

## OKLAHOMA DISASTER

Mr. McCONNELL. Mr. President, we are all thinking today about the tragic loss of life in Oklahoma yesterday, so this morning I would like to take a moment to express my condolences to all who lost family and friends in this horrible disaster. It has been a truly heartbreaking loss of life—dozens injured and killed yesterday, including many children. The tornado that tore through Moore flattened entire neighborhoods and destroyed at least two elementary schools—Briarwood and Plaza Towers—just as students were about to be released for their last week of school before the summer recess. I don't think any of us can comprehend the searing grief of their parents. I am told that two crews from the Louisville Red Cross recently left for Oklahoma to help those who are now suffering.

Kentuckians understand the terrible toll these storms can take. Just last March I toured the wreckage after a deadly tornado in West Liberty, KY, where churches, businesses, and schools were reduced to rubble and where several Kentuckians lost their life. I remember full well the tornado that went through my hometown of Louisville back in the 1970s. It knocked down every house on my parents' street. My mother was in the basement, and mercifully it skipped over our house for some reason but leveled all the houses across the street and the ones next door. It is very hard to accurately describe the devastation a storm such as this leaves in its wake.

As first responders continue to dig through the rubble in Moore, I fear we will hear a lot more bad news in the days ahead. That said, I am sure we will also hear stories of hope and self-sacrifice, as we almost always do when tragedies such as this strike—of strangers shielding strangers, of neighbors helping others rebuild, of volunteers working through the night to sift through the debris to find survivors.

As we have seen time and time again in recent years, Americans are at their best when called upon to help each other in tragic circumstances, and this circumstance can hardly be more tragic. So we in the Senate offer our heartfelt prayers to those affected by this terrible storm. We offer our gratitude to the first responders. We offer our encouragement to Governor Fallin and the many Federal, State, and local officials who are working hard to assist in the recovery and who will aid in the rebuilding of homes and schools and families and lives.

## WELCOMING BURMA'S PRESIDENT

Later this morning the majority leader and I will welcome the leader of Burma, Thein Sein. He will be here to discuss the reform in that country and our bilateral relationship. Later today I will have more to say about the reform movement in Burma.

I yield the floor.

## RESERVATION OF LEADER TIME

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Under the previous order, leadership time is reserved. 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 majority controlling the first half.

Mr. McCONNELL. I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. SCHATZ). Without objection, it is so ordered.

## CONCLUSION OF MORNING BUSINESS

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Morning business is closed.

## AGRICULTURE REFORM, FOOD, AND JOBS ACT OF 2013

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the Senate will resume consideration of S. 954, which the clerk will report.

The assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

A bill (S. 954) to reauthorize agricultural programs through 2018.

Pending:

Stabenow (for Cantwell) amendment No. 919, to allow Indian tribes to participate in certain soil and water conservation programs.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Michigan.

Ms. STABENOW. We are now going to resume discussion on the farm bill, but before doing that I see one of the distinguished members of our committee on the floor who I know would like to make some other comments. But I just wish to thank her in advance for her leadership. We are so excited and pleased to have the Senator from North Dakota on the Agriculture Committee.

Having had a chance to be in North Dakota—and she has said it to me a thousand times, so it is burned into my memory—90 percent of the land in North Dakota is in agriculture, and so she reminds me of that every day. She has been a key person in helping us bring this farm bill to the floor. So before proceeding on the Agriculture Reform, Food and Jobs Act, I would ask that Senator HEITKAMP be recognized.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from North Dakota.

## TRIBUTE TO BRAD HEJTMANEK

Ms. HEITKAMP. Mr. President, on the floor of the Senate Senators often come to praise a local university football team that just won a championship or a famous coach who is retiring or maybe even a famous politician who

has passed away. Today I come to the floor of the Senate to thank a man who will never be written about in the history books or even known outside of my small hometown of Mantador, ND. Brad Hejtmánek's life and his accomplishments were pretty modest by national standards, but nevertheless, for the people of my small hometown, Brad was something special.

Brad was a standout high school athlete, a veteran, a softball coach, a National Guardsman, a coworker, a husband, a father, a gardener, and a friend. For most of his adult life, Brad was the mayor of Mantador—not exactly the most glamorous of jobs. Mantador runs exclusively on volunteer labor.

For years he made sure the city water and sewer were working, the Christmas tree got decorated, that barking dogs were attended to, that the garbage got picked up, the roads got fixed, and abandoned lots did not get overrun with weeds and junk.

For years Brad got to do the great ceremonies incumbent of a small-town mayor. For example, after I was elected attorney general of North Dakota, Brad presented me with the key to the city. This was no ceremonial key; it was the real deal. I wondered for months after getting that key what that key actually opened, until one day I got a call from Brad asking me if I could send the key back. You see, the key was actually to the town dump and spring cleaning was coming. But that was Brad.

You can't look anywhere in Mantador and not see his impact. One can go to the small ballpark and remember that Brad organized the National Guard to come and clean out the old grove of trees, look to the large VFW and remember that Brad recruited folks to come and help build it, look to the fire hall and remember the games of pickup baseball we played when we were kids, look to the Mantador grade school and remember that Brad was the kid who always took the dare, the kid who always organized the pickup football games, and that every kid in grade school knew the lyrics to the "Marine Corps Hymn" because Brad made sure at every choir practice we sang it not only once but twice.

Men and women such as Brad Hejtmánek are the unsung heroes of our democracy. They step up and volunteer when their country and their community need them. They are friends when a person needs a friend, and they never forget where they came from. So even though he will never have a chapter in a history book, he will always have a place in the hearts of the people of Mantador. In my book that is an honor unequalled.

Thank you, Brad, for all you did for your country and your small town. Godspeed, my friend. I and all of Mantador will miss you.

I ask unanimous consent to have his obituary printed in the RECORD.

There being no objection, the material was ordered to be printed in the RECORD, as follows:

BRADLEY C. HEJTMANEK

Bradley C. Hejtmanek, 59, of Mantador, ND passed away Thursday, May 16, 2013 at Sanford Health in Fargo, ND, surrounded by his family and friends. Funeral mass will be Tuesday, May 21, 2013 at 10:30 a.m. at Sts. Peter & Paul Catholic Church in Mantador, ND with Fr. Peter Anderl officiating and burial in Calvary Cemetery, Mantador with military honors by the Hankinson American Legion Post #88 and the Mantador VFW Post #9317 and the North Dakota National Guard. Visitation will be Monday from 3:00 p.m. to 7:00 p.m. with a prayer service at 7:00 p.m. all at the church, and Tuesday morning one hour prior to the service at the church.

Brad was born on April 14, 1954 in Breckenridge, MN, the son of Joseph & Marcella (Havlena) Hejtmanek. He attended school in Mantador and graduated from Hankinson in 1972. He earned his associate degree from Chaminade University, Honolulu, Hawaii in 1976.

Brad was very active in Mantador & the surrounding area. He enjoyed all sports, especially the Twins, Vikings, Wild & UND hockey. He enjoyed time spent with family & friends, reading, t.v. & of course, popcorn.

He is survived by his wife, Karen, 2 sons, Doug (Chaska Guemmer) & Jason (Bri Huotari), granddaughter, Aubrey, 2 brothers, Richard (Ann), Jay (Denise), a sister, Joy (Mike) Schreder, several nieces & nephews, father-in-law, George Thompson, 2 brothers-in-law, Terry (Kathy) Thompson & Brian Thompson.

He was preceded in death by his parents, brother, Douglas, nephew, Joseph & mother-in-law, Janice Thompson.

Frank Family Funeral Home, Hankinson, ND is in charge of the arrangements.

In-line guestbook: [www.frankfamilyfuneralhome.com](http://www.frankfamilyfuneralhome.com)

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Michigan.

ORDER FOR MOMENT OF SILENCE

Ms. STABENOW. Mr. President, first, I would I ask unanimous consent that at 12 noon today the Senate observe a moment of silence for the victims of the tornado in Oklahoma.

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

Ms. STABENOW. Mr. President, we know we have other colleagues who will be coming to the floor to talk about the very important jobs bill, reform bill, and food bill we have in front of us—a conservation bill as well—but I just wish to take a moment to say to our colleagues, if there are amendments they have, as we are moving through the bill—and we are doing our best to finish this by the end of the week or certainly get as close as we can—we are very interested in working with colleagues to get to their amendments. We would appreciate it if they would let us know what they are and bring them down so we can be working with them on any of their amendments.

We are very proud of the product we have in front of the Senate right now. There are 16 million people who work in agriculture. I would say that is a jobs bill. I think it is probably the biggest jobs bill we will have in front of the Senate—agricultural jobs directly

with those who are producing the food, who are producing the equipment for our food, and who are doing all the pieces around food production and processing and the efforts in trade around the globe, where we are proud to say agriculture is No. 1 in creating a trade surplus for our country. Other countries are looking to us. There are 7 billion mouths to feed in the world today, and American agriculture is at the front of the line feeding families and supporting efforts around the globe. We know that number is growing every day and the leadership of American agriculture is going to be even more important in that process.

We also know this is a bill that conserves our land, our water, our air, and our forests. This is the piece of legislation that focuses on conservation for working lands—lands that are owned by someone in this country, which is the majority of land, and there are incredibly important partnership efforts that go on. The farm bill improves 1.9 million acres of fish and wildlife habitat. That is why our conservation title is supported by over 650 conservation and environmental groups all across the country.

We have the same conservation title we had last year, and I am very pleased to say the House also has adopted the structure of reform we have in our bill. It is very similar in the House and Senate bills on conservation, and so this is a real landmark piece of legislation as it relates to preserving our soil, our land, our water, our air, and our forests, and it is a commitment we make as Americans to future generations.

We have also added in this legislation a commitment brought to us by the commodity farm groups and environmental and conservation groups to make sure, when farmers are using critically needed tools such as crop insurance—which is the mainstay for farmers now, buying crop insurance and hoping, in fact, they do not have to get a payout because it means they have had a loss or a disaster; that it is now the foundation of what we are doing to support farmers across the country—they have agreed to tie compliance for conservation practices to crop insurance, which is a very important policy. This is a historic agreement between agricultural groups and conservation and environmental groups. As a result of their agreement and their urging, we have added that to this bill, which is a very significant addition and strengthens what we are already doing on conservation.

We make a strong nutrition commitment to families. We make sure every family who currently qualifies for nutrition assistance in our country continues to receive that assistance. We create savings by looking at areas where there has been abuse or misuse by a few States on one policy and by individuals or retailers in other areas and we tighten that up so we have more integrity in the process. We make it clear we stand with families who

need help; we stand with families who find their own personal disaster because of the economy, just as we stand with farmers for a strong crop insurance program when a farmer has a disaster as well, but we do make sure there is integrity in the programs, which is very important.

We have had at least two cases in Michigan where two people won the lottery and continued on food assistance—pretty outrageous. And we make sure that cannot happen again. There have been abuses in other areas, where retailers have allowed people to turn in their food assistance cards for money for drugs or other illegal activities, and we make sure we clamp down on that. We have gone through the bill and we address misuse, waste, fraud, and abuse in every part of the farm programs but certainly in this area as well. So we can stand before our colleagues and say this is about making sure folks who have worked all their lives, who have paid taxes all their lives, who suddenly find themselves, through no fault of their own, in a situation where they need some temporary food help are able to get that help for their family.

The good news is those dollars—that part of the farm bill—are actually decreasing. The costs are going down and not because we are cutting back on support for families but because the economy is improving, so more people are going back to work and don't need the temporary help. That is the way we should be reducing the costs, and that is in fact what we do.

I am also very pleased with the fact we focus on rural development and reforms that are very significant and very important. Right now, there are actually 11 different definitions of the term “rural.” We had local mayors and county supervisors and village residents come to us and say: We appreciate the fact that rural development funds allow us to provide financing for our businesses and water and sewer projects and housing projects and road projects, but could you just give us one definition, rather than trying to figure out 11 different ways to define rural. It may sound simple, but it wasn't simple. But we did actually get it down to one definition, and we have streamlined the process and the paperwork so communities, small towns, and folks who support and need rural economic development help can get that with a minimal amount of paperwork.

We have done that through this entire bill. Frankly, I truly believe that if, in every part of government, we did what we have done in agricultural programs, we would not only be doing what the public wants but we would balance the budget. We have 100 different programs or authorizations we have eliminated because they didn't make sense anymore. They were duplicative, not wise spending for taxpayers—things such as direct subsidy payments for farmers that did not make sense, cutting from 23 conservation programs to 13 and putting them

in 4 different subject areas with a lot of flexibility so we can stretch it out and get more bang for our buck and do a better job without in any way reducing the commitment to conservation.

We have gone through the entire farm bill and made tough decisions, smart decisions. We have saved about \$24 billion—more than even we did last year—while having a set of policies that is broadly supported in the conservation community and the agricultural community and the energy community and those who represent small towns across this country. We did it, again, by making tough decisions and by working together on a bipartisan basis.

I am proud that even though these arbitrary, across-the-board cuts called sequester, cuts that make no sense—even though those cuts would require \$6 billion in cuts in agricultural programs, we have been willing, voluntarily, to come up with four times that level of cuts. We ask for your support for a set of policies that works better, that streamlines the system, that cuts back on that which does not make sense to do but strengthens the priorities that are important for economic growth, for families, for conservation, for communities all across this country.

We are willing and have done our part to step up and meet the challenges of deficit reduction, of balancing our Federal budget, but keeping our commitment to our farmers and ranchers who have the most risky jobs in the world. As I said yesterday, nobody else has to worry about whether it is going to rain or not rain—too much rain, no rain; whether it is going to freeze, as it did in northern Michigan after the cherry blossoms came on the trees and the freeze wiped everything out.

Nobody else is in a business where they cannot control the most important factor, which is the weather. We have certainly seen the havoc the weather has played on families across this country, including what happened yesterday in Oklahoma.

We stand here proudly to say we support an effort that is creating reform, that is saving money, that is standing up for the folks who have helped create the most affordable and safest food supply in the world—America's farmers and ranchers. We stand here supporting American families who need to make sure that when times are tough the very best of America's values are in place, which is to make sure they have the ability to put food on the table for their families.

I believe we have others who will be coming to the floor. At the moment I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Ms. HEITKAMP). Without objection, it is so ordered.

Ms. STABENOW. I ask unanimous consent that following a moment of silence at noon today, the Senate proceed to a vote in relation to Cantwell amendment No. 919; that upon disposition of the Cantwell amendment, Senator GILLIBRAND be recognized.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection? Without objection, it is so ordered.

Ms. STABENOW. We are also working on a Sessions amendment No. 945, which we had hoped to line up as well. I understand there is an additional modification being made. If that modification is agreeable to both sides, it is our intention to adopt that amendment, as modified, prior to the caucus meetings.

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

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The bill clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

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

#### MOMENT OF SILENCE

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, there will now be a moment of silence for the victims of the tornadoes in Oklahoma.

(Moment of silence.)

#### AMENDMENT NO. 919

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the question is on agreeing to amendment No. 919, offered by the Senator from Washington, Ms. CANTWELL.

The Senator from Michigan.

Ms. STABENOW. Let me indicate that this amendment would require tribes to be included in the development of Resource Conservation Act appraisals. It is something that is supported by Senator COCHRAN and me.

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 bill clerk called the roll.

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

Mr. CORNYN. The following Senators are necessarily absent: the Senator from Oklahoma (Mr. COBURN), the Senator from Oklahoma (Mr. INHOFE), and the Senator from Louisiana (Mr. VITTER).

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

The result was announced—yeas 87, nays 8, as follows:

[Rollcall Vote No. 129 Leg.]

#### YEAS—87

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

#### NAYS—8

Cornyn	Kirk	Rubio
Cruz	Lee	Toomey
Johnson (WI)	Paul	

#### NOT VOTING—5

Coburn	Inhofe	Vitter
Heinrich	Lautenberg	

The amendment (No. 919) was agreed to.

Ms. STABENOW. I move to reconsider the vote and to lay that motion upon the table.

The motion to lay on the table was agreed to.

#### AMENDMENT NO. 931

Mrs. GILLIBRAND. Madam President, I call up my amendment No. 931 for a vote at a time to be determined by the manager of the bill.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report the amendment.

The bill clerk read as follows:

The Senator from New York [Mrs. GILLIBRAND], for herself, Mr. LAUTENBERG, Mr. WHITEHOUSE, Mr. COWAN, Mr. REED, Mr. BLUMENTHAL, Mr. WYDEN, Mr. CASEY, Mr. KING, Mr. SCHUMER, Ms. WARREN, Mrs. MURRAY, Mrs. BOXER, Mr. SANDERS, Ms. BALDWIN, Mr. MURPHY, and Mr. MENENDEZ, proposes an amendment numbered 931.

Mrs. GILLIBRAND. I ask unanimous consent that the reading of the amendment be dispensed with.

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

The amendment is as follows:

(Purpose: To strike a reduction in the supplemental nutrition assistance program, with an offset that limits crop insurance reimbursements to providers)

Beginning on page 355, strike line 8 and all that follows through page 357, line 15.

On page 1065, after line 25, add the following:

#### SEC. 11011. ANNUAL LIMITATION ON DELIVERY EXPENSES AND REDUCED RATE OF RETURN.

(a) ANNUAL LIMITATION ON DELIVERY EXPENSES.—Section 508(k)(4) of the Federal Crop Insurance Act (7 U.S.C. 1508(k)(4)) is amended by adding at the end the following:

“(G) ANNUAL LIMITATION ON DELIVERY EXPENSES.—Beginning with the 2014 reinsurance year, the amount paid by the Corporation to reimburse approved insurance providers and agents for the administrative and

operating costs of the approved insurance providers and agents shall not exceed \$924,000,000 per year.”.

(b) **REDUCED RATE OF RETURN.**—Section 508(k)(8) of the Federal Crop Insurance Act (7 U.S.C. 1508(k)(8)) (as amended by section 11011) is amended by adding at the end the following:

“(G) **REDUCED RATE OF RETURN.**—Beginning with the 2014 reinsurance year, the Standard Reinsurance Agreement shall be adjusted to ensure a projected rate of return for the approved insurance producers not to exceed 12 percent, as determined by the Corporation.”.

Mrs. GILLIBRAND. I yield to the chairman of the committee for other business.

Ms. STABENOW. I thank the Senator.

Madam President, we have a great start here with our first vote.

#### AMENDMENT NO. 945, AS MODIFIED

Ms. STABENOW. Before proceeding with Senator GILLIBRAND's amendment, I ask unanimous consent that the Sessions amendment No. 945, with the changes at the desk, as modified, be agreed to.

The amendment, as modified, was agreed to, as follows:

(Purpose: To clarify eligibility criteria for agricultural irrigation assistance)

On page 263, between lines 20 and 21, insert the following:

“(iii) **IRRIGATION.**—In States where irrigation has not been used significantly for agricultural purposes, as determined by the Secretary, the Secretary shall not limit eligibility under section 1271B or this section on the basis of prior irrigation history.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from New York.

#### AMENDMENT NO. 931

Mrs. GILLIBRAND. I rise today to urge my colleagues on both sides of the aisle to join my effort to fight off the proposed \$4 billion worth of cuts to SNAP, better known as food stamps.

I ask that my amendment, No. 931, be called up for a vote at a time determined by the manager of the bill.

When Congress proposes to cut the food stamp program, it is not a nameless, faceless person looking for a hand-out who suffers—it is hungry children, hardworking adults, seniors on fixed incomes, veterans, active-duty servicemembers fighting our wars, and the families who stand by them.

I heard from a single mom in Queens, working full time at a supermarket, doing all she could to make ends meet but still struggles in this very tough economy. Her son came home one day from school with a bag in his hand and told her he saved his lunch for their dinner, and that he asked his best friend if he could have his sandwich to bring home for his brother. Obviously that mother broke down in tears. She needs food stamp assistance.

I heard from a senior in Washington Heights in New York City. She receives a limited fixed income, not enough to live on. She relies on SNAP to pay for food and for some peace of mind. Without that help, putting food on the table will become impossible.

I have heard from veterans all across the country who are making their

voices heard to prevent these cuts, such as one very brave veteran from Colorado Springs. He served in Iraq, but was declared medically unfit to continue his service. He was released from the military and returned home. As he was looking for a job and waited for the VA to activate his benefits, he relied on SNAP to help his family make ends meet. Going from active duty to food stamps, he described, was a culture shock. It was never his plan to go on food stamps. Without that little bit of support, this veteran, his wife, and his children would have needlessly suffered. Today he is back on his feet working full time, but the program was there for him when he needed it, as it should be.

These are the people who rely on this critically needed assistance to put food on the table and who stand to lose if Congress follows through with these deep cuts to SNAP. Half of all food stamp recipients are children, 8 percent are seniors, and 1.4 million veteran households receive food stamps. There are some of you here who would have us believe that these children, seniors, and veterans are gaming the system just to take advantage of taxpayers. The fact is, it is less than 1 percent of every dollar that goes into this program that is wasted, less than 1 percent is evidence of fraud. Imagine if we had that level of efficiency anywhere else in government.

In fact, SNAP keeps our economy moving. This money goes straight to the grocery stores, the store clerks, the truckers who haul the food, and producers all across the country. Sixteen cents of every SNAP dollar actually goes right back to the farmer who grew the crop, according to the USDA. When we cut \$4 billion from SNAP, it means there is \$90 less a month going to half a million households. To folks in this Chamber, \$90 a month may not seem like a lot of money, but for a struggling family that is a week's worth of groceries. Imagine telling your children they can't eat the last week of every month. Imagine telling your child at night when he says to you: Mommy, I am still hungry, that there is nothing you can do about it.

As a mother, as a lawmaker, watching a child, a senior, and a brave veteran going hungry is something I will not stand for, and neither should anyone else in this body. Clearly we have to reduce the debt and the deficit, but hardworking parents, their children, seniors, troops, and veterans are just trying to keep the lights on, trying to make ends meet, trying to put food on the table. They did not spend this Nation into debt, and we should not be trying to balance the budget on their back. They deserve better from us. These are the wrong priorities for America.

Instead, the amendment I am proposing would reduce a real source of waste in this budget, and that is corporate welfare for large corporations that do not need it, including insur-

ance companies that are based in Bermuda, Australia, and Switzerland.

My amendment already has the support and advocacy of a third of this body. Thirty-three Senators have signed a letter saying do not cut food stamps, because it protects half a million struggling Americans who too often do not have a voice in Washington when they desperately need it. It makes modest cuts to an already overgenerous corporate welfare system. It is common sense. Standing by those who are suffering is the core. It is a core value of who we are as Americans.

If it is in your heart, and if you believe feeding hungry children is the right thing to do, then stand with us. Stand with America's veterans. Stand with the AARP and America's seniors. Stand with struggling families and children all across this Nation. Let's keep food on the tables of people who need it. When we do, America will be stronger, and this body will be stronger.

I yield the floor.

#### RECESS

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the Senate stands in recess until 2:15 p.m.

Thereupon, the Senate, at 12:41 p.m., recessed until 2:15 p.m. and reassembled when called to order by the Presiding Officer (Ms. BALDWIN).

#### AGRICULTURE REFORM, FOOD, AND JOBS ACT OF 2013—Continued

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Vermont.

#### COST OF GASOLINE

Mr. SANDERS. Madam President, I will hold off asking that the pending amendment be set aside until the manager is here. At this time I will address an enormously important national issue, an issue even more important to rural America; that is, the skyrocketing cost of gasoline at the pump, and oil in general, which is causing enormous hardship for the American consumer, small businesses, truckers, airlines, and fuel dealers.

The bottom line is in Vermont and all over this country people are paying an arm and a leg for a gallon of gas and for home heating oil, and it is a very serious economic problem for the individual consumer and for the entire economy at large. In fact, as we continue to struggle to get out of this terrible recession, high oil and gas prices are enormously detrimental to the entire economic recovery process.

These rapidly increasing prices are particularly harmful to rural America where working people often are forced to travel 50 to 100 miles to their jobs and back. If people are paying \$3.80 for a gallon of gas, that adds up, and it is money coming right out of their wallets.

Over the last 5 months the national average price for a gallon of gasoline