

about half of what, if you agree on the framework of Simpson-Bowles, we need to do. We have to get more done; we are not there yet. The revenues of this country traditionally have been about 19 percent of our economy. That is what it was under President Clinton when we balanced the Federal budget. We actually had surpluses. Our economy was growing. There was job growth. We were moving in the right direction.

Our revenues have dipped to about 15 percent of our economy, so we are not anywhere near having as much revenue as we need in order to have a balanced approach that allows for job growth. And, yes, our spending is too high, particularly on what we call the mandatory side. We agree with that. If you look at our health care costs in this country, they are much higher than those of any other nation in the world and we do not have the health results that would demonstrate why we are spending so much more. We need a more efficient system. That is why a lot of us supported the Affordable Care Act, because we see in it delivery system reform that will make our health care system more efficient, bring down the cost of hospital care by reducing readmissions, bring down the cost of hospital care by reducing hospital infection rates, bring down the cost of high-cost interventions by dealing with people with complicated issues, multiple issues, in a much more managed way; using health technology more efficiently; using preventive care to actually reduce health care costs. We know early intervention saves lives, saves costs, and when you bring down the cost of health care you bring down the cost of Medicaid, you bring down the cost of Medicare, and you help our budget get into better balance.

We also believe we can save money in the military. The baseline for military spending assumes the high level of military operations in Afghanistan. Well, our troops are coming home. I think we can now safely assume that our Active military needs will not be at the high levels they have been over the last decade, and that will save money. I personally think we need to look at a BRAC-like process for our international military facilities, as we did for our domestic military facilities. All of that can save money.

So what do we need to do? We need to get together, Democrats and Republicans, on a balanced approach. We need to do it in the month of February because on March 1 these automatic cuts, known as sequestration, take effect. The automatic cuts were put in during the Budget Control Act as a way to get us to act. None of us wanted to see across-the-board cuts to both our domestic and our military budgets; we didn't think that made a lot of sense. After all, some programs are more important than others, and we should make the hard choices. We should not be using an across-the-board cut.

We need to come together. As I have indicated, there are areas in the spend-

ing where I hope we can come together so we can make our system more efficient, particularly on the delivery of health care. There are certain reductions we can make in the overseas contingency accounts in our military.

On the revenue side, we have brought out areas where there are loopholes and shelters in our Tax Code. We can do a better job. It is interesting that the top 1 percent of the taxpayers of this country receive 25 percent of the benefits on what is known as tax expenditures. I heard my colleagues come to the floor and talk about how we have to bring down the cost of spending. Well, yes, we do spend through appropriations bills, but we also spend through tax expenditures, which are provisions we put in the Tax Code to give breaks to some—not all—of our constituents. When we add up all those tax expenditures, it comes to \$1.2 trillion a year. That is what the tax expenditures come to. That is larger than our entire discretionary spending. We are spending more through the Tax Code than we are through appropriations bills. We can certainly find some savings in those tax expenditures, and we can use that in a balanced approach to be able to avoid the across-the-board cuts and get our budget back into better balance. That is where we need to move as a Congress and as a nation.

It is important for us to take timely action. Let me underscore that. We need to act in February. We don't want to go through the uncertainty of what sequestration means. I have talked to a lot of businesspeople who depend on Federal contracts. Will that contract be let? They don't know. We need to give predictability so that our economy can take off.

I hope we all put our Nation's fiscal interests ahead of any of our partisan objectives, and that means listening to each other. Democrats and Republicans need to listen. My colleagues on the Republican side of the aisle have made some good points in regard to mandatory spending. My colleagues on the Democratic side of the aisle have made some very valid points about the need for revenue. I hope we will listen to each other, resolve our differences, and put a proposal forward that brings our Nation back to a stable fiscal future, which will allow us to create the types of jobs we need by investment and fiscal prudence so our economy can continue to lead the world. We need to act in a responsible, balanced, bipartisan, and timely way.

With that, I yield the floor.

THE PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Maine.

VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN ACT

Ms. COLLINS. Mr. President, I am honored to be an original cosponsor of the bipartisan legislation to reauthorize the Violence Against Women Act. Let me thank the two leaders of that important bill, Senators LEAHY and CRAPO, for their work to ensure that

the Senate makes renewing this important law a high priority early in this Congress.

I also wish to acknowledge the work of the many advocates who have delivered so strongly the message to Congress and to the public that we must do more to prevent violence from occurring in our homes and in our communities. Our law enforcement officers, counselors, social workers, health care professionals, public educators, and community service providers are truly on the front lines of the effort to help those who are the victims of violence and to help prevent violence from occurring in the first place. Their advocacy on behalf of these victims has helped to make this bill a priority. I commend them all for the work they are doing each and every day.

In my home State of Maine, we are fortunate to have a very low crime rate, but law enforcement officials tell me that the two greatest areas of concern are domestic violence and drugs. Often, these two go hand in hand. In fact, a 2011 study by the University of Southern Maine's Muskie School of Public Service found that 65 percent of victims of crime in Maine believe the offender was under the influence of drugs or alcohol at the time.

Over the last decade, occurrences of domestic violence have resulted in nearly half of all homicides in my State. Nearly half are the result of incidents of domestic violence.

According to statistics from the Maine Department of Public Safety, there were 5,360 reported domestic assaults in the year 2011, which is nearly a 5-percent increase from the previous year. This equates to one domestic assault every 1 hour and 38 minutes, and this is in a State with a very low crime rate.

Nationally, one in four women and one in seven men experience severe physical violence at the hands of an intimate partner.

In addition, Maine's 10-year average is 364 rapes per year. Think about that. That is almost one rape per day in a State with a very low crime rate. Those are only the reported crimes. I suspect the actual number is even higher. According to the Maine Coalition Against Sexual Assault, an estimated 13,000 Mainers will experience some form of sexual violence this year alone. Currently, rape has the lowest reporting, arrest, and prosecution rate of all violent crimes in the United States.

So I am very pleased that this year's reauthorization bill also includes the provisions of the Sexual Assault Forensic Evidence Registry—or SAFER—Act, which was authored by our colleague, Senator JOHN CORNYN. I commend the Senator for his leadership in that area, and I am pleased to be a cosponsor of his bill, which unanimously passed in the last Congress in the Senate and has been incorporated into the Violence Against Women Act reauthorization. This bipartisan bill, the

SAFER Act, would authorize the Attorney General to award grants to State and local governments to audit and reduce the backlog of untested rape kits.

Mr. President, I think you will share my shock and alarm at the number of these kits which are sitting in the possession of law enforcement agencies and which could contain DNA evidence that would lead to prosecutions and help get rapists off the streets and yet have not been analyzed. The estimate is that between 300,000 and 400,000 of these kits are just sitting in the possession of law enforcement agencies but have not been analyzed. That is totally unacceptable.

The reauthorization bill we introduced last week would help ensure that Maine and every other State has the necessary resources to support victims of violence and, whenever possible, to prevent violence from occurring in the first place.

Elizabeth Saxl, the executive director of the Maine Coalition Against Sexual Assault, recently wrote to me in support of the reauthorization of the Violence Against Women Act. She noted this in her letter:

By reauthorizing and making significant improvements to these important programs, this legislation will help fulfill the critical unmet needs of victims of violence and expand protections to currently under-protected populations.

Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that her letter be printed in the RECORD at the conclusion of my remarks.

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

(See exhibit 1.)

Ms. COLLINS. The Violence Against Women Act has made a significant difference in combating domestic violence, sexual assault, and stalking, through grants to State and local governments and nonprofit organizations. Since it was first passed in 1994, the programs authorized under this law have provided State and local partners with more than \$4.7 billion of assistance. This assistance helps to ensure that the victims of violence get the help they need to recover and has prevented incalculable suffering by stopping violent crimes before they happen.

It is extremely important to pass this legislation because all men and women—and men are victims as well as women. In some ways, the name of this law should be changed. But all women and men, regardless of race, religion, sexual orientation, or disability deserve to be safe and protected from physical violence, and that is what this reauthorization would help to do.

Finally, this is not and never should be a partisan issue. Violence and domestic assaults do not discriminate between Republicans and Democrats, Independents and Greens, or people who are not politically active at all.

This is an equal opportunity crime that harms people regardless of their political affiliation, their profession,

their location, or their status in life. It is an issue that deserves bipartisan support. I hope my colleagues on both sides of the aisle will come together and pass this important bill.

I recognize there may be some provisions of this bill which are controversial; but, surely, we can come together in support of the goal of this vital legislation. We can work out differences if not on the Senate floor then in conference with the House; but, surely, we can come together and reauthorize this law that has made such a difference to so many in our country.

EXHIBIT 1

MAINE COALITION AGAINST

SEXUAL ASSAULT,

Augusta, ME, February 4, 2013.

Hon. SUSAN M. COLLINS,

U.S. Senate,

Washington, DC.

DEAR SENATOR COLLINS: On behalf of the Maine Coalition Against Sexual Assault (MECASA), and the sexual assault crisis and support centers we represent, I am writing to express our strong support for S. 47, the Violence Against Women Reauthorization Act (VAWA) of 2013. By reauthorizing and making significant improvements to these important programs, this legislation will help fulfill the critical unmet needs of victims of violence and expand protections to currently under-protected populations.

VAWA has provided invaluable support for law enforcement, courts, sexual assault crisis and support centers, domestic violence service providers, prevention efforts, and community outreach. In the past decade, nearly half of Maine's homicides have been the result of domestic violence, many of which included elements of sexual violence. Additionally, nearly 13,000 Mainers will experience sexual violence this year alone while Maine's ten-year average for rapes reported to law enforcement is only 364. The cost of these crimes to Maine is enormous. VAWA helps control these costs by enabling support centers to provide free, necessary, quality services to victims who need help, not to mention the incalculable suffering that these programs help prevent.

Since the original passage of VAWA, Maine has strengthened laws regarding domestic violence, sexual violence, and stalking and has implemented programs which continue to yield tangible results for victims and for public safety. Despite VAWA's success, its criminal justice and community-based programs remain acutely necessary. According to a recent study by the University of Southern Maine's Muskie School of Public Service, nearly one in five Mainers reported having been the victim of sexual assault or an attempted sexual assault in his or her lifetime. Nationally, the Center for Disease Control and Prevention estimates that nearly one in five women and one in 71 men have been raped at some time in their lives, and one in four women and one in seven men experience severe physical violence by an intimate partner.

MECASA supports efforts to further strengthen and improve the response of the criminal justice, legal, and victim support systems for survivors of domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, and stalking. We are grateful to you for your steadfast support of VAWA and your commitment to violence prevention and response.

Thank you for all you do on behalf of Maine and our nation.

Sincerely,

ELIZABETH WARD SAXL,

Executive Director.

Ms. COLLINS. Mr. President, seeing no one seeking recognition, I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Tennessee is recognized.

Mr. CORKER. I thank the Chair.

(The remarks of Senator CORKER pertaining to the introduction of S. 215 are printed in today's RECORD under "Statements on Introduced Bills and Joint Resolutions.")

Mr. CORKER. Mr. President, I notice the absence of a quorum, and I thank the chair for the time.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

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

Mr. MCCAIN. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that I speak as in morning business.

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

DOD REFORM

Mr. MCCAIN. Mr. President, this past year, our national debt passed a staggering \$16 trillion, more than \$51,000 for every man, woman, and child in America. Today, several very serious fiscal matters that would seriously impact the Department of Defense and the U.S. defense industrial base, including budget sequestration, the debt limit, and disposition of the defense budget for fiscal year 2013 remain unresolved. Underpinning all of these matters is the larger issue of why the culture of how the Department of Defense does business must change. While daunting, this question provides us with a valuable prism through which Senator Hagel's nomination, now pending consideration by the Armed Services Committee, should be considered.

By "culture," I mean that the mindset that has for years pervaded how the Department of Defense buys goods and services and manages assets and resources without regard to either their affordability or what our service men and women actually need to defend the Nation.

After years of developing legislative initiatives intended to reform how the Department does business, I am convinced that the single most effective agent of cultural change at the Department is the right leadership: leadership that recognizes that the Department owes to the taxpayer a stewardship obligation to extract maximum value for every defense dollar spent, and a moral responsibility to the warfighter that these dollars are being spent wisely, to effectively procure desired combat capability.