

these people have at least the basics of being able to have a meal during the day.

House Republicans are determined to gut the nutrition assistance program in the name of austerity, even though 9 out of 10 recipients are families with children, senior citizens, or people with disabilities. These needy Americans aren't exactly living a life of excess on the government's dime. They get about \$4 in food assistance each day.

One of my favorite things I like to do in Nevada and here in Washington is to go grocery shopping. It is such a diversion for me. I love going grocery shopping to look around, buy things. Landra and I are without our children and our grandchildren—we live alone—but we still buy food and I enjoy that so very much. So I have a good idea how much \$4 will buy, or \$4.50 to be specific. That is enough money to buy, if one is lucky, a pound of hamburger. They have different grades of hamburger. They have the expensive kind, the not so expensive, and then the cheaper kind. Even for the cheaper kind, \$4 couldn't buy a pound of that most of the time. A gallon of milk costs about four bucks. So a person couldn't buy them both on the same day; a person certainly couldn't buy hamburger and milk on the same day.

It is possible to make important reforms to both farm and food stamp programs without balancing the budget on the backs of people who are hungry. But instead of cutting waste and eliminating fraud, the House Republicans would cut lunches for 210,000 children and eliminate food assistance for 170,000 veterans.

There is another way. It was done here in the Senate under the direction of Chairwoman STABENOW: the bipartisan Senate agricultural bill, passed under her direction and that of the ranking member. It saves \$23 billion without forcing needy children to skip meals. It does it fairly. If the Senate farm bill came to the House of Representatives floor, it would pass overwhelmingly, but the Republican leadership won't let Democrats vote. That is why they will probably pass this very mean-spirited piece of legislation today, because only Republicans will be allowed to vote on it.

The House Republican leadership refuses to consider any bill that would garner votes from both parties. Leave it to the House of Representatives to take the hard way whenever possible.

These same reckless Republicans are also determined to take the uphill route to passing a CR—a continuing resolution. What does that do? It funds the government. Instead of doing what is necessary to keep the economy on a firm footing, Republicans are obsessed with denying and undermining the law of the land—ObamaCare. Remember, the law passed about 4 years ago and the Supreme Court declared it constitutional. Many good things are already working to keep people who are sick from declaring bankruptcy. It is a

good piece of legislation that will make America like all modern nations and have health care for everybody, with rare exception.

Watching the Republican Party self-destruct—and that is not coming from me; that is what pundits are saying all over the country—would be good political theater, to watch them self-destruct—and that is what they are doing—if there were not so much at stake.

The economic consequences of a government shutdown are deadly serious. Even today, when I had my news briefing—the Republicans are openly fighting against each other now. Senate Republicans are saying, Well, we know we don't have enough votes to get rid of ObamaCare, but let's send it back to the House and let them hang tough. The House Republicans are saying, Why aren't the Senate Republicans doing it themselves?

The consequences of a government shutdown are deadly serious. The economic consequences of a first-ever default on the full faith and credit of the United States are deadly serious. Look what happened last time they threatened this: The stock market dropped 2,000 points. We lost our credit rating. It dropped.

Anyone listening to this doesn't have to take my word for it. The U.S. Chamber of Commerce, not noted for being this base of liberality in the country, wrote to Members of the House yesterday, saying: Prevent a shutdown. Ease the fears of default. Specifically, here is what they said:

It is not in the best interests of the United States or its business community or the American people to risk even a brief government shutdown that might trigger disruptive consequences or raise new policy uncertainties washing over the U.S. economy.

The quote continues:

Likewise, the U.S. Chamber respectfully urges the House of Representatives to raise the debt ceiling in a timely manner and thus eliminate any question of threat to the full faith and credit of the United States.

But in spite of these warnings from the largest business organization in the country, Republicans either don't realize the stakes or simply don't care. They are willing to put the Nation's economic recovery at risk to make an ideological point.

What remains to be seen is how many innocent Americans will be hurt by their reckless political games. How many children will go to school without breakfast? How many workers will lose their jobs? How many seniors will lose their retirement? How many businesses will lose their hard-earned investments if Republicans tank the economy?

I only hope the anarchists in the House of Representatives come to their senses before it is too late.

I note the absence of a quorum.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The clerk will call the roll.

The assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Without objection, it is so ordered.

#### RECOGNITION OF THE MINORITY LEADER

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The Republican leader is recognized.

#### UNANIMOUS CONSENT REQUEST—S. 1514

Mr. McCONNELL. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate proceed to the immediate consideration of Calendar No. 191, S. 1514, the Saving Coal Jobs Act. I ask unanimous consent that the bill be read a third time and passed without intervening action or debate, and the motion to reconsider be laid upon the table.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Is there objection?

Mr. REID. Mr. President, reserving the right to object, I know how important coal is to the States of Kentucky, West Virginia, Indiana, and a lot of States feel very strongly about coal. We will be happy to work with the Republican leader and others who are concerned about the coal issue in the United States to come up with a procedure where we can try to figure out a way to get a vote on this and have a reasonable debate on it. So I will be happy to work with the Republican leader, but based on my brief review, I think it best now for me to object, and I do object.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Objection is heard.

#### WAR ON COAL

Mr. McCONNELL. Mr. President, I might say we have a genuine emergency in Kentucky—a depression in eastern Kentucky—as a result of what this administration has done and is about to further do this very week, directed at the jobs and livelihood of my constituents. So it is for us a genuine emergency.

The EPA is due this week to announce regulations capping carbon emissions on new coal-fired powerplants. It is just the latest administration salvo in its never-ending war on coal, a war against the very people who provide power and energy for our country. The EPA has already stifled the permitting process for new coal mines. The Agency has done this so dramatically that they have effectively shut down many coal mines through illegitimate, dilatory tactics.

The EPA's actions ignore the thousands of people in my home State of Kentucky who depend on the coal industry for their livelihoods. Kentucky's own Jimmy Rose, a veteran and former coal miner, said it best in

the title to his song: "Coal Keeps the Lights On." Coal keeps the lights on.

In the year President Obama took office, there were over 18,600 employed in the coal industry in my State. Over 18,600 Kentuckians were employed in the coal industry in my State the year President Obama took office. But as of September 2013—this month—the number of persons employed in Kentucky coal mines is down to 13,000. That is 18,600 when the President took office; 13,000 today employed in coal mines in my State.

The picture is actually getting worse instead of better. This week a major employer announced 525 layoffs in eastern Kentucky mines. This news ironically came out on the same day the President announced that his proposals, according to him anyway, are helping to strengthen the economy. Try and tell that—try and tell that—to the hard-working coal miners in eastern Kentucky that this is a way to strengthen the economy. These people are now trying to figure out how to feed their families and pay their bills.

Kentucky coal miners have suffered far too much already. Congress cannot idly sit by and let the EPA unilaterally destroy a vital source of energy and a vital source of employment. That is the reason I sought a few moments ago to bring up and pass the Saving Coal Jobs Act. Saving coal jobs is the single most important accomplishment in the near term for the people of Kentucky. It is a combination of two bills, both of which have languished in committee for literally months.

The bill would essentially repeal the administration's declaration of war against coal. The first part of the bill would prevent the EPA from regulating carbon on new and existing coal plants; the second would force the EPA to stop stalling on mining permits.

It is time to act on the Saving Coal Jobs Act. The time to act is now. This is a genuine emergency in the Commonwealth of Kentucky.

#### RESERVATION OF LEADER TIME

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Under the previous order, the leadership time is reserved.

#### MORNING BUSINESS

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Under the previous order, the Senate will be in a period of morning business for 1 hour, with Senators permitted to speak therein for up to 10 minutes each, with the time equally divided and controlled between the two leaders or their designees, with the majority controlling the first half.

The Senator from Arkansas.

#### THE FARM BILL

Mr. PRYOR. Mr. President, I rise to talk about the farm bill. Ten days, that is all the time we have to work out

some agreement on our farm legislation before we revert to the 1949 farm policy in this country.

Let me make this very clear to the American people and to my colleagues. This has nothing to do with the traditional battle lines in agriculture. This is not one of those Midwest farming versus Southern farming type scenarios. This is not a specialty crop versus a row crop type issue. This has nothing to do with that at all. It is an ideological fight, where we see hyperpartisanship and gridlock politics taking over the Congress.

Today, the House of Representatives has a vote. It is a very important vote. What they are proposing is that they cut \$40 billion from the nutrition title over 10 years. That is \$40 billion.

Here again, this is not about a traditional fight that you see and you have seen for decades in agriculture. This is about hunger in America. It is a sad fact. It is something that maybe people in this building do not like to acknowledge. But we have people who are hungry in this country. They may be people with whom we go to church. They may be our neighbors. They may be friends, coworkers, folks with whom we graduated from high school. They could be seniors or children or the working poor. But we have people in this country who are hungry today.

Can you imagine America being the land of plenty and having hungry people and having folks in this building—in the Chamber of the House of Representatives—voting to not lend a helping hand when people need it the most?

I am reminded of that great song, "America the Beautiful," where it starts out:

O beautiful for spacious skies,  
For amber waves of grain,  
For purple mountain majesties  
Above the fruited plain!

It goes on and on and on to talk about the riches of this great country. But, unfortunately, as I said, today we have way too much hunger in our Nation.

The Congress can do something about that. The Congress can do something about it. In fact, the Senate already has done something about it. Thanks to Senator STABENOW and Senator COCHRAN and the bipartisan efforts on the Senate Agriculture Committee, they made responsible reforms in SNAP, in other nutrition programs to streamline and fix and correct and improve the nutrition title. They went after what we are concerned about, such as waste and abuse of the system, and fraud. We all know you have some of that in these programs. But we have a saying in our State. It is kind of a country saying. I know people have heard it before. But we say: If it ain't broke, don't fix it. Our agriculture law in this country ain't broke.

It can be improved, and I think that is what the Senate has done. The Senate has been responsible. The Senate has worked in a bipartisan way. Again, that bill passed through this Chamber

a few months ago with 66 votes, a very bipartisan vote. That is the solution. That is the solution of us working together.

Unfortunately, again we have people down the hall in the House of Representatives who are going to put that in jeopardy with a "my way or the highway" political solution. This is not good for the country.

I think the reason some of these folks are doing this is because they do not understand the impact their decision could have on this country. But let me put it in perspective. When we look at America, there are lots of different ways to look at agriculture and look at our economy and look at the global economy, but one way is this: We have several core strengths in the U.S. economy. We do some things better than anybody else in the world, and one of those is agriculture.

If we look at investment, if we look at innovation, if we look at new farming practices and ways to conserve water—how to get more per acre—all these things that improve and increase production and nutrition, et cetera, et cetera, they come from America. It is one of the core strengths of the U.S. economy. Everybody in the world wants to be like America when it comes to agriculture. Everybody wants what we have. They copy us. They model what they do after this country. It is something we should be proud of. I know inside the beltway it is not very exciting, it is not very flashy, but we have the safest and highest quality and, in relative terms, the cheapest food supply in the entire world. It is one of the true reasons for America's strength.

But, unfortunately, if we do not pass a new farm bill by September 30, we run the risk of putting all that in jeopardy, and there could be dire consequences. There is no question about it. If we talk to all the experts, talk to all the economists, talk to the people who understand this, what we can see very clearly is that crop prices will destabilize, and that means some prices will go up, some will go down.

For example, soybean farmers all over this country are going to lose their crop support. They are going to lose that protection that has been there since the 1960s. Because it was not there in 1949, it will be gone, and that will be devastating to the soybean industry. That is just one little piece of the puzzle.

I could go on and on. We have a huge trade deficit in this country. We know that. But our saving grace, when it comes to trade, is agriculture. Those export programs to sell our ag products overseas will be lost if this agreement is not reached.

Again, food prices will rise dramatically. We have heard others talk about that even this morning. The Democratic leader mentioned it. But it is going to hurt not only farmers, it is going to hurt families all over this country.