

one should be able to shut down our government because they don't get their way in an election. I don't think that is the role model we want to serve to the other governments in the world, much less to our kids. I think we can compromise on a lot. We can even work on making this bill better. But let's keep the government open, let's pay our bills, and then let's sit down and have some meaningful negotiation and compromise about Federal spending. I am somebody in my caucus who is always open to other ways we can cut spending. Some in my caucus don't feel as strongly as I do about that, but I am willing to listen to all sides and negotiate around the budget.

Let's not hold our economy hostage in the process. Real people are going to be hurt. This isn't just about who is on the Sunday morning shows, who is your primary opponent, what are they saying on cable news. This is about real folks, and we need to be focused on them.

I implore Speaker BOEHNER, let the Members vote. Just let them vote. Put it on the floor. He can do it in an hour. Put it on the floor and let them vote. If it is defeated, then let's talk. I will bet it won't be.

Mr. President, I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Colorado.

DEFICIT-NEUTRAL DISASTER RELIEF ACT

Mr. UDALL of Colorado. Mr. President, I believe the Deficit-Neutral Disaster Relief Act Senator BENNET and I have drafted is at the desk. It is my understanding both sides have cleared the bill, I would add, after a lot of pushing from Senator BENNET and me and other Coloradans, along with the Governor and Department of Transportation.

I ask unanimous consent that the Senate proceed to the immediate consideration of S. 1560, introduced earlier by Senators BENNET and UDALL of Colorado, that the bill be read three times and passed, and the motions to reconsider be made and laid upon the table, with no intervening action or debate.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection?

Without objection, it is so ordered.

The bill (S. 1560) was ordered to be engrossed for a third reading, was read the third time, and passed, as follows:

S. 1560

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,

SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.

This Act may be cited as the "Deficit Neutral Disaster Relief Act".

SEC. 2. EMERGENCY RELIEF PROJECTS.

(a) IN GENERAL.—Notwithstanding any other provision of law, the Secretary of Transportation may obligate not more than \$450,000,000 of the amounts made available to carry out section 125 of title 23, United States Code, under chapter 9 of title X of division A of the Disaster Relief Appropriations Act, 2013 (Public Law 113-2; 127 Stat. 34) under the heading "EMERGENCY RELIEF PRO-

GRAM" under the heading "FEDERAL-AID HIGHWAYS" under the heading "FEDERAL HIGHWAY ADMINISTRATION" for emergency relief projects in the State of Colorado arising from damage caused by flooding events in that State in calendar year 2013.

(b) EMERGENCY DESIGNATION FOR CONGRESSIONAL ENFORCEMENT.—In the Senate, this Act is designated as an emergency requirement pursuant to section 403(a) of S. Con. Res. 13 (111th Congress), the concurrent resolution on the budget for fiscal year 2010.

(c) EMERGENCY DESIGNATION FOR STATUTORY PAYGO.—This Act is designated as an emergency requirement pursuant to section 4(g) of the Statutory Pay-As-You-Go Act of 2010 (Public Law 111-139; 2 U.S.C. 933(g)).

Mr. UDALL of Colorado. Mr. President, I wish to thank my colleagues and once again outline what this important act we passed will do. It is critically important.

I was on the floor Friday, and the Presiding Officer was here on Friday and was patient and listened to the case Senator BENNET and I made at that time. This is critically important because it will allow Colorado to begin rebuilding our battered roads and bridges and highways without having to wait years for relief. We are close now to getting this legislation to the President's desk, and I look forward to working with my colleagues in the House, with Senator BENNET, to get this bill signed into law as soon as possible.

Senator BENNET and I have been on the floor on a number of occasions in recent days to highlight how devastated certain parts of our beautiful State are as a result of these biblical floods we suffered a few weeks ago. Many communities are just now beginning to comprehend how serious the damage is and to see firsthand how many hundreds of miles of highways, roads, bridges, and other parts of our infrastructure are ruined or in some cases even washed away entirely.

I have had many occasions to see this damage firsthand in the last few weeks, starting in my own neighborhood, which was evacuated, but all over the northern front range. I was in Jamestown on Saturday. Senator BENNET was there a few days earlier. It is one of the worst-hit communities in Boulder Canyon. It is almost beyond description. The homes are literally washed off their foundations, cars were embedded in the ground, completely buried. Families were left in some cases with 2 to 3 feet of mud and silt, river cobbles literally inside their homes. I was in one home in Jamestown standing on the mud and silt, and my head was touching the ceiling because of the 3 feet of debris that was inside that house. We have seen entire roads and highways completely decimated. Without this help, it is a fact that communities will not be able to rebuild.

By passing the Deficit-Neutral Disaster Relief Act, we have lifted the statutory cap of \$100 million to a limit of \$450 million. The money applies to highway relief, so it will be enough to help us rebuild swiftly.

As I have done here before, I want to again make it clear that this isn't new

money. It doesn't increase budget authority or increase net outlays. It simply allows us to access an already existing appropriated fund of money.

Historically, this \$100 million cap on relief has routinely been recognized by Congress as an unwise impediment to helping States recover and it has been raised for nearly every natural disaster in recent years. Examples would be familiar to anybody listening. We raised the cap on transportation disaster relief for Hurricanes Gustav, Ike, Irene, Sandy, as well as during the Missouri River basin flooding in 2011.

I am truly appreciative and truly grateful that all of our colleagues have come together to recognize that the floods in Colorado are no exception. We are all in this together when it comes to responding to national disasters. I am glad that today we can say to Coloradans Members of Congress from all across the United States of America have stood with us in our recovery efforts, and we will stand with them in their recovery efforts as we have in the past as we experience natural disasters.

I thank the Senate for clearing this crucial legislation.

Mr. President, I yield the floor and look forward to the remarks of my colleague Senator BENNET.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Colorado.

Mr. BENNET. Mr. President, I will be brief because I think Senator UDALL has covered it very well. But I also want to rise today on this floor to thank all 100 of our colleges who were necessary for getting this done and for getting it passed. We have to move it along to the President's desk.

There are a lot of times when people at home wonder whether anybody in this place is listening to them and whether we are doing something other than playing politics with each other. This is a clear case where people here have listened to the people in Colorado, who have generously from time to time helped people in other States that were confronting disasters. Now it is our turn to ask for help, and that help has been granted.

I wish to thank Senator UDALL for his leadership in particular, but also all the Members in the Senate who made this possible.

Mr. President, I yield the floor.

ORDER OF PROCEDURE

Mr. BENNET. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that all quorum calls during the period of morning business be charged equally to both sides.

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

Mr. BENNET. Mr. President, I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

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

Mr. MERKLEY. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent to speak for up to 10 minutes.

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

CONTINUING APPROPRIATIONS

Mr. MERKLEY. Mr. President, I want to make a few comments about the crisis that is unfolding before us. Right now some colleagues in the Senate and others over on the House side are holding the entire American economy hostage to make their favorite point on policy. I must say that this blackmail against ordinary working class Americans—threatening to steal whatever momentum our economy has rather than build greater momentum and greater job growth—is deeply misguided. That is really as polite a way as I can possibly put it.

Think about what working families have been through over the last few years. The deregulation of Wall Street leading to predatory mortgages that hurt millions of families, and then the securities that those were based on, proceeded to derail our entire economy, hurting millions more. Families lost their savings. They lost their jobs. They lost the equity in their house.

All that working families are asking for is a little bit of common sense. Don't do further damage to the economy that is struggling to recover. Yet certain colleagues here in the Senate and over in the House seem to believe that the little people don't matter, the working people do not matter, the stability of the foundation for families and living-wage jobs doesn't matter because they can play whatever political games they want and the only people hurt are ones they do not see in their life. Maybe they live in a gated community. Maybe they live in a bubble. But I see those people. I see them every day. They are the salt of the Earth. They are the workshop that takes America forward. They are the small businesses across this Nation. All they are asking for is a little reasonableness and common sense.

Some of my colleagues have said this crisis comes because the majority party in the Senate has refused to negotiate. Nothing could be further from the truth. Negotiation in the budget process starts with each side passing a budget resolution and holding a conference committee. But it is Members of the minority of this Chamber who have come to this floor at least 18 times to block the start of a conference committee in order to work out the budget. I cannot imagine in my wildest dreams why they are terrified of there being a conversation between leadership in the House and leadership in the Senate, meeting with the television cameras on to work out the details of a budget compromise. But they seem terrified, petrified, scared to death that there will be a conversation between

the House and Senate that would lead to a compromise.

So, indeed, there has been obstruction on compromise, and we know exactly where it is. They are the same individuals who are trying to drive the economy over the cliff right now. Moreover, members of this party said let's go further. The Senate has a number. The House has a number. But the budget conference committee is being blocked. Let's simply accept the House number, and not split it down the middle, not insist on our number, let's take the House number. That is going far beyond the middle path, if you will. That is a major compromise. If you are looking for compromise, it is happening with the leadership of the Senate putting forward a compromise that takes the House number for the budget. It appears that certain individuals in this body just do not want to take yes for an answer.

I am going to conclude my remarks. I see my colleague, the esteemed Senator from Illinois has arrived. I want to close with this notion. This is not the first crisis that has been artificially manufactured that has damaged the American economy. Let us remember that similarly we faced this in April 2011 with the continuing resolution. We faced a manufactured crisis with the debt ceiling in July of 2011. We faced the December 2012 fiscal cliff that did substantial damage; in March of this year, the continuing resolution, which brings us up to right now.

This is not all. The same individuals who are threatening at this moment to drive our economy over a cliff are saying we will do it again in a couple of weeks over another debt ceiling issue and when this continuing resolution expires a few weeks from now, if we get one done, we will do it again a few weeks from now—three crises in a period of just a few weeks. If you want to destroy the economy for working Americans, this is how it is done, and it is unacceptable. We need a bipartisan, commonsense caucus to come together and simply say no to those who are trying to create this terrible blackmail using American working families in the process.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Massachusetts.

Mr. MARKEY. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent to speak for 5 minutes as in morning business.

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

Mr. MARKEY. Mr. President, we are just hours away from a government shutdown. I think tea party Republicans saw the "Breaking Bad" dramatic depiction of reckless behavior last night and thought they could put on an even better finale, create even more drama, and cook up even more toxic ideas. They thought they could break this government in every bad way possible. These tea party antics are the stuff of fairy tales. The way the GOP is writing this story at the stroke of midnight as we turn the calendar to-

ward October, our government and potentially our economic recovery turn into a pumpkin.

But it is the tea party GOP who are in fantasyland by thinking we will allow them to cut off ObamaCare, shut down government, and melt down our economy. Democrats are not going to allow them to do this.

What do the American people want? Americans want our military to get paid on time. Americans want our seniors to get the benefits they have earned and depend on. Americans want to be able to respond to floods in Colorado or wildfires in the West.

The American people don't want the government to shut down. Americans want a business plan that completes this recovery, creates jobs, and gets our economy back on track. They want us to work together to accomplish this goal.

What are the effects of the tea party Republican tactics? By forcing Congress to govern by going from crisis to crisis, tea party Republicans hope to chip away at the bedrock programs that run our country and help our people.

First, the tea party did this with sequestration, which is a fancy word for mindless cuts in programs that help ordinary families in our country. Now they are going after the ObamaCare law. What is next are their enduring targets such as Social Security, Medicare, and the safety net programs that millions of Americans depend on. These are the same Republicans who want to privatize Social Security. They want to turn Medicare into a voucher program. Now they want to reverse the progress achieved by the legendary Ted Kennedy, who made it clear that in the United States of America health care is a right and not a privilege.

The tea party Republicans are playing high-wire politics with our economy so they can take away the social safety net for millions of American families. This bill is just a preview of coming attractions. Two weeks from now we will be careening to the next crisis, this time over whether America will pay its debts. If we do not raise the debt ceiling, we will not be able to pay our bills starting on October 17.

What is the harm of defaulting on our debts? Our Nation's stock and bond markets could go into a free fall that will damage the full faith and credit of our country, the bedrock of the entire American economy. What does that mean? The full faith and credit of the United States is in question.

If you took out a mortgage, had a car loan, bought some furniture, and when the bill came due you said: I am not going to pay these bills, what do you think would happen? Your credit score would plummet. It would throw your financial life into chaos for years. No one would lend you money, or, at a minimum, you would be hit with sky-high interest payments because of the risk that you wouldn't pay the next time either.