

way, shape or form misstated what her proposal does, which is extend the 3.4 percent which is limited only to subsidized Stafford loans?

If the Senator thinks that is wrong, I would ask her to speak now.

Ms. WARREN. I believe, if I understand this correctly, what we are trying to do is protect the subsidized Stafford loans. What I understand the Republicans have tried to do is protect all the new loans so no one is dealing with all the loans that already have been issued and are at much higher interest rates. This is how I understand it. If the Senator is talking about wanting—

Mr. BURR. Reclaiming my time—

Ms. WARREN. Then I assume the Senator means all the students with student loan debt, and that is not my proposal.

Mr. BURR. Reclaiming my time, clearly, the Senator said her bill only deals with the subsidized Stafford loan.

Under current law, let me state it again, unsubsidized Stafford loans, current law, 6.8 percent; parent and graduate PLUS loans, 7.9 percent. Somehow, somebody thinks this is fair.

I, personally, participated in coming up with something that treats everybody the same, that ties it to a 10-year Treasury, that fixes the rate above a 10-year Treasury that sets that number once a year, lets students know exactly what their exposure is going to be, and provides them the certainty of that interest rate for the life of the loan—

Ms. WARREN. Will the Senator yield for a question?

Mr. BURR. Let me finish—which this unanimous consent request doesn't incorporate.

In essence, the unanimous consent request says we are not going to deal with this 61 percent; we are only going to deal with 39 percent. Because they have received the preferred rate up to this point, we want to protect the preferred rate.

Some people think it is the role of Congress. I don't think that is the role of Congress.

I yield to the Senator for a question through the Chair.

Ms. WARREN. I wish to make sure I understand. Have the Republicans put any proposal on the table that will deal with all of the outstanding student loan debt?

Mr. BURR. I would be happy to address the Senator's question.

No, we haven't. The President's proposal—and I said there are parts of it I don't agree with—makes loan forgiveness tax free.

Maybe what we ought to debate is whether we are going to make college tuition free, because this is a race for who can make it the cheapest on the backs of the American taxpayer—when we are \$1 trillion out of balance, \$1 trillion we spend.

Excuse me, we have new numbers: \$646 billion this year, projected to go up next year. We are accruing debt on this country's books at a rate nobody

ever dreamed. We are still talking about constructing programs that financially are unsustainable because we are using somebody else's checkbook.

This is the definition of insanity. Therefore, I would object to the Senator's original request.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Objection is heard.

The Senator from Massachusetts.

Ms. WARREN. I just wanted to return to this question, since the Senator has raised it, about the Congressional Budget Office. Let's all be clear about what the current student loan interest rates produce for the government.

The CBO, the agency in charge of estimating these costs for the government, maintains that this year the government will make \$51 billion in profits from the student loans. Their most recent report on this—I read the language earlier—is clear and direct. We will make a profit.

The CBO uses this accounting method because it reflects reality. It is the reality of how these loans affect the Federal budget. The CBO's method takes into account the cost of lending money from the Treasury and the projected money that will be returned to the Treasury.

It takes into account the risk that some students will default; in other words, it is basic math.

Some people don't like the idea that the government is profiting from the student loans. Their approach is to try to change the accounting rules to treat the government as if it were a private bank rather than the Federal Government, which it is.

The government is not a bank in a private market. If we want to reduce the profits from student loans, then we should actually reduce the profits from the student loans, not change the map, not bury our heads in the sand and pretend those profits don't exist.

Let's go back to what the Senator has proposed. The Republicans propose that we take \$51 billion in profits that will currently be made from the backs of our students and add another \$16 billion in profits off the backs of our students. This is fundamentally wrong. It is not sustainable.

I think the larger point the Senator makes is one that says we have a big problem. We need to talk about the debt that is outstanding. We need to talk about how we are going to pay for college over time. We can't do that in the next 2 weeks.

We need to make sure interest rates don't double, and then we need to address this problem. I am pleased to work with people on both sides of the aisle.

Mr. BURR. Will the Senator yield for a question?

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator should be aware we have a previous order to recess.

Mr. BURR. I ask unanimous consent to ask one question of my colleague from Massachusetts.

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

Mr. BURR. Does the Senator from Massachusetts agree that out of the student loan fund \$8.7 billion is diverted to the Affordable Care Act?

Ms. WARREN. No.

Mr. BURR. The Senator is not aware of that?

Ms. WARREN. Look, we can go back over the CBO numbers, but what is clear right now is what the CBO has made clear. We will make \$51 billion in profits off the backs of our students. The Republicans propose to make another \$16 billion off the backs of our students. We can't do that. It is unsustainable. Our students are asking for more.

Mr. BURR. I thank my colleague for not answering.

RECESS

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the Senate stands in recess until 3:30 p.m.

Thereupon, at 2:31 p.m., the Senate recessed until 3:30 p.m. and reassembled when called to order by the Presiding Officer (Ms. WARREN).

BORDER SECURITY, ECONOMIC OPPORTUNITY, AND IMMIGRATION MODERNIZATION ACT—Continued

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Connecticut.

GUN VIOLENCE EPIDEMIC

Mr. BLUMENTHAL. Madam President, today we mark the 6-month anniversary of a date that none of us will ever forget because it transformed our lives, it transformed America, and it certainly transformed Connecticut and the community of Newtown.

We commemorate the 6-month anniversary of that unspeakable, unimaginable tragedy that cut short the lives of 20 beautiful, innocent children and six dedicated, courageous educators.

It transformed America in so many ways. It changed our lives irrevocably and, I hope, put us on a trajectory toward changes in our laws that will prevent this kind of horrific, unimaginable tragedy from ever happening again. Our challenge right here in this body, on this floor, is to make sure we learn from it, that we act on it, and that we keep faith with those families, as well as the Newtown community and all of our country that lost so much that day.

December 14 began like so many other days for the parents of Newtown, CT. They took their children to school, kissed them goodbye, and went about their day with plans for play dates, Hanukkah and Christmas holiday parties, and presents that they would give to those children for those holidays. They planned snack breaks and holiday parties. They wrapped presents. Just hours later, I stood with them and saw them emerge from the Sandy Hook firehouse having learned that those children would not be coming home that night.

I arrived in Newtown as a public official within hours of that shooting. But

what I saw was through the eyes of a parent—grief-stricken, panicked parents, tears streaming down their faces—who came hoping to reunite with their children. Many parents did reunite. Children were brought to all of the parents who gathered at the firehouse, and they left with their children—until the families who realized that their children would not be coming home.

I saw those families who lost beautiful, young children. Some of them are here, along with adults—dedicated, courageous adults—families of educators who died themselves trying to save their children. I will never forget the cries of grief, anguish, pain, and disbelief.

Every parent in his or her DNA has something fundamental. It is about trust and caring for children, making sure they come home at the end of the day when they go to school; that they are kept safe in some very basic and fundamental way. Society shares that trust. Society failed in that trust.

We will never forget the loss and heartbreak of that tragic day in Sandy Hook. But we also know that in the face of evil there was tremendous goodness and heroism. There were genuine heroes: the first responders who braved the unknown, hearing gunfire, charging into that school, and stopping the shooting through their courage because the shooter turned that gun on himself. There were the brave educators, teachers, administrators, and school psychologists who threw themselves in front of bullets or tried to save their children and perished themselves. Then members of the community who came together in support of the families and who themselves, along with first responders, are continuing to recover. They exemplify the quintessential values of this quintessential New England town that make us proud to be American.

Thirty-two members of the victims' families at the massacre wrote to the U.S. Senate Judiciary Committee. Through their unspeakable pain and suffering, they asked Congress to honor the memory of their loved ones by supporting measures to stem and stop the epidemic of gun violence. They wrote, "In the midst of our anguish we are compelled to speak out to save others from suffering what we have endured."

These brave families have come to Washington to tell their stories. They sat in this very gallery. They met with colleagues. Some of our colleagues refused to meet with them. I urged them to share some of their hurt and meet with them, to hear their stories. We owe them tremendous respect and gratitude. They enabled us to come to this point where we are close to making fundamental changes in the law.

But in April, that day of the vote was a day of shame because the Senate turned its back on the families of Newtown while some of them watched in this very gallery. How to explain to those families or try to explain how 90

percent of the American people could be in favor of reasonable, commonsense measures that we proposed—background checks on all firearms purchases and a ban on illegal traffic and straw purchases, on assault weapons, and on excess capacity magazines—how 90 percent of the people could be in favor of those kinds of commonsense measures, most especially the background checks, yet the Senate failed to pass it.

Those families have been resolute and resilient at every turn. Mark Barden, whose son Daniel was killed 6 months ago at Sandy Hook, wrote:

We are not defeated. We will always be here because we have no other choice.

Despite their profound and harrowing loss, those parents, husbands, wives, sisters, brothers, grandmothers have kept faith and they have inspired us to keep faith. They uplifted us and their determination has meant the world to colleagues who have heard them, and as an example of grace under pressure and courage and strength, they have refused to give up.

They will not give up, nor will we. We are coming back for another vote. We will not allow that vote to be the final one. It may be the first one, but it is not the final one, and we will win the last vote, which is the one that counts.

In the meantime many of my colleagues have stood up to the special interests and most especially the NRA, which was accustomed to having its way and holding sway in this body, in Congress, just as a schoolyard bully would. My colleagues have stood up to that bully once and will do it again. This time we will win.

What happened in Newtown could happen anywhere in America. If it happened there, it can happen in any town or city, and it has, in fact, claimed the lives of 4,900 people since Newtown. Gun violence has claimed their lives. I am constantly shocked and saddened by how quickly that number rises each time I speak about this topic. Just last week a man armed with semiautomatic AR-15 assault rifle and more than 1,300 rounds of ammunition, opened fire at a Santa Monica college and killed five people.

The stories about Newtown, about all of the massacres since and before—whether Columbine or Virginia Tech or Arizona and Tucson—affirm that these laws can help save lives. These laws can help save lives.

Six months ago I left the firehouse at Sandy Hook to attend a vigil at a church in Newtown. The church was St. Rose of Lima, presided over by Father Bob, Msgr. Robert Weiss. The church was filled. It was a powerful and moving experience. People listened to the service through the windows and the PA system outside.

I said that evening the world is watching Newtown. In fact, for 6 months the world has watched Newtown. It has seen a story of unparalleled and unprecedented courage and

fortitude. Now we will continue to watch Newtown. But the world is also watching the Senate. We need to be worthy of the courage and strength that Newtown has demonstrated in moving ahead.

I thank the majority leader HARRY REID and all of my colleagues who have determined that we will bring this bill back, not only to honor the memories of the Newtown victims and keep faith with them but also to make this country better and safer, worthy of these children, beautiful and innocent at the time of their passing with all of their future ahead of them. There were educators who worked for their whole professional lives, trying to help children such as these young people.

Out of that grief and pain we can make America safer and stronger. We can make America better. That is the potential legacy of these lost lives, a better and safer America. If we achieve it, they will not have died in vain.

I yield the floor.

Mr. MURPHY. Madam President, I join my colleague from Connecticut on the floor of the Senate to commemorate a sad day; 6 months since the shootings in Newtown took the lives of 20 6- and 7-year-olds and 6 of the teachers charged with protecting them. I know you share in our sadness, Madam President, since it was not too long afterwards that your State went through a tragedy of smaller and bigger proportions.

We have to wonder, 6 months later, after these families, the brothers and the sisters and the moms and the dads of these victims coming down to the Senate, over and over again, including this week, looking Senator after Senator, Congressman after Congressman, in the eye and asking for this place to learn something from this tragedy—we wonder how 6 months later we have done nothing. We wonder how, if 20 little kids dying at the hands of a mad man with a gun over the course of 5 or 10 minutes doesn't move this place to action, what would? What visit to your office, what message, what story, what set of facts could possibly make this place change the laws that have allowed for these slaughters—plural—over and over again to happen?

It is 6 months later and we have done nothing. At least on the Senate floor we raised the bill, we put it on for debate, we got 55 votes, and the rules prevented us from getting it passed. The House down the hall has done absolutely nothing. They have not lifted a finger to move legislation for 6 months, 6 months later, and no answer to these families.

I was there with Senator BLUMENTHAL that afternoon in that firehouse. Those are moments I would, a lot of days, love to have never lived—things I did not need to see. But it changed my life and committed me to action.

It commands us to understand that the most shallow argument that has been posed, I would argue the most

backward argument that has been posed over the last 6 months, is that, yes, these terrible things happen—the most terrible of them we are marking the 6-month anniversary of—but there is nothing we could do here that would change that; that very bad things are going to happen to good people, to good first grade students, but that nothing here is going to truly change any of that.

That is just flat wrong. It should not be every 6 months that we come to the floor to try to rebut that argument. It should be every day. Because in Columbine, the guns that were bought to slaughter those high school students were bought outside of the background check system—intentionally so, because the person who bought them knew if they went into a legitimate gun store they would not be able to purchase the guns that were being requested, so they went to a gun show, around the background check system.

We know different laws would change things because in Aurora the shooter went in with a 100-round drum and the shooting stopped and people escaped, including a couple of my constituents, because the gun jammed. They had trouble switching these massive ammunition clips.

In Newtown, we know the power of the gun that was used. These assault weapons are all over the place today. They have become commonplace. But it does not belie the fact that they still have a power to kill that few other guns do, so much so that when Lanza walked into that school that day, fired over 150 rounds, shot 20 kids, not a single one of them survived. Every kid he shot died, in part because of the power of that gun. That same day a very sick man walked into a school in China, armed with a weapon, attacked over 20 children and every single one of them lived. That guy had a knife.

Assault weapons, if we continue to allow them to ripple throughout our streets, lead to mass slaughters. High-capacity ammunition clips, when somebody chooses to engage in one of these massacres, allow more people to be killed. Our failure, over and over again, to pass comprehensive background checks is unacceptable, given the number of criminals and the number of people with severe mental illness who are still allowed to get guns over the Internet or in gun shows; 6 months and we have done nothing.

But I stand here, frankly, more optimistic about human nature than I was 6 months ago, not less optimistic. I might be less optimistic about this place and about the Congress, but I am more optimistic about the indomitable human spirit than I was when this started out.

Senator BLUMENTHAL said it best. That 10 minutes of grievous violence, mental illness masquerading as evil inside that school, was essentially enveloped by the millions of acts of humanity that just flowed forth from Newtown, from Connecticut, from all over

the country, whether it was the heroism of those teachers, whether it was the firefighters, the volunteer fighters who stayed at that firehouse for days or weeks on end with no pay or just the thousands of gifts—teddy bears, small tokens of appreciation of the community that came from all over the country.

People are good. They truly are. Despite what that young man did, it reaffirmed my faith in who we are.

Last Friday night, the Sandy Hook Fire Department had their big annual fundraiser. Some people wondered whether they would do it. First of all, they said they were going to do it because they were not going to start changing the way they did things and, second, they needed the money because they expended a lot of effort and equipment and resources in responding to this tragedy. On Friday we had an absolute deluge in New England. It was raining cats and dogs all day. There was no reason they should have gone forward on Friday night with that lobster bake at the Sandy Hook firehouse, but they decided to put it on, and I went, despite thinking there were going to be about six people inside that firehouse. It was packed, jammed full of people, not just from Newtown but from all over New England who came down on a torrentially raining evening to show their support for those firefighters, for that community, and for those families. That is what defines Newtown.

Six months later, we know the headlines still read about the 26 kids and adults who lost their lives there. But what we know Newtown to be today is a place full of love, full of compassion, and—though not maybe today yet—a place that will, 1 year, 5 years, 10 years down the line be defined by resiliency.

I wish we weren't down here commemorating 6 months. I wish we weren't down here commemorating nothing having been done over the course of 6 months. But we are not going away. We are not giving up. The families who were down here this week didn't turn into advocates for 4 months, they turned into advocates for 40 years, and they will be back again and again until we have an answer for these mass tragedies and for the 5,033 people who have died at the hands of guns since December 14—6 months ago.

I yield back the floor and note the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. CARPER). The clerk will call the roll.

The assistant bill clerk proceeded to call the roll.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Arizona.

Mr. MCCAIN. 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. MCCAIN. Mr. President, first of all, I wish to thank the Presiding Officer, the distinguished Senator from Delaware, who is not only an out-

standing Member of the Senate, but he is the chairman of the homeland security committee. He has gone out of his way to understand the issues we face when we are addressing border security. The chairman was kind enough to visit the border between Arizona and Sonora, Mexico, and spent a lot of time with us and with the people who are entrusted to secure the border. He made some remarks I think were entirely accurate about the challenges we face in enforcing our border. So I wish to again thank the distinguished chairman of the homeland security committee.

I wish to address a few aspects of comprehensive immigration reform that need to be discussed. First of all, everybody says—and I say it too—we don't want to return to 1986 because in 1986 we guaranteed the American people we would secure the border, and it would never happen again. Well, the fact is, when we look at what we did in 1986—and I will, first of all, plead guilty for having voted for it—the only mandate in the entire legislation which gave “amnesty” to 3 million people was:

Of the amounts authorized to be appropriated under paragraph one, sufficient funds shall be available to provide for an increase in the Border Patrol personnel of the Immigration and Naturalization Service so that the average level of such personnel in each of the fiscal years 1987 and 1988 is at least 50 percent higher than such level for fiscal year 1986.

Let me translate that. It meant we would increase the Border Patrol. That was the only mention of how we were going to secure the border after we gave amnesty in 1986. And at that time, I say to my colleagues, the cost, as I mentioned, was 50 percent higher. The Border Patrol has to be 50 percent higher.

Well, the number of Border Patrol agents in 1986 was 4,000—4,000. Now we have 21,000. So there was really nothing in the 1986 bill about fencing, about sensors, about other ways to get our border secure. So we learned from that.

We learned from that, and this legislation that recently passed through the Judiciary Committee and is now on the floor, as compared with 1986 where they said they would increase the numbers of Border Patrol agents by 50 percent—this legislation appropriates \$3 billion in funding for the comprehensive southern border security strategy. No one who is in RPI status will be able to petition for a green card until certain requirements are fulfilled, including the following: E-Verify in use by all employers, an entry-exit system in place, \$1.5 billion in additional funding for the southern border fencing strategy that has to be submitted within 180 days of passage of this legislation and signed by the President.

It sets the goal of a 90-percent effectiveness rate for all southern border States. If that goal is not reached within 5 years, there will be a bipartisan commission formed and authorized to spend \$2 billion in additional funds to secure the border.

It will add an additional 3,500 Customs and Border Patrol agents. Remember, in 1986, there was a total of 4,000.

It will authorize the National Guard to provide assistance along the border if requested. The National Guard has had tremendous success on our border. No, they don't carry weapons, but they do incredibly important work, and I am glad they don't carry weapons, to tell the truth.

The bill funds additional Border Patrol stations and forward operating bases.

It increases something called Operation Stonegarden funding, which is vital, in my view, in disincentivizing people to frequently cross the border, and strengthens Border Patrol training.

It authorizes funds to triple the border-crossing prosecutions in the Tucson sector. Why do I mention the Tucson sector? Not because I am from the State of Arizona but because the Tucson sector for years has been a major thoroughfare for both people and drugs.

The current bill will authorize funds to help States and localities incarcerate criminal unauthorized illegal immigrants.

It grants the Department of Homeland Security access to Federal lands. That is a problem on our border, where we have an Indian reservation that is right on the border. They are sovereign nations, and this will authorize a greater ability for us to have access to those lands. There are wildlife refuges we need access to as well.

The bill removes the discretion from the Secretary of Homeland Security to develop the southern border strategy and provides the minimum requirements recommended by the Border Patrol. Those are the people on the ground. These are the people who today, in 120-degree heat at the Sonora, AZ, border, are sitting in vehicles and patrolling our border to keep our Nation secure. This is recommended by them and must be included in the strategy that we want to achieve and must achieve, which is 100 percent situational awareness of each and every 1-mile segment of the southern border.

The technology list will include, but is not limited to, sector-by-sector requirements for integrated fixed towers, VADER radar systems. These radar track people back from where they came.

The list includes unmanned aerial systems—what we know as drones—fixed cameras, mobile surveillance systems, ground sensors, handheld thermal imaging systems, infrared cameras, thermal imaging cameras, license plate readers, and radiation detection systems. All of these are part of this legislation and the billions of dollars we are going to spend to improve border security. We all admit the border is more secure, but where I disagree with the Secretary of Homeland Security is that it is not secure enough.

So we want to prevent the adjustment of status RPI, which is registered

permanent status, for people who will be granted it once the passage of this bill is achieved until that strategy is deployed and operational—deployed and operational. This is just to achieve a legal status in this country; also, a technology list before anybody can adjust RPI to green card status.

It removes the sole discretion from the Department of Homeland Security to certify the strategy is complete. It requires written, third-party certification to the President and Congress that affirms the elements required by the strategy are operational and capable of achieving effective control of the border.

With these tools in place, we can achieve situational awareness and be guaranteed this technology is deployed and working along the border. So I say to my friends who say we do not have sufficient provisions for border security, we will be glad to do more, but let's look at this.

Look at what we are doing: billions of dollars of technology as well as additional people, as well as other measures, including the E-Verify. The magnet that draws people to this country is jobs, and if the word is out that unless an E-Verify is in operation—unless a person can get a job in this country they are not going to come here unless it is through a legal means and not through illegal means.

We are a nation of immigrants. I would remind my colleagues again, 40 percent of the people who are in this country illegally did not cross our border. They came on a visa that expired. So we need to have footprints and other physical evidence of illegal crossings. It is a tool for Border Patrol agents to identify and locate illegal border crossers. But it is imprecise. That is why we need to have this technology, so we can surveil and have situational awareness of the entire border.

The General Accounting Office is an organization all of us over time begin to rely on enormously, and I will quote from them:

In terms of collecting data, Border Patrol officials reported that sectors rely on a different mix of cameras, sign cutting—

That is tracking footprints—credible sources, and visual observation to identify and report the number of turn backs and gotaways.

Turnbacks are those we catch and turn back, and gotaways are those we see come across and do not apprehend.

Again, quoting the GAO:

According to Border Patrol officials, the ability to obtain accurate or consistent data using these identification sources depends on various factors such as terrain and weather. For example, data on turn backs and gotaways may be understated in areas with rugged mountains and steep canyons that can hinder detection of illegal entries. In other cases, data may be overstated—for example, in cases where the same turn back identified by a camera is also identified by tracks. Double counting may also occur when agents in one zone record as a gotaway an individual who is apprehended and then

reported as an apprehension in another zone. As a result of these data limitations, Border Patrol headquarters officials said that while they consider turn back and gotaway data sufficiently reliable to assess each sector's progress toward border security and to inform sector decisions regarding resource deployment, they do not consider the data sufficiently reliable to compare—or externally report—results across sectors.

That is why we need this technology.

Now, I wish to point out that from the Border Patrol, not from the Department of Homeland Security, I got a detailed list of what they believe is necessary, using their experience, as to the specific equipment and capabilities they need on each of the nine sectors of the border.

For example, in the Arizona sectors, including Yuma and Tucson, we need 56 towers, 73 fixed camera systems, 28 mobile surveillance systems, 685 unattended ground sensors, and 22 handheld equipment devices.

At points of entry or checkpoints we need one nonintrusive inspection system, and the list goes on. It is a specific list of what the Border Patrol believes we need in each of the nine sectors on our southern border in order to give us 100 percent situational awareness and put us on the path to a 90-percent effective control of the border.

So I say to my friends who say we cannot control our border, I respectfully disagree because of what we are doing in this legislation. And those who say we are unable to keep track of what goes on at our border, I would argue that the minimum requirements to be included in the southern border security strategy as provided by the Border Patrol should convince anyone of what we need.

I ask unanimous consent that these minimum requirements be printed in the RECORD.

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

MINIMUM REQUIREMENTS TO BE INCLUDED IN THE SOUTHERN BORDER SECURITY STRATEGY

ARIZONA (YUMA AND TUCSON SECTORS)

BETWEEN THE PORTS OF ENTRY

50 Integrated Fixed Towers (with relocation capability)

73 Fixed Camera Systems (with relocation capability), which include Remote Video Surveillance Systems

28 Mobile Surveillance Systems, which include mobile video surveillance systems, agent-portable surveillance systems, and mobile surveillance capability systems

685 Unattended Ground Sensors, including seismic, imaging, and infrared

22 Handheld Equipment Devices, including handheld thermal imaging systems and night vision goggles.

AT POINTS OF ENTRY, CHECKPOINTS

1 Non-intrusive Inspection System

7 Fiber-optic Tank Inspection Scopes

19 License Plate Readers, including mobile, tactical, and fixed

2 Backscatter

14 Portable Contraband Detectors

2 Radiation Isotope Identification Devices

18 Radiation Isotope Identification Devices updates

16 Personal Radiation Detectors

24 Mobile Automated Targeting Systems

- 3 Land Automated Targeting Systems
AIR AND MARINE
- 3 VADER radar systems
6 Air Mobility Helicopters
SAN DIEGO
BETWEEN THE PORTS OF ENTRY
- 3 Integrated Fixed Towers (with relocation capability)
41 Fixed Camera Systems (with relocation capability), which include Remote Video Surveillance Systems
14 Mobile Surveillance Systems, which include mobile video surveillance systems, agent-portable surveillance systems, and mobile surveillance capability systems
393 Unattended Ground Sensors, including seismic, imaging, and infrared
83 Handheld Equipment Devices, including handheld thermal imaging systems and night vision goggles.
AT POINTS OF ENTRY, CHECKPOINTS
- 2 Non-intrusive Inspection Systems, including fixed and mobile
1 Radiation Portal Monitor
AIR AND MARINE
- 2 Aerial Downlink Communication Systems
12 Night Vision Goggles
5 Forward Looking Infrared Radar Cameras
2 Search Radar
1 Long Range Thermal Imaging Camera
3 Radar for use in the maritime environment
1 Day Color Camera
3 Cameras for use in the maritime environment
1 Littoral Detection & Classification Network
EL CENTRO
BETWEEN THE PORTS OF ENTRY
- 66 Fixed Camera Systems (with relocation capability), which include Remote Video Surveillance Systems
18 Mobile Surveillance Systems, which include mobile video surveillance systems, agent-portable surveillance systems, and mobile surveillance capability systems
85 Unattended Ground Sensors, including seismic, imaging, and infrared
57 Handheld Equipment Devices, including handheld thermal imaging systems and night vision goggles.
2 Sensor Repeaters
2 Communications Repeaters
AT POINTS OF ENTRY, CHECKPOINTS
- 5 Fiber-optic Tank Inspection Scopes
1 License Plate Reader
1 Backscatter
2 Portable Contraband Detectors
2 Radiation Isotope Identification Devices
8 Radiation Isotope Identification Devices updates
3 Personal Radiation Detectors
16 Mobile Automated Targeting Systems
AIR AND MARINE
- 2 Aerial Downlink Communication Systems
3 Aerial Receiver Communication Systems
2 Forward Looking Infrared Radar Cameras
1 Unmanned Aerial System
EL PASO
BETWEEN THE PORTS OF ENTRY
- 27 Integrated Fixed Towers (with relocation capability)
71 Fixed Camera Systems (with relocation capability), which include Remote Video Surveillance Systems
31 Mobile Surveillance Systems, which include mobile video surveillance systems, agent-portable surveillance systems, and mobile surveillance capability systems
170 Unattended Ground Sensors, including seismic, imaging, and infrared
24 Handheld equipment devices, including handheld thermal imaging systems and night vision goggles.
1 Portable Camera Tower
1 Sensor Repeater
2 Camera Refresh
AT POINTS OF ENTRY, CHECKPOINTS
- 4 Non-intrusive Inspection Systems, including fixed and mobile
23 Fiber-optic Tank Inspection Scopes
1 Portable Contraband Detectors
19 Radiation Isotope Identification Devices updates
1 Real time Radioscopy version 4
8 Personal Radiation Detectors
AIR AND MARINE
- 1 Aerial Downlink Communication Systems
7 Aerial Receivers
24 Night Vision Goggles
4 Forward Looking Infrared Radar Cameras
20 Global Positioning Systems
17 UAS Radio Systems
BIG BEND
BETWEEN THE PORTS OF ENTRY
- 7 Fixed Camera Systems (with relocation capability), which include Remote Video Surveillance Systems
29 Mobile Surveillance Systems, which include mobile video surveillance systems, agent-portable surveillance systems, and mobile surveillance capability systems
1105 Unattended Ground Sensors, including seismic, imaging, and infrared
131 Handheld Equipment Devices, including handheld thermal imaging systems and night vision goggles
1 Mid-range Camera Refresh
1 Improved Surveillance Capabilities for existing aerostat
27 Sensor Repeaters
27 Communications Repeaters
AT POINTS OF ENTRY, CHECKPOINTS
- 7 Fiber-optic Tank Inspection Scopes
3 License Plate Readers, including mobile, tactical, and fixed
12 Portable Contraband Detectors
7 Radiation Isotope Identification Devices
12 Radiation Isotope Identification Devices updates
254 Personal Radiation Detectors
19 Mobile Automated Targeting Systems
AIR AND MARINE
- 6 Aerial Receiver Communication Systems
3 Forward Looking Infrared Radar Cameras
UAS Radio Systems
DEL RIO
BETWEEN THE PORTS OF ENTRY
- 3 Integrated Fixed Towers (with relocation capability)
74 Fixed Camera Systems (with relocation capability), which include Remote Video Surveillance Systems
47 Mobile Surveillance Systems, which include mobile video surveillance systems, agent-portable surveillance systems, and mobile surveillance capability systems
868 Unattended Ground Sensors, including seismic, imaging, and infrared
174 Handheld Equipment Devices, including handheld thermal imaging systems and night vision goggles
26 Mobile/Handheld Inspection Scopes and Sensors for checkpoints
1 Improved Surveillance Capabilities for existing aerostat
21 Sensor Repeaters
21 Communications Repeaters
AT POINTS OF ENTRY, CHECKPOINTS
- 4 License Plate Readers, including mobile, tactical, and fixed
13 Radiation Isotope Identification Devices updates
3 Mobile Automated Targeting Systems
6 Land Automated Targeting Systems
AIR AND MARINE
- 8 Aerial Receiver Communication Systems
15 Night Vision Goggles
7 Forward Looking Infrared Radar Cameras
3 Forward Looking Infrared Radar Cameras with marine capabilities
LAREDO
BETWEEN THE PORTS OF ENTRY
- 2 Integrated Fixed Towers (with relocation capability)
69 Fixed Camera Systems (with relocation capability), which include Remote Video Surveillance Systems
38 Mobile Surveillance Systems, which include mobile video surveillance systems, agent-portable surveillance systems, and mobile surveillance capability systems
573 Unattended Ground Sensors, including seismic, imaging, and infrared
124 Handheld Equipment Devices, including handheld thermal imaging systems and night vision goggles
38 Sensor Repeaters
38 Communications Repeaters
AT POINTS OF ENTRY, CHECKPOINTS
- 1 Non-intrusive Inspection System
7 Fiber-optic Tank Inspection Scopes
19 License Plate Readers, including mobile, tactical, and fixed
2 Backscatter
14 Portable Contraband Detectors
2 Radiation Isotope Identification Devices
18 Radiation Isotope Identification Devices updates
16 Personal Radiation Detectors
24 Mobile Automated Targeting Systems
3 Land Automated Targeting Systems
AIR AND MARINE
- 6 Aerial Receiver Communication Systems
2 Remote Video Terminals
3 Forward Looking Infrared Radar Cameras
6 Forward Looking Infrared Radar Cameras with marine capability
2 Medium Lift Helicopters
RIO GRANDE VALLEY
BETWEEN THE PORTS OF ENTRY
- 1 Integrated Fixed Towers (with relocation capability)
83 Fixed Camera Systems (with relocation capability), which include Remote Video Surveillance Systems
25 Mobile Surveillance Systems, which include mobile video surveillance systems, agent-portable surveillance systems, and mobile surveillance capability systems
716 Unattended Ground Sensors, including seismic, imaging, and infrared
205 Handheld Equipment Devices, including handheld thermal imaging systems and night vision goggles.
4 Portable Camera Towers
4 Sensor Repeaters
1 Communications Repeater
2 Camera Refresh
AT POINTS OF ENTRY, CHECKPOINTS
- 1 Mobile Non-intrusive Inspection System
11 Fiberoptic Tank Inspection Scopes
1 License Plate Reader
2 Backscatter
2 Card Reader System
8 Portable Contraband Detectors
5 Radiation Isotope Identification Devices
18 Radiation Isotope Identification Devices updates
135 Personal Radiation Detectors
AIR AND MARINE
- 3 VADER Radar Systems
2 Aerial Downlink Communication Systems

12 Aerial Receiver Communication Systems
 2 Forward Looking Infrared Radar Cameras
 3 Omni-directional Antennae
 28 Forward Looking Infrared Radar Cameras with marine capabilities
 1 Unmanned Aerial System

Mr. MCCAIN. I see my distinguished friend from Vermont on the floor, who is always worth listening to, so I will be brief.

I wish to share with our colleagues another aspect of this problem that we really have not talked about very much, and that is the issue of drugs. Drugs are a problem of enormous proportion in this country. We see the effects of illegal drugs such as methamphetamine and others, and we see it is doing incredible damage to our Nation and particularly to our young people.

This document is called the Arizona High Intensity Drug Trafficking Area Threat Assessment of 2013. Now, I am not going to go into a lot of the details, but there are some stark facts about the flow of drugs across our southern border that should disturb all of us. I quote:

The Tucson and Phoenix areas remain the primary distribution hubs for ton quantities of marijuana in the southwest region—

Ton quantities of marijuana in the southwest region—

as Tucson and Phoenix-based sources sell throughout the United States.

In other words, the drugs come up across the Arizona-Sonora border, they are tracked by guides on mountaintops and into Phoenix, and from Phoenix they are distributed throughout the country.

The Phoenix field DEA—Drug Enforcement Agency—Phoenix field division's biannual drug price list for 2012 indicates marijuana in the Tucson and Phoenix metropolitan areas remained stable during the period January 2011 to 2012.

Why is that important? Because the only real indication as to whether we are reducing a supply is the price of that supply. So when we see the price of marijuana on the street in Phoenix and Tucson is exactly what it was for the entire year, no matter what we see in the papers and on television of these large apprehensions, unless the price is going up, then we are not apprehending these drugs.

So I just want to mention a couple of other facts to my colleagues and why I think we are not addressing the drug problem sufficiently in this legislation.

The assessment continues:

The retail price of methamphetamine decreased in the Phoenix area and now ranges from \$500 to \$1,000 per ounce.

If there is a terrible drug on the market today, it has to be methamphetamine. I am told that one—one—ingestion of methamphetamine makes a person an addict. So what have we been able to do as far as methamphetamine? The retail price of methamphetamine decreased, which obviously means the

supply has certainly not been impacted.

Wholesale black tar heroin prices in Arizona have remained stable or decreased slightly, including market stability.

Only 35 percent of the HIDTA—

The high density trafficking area—

respondents reported high cocaine availability in their respective jurisdictions. Intelligence indicates cocaine price increases in Mexico and Arizona during the past year may have impacted the supply of cocaine to the Arizona drug market, thus impacting other drug markets.

So that is good news.

Continuing to read from the threat assessment: The price per kilogram of cocaine increased \$5,000 to \$6,000 per kilogram in the Phoenix area.

My friends, I know my colleagues are very busy, but I would at least have your staff read this threat assessment of 2013 in the State of Arizona. Again, I do not say that because I represent the State of Arizona. But these same people—the Drug Enforcement Agency—will tell you still the bulk of illegal drugs crossing our southern border comes through the Arizona-Tucson sector.

So what is my recipe on this situation? Frankly, I do not know a real good recipe because clearly demand is either stable or on the rise in the United States of America depending on to whom you talk. In some places in America, the use of drugs is glamorized. In some places, it is kind of the sophisticated thing to do. I do not think there is any doubt that there are influences in the United States of America that increase the attractiveness of drugs to our citizens.

I am not saying I know the answer, but I do think that as we address the issue of border security, we have to understand that if there is a demand for drugs in the streets of every major city in America, they will use all ultralights, they will use submarines, they will use tunnels, they will do whatever is necessary in order to get that supply to where there is a market.

I will never forget being down in Colombia, where the government people there showed me a submarine the drug cartel people had built—a very sophisticated submarine. They had hired engineers to build it. It was one that travels under the water—not far but under the water.

I said: How much did it cost them to build this?

He said: Five million dollars.

I said: Five millions dollars. That is a lot of money.

The guy said: They make \$15 million in one load—in one load.

So I am not coming to this floor with a lot of answers, but I am coming to the floor of this Senate and saying that the drug issue in this country is a serious one, and if anybody thinks we are reducing the supply of those drugs, I think the facts contradict that, and it is time we started seriously as a society addressing what is killing our young and old Americans.

So, again, I thank my colleagues for their consideration of this legislation. I really came to the floor to convince them that this is a far different situation from 1986. We have gone from 4,000 border agents to 21,000. We have put in all kinds of barriers to the border. But, most importantly, as the Presiding Officer from Delaware pointed out earlier today, we now have technology that can surveil and interdict people from crossing our border. Our challenge is to get it done.

I thank my colleague from Vermont for his patience, and I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Vermont.

Mr. SANDERS. Mr. President, let me congratulate Senator MCCAIN for all of his hard work in the Gang of 8 and his focus on border security, which is an enormously important issue.

As the son of an immigrant—my dad came to this country at the age of 17 from Poland—I strongly support the concept of immigration reform, and I applaud the Judiciary Committee and all of those people who have been working hard on this legislation.

There are a lot of provisions within this bill that I think should be strongly supported by the American people.

I strongly support a pathway to citizenship for the 11 million undocumented immigrants in this country. Bringing undocumented workers out of the shadows and giving them legal status will make it more difficult, among many other things, for employers to undercut the wages and benefits of all workers and will be good for our entire economy—a very important step forward.

I strongly support the DREAM Act to make sure the children of illegal immigrants who were brought into this country by their parents years ago are allowed to become citizens.

I strongly support providing legal status to foreign workers on family farms. Dairy farmers in Vermont and the owners of apple orchards in my State have told me that without these workers, they would go out of business, and it is obviously true in many parts of this country.

We also need to make sure, as Senator MCCAIN has just elaborated, that our borders are more secure and prevent unscrupulous employers from hiring those who have come here illegally.

All of those provisions are extremely important, are included in the legislation passed out of the Judiciary Committee last week, and are provisions I support. I commend my colleague from Vermont Senator PAT LEAHY for his leadership on those issues. But let me tell you some of what concerns me very much about the bill as it presently stands.

At a time when nearly 14 percent of the American people do not have a full-time job, at a time when the middle class continues to disappear, and at a time when tens of millions of Americans are working longer hours for lower wages, it makes no sense to me

that the immigration reform bill includes a massive increase in temporary guest worker programs that will allow large corporations to import and bring into this country hundreds of thousands of temporary blue-collar and white-collar guest workers from overseas. That makes no sense to me.

I am particularly concerned that at a time when college is becoming increasingly unaffordable—and every parent out there with a high school kid is worried about how that family is going to afford college for their kids—at a time when young people desperately need jobs to help pay for the cost of a college education, this bill will make it more difficult for young Americans to find the jobs they need.

Today, youth unemployment is over 16 percent, and the teen unemployment rate is over 25 percent. Unfortunately, many of the jobs that used to be performed by young Americans are now being done by foreign college students through the J-1 Summer Work Travel Program and the H-2B guest worker program.

Millions of Americans, including myself—and I suspect many Members of Congress—earned money when they were young at summer jobs or at part-time jobs when they were in college in order to pay for the cost of college. Some Americans today are working as waiters and waitresses. They are working as lifeguards. They are working as front-desk clerks at hotels and resorts. They are working as ski instructors, as cooks, chefs, kitchen personnel, chambermaids, landscapers, and many other similar jobs. And there is nothing any American has to be embarrassed about at working at any of those jobs or any other job in order to earn some income to pay the bills or to make some money in order to afford to go to college. There is nothing anybody should be ashamed about doing that kind of work. What I worry about very much is the degree to which those jobs will be available for young Americans as a result of the J-1 program and the H-2B program.

It pains me very deeply that with minority unemployment extraordinarily high—I was just in Detroit last week talking to kids who are working so hard, and they are working for \$7.25 an hour at McDonald's or other fast food places—if they are lucky enough to get that work. Many of them would like to go to college but are unable to earn the money they need in order to go to college. It seems to me terribly wrong that we have programs such as this J-1 Summer Work Travel Program which brings students from all over the world into the United States to take jobs that young Americans want to do.

The J-1 program for foreign college students is supposed to be—is supposed to be—used as a cultural exchange program, a program to bring young people into this country to learn about our way of life, our customs, and to support international cooperation and understanding. Those are extremely im-

portant goals. I believe in that passionately. When I was mayor of the city of Burlington, we started sister-city programs with towns around the world in order to develop that type of understanding and cooperation. That is the theory of what the J-1 program is supposed to be, and a wonderful goal it is.

Unfortunately, that is not what it is today. Today the J-1 program has morphed into a low-wage jobs program to allow corporations such as Hershey's and McDonald's and many others to replace young American workers with cheaper labor from abroad. Each and every year companies from all over this country are hiring more than 100,000 foreign college students in low-wage jobs through the J-1 Summer Work Travel Program.

Unlike other guest worker programs, the J-1 Summer Work Travel Program does not require businesses to recruit American workers for these positions, offer jobs to willing and able Americans first, or to pay prevailing wages. In other words, if there are jobs out there that our young people would like to get in order to put aside a few bucks or help pay for the cost of a college education, the employer is not obliged to reach out to these young Americans. It is one thing for an employer to say: Look, I reached out, tried to get some young people to do this job, could not find them, and I had to go abroad. I can understand that. But that is not the requirement of this J-1 program.

Let me read from a Web site of a foreign labor recruiter touting the benefits of using the J-1 Summer Work Travel Program to employers in the United States. This Web site is called jobofer.org. This is one, as I understand it, of many. But here is what it says. I quote from the Web site jobofer.org. This is going to employers who need unskilled workers for the summer.

Whether you are running an amusement park, a water park, a concessions stand, a golf club, a circus, a zoo, or anything else where people come to enjoy themselves, it's a great idea not to miss the opportunities of the season and hire international seasonal workers to cover your growing staffing needs.

International seasonal workers.

Jobofer.org has experience in matching candidates from foreign exchange students with amusement firms all over the USA, covering every type of entry level position you may want to cover with seasonal staffing.

The Work And Travel USA program allows exchange students from abroad to work in the US for up to 4 months during the busy season under a J1 visa.

Jobofer.org is committed to understanding your needs as an amusement business and handling all the seasonal staffing procedures for you, at absolutely no cost. Check out the list of positions typically filled with international exchange students . . .

Now, what this Web site is doing is telling employers—in this case, they are just focusing on amusement parks, but obviously it goes much beyond that into all kinds of resorts, many other areas—but what they are simply saying is that we need unskilled labor.

One knows that historically in this country that is what young people did.

When you were in high school, when you were in college, you would try to make a few bucks. You go out and you get a summer job. Maybe you could earn a couple of thousand dollars. Maybe it starts you on a career or maybe it is money to put aside to go to college. I did it. Many Members of the Senate did it. Millions of young people in this country want to do it.

What these companies are saying is: You do not need to hire kids in your community anymore. You do not have to reach out to minority kids who desperately need a job, to kids in Vermont who want to put away a few bucks to go to college. You do not have to do that anymore. We will help you bring in young people from all over the world to do those jobs.

One of the arguments we hear on the floor is we need highly skilled workers because high-tech companies cannot attract the scientists and the engineers and the physicists and the mathematicians they need. When we bring them in, these guys are going to help create jobs in America. Maybe. That is a whole other issue for discussion. But nobody can tell me we need to bring young people from all over the world to work at entry-level jobs because there are not young Americans who want to do that job, when the unemployment rate of young people in this country is extraordinarily high. Nobody with a straight face can make that claim.

Here are some of the jobs being advertised on this very same Web site. There are many Web sites like it. This one focuses on jobs within the amusement industry: Ride operators/attendants, game operators, food service—flipping hamburgers—lifeguard. I guess we have no young people in America who are capable of being lifeguards. Nobody in America can swim and get a job as a lifeguard. I guess we need to bring people from all over the world to be lifeguards. Guest relations, admissions, security, games and attractions, merchandise, grounds quality, season pass processor, entertainment wardrobe, warehouse, safari gatekeepers and wardens, parking lot attendant. I guess nobody in America could be a parking lot attendant. Landscape, cash control.

Here is the interesting point. The Web site, after mentioning all of those jobs specific to the amusement industry, asks the following questions: What happens—interesting question. What happens when you use seasonal employment for your theme or amusement park? Here is the answer this foreign labor recruiter gives on its Web site:

You cover your seasonal staffing needs with young, highly motivated, English-speaking international staff from 18 to 28 years old and cut costs by paying fewer taxes.

Got that? You can bring in international workers, students from abroad, and one of the advantages you have is you pay lower taxes on that foreign worker than you do for an American worker.

In fact, under the J-1 Summer Work Travel Program, employers do not have to pay Medicare, Social Security, and unemployment taxes, which amounts to a payroll savings of about 8.45 percent per employee. What a bargain. So we are enticing—we are giving an incentive to a company to bring foreign workers into this country and saving them money by hiring foreign workers at the expense of young Americans who certainly can do those jobs.

Under the J-1 program, employers do not have to pay Social Security and Medicare payroll taxes. They do not have to pay unemployment taxes. They do not have to offer jobs to Americans first. They do not have to pay wages that are comparable to what American workers make. What employer in America would want to hire a young American as a lifeguard or a ski instructor or a waiter or a waitress, or any other low-skilled job, when they can hire a foreign college student instead at a significant reduction in cost?

I understand the immigration reform bill we are debating reforms this program by requiring foreign labor recruiters to pay a \$500 fee for every foreign college student they bring into this country. Right now, foreign college students bear all of these costs. But in my opinion, that is not good enough. This program is a real disservice to the young people in this country.

I believe in cultural exchanges. I would put a lot more money into cultural exchanges so our young people can go abroad, so young people from all over the world could attend our high schools. That would be a great thing. But that is not what this J-1 program is. It is a program which is displacing young American workers at a time of double-digit unemployment among youth, and it is putting downward pressure on wages at a time when the American people are in many cases working longer hours for lower wages.

In my opinion, this particular program should be abolished. Cultural program, yes; but bringing in young people to take jobs from young Americans, no. At the very least, if we are not going to abolish this program, we need to make sure we have a comparable summer and year-round jobs program for our young people in order to help them pay for college and to move up the economic ladder. At the very least, that is what should be in this bill.

That is why I will be filing an amendment today to the immigration reform bill to create a youth jobs program. My amendment would provide States with \$1.5 billion in immediate funding to support a 2-year summer and year-round jobs program for low-income youth and economically disadvantaged young adults. This amendment is modeled on the summer and year-round youth jobs program included in President Obama's American Jobs Act.

This amendment would build on the success from the American Recovery

and Reinvestment Act, which provided \$1.2 billion in funding for the WIA Youth Jobs Program. This program created over 374,000 summer job opportunities during 2009 and 2010 for young Americans who desperately needed those jobs. This amendment, in fact, would create even more jobs.

Let me be very clear. The same corporations and businesses that support a massive expansion in guest worker programs are opposed to raising the minimum wage. They have long supported the outsourcing of American jobs. They have reduced wages and benefits of American workers at a time when corporate profits are at an all-time high. In too many cases, the H-2B program for lower skilled guest workers and the H-1B for high-skilled guest workers are being used by employers to drive down the wages and benefits of American workers and to replace American workers with cheap labor from abroad.

The immigration reform bill that passed the Senate Judiciary Committee could increase the number of low-skilled guest workers by as much as 800 percent over the next 5 years and could more than triple the number of temporary white-collar guest workers coming into this country. That is the basic issue. That is my basic concern. At a time when unemployment is so high, does it make a whole lot of sense to be bringing hundreds of thousands of workers from all over the world into this country to fill jobs American workers desperately need?

The high-tech industry tells us they need the H-1B program so they can hire the best and the brightest science, technology, engineering, and math workers in the world, and that there are not enough qualified American workers in these fields. In some cases—let me be very honest—I think that is true. I think there are some companies in some parts of the country that are unable to attract American workers to do the jobs that are needed. I believe in those instances, corporations should have the right to bring in foreign workers so the corporation can do the business it is supposed to be doing.

But having said that, let me also tell you some facts: In 2010, 54 percent of the H-1B guest workers were employed in entry-level jobs and performed "routine tasks requiring limited judgment," according to the Government Accountability Office. Routine tasks.

So when a lot of my friends here talk about high-tech workers, they are talking about scientists, they are talking about all of these guys who are doing a great job, but that is not necessarily the case. Only 6 percent of H-1B visas were given to workers with highly specialized skills in 2010, according to the GAO. More than 80 percent of H-1B guest workers are paid wages that are less than American workers in comparable positions, according to the Economic Policy Institute.

Over 9 million Americans have degrees in a STEM-related field, but only about 3 million have a job in one. Last

year, the top 10 employers of H-1B guest workers were all offshore outsourcing companies. These firms are responsible for shipping large numbers of American information technology jobs to India and other countries. Half of all recent college graduates majoring in computer and information science in the United States did not receive jobs in the information technology sector. So it seems to me this is an issue we have got to deal with.

The second amendment I will be filing today is with Senators GRASSLEY and HARKIN. That amendment would prohibit companies that have announced mass layoffs over the past year from hiring guest workers unless these companies can prove their overall employment will not be reduced as a result of these mass layoffs. In other words, what we are seeing is a very clear trend. Large corporations are throwing American workers out on the street, and they are bringing in foreign workers to do those very same jobs.

Many of those very same companies have moved parts of their corporate world away from the United States into Third World countries. So this continues the attack on American workers. We must stop it.

Let me give you a few examples as I conclude my remarks. In 2012, Hewlett-Packard, one of the large American corporations, announced it was laying off 30,000 workers at the same time it hired more than 660 H-1B guest workers. In 2012, Cisco laid off 1,300 employees at the same time it hired more than 330 H-1B guest workers. In 2012, Yahoo hired more than 135 H-1B guest workers at the same time it announced it was laying off over 2,000 workers. Research in Motion hired 24 H-1B guest workers at the same time it laid off over 5,000 people.

I think it makes no sense at all that corporations that are laying off American workers are now reaching into the H-1B program to bring in foreign workers.

Let me conclude by saying there is much in this legislation I support and that I believe the American people support. But problems remain. Problems remain. The main problem to me is this guest worker concept which is being widely abused by employers throughout this country. At the very least, I want to see a summer jobs program for our kids who are now losing jobs because of the J-1 program. But we need to do even more than that.

I look forward to working with my colleagues who have worked so hard on this bill to make it a bill that all Americans and all working people can be supportive of.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. MURPHY). The Senator from Arizona.

Mr. McCAIN. I ask unanimous consent to address the Senate as in morning business and engage in a colloquy with the Senator from South Carolina.

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

SYRIA

Mr. MCCAIN. Mr. President, in a couple of minutes the President of the United States will be announcing it is now conclusive that Bashar al-Asad and the Syrian butchers have used chemical weapons, which is, as we all know, a red line which the President of the United States announced that Bashar al-Asad cannot cross.

Asad has been very clever in using small amounts rather than large amounts. But the fact is we are not the first country to conclude the Asad regime has used chemical weapons in their attacks on the population of Syria.

The President also will announce we will be assisting the Syrian rebels in Syria by providing them with weapons and other assistance. I applaud the President's decision, 93,000 people dead later, over 1 million refugees, and the countries in the surrounding region erupting into sectarian violence, the clear spreading of this conflict into a regional conflict: Sunni, Shia, Saudi, Iran, Russia, all major players.

We see that Jordan is overwhelmed with refugees. Lebanon is experiencing sectarian violence. Iraq is unraveling and the entire region is bordering on chaos, not to mention the massacre and genocide that is taking place in Syria.

I applaud the President's decision, and I appreciate it. The President of the United States had better understand that just supplying weapons is not going to change the equation on the ground of the balance of power. These people, the Free Syrian Army, need weapons and heavy weapons to counter tanks and aircraft. They need a no-fly air zone. Bashar Asad's air assets have to be taken out and neutralized. We can do that without risking a single American airplane. We can do it by cratering the runways with cruise missiles, moving the PATRIOT missiles closer to the border, and protecting a safe zone where they can organize, they can work, and they can coordinate with the civilian side of the Syrian National Army, and they can have a chance of success.

Today—thanks to Iranians, thanks to Russia, thanks to Hezbollah pouring in by the thousands, thanks to people flowing in from all over the Middle East—including from Iraq back into Syria—they are losing. They are being massacred and they are sustaining incredibly heavy casualties. It is terrible.

I applaud the President's decision. I applaud the fact that he has now acknowledged what the French, the others, and all the rest of us knew, that Bashar Asad is using chemical weapons.

Just to provide weapons to the Syrian National Army is not enough. We have to change the equation on the battleground. If I might say, I have seen and been in conflicts where there was gradual escalation. They don't win. If all we are going to do is supply weapons, then there will be a commen-

surate resupply by the Iranians, Russians, and others.

I thank the President for acknowledging the Syrians are using chemical weapons and massacring their own people. I applaud his decision to provide additional weapons.

Every ounce, every bone in my body knows that simply providing weapons will not change the battlefield equation, and we must change the battlefield equation; otherwise, we are going to see a regional conflict, the consequences of which we will be paying for for a long time.

I yield to my colleague from South Carolina.

Mr. GRAHAM. I wish to add my voice to the President's decision to act, because I think action by the United States and the international community is required.

What does it matter to the average American that we contain this war in Syria and that it ends sooner rather than later? As to chemical weapons that have now been acknowledged to be used by Asad against his own people, my goal is to make sure they are not used against us, Israel, or our allies throughout the world. If we don't stop this war, the chemical weapons caches—numbers in the hundreds of thousands of weapons—could be used to be deployed to kill thousands of Americans or Israelis or people who are aligned with us.

The President's decision to intervene comes from an escalation of the use of chemical weapons by Asad. As Senator MCCAIN has indicated, the threats to our country are not just from the chemical weapons but from a regional deterioration.

I say to the sitting President of the Senate today, we were in Jordan. The Jordanian Government has to accommodate over 550,000 Syrian refugees. Sixty thousand Syrian children are attending Jordanian schools. The economy in Jordan is about to collapse. If we lose the King of Jordan, we have lost one of the last moderate voices in the Middle East.

This war has a ripple effect. It is affecting Turkey; it is affecting Iraq. Radical Islamists are flowing in on the Sunni side and Shia side. There are al-Qaida elements that are filling in the vacuum because the war has gone on so long. Now we have Hezbollah, a radical Islamic Shia group. This is turning into a civil war within Syria and a regional conflict.

To the President: Your decision today to get involved is welcome news. But as Senator MCCAIN said, Mr. President, the goal is to end the war. The only way this war is going to end quickly and on our terms is to neutralize the air assets Asad enjoys.

On the air power advantage he has over the rebels, we can crater the runways. There are four air bases he uses. We can stop the planes from flying. We can shoot planes down without having one boot on the ground. That is not necessary.

As to Senator MCCAIN's point, the longer this war goes on, the more damage to our allies, and the more likely the chemical weapons can be used not just against Syrians but against us and others. My biggest fear about the war in Syria is the chemical weapons falling in the hands of radical Islamists. They are closer today than they have ever been in achieving that goal.

Mr. President, you made the right call today. We need to follow up to end this war with neutralizing Asad's air power and having a no-fly zone so the rebels can reorganize. When we supply arms to the rebels, we will look long and hard at who to give the arms to.

The good news is we don't need to give them a bunch of anti-aircraft capability if we crater the runways through the international community using our assets. If we neutralize the air power by blowing up the runways, you don't have to provide the rebels with a bunch of anti-aircraft capability.

If we will provide a no-fly zone using PATRIOT missile batteries, you can protect the people without interjecting massive weapons into the conflict.

Senator MCCAIN has been right about this for a couple of years. This is a big day.

I will conclude with this. Asad is the reason the Russians are providing him more weapons. The reason is Hezbollah is in Syria. The reason the Iranians are so bold is he is clearly winning. It is not in our national interests for him to win because the Israelis cannot allow the technology being sold to Asad by the Russians being present, because it will hurt their national security.

I hope with this intervention today to get involved, after chemical weapons have been used, the tide of the battle will turn. If it doesn't turn, it will have catastrophic results for national security and the region as a whole.

The President chose wisely today to get involved. We support him. The goal is not to help the rebels, the goal is to end the war before chemical weapons can be used against us, we lose the King of Jordan, and the entire Middle East goes up in flames.

Mr. MCCAIN. May I ask my colleague if he remembers when the Secretary of Defense and the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff appeared before our committee well over a year ago and said, unsolicited, it is inevitable, it is inevitable that Bashar Asad will fall? Does the Senator remember that?

Mr. GRAHAM. Yes.

Mr. MCCAIN. This is from our highest ranking official and from our highest defense official, the Secretary of Defense.

At that time I said: What makes you so sure? How can you be so sure with the help from Hezbollah, with the help from the Russians at the time, the equipment and arms they are getting?

They said: Don't worry. The fall of Asad is inevitable.

Is there anybody today who believes he is going to fall? I don't think so. Because the facts on the ground are he is

winning and the slaughter continues. The latest is 93,000 people have been massacred. As the Senator from South Carolina indicated, there are well over 1 million refugees overwhelming the neighboring countries.

It is my understanding the President has not made the final decision on arming, but he has made the decision that chemical weapons are being used. I think it is obvious they will be providing weapons. They need a no-fly zone. I would say there are military officials in the Pentagon who will say we can't do it, and we have to have total mobilization of every single Reserve in the world and the United States, and it is so hard.

We spend tens of billions of dollars a year on defense. If our military can't establish a no-fly zone, then, by God, American taxpayer dollars have been terribly wasted and we ought to have an investigation as to why we can't handle a situation in a third-rate country. I believe we can, I know we can. I know, because I talked to people, such as the head of our Central Command, a former head of our Central Command, our former head of NATO, and others, such as General Keane, the architect of the surge. We can go in and establish a no-fly zone, and we can change this equation on the battlefield.

Finally, I would ask my colleague, we understand the American people are war weary. They are weary because of what happened in Iraq. We remain in Afghanistan. Iraq is unraveling, by the way, but Americans are weary. They are tired of reading the casualty lists, of the funerals, and the terrible tragedies that have befallen American families. That is why neither I nor the Senator from South Carolina is saying we want boots on the ground. In fact, we don't want boots on the ground. We know it would be counterproductive. We know it would not lead to victory. We do know we can provide incredible assistance and change this battlefield equation.

Finally, because a lot of Americans haven't paid perhaps as much attention as some of us, and maybe because they are war weary, I think it would be wise for the President of the United States to go on national television to explain to the American people why we are stopping this genocide, explain why we are assisting these people who are struggling for the same things we stand for and believe in, why the United States of America went to Bosnia with air power, not boots on the ground, and why we went to Kosovo and didn't put boots on the ground. Explain how we can help these people while alleviating the unspeakable misery of the Syrian people.

Does my colleague from South Carolina agree with that?

Mr. GRAHAM. I would recommend the President educate the American people about what is going on in the Middle East, because it is scary. It is really scary.

The Iranians are marching toward a nuclear weapon. Israel is becoming

more surrounded by radical Islamic nations, not less. The King of Jordan is teetering. If we lose him, God knows what is going to happen in the Middle East.

I would suggest that the President take it one step further. Explain to the American people what happens to us if these chemical weapons Asad has used against his own people fall into the hands of radical Islamists who want to do more than just take care of Syria. My big fear is weapons of mass destruction are going to fall into the hands of radical Islamists either in Iran or Syria if we don't act quickly.

The only reason thousands of Americans have been killed in the war on terror—and not millions—is they can't get the weapons to kill millions of us. If they could, they would.

I would argue very strongly it is in our national security interests to make sure the war in Syria ends and Asad is displaced.

Senator MCCAIN is right, he is winning. He was supposed to be gone last year. He is never going to be displaced until the tide of battle changes. The way we change the tide of battle is neutralize his air power. We can do that without mobilizing every Reservist, including me. It can be done, it should be done, and it is in our interests to do it.

One last thought. If we do not address the chemical weapons compromise in Syria and end this war before these chemical weapons flow out of Syria, not only will Israel be in the crosshairs of radical Islamists with a weapons-of-mass-destruction capability, it is only a matter of time before they come here. The next bomb that goes off in a place like Boston could have more than nails and glass in it.

The people who want these weapons in Syria, trying to develop nuclear capability in Iran, if we don't think they are coming after us, we are naive. I know we are war weary, but I hope we are not too weary to protect our children, grandchildren, and ourselves from a threat that is real. I wish it would go away, but we don't make these things go away by wishing, we confront them. The sooner we confront it, the better off we will be.

Mr. MCCAIN. I would mention one other thing, as I know one of my colleagues is waiting on the floor. There is no other experience that I think anyone can have to see the terrible ravage of war than to go to a refugee camp. The Senator from South Carolina and I have been to refugee camps on both the Turkish and the Jordanian border to see thousands of people living in terribly primitive conditions; to see, as I did in one camp we visited—there had been a rainstorm the night before and people were literally living in water—the desperation on the faces of the people and the children.

I have had many moving experiences while visiting these refugee camps, but I also think there is an aspect we ought

to understand and appreciate as Americans. They are angry and they are bitter because we wouldn't come to their assistance.

I will never forget a woman who was a schoolteacher escorting me around the refugee camp. She said: Senator MCCAIN, do you see all these children here? Do you see all these children?

She said: These children are going to take revenge on those who refused to help them stop this slaughter by Bashar Asad.

So there are long-term implications both on the humanitarian side as well as other aspects of this issue. Believe me, it is the greatest blow to Iran in 25 years if Bashar Asad fell. So it is not just a humanitarian issue. If Bashar Asad goes, Hezbollah is disconnected from Iran, and the whole equation in the Middle East dramatically changes. If Iran and Bashar Asad succeed, we will see a direct threat of the State of Israel, which the Israelis understand, coming from the Golan Heights.

So this is not only a humanitarian issue, it is a national security issue. If Iran succeeds, keeping Bashar Asad in power, that will send a message throughout the Middle East about Iranian power, Iranian ability, and the Iranian ability to change governments throughout the Middle East. So there is a lot at stake.

I hope the President will go to a no-fly zone and give these people the weapons with which to defend themselves, as Russian arms and Iranian arms pour into the country on the side of Bashar Asad. My friends, it is not a fair fight, and we know, in that kind of climate and terrain, air power is the deciding factor.

I thank my colleague from South Carolina, and I appreciate the patience of the Senator from Texas.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. COWAN). The Senator from Texas.

IRAN ELECTION

Mr. CRUZ. Mr. President, on Friday, the people of Iran head to the polls to make a false choice. Ostensibly participating in a democratic process to select a new President, they are really affirming their existing extremist theocracy. They will be forced to select not the candidate of their choice but the candidates that have been chosen for them by the Supreme Leader Ali Khamenei—candidates guaranteed to continue the Supreme Leader's policies of political and religious oppression in pursuit of nuclear capability at all costs.

In the United States we are now engaged in a national dialog about how we can best preserve our God-given rights guaranteed to us by our Constitution. We are taking a serious look at the role of government in our lives and revisiting the balance government is striking between security and privacy. But even as we debate these vital issues at home, we should remember those who are denied their liberty in Iran.

Today, in Iran, the economic picture is grim. Forty percent of Iranian citizens now live below the poverty line, almost double the rate in 2005. The rial has lost 50 percent of its value. The official rate of inflation is 32.2 percent. The real rate is considerably higher. The national rate of unemployment is 11.2 percent, and it is as high as 20 percent in certain regions.

Basic freedoms—political, religious, speech, the Internet—are under systematic attack by the regime. Sadly, persecution and oppression are the norm in Iran. Iran's political opposition has been effectively silenced. Key 2009 opposition leaders, such as Mir Hossein Mousavi and Mehdi Karroubi have been imprisoned without charge in their own homes for 2 years with locked doors and windows. The list of Presidential candidates has been hand-selected by the Supreme Leader, not by the Iranian people. American-Iranian Pastor Saeed Abedini is right now serving an 8-year sentence in Iran's brutal Evin prison for simply professing his faith.

In January, I was proud to sign a letter, along with 11 other Senators, to Secretary Clinton advocating for Pastor Abedini's release and to Secretary Kerry on February 12, thanking him for his statement in support of Pastor Abedini.

There has been a crackdown on Christians in the lead-up to this election, including the closing of the Central Assemblies of God Church in Tehran and the detention of Pastor Robert Asserian. Iranian Pastor Behnam Irani may face the death penalty for organizing a 300-strong congregation of the Church of Iran. Iran's 100,000-plus Evangelical Christians are suffering brutal oppression right now.

In an imitation of China, Iran is attempting to create a sort of internal Internet that will block access to international news and social media. Since the 2009 uprising, the Supreme Leader has instituted four new entities to restrict Internet freedom: The Supreme Council on Cyberspace, the Committee Charged with Determining Offensive Content, the Cyber Police, and the Cyber Army.

Iran has continued to aggressively expand its influence in the region and beyond. Iran remains a leading state sponsor of terrorism and is increasing its activity. Iran has been so hostile toward the nation of Israel that Prime Minister Netanyahu recently expressed fears of "another Holocaust" from Tehran, regardless of any election that may take place. Iran's proxy army, Hezbollah, is supporting Assad's murderous attacks on his own people in Syria.

Today, the United Nations estimated that 93,000 people have been slaughtered in Syria since the uprising began in 2011. Iran's fingerprints are on those murders. Iran is not only expanding its own influence in the region through closer ties with the Muslim Brotherhood in Egypt, but it is also expanding

its influence in Latin America. Most troubling, Iran is proceeding undeterred in its pursuit of nuclear weapons capability.

In my judgment, there is no greater threat to the national security of the United States than the prospect of a nuclear Iran, and we need to be unequivocal and speak with absolute clarity that the United States will do whatever it takes to prevent Iran from acquiring nuclear weapons capability.

Unfortunately, the message from the United States has at times seemed muddled. On the one hand, Secretary of State John Kerry has asked Congress to relax sanctions around the Iranian Presidential elections so his diplomatic efforts have a "window" to work. On the other hand, the Obama administration recently announced new sanctions on Iran's currency and a new initiative to get communications devices to the Iranian people. But both efforts, however well intentioned, came too late to have any real impact on this election.

Today, the Senate is taking encouraging action. I am pleased the Senate hopes to pass a resolution, S. Res. 154, reaffirming our call for free and fair elections, a resolution I fully support.

The resolution also condemns the widespread human rights violations of the Government of Iran, calls on the Government of Iran to respect its peoples' freedom of expression and association, and expresses our ongoing support to the people of Iran for their calls for a democratic government that upholds freedom, civil liberties, and the rule of law.

The Iranian people may well be confused about where the United States stands, especially after we stood silently by when they took to the streets 4 years ago during the Green Revolution. But it was not always this way. Twenty-six years ago this week, President Ronald Reagan stood in front of the Brandenburg Gate in Berlin and challenged Soviet leader Mikhail Gorbachev to tear down the wall that divided the eastern and western halves of the city. No more important words have been spoken by a leader in modern times.

Today, I ask all Americans to join me in likewise urging the regime in Iran to tear down the walls of political and religious persecution, to relieve the pain of the unnecessary economic hardship, and to renounce the isolation caused by Tehran's aggressive and beligerent policies.

To those right now imprisoned and being persecuted in Iran, I would repeat the words of encouragement President Reagan gave when he knew the tyranny represented by the Berlin Wall would not stand. As President Reagan observed: "For it cannot withstand faith; it cannot withstand truth; it cannot withstand freedom." That is the very same message we should convey to the people of Iran as they suffer under tyrannical theocracy.

To the Supreme Leader I would say: Stop oppressing your people. Stop per-

secuting Christians. Stop pursuing nuclear weapons capability. Stop stifling freedom of speech and allow real and free elections. Free the Iranian people.

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

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The assistant bill clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

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

DEFENSE CONTRACTING

Mr. MANCHIN. Mr. President, I appreciate the power of the free enterprise system. It is one of the reasons for America's greatness. I know from experience that private businesses do some things better than the government ever could. But over the last couple of decades, the United States has increasingly relied on private contractors to do the work the men and women in our Armed Forces used to do, and they are getting exorbitant salaries to do the same work—in some cases, almost twice the salary of the President of the United States.

To the people of West Virginia and to me it doesn't make any sense to pay a defense contractor up to \$763,000 a year. That is almost twice as much as our Commander in Chief and almost four times as much as our Secretary of Defense. If we do nothing about this, this figure will automatically rise to \$951,000 next year—\$951,000. That is almost \$1 million a year right in the middle of sequestration when we are cutting everything.

With the war in Afghanistan winding down, it is only natural for defense contractors to be looking for new opportunities, and the southern border of our country is one of the places they are eyeing. In fact, the New York Times says some of them are getting ready to demonstrate military grade and long-range camera systems this summer in an effort to secure billion-dollar contracts with Homeland Security.

I understand we need the expertise of a private industry to secure our borders, but taxpayers should not be responsible for the exorbitant salaries these contractors are demanding. So I am offering an amendment that would cap compensation for private contractors employed for border security. The cap would be \$230,700 annually, which is the most a government civilian can be paid in a given year. So it is in line with what we are doing.

That is significantly more than we pay Defense Secretary Hagel or our Homeland Security Secretary Napolitano.

There is nothing in my amendment that would prevent contractors from making more than \$230,000. We are not saying they can't make more than that. We are saying they can't pass that through to the taxpayers of America. They have to pay it out of the profits of their company. The only thing I

am preventing is the taxpayers from having to foot the bill.

I have heard some proposals to bring that figure down to \$487,000. That is an improvement. But, frankly, I can't look West Virginians in the eye, and I am sure the Chair would have a hard time looking his constituents in Massachusetts in the eye, and justify paying government contractors that much money because it is just hard to justify. It can't be justified.

We need to get our fiscal house in order. We can't do that if we allow private contractors to charge the taxpayers exorbitant salaries of almost \$1 million. It is time for commonsense controls on contractors' salaries. So I am asking for the support of this amendment when it comes to the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Alabama.

Mr. SESSIONS. Mr. President, I appreciate the opportunity to share some remarks, and I appreciate the eloquence of my friend and colleague from West Virginia on the issue he just mentioned.

The committee did reduce almost by half the amount that contractors could bill, and we may see further changes in that issue. But when we are talking about money, real money, there is a problem we have with the bill that came out of committee. It is such a grim, serious matter that we have to talk about it, we have to be up front about it, and nobody can be confused about it.

I was pleased with Chairman LEVIN. He is a wonderful chairman of our committee. We have consistently had bipartisan votes. I wanted it to be a bipartisan vote for the bill and voted for it today, but I am not sure that was the right vote because I said during the committee that we have a serious problem in the amount of money that was appropriated for the bill, \$52 billion over the current law.

There is a hope and belief that we can fix that gap between now and the time it comes to the floor. Secretary Hagel was before the Budget Committee yesterday. I am the ranking Republican on the Budget Committee. He indicated he is working on a plan to help us be within the law. He also indicated that to Chairman LEVIN and Ranking Member INHOFE on the Armed Services Committee. But let's be sure what the situation is.

August 2011 we had run up huge debt. We had hit our debt ceiling again. The administration and the President wanted to raise the debt ceiling \$2.1 trillion, one of the largest—or maybe the largest—raise of the debt ceiling in history. That was supposed to take us 2 or 3 years.

Well, we have already hit that debt ceiling again now it appears. Soon we will be having to pass legislation. All the little extensions and maneuvering to extend the debt ceiling a little longer are being exercised, and we will soon have to vote again to raise the debt ceiling.

But in August of 2011, after much intensity of effort, legislation passed. I opposed it. One of my biggest concerns was what it was doing to the defense budget. But the bill passed. It set up a committee, and the committee was to deal with future cuts and long-term entitlement programs and other programs. That was their goal. They were given that challenge.

Fundamentally, the bill that passed raised the debt ceiling \$2.1 trillion, but it reduced the growth of spending over the next 10 years by \$2.1 trillion. Unfortunately, those reductions in the growth of spending fell disproportionately on the Defense Department. I will mention that in a minute.

But the agreement was clear. There were no tax increases. There were no other gimmicks to it other than the spending level would be reduced over 10 years by \$2.1 trillion. We were then spending at the level of \$3.7 trillion a year, which would mean \$37 trillion over 10 years. We were on track to spend \$47 trillion over 10 years—a substantial increase from the current level. So the agreement was that it would reduce the growth to \$45 trillion instead of \$47 trillion.

There was a hope that the committee would reach an even more historic agreement in which entitlements—Social Security and Medicare—would be put on a firm foundation, and we would get the country on the right track.

The committee failed. They did not reach an agreement. So in law there remains the BCA, and within the Budget Control Act there was the sequester, and the sequester would take another \$500 billion. The BCA took about \$500 billion out of the defense budget, and the sequester part of the BCA took another. When the committee didn't reach an agreement, that was another \$500 billion to be taken out of the Defense Department, \$1 trillion.

The Defense Department represents one-sixth of the Federal budget, almost \$1 trillion out of the defense, one-sixth of the government. That is one-half of the cuts that were to be taken from our entire government.

When we look at the numbers over 10 years, the defense budget adjusted for inflation would take a 14-percent reduction in its funding, whereas the remaining five-sixths of the Federal Government would have a 44-percent increase in its funding.

This is the kind of malapportionment of belt tightening that ought not to happen. So I thought—and I believe the American people thought—that we should get together with the President and see how we can avoid this problem and spread the cuts out through other agencies and departments, many of which had no reductions whatsoever. Of course, Social Security had no reduction whatsoever. Medicaid—one of the fastest growing programs of all—had zero reduction in spending under sequester. Food stamps had gone from \$20 billion to \$80 billion, increased fourfold in 12 years, and got zero cuts. A lot

of other programs got zero cuts; whereas, the Defense Department was getting hammered.

People think, well, the war is coming down and the Defense Department can handle it. No, that is not the way it works. The war costs are entirely separate. This is a reduction of the base defense budget, where we pay our soldiers, pay our electric bills, maintain our aircraft, our ships, our ports, and our bases around the world. That is what is being cut, the fundamental strength of the military, and it is too much.

Can they survive it? Not without doing some damage. Sure, they will survive it, and they will be able to get by. But what ought to be done is we ought to get together with the Commander in Chief of the U.S. military, work with the Secretary of Defense, former-Senator Chuck Hagel, get together and figure out a way to have some other parts of this government take some of the reductions in spending that have fallen disproportionately on the Defense Department. It is just that simple.

I suggested to Secretary Hagel yesterday at the Budget Committee that, yes, he ought to be talking with Congress; yes, we have eventually the power of the purse; but nothing is going to happen in the Senate that President Obama doesn't agree to. Senator REID is not going to support anything President Obama doesn't agree to. It looks to me like the Members of the Democratic caucus are going to stick together on this issue. They have so far. Months have gone by and sequester hasn't been fixed.

So I said: I assume, Mr. Secretary, you have the phone number to 1600 Pennsylvania Avenue. I think you had better call over there to the Commander in Chief of the U.S. military, who has an obligation to the men and women he is deploying all over the world and sending into harm's way, and who has an obligation to maintain the strength of our military.

Yes, it can be more efficient. It has already taken \$500 billion in cuts, and it may take a little more. But these cuts are more than can be easily assimilated.

I just believe this has drifted to a point where we are in a serious predicament. The military has already had to lay off civilian workers of the U.S. Government for 11 days, furloughed without pay, and done other things to try to stay within the financial constraints they are now under because the cuts are beginning to bite.

So that is the situation. I want to say to my colleagues, I do not believe the Defense bill that came out of committee—and we had a nice discussion today on multiple issues that are important to America's defense, and we had a good collegial feeling. I don't believe that bill should pass the Senate—I don't believe it will pass the Senate—if it violates the spending limits we voted on just 2 years ago.

Just think of it. We agreed to reduce the growth of spending from \$37 billion now at that rate 2 years ago. We were going to let it grow to 47, we reduced the growth to 45, and we come back to the American people and say we can't effect that now? We can't reduce the growth and spending just that little bit? We promised you that we would raise the debt ceiling, but I know it made you angry, American people. You were mad at us because we mismanaged your money. But we promise, we will reduce the growth of spending by \$2.1 trillion. Trust us. We will do it.

And here we are. President Obama, 6 months later, produced a budget that wiped out all those cuts and increased taxes, taxes and spending. This has been the pattern we have been in. I have to say, we do not need to have this happen.

So I am prepared to meet with the President. I am prepared to meet with the Secretary of Defense, the Office of Management and Budget, and talk about where we can find other reductions in spending and reduce some of the reductions on the Defense Department. We need to reduce a good many of those, frankly. Then the Defense Department can phase in some reductions in spending over the outyears. They can do that. But too much too fast is destabilizing. No business would do that. So we have to figure out a way to make this system work.

I was pleased to work with Senator LEVIN and Senator INHOFE today. I want to be cooperative and be positive in our efforts. I like much of what we did with the authorization bill in the Armed Services Committee, but we just didn't talk about the elephant in the room; that is, the sequester, the real danger we have there. We are going to have to discuss it now. It will be part of the floor discussion and debate if it is not fixed.

It can be fixed. I think we are all prepared to work for it. I don't believe this country will sink into the ocean. I don't believe this country is going to have to close its ports. I don't believe this country is going to have to end tours at the White House to reduce the growth of spending by \$2 trillion, from \$47 trillion to \$45 trillion over the next 10 years. I don't believe that is going to bankrupt us. But we ought to do it in a smart way. We should have every agency and department of government tighten their belts, not just some.

We slipped into this when the sequester was written to try to effect some political result that didn't occur, and now, as a responsible Senate, we have to consider what is right for America. The right thing is to have all agencies and departments tighten their belts and reduce the pressure that is now falling on our Defense Department.

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

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The assistant bill clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

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

MORNING BUSINESS

Mr. REID. I ask unanimous consent that Senators proceed to a period of morning business, with Senators being permitted to speak for 10 minutes each.

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

B. TODD JONES NOMINATION

Mr. LEAHY. Mr. President, on Tuesday, the Senate Judiciary Committee held a hearing on the nomination of B. Todd Jones to serve as the director of the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms, and Explosives, ATF. I thank Senator KLOBUCHAR for the exceptional job she did in chairing this hearing and setting the record straight with respect to distortions of the nominee's record.

Todd Jones continues to serve this country honorably. He volunteered for the U.S. Marine Corps in 1983, serving on active duty as a judge advocate and infantry officer until 1989. In 1991, he was recalled to Active Duty to command the 4th Marine Division's Military Police Company in Iraq. He also served as commanding officer of the Twin Cities Marine Reserve Unit. He has twice been considered for the important law enforcement position of U.S. attorney and twice unanimously reported out of the Judiciary Committee and unanimously confirmed by the Senate. In 1998 he was first appointed to be the U.S. attorney for the District of Minnesota and became the first African American U.S. attorney in Minnesota's history. In 2009, when that office was at a low point and needed a strong hand to lead it back, he answered the call, again.

When the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives needed new leadership after its poorly conceived and executed Fast and Furious operation, the President called upon him, again. He was called upon to clear up the mess and deserves our thanks for having made great progress in doing so. He has done so while all the while continuing to serve as the U.S. attorney for the District of Minnesota and has had to restore leadership and effectiveness in two important law enforcement agencies.

We have received numerous letters of support for Todd Jones' nomination from law enforcement, respected legal professionals, and veterans of the U.S. Marine Corps. He has critics; he has taken on difficult assignments. As he noted at his hearing, sometimes you have to take action to make a change and change is not always something that everyone is going to favor. A fair evaluation of what he has accomplished leads me to support his nomination to be confirmed as the director of ATF.

The ATF has been without a permanent director since that position was made a confirmable position in 2006. We lean heavily on the expertise of the ATF. For example, under the leadership of Todd Jones, since September 2011, ATF has been called on to analyze the bombs left near the finish line at the Boston Marathon, to sift through burned debris at the chemical plant explosion in West, TX, and to trace the weapons used in the Newtown and Aurora mass killings. Agents of the ATF have played a major role in investigating some of our Nation's worst tragedies. The agency needs a confirmed head. Todd Jones is the ATF's fifth acting director since 2006. The Senate should be doing everything it can to ensure that the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms, and Explosives has the tools it needs to keep Americans safe, and that starts with a Senate-confirmed director.

I had accommodated the ranking member on requests for further information and delay on this nomination for months. Senator GRASSLEY insisted on the production of documents from the Department of Justice that his staff had already had access to for months. He insisted that his staff be able to interview Todd Jones in his capacity as U.S. Attorney for the District of Minnesota, as well as two other Justice Department officials, in order to try to build a case against another nomination, that of Tom Perez to be Labor Secretary. Those interviews have taken place. Senator GRASSLEY requested additional background information from the administration not usually required by the committee for an executive nomination and he received that information. When he sought information about an ATF operation in Milwaukee, I arranged a bipartisan briefing for our staffs from the agency.

Some are criticizing the nominee based on a complaint filed against him by an AUSA from the earlier Bush-era U.S. attorney office. After learning about the complaint, I had initially put on hold a planned hearing on this nomination. In late April, a news article reported that "an aide to Senator GRASSLEY" had released a letter from OSC that the ranking member and I had received about the existence of that preliminary inquiry. It was at that time that I determined that this hearing should move forward to allow the nominee an opportunity to defend his reputation. When a private complaint against him was disclosed publicly, I thought it unfair that the nominee could not respond. He did at his hearing and in my view that matter is put to rest.

The U.S. Office of Special Counsel, OSC, closed the file on the underlying allegation made against the nominee of "gross mismanagement and abuses of authority." The allegation involving alleged retaliation has been referred to mediation. In deference to the complaining party and the request of the