

with no special deal, no special subsidy, no special exemption.

That law was passed as part of ObamaCare, pure and simple, exactly those words.

I guess this is an example of what NANCY PELOSI said: We need to pass the law in order to figure out what is in it. Because after the law passed, with that language in it, lots of folks on Capitol Hill started reading that and they said, Oh, you-know-what; we can't stand for this, we can't live by that. We can't be subject to the same situation as other Americans. So there was furious scheming and gnashing of teeth about how we are going to get out of this burden, even though there was very little broad-based discussion about how we are going to get all of Americans out of that burden they were subjected to.

That developed into furious lobbying of the Obama administration. Many folks in the Senate, led by the distinguished majority leader HARRY REID said: Mr. President, you need to issue a special rule that exempts Congress, that takes the pain out of that provision—a special, unique, special rule, special bailout for Congress. Sure enough, that is what the Obama administration did, conveniently right after we left town for the August recess, right after Congress got away from the scene of the crime.

According to numerous press reports that are not rebutted, President Obama personally got involved. He personally had discussions within his administration, at the urging of HARRY REID and others, and he ensured that this special rule was issued. It does two things, basically. No. 1, it says that even though the ObamaCare statute states plainly and clearly that every Member of Congress and all official congressional staff have to go to the exchanges, we don't know what official staff is, so we are going to leave that up to each individual Member of Congress, and we are not going to second-guess that. So any individual Member of Congress can say certain folks aren't covered by that mandate. They can stay in their current plan. They don't have to be disrupted. In theory, a Member of Congress can say nobody on my staff is part of that official staff for purposes of this mandate. That is silly and ridiculous on its face because the statute is clear.

The second thing this illegal rule does is it says that for Members and any staff who do go to the exchange—what is supposed to be the fallback position for Americans and for Congress—for Members and staff who do go to the exchange, they get to take their very generous taxpayer-funded subsidy with them, even though that is not available to any other person losing employer-based coverage and who is going to the exchange against his or her will. So that deal isn't available to anyone but the select ruling class.

That is why I think this rule is completely illegal, and that is why I know it flies in the face of what I consider

the first most basic rule of democracy; that laws passed by Congress, by Washington, should be applied to Washington the same as they are applied to America. That should be true in ObamaCare. That should be true across the board.

To react to this illegal Obama administration rule, I joined with many colleagues in the Senate—and I wish to thank all of my cosponsors, including Senator ENZI, Senator HELLER, and several others—I am forgetting the entire list—and Members of the House who have identical legislation and identical language. They are led by Congressman RON DESANTIS of Florida. RON JOHNSON is another colleague I was trying to think of from Wisconsin who is another leading coauthor. I wish to thank all of them for leading this fight.

Our language does two simple things. First of all, it negates this illegal Obama administration rule that is a special exemption, a special bailout for Congress against the clear language and intent of ObamaCare. Secondly, it broadens that rule and also applies it to the President and the Vice President and all of their political appointees.

That is the "no Washington exemption" language. That is the Vitter amendment in the Senate, with many other cosponsors. That is the DeSantis amendment in the House, with many House cosponsors. I urge all of my colleagues to come together around that commonsense, fair language, which again simply ensures what I think should be rule No. 1 of our American democracy: Whatever Congress passes for America, it applies equally to itself; whatever Washington imposes on America, it applies equally to Washington, to policymakers in Washington.

We are making progress because there are reports that the House may very well take up this exact language tonight as part of the continuing discussion about a spending bill, and I urge the House to do that, to stand with the American people—not to stand with Washington but to stand tall with the American people—and say, yes, it should be that even playing field, and whatever is passed on America should be applied equally in the same way. No special deals or exemptions or subsidies should be applied to Washington.

I urge all of my colleagues here, Republicans and Democrats, to support that effort, to support that simple, basic, fair language, to support it on ObamaCare, to support it across the board because it is essential that what Washington passes on America is applied with equal force and effect on Washington. If we did that under ObamaCare, I am convinced we would rush with greater determination, speed, and focus to fix the very real problems of ObamaCare because we would be vested in it. If we did that on other laws, I am convinced it would have the same positive effect. Let's do

it, No. 1, because it is fair and right; and No. 2, because our personal interests should be completely aligned, should be the same as those of the American people, and that will get us to act. That will get us to fix things. That will get us to fight in the right direction, Republicans and Democrats together.

Again, I urge support of this new Washington exemption language. I urge the House to vote positively on that tonight. I urge the Senate to accept that fundamental principle, that important language, which, as I said, I think is the first core rule of democracy.

Thank you. I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Massachusetts.

EXTENSION OF MORNING BUSINESS

Ms. WARREN. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent that the time for morning business with debate only be extended until 8 p.m., with Senators permitted to speak therein for up to 10 minutes each, and that the majority leader be recognized at 8 p.m.

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

CONTINUING APPROPRIATIONS

Ms. WARREN. Madam President, I come to the floor today in a state of disbelief. With millions of people out of work, with an economic recovery still far too fragile, with students and families being crushed by student loan debt, with millions of seniors denied their chance at one hot meal a day, with Meals On Wheels, and millions of little children pushed out of Head Start because of a sequester, with the country hours away from a government shutdown and days away from a potential default on the Nation's debt, the Republicans have decided that the single most important issue facing our Nation is to change the law so employers can deny women access to birth control coverage.

In fact, letting employers decide whether women can get birth control covered on their insurance plans is so important that the Republicans are willing to shutter the government and potentially tank the economy, over whether women can get access to birth control in the year 2013,—not the year 1913, the year 2013.

I have a daughter and I have granddaughters, and I will never vote to let a group of backward-looking ideologues cut women's access to birth control. We have lived in that world and we are not going back—not ever.

This assault on birth control is just one more piece of an ongoing Republican assault on the orderly functioning of our government and the orderly functioning of our economy. In effect, the Republicans are trying to take the government and the economy hostage, threatening serious damage to both unless the President agrees to gut the Affordable Care Act.

This assault is utterly bizarre. Congress passed the Affordable Care Act to solve real, honest-to-God problems. Our health care system is broken. Forty-eight million people in this country had no health insurance. Women couldn't get access to cancer screenings. People with diabetes were denied health insurance because of a preexisting condition. People with cancer hit the caps on health insurance spending. Health care spending in this country was growing way too fast. So we worked hard. We compromised. We came up with a solution—a solution that will substantially improve the lives of millions of Americans—because that is the way democracy works.

It is time to end the debate about whether the Affordable Care Act should exist and whether it should be funded. Congress voted for this law. President Obama signed this law. The Supreme Court upheld this law. The President ran for reelection on this law. In fact, his opponent said he would repeal it and his opponent lost by 5 million votes.

I see things such as this and I wonder what alternate reality some of my colleagues are living in. So let me be very clear about what is happening in the real world. The ACA is the law of the land. Millions of people are counting on it—people who need health care coverage, people who need insurance policies that do not disappear just when they are their sickest. Women will get insurance coverage for birth control. The law is here to stay, and it will stay. Earlier today the Senate emphasized that reality by flatly rejecting the Republicans' newest ransom note, just as we did last week.

We should be having a real debate about our budget because we have real problems to solve. Earlier this year automatic across-the-board cuts went into effect throughout the Federal Government. That is the sequester. The sequester hits American families where they live. During my visits to cities and towns across Massachusetts, I have heard from families, small business owners, and community development organizations—from the Berkshires to the Cape. They tell me what it is like trying to stay afloat with mindless, across-the-board spending cuts weighing them down.

More than a thousand employees at Westover Air Force Base and Barnes Air National Guard Base in western Massachusetts are facing furloughs. This fall, more than 2,000 Massachusetts kids could not get into Head Start because of cuts, and the Head Start Program in Billerica will close completely at the end of this year. Federal workers across our State stand to lose as much as 30 percent of their salaries. Every one of those losses will tighten family budgets. And when families make less money, they have less to spend with local merchants and less money to pay off bills and less money to save and less money to do all that keeps our economy humming.

In fact, the Congressional Budget Office says ending the sequester would add 900,000 jobs to the economy by the end of next year. Next time you think about someone you know who is looking for a job or who is working part time but hoping to get full-time work, think about the 900,000 jobs the sequester has destroyed.

Scientists and medical researchers in Massachusetts are also getting pounded by the sequester. They are working hard to expand our medical knowledge and develop new cures for devastating diseases. They are working on discoveries that will help us in ways we cannot even imagine. Yet here we are, bluntly hacking away at their funding, delaying their research, and cutting off promising new work before it even starts—not because we have to, not because it is inevitable, but because Washington has its priorities all wrong, and it is making some truly terrible decisions.

Consider the Framingham Heart Study. It is a generations-long study of the causes of heart disease, a study that has helped create groundbreaking advancements in medical knowledge. There are people across this country who are alive today in part because of the work that began with this study. This study continues to yield extraordinary results, but it is scheduled to lose 40 percent of its funding—40 percent. Next time you think of someone you love who has heart trouble, think about the sequester cutting one of the world premier heart research programs.

Senate Democrats have put forward alternatives that would adequately fund the government while also addressing our budget deficits. Back in March the Senate passed a budget that would have ended the sequester. It was not easy. We had to make some compromises. No one loved everything in the final bill, but we debated it and we passed it. This is what Congress is supposed to do. But after we did all of that, Senate Republicans decided to filibuster the budget again and blocked us from going to conference with the House on the final bill. That is just pure obstruction, plain and simple.

In July the Senate attempted to pass the first of several appropriations bills to keep the government open and to end the sequester. We had a bipartisan Transportation and Housing bill that would have helped repair crumbling roads and bridges in our communities. It would have created more jobs, and it would have rolled back sequestration in these programs. But, once again, Senate Republicans filibustered and blocked that bill.

Now we are just hours from the government running out of money. We have not fixed the sequester because of all the obstruction. We have not finished a budget because of all the obstruction. We have not even passed a single appropriations bill because of all the obstruction.

The least we can do—the bare minimum we can do—would be to pass a

continuing resolution to keep the doors open and the lights on. We can ensure that over a million Federal workers are not simply sent home for no reason. We can avoid a government shutdown. But the Republicans have refused to do even that. They have continued to threaten to shutter the government unless the President agrees to gut the Affordable Care Act. The Senate rejected that position twice. Yet the Republican response has been to continue to threaten to shut down the government.

These threats may continue, but they are not working, and they will never work because this is democracy, and in a democracy hostage tactics are the last resort for those who cannot win their fights through elections, cannot win their fights in Congress, cannot win their fights for the Presidency, and cannot win their fights in the courts. For this rightwing minority, hostage taking is all they have left—a last gasp for those who cannot cope with the realities of our democracy.

The time has come for those legislators who cannot cope with the reality of our democracy to get out of the way so that those of us in both parties who understand the American people sent us here to work for them can get back to work solving real problems faced by the American people. We have real work to do, and that is what we should be doing.

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

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

Mr. BROWN. Madam President, I urge leadership in the House of Representatives to simply schedule a vote on the Senate-passed bill. I understand a number of people in the majority party are going to vote no. I also believe that—and the Presiding Officer used to be in the House of Representatives, as I was years ago. It is a democratic House, and I mean “democratic” with a small “d.” They should schedule a vote. I believe a majority of Members of the House of Representatives would vote for the bipartisan continuing resolution that passed the Senate. I believe they would pass it in the House if the Speaker of the House would let it come to a vote.

Is the Speaker of the House going to be the Speaker of the radical right of the Republican Party or is he going to be the Speaker of the U.S. House of Representatives? Fundamentally, that is the question. Is he going to be the Speaker of the radical right in the House of Representatives or is he going to be the Speaker of the U.S. House of Representatives? If he chooses the latter, if he chooses before midnight, there will not be a government shutdown because a majority of the House

of Representatives—not necessarily a majority of the Republicans, but a majority of those who took the oath of office on January 3, 2013, who were elected in November of 2012, and then took that oath—I believe a majority of them will support it.

I think it is always a good idea to look back in time a little to what happened in the past. We know that more than 30 times when President Reagan was President and President Bush Senior was President and President Bush Junior was President, the Congress raised the debt ceiling, even with a Democratic Congress, without preconditions, without threatening to shut the government down or without threatening default; and a number of times the same situation on continuing resolutions, passing budgets, all those things.

But never really before in the House of Representatives or the Senate has there been a body of Members who have tried repeatedly to have their way to, in a sense, attach their political platform from the election of the year before to a continuing resolution, and if they do not get that political platform attached, they are simply going to shut the government down. That is really what is happening.

There is all this talk about that the public does not like the Affordable Care Act. Some call it ObamaCare. The official name is the Affordable Care Act. There is some talk from the House of Representatives, really ad nauseam, that they do not like the Affordable Care Act and they say the public does not like the Affordable Care Act. But let's look at that.

(Mr. DONNELLY assumed the Chair.)

In 2012, the President of the United States was reelected—a strong supporter of the Affordable Care Act.

In 2012, supporters of the Affordable Care Act were elected, including the new Presiding Officer, who replaced the Senator from Hawaii, who is a supporter of the Affordable Care Act. I was reelected—a supporter of the Affordable Care Act. A strong majority in the Senate support the Affordable Care Act, many of whom stood for reelection and were successful. In fact, two more were elected this time who held office prior to this election and who supported the Affordable Care Act. More people voted for House candidates who supported the Affordable Care Act. More people voted for Democrats in the House races than Republicans, even though redistricting made the outcome a little different, obviously, from that.

So the point is, there is no public sentiment to shut the government down in order to defund or repeal or hold back or delay or emasculate or pull apart—or whatever—the Affordable Care Act.

But let's go back a bit in history.

In July 1965—48 years and a couple months ago—President Johnson signed Medicare into law. It passed bipartisanship, although a number of Republicans were strongly against it, es-

pecially the far right. In 1965, when Medicare passed, the John Birch Society did not like it. That was sort of the tea party of today. A lot of doctors did not like it. A lot of insurance companies did not like it in 1965. But a lot of people who were suspicious of government overall said they did not like it and opposed it, and a lot of them continued to oppose it after the election.

But 5 years later, the country clearly was very happy with Medicare. Certainly 48 years later, the country is very happy with Medicare. I do not think there is much question that 5 years from now people will be happy with the Affordable Care Act. They know it will have worked for people in this country. Much of it already has worked, as the Presiding Officer knows.

In my State, almost a million seniors have already received benefits. They have gotten free preventive care with no copays, no deductibles. Seniors from Youngstown and Toledo have had screenings for osteoporosis and physicals and all and there is no copay or deductible for those living on Medicare. People from Cleveland to Cincinnati, people in their twenties—100,000 Ohioans in their twenties—have been able to go on their parents' health care plan up until the age of 26. Because of a rule in the Affordable Care Act, we have seen thousands of Ohioans get a rebate check from the insurance companies because the insurance companies charged too much.

We know a lot of those benefits have been out there. Families who have a child with a preexisting condition are no longer being denied coverage because of the Affordable Care Act. So we know much of it has taken effect and much of it has been to the public benefit. We also know come tomorrow, October 1, much more of the Affordable Care Act—the rest of it—will be rolled out.

Seniors have saved in my State—and I think in the State of Indiana—an average of about \$700. Those who are in the prescription drug plan have saved about that amount of money on their prescription drugs, again, because of the Affordable Care Act. We know that. Put that aside.

Let's simply ask the House of Representatives to bring this bill up. We know what happens if we do not. A shutdown would hurt the financing of more than 1,000 small businesses per week in my State—from Hamilton to Chillicothe, to Mansfield, to Ashtabula. The Small Business Administration in 2012 approved nearly 54,000 applications through their credit loans program, supporting over half a million jobs. A shutdown would stop the ability of the SBA to loan to small businesses through this program.

A shutdown would put 52,000 Ohio federal employees at risk of being out of work. Most of them would temporarily lose jobs. We know that is a drag on the economy. We know it would mean government services are not being rendered. It would mean those

tens of thousands of workers would not get paid. It would mean a stumbling, a faltering, a sputtering of our economic growth and the economic recovery, because people are not making the money and putting money back into the economy.

Senior citizens would be ineligible, if there is a shutdown, to apply for new Social Security benefits. The Social Security applications would not be taken as a result of Federal furloughs and service cuts. In 2012, more than 2.2 million Ohioans received—obviously many had been receiving for years—Social Security benefits.

All we ask is that the Speaker of the House do what one should do in a democracy. Let the elected representatives of Congress have the opportunity to vote. Give them the opportunity to vote yes or no on the Senate-passed, bipartisanly passed continuing resolution. Speaker BOEHNER needs to make a decision. Is he going to be the Speaker of the radical far right Republican party or is he going to be the Speaker of the House of Representatives? That choice is clear. Bring that bill to the floor. Let all 435 Members of the House of Representatives who were elected last November and sworn in in January have the opportunity to vote.

I think if they do, it will mean the President will sign the bill before midnight and keep this government operating. There is simply no reason for it, as we lurch from crisis to crisis, all created by a political agenda, that most of the people in this country have rejected at election time.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The assistant bill clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

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

Mr. CASEY. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent to speak as in morning business for up to 10 minutes.

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

Mr. CASEY. Mr. President, we are here tonight in the Senate, hours away from a deadline which, if action is not taken on the House side, the other body, will lead to a government shutdown. Unfortunately, when I have been asked today by either constituents or reporters, and they ask: Is it less likely or more likely that there will be a shutdown, I have had to be honest and say: At least at this moment it seems more likely than less likely.

I think we have to examine not just how to try to resolve this in a way that makes sense, but also to remind ourselves how we got here. This is not the typical battle in Washington. We have had a lot of those. We should all try to work in a bipartisan fashion. But this one is unique in the sense that you have, on the one side, Democrats in Congress and across the country who

are united in an effort to continue the operations of the government and not have a government shutdown, even if we want to make a point, even if we want to make an argument about this or that policy.

We see a growing number of Republicans here in the Senate and across the country, and maybe even a few in the House, even in the last 24 hours or so, who are saying: Let's just get the government funded so we can move forward. We might be able to have a debate in the middle of November or somewhere down the road. But let's not hold up the operations of government or default on our obligations for the first time since 1789 in order to make an ideological point or a political point.

It is clear from the national data that Independents are on that side of the argument as well. So you have this consensus on one side, with Democrats, Independents, and Republicans, who say that we should not—in order to make a point about an issue, whether it is health care or the economy or whatever it is—we should not act in a way that would shut down the government to do that.

On the other side, you have the far right of the Republican party which not only believes that in order to make their point they are willing to allow the government to shut down, but they also have a determination to do that to the extent one wing of one party is really driving the train in that party. It happens to be the Republican Party.

So this is unusual. It is not the typical Democrat versus Republican debate. It started months ago when politicians who work in this town would go home to their State or their districts and make the point that, no matter what, they were going to argue that this is the moment where they should stop the health care bill. No matter what was in their way, they were going to continue to drive in that direction.

That is how we have gotten here. What happens if we go past the deadline and there is a shutdown of a few days or longer? Here is what some of the data show from some of the folks who are not in the Congress but who observe broader trends, especially economic trends.

Mark Zandi is Moody's chief economist. He is widely respected. I think people in both parties respect his opinion. According to him—and I am not quoting, I am just summarizing what he said—a shutdown lasting a few days would cost the economy 0.2 percent of GDP, while a longer shutdown could cost as much as 1.4 percent.

Sometimes it is difficult to say what 0.2 percent of GDP means. What it means for sure is the economy, which has been moving in the right direction—we have had tremendous job growth, over 9 quarters now, and many months of job growth. But we are not moving fast enough. We are not creating jobs at a fast enough pace.

When I go home to Pennsylvania people do not say to me: Score every point

you can for your point of view. They say to me: Work together with the other side to create jobs. Work together with the other side to put in place strategies that will lead to economic growth and to job growth.

If you are going to go in the wrong direction when it comes to growth, and you lose 0.2 percent of growth, and then, if the shutdown goes longer you lose 0.4 or 0.5 or 0.6, over time you are going in the wrong direction. But we know when you lose even 0.2 percent of growth you are killing jobs. So first and foremost, any shutdown is a big job killer. A default on our obligations would be a much bigger job killer.

A shutdown would not just slow growth, but it would spread anxiety. This is just human nature. It will spread anxiety among consumers. We know that in the summer of 2011 the almost default on our obligations caused consumer confidence to take a nosedive. We did not come out of that hole of consumer confidence until many months later. A government shutdown has a similar effect.

How about the U.S. Chamber of Commerce, not usually on my side of a lot of debates or on the Democratic side? The U.S. Chamber of Commerce has urged Congress to keep the government open and has said that a shutdown would be "economically disruptive and create even more uncertainty in the U.S. economy." So this is the U.S. Chamber of Commerce, which is often making arguments about uncertainty in other contexts. They are saying that a shutdown would create even more uncertainty.

How about the economic recovery? I mentioned those 9 quarters of growth we have had. We have had job growth as well. Just in terms of how you measure it: 7.5 million private sector jobs—7.5 million added in the last 42 months. That will take a nosedive. So instead of growing at 160,000 jobs a month, roughly, which has been kind of the pace for a while now, which is not fast enough—we need to be at 200,000 or 230,000 or 240,000 if we really want to say that the economy has taken off. But instead of growing at 160,000, 170,000, or even higher, we will go backwards. Maybe the job growth for the next couple of months will be substantially less than that. A shutdown all but ensures that to happen.

We don't know exactly how much slowing or how much damage would be done to the job growth, but there is going to be a job impact for sure, and I think that is pretty clear from the data.

Both sides in a lot of debates in Washington say they stand for small businesses. We can debate which side does a better job for small business. We know when a small business person needs some help, a measure of help from the Federal Government, they usually turn to the Small Business Administration. We know the SBA, their approval of applications for business loans guarantees and direct loans to

small business would cease. If we take the Small Business Administration off the playing field, they average about 1,000 loans or loan guarantees per week. That is national.

What does that mean for Pennsylvania?

From October 2012 through August of this year, 2013, the SBA supported over 1,400 loans for over \$600 million for small businesses in Pennsylvania. On average, that is about 30 loans for over \$13 million to entrepreneurs each week—every week, on average, based upon the recent data in Pennsylvania, 30 loans and \$13 million helping small businesses in Pennsylvania. To shut that off would make our economic circumstance even worse.

In Pennsylvania, we had many months in a row where the unemployment numbers were 500,000 people unemployed or more. Thankfully, it dipped below 500,000 for a couple of months. We just received the numbers from August because the State numbers are always behind. The State data for August unfortunately shows we are just above 500,000 people out of work. A shutdown will bring that 500,000-persons out-of-work number and send it higher and send it in the wrong direction.

What about veterans? People say veterans' disability checks would go out, just as Social Security checks would go out, in the aftermath of a shutdown. That is only part of the story. If you are a veteran getting disability checks or a pension benefit—in our State we have 109,000 veterans who receive disability or pension help. They may get their check, but it is highly likely, if not a certainty, that those checks will be delayed.

If you are a veteran and are entitled to this because of what you did for our country, because part of a political party wants to make an ideological point, you have to wait for your check. You have to wait for your disability check. That makes no sense. To say it is unfair to a veteran or to his or her family is an understatement.

What about Social Security? People say: Well, the checks are going to go out so people will be just fine in a shutdown.

That is only part of the story. Yes, current recipients will get their checks, but if you reach the age of 65 and you wish to have your application processed, you will not be able to do that or, at a minimum, that will be slowed substantially.

In our State, every month more than 11,600 people are able to start the process for Social Security benefits. Those people will have to wait and wait in the advent of a government shutdown.

What about national parks? We have a great blessing in our State where we have an abundance of national parks and historic sites which are wonderful for the country, wonderful for enrichment, learning, and history, but they also are a big economic driver in different communities.

In southeastern Pennsylvania, when you add it all, one of the numbers I saw was over \$200,000 of impact. Those, unlike a lot of others I spoke about, those parts of the government will stop completely. An economic engine in one part of our State that averages about \$200,000 of economic impact will stop. Maybe we will lose \$10,000 over the course of a shutdown. Maybe Pennsylvania will lose \$20,000 or \$30,000. We are going to lose for sure and a lot of other States will as well.

The Flight 93 National Memorial is one of those from 9/11 and Gettysburg and Valley Forge/Independence Visitor Center in Philadelphia, there are many examples and many job impacts when it comes to all of those.

The basic point is some people would say: Look, you are in the Senate or the House, and you wish to have a debate about something as significant and consequential to people's lives or to our economy such as health care, you ought to be able to debate that. I would agree with that. There is no question about it. We had big debates in 2009 leading up to a vote in the Senate. Then the debate continued in 2010. The bill was enacted in 2010. There was still debate about it after that. There were votes taken one after another to repeal it. Then the Supreme Court litigated it. That took months until the Supreme Court made a decision.

The Supreme Court, which is dominated—or at least the majority are Republican-appointed Justices—said the Affordable Care Act was constitutional. Then there was a Presidential election, which was another kind of litigation or debate. One candidate said: I am going to keep the Affordable Care Act in place, and we are not going to repeal it. The other side said: We are going to repeal it. The side that said they were going to put it into effect won the election—that of President Obama.

This has been debated and litigated several direct ways in several different branches of our government. That will continue and, frankly, it should continue. Some of the impacts are already in place. We know that.

We know, for example, that since 2010, when the consumer protections went into effect, which had nothing to do initially with those who were uninsured, the tens of millions of uninsured, but we put in place the consumer protections for those with insurance, those who had coverage, were making payments—premium payments—yet their children were still not protected because of a preexisting condition.

Up until 2010, it was the law—or it was the prevailing policy that if an insurance company wanted to say to those who were paying premiums, sorry, I know you are making your payments, but your child has a preexisting condition, and they are not covered, that was permitted when insurance companies had all of the power. I would argue they had all the

power, an unfair advantage and bargaining advantage. Since 2010, we have had something on the order of 17 million children who could no longer be denied coverage due to a preexisting condition, solely and completely because of the Affordable Care Act.

We have millions of young people who can stay on their parents' policies from the ages of 19 to 25. They can only stay on those policies solely because of the Affordable Care Act, because it was enacted into law.

We have millions of seniors who are getting payments over time to help them fill the coverage gap of the so-called doughnut hole. They are getting those payments solely because of the Affordable Care Act.

Tomorrow, we are going to see the beginning of the exchanges going up, where people can go into a marketplace and shop for the best possible health care insurance that they can afford. Most people—probably as many as 150 million Americans—already have coverage and their employer provides it, so their status will not change that much, if at all.

These changes are going into effect over time. I would hope the people who wish to keep debating it and making changes to it—and I voted for changes as well—would allow it to be, if not fully implemented, something close to fully over the next couple of months or maybe even over the next couple of years. Then at some point this debate about who is right or who is wrong about the impact will have been determined.

We are all for debate on the budget, health care, and everything else, but we shouldn't bring the country to these cliffs—the cliff meaning this deadline tonight on the budget, where the House has our legislation, which is only about the budget. They could pass it. It will pass if the Speaker puts it on the floor tonight. It would pass, and we would be beyond this crisis. Then we would move to the next deadline, get beyond these deadlines, have a big debate, and have very strong arguments made about how we get a full year's worth of a budget starting in the middle of November. That is the appropriate time and the appropriate place to make arguments about the budget, the economy, jobs, health care or whatever else it is. Now is not the time.

I would hope between now and midnight, the House would put up our bill, which is very simple—it keeps the government operating with no conditions and no add-ons—and pass that legislation. We would be done with this, and we could move on to issues people want us to work on.

I will restate what I said before. People in Pennsylvania, when they say to me what they want me to do, they say work together to create jobs. If you had to put that in a sound bite, that is what it is.

I am hoping between now and then this consensus of Republicans, Democrats, and Independents that prevailed

throughout the country will have the appropriate influence on those who are trying to push this to the end and shut down the government. A government shutdown is bad for everybody, no matter what party you are in. We should keep working to make sure it doesn't happen.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Michigan.

Mr. LEVIN. Earlier today the Senate rejected for the second time the House Republican continuing resolution. The approach they have adopted over in the House attempts to and would deprive millions of Americans of health insurance if it were passed here. It is not going to pass here.

I would say to Speaker BOEHNER we have given your proposal a vote. In fact, we have voted on it twice. Now you owe it to the American people to hold a vote, a vote on the bipartisan, clean continuing resolution which would keep the government open. This is the resolution which the Senate sent to you just a few hours ago.

The only thing preventing us from keeping this government open is Speaker BOEHNER's refusal to bring a bipartisan Senate continuing resolution to the House floor. I think most Republicans over there even acknowledge that it would pass if Speaker BOEHNER would allow a vote on it.

The Senate, a short time ago, approved a measure to allow for the pay of our men and women in uniform to continue in the event of a government shutdown. This measure was necessary because requiring our military to go into combat with only an IOU instead of pay would be a travesty. Nobody should be fooled. It is only one travesty that was avoided among many. Even if we restrict our view to the impact of a government shutdown on the military, there are many other terrible impacts of a government shutdown.

Our military Members would be paid so a shutdown would result in at least avoiding that problem. However, there are other unthinkable outcomes to our security with a government shutdown. Family members of military members who die in combat would not receive death benefits during a shutdown. It defies belief that in the pursuit of a narrow ideological goal House Republicans would prevent the payment of benefits for those who died defending our country. That is the result of a government shutdown.

In the event of a shutdown, the Department of Defense would also further reduce already curtailed training and bring routine maintenance to a halt, exacerbating the corrosive effects that sequestration is already having on military readiness. The Department of Defense would be barred from entering most new contracts. That would harm modernization programs.

A shutdown would severely curtail medical services for troops and their families. Commissaries would close, with hundreds of thousands of civilian

employees. Workers vital to our defense would be laid off. Outside of the DOD, a shutdown would disrupt some operations in the Department of Veterans Affairs which is providing benefits to those who have served.

Then there is the extraordinary disruption of having to plan for all of this absurdity. As Under Secretary of Defense Hale said on Friday:

Even if a lapse never occurs, the planning itself is disruptive. People are worrying right now about whether their paychecks are going to be delayed, rather than focusing fully on their mission. And while I can't quantify the time being spent to plan, it has or will consume a lot of senior management attention, probably thousands of hours in employee time better spent on supporting national security.

Again, that only covers the impact on our military and on our veterans. While Border Patrol agents and FBI agents would continue to work, they would be putting their lives on the line for an IOU instead for a paycheck. Health clinics would stop taking new patients. Lifesaving research would grind to a halt. The far-reaching effects of a shutdown on government services across the country should give us all pause, as should the fact that a shutdown is likely to damage the all-too-fragile economic recovery.

This has gone on for far too long and Speaker BOEHNER can end it now. There is still time for him to bring to the floor of the House of Representatives a clean continuing resolution and avert a government shutdown. For the good of our men and women in uniform and our national security, for the good of our economy, and for the millions of Americans who rely on and who benefit from important Federal programs, I hope the Speaker will allow our bipartisan continuing resolution to be voted on.

I hope that even this late in the game reason is going to prevail. I hold that hope in part because while House Republicans have put tea party ideology ahead of the good of the Nation, many of our Republican colleagues here in the Senate have not. These Members recognize there is a difference between on the one hand debating serious policy preferences and on the other hand threatening government shutdown if you don't get your way.

All of us in the Senate have issues on which we feel every bit as passionately as the opponents of the Affordable Care Act feel about that law. I happen to feel strongly, for instance, that we should have universal background checks for firearms purchases. By the tea party method of proving the strength of my belief, I should threaten a government shutdown if I don't get what I want on that subject. If all of us threaten legislative anarchy in pursuit of our goals, democracy will cease to function.

As appalled as I am that some Members would threaten such damage to our Nation, I am heartened that many of our Republican colleagues here in the Senate have spoken out in opposition to this approach.

When I came to the floor last week to speak on this topic, Senator AYOTTE was speaking. I commended her for saying that the American people expect us to keep the government running even though I disagreed with much of what she said about the Affordable Care Act.

I commend Senator COLLINS for saying a shutdown "will only further damage our struggling economy" and that we should resolve our differences "without resorting to constant brinkmanship and the threat of government shutdown." I commend Senator COLLINS, even though I disagree with her on the Affordable Care Act, for taking that position against a shutdown and for seeing the distinction between fighting hard for what you believe in and threatening to bring down government operations overall if you don't get what you want.

I commend Senator PORTMAN for saying that the differences on the Affordable Care Act "ought to be handled outside the context of a government shutdown."

I commend Senator CHAMBLISS for saying that while, in his words, he would love to defund ObamaCare, a government shutdown is "going to do great harm to the American people if we pursue that course."

I commend Senator KIRK for saying, "Let's not shut down the government just because you don't get everything you want."

There are others who have made that critically important distinction between opposing a certain policy and shutting down the government if one doesn't get his or her way.

I welcome spirited debate. I welcome differences of opinion. As my friend Senator MCCAIN said last week, there was plenty of both during the debate on the passage of the Affordable Care Act. But it is deeply distressing to hear Members of Congress argue that the litmus test of whether you are fighting for your beliefs is whether you are willing to shut down the government if you don't achieve a particular goal. That is more than fighting for your position, that is wanton destruction. I hope at least some House Republicans will come to see the difference between fighting for your goals and sowing anarchy in pursuit of them.

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

THE PRESIDING OFFICER (Ms. WARREN). Without objection, it is so ordered.

Mr. BLUMENTHAL. Madam President, moments ago the House of Representatives adopted a rule which clearly indicates that it is set to adopt a resolution containing unrelated conditions that will forestall its approval

by this Chamber. That is a tragic result which threatens harm and havoc to countless people who depend on government programs and to our economy. It threatens harm to veterans and children who depend on Head Start, seniors who receive meals, and it threatens jobs and economic growth with a ripple effect that will set all of us back in the continuing fragile and all-to-slow recovery we have seen from the greatest recession in recent memory.

Today's result in the House of Representatives is a tragedy for democracy. Without any overstatement, we have to recognize that this result reflects a dysfunction in democracy. The threatened shutdown of our government is the result of an extreme ideological fringe element in one House and one party that has made the decision that their agenda is a take-it-or-leave-it condition, that it is more important than economic growth, more important than our seniors, our children, our veterans. Key services, our economic growth, and jobs will be impacted very directly by this impending shutdown.

This morning I was at a gathering in Glastonbury, CT, with a group of manufacturers, their employees, and economic experts. One economic expert in particular, Steven Lanza of the University of Connecticut, told us that a shutdown of 3 to 4 weeks alone would cost the State of Connecticut 2,000 jobs.

We know from the predictions of expert economists such as Mark Zandi of Moody's Analytics that the result for the country as a whole could be percentage points of lost growth. In fact, we can ill-afford this self-inflicted, manufactured wound to our Nation and to the trust and confidence people deserve to have in our democracy and our economy.

For some businesses these problems will be more than acute; they will be life-threatening injuries because their existence—not to mention their profits—depends on consumer demand that will be diminished by the ripple effect and the ramifications of the 9,000 Federal employees in Connecticut who will be furloughed, not to mention the hundreds of others whose jobs will be threatened by a shutdown of just days or a week. The fact is that at this point we can't know what the full economic ramifications will be. There are more questions—serious questions—than there are answers.

I will support an amendment and a measure that will be offered I think later this evening or within hours to preserve the benefits and payments that are due to our veterans for their service and sacrifice. That is a provision we need to make. It is our responsibility to keep faith with those veterans and make sure we leave no veteran behind and that the processing of claims goes forward so our veterans receive the benefits they have earned.

At the forum I had this morning, Brian Montanari, the president of Habco, which is in Glastonbury, told us

he relies on contracts with the Federal Government for much of his business, and his employees—to whose ranks he has been adding—will be impacted by this potential shutdown, if only the uncertainty it creates. He is not alone. Businesses all over Connecticut and the country will face a tougher economic climate because of the shutdown. The Small Business Administration will stop processing applications for the business loans it provides to tens of thousands of entrepreneurs, risk takers, and job creators around the country. Perhaps the most galling aspect of this shutdown is the direct economic hardship it will cause to families whose jobs will be threatened and whose livelihoods will be at risk.

There are hours to go before the final hour, but the point is, as the President said so well earlier, keeping the government open is not a bargaining chip, it is our job. President Obama said: “You don’t get to extract a ransom for doing your job.”

Families need to be able to plan for their future, businesses need certainty in order to make investments and hire new workers, and the Nation needs both parties, not just one, to be fully committed to the democratic process.

I hope in the time remaining the House does its job, that these extremist demands are rejected—and certainly by this Chamber they will be. My hope is that we can move forward, keep the government open, provide the services people need, and support the economy, which is all too necessary at this point in our history.

I thank the Presiding Officer.

I yield the floor and suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The bill clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

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

EXTENSION OF MORNING BUSINESS

Ms. STABENOW. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent that the time for morning business, with debate only, be extended until 9:30 p.m., with Senators permitted to speak therein for up to 10 minutes each, and that the majority leader be recognized at 9:30 p.m.

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

CONTINUING APPROPRIATIONS

Ms. STABENOW. Madam President, let me speak for a moment about what we have happening. There is no reason for this happening, and there is absolutely no reason why, first of all, we could not have worked together to put a budget in place. We, months ago, passed a budget in the Senate and have been trying to go to a conference com-

mittee with the House so we could work it out and have a long-term budget that continues to bring down the debt. By the way, the deficit is coming down, which is very positive. But we know we need to continue to do more in a balanced way. That could be happening. It is not happening because the same people now who are putting us in a position where in a few hours there may very well be a government shutdown are the same ones who do not want to negotiate to get a budget for our country, which is very difficult to understand in terms of what the strategy is other than to just obstruct.

We are now in a situation where we have agreed to a compromise that would allow the continuation of funding of public services, from safety to health research, to what we do around education, innovation, small business. We have a whole range of things for 6 weeks. So we are talking about 6 weeks.

The compromise is that while we believe we ought to be reinvesting in education, in innovation, we ought to be creating jobs, rebuilding our roads and bridges and water and sewer systems, and doing a number of things that would strengthen our economy and create jobs, for this 6-week period, we agree to continue the funding level at the lower level the Republicans want.

So the continuing resolution we have sent to the House is a compromise by definition because we are willing for 6 weeks—while we negotiate a broader package on a full year’s appropriation—to continue funding at the level the Republicans have asked to be the spending level. By definition, certainly for many of us who believe we will not have a middle class—that we cannot grow the economy without doing the right kinds of investments and that we certainly should not be cutting back on cancer research and cutting clinical trials for women with breast cancer or cutting back on other possible cures, and that is happening right now at this lower level—but for 6 weeks we have said we are willing to compromise with the House Republicans in order to continue funding the government while the larger issues are worked out.

Instead of that happening, what we are seeing is a fight that, frankly, has been fought over and over. It was fought in the last election. It was very clear we had a President of the United States who ran on and who made a signature accomplishment of his first-term health care—access to affordable health insurance for all Americans—running against someone who said he would repeal that, and the President of the United States won with a substantial margin.

In the Senate, we had Democrats running against Republicans, with Republicans saying: Elect me and I will repeal ObamaCare; Democrats saying: No. We need health reform. We need to create a better, more competitive way to bring down health insurance rates—like in Massachusetts, the home of our

distinguished Presiding Officer. Our candidates—Democrats—won.

So I would suggest that in many places, and certainly across the country, with the President of the United States, the people of America spoke pretty strongly.

Now we are here. We all have seen the intensity of what is a minority opinion. I appreciate that. It is very intense. But it is a minority opinion in this country. So the minority of a minority is trying now to essentially slow down or stop the economy, hurt middle-class families, bring public services to a standstill because—even though they lost in the election, even though theirs is not the majority view—they have decided it does not matter—it does not matter—they are going to shut things down if they do not get their way.

What we are going to see tomorrow when healthcare.gov comes online are more competitive, lower rates for many Americans, young Americans, families, and so on, people who maybe could not get insurance in the past at all, moms-to-be who could not find maternity care—8 million women in this country who have not been able to find insurance companies that will cover them for maternity care because somehow being a woman was a “preexisting condition”—they are going to have a chance to do that, which means we will have more healthy moms, we will have more healthy babies, and this is good for our country.

We are seeing now in health reform that has already taken effect hundreds of dollars a year more in the pockets of senior citizens that they used to pay out for prescription drugs. But they do not have to do it anymore because we are closing this gap in coverage from the Medicare prescription drug bill.

As a caveat, let me say as somebody at the time 7 years ago who voted no on that Medicare prescription drug bill—because I believed and the majority on our side believed it was written way too much in favor of the drug companies as opposed to the seniors in terms of costs, not allowing Medicare to negotiate group rates and so on—when we lost that fight, we did not try to stop funding the implementation of Medicare prescription drugs, we did not do all of the antics that have been done. We said: OK, we lost that fight, so let’s make it work the best we can make it work, and we will fix it later.

We did not stop the funding for the educational efforts for seniors. We did not spend hundreds of millions or—I do not know, maybe it is billions now—trying to scare people, confuse people. We said: Let’s try to make it work. Even though in the May before the prescription drug bill took effect 21 percent of the public said they wanted it, they supported it, 7 years later, 90 percent of the public says they support it.

In health reform we were able to fix one of the things that many of us were concerned about then. Rather than