

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.

This is personal to me. I know in the Acting President pro tempore's home State of Hawaii they have a huge agricultural sector. I know it is very important to his State. Everybody thinks of how beautiful Hawaii is and tourism and all that, but agriculture is critically important to his State's economy, just like it is for the other 49 States. In almost every State—maybe with one or two exceptions—agriculture is very critical to that State's economy. That is true for Arkansas.

Again, this is very personal for me. One in six jobs in our State is related directly or indirectly to agriculture. Agriculture—we love our Fortune 500 companies. We love having them. We have several that are based in Arkansas. We are proud of them. But 25 percent of our State's economy is tied to agriculture—25 percent.

So the question is, How do we fix this? It is something we will never hear on the talk shows. We will not hear the talking heads chatter on about this. But the way we fix it is to work in a bipartisan way, to come together, to be very responsible—as the Senate has been on this issue—to put something together, and to get it done.

This is why groups in my State, such as the Arkansas Farm Bureau, Agricultural Council of Arkansas, Riceland Foods, Arkansas Rice Growers Association, Tyson Foods, the Arkansas Cattlemen's Association, et cetera, et cetera—the list goes on—all supported what we did in the Senate, and they do not support what is going on in the House right now.

But even more important than the groups, I have been around my State, of course, all year—and over the last 10 years. But during the August recess, I went around the State, and every time I saw a farmer—and I literally talked to hundreds of them—they said: Please, please, don't let this happen. Don't let this happen. Why do we want to put all this at risk? What we have now is working. Sure, we can make improvements. Yes, we support the Senate bill. Even though the Senate bill is not perfect, we support that because we know the importance of agriculture.

I would ask my House colleagues to please get themselves out of this manufactured crisis they have created for us all. Let's turn off the politics. Let's work together. The American people are counting on us.

I yield the floor.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The assistant majority leader.

Mr. DURBIN. Mr. President, are we in morning business at this time?

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. We are.

Mr. DURBIN. Does the majority have the control for an additional period of time?

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Yes.

Mr. DURBIN. How much time is remaining?

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. There is 20½ minutes.

Mr. DURBIN. Thank you very much, Mr. President.

FACING DEADLINES

Mr. DURBIN. Mr. President, the news out of Washington is not encouraging. It looks as though we are facing a government shutdown and the possibility of even a default on the debt. These are totally unnecessary. There is nothing that is forcing this, other than the political will of some people, and both are disastrous.

Shutting down the government, of course, runs the risk of disrupting Social Security payments, veterans' checks. It, of course, is damaging to our economy. At a time when we are recovering, but slowly, and we need to create jobs, it does not make any sense.

We are facing a deadline, obviously, of October 1 for a new fiscal year. We passed a budget in the Senate back at the end of March, if I remember correctly. Senator PATTY MURRAY of Washington, the chairman of the Senate Budget Committee, worked through a budget that passed. We then asked for the obvious: Let's have a meeting with the House. It is controlled by Republicans. We have a Democratic majority here. Why don't we sit down now and work out our differences? The difference between the two budgets, about \$92 billion—substantial for sure but something that is at least worth sitting down and discussing.

We came to the floor of the Senate repeatedly asking for a chance to sit down and work it out. Sadly, three or four Senators on the other side of the aisle continued to object. They would not let us sit down and talk. They would not let us try to find a bipartisan solution to this challenge, and it brings us to this moment.

Not having agreed on a budget resolution, we have been unable to pass appropriations bills—though they are ready in the Senate. I know a little bit about this because my new responsibility in the Appropriations Committee is the largest single bill. The bill I have worked on, with Senator COCHRAN, Republican of Mississippi, is a bill that covers all of the Defense Department and all of the intelligence agencies. I will tell you, it is the largest and a huge portion of our national discretionary budget—almost 60 percent.

We are ready. We prepared the bill. We want to bring this bill before the committee on the floor and have the debate that it deserves so our men and women in uniform are well served, our intelligence operations continue, and we acquire the necessities for the protection of America. Unfortunately, the same group that opposed sitting down with the House Republicans and finding a compromise has objected to taking up any spending bill on the floor of the Senate.

Where does that leave us? We have no budget, and we cannot take up a single

spending bill because of the objections from the other side of the aisle. They are being guided by a few Members over there who are of a certain political faith that I cannot even describe who believe that chaos is the best. I do not.

I have been here for a little while. I have found good-faith efforts by Members on both sides of the aisle. Many Republican Senators—conservative, yes, but sensible—are willing to sit down and try to find answers to these issues.

That is the right thing. Sadly, what has happened over in the House is hard to explain. I read press reports. There are about 40 of the House Republicans who are so-called tea party Republicans who insist on shutting down the government and insist as well on defaulting on our national debt. They happen to believe that is a good way to push their position opposing health care reform, ObamaCare. They happen to believe that is the way to convince the American people they are right.

I think they are completely wrong. I never thought I would ever come to the floor of the Senate to quote Karl Rove. But in this morning's Wall Street Journal, for goodness' sake, he wrote a long article to his fellow Republicans saying: Wake up to reality. Independent voters, those who do not declare for either political party across America, think the tea party Republican strategy is disastrous.

He warned the Republican Party: If you are not careful, you are going to push those Independents over onto the Democratic side.

Far be it for me to not want to see that happen politically, but I certainly have to tell you that if it takes shutting down the government and shutting down the economy, I do not want it to happen. What Karl Rove has said to his fellow Republicans is: Look at the reality of what you are doing to this party. You are destroying this party for the next election—this morning's Wall Street Journal.

I ask unanimous consent that article be printed in the RECORD at the conclusion of my remarks.

Most people do not even understand what a debt ceiling is. It is kind of hard for the average American to understand. Let me try to put it in simple terms. We spend more money than we raise in taxes. When we do that, we have to borrow money. The good news is that the amount each year is coming down dramatically, so our annual deficits are reducing, are coming down.

But when there is a difference, when we spend more than we have, we have to borrow it. In order to borrow it, there needs to be an overall authorization of the government. It is called the debt ceiling. So as we, for example, fund our military and borrow, say, 40 percent or 30 percent of what it takes to fund our military, as we borrow that, we need an authorization to do it.

There comes a point where we have used all our authority to borrow and