

the First Amendment to the Constitution? Is it irrelevant that an agency with the power to destroy people's lives adopted the tactics of a dictator? Is it irrelevant that senior IRS officials learned about these abuses at least 2 years ago and lied to Congress and the American people when we asked them about them?

When I got reports from the King Street Patriots and True the Vote in Houston, TX, and the Waco and San Antonio tea parties in 2011 and 2012 about some of the tactics they were being exposed to, I and other Members of the Senate wrote to the Commissioner of the IRS Mr. Shulman, and Mr. Miller, the Acting Commissioner, and they failed to disclose what we now know is the truth. Senator HATCH, the distinguished ranking member of the Finance Committee, yesterday told Mr. Miller that was a lie by omission at the very least. Certainly it was not telling the whole truth to the Members of Congress, whose responsibility is to provide oversight to the American people of the IRS and of the Federal Government. I don't think it is irrelevant when IRS Commissioner Douglas Shulman categorically denied these abuses in sworn testimony before the House Ways and Means Committee in March of 2012.

Furthermore, I don't think it is irrelevant that IRS officials may have committed criminal offenses. I realize that is a serious statement and charge to make, but we know this morning that the director of the Internal Revenue Service division overseeing nonprofit organizations has taken the Fifth Amendment when asked for sworn testimony by a congressional oversight committee.

To refresh everybody's memory, the Fifth Amendment to the U.S. Constitution means that you cannot be compelled to incriminate yourself and possibly expose yourself by virtue of your own testimony to a criminal prosecution. That is what taking the Fifth Amendment is.

While she is within her rights to take the Fifth Amendment, if she has a credible fear of prosecution for violating the criminal laws, I believe this elevates this scandal to a new level.

Finally, I would suggest to our friends at the White House that it is not irrelevant that a Texas businesswoman named Catherine Engelbrecht was targeted not only by the IRS but by the FBI, the ATF, and OSHA after she founded a pair of organizations in Houston, TX, known as the King Street Patriots and True the Vote.

I think most Americans would agree that all of this information is quite relevant, quite reprehensible, and something that Congress ought to, on a bipartisan basis, investigate.

I congratulate the chairman of the Senate Finance Committee, MAX BAUCUS, a Democrat—not a member of my political party—and Senator ORRIN HATCH, the ranking Republican on the Finance Committee, for the bipartisan

way they have begun the investigation into this IRS scandal. What we all recognize, Republicans and Democrats alike, is that this is a threat to the public's trust in government institutions and that this culture of intimidation is not something we can stand for, using the extraordinary power of the Federal Government to target American citizens for exercising their constitutional rights. Indeed, if President Obama wants to know why the American people's trust in the Federal Government has plummeted to an alltime low, all he has to do is look at these two scandals and consider how the administration is handling them.

When government officials consistently mislead, stonewall, and abuse their power, people take notice, they don't forget, and the day of reckoning will surely come.

Madam President, 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.

Mrs. SHAHEEN. I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

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

Mrs. SHAHEEN. It is my understanding that I have 10 minutes to speak. Will you confirm if that is correct?

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator is correct.

SUGAR PROGRAM

Mrs. SHAHEEN. I am here today to speak to the importance of bringing much needed reform to the Federal Sugar Program. I understand that this is not something the Presiding Officer supports and that this is not something the Agriculture Committee addressed in the farm bill. I think it is important to try to address some of the misinformation that is out there.

We have been hearing a lot of talk about the need to protect America's sugar farmers. What we haven't heard is that sugar remains the most tightly controlled commodity market in this country. We currently have what I believe is an outdated program that offers a sweet deal to a small group of sugar growers and processors at the expense of too many other American businesses and at the expense of American consumers.

What the amendment that I have offered with a number of cosponsors will do is reform the Sugar Program to make U.S. manufacturers more competitive and to reduce prices for consumers. It will lower sugar price support levels, and it will reform the excessive restrictions on domestic supply and import quotas for sugars.

These reforms would save taxpayers money. The Congressional Budget Office has estimated that this legislation would save \$82 million over the next 10 years.

I think it is important to keep in mind the amendment we have introduced does not eliminate the safety net for sugar producers. It simply makes some moderate commonsense reforms in the program. Sugar growers would still be supported by the Sugar Loan Program and protected by import restrictions and domestic market allotments. In fact, this amendment simply returns us to the same policies that sugar producers themselves supported as recently as 2007.

Since 2008, sugar prices in the United States have soared to record highs and they have consistently reached levels that are about twice the world pricing of sugar. In fact, the Sugar Program has cost consumers and businesses as much as \$14 billion over the last 4 years. This amendment would provide a smart, practical, and pragmatic fix to the policies that are currently in place, and it is a bipartisan proposal. There are 18 other Senators from both sides of the aisle who have joined on this amendment.

Again, we have been hearing about jobs that would be lost in the sugar industry if we make these moderate reforms, but the reality is we are already losing and have lost too many valuable manufacturing jobs across this country as businesses close or move overseas in search of lower prices. We can see some of this illustrated on this chart. These are sugar-using jobs in the food industry, and there are more than 30 times as many of these jobs as there are in sugar production and processing. So we can see sugar-using food and beverage jobs, which is the blue, compared to sugar farming, production, and processing, which is the red. That is 590,669 compared to 18,078. And where do these numbers come from? Well, in fact, they are from the U.S. Census and the Department of Commerce.

Unfortunately, between 1997 and 2011, nearly 127,000 of these jobs, the manufacturing jobs, were lost in sugar-using industries. In fact, the U.S. Department of Commerce has estimated that for every one sugar-growing job that is saved through high sugar prices, approximately three manufacturing jobs are lost. So again, let me put the numbers into perspective, as this chart does. There are less than 5,000 sugar growers and processors in the country. U.S. data shows there are about 18,000 total jobs in the sugar industry, compared with almost 600,000 jobs in the sugar-using industry.

We have also been hearing this amendment would allow for an increase in foreign sugar into the U.S. market. This amendment maintains the current import quotas for each country. Let me repeat that: It maintains the current import quotas for each country. It allows the Secretary of Agriculture to modify these quotas if he or she determines it is necessary, just as they were able to do before 2008. The fact is this amendment would have no impact on sugar imports from Mexico because under the North American Free Trade

Agreement or NAFTA, Mexico currently is the only country without a quota for sugar importation, and that is true whether we pass this amendment or not. That is true under the current system.

So even if we don't pass reforms, the argument that Mexico is coming in and bringing sugar into the country is true, there is sugar coming in from Mexico, but the fact is that is the way it is under the current program. Currently, sugar is the only—let me repeat, the only—commodity program that was not reformed in the committee-passed farm bill that is under consideration now.

Let me be clear: I think the Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry—Senator STABENOW and the committee—did a great job on that bill in most areas because they provided savings and they reformed the program. So it is particularly puzzling to me why they totally left the sugar subsidies out of the bill, that they did nothing to reform the Sugar Program.

I don't think any program the Federal Government operates should be immune from updates and improvements. We need to act, and we need to act now, to reform the Sugar Program and to protect those workers who are in the food industry that use sugar, and protect consumers who are spending more money than they should for the cost of sugar.

Madam President, I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Colorado.

Mr. UDALL of Colorado. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senator from Maine Ms. COLLINS, and I be permitted to engage in a colloquy for up to 10 minutes.

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

SEQUESTRATION

Mr. UDALL of Colorado. Madam President, Senator COLLINS and I are here today to underscore the timeliness of a bipartisan solution we have been pushing since March. While I firmly believe we should replace the sequester with a balanced and comprehensive plan that delivers the same deficit-reducing punch, it appears to me, and to all of us, the sequester is here to stay for at least the remainder of the fiscal year ending September 30 of this year.

We need deficit reduction, but the way in which we are doing it under the sequester is terrible policy and it is time to fix it. Just after the fiscal year 2013 sequester was triggered, with Senator COLLINS' leadership, she and I introduced a commonsense plan that would empower Federal departments and agencies to replace the indiscriminate cuts of sequestration with more strategic cuts.

One only has to look at the way in which sequestration has endangered critical programs for working families, our senior citizens, and the middle

class to know we have to do more than we are doing today. Throwing up our hands and doing nothing is poor governing. Senator COLLINS and I believe we have a responsibility here as leaders to inject some measure of common sense into the process.

With that, Madam President, I wish to turn to my colleague Senator COLLINS for her thoughts on the necessity of the Collins-Udall legislative proposal.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Maine.

Ms. COLLINS. Madam President, of course my friend and colleague from Colorado is exactly right, and I want to thank him for his leadership on this issue and for working with me to develop a bipartisan, commonsense plan that would help to mitigate the harmful effects of the automatic spending cuts known as sequestration that took effect on March 1.

I want to emphasize that under our proposal, budget targets would still have to be met. We understand the need to confront our enormous Federal debt, which is approaching \$17 trillion. But our plan does so in a sensible way. It recognizes that rather than imposing meat-ax cuts, we should be setting priorities. Our bill would give the heads of Federal agencies and departments affected by sequestration the flexibility to implement the required cuts in a much more thoughtful way by preserving vital programs and reducing or eliminating lower priority programs.

Our bill also ensures appropriate congressional oversight of these decisions by requiring the agency heads to submit their spending plans to both the House and Senate appropriations committees 5 days before implementing these decisions. These committees and their subcommittees know the budgets of these agencies inside and out and will be able to effectively monitor their spending decisions, just as the committees now oversee reprogramming requests.

Congress has already demonstrated that providing flexibility to Federal agencies in a commonsense way to address the unprecedented problems caused by sequestration makes a great deal of sense. Recently Congress passed a bill we authored that gave the Department of Transportation the flexibility to end the furloughs of air traffic controllers and to, instead, reduce spending by transferring unused balances from a grant program. That is the kind of decisionmaking flexibility we are talking about. In this case the furloughs were causing terrible flight delays and had the potential to truly harm the economies of Maine, Colorado, and countless other States that count on tourists visiting our amazing scenery, sampling our extraordinary food, and being with our great people. Had we not come together to pass this bill, the impacts could have been devastating to Maine and to Colorado businesses and their employees.

In Maine it would have affected everyone from our wait staff and our inn-

keepers to our countless tourist attractions. It would have even affected Federal institutions such as the gem of Acadia National Park and our State parks as well. In our States, each season, but particularly during those key peak summer months, we welcome with open arms visitors from around the globe. If those visitors were going to have to sit on a tarmac for 3 hours awaiting a flight, they most likely were going to cancel their trips.

I am proud of the work Senator UDALL and I did to pass this bipartisan bill, but more can and should be done to give other agencies the same kind of flexibility to set wise spending priorities.

I would turn to the Senator from Colorado to ask him if he agrees that isn't a better approach than across-the-board cuts with no flexibility?

Mr. UDALL of Colorado. The Senator from Maine has it exactly right, and I commend her for her leadership.

I want to point out to those who were critical of what we did when it came to the FAA, it is not just elite business travelers or Members of Congress who use our air transportation. It is families, it is seniors, it is businesswomen, and every American possible using our air transportation system. We see the egalitarian nature of our air transportation system when we are in our airports.

Senator COLLINS brokered a sensible compromise that kept our airports running, flights on time, and commerce flowing smoothly. I remember Senator COLLINS standing here on the floor, somewhat late at night, appealing to both of our leaders. So Senator COLLINS led the way.

We also moved in the furloughs for meat inspectors. If we can deal with these small corners of sequestration, we can go all in. We have proven we can find consensus. It is time to finish that job.

I want to turn back to my colleague for any final thoughts she might have to make about our bill and the importance of this effort we have underway.

Ms. COLLINS. I want to thank my good friend and colleague. It wouldn't have happened without his support. We took a bipartisan approach, and that is the kind of approach we are taking today in urging our colleagues to look at our bill and our leaders to move it.

Many agencies face the same challenges that were encountered by the FAA, and many agencies know of better ways to meet the sequestration targets. I have long believed these across-the-board cuts where we don't prioritize simply do not make sense.

Last week, the Department of Defense announced that because the Navy was able to identify cost-effective ways to meet its budget targets, thousands of hardworking men and women at our Nation's naval shipyards, such as the Portsmouth Naval Shipyard in Kittery, ME, would not have to be furloughed. I had long argued the Department of Defense has the flexibility to minimize