

In addition, I think there are going to be more counselors on the ground helping children than in past disasters.

I see colleagues on the floor, so let me finish quickly.

We have implemented an automated family reunification database to ensure children are returned to parents. This is a relatively small place, well known. We do not believe there are any children whose whereabouts are unknown to their parents. All of the statistics, however, are not in of people missing, et cetera. But there are provisions right now at work with FEMA helping with family reunification. Coordinators are already on the ground specialized in looking out for the specific needs of children in disasters. I thank the coalition that worked with me for years to put that into place.

Again, there will be no offset. There is no reason to need an offset. We have the \$11 billion, thanks to the good work of many people in this Chamber and on the other side of this Capitol, to provide this funding for these disasters. I know FEMA is on the ground. They will do the best they can.

In this case, with tornado insurance, which is carried by many people in this area—I am doing a little bit more research into whether it is mandatory or voluntary—with a combination of local help and State help and Federal help and private insurance and, of course, the great spirit of voluntarism, I am confident that after we finish this very sad recovery and shock this community is going through, that we will be able to help them build a stronger and more vibrant community of Moore, OK, in the future.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Utah.

BUDGET CONFERENCE

Mr. LEE. Madam President, earlier today we were asked to give our consent to go to conference on the budget resolution. This is an important matter because we have now gone more than 4 years without a budget. This has been of great concern to many of us. I do not think there is one Member of this body who would not want Congress to pass a budget this year. We would like to see that happen. We need that.

We do, however, have a concern—some of us—with the request that we go to conference without certain assurances. Most important, we want a very simple assurance that any conference report that results from this conference will not be used to raise the debt limit. The reason for this is simple. This is an important matter. At a time when we have racked up about \$17 trillion in debt, we want some assurances that this important decision will be made under the regular order of the Senate; that the normal rules of the Senate will apply; that this will not be negotiated behind closed doors in a backroom deal. The American people deserve more. They demand more.

Those who may have questioned our motives in connection with this, I ask them a very simple question: Will you give us an assurance that you are not going to use the conference report to raise the debt limit? If they can answer that question to our satisfaction, if they can simply give me an assurance that is not what they are going to use it for, then I will gladly give my consent. So I invite that to be the topic of discussion.

All this begs the question. Why would they not give that assurance? What on Earth is wrong with the regular order? What on Earth is wrong with giving an assurance that, in connection with a conference report on a budget resolution, they would not be willing to say: If we are going to raise the debt limit, we are going to do it under the regular order.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Louisiana.

Ms. LANDRIEU. Madam President, I was going to talk about the tornadoes, but I will take a moment to respond to my colleague from Utah.

There are Members objecting to going to regular order on the budget, and he is one of them. The Senator from Utah himself is objecting to regular order, which would allow us to go to conference on the budget. He was one of the critics when he was running for office. He made numerous statements while he was on his way to becoming a Senator by saying that the Senate and the House needed to have a budget.

Well, the House has passed a budget, the Senate has passed a budget. Yet the Senator from Utah is the one—along with the Senator from Kentucky, and I understand earlier today, the Senator from Arizona, Senator MCCAIN—objecting to going to conference to resolve the differences.

I know the Senator from Utah has read the Constitution, just as I have. The Constitution and the laws that created the Senate of the United States give great strength to the minority—and he is in the minority. However, nowhere in the Constitution does it say one Senator from one State has the right to write the rules and laws for the whole country. I read it lots of times, and I have never seen that. Evidently that is what the Senator from Utah wants. He said if we would just do what he wants, we could proceed.

Well, I have news for him and the Senators who are objecting. It is not about what they individually want. It is collectively what we want. We represent all the people of our country: Republicans, Democrats, conservatives, and liberals.

For 4 years this same group yelled and screamed about not having a budget. Now that we have a budget, they are yelling and screaming that they don't want to work out the differences. I honestly don't know how to please colleagues like this. We had to literally listen to them ranting and raving for years about how we didn't have a budg-

et. We worked extra hard. At the time we said—and I was one of them—that technically they're right, we did not have a budget. As the Presiding Officer knows, we had something that was stronger than a budget. We had spending limits that had the real teeth of law.

What people might not realize is budgets are aspirations. Just as when someone does a budget at home, they can say: My budget this year is going to be set at \$25,000. It is an aspiration. They might spend a little more or a little less. There is no mechanism for control; it is just an outline, and that is important.

We thought what we had, as the Democratic leadership, is better than a budget. We had actual spending controls, but that wasn't enough for the Republicans. They knew we had spending controls, but they still went on "Fox News" and everywhere else explaining to people that we had no budget and inferred there were no controls. And that is patently false. We had spending controls. We have spending controls now. We have spending limits which are agreed to by Republicans and Democrats, except there are a handful of Republicans who don't agree with those limits. They decided because they represent half of four States that they want their way or the highway, and now the whole Congress cannot go to a conference on a budget.

I don't understand this. I understand minority rights need to be protected. I understand it is important to make sure everyone's voice is heard. I understand everybody cannot get everything they want. I don't understand when my colleagues—the Senator from Utah, the Senator from Kentucky, and the Senator from Arizona—say: No, we can't go to a conference to work out the differences on the budget so the United States can move more quickly to a balanced budget. They have complained year after year that we didn't have a budget. It is the height of hypocrisy, and their position is completely unexplainable and unacceptable.

I am glad I was on the floor. I came to talk about the tornado, but I am glad I had a chance to make a statement for the RECORD about why not many—but there are a few—Republican leaders have stopped the entire budget process until they get their way exactly the way they want it. That is not the way our government works. We don't have kings anymore. We don't have dictators anymore. We don't have people with special powers. We are all humans, and we are all on equal footing. We are all elected to represent our constituents. No one in this Chamber is entitled to write the budget exactly the way they want it.

If I wanted to do something, I could say just as easily as he could: Well, I am going to object unless you promise me that X, Y, and Z are going to be in the budget. I could say that, as could

the Senators who sit next to me, Senator SANDERS and Senator CARPER. Every Senator could say that. We all have things which are very important to us and our constituency, but if we act like that and we don't act in a mature and sensible way, we will never get anything done, and that is where we are now.

We have a handful of Republican Senators—maybe less than five, I don't know—who are objecting every day so we cannot take our budget to conference and have it reconciled. They have yelled at everybody for 4 years about how we didn't have a budget.

The only way we are going to get a budget is to go to conference, have regular order, and work out the differences in a public meeting with public votes. It cannot happen behind closed doors or in some back room somewhere. It has to take place in a public meeting, during a conference so we can talk about what programs or what levels of funding should be reduced, such as what revenues could potentially be raised. Then, according to our process, those directions are given to appropriations committees. At that point we can do our work on building an appropriation for defense, building an appropriation for education, building an appropriation for health, and for our veterans.

If we don't have a budget, we cannot even go to regular order on appropriations. As an appropriator, it is getting frustrating around here to not be able to go to a regular appropriations meeting and sit down as we used to do before this new crew showed up and talked about meeting our budget caps and how we wanted to allocate the taxpayer money in a public, open meeting instead of cramming things in an omnibus bill and doing deals in the middle of the night.

If they would let us get back to regular order and do the people's business, I promise that the people of Utah would be happy, the people of Arizona would be happy, and the people of Kentucky would be happy. They want us to get back to regular order so we can try to negotiate a budget that the majority—and not even the regular majority. We have to have 60 votes to do anything around here. Before a conference committee can come back, there has to be a broad understanding of what was going to be in that conference.

I have one final argument. I could understand a little trepidation on the part of the minority if they were not in control of the House, but the Republicans have control of the House, and the Democrats have control of the Senate. I mean, I could understand their concern if one party had the majority in both the Senate and the House. They might be concerned that what comes out of conference could get rammed down and the minority could be caught off balance. The minority controls the House. This is as fair a fight as they are going to have with one party controlling one and one party controlling the other.

Yes, the President is a Democrat, but he has indicated what I think is very open-minded support for entitlement reform when it is appropriate and additional revenues that are being raised. The President has not put any particular line in the sand that I am aware of. He has been quite reasonable, but he cannot sign a budget unless we can get it to his desk.

We have three or four Senators, if they can't get it exactly the way they want it, who are going to hold up everything. I don't think that is what the American people want, and I am disappointed in our colleagues.

I yield the floor.

TRIBUTE TO MARIE C. JOHNS

Ms. LANDRIEU. Madam President, next Friday, May 31, is my friend's—Marie C. Johns—last day as the Deputy Administrator of the U.S. Small Business Administration. She has served the SBA and our country's small businesses with distinction since 2010, and I will miss working with her.

Her appointment to serve as the Deputy Administrator came at a critical time for U.S. small businesses, when the economy was recovering from the worst economic downturn since the Great Depression. The SBA needed great leadership, and she brought to the agency an impressive family history of entrepreneurship and professional accomplishments.

As she said during her confirmation hearing on May 19, 2010, “the spirit of entrepreneurship has been at the core of my professional and personal life.” She described the landscaping business her grandfather owned in Indianapolis, IN. And then later, after her uncle earned his degree in pharmacy at Howard University, her grandfather built a community pharmacy so that her uncle could practice as a pharmacist and serve the African-American community in Indianapolis. Marie built her own career in DC, starting as a first-level manager in telecommunications and retiring as the president of Verizon DC. During her 20 years in communications, she held numerous leadership positions, helping small businesses and entrepreneurs. To name just one, she served as the chair of the Small Business Committee for the DC Chamber of Commerce, helping small businesses obtain technical assistance and mentoring from larger firms.

During her time as the SBA Deputy Administrator, Marie and I have enjoyed a strong working relationship, which has allowed us, alongside Administrator Karen Mills, to achieve a number of substantial accomplishments. Most significantly, we passed the landmark Small Business Jobs Act of 2010 that provided billions of dollars of loans and investment capital to America's entrepreneurs. In 2011 and 2012, the SBA issued its first and second rounds of State Trade and Export Promotion, STEP, grants to 47 States and four territories. These STEP grants

have maximized the Federal, State, and local resources to help small businesses export, which in turn has contributed to both business growth and job creation. And finally, we persevered and improved the women's contracting program to put women-owned small businesses on the same playing field with other contracting programs so that contracts to women are no longer capped at artificially low amounts. Recently, on May 8, marking her last time to testify before the Senate Small Business Committee, Marie testified on the important issue of minority women entrepreneurs and how essential they are to the larger economy. The testimony from that hearing was moving and educational and helped raise awareness of this growing segment of job creators.

It has been an honor to work with Marie to provide help and support to the more than 28 million small businesses in this country. During her tenure, the SBA became a more effective Federal champion of small businesses by assisting these businesses to secure financing, technical assistance, training, and Federal contracts.

Ms. Johns now leaves the SBA with a strong performance record. This Nation's small businesses are in a better position because of her work. Her dedication to the improvement of the health of small businesses in the United States will always be appreciated. I thank her for her work and wish her well as she returns to her many civic duties.

RETIREMENT OF ADMIRAL JAMES STAVRIDIS

Mr. MCCAIN. Madam President, today I honor a superb leader, scholar, and warrior. After a lifetime of service to our Nation, ADM James G. Stavridis is retiring from the U.S. Navy and his position as Commander of the United States European Command. On this occasion, I believe it is fitting to recognize Admiral Stavridis' years of distinguished uniformed service to our Nation.

The admiral is a 1976 distinguished graduate of the U.S. Naval Academy. He has led at every level from command-at-sea to theater command. Admiral Stavridis has also served as a strategic planner for the Chief of Naval Operations and the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, and as the senior military assistant to the Secretary of Defense. Prior to assuming command of the United States European Command, he commanded the U.S. Southern Command, focused on Latin America and the Caribbean. Admiral Stavridis assumed command of European Command on June 30, 2009, the first naval officer to hold this command.

Admiral Stavridis' contributions to scholarship are also notable. He has graduated with distinction from the Naval Academy, the Naval War College, the National War College, and the