

with it. Middle-class Americans remember the consequences of the Republicans' willingness to threaten a national default. I am relieved that this time Congress was able to reach a compromise and avert a fight so middle-class families can get the certainty they badly need.

RESERVATION OF LEADER TIME

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the leadership time is reserved.

ENSURING THE COMPLETE AND TIMELY PAYMENT OF THE OBLIGATIONS OF THE UNITED STATES GOVERNMENT

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the Senate will proceed to the consideration of H.R. 325, which the clerk will report by title.

The assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

A bill (H.R. 325) to ensure the complete and timely payment of the obligations of the United States Government until May 19, 2013, and for other purposes.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Utah.

Mr. HATCH. Mr. President, I suggest the absence of a quorum and that the time in quorum call be equally divided.

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

Mr. HATCH. Mr. President, 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.

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 President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

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

Mr. BAUCUS. Mr. President, thanks in part to filmmaker Steven Spielberg, there is renewed interest today in America's 16th President, Abraham Lincoln.

A century and a half ago, during one of the most critical times in American history, Lincoln faced a nation divided by ideology and war. Only through fierce determination and moral courage was Lincoln able to preserve the Union.

Today, we again are in an ideological divide. Too often, Congress fails to agree on key social and economic issues.

Politics is winning out over progress. Like the America of the 1860s, the unwillingness to compromise has crippled our ability to move forward as a nation.

As we discuss America's fiscal responsibility today, I would like to share the words of Lincoln. One of my favorite quotes is this: "You cannot escape the responsibility of tomorrow by evading it today."

As a nation we have a responsibility to fulfill existing commitments to pay our bills, and it is a responsibility we

cannot evade. As we know, the Federal Government officially hit its current authorizing spending limit—also known as the debt ceiling—on December 31, 2012.

Over the past month, the Treasury Secretary has been using extraordinary measures to continue funding the government and sending out Social Security checks and veterans' benefits. Treasury's action only bought limited time. The debt limit deadline was moved from December 31 to mid-February or early March. Needless to say, a feeling of uncertainty has spread across the country. However, on January 23, the House of Representatives approved a plan to ensure America can meet our obligations through May 18.

The bill, H.R. 325, which we have before us today, also provides an incentive for action on the Federal budget. The legislation includes a provision that would withhold the pay of lawmakers in the House or the Senate if their Chamber fails to pass the budget blueprint by April 15.

Since 1917, Congress has always taken appropriate action to avoid defaulting on America's bills. We must continue to fulfill our responsibility. We must not fail now. There is too much at stake.

Failure to pass this bill will set off an unpredictable financial calamity that would plunge not only the United States but much of the world back into recession and more. Every single American would feel the economic impact. There would be radical cuts in military salaries, veterans' programs, Social Security benefits, and education. Tax refunds may not be issued, and our country's credit rating would almost certainly be downgraded significantly.

I understand the concern over America's deficits and debt. I share those concerns, and I strongly believe we must develop a long-term plan to cut the debt and get America's fiscal house in order.

Let me remind you, over the past 2 years we have made real progress at cutting deficits and debt. We have done so working together across the aisle.

In 2011, we passed \$1.4 trillion in spending cuts. Earlier this month, Congress passed legislation that reduced the deficit by another \$600 billion. Together, with interest savings, these two actions will cut the deficit by about \$2.5 trillion over the next 10 years.

Add to this the savings from winding down the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan and the savings to America's Federal budget reach almost \$3.5 trillion over 10 years—all together \$3.5 trillion over 10 years—which we already are doing as a consequence of winding down the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan. That is real progress.

In the coming weeks we will have to confront the deficit issue again when sequestration of spending programs starts on March 1. March 27, the day the continuing resolution for appropriations expires, brings tough choices. That is why we are here, to make the tough decisions, to do the hard work.

The threat of defaulting on our fiscal obligations is extremely dangerous. It puts America on unstable ground. We all are aware how our political brinkmanship of 2011 led to the first ever downgrade of our country's credit rating. It sent shock waves in stock markets across the globe and nearly crashed the American economy.

We have the opportunity today to avoid that calamity. We have the opportunity today to avoid another destructive budget battle. H.R. 325 ensures America can meet our obligations through May 18 and provides the Congress with a necessary calm between fiscal storms.

The House of Representatives adopted the bill by a bipartisan vote, 285 to 144, and it is supported by the administration. The bill before us is necessary to remove the threat of default that would throw the U.S. economy into chaos. It gives us time to work together on a sensible, balanced solution to our Nation's fiscal challenges without undermining the Nation's economy. It deserves our support.

I congratulate Speaker BOEHNER on his leadership with regard to this issue and the House for its bipartisan approach to a tough but necessary vote. Let's pass this legislation today and move on to the debate over what further deficit reduction options we need to help keep America's economy moving forward.

In the words of Lincoln: "The occasion is piled high with difficulty, and we must rise with the occasion."

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Utah.

Mr. HATCH. Mr. President, right now the Federal deficit stands at roughly \$16.4 trillion. I don't know how anyone can hear that number and not be appalled, nor do I believe there will be, over 10 years, \$2.5 trillion in deficit reduction. In fact, I don't see any deficit reduction except, perhaps, bringing our soldiers back, but that is not particularly deficit reduction since it looks as though we are going to have difficulty maintaining the military with the strength it has had in the past.

Think about it, \$16.4 trillion. It is incredible. The Federal Government is currently operating with just \$25 million of so-called headroom underneath a statutory debt limit which, to be more precise, is \$16.394 trillion. We are told that we reached the debt ceiling at the beginning of the year, and in order for the government to pay for obligations without further borrowing, Treasury has been using so-called "extraordinary measures," such as changing the finances of certain Federal savings plans.

Sadly, the use of such measures has become the norm under this administration and under this Senate majority, where budget and debt decisions are continually made through last-minute, closed-door deals. I don't think the American people can stomach another cliff scenario. I don't think they

want to turn on the news and see another clock counting down to the latest in a string of perfectly avoidable crises.

There is a better way to legislate. I am not talking about some novel or unheard of approach. I am talking about doing things through the regular order. Anyone watching the Senate operate over the last few years probably doesn't know what I am talking about. There is a process that has been established to facilitate compromise and move even controversial pieces of legislation over the finish line.

Under this process bills are assigned to committees where they are debated and discussed in hearings and markups. Committees are able to consider and process proposals before legislation is brought to the Senate floor. While this system isn't perfect, moving a bill through the committee greatly improves its prospect for passage in a divided Senate.

This isn't meant to be a civic lesson. I know my colleagues understand how the committee process works. As we debate yet another major piece of legislation that hasn't gone through a committee, I don't think a reminder is out of order. We need to return the Senate to regular order, which includes processing budgets through the Senate Budget Committee and processing the debt limit through the Senate Finance Committee.

We are told if we pass this legislation, the administration will be able to borrow to be able to pay off incoming obligations until May 19. Then, presumably, we will be back to the use of "extraordinary measures," which as I understand it will get the government through the end of July before we are once again talking about a possible default.

That is not the way to run a government. Prospects of more debt limit impasses and threats of future defaults serve only to elevate uncertainty among the American people about whether the Federal Government will honor its financial obligations. Unfortunately, this administration has continued to play on this uncertainty for political purposes. Rather than working with Congress to resolve our fiscal mess, the President throws out suggestions that Social Security recipients would not receive their benefits or that our troops would not get paid. Indeed, it seems that the President is more interested in engaging in political fights and manufacturing straw men than he is in eliminating threats to the fiscal security of our Nation's seniors and our troops.

At the same time, we wait for the first Senate budget in 4 years. I was heartened when I heard the news that the Democratic leadership plans to move forward with a budget this year. However, I am disappointed by indications that no effort will be made in the budget to rein in our unsustainable entitlement programs. I hope that is not true because, to borrow a phrase from

the President, "We can't wait." Entitlement reform can't wait.

Even the trustees of Social Security and Medicare have stated that the entitlements are unsustainable, and they urge quick action. Those trustees include senior officials in the Obama administration who could hardly be viewed as deficit hawks.

These are the problems our Nation faces. Our fiscal and economic well-being literally hang in the balance of these debates. If the Senate is going to be up to the challenge of fixing these problems, we are going to have to start doing things differently. We shouldn't wait until the Nation's finances reach yet another cliff sometime this summer before we start talking again and addressing our unsustainable fiscal situation. That is not what the American people want to see, and that is not the direction in which we should be going.

I believe my colleague from Montana feels the same way; that we can start the talks now in committees and do the things we should in committee and report bills to the floor. Even if we can't support them, at least they will be done the right way. A return to regular order would provide a potential solution, but it wouldn't require that we begin work immediately; that we don't just wait until the last minute and have these decisions made in the office of the majority leader.

Even if we were to pass the stop-gap debt limit suspension measure before us, there is precious little time for us to act. I have suggested and will continue to suggest that the Senate Finance Committee begin to engage now on a longer term debt limit solution. The bill before us would only eliminate the prospect of Federal default until sometime in the summer. That means if we go through regular order, we have only a few months at best to debate, have hearings, process proposals, and make decisions.

I am not under any illusions this process will be easy. If we want to avoid another cliff scenario in late July, this is the best way to go forward. It is the best path forward.

We don't need any more last-minute deals to avoid going over cliffs. We certainly don't need any more countdowns or threats of default and downgrades to our Nation's credit rating. Of course, we don't need to wait in the hopes that President Obama will finally break his string of failures to arrive at a so-called grand bargain. We have the tools at our disposal to address these problems, but, as I said, we need to start now, immediately.

As the ranking member of the Senate Finance Committee, I am committed to working with my colleagues on the committee—those on both sides of the aisle—to reach a long-term solution on the debt limit. I believe this process can put us on a path to tax and entitlement reform, which is the key to righting our Nation's fiscal course and putting us on a better economic footing.

The measure before us is not a long-term solution to the debt ceiling or our

fiscal predicament, nor is it intended to be. I am convinced that if we want a long-term solution, and if we want to avoid facing yet another cliff, we need to restore regular order in the Senate. I think anything short of that is not going to work.

We have good people on both sides of the floor, people who love this country, people who really can work together if they will. We have committees set up to take care of these problems, but they are being bypassed. We must find ways of working through the committees.

We have a number of people on both sides who need to deal with the uncertainties, the problems and the difficulties in these fiscal matters. I have confidence in our chairman and in his leadership, and I know this is not his fault. I think he would prefer regular order, as would I. It puts a lot more burden on us as committee members, but that is where it ought to be. We ought to be able to face these problems.

We have excellent people on both sides on the Finance Committee. I would like to see the Finance Committee do its work and have the confidence that we should and get this done in a proper manner, in the right way, before we go off the fiscal cliff again or before we need to be faced with the fiscal cliff.

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

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

AMENDMENTS NOS. 6 AND 7, EN BLOC

Mr. PORTMAN. Mr. President, I have two amendments at the desk and I ask for their immediate consideration, en bloc.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report the amendments.

The legislative clerk read as follows:

The Senator from Ohio [Mr. PORTMAN] proposes amendments en bloc numbered 6 and 7.

Mr. PORTMAN. I ask unanimous consent that the reading of the amendments be dispensed with.

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

The amendments are as follows: (Purpose: To require that any debt limit increase be balanced by equal spending cuts over the next decade)

At the end of the bill, insert the following: SEC. ____ . DOLLAR FOR DOLLAR REQUIREMENT.

(a) DEBT LIMIT CONTROL.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—Subchapter I of chapter 31 of title 31, United States Code, is amended by inserting after section 3101A the following:

“§ 3101B. Debt limit control

“(a) DECLARATION OF A DEBT LIMIT WARNING.—

“(1) IN GENERAL.—In the event of a near breach of the public debt limit established by section 3101, the Secretary of the Treasury shall issue a debt limit warning to the

Committee on Finance of the Senate and the Committee on Ways and Means of the House of Representatives that shall include a determination as to when extraordinary measures may be necessary in order to prolong the funding of the United States Government.

“(2) DEFINITIONS.—In this subsection:

“(A) EXTRAORDINARY MEASURES.—The term ‘extraordinary measures’ means measures that may be taken by the Secretary of the Treasury in the event of a breach of the debt limit by the United States to prolong the function of United States Government in the absence of a debt limit increase.

“(B) NEAR BREACH.—The term ‘near breach’ means the point at which the Secretary of the Treasury determines that the United States Government will reach the statutorily prescribed debt limit within 60 calendar days notwithstanding the implementation of extraordinary measures.

“(b) PRESIDENTIAL SUBMISSION OF DEBT LIMIT LEGISLATION.—

“(1) SAVINGS RECOMMENDATIONS FROM THE PRESIDENT.—Any formal Presidential request to increase the debt limit under this section shall include the amount of the proposed debt limit increase and be accompanied by proposed legislation to reduce spending over the sum of the current and following 10 years by an amount equal to or greater than the amount of the requested debt limit increase. Net interest savings may not be counted towards spending reductions required by this paragraph.

“(2) CALCULATION.—The spending savings under paragraph (1) shall be calculated against a budget baseline consistent with section 257 of the Balanced Budget and Emergency Deficit Control Act of 1985. This baseline shall exclude the extrapolation of any spending that had been enacted under an emergency designation.”

(2) SUBCHAPTER ANALYSIS.—The table of sections for chapter 31 of title 31, United States Code, is amended by inserting after the item for section 3101A the following:

“3101B. Debt limit control.”

(b) CONGRESSIONAL REQUIREMENT TO RESTRAIN SPENDING WHILE RAISING THE DEBT LIMIT.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—Title III of the Congress and Budget Act of 1974 is amended by inserting at the end the following:

“SEC. 316. DEBT LIMIT INCREASE POINT OF ORDER.

“(a) IN GENERAL.—

“(1) POINT OF ORDER.—Except as provided in subsection (b), it shall not be in order in the Senate or the House of Representatives to consider any bill, joint resolution, amendment, motion, or conference report that increases the statutory debt limit unless the bill contains net spending reductions of an equal or greater amount over the sum of the current and next 10 fiscal years. Net interest savings may not be counted towards spending reductions required by this paragraph.

“(2) COMPONENTS OF NET SPENDING REDUCTION.—

“(A) CALCULATION.—The savings resulting from the proposed spending reductions under paragraph (1) shall be calculated by the Congressional Budget Office against a budget baseline consistent with section 257 of the Balanced Budget and Emergency Deficit Control Act of 1985. This baseline shall exclude the extrapolation of any spending that had been enacted under an emergency designation.

“(B) AVAILABILITY.—The Senate and the House of Representatives may not vote on any bill, joint resolution, amendment, motion, or conference report that increases the public debt limit unless the cost estimate of that measure prepared by the Congressional Budget Office has been publicly available on

the website of the Congressional Budget Office for at least 24 hours.

“(C) PROHIBIT TIMING SHIFTS.—Any provision that shifts outlays or revenues from within the 10-year window to outside the window shall not count towards the budget savings target for purposes of this subsection.

“(b) SENATE SUPERMAJORITY WAIVER AND APPEAL.—

“(1) WAIVER.—In the Senate, subsection (a)(1) may be waived or suspended only by an affirmative vote of three-fifths of the Members, duly chosen and sworn.

“(2) APPEAL.—An affirmative vote of three-fifths of the Members of the Senate, duly chosen and sworn, shall be required to sustain an appeal of the ruling of the Chair on a point of order raised under subsection (a)(1).”

(2) CONFORMING AMENDMENT.—The table of contents set forth in section 1(b) of the Congressional Budget and Impoundment Control Act of 1974 is amended by inserting after section 315 the following new item:

“Sec. 316. Debt limit increase point of order.”

(Purpose: To amend title 31, United States Code, to provide for automatic continuing resolutions)

At the end of the bill, insert the following:
SEC. _____ . END GOVERNMENT SHUTDOWNS ACT.

(a) SHORT TITLE.—This section may be cited as the “End Government Shutdowns Act”.

(b) AUTOMATIC CONTINUING APPROPRIATIONS.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—Chapter 13 of title 31, United States Code, is amended by inserting after section 1310 the following new section:
“SEC. 1311. CONTINUING APPROPRIATIONS.

“(a)(1) If any appropriation measure for a fiscal year is not enacted before the beginning of such fiscal year or a joint resolution making continuing appropriations is not in effect, there are appropriated such sums as may be necessary to continue any program, project, or activity for which funds were provided in the preceding fiscal year—

“(A) in the corresponding appropriation Act for such preceding fiscal year; or

“(B) if the corresponding appropriation bill for such preceding fiscal year did not become law, then in a joint resolution making continuing appropriations for such preceding fiscal year.

“(2) Appropriations and funds made available, and authority granted, for a program, project, or activity for any fiscal year pursuant to this section shall be at a rate of operations not in excess of the lower of—

“(A) 100 percent of the rate of operations provided for in the regular appropriation Act providing for such program, project, or activity for the preceding fiscal year;

“(B) in the absence of such an Act, 100 percent of the rate of operations provided for such program, project, or activity pursuant to a joint resolution making continuing appropriations for such preceding fiscal year; or

“(C) 100 percent of the annualized rate of operations provided for in the most recently enacted joint resolution making continuing appropriations for part of that fiscal year or any funding levels established under the provisions of this Act;

for the period of 120 days. After the first 120 day period during which this subsection is in effect for that fiscal year, the applicable rate of operations shall be reduced by 1 percentage point. For each subsequent 90 day period during which this subsection is in effect for that fiscal year, the applicable rate of operations shall be reduced by 1 percentage

point. The 90-day period reductions shall continue beyond the last day of that fiscal year until the new appropriation has been enacted.

“(3) Appropriations and funds made available, and authority granted, for any fiscal year pursuant to this section for a program, project, or activity shall be available for the period beginning with the first day of a lapse in appropriations and ending with the date on which the applicable regular appropriation bill for such fiscal year becomes law (whether or not such law provides for such program, project, or activity) or a continuing resolution making appropriations becomes law, as the case may be.

“(b) An appropriation or funds made available, or authority granted, for a program, project, or activity for any fiscal year pursuant to this section shall be subject to the terms and conditions imposed with respect to the appropriation made or funds made available for the preceding fiscal year, or authority granted for such program, project, or activity under current law.

“(c) Expenditures made for a program, project, or activity for any fiscal year pursuant to this section shall be charged to the applicable appropriation, fund, or authorization whenever a regular appropriation bill or a joint resolution making continuing appropriations until the end of a fiscal year providing for such program, project, or activity for such period becomes law.

“(d) This section shall not apply to a program, project, or activity during a fiscal year if any other provision of law (other than an authorization of appropriations)—

“(1) makes an appropriation, makes funds available, or grants authority for such program, project, or activity to continue for such period; or

“(2) specifically provides that no appropriation shall be made, no funds shall be made available, or no authority shall be granted for such program, project, or activity to continue for such period.”

(2) CLERICAL AMENDMENT.—The table of sections of chapter 13 of title 31, United States Code, is amended by inserting after the item relating to section 1310 the following new item:

“1311. Continuing appropriations.”

Mr. PORTMAN. Mr. President, I rise today to offer first a commonsense amendment to begin to address our Nation’s unprecedented national debt. It is hurting jobs in our economy today and is placing an immoral burden on our kids and our grandkids. This is called the Dollar For Dollar Deficit Reduction Act. It ensures every time we raise the debt limit we cut spending by the same amount over a 10-year period.

We all know the growth of the national debt is not sustainable. In the past 4 years our national debt has risen by \$6 trillion and is projected to add another \$9 trillion over the next decade. These numbers are huge, too big to comprehend. So let’s put it this way: If we don’t do something, we are really in trouble. Between the end of 2008 and 2022—so 9 years from now—the average household share of the national debt will have risen from \$90,000 a household to \$160,000 a household. That is how big the debt will get. Today, it is about \$130,000 per household.

We know we need to do something. Democrats and Republicans alike talk about it a lot. The debt limit is an opportunity to have this debate. Future

decades will bring even more debt, with the Congressional Budget Office—a nonpartisan group here in Congress—now projecting the debt will top 200 percent of our economy in 25 years. Again, this is unprecedented. It is about 100 percent of our economy right now.

And, by the way, the projection that the debt will be 200 percent of our economy in 25 years is a rosy scenario that assumes we will have peace, prosperity, and relatively low interest rates. I think we can all agree that saddling our children and grandchildren with this enormous debt is not just bad economics, it is immoral.

In reining in the debt, the Congressional Budget Office makes clear that spending is driving future deficits. When we look at the future deficits, it is spending that is creating a major problem. Again, according to the Congressional Budget Office, revenues will surpass their historic average, which is about 18 percent of our economy, as soon as the economy begins to recover. Spending, which has been historically 20 percent of our economy, has already jumped to over 23 percent of our economy and is projected to rise to 30, 40, 50 percent of GDP over the next several decades. So clearly we have a spending problem.

The amendment I offer today will ensure that debt limit increases are matched with equal cuts in Federal program spending over the next 10 years—so for a decade. There are no gimmicks, no timing shifts, but these will be real cuts in the growth of Federal spending.

This chart shows what the results of this would be for the country. The top lines are spending. This is the blue line. The bottom line, the red line, is revenue. So here we are today, 2013. Again, the spending as a percent of our economy is just over 23 percent. If we continue to go the way we are going, what will happen, based on these relatively rosy scenarios about our future, is we will see a dip in the spending as a result of our economy and then it goes up and quickly begins to climb further from that over the coming decades. Revenues, again under the current scenario, continue to grow to the point they go above the historic 18 percent. Here it indicates that by 2022 they would be at 19.1 percent. Spending, under the proposal we have before us today—this amendment, the dollar for dollar amendment—goes to 19.6 percent, so just about at the 20-percent historic average.

This of course means we are very close to balance. And it means, again, there is a reasonable result to this, which ends up with spending being very close to the historic average, revenue coming above its historic average, and again we are back on track toward fiscal discipline and toward fiscal sanity. That means we can have a stronger economy—the kind of robust economy we all hope for—bringing back the jobs and not leaving to our kids and

grandkids such an enormous debt and deficit.

We would still have a deficit here, a small one, and this would be positioning the deficit to get to balance because it would be such a relatively small deficit compared to what we have had in the past. If enacted, the result will be about \$3 trillion in savings over the next decade. This is roughly consistent with what other groups have talked about, including the Simpson-Bowles Commission and others. Given the \$44 trillion in spending projected over the next decade, this \$3 trillion in savings should not be too much to ask. In fact, simply limiting spending growth to about 3 percent per year would accomplish this same result.

So that is essentially what is being required here when you say there will be a dollar-for-dollar reduction in spending over 10 years every time you raise the debt limit by \$1. The result is that, again, by 2022 the deficit will fall to less than 1 percent of GDP—very close to balance. The debt as a percentage of the economy would actually be declining as well, and it actually declines to the point where, according to the Simpson-Bowles Commission and others, it would be 60-some percent of the economy, which many view as having stabilized our debt. Again, we have a lot of work to do even at that point, but at least it stabilizes it. It actually declines by about 19 points as a percentage of the economy from its peak in terms of our debt. Future generations would be spared this crushing debt and the economic stagnation we otherwise will face if Washington does nothing.

Some may contend that the debt limit is the wrong place to have this spending debate. I have heard this a lot as I have been promoting this idea. I have to respectfully disagree. The debt limit is about all that has worked. The debt limit is not just about paying past bills, it also presents an opportunity to talk about the future—what should our bills be in the future? It is not about, as the President often says, paying our past bills. Those should be paid. It is about what bills we are going to rack up going forward. We have to make a change. If we don't, the country is headed toward bankruptcy.

Furthermore, nearly every single deficit reduction bill over the past 28 years has been linked to the debt limit. In fact, I would say every single one of the significant deficit reduction packages in the last few decades has been linked to the debt limit. It is all that has worked around here.

In 1985—there are some Members in the Senate today who were here then, and they will tell you that the Gramm-Rudman-Hollings bill, which came out of the Senate, helped reduce the deficit. It was attached to what? A debt limit bill. Since that time, the three largest deficit reduction packages in the 1990s—1990, 1993, and 1997, including the 1997 Balanced Budget Act—were all linked to what? A debt limit discus-

sion. So it is really all that has worked.

The Statutory Pay-As-You-Go Act, which a lot of Democrats were very supportive of, was in 2010. That came out of a debt limit discussion.

Finally, of course, the debt limit was the impetus for the Budget Control Act just 2 years ago, when this Congress made a commitment to save \$2.1 trillion over the decade. So just 2 years ago, we agreed to this dollar-for-dollar provision, and it was done as part of the debt limit.

As we discuss the dollar-for-dollar amendment pending today, we have to remember that this is really where the idea came from. Dollar-for-dollar came out of the Budget Control Act. So for folks who attempt to label this idea as untenable, too aggressive, or without precedent, remember that the dollar-for-dollar legislation passed only 2 years ago with only 95 Democratic votes in the House and 45 of the 51 Democrats here in the Senate voting yes. So the idea certainly has precedent, and given the results we talked about earlier, it is a commonsense way to address the debt limit debate today and in the future if this body is going to be serious about getting Washington's spending and debt under control.

By the way, it wouldn't apply to this first short-term debt limit extension. This would apply to the debt limit extension that we all hope will be a longer term agreement with Republicans and Democrats, including, as the chair and the ranking member of the Finance Committee just talked about, tax reform and entitlement reform—working together to solve these problems. This would provide the impetus to do that.

So whether that is in 3 months or, as some are suggesting, 6 months from now, given the fact that Treasury will be able to use some authorities to help extend that debt limit, that is when this would apply. It would not apply to this short-term debt limit, but it is putting the discipline in place now that we employed only 2 years ago to be able to get real savings for our country.

The debt limit is also an important tool for deficit reduction because it is all we have had. And when you think about it, we haven't had budgets. The only recent restraint came in the context of the debt limit and dollar-for-dollar reductions in the Budget Control Act. This is partly because the Senate has not passed a budget, as we all know and we all have heard about, in over 3 years. I understand the majority is committed to passing a budget in the Senate this year. I commend them for that. I hope they will. But reconciling it with the House, of course, will be a challenge, and future years also remain uncertain. So in the absence of a budget, the fact remains that the debt limit has been the effective tool we have used.

By the way, the fact also remains that now nearly two-thirds of all

spending is not even subject to the budget. Why? Because it is on autopilot. It is not annually appropriated. It is the mandatory spending. So even if we have a budget, which I hope we do, still, the debt limit is the most likely way for us to get at the bigger picture since 62 percent of spending is on autopilot—or mandatory—and not subject to the annual appropriations process that would be part of the budget agreement. This is why the debt limit is likely to remain the most successful tool for deficit reduction.

Common sense tells us that while Washington pays its past bills, it also has to take steps to reduce its future bills. Based on one poll I saw, 72 percent of Americans agree that when you increase the debt limit, it should be matched by equal cuts, dollar-for-dollar—72 percent of Americans. It is common sense. We did it 2 years ago. It leads us to a result that seems reasonable.

Most people think we need to get spending under control. The revenues are going to go up based on the CBO projections here, and we get to virtually a balance over 10 years if we put this in place, with the permitting of about 3 percent growth in spending every year. So this is not an unreasonable result. It is a sensible solution. Congress did it a couple years ago.

I hope my colleagues will join me on a bipartisan basis to say that with regard to the longer term debt limit extension we are facing somewhere in the 3- to 6-month period, that we put in place this discipline and then allow the committees to do their work. We should go back to regular order. The Finance Committee chairman has made this point repeatedly, and so has the ranking member. Other members have. We need hearings. We need to have an open process. We don't want these last-minute bills that people haven't had a chance to read and staff hasn't had a chance to review.

This would put us in that position—knowing that we have this discipline in place, we can achieve this, and we must achieve this for the sake of our kids and grandkids. I urge my colleagues to support it.

Mr. President, I now would like to offer a second amendment. I have been asked to offer these two amendments together. The second amendment is another idea because it doesn't have to do with the debt limit per se, but it has to do with how we avoid government shutdowns. This is bipartisan legislation, and it is a bipartisan idea whose time I believe has come.

Every year since 1997 and in all but 2 years since 1985, Congress has reached the October 1 fiscal year-end without doing all the appropriations bills. Think about that. Every year since 1997, we have not been able to reach agreement on all the appropriations bills, and only twice since 1985 have we ended the fiscal year with having all the appropriations bills done.

What is the result? In some years there has been a relatively quick vote

on what is called a continuing resolution to continue government spending in those areas where we haven't completed our work. In other years the result has been a real showdown, with the threat of government shutdown. And then in some years we have had an actual government shutdown. In fact, it has happened way too often, and the reason is that, again, we haven't been able to come together as Republicans and Democrats, the House and the Senate, working with the President, to put forward these appropriations bills in regular order, and so we face these shutdowns. And we actually have faced some last-minute budget bills, many of which are full of surprises because Members haven't had a chance to read them and staff has not had a chance to review them.

These shutdowns, by the way, when we have had them, have created real problems. Americans hoping to travel abroad find that their passport applications can't be processed. Disease surveillance ceases at the Centers for Disease Control. Recruitment of Border Patrol agents stops. Families planning to go on vacations to national parks find their destinations closed. It is not a good way to run a government, and I think we should avoid those shutdowns.

Some make the reasonable argument that these shutdowns are an acceptable price to pay if they lead to spending cuts. I understand that is an argument out there, but in fact, as I look at it, I think the opposite has occurred. The 1996 government shutdown that a lot of people talk about produced such a large backlash that it seems as if a lot of lawmakers decided to abandon spending restraint altogether. A proof point might be that after that 1996 shutdown, nondefense discretionary spending nearly doubled over the next decade. So it seems to me as though the case for spending restraint was harmed, not helped, by the 1996 government shutdown.

The last-minute budget bill that usually results from the threat of government shutdown tends to have a lot of surprises in it. It is a real problem because over the years Congress has found itself just hours away from a government shutdown, often forced to vote on these thousand-plus page bills—an omnibus spending bill that folks have not had a chance to read and our staffs haven't sufficiently reviewed. It is not the fault of our Appropriations committees, which do their best under tight deadlines. I think it is the fault of these artificial deadlines themselves.

With hundreds of billions of dollars at stake, we could all use more time to better understand what we are voting on. This bipartisan amendment would solve these problems.

For all regular programs or activities whose appropriations bills have not been approved—whether it is all the bills or whether it is only one bill—the End Government Shutdown Act would

automatically continue the current level of spending, no significant disruption, no crisis for citizens, no furloughed employees, no rush to approve a last-minute budget deal that people haven't had a chance to look at.

Yet we don't want these continuing resolutions to take the pressure off lawmakers to complete their work, so after 120 days there would be a 1-percent reduction in spending. It would be across the board in a normal year. Because the new fiscal year is October 1, this would mean lawmakers would have until January 29—well after the holiday break—to complete their work on the appropriations bills.

And this year, should Washington fail to come to an agreement on the continuing resolution, spending would remain at whatever the current level of spending is for those first 120 days.

Under this amendment, after the 120-day period, spending levels on any remaining unfinished bills would continue to be reduced across the board 1 percent every 90 days. I doubt that would be necessary because I think the appropriators of the House and Senate would come together to solve the problems. But every 90 days, there would be an additional 1 percent reduction until the appropriations bills for the year-long continuing resolution have been enacted.

These eventual small cuts are designed to keep both sides at the bargaining table. They aren't so small as to be irrelevant, but they are not so large as to gut any programs. Priorities of both Republicans and Democrats would be subject to the same across-the-board cuts, and both parties, therefore, would have an incentive to come to an agreement to fully fund the priority programs and reduce funding for lower priorities.

This bipartisan amendment may not be each lawmaker's idea of perfect. It is certainly not mine. I would rather get all the appropriations bills done, but that is not what is happening. But we should all agree that it improves upon the current situation where we bounce from crisis to crisis, worried about government shutdowns as well as the rushed bills we have to vote on to avoid shutdown. The American people want us to complete our work in a logical way, and this amendment helps us to do that.

I urge my colleagues on both sides of the aisle to support this commonsense, bipartisan approach.

I yield the floor.

AMENDMENT NO. 8

Mr. TOOMEY. Mr. President, I have an amendment at the desk and ask for its consideration.

Ms. MIKULSKI. If the Senator from Pennsylvania will withhold? After he speaks, the Senator from Montana will speak, and then may I be recognized on the Portman amendment? I ask unanimous consent I be recognized after the Senator from Montana.

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

Without objection, the pending amendment is set aside.

The clerk will report the amendment.

The legislative clerk read as follows:

The Senator from Pennsylvania [Mr. TOOMEY] proposes an amendment numbered 8.

The amendment is as follows:

(Purpose: To protect Social Security benefits and military pay and require that the United States Government prioritize all obligations on the debt held by the public in the event that the debt limit is reached)

At the end of the bill, insert the following:

SEC. ____ . ENSURING THE FULL FAITH AND CREDIT OF THE UNITED STATES AND PROTECTING AMERICA'S SOLDIERS AND SENIORS ACT.

(a) **SHORT TITLE.**—This section may be cited as the “Ensuring the Full Faith and Credit of the United States and Protecting America’s Soldiers and Seniors Act”.

(b) **PRIORITIZE OBLIGATIONS ON THE DEBT HELD BY THE PUBLIC, SOCIAL SECURITY BENEFITS, AND MILITARY PAY.**—In the event that the debt of the United States Government reaches the statutory limit as defined in section 3101 of title 31, United States Code, the following shall take equal priority over all other obligations incurred by the Government of the United States:

(1) The authority of the Department of the Treasury contained in section 3123 of title 31, United States Code, to pay with legal tender the principal and interest on debt held by the public.

(2) The authority of the Commissioner of Social Security to pay monthly old-age, survivors’ and disability insurance benefits under title II of the Social Security Act.

(3) The payment of pay and allowances for members of the Armed Forces on active duty.

(c) **LIMITED DEBT LIMIT AUTHORITY.**—

(1) **IN GENERAL.**—If the Secretary of the Treasury determines, after consultation with the Director of the Office of Management and Budget, that incoming revenue will not be sufficient to finance the priorities listed in subsection (b) over the following 2 weeks, the Secretary, in coordination with the Director of the Office of Management and Budget, shall—

(A) notify Congress of the expected revenue shortfall; and

(B) raise the debt limit by the amount necessary to cover the difference between incoming revenue and the revenue needed to finance the priorities listed in subsection (b) on a 2 week basis.

(2) **LIMIT.**—The debt limit increase provided by paragraph (1)(B) may not exceed the difference between expected outlays for the listed priorities and expected revenue.

(3) **EXCESS REVENUE.**—If incoming revenue exceeds the amount projected by the Secretary of the Treasury, in consultation with the Director of the Office of Management and Budget, needed to finance the priorities listed in subsection (b) over the 2-week period, any amount in excess shall be held in reserve and applied to the following 2-week period.

THE PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Pennsylvania.

Mr. TOOMEY. Mr. President, I wish to address the substance of this amendment, but let me start with a little context on this underlying bill. The underlying bill, of course, suspends the debt ceiling from now until May 18. What that means is in the meantime, the administration will be able to borrow as much money as it wants within certain constraints, but a very large

sum of money over the next 3½ months, at which point the debt ceiling will be reinstated at a higher level. We expect the government will probably borrow something on the order of \$400 billion between now and such time as the debt ceiling is reestablished.

We have \$16.4 trillion in debt today, so by the time the debt ceiling is re-applied, reimposed, it will be just under \$17 trillion. At that point we will be right back to the standoff we were at very recently, a standoff over what to do about this massive amount of debt we already have and the massive amount of additional debt the administration would like to create. The administration’s position is very clear: They want additional borrowing authority with no strings attached—no conditions, no limits on future spending. They just want to be able to keep borrowing. Some on our side of the aisle believe very strongly that any increase in the debt ceiling that authorizes still more borrowing needs to be accompanied with some measure of spending discipline so we can at some point begin to regain control over these out-of-control deficits and the debt.

In any case, what we know for sure is that this tension will reemerge and that we do not have a resolution in place now. If this measure passes, which very likely it will, and it will be signed into law, we have just kicked this can down the road until May—maybe June or July at the most—but we surely will be back at this point where we are having this argument.

Here is what else we know. We know that tax revenue, ongoing tax revenue coming into the Government’s coffers, is going to be about 75 percent of all the money the Government is planning to spend in the coming year—or is likely to spend. Since 75 percent does not cover everything, the other 25 percent is meant to be borrowed. Therein lies the necessity of raising the debt ceiling, precisely to fund the difference between all the Government wants to spend and the tax revenue it is going to have.

It is important to note, by the way, that raising this debt ceiling is not about paying for past bills incurred. I know that is repeated around here all the time. It is totally untrue. We have a funding for the appropriations process that expires at the end of March. There is no appropriation that is in place going forward. The debt ceiling increase, the authority to borrow more money, is all about funding future spending, which is part of the reason why some of us think this is a very sensible moment to try to bring some discipline to that future spending.

What would happen if we do not raise the debt ceiling right away? If we do not, we would have to have a 25-percent cut in all government spending. That is pretty massive. That is pretty problematic. The administration and some actually go way overboard in the threats they attach to this. They

threaten to inflict the maximum possible economic damage if the debt ceiling is not raised promptly upon the point at which they run out of their maneuvering room. So you hear threats about a default on our debt and senior citizens will not get their Social Security check and our military folks will not get paid. All kinds of the most disruptive, most damaging, and most dangerous kinds of outcomes are threatened by the administration. This is unnecessary. This is not true. This is not what would happen. But there is an incentive, of course, to try to scare and intimidate Republicans into giving the administration the unconditional ability to keep on borrowing and spending as they have been doing, and that is why we hear this.

My amendment is an attempt to absolutely minimize the disruption, the danger, and the drama. It is an attempt to get away from “government by cliff” and to have a sensible approach to bringing our spending under control. It is called the Full Faith and Credit Act. What it does is it says very simply, since none of us can guarantee the debt ceiling is going to be raised on any particular date—we all know how we are going to vote. We cannot control anyone else’s vote. We certainly cannot control a single vote in the House and we cannot control what the President is going to do. Therefore, we can never know for sure whether and when and under what circumstances the debt limit will be raised.

My point is the sensible and prudent and responsible thing to do is have a plan to minimize the downside if the debt ceiling is not raised immediately upon reaching it. This has nothing to do, by the way, with the current circumstances of suspending the debt ceiling. This is all about the next time, in May or June or July, when we find ourselves facing these circumstances.

What my bill says is, if we get to that point, the Federal Government would be obligated to prioritize three categories of spending: That would be interest on our debt to make sure we do not default on our debt and create a financial crisis; it would be Social Security payments to everybody who qualifies for a Social Security payment so that no senior citizen has to worry and wait to get their check; and it would be Active-Duty Military personnel so that no soldier has to worry or wonder whether they are going to get paid.

By the way, what my bill does is it goes a step forward and says not only will the Federal Government have to prioritize those three categories, but it says in the event on any given day the tax revenues were not sufficient to cover those three payment obligations, the Treasury Secretary would be authorized to borrow additional amounts to ensure that those payments were made.

What does it do? It guarantees that it would be absolutely impossible, under any circumstances, to default on our

debt, to miss a Social Security payment to anyone, or to be late with the military pay to anybody. That is what it would do. It would take a little bit of the drama and the risk and the uncertainty and the potential damage to the economy off the table and allow us to have an honest, sensible discussion about how we are going to get spending under control.

Mind you, these three categories of spending, if you add them all together, cumulatively account for about one-third of all the spending the government is scheduled to engage in over the course of this fiscal year. Ongoing tax revenue is about three-quarters of all the spending that is going to occur. So clearly there is far more than enough tax revenue to cover these items, but tax revenue comes in in a lumpy fashion. It doesn't come in smoothly and uniformly over the course of the year, hence the provision that allows the Treasury Secretary to borrow in the event that they needed to in the short run to smooth it out.

Let me say something that is of more fundamental importance. This amendment is not intended to be a replacement for raising the debt ceiling. Unfortunately, as long as we are running structural deficits, we are going to have to borrow money to fund them. This amendment, if it were to pass and be signed into law, does not mean we would not have to raise the debt ceiling at some point. Of course we are going to have to until we get to the point where we have balanced budgets and do not have to continue to run deficit spending.

By the way, I do not think it is desirable or optimal to cross into that threshold where we are living under the rules of prioritization, because it is very disruptive to not be paying all the other bills on time as we ought to. That is much better. But my point is, there is something even more important here and that is to fundamentally bring our spending and deficits under control. Trillion dollar deficits, a total debt that now exceeds the total economic output of our country—we have a disastrous fiscal situation on our hands. It is right now costing us jobs, economic growth today, and it is guaranteed to result in a full-blown fiscal crisis and a meltdown if we do not change the path we are on.

The only time we have ever been able to persuade this President to agree to significant spending reductions was the last time we argued over the debt limit and we did end up getting spending cuts as part of that. I think the urgency of getting our spending under control and getting our fiscal house in order so we can avoid a fiscal crisis and have the kind of economic recovery we need is what necessitates a prioritization bill so we can take the shrill excesses and the threats that some are claiming off the table and have a real discussion and real solutions about how we are going to get spending under control.

My strong hope is that we can bring an end to "government by cliff." Senator PORTMAN has an amendment, I believe, that he is going to introduce, which would prevent the danger of a government shutdown in the event that a CR, a continuing resolution, expires. It makes all the sense in the world. We should not find ourselves backed up against the wall at midnight on December 31 with a great calamity threatened if we do not pass some bill that nobody has ever seen. This is a terrible way to run the government and that is what we have been doing. What my bill does is it eliminates the risk of default and it creates the opportunity for us to bring some spending discipline associated with any future debt limit increase. The bill of Senator PORTMAN will avert the risk of a government shutdown.

I fully support his other efforts to make sure we have a dollar in savings for every new dollar in debt we create. We have an obligation to do that. We have already have too big a debt burden. We have to begin curbing the problem that causes it, and that is too much spending.

I urge my colleagues to support this amendment. As I say, it will not have any effect on the specific bill under consideration to temporarily suspend the debt limit. It will make a much more manageable and a much less disruptive discussion when we address the debt limit once again in May or June—or when that day surely will arrive.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Montana.

Mr. BAUCUS. Mr. President, I rise to speak on two amendments. It will be the first amendment offered by the Senator from Ohio, his first amendment, and also I will speak on an amendment offered by the Senator from Pennsylvania. I think the Senator from Maryland, the chairman of the Appropriations Committee, will speak on the second Portman amendment.

I chuckled this morning. I see two new Members, very able Members of the Senate, who are now members of the Senate Finance Committee, follow their urges to offer amendments immediately to bills before the Senate. Senator PORTMAN is doing that, Senator TOOMEY is doing that, and I commend them, very much commend them for being so interested in the subject and allowing their intellectual juices to flow and come up with something that is new and different and in their view might make some sense. I think part of this is because of the newly found efforts here in the Senate, and desire in the Senate, certainly among rank-and-file Members, to do something.

What you hear around here is: "Regular order." That is something I very much subscribe to, namely let the committees do their work. Senator PORTMAN and Senator TOOMEY are certainly following that tradition by offering amendments so the Senate Finance Committee, or in this case the

Senate floor, is doing its work with respect to the pending measure.

I want to start by saying how much I appreciate the efforts of the Speaker, Speaker BOEHNER. He has done a good job giving us a few months' breathing room here in the Congress with respect to the debt limit increase; that is, having the House pass on a bipartisan basis a measure which extends the debt ceiling limit for another several months, to May 18. That gives us a chance to figure out how we are going to get our fiscal house better in order, cut the debt, and deal with some other vexatious issues such as the sequester and the continuing resolution.

The amendment, I must say, though, offered by my good friend from Ohio is a throwback to an effort that was undertaken essentially a year or two ago. With all due respect, it didn't work. What was that? Namely, it was the Sanders amendment, which is for every dollar increase in the national debt there be a dollar cut in Federal spending. This was something that was tried, the House of Representatives tried, the Speaker negotiated with the President, and it didn't work. Frankly, it led to a big confrontation, if you will, on August 11, where the debt was reaching its limit, there was no agreement on spending cuts, and the credit agencies began to downgrade U.S. credit. It didn't work. I again say I am very proud of the Speaker for trying a different approach.

It is also important to point out that if this amendment were to pass, we would have to send this bill back to the House. We are already now on a good track for the Senate to pass, without amendment, the House-passed bill. If that happens, then the world knows that the U.S. Government will not be in debt until at least May 18, and because of measures the Treasury Secretary will not exceed the debt limit until sometime in August.

We will be in debt. We have a big debt. The debt is about a \$16 trillion debt, but we will not reach our debt limit if the House bill is passed by the U.S. Senate. In my judgment, it is very important that we pass this House amendment so that we in the Senate and the House of Representatives can get to work on how we reduce the debt and how we get our house in order as best as we possibly can.

I thank my friend from Ohio for his approach. Dollar for dollar, this has been attempted in the past. It has been rejected by the Speaker in the House of Representatives, and it has been rejected by the majority of the House of Representatives. This is an idea that was once tried, but it didn't work. I submit, with all due respect, it would not work this time either for the reasons I just mentioned and for the additional reason that it would further complicate an effort to increase our debt limit for a short period of time, which allows us to do our work.

I now wish to turn to the Toomey amendment. Again, I thank my colleague from Pennsylvania, a member of

the committee, for industriously coming up with an idea. I must say, with total respect, I don't think the idea works. Basically the idea is that when the debt limit is reached, the limit would be increased only for the purpose of addressing principal and interest on the debt held by the public or Social Security benefits and military pay, and that is it. The debt limit is automatically increased only for those three reasons and not for other reasons; that is, not for other programs the U.S. Government has an obligation to fund.

What are some of the other programs? Medicare, veterans' benefits, disability benefits, Medicaid, Pell grants, special education for disabled children, and highway funding. The list is extremely lengthy. I just mentioned a few.

What happens if the Toomey amendment is law? First of all, we have reached our debt limit. What are the credit markets going to think? What are credit agencies going to think? They are going to think, oh, my gosh, the U.S. Congress has not increased its debt limit but for essentially on a daily basis Social Security, interest on the debt, and military pay. It is not for military procurement or men and women in the Air Guard. It is just military pay. It sounds as though it is just for active-duty pay. Think of what will happen. Think of the chaos. Other agencies are not going to know whether they will be funded. They have no idea. According to the Toomey amendment, it is up to the Treasury Secretary to prioritize. How can he do that when there is no money there and the debt limit is not increased? Frankly, I cannot believe this amendment is even offered. With all due respect to my friend from Pennsylvania, it is so nonsensical.

With respect to the two amendments that are offered here, the first being the Portman amendment, I say to my friends, it has been tried in the past and it didn't work. It didn't work when the President and Speaker were trying to negotiate a deal on August 11. It caused chaos in the markets. That is one of the reasons the markets fell so much in August of 2011.

If this amendment is agreed to, it will have to be sent back to the House. It will mean putting this issue of extending the debt limit increase for 3 months in tremendous jeopardy. I don't think we want to do that. I think it is the wrong thing to do.

The second amendment, the Toomey amendment, is totally unworkable. It will cause even more chaos at a time when we are trying to calm the markets, at a time when we are trying to get more confidence, more credibility, not less. In my judgment, both—especially the latter—will result in a lot more worry in the markets, not more confidence. It will create more worry, more uncertainty, and for those reasons I think these amendments should be rejected.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Maryland.

Ms. MIKULSKI. Mr. President, I stand as the chair of the full Appropriations Committee to respond to two Portman amendments. I will comment on one and speak to the one related to automatic CRs, which is in the jurisdiction of the Appropriations Committee.

First I will speak to the dollar-for-dollar cuts, which the Senator from Montana and chair of the Finance Committee spoke to. I want to say I absolutely support his position. As an appropriator, I agree with his arguments. The dollar-for-dollar cuts would make the Boehner rule permanent. It would raise the debt limit by mandating a \$1 trillion cut in spending. This amendment could allow the minority of 41 Senators to dictate the fiscal policy to the majority.

I also oppose the Portman amendment related to automatic continuing resolutions. What does the amendment do? It sounds good. I must say I have great admiration for the Senator from Ohio. He has a well-known reputation for working on a bipartisan basis. When he was in the House, he worked so well with my colleague Senator CARDIN. I look forward to having these kinds of discussions and seeing how we can work out some of these issues.

In listening to the debate, I think we are all in agreement of our goals, but we disagree on the means.

As I read it, Senator PORTMAN's amendment says if Congress fails to pass an appropriations bill or a continuing resolution related to it, instead of a government shutdown, automatically a continuing resolution would go into effect.

Now that sounds good. However, there is an additional part that says every 3 or 4 months, if Congress fails to replace the CR, it would decrease agency funding by 1 percent across the board.

That sounds pretty good too because, after all, what is 1 percent? Well, 1 percent compounded has Draconian results. This amendment would set up essentially the framework for many sequesters that would go into effect automatically if Congress doesn't pass the appropriations.

I agree with the Senator from Ohio that we need to follow regular order, which means bringing up appropriations bills one by one, open, transparent, debatable. If you want to shave or save, offer amendments. If we had regular order, we would be able to pass our bills.

We cannot have a situation in the Congress where we have not been able to bring up bills because of the filibusters and deleterious tactics of some Members, and then when we can't bring them up, we are punished for it.

I oppose this amendment for three reasons. The amendment is the wrong solution, regular order is the solution.

Mr. President, I note the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Indiana.

Mr. COATS. I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

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

Mr. COATS. In deference to the Senator from Maryland, I went through the cold-and-cough crud that caused her to begin coughing, so I fully understand why she needed to take a break. I am more than willing to step aside when she comes back.

In the interest of time, since I am next up—I know we are trying to move toward a vote at 12:15 p.m.—I wish to proceed. I will be happy to suspend when the Senator gets back.

This afternoon the Senate will vote on a bill recently passed by the House to suspend the debt ceiling for 4 months. First, I wish to commend the House on one aspect of the legislation, which I strongly support, and that is the suspension of salary for Members of Congress if we do not pass a budget by April 15.

As I mentioned on the floor yesterday, Congress, by law, is required to pass a budget. It has been nearly 4 years since it has done so. As a result, the Senate has blatantly ignored its legal duty, not to mention its moral duty, to enact a budget. This is completely irresponsible, and, quite frankly, it is embarrassing. If this body cannot fulfill its most fundamental duty under law to pass a budget, then I say we don't deserve to get paid.

However, another aspect of the bill that would suspend enforcement of the Federal debt limit until at least May—and according to recent statements issued by the administration possibly until August—concerns me. I understand why the House is taking this approach for political and tactical reasons, but unfortunately, this decision only continues the practice of governing from crisis to crisis, cliff to cliff, and pushing through flawed, haphazard legislation at the last minute as we did with the vote on the fiscal cliff, which is a great example of how this body should not function.

As a result of this practice, Members are left deciding between choosing the lesser of two evils. Never again will I, nor I believe many of my colleagues, support any legislation that is negotiated in secret, bypasses the regular process where we have an opportunity to take it up in committee and amend it, if necessary, and then present it to the Senate for debate and evaluation or amendment. Never again will I support something that takes us into the wee hours of the night into New Year's Eve and New Year's Day and then just have a few minutes to try to evaluate it with no debate and no opportunity to amend. This is no way to govern a country. It is no way to strengthen a weak economy and spur job creation, and it is no way to restore confidence among consumers and investors, which is such a critical factor in making for

robust growth, which we are not enjoying right now. Eventually all of us have to stand up and say enough is enough. Pushing these debates up until the last minute, creating our fiscal cliffs, and passing short-term measures must cease.

The people of Indiana have had enough. Across the country the American people have had enough of Washington postponing real action on the most serious challenge facing our country, namely the out-of-control plunge into further deficit spending and debt.

Both Republicans and Democrats, the President and the Congress, liberal and conservative economists and non-partisan people, all agree that our continued increase in debt is unsustainable. We all know that what has been fueling this fire that has engulfed our fiscal house is spending. To date our meager efforts to deal with this looming fiscal calamity are like trying to put out a five-alarm fire with the occasional squeeze of a squirt gun.

I note that the Senator from Maryland is on the floor. If she wishes to resume, I would be happy to suspend my remarks.

Ms. MIKULSKI. Is that okay with the Senator?

Ms. MIKULSKI. I thank the Senator for the courtesy. Both the Senator from Montana and I have been hit by this bug.

Mr. COATS. I was hit by it 2 weeks ago so I fully understand what the Senator is going through.

Ms. MIKULSKI. Little germs are doing to me what my opponents couldn't, which is stop me from talking. I thank the Senator for his courtesy.

Mr. President, I oppose the Portman amendment related to automatic Continuing Resolutions with cuts if Congress does not pass appropriations bills. I acknowledge the legitimacy of his concerns, and I agree that we are all tired of governing from crisis to crisis. And I share his goal of keeping the government open so our Federal agencies can carry out their missions, and serve the American people. But I very much oppose this proposed solution.

Now, what does the amendment do? It sounds good, and I must say, I have a great admiration for the Senator from Ohio. And he has a well-known reputation for working on a bipartisan basis. He has worked so well when he was in the House with my colleague, Senator CARDIN. And I look forward to having these kinds of discussions and seeing how we can work out some of these issues. I think in listening to the debate, we all are in agreement of goals, but we disagree on means.

His amendment, as I read it, says if Congress fails to pass an appropriations bill or a Continuing Resolution related to it, instead of a government shutdown, an automatic Continuing Resolution would go into effect. That sounds good. However, there's an additional part that says, after four months, if Congress fails to replace the

Continuing Resolution, it would decrease agency funding by one percent across the board. Well, that sounds pretty good too. Because after all, what is one percent?

Well, one percent every 90 days compounded has draconian results. This amendment would set up essentially the framework for mini-sequesters that would go into effect automatically if Congress doesn't pass appropriations bills.

I oppose this amendment for three reasons. First, the amendment is a wolf in sheep's clothing. The amendment's stated purpose is to establish automatic Continuing Resolutions, but the amendment wouldn't just extend funding for government operations. It would also cut funding one percent across the board for every 90 days that Congress doesn't pass Appropriations bills or a Continuing Resolution. Mr. President, this amendment just creates a new crisis instead of providing confidence and clear direction. This type of robotic-cutting Continuing Resolution would add uncertainty to the operations of the Federal government.

Second, this amendment is the wrong solution to a long-standing problem. A problem we have become too familiar with, and too comfortable with. I'm talking about not operating according to regular order. I agree with the gentleman from Ohio, we need to follow a regular order. Regular order means Congress receives the President's budget. Regular order means the Appropriations Committee holds hearings and marks up bills. Regular order means bringing up appropriations bills on the Senate floor, one by one, a process that is open, transparent, and allows debate. If a Member wants to save money or shave spending on these bills, that Member can offer amendments. If we had regular order, we would be able to pass our bills.

The solution to the problem of governing from crisis to crisis, of avoiding Continuing Resolutions and government shutdowns, is not an automatic Continuing Resolution. The solution is to get back to regular order, where Congress makes smart decisions about where to make needed investments and where to cut. Permanent robotic-cutting Continuing Resolutions are not the solution.

You have a situation in Congress where we haven't been able to bring up bills because of filibusters, and because of the dilatory tactics of some Members. We can't bring our bills up, and we're punished for it. There are those who have thrown sand in the gears of regular order by tying up appropriations bills with controversial riders and calls for draconian cuts, and then complain when we have to do Continuing Resolutions to keep the government working for the American people. They can't have it both ways. Regular order is the solution.

Third, this amendment simply gives up Congress's Constitutional responsibility, the power of the purse. This

amendment would put the government on auto-pilot for months, perhaps even years. In a divided Congress, it is hard to come to an agreement on spending. But every time we pass a Continuing Resolution, we are giving the executive branch more and more control over the federal budget. This means Congress gives up control to OMB and Cabinet officers.

By not passing our bills, we weaken Congressional oversight. The Appropriations Committee is the only committee that reviews every spending account of every agency. The Committee digs down further than any other committee to make sure that agencies are not wasting taxpayer dollars. And when we find things that need to be fixed, we fix them in our bills. But if we can't get our bills to the President's desk, then our efforts at oversight are not realized.

Mr. President, I agree with the Senator from Ohio that we should stop our dependence on Continuing Resolutions, especially long-term Continuing Resolutions. They are a terrible way to govern. It is time for us to show we can govern. The American people want to see us govern. We all need to work together in good faith and in a timely manner. This is what the Appropriations Committee does.

Mr. President, I urge my colleagues to oppose this amendment.

Mr. President, I also oppose the amendment from the Senator from Ohio that demands a dollar in cuts for every dollar increase in the debt limit.

Under this amendment, the debt limit could not be raised without spending cuts equal to the amount to be raised, unless the requirement is waved by a super-majority of 60 votes. This amendment would make the "Boehner Rule" permanent. The amendment means that in order to raise the debt limit by \$1 trillion, Congress would need to cut \$1 trillion in spending over the next ten years.

This is a terrible amendment. The point has been made before, but I make it again. The debt limit is not about cutting spending, it is about paying for spending that Congress has already authorized. If enacted, the Portman amendment would require trillions and trillions of dollars in cuts to earned benefits programs over the next decade. Cuts to Social Security, Medicare and Medicaid, and all of our other mandatory programs. It would also squeeze discretionary spending, including defense, to the point where I doubt our agencies could carry out their most basic responsibilities.

I remind my colleagues that under this amendment, if the Congress were to pass a tax cut, revenues would fall but spending would not. So the next year, when less revenue comes in, Congress would be forced to pay for the tax cut with equal spending cuts. If Congress passed another huge tax cut for the wealthy, like the Bush tax cuts, then Congress would have to cut programs for the middle class to pay for it.

And I also remind my colleagues that if Congress passed emergency spending, like the Sandy bill, then guess what? Next year, Congress would have to find even more cuts to earned benefits or to discretionary spending to pay for that.

The Senate has a history of always protecting the rights of the minority. But it is one thing to protect the interests of the minority party, and it is quite another to allow a minority of 41 Senators to dictate policy to the majority. By requiring an affirmative super-majority of 60 votes to raise the debt without draconian spending cuts, this amendment gives veto power to the minority over most fiscal decisions that the majority supports. Tax changes, spending, earned benefit reforms, Budget Resolutions, and even Reconciliation. That is simply not acceptable.

Mr. President, the objective of this amendment is obvious to me. The American people do not support cuts to their earned benefits, to Social Security and Medicare. This amendment is a way to force huge cuts in these programs without ever having to justify them.

I suggest that if Members want to cut a trillion dollars from Social Security over the next ten years, let them come down and offer an amendment that does just that. And if Members want to change the rules for Medicare, in order to remove Americans from eligibility for Medicare, or from Medicaid, let them come to the floor with legislation in hand to do just that.

We're talking about trillions of dollars here. Chained CPI is not going to do it. Cuts to providers won't do it. And that's the problem. Cuts of this magnitude require immediate cuts to Social Security. And these cuts reduce the number of people helped by Medicare and Medicaid. And of course, they gut non-defense discretionary spending. And I say to my colleagues, if I'm overstating the case, I look forward to someone coming down here and offering legislation that saves trillions of dollars and doesn't do those things.

We need to get our financial house in order. But we need a balanced solution, one that includes revenues, sensible reforms to earned benefits that save money but do not hurt the middle class, and spending cuts.

This amendment could not be less balanced. This amendment is all cuts and no revenues, and contains not one specific policy that would save a single dollar. Tens of millions of middle class Americans work their whole lives, play by the rules, and pay their taxes every year so one day they can retire with some dignity and some security guaranteed to them. That's the promise this government made, and it's a promise the Congress needs to keep. With reforms to revenues and with reforms to our earned benefits programs. With frugality. With compromise. That's the solution to our fiscal challenges.

Mr. President, this amendment would fundamentally rewrite the social com-

pact between the government and its citizens. Without a single hearing. Without a single witness. This approach is unacceptable, and I urge my colleagues to oppose this amendment.

I yield the floor.

Mr. COATS. Mr. President, I send my sympathy and empathy to the Senator from Maryland. Having gone through the same thing, I fully understand what she is dealing with and trust she will recover quickly.

Picking up where I left off, dare a politician stand here and acknowledge this? Many don't want to. But the truth is this: The main driver of our debt and deficit spending is the runaway mandatory spending on Medicare, Medicaid, and Social Security.

Despite those who claim it is political suicide to touch these programs and despite the fact none of us are saying we should eliminate these programs, this is an area where many don't want to tread. But I believe these programs, which provide much needed benefits for many Hoosiers and Americans, need to be preserved. But our goal and our challenge is to find common ground on not how to eliminate these programs but how to save these programs, both for current retirees and for future generations. If we don't take steps to reform these programs, we risk not only bankrupting our country, we risk having to tell the recipients of the benefits of these programs we no longer can fulfill their needs and our propositions.

It is difficult for me to support any effort to increase the debt limit when we continue to avoid taking the necessary steps to eliminate deficit spending and control our debt in the future. Despite several bipartisan attempts over the last 2 or 3 years, including efforts by the Simpson-Bowles Commission—the President's Commission—the Gang of 6 and the supercommittee of 12, we have failed to put together a credible, long-term deficit reduction package. How then can we continue to raise the debt limit over and over again without agreeing on a way to reduce it in the future?

Repeatedly and thoughtlessly raising the debt limit represents a political moral hazard, a taxpayer bailout for big government politicians who don't want to be bothered by controlling spending. Congress continually increasing the debt limit is akin to consumers having the ability to increase their own credit borrowing limit with no oversight. We just keep increasing the credit limit to pay for more and more spending. It reminds me of a parent dealing with an irresponsible teenager who was given a credit card, asked to stay within the credit limits but month after month after month continues to exceed the limit as the debt piles and the interest on the debt accumulates. Eventually, the parent has to take away the card and take the scissors and cut it up. At what point do we in the Congress take the congressional credit card, cut it up, and get control of our spending?

I urge my colleagues and the President to focus not on how to get enough votes to raise the borrowing limit again but on how we can truly begin the essential task of eliminating deficit spending and reducing our debt as a percentage of GDP.

Part of what makes America so remarkable is we have the ability in this great country to control our destiny. The problems we face are not insurmountable, but they are not avoidable either. It is time we take a stand and do what the people we represent sent us to do. It is time we make the changes we pledged we would make when we were seeking office, and it is time we take control of our country's financial future and put America on a path to prosperity.

With that, I yield the floor and note the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

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

Mr. VITTER. Mr. President, I am going to lay out and discuss a motion to commit which I have at the desk, and we are going to be voting on that motion to commit later today. It is very simple, very straightforward. In fact, I will read it:

Mr. VITTER moves to commit the bill H.R. 325—

That is, of course, the debt limit increase which we have at the desk which we are debating—

to the Committee on Finance with instructions to report the same back to the Senate within 7 days with legislative language that makes changes in existing programs that reduce Federal spending by the increase amount required by section 2(b) . . . over the period of fiscal years 2013 to 2022.

It is very simple. By whatever amount we are increasing the debt limit, so too would we reduce spending. The idea is to start actually paying for what we spend or at least paying for the extra we are going to borrow. It is a commonsense idea, a straightforward approach, and it is not Draconian. We can do it. It starts to put discipline into the process.

This bill before us suspends the debt limit until May 18. That is estimated to mean between \$300 billion and \$400 billion in additional deficit spending. So under this motion to commit, that is the savings we would find. Those are the cuts we would make: \$300 billion to \$400 billion total over 10 years. Obviously, that is \$30 billion to \$40 billion a year. That is thoroughly doable. It is meaningful. It takes some work, but it is thoroughly doable, and those savings would be such a small percentage. The part for this year would only be about 3 percent of the deficit and around 1 percent of total Federal spending.

If we can't find between \$30 billion and \$40 billion a year in savings, is

there truly a way we can agree to major budget reforms? If we can't find those modest savings, should we be borrowing more money to just spend and spend and spend?

Let me be clear. My limited motion is not enough. We need more spending cuts and we need more and fundamental budget reform and we need it now. But I am proposing a reasonable first step that is concrete and meaningful as a downpayment toward fiscal soundness.

This bill is short term. It is a patch. It is for 3 months. But it puts us on the right path. It is a concrete, meaningful first step.

Surely, we should have learned by now; Congress passed the last debt limit deal in 2011, but we got a credit downgrade anyway. As we continue to rack up more and more debt—without spending reform, without budget reform—a new downgrade has to be on the way. It is not a question of if; it is a question of when.

All the credit rating agencies have maintained their negative outlook, including after the fiscal cliff deal. The problem, as it was with the deal passed on New Year's Day, is not that we are taxed too little; the problem is we clearly spend too much. Not enough folks in this building recognize that. Everybody in the real world recognizes that, and certainly the credit rating agencies recognize that.

So why don't we take this reasonable, concrete first step? Again, my modest amendment is a small downpayment but an important step, concrete action during the time for which this bill would increase debt, as we work toward a more comprehensive solution.

If we are going to raise the debt limit, we must at least show the taxpayers, the credit rating agencies, and the world that we are serious about getting our fiscal house in order. Without this type of amendment—or in this case a motion to commit—we are not saying that in any way, shape, or form with this bill. That is why without this sort of motion to commit or a roughly similar amendment, I cannot vote for this debt limit increase.

I urge all of my colleagues to join me in a bipartisan way around this approach. I think it would be a step in the right direction.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Utah.

Mr. HATCH. Mr. President, the debt limit alone, under the current administration, had been increased by over \$5 trillion. That is simply unsustainable.

Not to worry, I have recently been told. We have made massive progress toward promising deficit reduction. I hear this even though we have not seen any significant actual reduction.

I have been hearing bold claims by my friends on the other side of the aisle about having attained trillions in budget "savings" and deficit reduction in just the past couple of years alone.

They have gone so far as to say that we have had \$2.4 trillion of deficit reduction legislated in the past 2 years. Of course, the deficit reduction has not been realized. It represents promises and plans that even Democrats seek to undo. It is amazing to me that they make these claims.

I have heard bold claims that we have somehow legislated deficit reduction totaling as much as \$3.6 trillion from my friends on the other side. I have heard that deficit reduction that has been promised can be broken down to an 80-to-20 ratio of spending cuts to tax hikes.

While I often applaud creativity, I have to say these deficit reduction claims and the ratio of spending reductions to tax hikes is more than creative. It is more like Enron accounting, and if you were running a company in the private sector and made such claims, you would probably end up in jail.

Let me make a few brief comments on the Democrats' Enron accounting of deficit reduction.

First, the so-called spending cuts they identify have not yet been realized, and even they are working hard to undo some of them, if not all of them.

Second, the so-called spending cuts are only cuts if you are selective in the starting point you use to measure whether spending is being cut. Relative to what spending levels would be, had we not had a Democrat spending spree, spending has increased even if you include plans put forward in the Budget Control Act, which have not yet been realized.

Third, the spending-cut-to-tax-hike number thrown around by my friends on the other side of the aisle counts only one discrete tax hike—the one associated with the fiscal cliff bill.

Why do Democrats want to entirely ignore the massive tax hikes associated with ObamaCare that have already gone into effect, with more to come?

Fourth, spending cuts that my friends on the other side of the aisle are banking on when they devise their Enron accounting have not yet been set in place. Until fiscal year 2013 comes to a close, those spending reductions have not actually occurred, and Congress has a long history of promising cuts without delivering.

It is ironic to me that my friends on the other side of the aisle fight tooth and nail against any true reductions in the outsized spending of the current administration. Then when budget realities force consideration of reductions, and legislation is passed promising reductions, Democrats boast of having cut spending to reduce deficits.

Finally, when it comes to actually implement any spending cuts, Democrats want to undo them and replace them with yet more taxes. That is what we are hearing from the other side with regard to the sequestration.

I believe our country faces a large spending problem and that our debt is too big and grows too fast. I believe

presenting a picture of our finances that would pass muster only in the Enron accounting department is a disservice to the American people. If my friends on the other side of the aisle want more tax hikes to pay for more spending, then they should just say so. And some of them do, by the way, and I compliment them for doing that, even though I think it is crazy. Cloaking their desires in manufactured claims that we have somehow cut spending 4 to 1 relative to tax hikes is simply dishonest. And I do not think I have been wrong in calling it Enron accounting.

Frankly, I am getting a little sick of it because they throw these figures around as though they are really tax cuts, and they are not tax cuts, and they never will be according to my friends on the other side in what their actions show. So it is important that we get rid of the fuzz and get rid of the buzz and get rid of the phony stuff and the Enron accounting and start realizing that we need to have some real tax reductions.

Frankly, we need to have some real spending reductions. Even if we cannot get tax reductions, we ought to all be working on spending reductions. We ought to be looking at every aspect of this economy, every aspect of our budget, every aspect of our legislation, and we ought to be looking for as many spending reductions as we can find.

Spending is out of control. Even today, you know they are going to be spending well over 22 percent of GDP, according to the best of estimates. The economic results of yesterday that were in the paper of this slow growth ought to be waking up everybody on both sides of the aisle that we are not doing our job. The reason we are not doing our job is because we phony up these numbers that are not really spending reductions, and then we act like everything is hunky-dory, when, in fact, things are not hunky-dory.

We are in real trouble in this country, and it is inexcusable to let the greatest country in the world have to go through this type of charade because we are unwilling to face the music that every individual family in this country has to face on balancing their budgets and on balancing ours.

I think it is time to cut the charade and quit talking about spending reductions that do not materialize and amount to nothing but Enron accounting.

Mr. President, I ask that both sides be charged equally for the time we are in a quorum call.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. That is the order.

Mr. HATCH. 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.

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

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

AMENDMENT NO. 9

Mr. PAUL. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent to call up amendment No. 9.

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

The clerk will report.

The assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

The Senator from Kentucky [Mr. PAUL] proposes an amendment numbered 9.

Mr. PAUL. Mr. President, 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 prohibit the sale, lease, transfer, retransfer, or delivery of F-16 aircraft, M1 tanks, or certain other defense articles or services to the Government of Egypt)

At the appropriate place, insert the following:

SEC. ____ . PROHIBITION ON CERTAIN MILITARY SALES TO EGYPT.

(a) IN GENERAL.—Notwithstanding any other provision of law, the United States Government shall not license, approve, facilitate, or otherwise allow the sale, lease, transfer, retransfer, or delivery of F-16 aircraft, M1 tanks, or other defense articles or services listed in Category VI, VII, or VIII of the United States Munitions List to the Government of Egypt.

(b) UNITED STATES MUNITIONS LIST DEFINED.—In this section, the term “United States Munitions List” means the list referred to in section 38(a)(1) of the Arms Export Control Act (22 U.S.C. 2778(a)(1)), as in effect on January 1, 2013.

Mr. PAUL. Mr. President, I rise today to present an amendment that would stop the transfer of F-16s and Abrams tanks to Egypt. I think it particularly unwise to send tanks and our most sophisticated fighter planes to Egypt at a time in which many are saying the country may be unraveling.

Ironically, a year ago, the Arab spring occurred. Hundreds of thousands of people gathered in Tahir Square to protest against the government that was instituting martial law. Ironically, the current President now has instituted martial law. Once again, the dread “indefinite detention” is threatened to citizens in Egypt.

As the rioting expands, many see Egyptian descending into chaos. What is President Obama’s response to this? To send them some of the most sophisticated weapons we have, F-16 fighters and Abrams tanks. I think this is particularly unwise. This amendment will stop it. I think this is particularly unwise since Egypt is currently governed by a religious zealot, a religious zealot who said recently that Jews were “bloodsuckers” and “descendants of apes and pigs.”

This does not sound like the kind of stable personality to whom we should be sending our most sophisticated weapons. I think it is a grave mistake to send F-16s and Abrams tanks to a country that last year detained American citizens on trumped-up political charges, to a country that currently is still detaining Egyptian citizens on trumped-up political charges.

I think it is a blunder of the first proportion to send sophisticated weapons to a country that allowed a mob to attack our embassy and to burn our flag. I find it objectionable to send weapons, F-16s and tanks, to a country that allowed a mob chanting “death to America” to threaten our American diplomats.

I am concerned that these weapons, some of the most sophisticated weapons in the world, someday may be used against Israel. I am concerned these weapons threaten Israel’s security. I am concerned that we are sending weapons to a country with a President who recently was seen to be chanting “Amen” to a cleric who was saying, “death to Israel” and “death to those who support Israel.”

I think it is foolhardy to support and send arms to both sides of an arms race. We send 20 F-16s to Egypt, which already has 240 F-16s. We send 20 in addition. What does Israel feel? They have to have two for every one Egypt has. It escalates an arms race and makes it more difficult for Israel to defend herself.

Today we have a chance to stop this folly. I urge my colleagues to instruct the President that we will not send any more F-16s and any more Abrams tanks to the current Government of Egypt.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Arizona.

Mr. MCCAIN. Mr. President, what is the parliamentary situation?

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senate is considering H.R. 325.

Mr. MCCAIN. How much time is remaining?

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Only Democratic time remains.

Mr. MCCAIN. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that I be allowed 10 minutes.

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

Mr. MCCAIN. Mr. President, I speak in opposition to the amendment evidenced by my friend, the Senator from Kentucky, which would prohibit the sale, licensing, approval, facilitation, transfer, retransfer, or delivery of any defense articles and services to the Government of Egypt, including F-16 aircraft and M-1 tanks.

There are many problems with this amendment. I would like to explain. First, the amendment is not revenue neutral. The Congressional Budget Office has not provided an official score, despite my request, but there is a way to avoid the basic fact that there are numerous costs associated with this amendment. The defense articles the Senator from Kentucky wishes to block and prohibit are manufactured by American workers and defense companies. They have contracts to produce this equipment, and American workers are doing that as we speak.

If the Federal Government steps in, as my colleague’s amendment would mandate, those contracts would have

to be immediately broken, and U.S. production lines would have to be shut down immediately. There is a cost of breaching a contract in this country, and there should be. That does not change just because the government is the one doing the breaching. This is also as it should be.

So the Senator’s amendment would obligate the Federal Government to pay the many costs to American businesses and workers for breaking our commitments to them. Furthermore, many of these defense articles have already been produced. They have already been paid for. They are technically the property of the Egyptian Government already. If the Congress prohibits these defense articles from being delivered to Egypt, they become the responsibility of the U.S. Government. We will have to store them somewhere, and that is not free either.

In short, there are a lot of hidden costs in this amendment. If this provision becomes law in its current form, it will add to the national debt. This is fiscally irresponsible, and I cannot support it on these grounds alone.

Second, and more important than the costs associated with this amendment, it is harmful to America’s national security interests. I know as well as anyone that Egypt is beset now with many problems.

I was in Egypt 2 weeks ago with a bipartisan delegation of my colleagues. The Muslim Brotherhood-led government, which I would remind my colleagues was elected by the Egyptian people, has done a poor job of governing in an exclusive and pluralistic way, establishing the rule of law, and building democratic institutions.

The results of the Egyptian Government’s failing are plain to see in the awful street violence and expanding unrest in Egypt. President Morsi’s government has not been able to stem the violence and has often made matters worse. Egyptian police seem to have neither the capacity nor the legitimacy to restore order. The fact is, despite its flaws, the Egyptian Army remains one of the major stabilizing forces in Egypt today. If, God forbid, the current unrest worsens, and Egypt tips deeper into civil conflict, the one force in that country that might be capable of pulling Egypt back from the abyss is the Egyptian military.

If the Senate were to adopt the amendment proposed by the Senator from Kentucky, we would not only be harming the effectiveness of the Egyptian military, which, by the way, is not objected to by the Israelis, who probably understand better than anyone what defense capabilities might be used someday to threaten their security, we would be rupturing a decades-long partnership and denying and squandering our influence with the leaders of one of the most important institutions in Egypt.

The ramifications of this decision would be enormous, especially when it comes to the ability of U.S. ships, including U.S. aircraft carriers and other

vessels, to transit the Suez Canal securely and effectively. I would urge the Senator from Kentucky to call the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff and ask him what effect this would have on the U.S. military and America's overall national security.

As I say, this amendment would be even more detrimental to our ally Israel, for which the continuing instability in Egypt is an abiding, clear and present danger. I have seen no objections raised by our Israeli allies to U.S. military assistance to Egypt, nor do I expect to see any. Here too I would urge my colleague to pick up the phone and call the Israeli Ambassador or just recall what I am sure he heard from Israel's leaders during his recent visit there a few weeks ago.

This amendment is absolutely harmful to the national security of our ally Israel. The timing of the amendment is also detrimental because our government is currently engaged in discussions with the Egyptian Government and military about the need to shift our security cooperation more toward the kinds of programs and equipment Egypt needs to combat the threats they increasingly face: porous borders, a rising threat from terrorism, deteriorating conditions in the Sinai, and a security sector in dire need of reform. It is in Egypt's interest to move in this direction, as they are beginning to do. It is in our interest to help them.

If we adopt this amendment, the promise of this entire endeavor will be destroyed. Egypt will suffer, Israel will suffer, and the United States will suffer.

I oppose this amendment because it is uninformed and oblivious to the world challenges America faces and our continuing need to work with America's partners, imperfect and frustrating though they may be, to defend our Nation, our interests, and our allies in an increasingly dangerous world.

Finally, the Middle East is in a period of transition and change that we have not seen practically in its entire history. The Egyptians are key and vital to what happens in that part of the world. It is the heart, soul, and center of the Arab world. One out of every four Arabs who live in the Arab world lives in Egypt. It is the cultural and historic center of all the Arab world.

It is vital we do whatever we can to see that Egypt makes a transition to a free, democratic, and open society. That is in grave danger today. To pass this amendment today and send this message to Egypt in this very unstable and unsure time, I believe, would be exactly the wrong message at this time. I would also point out that this legislation has nothing to do with Egypt. It has nothing to do with Egypt.

A decision of this magnitude, in my view, requires hearings, debate, and legislation that would stand by itself, rather than in a 15- or 20-minute discussion on the floor of the Senate. For

that reason alone, I urge my colleagues to overwhelmingly—as we have other amendments of the Senator from Kentucky—reject this amendment.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Kentucky.

Mr. PAUL. I ask unanimous consent to speak for 5 minutes.

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

Mr. PAUL. I find the argument spurious and, frankly, absurd that not giving F-16s to Egypt is somehow against the interests of Israel. Imagine this. The President of Egypt has called Jews bloodsuckers and descendants of apes and pigs. The President of Egypt has also said that when we look at the relationship of Israel and her supporters—he stood next to a cleric, chanted “Amen” and said “Amen,” that we should go after and destroy Israel and the supporters of Israel.

Somehow it is a good idea to ship weapons to this country and to this religious zealot? I find it absurd that that would be in Israel's best interests. Somehow, the argument is made that, oh, this will lead to stability in Egypt. Well, giving F-16s is somehow going to stabilize unrest in Egypt? It makes no sense whatsoever.

I would say that when we look at this and we hear arguments such as this will cost money, do you know whose money it was that bought these F-16? It was our money to begin with. We send the money to Egypt and then they buy the weapons from us.

If we are worried about a place to store the F-16s, why don't we give them to our military? Everybody seems to be saying it is a problem, this sequester, and there is not enough money for our military. Why don't we give the 20 F-16s to our military? Why don't we give the tanks to our military? Apparently, these are more tanks that are being given to Egypt than often different contingents of our Marines have at any one given point in time.

I would say keep the money and keep the weapons in our country. Mark my words, it is a mistake to send these weapons to Egypt. It is not in Israel's best interest.

For people to come down and argue it is in Israel's best interest to send weapons to a country that professes hate, professes a disbelief in the Holocaust, that professes they are in favor of destroying Israel—that is whom we are supposed to send these weapons to? It makes no sense at all.

Our foreign policy often makes no sense at all. I do think we need to reassess. We made this deal with Mubarak. We didn't make this deal with Mursi. Currently, Egypt is unraveling. I think it is a terrible mistake to send these weapons to Egypt, and I hope my colleagues will consider that.

I yield back the remainder of my time, and I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Ms. BALDWIN). The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

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

AMENDMENT NO. 6

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, there will be 2 minutes of debate, equally divided, prior to a vote on amendment No. 6, offered by the Senator from Ohio, Mr. PORTMAN.

The Senator from Ohio is recognized.

Mr. PORTMAN. Madam President, we had a debate earlier on this. This is the Dollar-for-Dollar Deficit Reduction Act. It makes all the sense in the world.

Here we have a \$16 trillion national debt, now exceeding \$130,000 per household in America. We are told by the Congressional Budget Office that there is \$9 trillion more coming over the next decade.

We have to make this difference here on this bill. We have to take this opportunity to ensure that we are, in fact, beginning to reduce spending, getting this under control, as we once again are asked to extend the debt limit.

This would not apply to this particular short-term debt limit, by the way; it would set up the discipline for the next debt limit, which is anywhere from 3 to 6 months from now.

Now is the time for us to come together as Republicans and Democrats and determine how we indeed reform the entitlement programs, put tax reform in place, go through regular order in the Finance Committee, as the chairman and others have called for, to ensure that we can get this under control.

It is a commonsense proposal. We did it 2 years ago. Most Democrats and most Republicans here on the floor supported it in the past. About 95 Democrats in the House have also supported it. It is a dollar-for-dollar reduction over 10 years as we raise the debt limit.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator's time has expired.

The Senator from Montana.

Mr. BAUCUS. Madam President, on January 23, something marvelous happened. What was that? The House, on a strong bipartisan basis, passed a bill which would raise the debt limit, which would extend the debt limit to May 18. It was bipartisan. Speaker BOEHNER is to be commended.

This town is criticized for its lack of working together because it is just too partisan. Speaker BOEHNER found a solution to help us relieve the pressure so we can get our job done and get the deficit spending under control.

The method suggested by the Senator from Ohio is a step backward. We have tried that. We tried that a couple of years ago, and it didn't work. We all remember August 11, when the markets basically collapsed when the credit agencies began to downgrade our debt.

So I say let's follow the lead of the bipartisan Speaker, who found a way through great leadership to pass a provision. We should pass the same provision because if we don't, then we will be back to chaos.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator's time has expired.

Mr. BAUCUS. Amending the provision means it has to go back to the House. If you think the markets are in disarray today, just think of the lack of confidence that would prevail if this amendment were to succeed.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator's time has expired.

Mr. BAUCUS. Madam President, I move to table the Portman amendment and ask for the yeas and nays.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there a sufficient second?

There appears to be a sufficient second.

The question is on agreeing to the motion.

The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk called the roll.

Mr. DURBIN. I announce that the Senator from Massachusetts (Mr. KERRY) and the Senator from Washington (Mrs. MURRAY) are necessarily absent.

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

The result was announced—yeas 54, nays 44, as follows:

[Rollcall Vote No. 6 Leg.]

YEAS—54

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

NAYS—44

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

NOT VOTING—2

| | |
|-------|--------|
| Kerry | Murray |
|-------|--------|

The motion was agreed to.

RECESS

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

Thereupon, the Senate, at 12:30 p.m., recessed until 2:15 p.m. and reassembled

when called to order by the Presiding Officer (Ms. HEITKAMP).

ENSURING THE COMPLETE AND TIMELY PAYMENT OF THE OBLIGATIONS OF THE UNITED STATES GOVERNMENT—Continued

AMENDMENT NO. 7

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, there will be 2 minutes of debate equally divided prior to a vote in relation to amendment No. 7 offered by the Senator from Ohio, Mr. PORTMAN.

The Senator from Ohio.

Mr. PORTMAN. Madam President, this amendment is a commonsense amendment that would end government shutdowns as well as keep us from facing these last-minute budget deals. For all regular programs or activities for which an appropriation bill has not been approved, the End Government Shutdowns Act would automatically continue funding—no significant disruption, no crisis for citizens, no furloughed employees, and no rush to approve a budget agreement that folks simply haven't read.

It doesn't take pressure off lawmakers altogether, however, because it forces us to complete our work by saying that after 120 days, spending would be reduced by one percentage point and then every 90 days by one more percentage point. It would force the administration, Congress, and Members of both parties to come together to make sure we have regular order and we have a process by which we have to get appropriations bills done, which we haven't been doing around here.

Instead of bouncing from crisis to crisis worrying about government shutdowns and having to vote on rush bills that Members haven't read and staff haven't had time to review, this is a more sensible and logical way to proceed. The American people expect us to do it and I hope we get support from both sides of the aisle on this bipartisan approach.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Maryland.

Ms. MIKULSKI. Madam President, I oppose the amendment. It would trigger an automatic CR if Congress doesn't pass appropriations bills or a CR.

I understand the Senator's goal, but I oppose the amendment for three reasons: One, the amendment is really about cutting; it is not about keeping the government open. It includes an automatic CR with a 1-percent cut every 90 days, which means it would be compounded—these would be compounded cuts by compounded interest—if the Congress does not pass an appropriations bill. So a cut every 90 days would be a 1-percent cut, and then the following 90 days another 1 percent.

The amendment gives up Congress's constitutional responsibility. If we go on auto pilot, it gives the major power of the purse, which is mandated in the

Constitution, to OMB and Cabinet officers—essentially nonelected political appointees. I don't think the Congress or the American people want to give the power of the purse to nonelected political appointees. Also, I agree we need to get back to regular order.

Madam President, because I disagree with this amendment, I move to table the Portman amendment and 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 question is on agreeing to the motion.

The clerk will call the roll.

The assistant bill clerk called the roll.

DEMOCRATIC ANNOUNCEMENTS

Mr. DURBIN. I announce that the Senator from Massachusetts (Mr. KERRY) and the Senator from Washington (Mrs. MURRAY) are necessarily absent.

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

The result was announced—yeas 52, nays 46, as follows:

[Rollcall Vote No. 7 Leg.]

YEAS—52

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

NAYS—46

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

NOT VOTING—2

| | |
|-------|--------|
| Kerry | Murray |
|-------|--------|

The motion was agreed to.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The majority leader.

Mr. REID. Madam President, we have four more votes. They have all been ordered, just like this one was, as 10-minute votes. We are going to stick with that. If people are not here—whether you have been here for 30 years or 3 days—we are going to close