

Mr. SANDERS. Madam President, I thank my friend from Illinois for all the work he has done on this issue and so many other issues. He knows I disagree with him on this and do not intend to vote for this bipartisan agreement.

He makes a good point in saying we don't have the votes. We don't. We don't have the votes because we have a political party here that could care less about the needs of working families and about college affordability.

I would say to my friend from Illinois that if we are going to win this fight and protect college students, we have to take the fight to the American people. When we work with Republicans to make college unaffordable, then the American people are going to say: What is the alternative?

So from a political strategy, I would say to my friend from Illinois we have the people on our side. We have parents on our side and we have young people on our side. Our job is to bring forth a proposal that they can demand be accepted. If we collapse on this issue, then they are going to be looking out and saying: What is the alternative?

The Senator from Illinois makes a valid point; that in the next few years, in fact, it is not a bad deal. It is not as good as I would like, but it is not a bad deal. That is why, as I mentioned to the Senator a few moments ago, I will be bringing forth an amendment to say: Let us sunset this agreement in 2 years. We are bringing up the higher education authorization bill. It will give us an opportunity to deal with this issue of student loans and the higher cost of college in general. Why do we need a permanent bill right now when we are going to be working in the fairly near future on the higher education bill?

So my view is a 2-year sunset to this bill. It is not everything I want, but it will protect students. If we are going to talk about variable interest rates, let them at least take advantage of lower interest rates.

What CBO is projecting is that in years to come interest rates are going to go up. According to the CBO, under this legislation, the good news is that interest rates would only be, for Stafford subsidized, 3.86; in 2014, it will be 4.6, not so good; 2015, 5.4, really not good; 2016, 6.29, worse; 2017, 7 percent; 2018, 7.25; and, by the time we get to 2023, it would also be at 7.25.

We have a crisis right now in terms of student indebtedness. Why would we want to make that crisis even worse?

The second point I would make is that right now it is estimated that the Federal Government will earn about \$180 billion in profits over the next 10 years on student loans. I suggest that while I have no problem with the Federal Government making profits on this or that endeavor, this is not a particularly good area to be making profits because they are making profits off of low- and moderate-income people who want to send their kids to college.

I can think of a lot better ways to make money, to help us with the deficit, than by forcing low- and moderate-income parents and students to pay more than they should be paying. If we want to do deficit reduction, maybe we can ask the one out of four corporations in America that pays nothing in taxes to start paying their fair share of taxes. Maybe we can address growing wealth and income inequality in a way that brings us in more revenue. But it is almost a form of regressive taxation to say to low- and moderate-income students and families: You want to go to college, you want to make something of yourself, you want to make it into the middle class, you want to help make our Nation more competitive—and in a 10-year period we are going to make \$180 billion in profits off of your desire to go to college. I think that is wrong.

If we look around the world, in an increasingly competitive global economy what we find is that we are at the very bottom in terms of the kind of support we give our young people and their families to go to college. Right now in Vermont, which is a little bit higher than the national average, our young people are graduating from a 4-year school \$28,000 in debt. That is on average, meaning lower income young people will graduate deeper in debt.

What does it mean in a difficult economy, a challenging economy, to start off your adult life \$40,000 or \$50,000 in debt? If you go to graduate school, that number goes way up. I talked to a couple of young dentists in Vermont last year. They had over \$200,000 in debt starting off their professional careers—dentists, doctors, people in graduate school.

A couple of months ago I had the Ambassador from Denmark come to the State of Vermont to do some town meetings with me. Do you know how much debt young people who graduate college, graduate school, medical school, in Denmark have? They have zero because that country and many other countries have made what I think is the rational conclusion that it is important to invest in our young people. We need their intellectual capital, we need the best educated workforce that we can get, and we want to encourage people to go to college, not discourage them by high college costs.

I think we can do a lot better than this bipartisan bill. The danger with the bipartisan bill is that the CBO and virtually all economists tell us interest rates are going up. If you peg your student loan to a variable interest rate, and those interest rates are going up, then the proof is in the pudding, according to the CBO, that in a number of years students are going to be paying very high interest rates.

Given the fact we are going to be dealing with higher education reauthorization within a year, which needs to tackle a whole lot of issues within the issue of higher education, including student loans, my suggestion will be,

and my amendment will be to say: Let's sunset this legislation at the end of 2 years. Let's take advantage of the low-interest loans and give us the time to come up with a long-term plan.

I look forward to my colleagues supporting that amendment.

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

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The bill clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Ms. STABENOW. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

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

FEDERAL AGRICULTURE REFORM AND RISK MANAGEMENT ACT OF 2013

Ms. STABENOW. Madam President, it is my pleasure to ask unanimous consent that the Senate proceed to the consideration of Calendar No. 136, H.R. 2642; that all after the enacting clause be stricken and the text of S. 954, as passed by the Senate, be printed in lieu thereof; that H.R. 2642, as amended, be read a third time and passed; the motion to reconsider be considered made and laid upon the table; that the Senate insist upon its amendment, request a conference with the House on the disagreeing votes of the two Houses; and the Chair be authorized to appoint conferees with the ratio of 7 to 5 on the part of the Senate, all with no intervening action or debate.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection? Without objection, it is so ordered.

The amendment was ordered to be engrossed and the bill to be read a third time.

The bill (H.R. 2642), as amended, was read the third time and passed.

Ms. STABENOW. Madam President, let me just take a moment to thank my ranking member Senator COCHRAN and to indicate we are in fact now officially sending back our Senate bill to the House and requesting a conference on the farm bill. This is a very important step this evening.

I thank the senior Senator from North Dakota Mr. HOEVEN, who has done yeoman work this evening and today, and the senior Senator from Georgia Mr. CHAMBLISS, who has been very involved, as well as other members of the committee, for working hard to bring us to this point.

As everyone knows, we have been working very hard on a bipartisan basis in the Senate. We have produced a product that is comprehensive, bipartisan, balanced; that addresses the agricultural needs and concerns of our country in a 5-year farm bill; that addresses food security and conservation of our soil and land and water; bio-energy, rural development—we could go on and on with all of the pieces of the farm bill that are so important.

We also do this on behalf of the 16 million men and women in America

who work hard every day in some part of agriculture and the food industry, the riskiest business in the world. Nobody else has to worry for their products or services, about whether it is going to rain or not today or be too hot or too cold. There are folks who do that every single day. Because of them we have the safest, most affordable food supply in the world.

On behalf of all of them, I truly thank my committee, our committee that has worked incredibly well together. As I said, we have had tremendous leadership shown as we have moved to this process to go to conference. I could thank every member of our committee, but I do believe I need to, one more time, indicate that Senator HOEVEN and Senator CHAMBLISS have been invaluable in this process. Senator HOEVEN was spending a lot of time tonight, as everyone else was getting on airplanes, to help be able to get to this point.

I certainly could go down the list. I hate to always not mention someone I may have missed because we certainly had a strong committee presence and a desire to continue to do great work in the Senate on the issue of supporting farmers and ranchers. This is a very important step as we move forward in what I am very confident, despite the twists and turns, will result in a bipartisan farm bill.

I commend, despite terrific odds and challenges, the chairman in the House and ranking member in the House for their efforts. I am confident that working together we will be able to get this done for the American people.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The bill clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

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

TRANSPORTATION, HOUSING, AND URBAN DEVELOPMENT, AND RELATED AGENCIES APPROPRIATIONS ACT, 2014—MOTION TO PROCEED—Continued

Mr. REID. Madam President, what is the matter before the Senate?

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The motion to proceed to S. 1243.

CLOTURE MOTION

Mr. REID. Madam President, I have a cloture motion at the desk.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The cloture motion having been presented under rule XXII, the Chair directs the clerk to read the motion.

The legislative clerk read as follows:

CLOTURE MOTION

We, the undersigned Senators, in accordance with the provisions of rule XXII of the Standing Rules of the Senate, hereby move to bring to a close debate on the motion to proceed to Calendar No. 99, S. 1243, a bill making appropriations for the Department

of Transportation, and Housing and Urban Development and related agencies for the fiscal year ending September 30, 2014, and for other purposes.

Mark Begich, Barbara A. Mikulski, Patty Murray, Mark R. Warner, Tom Udall, Martin Heinrich, Angus S. King Jr., Sheldon Whitehouse, Elizabeth Warren, Dianne Feinstein, Patrick J. Leahy, Tom Harkin, Jack Reed, Richard J. Durbin, Richard Blumenthal, Mary L. Landrieu, Jeff Merkley, Harry Reid.

Mr. REID. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent that the mandatory quorum required under rule XXII be waived; that the vote on the motion to invoke cloture on the motion to proceed occur at 12 noon on Tuesday, July 23; that if cloture is invoked, all postcloture time be yielded back and the Senate proceed to vote on the motion to proceed; that if the motion to proceed to Calendar No. 99, S. 1243, is adopted, the text of H.R. 2610, as reported by the House Appropriations Committee, be deemed House-passed text for the purposes of rule XVI.

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

MORNING BUSINESS

Mr. REID. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate now proceed to a period of morning business, with Senators allowed to speak therein for up to 10 minutes each.

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

CONSULTATION REQUEST

Mr. COBURN. Madam President, I ask consent that the following letter be placed in the CONGRESSIONAL RECORD.

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

U.S. SENATE,

Washington, DC, July 18, 2013.

Hon. MITCH MCCONNELL,
Senate Minority Leader, U.S. Senate,
Washington, DC.

DEAR SENATOR MCCONNELL: I request that I be consulted before the Senate enters into any unanimous consent agreements or time limitations regarding S. 162, the Justice and Mental Health Collaboration Act of 2013.

I support the goals of this legislation and believe incarcerated offenders suffering from mental illness should have access to treatment. However, I believe the responsibility to address this issue, as it relates to inmates in state and local prisons and jails, lies with the state and local governments that manage these correctional systems. Furthermore, while I do not believe this issue is the responsibility of the federal government; if Congress does act, we can and must do so in a fiscally responsible manner. My concerns are included in, but not limited to, those outlined in this letter.

While this bill is well-intentioned, it authorizes \$40 million per year for five years, costing the American people at least \$200 million dollars without corresponding offsets. Furthermore, the Congressional Budget Office (CBO) has not yet scored the legislation. This bill authorizes new permissible

purposes for the existing grant program including, among others, funding for veterans' treatment courts, correctional facility programs, and state and local law enforcement academy training. Expansion of services through additional permissible purposes or new grant programs, however, requires the Department of Justice (DOJ) to carry out additional responsibilities. Thus, even if the legislation may be implemented by existing DOJ staff, it is not free of future administrative expenses or costs the CBO may identify that would result in a score beyond the bill's stated funding authorization.

It is irresponsible for Congress to jeopardize the future standard of living of our children by borrowing from future generations. The U.S. national debt is now over \$16.7 trillion. That means almost \$53,000 in debt for each man, woman and child in the United States. A year ago, the national debt was \$15.9 trillion. Despite pledges to control spending, Washington adds billions to the national debt every single day. In just one year, our national debt has grown by \$800 billion or 5%.

In addition to these fiscal concerns, there are several problems specific to this legislation. First, while I recognize both our federal and state criminal justice systems must accommodate mentally ill offenders, which is a difficult and costly task, it is not the responsibility of the federal government to provide funding to treat this population of offenders within state and local prison systems.

In fact, states face a much larger challenge than the federal government, as they incarcerate the vast majority of inmates in this country. According to the Department of Justice Bureau of Justice Statistics (BJS), of the 1.59 million total inmate population in 2011, 1.38 million are incarcerated in state facilities compared to 216,362 in the federal system. As a result, states also care for the largest population of mentally ill offenders. The most recent BJS data notes 56 percent of state inmates and 64 percent of jail inmates displayed a mental health problem compared with 45 percent of federal inmates. Furthermore, BJS found only 8.9% of federal inmates displayed both a history and symptoms of mental health problems, while over 17% of state and local inmates experienced those problems. Thus, although states have an awesome responsibility in this area, they also have a great opportunity to lead by way of experience and example. Many have done so by developing and funding their own innovative ideas to enhance programs for and treatment of mentally ill inmates.

In September 2009, the Senate Judiciary Committee, Subcommittee on Human Rights held a hearing entitled, "Human Rights at Home: Mental Illness in U.S. Prisons and Jails," in which we heard testimony from representatives of two state prison systems and a state court judge who outlined the different challenges faced by their states. These states and others have taken action to address their mentally ill prison populations, but often each tackles the problem with a different approach. For example, from 2003–2007, New York legislators and governors engaged in a battle over reforming the state's policies on this issue, and in 2007, Oklahoma established a program to provide inmates with serious mental illness a comprehensive plan for release, including access to support services and medication. The program set up two intensive care coordination teams in Oklahoma City and Tulsa to help state inmates close to release obtain access to community mental health centers, among other services.

There is significant diversity within the inmate population both among states and between state and federal prison systems, Oklahoma and New York incarcerate different types of inmates with different mental