

purposes for public-employee workers. The voters of Ohio said no to that, and 61 percent of them struck that law down in a referendum. But nonetheless the antiunion efforts from the most pro-corporate, conservative, far-right State legislators in State legislatures across the country continue unabated.

Workers are still being punished for discussing pay and bonuses with one another.

For 78 years the NLRB has been instrumental in addressing the challenges American workers faced. Senator Wagner explained on the floor:

It is necessary to insure a wise distribution of wealth between management and labor, to maintain a full flow of purchasing power, and to prevent recurrent depressions.

We know that when workers make decent wages, workers buy the cars made in this country, they buy the appliances, they go to the hardware store, they pay their property taxes, they buy homes, they renovate their homes, they do things that put money into the economy. If you only have a sliver of people who are very wealthy and a declining middle class, the purchasing power and the growth in the economy tends to diminish. That is not the kind of country we want, and it is not the kind of country we have had since World War II. But just a few years after the great recession, there is a widening gap between the average wage of workers and heads of corporations.

For families struggling to make ends meet after a breadwinner was unfairly forced off the assembly line, the NLRB matters.

If we do not confirm the President's nominees, then workers, such as Kevin from Akron, will have no recourse against retaliation for his union activity. Kevin and his coworkers wanted to form a union to stop a 12-hour shift policy from being put in place at their place of employment. The company fired six workers, including Kevin, for this union activity.

While the NLRB ordered the company to reinstate the workers—the NLRB said the company was wrong; under Federal law, the workers should be reinstated—the DC Circuit Court—in large part, with judges who almost always do the bidding of the wealthiest corporations in this country—the DC Circuit Court delayed enforcement of the case until the pending challenge to the President's 2012 nominees is resolved in court or the board has a Senate-confirmed quorum.

Kevin is a human face of why America needs a fully staffed National Labor Relations Board with the legal quorum needed to do its job. We should confirm these board members. We should make sure workers such as Kevin receive the workplace protections—whether they are union members, whether they are not union members—they deserve.

I thank the Presiding Officer.

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

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

THUD APPROPRIATIONS

Mr. CASEY. Madam President, I rise today to talk about legislation we are currently considering, and it is a welcome development that we are actually working on appropriations bills on the Senate floor. I want to commend the work of Chairwoman MIKULSKI of the Appropriations Committee, her ranking member Senator SHELBY, as well as both Chairman MURRAY and Ranking Member COLLINS on the so-called THUD bill. Everything in Washington has an acronym. So it is with this, the Transportation, Housing and Urban Development appropriations bill.

As many people know, when you consider those appropriations and you consider the subject matter, it is pretty broad and diverse. I will just give maybe a five-part summation here of what we are talking about. It means investing, of course, in transportation infrastructure; providing housing and services to very vulnerable Americans; supporting our communities and addressing the foreclosure crisis, which is still with us in so many ways, as the Presiding Officer knows so well and has worked so hard on over many years; ensuring the safety of our transportation system; and then, No. 5, promoting sustainability in our communities.

I want to talk first about Amtrak. Amtrak is part of our transportation infrastructure that not only is critically important for a State such as Pennsylvania but really the entire eastern seaboard and really across the whole country. It is one of the reasons we can move not just people but goods and services with the transactions that occur when people are able to get from one place to another.

The Senate bill we are considering includes almost \$1.5 billion for Amtrak, preserving the Federal commitments to provide safe, reliable, and energy-efficient passenger rail transportation for more than 31 million travelers—and that is an annual number—plus an additional 235 million commuter trips that depend upon Amtrak and its infrastructure along the Northeast corridor.

Unfortunately, the House bill guts funding for Amtrak, cutting the appropriation by a third—\$465 million below the fiscal year 2013 enacted level. This is the lowest level of funding in over a decade. It makes no sense in a lot of ways to try to find savings in a bill like this at such an extreme level. It makes no sense at all in terms of our economy.

Due to contract and debt service payment commitments, this would mean Amtrak only has \$100 million for capital investments. The Northeast cor-

ridor alone needs \$782 million per year to address longstanding state of good repair projects, so not even one-seventh of the dollars we need for state of good repair projects. This is not just a nice thing to do every year. You have to fix the infrastructure if you are running a transportation system and especially if you are running Amtrak.

So that is not only a safety issue, but it is a jobs issue. You could put at risk some 10,000 jobs and possibly eliminate some existing Amtrak routes.

In 2012 over 6.1 million Amtrak passengers traveled at Pennsylvania stations, and this number is expected to increase in 2013. Ridership has continued to grow over the past several years. It reached an alltime high last year and is on track to break that record in 2013.

I was just talking to folks at Amtrak today, and they talked about the tremendous growth in ridership. That is good for a lot of reasons. It is not just nice for Amtrak. Most importantly, it is good for our environment, with fewer people driving cars that have an impact on air emissions. It is also probably a great stress-reliever for people. Driving and working is a challenge, getting from one place to another. Riding on a train can allow you to do work and maybe allow you to be more rested, and it probably cuts down on traffic fatalities, although I do not have a study that backs that up.

But there is no question that we want to make sure we make these investments in Amtrak, and I hope we can ultimately get a bipartisan agreement and have some of the features of bipartisanship we have seen here in the Senate.

We also know that Amtrak, just from a Pennsylvania perspective, is a job creator. It employs over 2,600 Pennsylvanians, and these jobs could be in jeopardy if these cuts are maintained.

The other aspect—and I will end with this on Amtrak—are the suppliers who are affected. And, of course, that is a big jobs issue as well.

Let me move to the second part of my remarks today about this very important appropriations bill, and that has another acronym: CDBG, community development block grants. A lot of people might know this acronym better than THUD—the Transportation, Housing and Urban Development bill.

The Community Development Block Grant Program is so important for a variety of reasons. One of the most important reasons we should focus on it is that it is one of the few remaining Federal programs where the Federal Government says to local governments: Here are some resources. These are taxpayer resources, so you have to safeguard them and spend them wisely, but we are giving you these Federal funds so you can make a decision about what is best for your community.

That is what community development block grants are all about. There is not a one-size-fits-all Federal-Washington-way to spend these dollars.

That is why I cannot understand why some people here want to make the kinds of dangerous cuts to these block grants that some want to make.

We know the Senate bill includes a little more than \$3.15 billion for these block grants—less than the 2013 bill, but it is \$352 million more than the President asked for this year—“this year” meaning 2014. According to calculations by HUD, the funding level provided in the Senate bill will support an estimated 80,900 jobs—twice the level in the House bill—80,900 jobs. That is a good reason to support the Senate bill. That is not the only reason standing alone, but that is a big jobs number. The House bill contains the lowest amount ever provided to the program.

I wish we could stand and say: You know what, communities across the country do not need block grants. They do not need to even decide what is best for the community because all of the problems are taken care of. Everything is wonderful. All of those communities are in perfect shape, so let's just have a big cut to the program.

That would be an interesting scenario if it were true. The reality is that in a lot of communities they have had to deal with the ravages of a foreclosure crisis where the greatest number of Americans ever probably lost their homes—maybe the highest number since the 1930s, No. 1. No. 2, they had to deal with the jobs crisis in addition to the foreclosure crisis. Of course the two are closely related. We just went below half a million people out of work in Pennsylvania, but we are still at about 490,000 people out of work.

So these communities that have had to deal with several avalanches of problems—foreclosure crisis, jobs crisis, and then all of the results of both of these, all of the trauma that has been heaped on these communities, now we are told by some in Washington: Your problems are solved. You do not need any grant funding from the Federal Government to help you decide what is best for your community, whether you are going to use it for foreclosure mitigation or whether you are going to use it for job creation, whether you are going to use that limited resource from the Federal Government to bring a company into your town.

You are being told that, in essence, by implication, you do not need that. That is really an insult to local communities across the country.

We know that the block grant program began in 1975. In its first year it was funded at a \$2.47 billion number. Why do I give that specific number from the 1970s? Well, up until now that is the lowest amount it has ever received but still \$837 million more than the level provided by the House bill. So what the House is doing here is setting records they should not want to set to be in a race to see who can in a more devastating fashion almost decapitate the block grant program.

Since the program started, the number of grantees has doubled, making

the impact of the cuts even greater on communities. These community development block grants allow 47 Pennsylvania communities to address local needs. They get to decide, not the Federal Government. They get the resources, and they decide at the local level. We know that countless communities have received these funds.

These funds have also been made available to State governments. Municipalities depend on this funding for economic development projects, which I mentioned before. To give you some examples of individual cities, the city of Philadelphia, which has had an unemployment rate at 10 percent or above for as long as anyone can remember—we are into several years now where the unemployment rate has been 10 or higher, meaning that between 60,000 and 70,000 or more people have been out of work in that city. CDBG funding in Philadelphia was used to stem the foreclosure crisis, helping nearly 4,000 homeowners avoid foreclosure through housing counseling, funded by the Community Development Block Grant Program. Prior to the funding cuts, these grants provided annually enough resources that 2,818 jobs were created. Now, in a city that has had 60,000 to 70,000 people out of work consistently for several years, 2,818 jobs is a lot of jobs. Philadelphia is a big city, but that is still a lot of jobs that are directly a result of community development block grant funding.

That is why you hear from mayors that are Democrats and Republicans and Independents. Whatever their party, they all seem to come together on these block grant funds because they know they are better judges of what is best for their communities.

The City of Philadelphia developed its own foreclosure mitigation program. They developed the program. They came up with the idea, implemented it, and then used Federal money to support it. Yet you have some people in Washington saying: Do not worry about it. You do not need those funds. We are going to decide what the priorities in your town are.

That is really what they are saying. They may not want to hear this, but that is what you are saying when you tell someone: We are going to drastically cut funding for a successful grant program that has funded projects that you have decided are important or that you may have even created, in the case of this foreclosure mitigation program.

In essence, what they are saying is not just that we are going—that the House or the Senate or any part of our government is going to cut this program dramatically. They are making the decision for those local communities. So all of those folks in Washington who talk about local decision-making and then gut the program have their credibility dramatically undermined.

I will give a few more examples before I wrap up. The City of Pittsburgh

directed some of its grant dollars to promote home ownership and affordable housing. That is our second largest city using these grant funds in a way that was most important to them. The Lehigh Valley, which is the eastern seaboard of our State, just north of Philadelphia—cities such as Allentown, Bethlehem, Easton, those communities—used the funds to encourage private sector investment. So they made a decision in their communities that we are not going to use these funds for foreclosure mitigation or housing, we are going to focus on job creation. We are going to focus on getting private sector businesses to locate in the Lehigh Valley in Pennsylvania. They made that decision, not us. They made that decision. Some people in the House think they should substitute their judgment for the people of the Lehigh Valley in Pennsylvania. I think that is a mistake.

In Lancaster and York Counties down in the southern border of our State, a portion of these grant funds was used to reduce blight and revitalize historic downtowns. Again, they made that decision. They have used these dollars for that.

None of those communities are saying these dollars should not be safeguarded, should not be spent and treated as precious taxpayer dollar resources. No one is saying they should not be scrutinized. No one is saying they should not be audited. No one is saying they should not be carefully examined as to how they spend those dollars. All they are saying to us is let's keep the community development block grant at a reasonable level. We are not asking for the Moon, not asking for a doubling of the funding or some great amount of money that the Federal Government cannot afford. But they are saying: Let us decide that. Washington decides a lot of things. That is the way our system works. But on this one they are saying to us: Let us decide, not Washington.

So we know the value of the program. We know that over the past few years these grant funds have been reduced by nearly 25 percent. So just level funding, unfortunately, becomes a significant victory. Further loss of funds will directly harm these communities that rely upon these grant funds to address their most pressing needs. As I mentioned, mayors across the country rely upon these grants for vital services. I have heard directly from mayors in both parties about this. So further cuts to the block grant program will have a detrimental effect on cities and municipalities, some of which are the ones that have suffered the most from the foreclosure crisis, from the economic recession and the job-killing impact of that recession. If they are not digging out, they have just gotten out of the hole. They are not feeling all that secure yet. These grant funds allow them to make these decisions, allow them to make the investments they want to make.

I yield the floor.

HONORING OUR ARMED FORCES

FIRST SERGEANT TRACY L. STAPLEY

Mr. LEE. Mr. President, I rise today to honor a recently fallen soldier, 1SG Tracy L. Stapley, one of Utah's finest. He left this earth on July 3, 2013, while serving our country at Camp As Sayliyah, Qatar.

First Sergeant Stapley was an Army man, and his family is an Army family. His love for our country showed through his actions. He served in the U.S. Army Reserve for 26 years, and was assigned to the 308th Medical Logistics Company. He also worked full-time for the Army Reserve as a civilian, and his presence among co-workers will be sorely missed. The 308th recently posted a tribute to First Sergeant Stapley online, part of which I would like to read:

First Sergeant was an amazing leader, mentor, and friend. He always placed his soldiers first and had their backs from day one. To many, he was more than just a first sergeant, he was a friend and a confidant. First Sergeant Stapley was the glue that held the unit together. He excelled in all aspects of his life; from the unit's first sergeant, to his civilian employment, to being a husband and father.

Tracy and his dear wife Antionette are the parents of two beautiful children, Trase and Kennedy. Known as the "dance dad," Tracey was an ardent supporter of Kennedy's dancing. He also loved to attend Trase's sporting events. The unmatched pride of a father was frequently seen at many recitals, and on many sidelines. I trust that all Utahns share the pride that I feel, knowing that this fellow Utahn served not only his country, but also his family with honor and love.

It is comforting to me to know that First Sergeant Stapley's love for our country and dedication to excellence lives on through his family. His son Trase is currently a cadet at the U.S. Military Academy at West Point, and I am confident that he is representing Utah and the Stapley family well.

First Sergeant Stapley was always helping others, even when help was unsolicited. His son Trase wrote that Tracy was "a man worth praising and a friend worth having; . . . a fun-loving jokester." Trase added:

He loved the family and loved being around us making sure we had everything we ever needed and more. He was the best. We love you Dude, Rest in Peace. Come see us sometime.

It warms my soul to witness the sustaining power of faith, and the love that a son has for his father.

I imagine that First Sergeant Stapley, like many of our service men and women, would deny the claim that he is a hero. To Tracy, and all of our soldiers, I would say that you are among the few heroes left in our modern world. As Americans, we all feel a profound sense of pride and honor when we see a uniformed soldier, and we would be wise to remember our heroes in all that we do, especially in this body. It is true that we honor those

who have gone before by living our lives with excellence today.

I thank 1SG Tracy L. Stapley for his honorable service in defense of the Constitution and our freedom, and I thank all of our men and women who have also given the ultimate sacrifice. I would like to convey my condolences and profound gratitude to his wife Antionette, his daughter Kennedy, his son Trase, and his father John. Our thoughts and prayers are with you, and with your entire family. It is my solemn hope that we, as Senators, will always remember the tremendous sacrifice, laid upon the altar of freedom by our brave soldiers and their families.

HONORING PRIVATE FIRST CLASS
WALTER HERBERT ANDERSON

Mr. LEE. Mr. President, today I rise to honor PFC Walter Herbert Anderson, who has been awarded a posthumous Purple Heart for his service in World War I. He was born in Toquerville, Utah Territory, on February 3, 1895, 1 year before Utah officially became a State. Little did he know that his service would take him around the world and change the rest of his life. PFC Anderson was involved in some of the largest American offensives of the war and served his country with honor. He was part of the famous 91st Division, affectionately referred to as the "Wild West Division."

The division consisted of a group of inexperienced young men from several Western States. Although they were shipped to Europe in the eleventh hour of the war, as all Americans were, they fought in some of the most ferocious operations. Private First Class Anderson, a member of the 346th artillery regiment, was part of three major offensives: the Saint Mihiel Offensive, France; the Meuse-Argonne Offensive, France, and the Ypres-Lys Offensive, Belgium.

During the Meuse-Argonne Offensive in October 1918, Private First Class Anderson was debilitated by a German gas attack. In World War I, due to the limited knowledge regarding the effects of chemical warfare, gassed soldiers were not counted among the wounded in medical records or morning reports. According to the U.S. Army Medical Department's Office of Medical History, 229 soldiers were gassed from the 91st Division during the Meuse-Argonne Offensive. These soldiers were not put in the hospitals because of gas residuals, which were active for days.

The American casualties from mustard gas were carried to portable "gas hospitals." These consisted of temporary shelters or local homes. In all, during the Meuse-Argonne campaign, there were 20,000 chemical warfare casualties, comprising 22 percent of all injuries during the campaign. Within 24 hours of exposure, victims experienced skin irritations, which often turned into large blisters. If eyes were exposed, as Private First Class Anderson's were, resulting symptoms usually

included swelling, pus, and temporary blindness.

U.S. doctors treated Private First Class Anderson in a private home at La-Ferté-Barnard, France, for about 6 weeks. He was not counted among the wounded. His injuries consisted of temporary blindness, sticky eyes, burning and pain, bronchial problems, and nervousness. Such was the sacrifice that Private First Class Anderson, along with many of his brothers-in-arms, made to defeat the despotic regimes of Central Europe.

Private First Class Anderson was released from the Army in April 1919. Upon release, he was told that his eye problems and nervousness would go away. On April 6, 1921, Private First Class Anderson signed an affidavit of disability and honorable discharge, stating that he "was gassed about October 2, 1918, at the Meuse-Argonne, and was treated by U.S. doctors in a private home at La-Ferté-Bernard, France." His eyes had a film over them, and his eyelids were granulated. He was officially diagnosed with trachoma, which was caused by exposure to mustard gas. He lived honorably with this disability for the rest of his life.

Private First Class Anderson left a legacy of service and sacrifice to his posterity. He served as the post commander of the Utah Veterans of Foreign Wars, and two of his sons also served in the U.S. Armed Forces. He was Salt Lake County commissioner from 1937 to 1938 and also served as a clerk for the Utah House of Representatives. At age 57, he lost an eye as a result of a tumor development and subsequent operation. He pushed on with one eye, until in 1955, stricken with cancer, he left this frail existence for a more exalted sphere.

To Walter and his dear wife Lola and to their posterity, on behalf of the U.S. Senate and the people of Utah, I sincerely thank you for your sacrifices, your love of country, and your honorable service. May the life of PFC Walter Herbert Anderson, deserving the honor of being included in The Military Order of the Purple Heart, shine as an example for us and for future generations. It is my prayer that we will always remember the sacrifices of our brave military men and women who have fought and who continue to fight in defense of our Constitution and our liberty.

TRIBUTE TO ALTON "RED"
FRANKLIN

Ms. LANDRIEU. Mr. President, today I wish to ask my colleagues to join me in recognizing September 6, 2013, as Coach Alton "Red" Franklin Day in the State of Louisiana. On this date, Coach Franklin's 35 years of leadership and service to the football program at Haynesville High School as head coach