS has been deliberately targeting and harassing some organizations based on their political views.

As we all know, the IRS has a very important and key role in administering some of the biggest parts of ObamaCare and thus will be collecting massive amounts of new information about individual Americans. That was always a bad idea, but now, after we have learned about the abuses at the IRS, it sounds even more dangerous than ever. After what we have learned so far, how can Americans feel confident that the IRS won't abuse these new powers after having abused its current powers? Why should the American people believe what they have been told when they have been lied to time and time again about the IRS's activities?

Back in March 2012, the former IRS Commissioner categorically denied that his agency was targeting certain political organizations. Now we know that he was not only wrong, we also know they intentionally lied. We also know that senior IRS officials—many

who still have their jobs—learned of these abuses 2 years ago and never corrected the record.

In short, if we ever needed another reason to get rid of ObamaCare and replace it with market-driven, patient-centered reform, the IRS has provided us with one.

I yield the floor, and I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. CARDIN. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

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

THE BUDGET

Mr. CARDIN. Madam President, I remember—and I am sure the Presiding Officer does too—an early morning in March when we completed our budget deliberations. That was a couple of months ago. I remember the outcry about the Senate not following regular order in passing a budget. On that March morning, we followed regular order. We passed a budget. We took up lots of amendments. We spent hours on debate. We voted on many amendments, and the Senate worked its will. Of course, the House has also worked its will. It passed a budget that is different from the Senate budget.

The next step in regular order is for the House and Senate to meet in what is called a conference to work out the differences between the House and the Senate so we can then have a budget for the country. That is how the regular process works.

I know for the last couple of years we have had budgets. We have had budgets because of grand bargains that have been agreed to on debt extensions and things such as that, but there is now a cry to follow regular order. That is what we should do: Follow regular order. So the next step is to go into a conference.

I must tell my colleagues, I don't quite understand why the Republican leader is objecting to going to conference. He is trying to say, We will go to conference if the Senate agrees with the House. No, we don't go to conference because we agree with one body; we go to conference to work out our differences. So I am extremely disappointed that those who are yelling the loudest about following regular order are now preventing us from using regular order.

We need to get to conference, and one of the reasons is so we can get rid of sequestration. Sequestration means across-the-board mindless cuts. It treats every priority in government the same. That is mindless. That is not what we should be doing. It is having a major impact on the mission of many agencies in this country. They can't do what the public wants them to do because they don't have the budget sup-

port to do it. For an agency that is affected by sequestration, it amounts to almost 10 percent of their budget, because they have to cram in savings over a short number of months. Also, it only affects some agencies, not all. Not all of the programs are affected by sequestration. But those discretionary programs that are affected are across the board, without any discretion.

If the Presiding Officer ran into a tough economic time or someone we represent does and they lose some income, they look at their family budget. They may have money put aside for rent or mortgage payments, maybe some money put aside for a food budget for their family, and maybe there is some money put aside to go to an Orioles-Red Sox game.

They are going to have to make some tough choices, but they are going to make choices based upon what is most important to their family. They certainly are going to pay their rent payment or their mortgage payment to keep the roof over their family home.

So that is what we should be doing. We have to make decisions, and we cannot do these across-the-board cuts. It is hurting agencies. These are cuts on top of cuts on top of cuts.

Let me mention one group that will be particularly affected by that, and that is our Federal workforce. These are the people who are at NIH, the talented scientists doing the research that is keeping us healthy. They are finding the answers to the dread diseases in our society. These are people who are standing guard on our border, keeping us safe. These are people who do food inspections to make sure we have a healthy food supply. These are people who help our seniors, to make sure they get the checks they need for their dignity in their older years. These are people who are working for the public.

What have we done to them? Three straight years of freezes, no increase in their salaries. We are now looking at what we are going to do with their benefit structure. On top of that, we have freezes on the number of employees; therefore, they are being asked to do more with less. And now we have furloughs, which is basically cuts—cuts in their salary.

It is not the Federal payroll that causes the deficits we have today. As the Presiding Officer and I know, it is the fact that we went to war in two countries, we cut taxes, we went through a recession. We have to answer the way of getting out of this problem in a balanced approach. We have already done the discretionary cuts to those agencies, and we are now affecting their ability to do their mission.

I want to mention some of the effects of sequestration on the citizens of Maryland, whom I have the opportunity to represent in the Senate.

Maryland will lose approximately \$14.4 million in funding for primary and secondary education. Twelve thousand fewer students will be served and ap-

proximately 30 fewer schools will receive funding. In Maryland, we believe education is a top priority. That is how we compete. That is how we invest in our future. We invest in our children.

Maryland will lose approximately \$10 million in funds for about 120 teachers, aides, and staff who help our children with disabilities.

Around 770 fewer low-income students in Maryland will receive aid to help them finance the cost of college, and around 440 fewer students will get work-study jobs that help them pay for college. These are programs that Democrats and Republicans have fought for over the years to make sure they are funded. Now, in Maryland, we are going to have to cut back.

Head Start and Early Head Start services would be eliminated for approximately 800 children in Maryland, reducing access to critical early education.

The list goes on and on and on.

Maryland would lose about \$3 million in environmental funding to ensure clean water and air quality, as well as prevent pollution from pesticides and hazardous waste. We have worked hard to clean up the Chesapeake Bay and provide a safe environment for our families. That is in jeopardy as a result of sequestration. In addition, Maryland could lose another \$467,000 in grants for fish and wildlife protection.

In Maryland, there will be 46,000—tens of thousands—of civilians in the Department of Defense who will be furloughed, reducing gross payroll by around \$353.7 million in total in our State.

Maryland will lose about \$317,000 in justice assistance grants. These grants support law enforcement. We all talk about supporting law enforcement. These grants also support prosecution and courts, crime prevention and education, corrections and community corrections, drug treatment and enforcement, and crime victim and witness initiatives.

Maryland will lose about \$66,000 in funding for job search assistance, referral, and placement, meaning around 9,270 fewer people will get the help and skills they need to find employment.

Madam President, 2,050 fewer children in Maryland will receive vaccines for diseases such as measles, mumps, rubella, tetanus, whooping cough, influenza, and hepatitis B.

Maryland will lose approximately \$551,000 in funds to help upgrade its ability to respond to public health threats, including infectious diseases, natural disasters, and biological, chemical, nuclear, and radiological events.

Maryland will lose about \$1.6 million in grants to help prevent and treat substance abuse, resulting in around 2,500 fewer admissions to substance abuse programs.

Maryland health departments will lose about \$595,000, resulting in around 14,900 fewer HIV tests.

Maryland could lose up to \$124,000 in funds that provide services to victims of domestic violence.