

every time an issue like this has arisen.

We have already talked to the Congressional Budget Office about this. They have looked at the bill. They have told us that it will not cost the Federal Government one dime because the money is already there. It has already been appropriated. It just needs to be used for the purpose Congress laid out—to help States with major disasters that inflicted cost damage on that State's highway system.

Colorado needs this Congress to act, and act now, to get this done so that Colorado can access the highway aid we will clearly need to recover in the coming months.

This \$100 million cap on emergency funding from the Federal Highway Administration, as I mentioned earlier, has been lifted many times before. It has been done routinely and swiftly by this Congress following other major disasters when it was obvious—as it is in our case—that federally maintained highway costs would exceed \$100 million. We lifted it for the Sandy States, as I have pointed out, earlier this year when we passed the Sandy supplemental on January 29, 2013. We lifted it on November 18 for Hurricane Irene and the Missouri River basin flooding. We lifted it on September 30, 2008, for Hurricanes Gustav and Ike. We lifted it on May 25, 2007, for storms in the State of California. We lifted it on December 20, 2005, for Hurricanes Dennis, Katrina, Rita, and Wilma. All told, Congress has waived this \$100 million cap 14 times in the past 25 years. It is routine, and it is normal when there is a major disaster that causes major highway damage in excess of \$100 million.

Senator UDALL and I have been working with our colleagues in the Senate. Nearly all of them have indicated a readiness to work with us to pass this bill. I am very grateful for that.

I also wish to thank my colleagues for working with us to get this done quickly for Colorado in recognition of how badly we need this cap lifted and this Federal funding made available.

I urge my colleagues to pull together to work with us to quickly clear this bill in the coming days so we can get Coloradans the help they need.

If you will indulge me a few more minutes—and if the Senator from California would as well—I wish to take a quick moment to tell you why this is so important.

A picture tells a thousand words—especially when I am the one who is speaking. I want to show the damage to Colorado highways as a result of this historic flooding.

This photograph was taken during a helicopter tour by Vice President BIDEN, Governor Hickenlooper, and FEMA officials of flood damage in Greeley, CO, earlier this week. We can see that a huge portion of the road has washed away and water has breached a dam.

I would like to say that FEMA has been doing a tremendous job with our local and State officials.

This is a section of Highway 72 that collapsed and washed away after a flash flood tore through Coal Creek near Golden, CO, which is outside of Denver—maybe in Golden they would say Denver is outside of Golden. This is what the road looks like there.

A bridge on the south side of Lyons is gone. Huge portions have broken off. This is a photo of the bridge that is missing. Here is another shot of large portions of U.S. 34 washed away.

This is a very clear example of the way these mountain roads work. In this case, when the prospectors first came to Colorado, what they would do is pan for gold in the bottom of the rivers, near the plains. They would see whether there was gold leaf there. That would lead them to walk up these valleys—very steep valleys—to see where the gold was coming from. They founded towns in these places. That is the way the river came, then the road followed the river, and that allowed them to get to their town. You can see in this case this road has been completely washed out by the river.

This is just another instance of mountain roads where we can see the dropoff below is what used to be road but no longer is.

Here is a roadway that, when this photo was taken, is completely submerged and with extensive damage. And then this, what used to be a ribbon of pavement, is now in fragments in the remaining water.

In times of disaster in this country, we have stood together time and time again. Working on behalf of the people of Colorado, along with Senator UDALL, that is what we are asking for again. We have pulled together with all of our colleagues and we are going to need all of you to pull together with us.

The Founding Fathers had a lot of work to do and they are often quoted around this place, but they were engaged in founding a country, not dismantling one. This is a reminder of why this vision was so important and why people, frankly, are counting on us to carry this on for this generation of Americans and for the generations that will follow us.

With that, I thank the Chair for his indulgence, and I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Ms. HIRONO). The Senator from California.

GOVERNMENT FUNCTIONING

Mrs. BOXER. Let me say to my friend from Colorado he is right about a picture being so powerful. Having shown my share of those types of photos, I think the Senator underscores why it is important to have a national government. He and his colleague from Colorado makes the point, as did the Senators from New Jersey, New York, and California—regardless of party—that many times these natural disasters are just too much for

any one State, and that is why we need a national government that works well, not one that teeters on the brink of shutdown because political parties get into these partisan disputes and seem to lose their way.

As one who feels we have a very clear path ahead, there is no reason for us to add to the uncertainty the people in Colorado face right now because we don't have that particular funding laid out clearly at this point. We don't need to add a layer of fear that this government is not going to function. So I wish to thank my friend.

But I will say that we did vote 54 to 44 in the Senate to keep the government open and to make sure we don't get involved in clashes about other matters and add it to the resolution that keeps this government going.

Listen, there is no shortage of arguments we could have. Even within our own parties there are different views on many issues: how best to bring this economy back, how best to reform education, how best to have a very strong, lean military—we have arguments about all these things—how to deliver health care. All these things are worthy of debate, but they should remain separate and apart from our basic functions, one of which is to keep the government running and doing the things government does, and the second is to pay our bills, which requires us to make sure the debt limit is raised. When we see games being played in these areas, we know we are in deep trouble.

I see our leader Senator REID is on the floor. With his leadership we passed a bill to keep the government open. All JOHN BOEHNER has to do, as Speaker of the House—and I know the House well. I served there for 10 years—is to put our bill on the floor and let the Members vote. That is democracy. We don't have to have every Republican support it. We don't have to have every Democrat support it. Just put the bill on the floor.

When I served in the House I served with many different Speakers. I have to say, in my time, Tip O'Neill was the greatest. Why was Tip O'Neill great and why can JOHN BOEHNER learn from Tip O'Neill? Because Tip O'Neill knew what his function was. It was to keep this country going. It was to give a sense of certainty and calm to the people that even though we could debate all kinds of things, including whether to go to war or how to deal with many problems, we would keep the government going. We would pay our debts.

When Tip O'Neill was Speaker, Republican Ronald Reagan asked Tip O'Neill to increase the debt ceiling many times. Over the period Reagan was President, he asked to raise the debt ceiling 18 times. Did all of us agree the debt ceiling should be lifted? No. A few voted no, and that was fine. No one played games. Ronald Reagan was very clear on the debt ceiling. He said even any talk about not raising it was a problem for this economy, and he

said it way more eloquently than I, being the great communicator. He said even the thought of a default was dangerous for our economy. Yet here we have Republicans, in the House in particular, marching down that path and also marching down the path right now to shut down this government. We are just a few short days away.

I don't know about the Chair, but I know I did have a meeting with my staff to explain what could happen. People act as if a government shutdown doesn't mean pain. It is a dangerous game and it has devastating consequences for our families and not only for the people who rely on their work for their country—whether they are serving on the military or civilian side of the Defense establishment or in the Social Security Administration or the Medicare administration or the FBI or the food inspectors or the highway inspectors.

I have to say, Republicans keep saying: We don't want to shut down the government. Believe me, we don't want to shut down the government. We just want to stop the Affordable Care Act. You tried 42 times. You had an election over it. Give it up. This is a democracy. Run candidates who want to repeal it. That is fine. That is fine. We had that in the last election and President Obama won. I know people aren't happy about it. I understand that. I wasn't happy when Republicans beat my Democratic candidates for President. I wasn't happy, but I didn't shut down the government. I didn't demand their signature accomplishments be repealed. I lived with it, and I am not the only one. We all did. We all accepted it.

That is democracy. You have an election. There are winners and losers. Suck it up. Stop complaining. Go register your friends. Tell them to vote against BARBARA BOXER. Go tell them to vote against the Democrats. Go do it. That is fine. That is what elections are for. But once the election is over—and in this last case it was a central issue—work with us to make it better.

Senator CARDIN and I were on the floor the other day pointing out we voted against the prescription drug benefit for Medicare for basically two reasons; one, we thought it was going to cost too much money for the government because in there it said Medicare could not negotiate for lower drug prices. So it was a giveaway to the drug companies. They couldn't negotiate for lower drug prices. Also, there was a great big doughnut hole so after you got a certain amount of drugs, you got no benefit at all, and seniors were risking their lives to get through that period of time.

We didn't try to repeal the prescription drug benefit; we tried to fix it. Here is the great news. In the Affordable Care Act, also known as ObamaCare, we fixed the doughnut hole. We are closing it. Now senior citizens are not going to have to cut their pills in little pieces while they wait for that doughnut hole period of time to pass.

So there are a lot of pathways forward for the Republicans in the House. Follow history and tradition, which says we have two basic things we must do: keep this government open and pay the bills that we incur. Simple. It is not complicated. If anyone tells you it is complicated, laugh, because it isn't.

If you are a family and you incur bills, you pay them or you are a deadbeat. In the old days, people used to go to jail. We stopped that. Now we have bankruptcy filings. Pay your bills, Republicans. Pay your bills. Keep the government going—a very simple path. Take the bill we just passed. It is neutral. It has no policy in it. It keeps the spending going. We haven't added any of our wonderful things we would like to see and do. We kept it clean. Put that bill on the floor—it passed 54 to 44 here—and vote on it. People who want to shut down the government will vote no. That is their right. People who want to keep the government open will vote yes. There will be Republicans on either side. There will be Democrats on either side.

What we hear happening is they are going to bring it back and they are going to put more of their favorite things in it. Who knows what they will pick. They have a lot. They want to shut down the Environmental Protection Agency. They want to stop us from cleaning up the air and the water. They want to stop us from addressing the issue of coal ash piling up all over the country. That is what they want to do, from what I read in the paper. Then they want to delay this health care bill, just as it is about ready to kick in.

We have been down this road before. We know what happens when the government shuts down. I asked my staff to go back, to go to the press and look at the stories. I am not speaking make believe. I am speaking history. When Newt Gingrich and the Republicans shut down the government in the 1990s, we all know what happened. It hurt our country. It hurt our economy. It hurt our seniors, our veterans, our businesses. It hurt anyone who even had 100 shares of stock in the stock market. It hurt the American people.

Mark Zandi, an economist who advised Republican Members of the Senate, predicts a shutdown lasting just a few days would reduce our gross domestic product by two-tenths of a point.

How does that help us when our economic growth is curtailed by a shutdown? How does it help our economy when more than 169,000 Federal employees in my State and many more nationwide are furloughed without pay? It will be more than 1 million Federal employees and 169,000 in California. These are real people, with real families, with real bills to pay who get up and go to work for their Nation. How does that help our economy?

We know the last shutdown cost the Federal Government \$1.4 billion. If we factor in inflation, that is \$2 billion, and that was for 2 weeks. A 2-week shutdown cost \$2 billion. Great, just

what we need to do—throw money out the window. Because we can afford it, right? No.

Agencies are making their shutdown plans. Federal employees are preparing to be furloughed. You know what happens when you get scared you will not get a paycheck? You pull in. You don't go out to the movies and you don't go out for dinner because you are worried. That has a trickle-down effect on small businesses.

How does it help our seniors when the Social Security Administration, during a shutdown, cannot process benefits for retirees? What happens if someone is widowed and she needs the help from Social Security to get those burial benefits she is entitled to? Is that making the Republicans excited over there, to hurt our seniors with Medicare, with Social Security?

Medicare can't take any new patients because they won't be able to. In the last shutdown, 10,000 people a day were turned away. People who were waiting to turn 65 so they could get their Medicare card called up Medicare, and no one is there. Sorry. Oh, that is a lovely thing to do to your mothers and dads, I say to my colleagues over there. Lovely.

How does it help our veterans and their families when a new disability claim or GI bill claim cannot be processed? I can tell you, it hurts them. There is already a huge backlog. This is just what we don't need, a shutdown, where the backlog of claims gets worse and worse. We all say we love our veterans, and I believe it when we say that. Don't shut down the government and hurt our veterans.

Republicans say they care about small businesses more than Democrats. How does it help our small businesses when they can't bid on government contracts or get small business loans through the SBA? I tell you, it hurts them. How is it going to help the more than 14,000 government contractors in California who may not get paid for their work on time? They will be hurt badly. They have bills to pay, they have employees to pay, and they won't be able to pay them. If you ask the average working person how close they are to seriously being homeless, not being able to pay the rent, it is only a few weeks for a lot of our people.

I would ask, how does it help our health in this country when the EPA cannot clean up toxic superfund sites? Those sites harm our families, they harm our children, and they will be shut down.

How does it help our fight against cancer and Alzheimer's when the NIH cannot enroll patients in drug trials? If you ask people who the real enemies are, a lot of times they will say we worry about someone in the family getting a heart attack, getting a stroke, getting Alzheimer's. How does it help our families when the NIH can't enroll patients in drug trials and the CDC can no longer monitor new avian flu cases?

And tell me, Republicans who want to shut down this government, how

does it help our businesses like our restaurateurs and people who run hotels when tourist visas cannot be processed and people who are waiting to come to America to stay in our hotels are turned away? That is bad for this economy.

How does it help a family buy a house when the FHA can't process a loan for the American dream of owning a home? But that is what is going to happen.

And tell me, how does it help a single mom when she can't get help from HHS in collecting child support to feed her family? How does it help the families in Colorado, their homes and roads and bridges destroyed, when the National Guard—we just learned from Senator UDALL—cannot start their work until the government reopens? It is downright dangerous.

How does it help our schoolkids who come to Washington to learn about our great Nation, they go to the Mall, and they can't get in any museums?

And do we want to hear the ultimate outrage? These Senate and House Members who want to shut down the government will get paid during a government shutdown that they caused. These Senate and House Members who want to shut down the government—they personally will still get paid. Their families will have a paycheck during a government shutdown.

In March of 2011, the Senate passed S. 388, the Boxer-Casey bill, to prevent Members of Congress from getting paid in the event of a government shutdown or a default. It is a very simple bill:

Members of Congress and the President shall not receive basic pay for any period in which there is more than a 24-hour lapse in appropriations for any Federal agency or department as a result of a failure to enact a regular appropriations bill or a continuing resolution; or if the Federal Government is unable to make payments or meet obligations because the debt limit has been reached.

Our bill, I am proud to say, passed the Senate. Senator CASEY and I wrote a letter—signed by 14 of our colleagues—to Speaker BOEHNER and the Republicans, asking that they bring up and pass our bill. In that letter we said:

Members who want to shut down the government should not continue to receive a paycheck while the rest of the Nation suffers the consequences. Members of Congress and the President should be treated no differently than every other Federal employee. We too should have to face the consequences of our actions.

Speaker BOEHNER had time to put lots of other things on the docket, but not our bill. So we introduced a new one. I am here to say we have a bill that is called S. 55. It says the same thing, we are not going to get paid if we don't do the two basic functions we have to do: keep this government running, and raise the debt ceiling.

I want to ask: How is it that Republicans, who are urging a shutdown of the government by virtue of their votes—and we have them in the Senate—why are they not cosponsors of

our bill? They don't care if the government is shut down. Get on my bill. I invite Senator CRUZ and Senator LEE. They spoke for 21 hours. That took a lot of strength. Maybe they have strength left to pick up the phone and call me and go on my bill so they won't get paid, because as of now they will. They want to protect their pay. They want to protect their families.

Some of them even suggest taking away the employer contribution from our staff, that is treated like almost every other employee with a big employer, an employer contribution to health care. They want to take it away, but they want to get paid during a shutdown.

So pick up the phone, Senator CRUZ, and call me. I will be delighted to hear from you, and let me put you on my bill because that would be helpful. Then we can e-mail all of your friends and tell them to get everybody else on the bill. And maybe, just maybe, we can make a little sacrifice if things go wrong.

By the way, there is no reason for things to go wrong. We just passed a good bill, a clean bill. We know we are going to have arguments over health care, we are going to have arguments over Social Security, we are going to have arguments over the best way to move forward with sequester. That is fine. There is a time and a place. You don't put those issues on a continuing resolution to fund the government. You don't put those issues on a debt ceiling and, as Ronald Reagan said, put our economy in a very dangerous and precarious situation.

If you listened to the speeches of my colleagues, the 21-hour speech, and if you take away the time that was devoted to Dr. Seuss, most of it was about the Affordable Care Act. So I think we ought to take a look at the Affordable Care Act. This is the terrible piece of legislation that certain colleagues of the Republican side say is so terrible they are willing to shut the government down:

Right now, because of the Affordable Care Act, 3 million young adults are on their parents' plan. Isn't that terrible? Three million of them can stay on their parents' plan. I want to know why they would shut down the government and kick those youngsters off their parents' plan, because that is what they will do. They don't tell you that, but we won't be able to enforce this law. We won't have the funds. They would kick these kids off their parents' plan because, frankly, the law would in effect be suspended. And if an insurance company said, We are not going to do this anymore, those youngsters are out of luck. So that is the first question I ask them: Why do you want to kick 3 million youngsters off their parents' plan?

Now 71 million Americans are getting free preventive care, such as checkups, birth control, and immunizations. Now when you don't fund this bill, delay it, or fool around with it, forget this. So

now 71 million people who could have gotten immunized don't get immunized, a good bunch of them, because they can't afford it—under the Affordable Care Act it is free—then they get sick and then others catch what they get. Tell me how that makes America a better place. I am waiting to hear. No one has told me how it makes America a better place when we kick children off their parents' plan or we take away immunization or birth control or checkups from our people.

I mentioned this before. Senator KING was talking about how when he was a youngster he worked here and he had health insurance, and the health insurance allowed him to get a free medical checkup. He got a free checkup, and he found out that he had a melanoma, a mole that had gone cancerous. It was very serious. He was a youngster. This is a long time ago for him. As a result of that, he is with us today, living and well and here to fight for health care. That is a story we should think about. Because he went to the doctor, the doctor looked at him and found this mole, he got that mole removed, and he is alive.

Tell me why Republicans want to take away free preventive care from 71 million Americans. That is what the Affordable Care Act does. They call it ObamaCare because they polled it, and when they say ObamaCare, it is less popular. So I will call it ObamaCare. I thought the President was funny when he said that after this law is out there a few years and people like it, the Republicans will stop calling it ObamaCare, a moment of levity that had a lot of truth to it.

This is another benefit the Republicans would delay, stop, and put in jeopardy. They will even shut the government down. They don't like the fact that 17 million children with pre-existing conditions such as asthma and diabetes can no longer be denied coverage. So I have to ask them, What is it you have against kids? I have met the parents. If a child had diabetes, if a child had asthma, the insurance company said, Sorry, you are out of luck. Because of the Affordable Care Act, ObamaCare, children can no longer be denied coverage.

I have met these little kids who have benefited, who have gotten the care, who are doing well because the moms and dads don't have to wait until they are gasping for air or have an absolute breakdown and then they have to rush them to the emergency room where they are patched up and don't get the kind of care they need.

Here is another thing. I don't understand why the Republicans feel it is a good thing for insurance companies to be able to cancel your health insurance when you get sick. That is what used to happen before ObamaCare, before the Affordable Care Act. Remember, this law has been in effect for 3 years, so all these benefits have gone into play. No more lifetime limits.

I remember once looking at our insurance policy many years ago that my

husband got through his employer, and we thought it was a great plan. Then we looked at the little print that said when you reach a cap of \$250,000, no more health insurance. Anyone who has the misfortune to get a serious condition, a disease, can bump up against that cap fast and you have no more insurance until, you pray to God, you are 65 and you can get Medicare. We immediately said we have to look for a different policy that has no caps—and of course it costs more. Under ObamaCare or the Affordable Care Act, no more lifetime limits, no more annual limits. The Republicans are so distraught at these reforms they are even willing to shut down the government. They are willing to delay ObamaCare. They are willing to defund ObamaCare. They are willing to repeal ObamaCare.

Let me tell you, this is a pattern. I am going to tell you the pattern. I am going to show you what happened when a Democratic President in the 1960s came up with the idea for Medicare. I am going to tell you what the Republicans said then. This is not something that just happened to the Republican Party. They have been fighting these kinds of benefits, I think, for decades. They fought Social Security in the 1930s. But I will go to Medicare. Dick Armey said in 1995—he was Republican House majority leader. He had ERIC CANTOR's job. He said Medicare is "a program I would have no part of in a free world."

Earth to senior citizens: Wake up. The Republican leader of the House in 1995 said Medicare is "a program I would have no part of in a free world." That same year, after leading an effort to raise premiums and costs for senior citizens, Newt Gingrich predicted that Medicare was "going to wither on the vine."

So when you hear these Republicans rail against ObamaCare, they railed against Medicare. They railed against Social Security. This is history. This is why there is a difference in the parties.

Listen to this. In 1965, this is what Senator Bob Dole said on the floor. Remember he bragged about this in 1996 during the Medicare fight. He said "I was there, fighting the fight, voting against Medicare, because we knew it wouldn't work in 1965."

Really? The Republicans knew that Medicare wouldn't work in 1965. Here it is, 2013, and people are saying: Don't you mess with my Medicare. Don't you touch it. Whether they are tea partiers or rightwing Republicans, moderate Republicans, liberal Republicans, Democrats—from left to right, they all say don't mess with my Medicare. Look at where the Republicans were. Don't forget, PAUL RYAN's budget destroys Medicare. It would never look the same if he had his way.

I will even go back further in history and show you some of the things that the Republicans said about Medicare when it was brought to us by the Democrats. Sixty percent of the Republicans in the Senate voted against it,

and one Representative, Durwood Hall of Missouri said:

We cannot stand idly by now, as the nation is urged to embark on an ill-conceived adventure in government medicine

—that's what he called Medicare—

the end of which no one can see, and from which the patient is certain to be the ultimate sufferer.

This man had it wrong. People love their Medicare. People tell me they are down on their hands and knees, praying to get the Medicare card, hoping they can hold out. Republicans have had it wrong. Why should we trust them and believe them when they say the Affordable Care Act is no good when we already see how many people it is helping?

Then there was Senator Milward Simpson, way back when, in the 1960s. He said:

I am disturbed about the effect this legislation would have upon our economy and upon our private insurance system.

He didn't have to be concerned. Medicare has worked beautifully. In the Affordable Care Act we make it better. We fix the prescription drug benefit. We make sure that our people on Medicare can have free checkups and immunizations. We strengthened it.

Let's look at Medicare's success. Before Medicare became law, the majority of seniors had no health insurance. Today nearly all seniors, 50 million, are receiving guaranteed health care through Medicare, and 80 percent of folks on Medicare believe the program is working. If you look over history, over the years Medicare has been more successful than private insurers at holding down health care costs.

Let me sum up. What we saw here today is some good news. Working with our Republicans, we managed to bring up a bill and modify it and make it clean, strip it of any kind of debate, and fund the government until the middle of November. That will give Senator MURRAY time to sit down with her counterparts and try to get a long-term solution.

If you want a long-term solution to our deficit and debt, you have to have a budget. Yet Republicans over here have stopped us from going to conference. Once this is done we can have a conference move forward, a debate go forward. Let's keep these arguments where they belong, which is separate and apart from keeping the government going. Let's keep these separate and apart from paying the bills we have already incurred.

I also want to say this. If you listen to Republicans, you would think this deficit has gone up under President Obama. President Obama inherited a \$1.2 trillion deficit. It is now down. It has been cut in half. But if you listen to them, you think: Oh my God, everything is awful. I took a look at the charts. I took a look at deficits under Democratic and Republican Presidents. Oh my God, I am so proud to be a Democrat. Under Democratic Presidents we have had surpluses. Under Bill Clinton

we had surpluses. As soon as the Republicans took over, President George W. Bush said, I am going to have a party. I am going to put 2 wars on the credit card. I am going to give the biggest tax cuts to billionaires and millionaires. Do know what happened? We had a crisis. Not only the worst recession since the Great Depression, but the deficit skyrocketed.

All those supply-side economists were proven wrong. Give tax cuts to the mightiest among us and the deficit will go down. That is voodoo economics, as it was once called by a really good Republican President. That is voodoo economics.

You are going to hear all kinds of things today in these speeches. But history is history. Bill Clinton had the surplus. George Bush turned it into the worst deficit in history. Barack Obama cut that in half. He rescued us with the Democrats and some brave Republicans who voted for economic stimulus—thank the Lord. And we are getting out of this mess.

Now we have Republicans, on the far right in the House, who are holding our country hostage because they do not like the Affordable Care Act, otherwise known as ObamaCare. They voted 42 times to repeal it. They are ignoring the fact that we had an election about it, and they are ignoring the fact that they do not run the Senate or the White House. They run one-third of the government. Fine. God bless them. But they have to work with us, not against us. We need to work together.

I served 10 proud years over there. I have never seen a situation where you are stopped from making any progress because 20 people belong to the tea party and are threatening the Speaker. The Speaker has to act like the Speaker of the House. He is not the Speaker of the Republicans, he is the Speaker of the House. Take our bill that just passed and put it on the floor. Some will vote aye, some will vote nay. Let's see what happens.

Meanwhile, there are a lot of people who are very worried today. They are worried that this government is going to shut down. They are worried that when they call about their Social Security check, if they have a problem, no one will be there. They are worried, if they have a problem, and they want to sign up for Medicare—no one will be there. They are concerned that their FBI agents are furloughed. They are concerned.

Maybe this concern may not sound like a big deal, but they saved for 2 years to take their kids to the Capitol, and they want to take them to all the great museums and the national parks and they are closed.

Why is this happening? Self-inflicted wound, self-inflicted wound.

Do your job. For God's sake, don't get paid if you can't keep the government open. Sign on in this body to S. 55 and say I won't get paid if the government shuts down. Tell Speaker BOEHNER to do that. They did it over there

for the budget. They said if we didn't pass a budget we should not get paid. We did pass a budget. Now they won't let us go to conference and finish the work.

What a mess we are in—self-inflicted—because people are in denial around here that there was an election. It was about health care. It was about being moderate. It was about working together. It was about compromise. It was not about who is the Presidential candidate who could lead us into the darkness and despair of complete warfare.

Let's end that warfare. We showed we could do it today. I thank my Republican colleagues who voted to allow us to offer our amendment. I appreciate it so much. I know they are getting yelled at. They should be praised. But it shows, right here in this Senate, that we can come together. We may not like our options or our choices. Believe me, I do not like the amount of money we are spending to run the government. It is really hurting my people back home. But I am not going to shut down the government about it.

Madam President, you are such a great new addition to the Senate. I am disappointed that you are not able to unleash your legislative prowess and move us forward, but we will get past this if we can work together.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Alabama.

AFFORDABLE CARE ACT

Mr. SESSIONS. Madam President, I want to share some remarks about the comments. I want to say Senator BOXER is a great advocate and does a good job as chair of our Committee on the Environment and Public Works. Pretty much we have had unanimous votes on bills that came out, Republicans and Democrats voting unanimously on the bills that came out. Sometimes we have differences and we fight over them, but a lot of times things are getting done around here.

But I will just say it is not actually fully correct to say the Republicans opposed the President's health care bill, the Affordable Care Act, ObamaCare. The American people opposed it by huge numbers. They, through an election, a remarkable election, and in some very close wins, found themselves with 60 votes in the Senate of the United States. They had a majority in the House, and they decided to move this bill. They shut out Republicans, moved a partisan bill, and they got it through—even when Scott Brown, if you remember, was running for the Senate in Massachusetts to fill the late Senator Kennedy's seat. He promised he would be the vote that would deny the 60 votes and stop this bill, and he won in Massachusetts. But he couldn't get here quickly enough. They were able to get the bill passed before he got here to kill it.

This has never been a popular bill and the polling number shows it is even

less popular today than it was when they rammed it through. So this is not a little bitty matter. It threatens our Republic, I think, in a lot of different ways. I have talked about that earlier. But I would say—to understand the dynamics on the floor of the Senate—you have to understand that the majority leader, having gotten his bill passed on Christmas Eve 2009, after all kinds of maneuvers to get that accomplished, has protected it from any further debate and discussion. He has blocked any ability to bring up the legislation and to be able to amend it and fix some of the obvious flaws in it. One of the top drafters, the Senate Democratic chairman of the Finance Committee, has called it a train wreck, and it at least at needs reform. It really cannot succeed in its present form. Senator REID has blocked any effort to bring up a bill and fix it. The American people might find that hard to believe, but I will repeat it: Since that time there have been numerous efforts on behalf of Members from this side to call up amendments and call up legislation to alter, amend, and replace the ObamaCare legislation.

He has utilized parliamentarian maneuvers, filling the tree, to block that. It cannot continue. This is about to become a law. It is going to hammer the American economy. It is already hammering the economy. The American people don't want it, and we are not going to go silent. So this is the beginning of the fight.

Senator CRUZ—maybe people can disagree with his tactics—but he drove and raised the issue. We need to keep talking about it; we just do. It is time for this Congress to listen to the voice of the American people.

Senator BOXER is a good person, and she said President Bush had \$1 trillion deficits and President Obama has reduced them in half. The highest deficit President Bush ever had in the 8 years he served as President was \$487 billion, which is a lot of money—too much. The year before, it was \$168 billion.

When President Obama took office, what was the first thing that was passed within weeks? A \$1 trillion stimulus bill to supposedly stimulate the economy, but the money went out to government agencies and departments, and it had no stimulus impact at all. It was \$1 trillion—every penny of which was borrowed. That year the deficit went up well over \$1 trillion. The next year it was well over \$1 trillion, the next year well over \$1 trillion, and the next year well over \$1 trillion.

In the first 4 years of President Obama's leadership, we had the highest deficits ever recorded in America. It is a stunning event, and he fought every day—and there were fights on the floor—to spend more and borrow more.

Some of his advisers would say: The reason this economy isn't growing so well is because we didn't borrow and spend enough. We didn't have enough. We should have created more debt and should have spent more. It has resulted

to this date in the lowest rebound economically from a recession since World War II, and we are not doing well in that regard.

It is absolutely not so that President Obama bears no responsibility for the unprecedented debt that he has run up during this time. He is still advocating for \$1 trillion more in spending above the Budget Control Act levels that he agreed to in the summer of 2011. He wants to spend \$1 trillion more than what he signed as an agreement to raise the debt ceiling.

I know he didn't want to, but Congress said: We are going to cut back on your credit card. Now we are going to raise the debt ceiling \$2 trillion, as you said you need, but we demand that you reduce the growth of spending over 10 years by \$2 trillion.

We were projected to have spending growth to \$10 trillion over the current rate of spending, which is about \$3.6 trillion a year. We were going to increase it by a total of \$10 trillion. Under BCA, if we adhere to it, we would increase it by \$8 trillion, not \$10 trillion. That is not going to bankrupt America. There is no reason we can't run this government by growing the spending by \$8 trillion instead of \$10 trillion. So it is unbelievable that we make that point.

I know the budget balanced in the last years of the 1990s, and President Clinton proudly claims credit for that, and he was a part of it. But I haven't forgotten that the Republican House was in a constant battle over Democratic President Clinton's spending levels, and there was actually a fairly long shutdown of the government to contain the growth of spending, and it resulted in a balanced budget. That is how it happened. There was credit enough to go to both sides of that.

We need health care reform. It needs to be smartly and effectively done. We can improve health care in our country, but it does not have to tank the American economy, and that is what has been happening in recent days. I was going to talk about that, without much reference to ObamaCare and the health care bill—which is a negative factor of economic growth of very large proportions—but I just followed my friend and able colleague, Senator BOXER, and I wanted to share those points.

Last Thursday I delivered the first in a series of speeches looking at the state of our economy. I directed my staff on the Budget Committee—I am the ranking Republican there—to specifically analyze conditions facing working Americans so I could share those findings directly with the Members of the Senate. Both parties need to focus their efforts on defending working Americans from policies—Washington policies too often—that damage their financial well-being. It is happening. Last week I discussed the falling incomes and social challenges eroding the security of the middle class.