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Senate

The Senate met at 9:30 a.m., and was called to order by the President pro tempore (Mr. LEAHY).

PRAYER

The Chaplain, Dr. Barry C. Black, offered the following prayer:

Let us pray.
Be merciful to us, O God. Because of Your constant love, because of Your great mercy, wipe away our sins of commission and omission. During this legislative stalemate, help our lawmakers to test all things by their own conscience, seeking to do right as You give them the ability to see it. Stir their hearts, making them bold to follow Your ways. In these days that try our souls, strengthen our weakness, replacing cynicism with faith and cowardice with courage.

We pray, in Your holy Name. Amen.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The President pro tempore led the Pledge of Allegiance, as follows:

I pledge allegiance to the Flag of the United States of America, and to the Republic for which it stands, one nation under God, indivisible, with liberty and justice for all.

RECOGNITION OF THE MAJORITY LEADER

The PRESIDENT pro tempore. The majority leader is recognized.

MAKING CONTINUING APPROPRIATIONS FOR FISCAL YEAR 2014

Mr. REID. Mr. President, we expect to receive the House message momentarily. I will move to table this motion when it arrives.

The PRESIDENT pro tempore. The Chair lays before the Senate the following message from the House of Representatives, which the clerk will report.

The assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

Resolved, That the House insist on its amendment to the amendment of the Senate to the resolution (H.J. Res. 59) entitled "Joint Resolution Making Continuing Appropriations for Fiscal Year 2014, and for other purposes," and ask a conference with the Senate on the disagreeing votes of the two Houses thereon.

Mr. REID. Mr. President, I move to table the motion from the House, and I ask for the yeas and nays on my motion.

The PRESIDENT pro tempore. Is there a sufficient second?

There is a sufficient second.

The question is on agreeing to the motion.

The clerk will call the roll.

The assistant legislative clerk called the roll.

The result was announced—yeas 54, nays 46, as follows:

[Rollcall Vote No. 212 Leg.]

YEAS—54

Baldwin	Harkin	Murray
Baucus	Heinrich	Nelson
Begich	Heitkamp	Pryor
Bennet	Hirono	Reed
Blumenthal	Johnson (SD)	Reid
Boxer	Kaine	Rockefeller
Brown	King	Sanders
Cantwell	Klobuchar	Schatz
Cardin	Landrieu	Schumer
Carper	Leahy	Shaheen
Casey	Levin	Stabenow
Coons	Manchin	Tester
Donnelly	Markey	Udall (CO)
Durbin	McCaskill	Udall (NM)
Feinstein	Menendez	Warner
Franken	Merkley	Warren
Gillibrand	Mikulski	Whitehouse
Hagan	Murphy	Wyden

NAYS—46

Alexander	Crapo	Kirk
Ayotte	Cruz	Lee
Barrasso	Enzi	McCain
Blunt	Fischer	McConnell
Boozman	Flake	Moran
Burr	Graham	Murkowski
Chambliss	Grassley	Paul
Chiesa	Hatch	Portman
Coats	Heller	Risch
Coburn	Hoeven	Roberts
Cochran	Inhofe	Rubio
Collins	Isakson	Scott
Corker	Johanns	
Cornyn	Johnson (WI)	

Sessions	Thune	Vitter
Shelby	Toomey	Wicker

The motion was agreed to.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. MARKEY). The majority leader.

Mr. REID. Mr. President, I ask this consent agreement under the background that the government is closed. All over America Federal employees were given 4 hours this morning to clear out their e-mails, computers, and close down their offices. All over America they were asked to come to work at 8 o'clock this morning, but by noon they will be out of their offices.

The government is closed because of the irrationality of what is going on on the other side of the Capitol. That is unfortunate, but that is the way it is. I will have more to say later.

MORNING BUSINESS

Mr. REID. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that there be a period of morning business for debate only until 12:30 p.m.—one-half hour after lunch time—with the time equally divided and controlled between the two leaders or their designees, with Senators permitted to speak therein for up to 10 minutes each.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection?

Without objection, it is so ordered.

RESERVATION OF LEADER TIME

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the leadership time is reserved.

RECOGNITION OF THE MINORITY LEADER

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Republican leader is recognized.

CONTINUING APPROPRIATIONS

Mr. McCONNELL. Well, Mr. President, Democratic leaders in Congress

• This "bullet" symbol identifies statements or insertions which are not spoken by a Member of the Senate on the floor.



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finally have their prize—a government shutdown that no one seems to want but them. House Republicans worked late into the night this weekend to keep the government open, and Senate Democrats dragged their feet literally for days. They refused to pass anything. News reports suggest the majority leader was even working behind the scenes to block any bipartisan negotiations from taking place.

Then, after doing essentially nothing all weekend but obstruct, with just hours left to go, Democrats voted again and again to reject reasonable legislation. Every piece of legislation the House sent over would have kept the government from shutting down—every single one of them. Each one represented more of a compromise than the last. And get this: Last night Senate Democrats went so far as to reject legislation that would have kept the government running under just two conditions—just two—that families get the same 1-year relief as employers and that Congress has to follow the same rules on the ObamaCare exchanges as their constituents. That is how extreme the Democratic position is. They won't even accept basic fairness as a principle under ObamaCare.

Today they have gone even further. They have now said they won't even agree to sit down and work out differences. They won't even talk about it. They literally just voted against working out a compromise. They seem completely opposed to negotiation or compromise on a law that is killing jobs, driving up premiums, and driving people out of the health care plans they already have and like, and they do not even want to talk about it.

So we know the Democrats who have shut down the government will yell and point fingers. They have already started that particular routine. They will say it was the mean old Republicans or the tea party or FOX News or maybe even George W. Bush. They shut down the government, and now they are praying the American people will think somebody else is responsible. They are doing this because they would rather see the government shut down than do anything to protect the American people from the consequences of ObamaCare despite the stories we see every single day about the pain this law is causing all of our constituents.

Now, I will say this: I appreciate yesterday's bipartisan action to ensure that servicemembers currently defending us are going to be paid on time. The brave men and women who defend our country deserve no less. But now we need to do the same for the rest of the American people.

The House legislation has been perfectly reasonable. It didn't have everything Republicans wanted. It didn't have everything Democrats wanted. But it represented compromise, and it reflected the will of the American people, who don't want a government shutdown and who want to tap the brakes on ObamaCare—good folks who

just think the middle class deserves a bit of a break. Senate Democrats could have passed any one of those compromises and averted this mess. Instead, they chose to shut down the government.

Well, it is past time for Senate Democrats to listen to the American people. The House has already done its job to fund the government again and again and again.

I know the Democrats who run Washington want to extract as many political points as they can from this manufactured shutdown, but they owe our country more than that. They need to understand that ObamaCare is not ready for prime time—not ready for prime time. Their stubborn refusal to even discuss temporary relief for the middle class was a staggering act of political arrogance. So this morning I am calling on the Democrats who run the Senate to sit down with the House and negotiate, to come to a reasonable solution that cancels their shutdown and pass it because no one wants a shutdown, it seems, but our friends on the other side of the aisle.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The majority leader.

Mr. REID. Mr. President, my friend the Republican leader spoke as if George Orwell wrote his speech. This is "1984," where up is down, down is up, east is west. All one needs to do is look at the press. We have a situation where we have a good day for the anarchists. Why? Because the government is closed. Speaker BOEHNER and his band of tea party radicals have done the unthinkable: They have shut down the Federal Government. Now, for us, that is hard to comprehend as being good. For them, they like it.

In Nevada today—7 o'clock in the morning out there—they are closing the Great Basin National Park. There will be some security folks around, but the visitor center will be closed. The Lake Mead National Recreation Area in Las Vegas where we have 600,000 people a year visit—not anymore—it will be closed. The Red Rock Canyon National Conservation Area—over 1 million people go there every year. No, the visitor center will be closed.

This situation involves people who work cleaning offices, people who are security folks for our Federal buildings—they will probably be able to hang around—people who really need a job. I talked last week a little on the floor about a woman who came to my event last Thursday. She works for the National Park Service. She has worked there all of her adult life. She knows what it is like to have a government shutdown because she was there when the last one occurred. They never got that money back. She is struggling because she doesn't make that much money, and now her job is gone. It is that way all over America. And why? To extract political concessions through hostage-taking over one issue—one issue—ObamaCare.

The exchanges in Nevada kick in today. Approximately 600,000 Nevadans

will be eligible for ObamaCare. These are 600,000 people who have no health insurance. Today they can search around on the exchanges that have been developed there by a Republican Governor, and they can get a policy for as little as \$100 a month—\$100 a month—and then if they get hurt they can go see a doctor or go to a hospital and not be embarrassed because they have no money.

What the American people must understand is that the House of Representatives did not close the government. It was the Republicans in the House of Representatives who closed the government. The House of Representatives has 435 Members, but, no, they were not allowed to vote on keeping the government open; they are so fixated on ObamaCare. But that is happening all over America today, and that is one thing not being heard. The President has said it is going forward full bore, and that is welcome news for as many as 30 million people in America who have no health insurance. So Members of the House of Representatives were unable to vote to keep the government open—only the Republicans.

PATY MURRAY, who is from the State of Washington and is chair of the Budget Committee, has worked hard, leading the Senate in passing a budget. She did that 6 months ago. The budget she passed is different from the one that passed the House of Representatives.

For generations, for hundreds of years in the Congress of the United States, when there have been two separate pieces of legislation, we have gone to conference. This is something you learn about in elementary school. When the House has passed something and the Senate has passed something, what do you do? You sit down together in an open forum and work out the differences. That is how we have always done it—until the tea party took over.

Senator MURRAY has asked to go to conference 18 times. The senior Senator from Arizona has asked eight times himself. By the way, the senior Senator from Arizona is a Republican. But there has been an objection. No conference. And this has gone on for 6 months. But as the clock ticked past midnight and the Federal Government officially barred the doors and hung a "closed for business" sign out, Speaker BOEHNER demanded the very conference they have shunned us on for 6 months. This display, I would hope, would be embarrassing to House Republicans and Senate Republicans. What a deal.

So I say to the Speaker: We are happy to negotiate a budget. We have been trying to for months. And we have not only Senator MURRAY, who has been anxious to get to the budget, but we have had Senator MIKULSKI, a powerful chairman of the Appropriations Committee, who can't do anything until we get a budget. So if the House passes the piece of legislation they have over there to keep the country

functioning again, to reopen government, we will be happy to go to conference. Why wouldn't we? We have been trying to do it for 6 months. Hopefully that would lead to a long-term responsible budget agreement with our Republican counterparts. That is what conferences are all about. We have been asking to do that for months and months—but not with the government closed.

Every day that the Speaker refuses to pass the bill they have over there, the resolution they have over there, and reopen the government, the American economy loses billions of dollars—billions of dollars.

The conservative business community has warned of the grave consequence of this shutdown. This shutdown couldn't come at a worse time, just as the economy is beginning to gain steam. The shutdown has furloughed half of the civilian workforce. At Nellis Air Force Base, one of the largest military installations in America, the civilian workforce there is coming to work today to close their offices. There are some exceptions, but certainly three-quarters of them.

The Centers for Disease Control has basically ceased their functions as to what happens if there is a bad flu epidemic someplace or some kind of an outbreak that they control.

Checks will go out for Social Security and our disabled veterans will get their checks. But if you have just come back from Afghanistan or Iraq, sorry, no new applications will be received. No passport applications will be processed. That is pretty important for tourist economies such as Las Vegas. No small business loans will be issued. We talked about the national parks. Millions of Federal workers will be sent home without pay. Thousands and thousands in Nevada are sitting home today, waiting for Congress to act.

As this economic reality kicks in, we need the Republicans also to kick in as to what is reality. I have had a number of Republican Senators come to me and say, You have got to give them something on ObamaCare. What is wrong with this picture? What is wrong with the fixation on a law of this country that has been a law for 4 years? I remind everyone again, the United States Supreme Court said it is constitutional. What is wrong with this picture: We will be happy if you give us something to hurt ObamaCare?

No matter how many times they try to extort the American people and the Democrats here in the Senate, we are not going to relitigate the health care issue. We are not going to do that. If they have problems with that bill, we will be happy to sit down and talk with them about a reasonable approach. But we are not going to do it with a gun to the heads of the American people.

Frankly, it is too late to avert the worst effects of the shutdown, but it is not too late to send the Federal employees back to work. The solution is as clear this morning as it was last

night: Reopen the government. Let all 435 Members of the House of Representatives vote on the legislation they have from us. Then if they want to sit down in a sensible way and talk about PATTY MURRAY's budget, we will do that; if they want to talk about the appropriations bills of Senator MIKULSKI, we will do that—as soon as the House takes a simple, reasonable action; that is, put the American Federal workers back on the job and we can begin the process of negotiating a long-term budget deal. We have been trying to do it for 6 months through the regular order of conference committee and continue to want to do that. But there is no time to waste. Every minute the Federal Government is closed shuts down American families, it costs jobs. Every week the Federal Government is shut down, the economy loses more than \$30 billion. It is time for Republicans to stop obsessing over old battles.

I say to my Republican friends, ObamaCare is over. It has passed. It is the law. And all over America today and for the next 3 months millions of people will sign up. Remember what I said about Nevada: You can buy a policy in Nevada for \$100 a month. In the State of Alaska, I was told there is no premium. It varies State to State. People who have never had health insurance will be able to get it.

I talked here on the floor 1 or 2 days ago. I know what it is like not to have the ability to go to a doctor or hospital. I know that. People have to understand that is not good. It is hard when you or a loved one is hurt or sick and you have nowhere to go. That is what this is all about.

I have respect and admiration for my Republican friends. Every one of them is an accomplished person or they wouldn't be in the Senate. But don't say to me that we are happy to open the government if you give us an arrow we can put in our quiver and say we hurt ObamaCare. It is the law.

I repeat what is a fact: The Republicans hated Social Security and they hated Medicare. How do people feel about Social Security and Medicare today? They feel really good. And that is the same with ObamaCare. People understand how good ObamaCare has been already if you are old and want to get a wellness check or if you have to buy pharmaceuticals. In the sparsely populated State of Nevada they have saved millions of dollars on drugs because of ObamaCare. You can stay on your parents' health insurance until you are 26 years old. That is a pretty good deal. You can finish college, maybe even start your life and not have to worry about that.

People got refunds in Nevada and around the country. Why? Because as part of ObamaCare, AL FRANKEN from Minnesota stuck a provision in the bill—that at least most of us voted for—saying if an insurance company doesn't provide 80 percent of their premium for health care, to having people get better, then they have to refund

that money. This year, all over America hundreds of millions of dollars were refunded to people because insurance companies didn't spend 80 percent toward having people get well. They gave bonuses and all kinds of overhead that weren't fair. ObamaCare is so important.

I say to my friends here in Congress, how many people have come up to them someplace and said, Thank goodness for ObamaCare. My daughter is a diabetic, and now we don't have to worry about her. She is insured.

I have had someone tell me—and this is why I usually include this in my remarks—I have a son who is an epileptic. Has anyone ever seen someone with an epileptic seizure, your little child, and you can't get health care because they have a preexisting disability? That is what ObamaCare is all about. You can't be denied insurance if you have a child who is an epileptic.

We will negotiate, as we have, on going to the budget and talking about a long-term agreement here. We have tried. The President has tried. They are only concerned about ObamaCare—ObamaCare—because they know that everything they do to try to throw monkey wrenches into the wheels of government as far as ObamaCare is good for the people who don't believe in government. They want it to fail. That is why they are doing all this. Each day that goes by—and now it is harder and harder, because on October 1 the exchanges are open. There will be a few glitches and there will be changes. That is the way it was with Social Security. That is the way it was with Medicare. But by the first of the year when millions of people are signed up on health insurance, it is good for everybody and it is good for America. And it is good for America because our country—this great country—will no longer be the only industrialized nation that doesn't have health care for everyone.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from California.

Mrs. BOXER. I won't be long, I say to my colleagues. I wish to thank our Leader REID for bringing back a sense of history, for putting this fight over the new health care law into context.

I did some research on what Republicans said about Social Security when it came up before in the Senate and the House: This is the end of the world. It was socialism. It was going to destroy mankind. I have the quotes. They are in the RECORD.

No, Social Security proved to be the most successful antipoverty program in America. People love it. But they keep trying to take it away.

Under George W. Bush they tried to privatize it and we Democrats stopped it. Then you go look to the 1960s when Lyndon Johnson talked about Medicare and the fact that our grandmas and grandpas at that time were being supported by their children because there was no health insurance available. This was the end of the world. Even Bob

Dole in the 1990s said, I was there fighting against Medicare. Bob Dole, a wonderful man, a Republican: I was fighting against socialism. And now even tea party members put signs up: Don't touch my Medicare.

So now we have the next reform, the Affordable Care Act. Republicans have called it ObamaCare. The President embraces it. In California today people are so excited. Millions of Californians who are uninsured will have the chance to get affordable health care. And, I might say, you go to coveredca.com, and you see the platinum plans that are the more expensive plans, you see the bronze plans, the least expensive, the silver plan. Who is going up there? Not people who already have insurance—it is about 80 percent—but those who don't. And in my State, the working poor will have a chance to get a Medicaid card.

Thank God we have a Governor and a legislature with compassion, unlike other States where the Governors are saying, No, we don't care; we think it is going to cost too much. Well, the fact is we know, and the reason the Affordable Care Act ObamaCare saves a lot of money over time is because people get the health care they need and they get it early.

We have a horrible day here today. I have 169,000 Federal employees, and about 80,000 of them are going to get furloughed. These are hard-working, good people who work for the Border Patrol, who work for the FBI, who work for NASA, who work for the National Park Service, who keep our Federal buildings clean and open, scientists, caseworkers who do important Social Security cases, Medicare cases, food inspectors, small business loan officers so important to the small business community—they are going to pack up and go home. To my Republican friends who brought this Republican shutdown, these are hard-working people.

I don't have one Republican on my bill who would take away our pay in a shutdown. Not one Republican. But they are ready to take away everybody else's pay. As a matter of fact, yesterday—to a person—they voted to take away the employer contribution from their own staff for the health care. I couldn't believe it. By the way, they don't need a law to do it. Senator VITTER's bill: Take away your health care—you don't need to take that employer's share. Give it back to the government. Call in your staff if you think they deserve this treatment and tell them you are going to reduce their salaries, and send the check back to the government. You don't need legislation to do it. That is how mean-spirited it is around here. So we face a nonsensical shutdown.

I want to talk about exactly where we are. The House sent us a 6-week bill that keeps the government going at certain levels of spending. Then the Republicans say, well, the Democrats won't compromise. I have news for the

Republicans. We don't like those numbers in that continuing resolution. We think they are way too low. We think they are hurting the economic recovery. We see the deficit's down by 50 percent. We don't have to bring about this austerity. We think it is hurting jobs and the economy, but that is not enough for them.

They have a victory on the number, but they want to add other things to the budget that have nothing to do with the budget and have everything to do with their obsession with repealing health care reform, just like the Republican Party has had an obsession for years. I forgot to say, remember Newt Gingrich's famous line on Medicare, "It is going to wither on the vine" and PAUL RYAN's budget, which destroyed Medicare as we know it.

It is our main responsibility to keep the government going, to pay our bills. Instead of sending us a clean bill, they send us a bill with lower numbers than we want, we accept the numbers, and then they tack on these mean-spirited amendments to hurt people—with the exception of the repeal of the medical device tax, which would blow a \$30 billion hole in our deficit. They repeal it. They have no way of making up for that money that would be lost to the Treasury.

I could not believe it. Yesterday, their first take was to take away women's health care. Three of us went up to the gallery and we said: You continue your war on women. They actually, in the House, repealed an existing law that gives women cancer screening, gestational diabetes screening, and making sure they have the correct supplies and the counseling to breast-feed their children, and birth control. They actually took that out, repealed it. We went up to the gallery. They left that little thing alone. They gave up on that.

But what are they doing now? Now they are saying their own employees have no right to an employer contribution. This is mean-spirited. This is hurtful. Send us a clean CR for 6 weeks and then vote to go to the budget conference, as Senator MURRAY has asked. But Senator CRUZ keeps appearing on the scene and objecting to appointing conferees to deal with the yearly budget because he says he doesn't want to have them discuss the debt. Who is he to say what you can discuss or not discuss? The last time I checked, there is free speech in this country, including in a conference committee.

That leads me to think they are going to play even worse games with the debt ceiling, about which Ronald Reagan—who asked for it and got, 18 times, an increase in the debt ceiling—said even thinking about defaulting is a horrible and dangerous thing. No President has had this kind of difficulty. They are obsessed with the health care law and they are obsessed with hurting this President.

Let's face facts. I have served with five Presidents; three of them were Re-

publicans. Did I agree with everything Ronald Reagan believed in? The Presiding Officer and I served in those years together. Remember those days of the nuclear weapons proliferation? We had our battles and, yes, we made a symbolic vote once in a while not to raise the debt ceiling. That is fine. But we never purposely brought down the government, ever—ever. The last time Newt Gingrich and the Republicans did it, it was a disaster and they have done it again.

I listened to the majority leader. The majority leader said the Republican leader's tale and his spin is similar to the book "1984." Let me just say, it is "Alice in Wonderland." It is not accurate.

Let's pass the bill we sent over, the clean CR for 6 weeks. Let's go to a budget conference. Let's resolve our problems. This is too great a country to have us suffer like this, a self-inflicted wound that does not have to be done.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Republican whip.

Mr. CORNYN. Mr. President, if we need evidence that there is a parallel universe in America today, on one hand is Washington, DC, and the bubble that seems to occur around this place, and then the rest of America. If we need evidence of that parallel universe, all we need to do is listen to the comments of the majority leader this morning who said, in the presence of these folks in the gallery in the Senate, "The government is shut down. The government is shut down."

That is clearly false. You know what. There are a lot of Americans who think that Washington is a train hurtling down the track, out of control. Who can blame them? When they look at our national debt, \$17 trillion, more than \$50,000 for every man, woman, and child in America; when they see our unsustainable programs such as Medicare and Social Security, which the majority leader and the distinguished Senator from California hold so dear—we do too. Those are important programs. So why would we not want to try to fix them?

The most amazing thing I heard today is the majority leader said that ObamaCare is sacrosanct. It is the law of the land. You cannot touch it. Over the last 3 years the Obama administration has repeatedly and unilaterally issued waivers, granted exemptions, and announced delays relating to this sacrosanct law known as ObamaCare. Since when is it beyond the power of the Congress to change existing law by amending it or repealing it or defunding it? It is absolutely unprecedented to have a majority leader of the Senate, someone who knows this institution as well as anyone, say Congress is powerless to act when our constituents tell us they want us to act because they do not believe ObamaCare will perform as advertised.

The best evidence is the unilateral actions of the President of the United

States, who granted waivers, exemptions, and delays for his preferred constituents. Meanwhile, the rest of America has to live with this monstrosity that will not work as advertised. Again, all we have to do is compare the President's promises to what has actually happened. He said if you like what you have you can keep it. That is not true. Millions of Americans are being dropped from their employer-provided coverage into the exchanges they do not want to be on because they would prefer to have their employer-provided coverage. When the President says the average family will see a reduction in their health care premiums of \$2,500, that is not true because they have actually gone up, on average, \$2,400. For many young people, such as my daughters, they are going to have to pay more so my generation will have to pay less, even though they do not need the government-approved, gold-plated health care plan, nor want it, nor can afford it.

We know that ObamaCare is, in the words of some of the leaders of organized labor, doing permanent damage to full-time work because people are being moved from full-time work to part-time work in order to avoid the employer sanctions, and it is doing damage to our broader economy. All of us have listened to the small business men and women for whom we work, who are our constituents, who say: We cannot afford ObamaCare, so we are not going to hire more people. In fact, we are going to cut back in order to avoid some of the sanctions associated with it or, you know what. At some point I am tired of working for the government instead of working for myself, my family, so I am just going to close business and shut her down.

Despite all that, the majority leader has the temerity to come on the Senate floor and say this is the law of the land; we can't touch it; it is perfect, couldn't be better. That is like whistling past the graveyard. Senate Democrats have refused to make any changes whatsoever, even in those provisions they themselves believe are flawed or defective in ObamaCare. They are refusing to abolish the medical device tax, which is a job killer and kills medical innovation that saves lives, even though 79 Senators, Republicans and Democrats alike, voted against the medical device tax on the budget resolution.

They are refusing to delay the individual mandate, even though the President of the United States has given businesses a 1-year delay in the employer sanction. Yet Democrats voted against delaying the individual mandate for average Americans. How can that be fair?

Most remarkably, when it comes to the ObamaCare exchanges, Senate Democrats have toed the line—you might say walked the plank last night, at the insistence of the majority leader—and they refused to treat Members of Congress the same as all other

Americans. That is what one of the votes we had last night did.

If I were a Democrat running for reelection in red States in 2014, I would be very worried about that. This is a toxic vote for them because Americans, although they may not be able to quote Federalist 57, know what it says in their hearts and spirits because it is fundamental to our democracy; that is, that Members of Congress should be treated no differently, certainly no better, than the rest of America when it comes to the law of the land. Those who cast that vote, who walked that plank last night, will be held accountable in the 2014 election.

You know what. I believe all of this points to the fact that the majority leader and President Obama want a government shutdown because they are reading some of the polls that say they think this will benefit them politically. They are willing to risk a shutdown of the Federal Government in order to gain political advantage. I am not so sure about that. I certainly did not believe that a shutdown—it was not my first choice. I thought surely cooler heads would prevail. When it came to the individual mandate, when it came to the medical device tax, when it came to eliminating the special carve-out for Congress, surely we can find some common ground somewhere. When there is plenty of evidence that the President and his administration have acknowledged the flaws and the defects and the unkept promises of ObamaCare, surely we could find somewhere we could find common ground.

Our colleagues in the House have now passed multiple bills to keep the government open and allow ObamaCare to remain funded, even though clearly our first choice is to repeal and replace this devastating legislation which is killing jobs, running up costs, and falling out of favor with even its most ardent advocates such as organized labor. Unfortunately, the Democratic Party, from the President of the United States to the majority leader of the Senate, to all Democrats in this body, have become the party of no: no compromise, no negotiations, no changes. It is all perfect. We would not change a thing. Life is good.

But the Government shuts down and invariably some people get hurt. The President of the United States was thinking about holding a meeting of congressional leaders at the White House. The report in one of the newspapers in Washington is Senator REID, the majority leader of the Senate, shut it down. The President wanted to demonstrate some leadership. He should demonstrate some leadership. People expect leadership out of the President of the United States, but HARRY REID shut it down. So HARRY REID shut down the Government and got what he wanted.

I think it is about time the President overrule HARRY REID. He was elected by the American people. For many of us he was our second choice, but he is

the President of the United States. He needs to demonstrate some leadership. Instead, the Democrats have doubled down on their strategy, hoping to gain political advantage at the expense of the people hurt. The shutdown was not my first choice, but there are many of my constituents who are calling me, telling me: Look, we are worried. We are scared about our future. We are scared not only about our ability to find jobs, we are scared about our children and their future. My generation was the beneficiary of the sacrifice and hard work of the greatest generation, the World War II generation, people who risked everything so we might have a better life.

I am hearing from a number of my constituents back home, and they are saying, look, we are willing to risk some hardship if that is what it takes to get the American people, the Democratic Party, and the President to wake up and say: We need to work together and fix these problems that we all know exist, the national debt, lower median income, unsustainable Medicare and Social Security, for which the Democrats offer only higher taxes and more regulation. No wonder the economy is growing so slowly. The triple whammy is ObamaCare, which is killing jobs and hurting the economy.

We can do better than that, and we certainly can by working together. Now is the time for the President to call that meeting in the Oval Office.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Missouri.

Mr. BLUNT. Mr. President, I am disappointed that the process has failed us in the last week for my friends in the House and in the Senate who, as I did, when we ran for these jobs, said we would do everything we could possibly do to not go down this path where the government gets between people and their doctor. Those are heartfelt and sincere views. If we were in the majority and had a President on our side, we would have already taken care of this issue.

For those who mistakenly thought if we didn't have any appropriations bill that somehow the President's health care plan wouldn't move forward, we now see today that was a mistaken view of what would happen. Most of the President's health care spending is mandatory. It is something the Congress doesn't even vote on. The way not to move forward is to change the law, but we have not had any opportunity to change this law. We didn't have an opportunity when the Presiding Officer and I served in the House together to change the law. This is a law that never was amendable on the floor of the Senate or the House.

It is hard to imagine that we have decided to restructure 1/16th of the whole economy and everybody's health care relationships without ever having a chance to amend the law. Surely my friends on the other side who have supported this bill, are supportive of this

law, understand the frustration we have when there has never been a possibility to bring an amendment to the law and say: Let's see if we can't make this part of it work better.

What was the amendment yesterday? The amendment yesterday to the law that the House offered the Senate—the principal amendment was: Let's not have the individual penalty for a year. The President, on his own, decided we won't have the corporate penalty for a year, that we wouldn't have the business penalty for a year. This is sort of a strange place for us to wind up. On this side of the Senate we are saying: Don't give job creators—we like to talk about job creators on this side of the Senate aisle—a break and not give people working at those jobs a break.

The President, on his own, can apparently amend the law without us. This is also pretty unusual, that the President, on his own, without us, thinks he can amend the law, but we have no avenue to amend the law. The President, on his own, said: We are going to eliminate the corporate penalty. We are going to say that for this first year, businesses that have more than 50 employees don't have to offer insurance or pay a penalty; that is what the law says was supposed to happen on January 1. But the President said: No, we are not going to do that; that is too hard to do. We are going to take a \$12 billion hit in funding this program because that is what the estimated penalties might have been. Frankly, that might have been low because a lot of businesses that were offering insurance I think will not offer insurance when we get into the requirement to offer insurance.

I think that was probably a low number, but it was a number. It was \$12 billion. Our friends in the House sent something over here that said: If we are going to waive \$12 billion, let's waive \$4 billion. Let's waive the penalty for individuals if they don't have insurance. By the way, many of those individuals were led by this law to believe they were going to get insurance at work. The President said there is no penalty for not offering insurance at work for this first year, but we are still going to penalize individuals who don't have it. If you are an individual and for whatever reason you can't afford or don't have insurance, you will have a \$95 penalty the first year, and it goes up after that. That was a chance to amend the law in the right way. The House would have voted, the Senate would have voted, and the President would have signed a bill. Imagine that. The House votes, the Senate votes, and the President signs a bill. I think that is the way the process is supposed to work. How we could have a \$12 billion waiver for the employer and have a \$4 billion penalty for the employee doesn't make any sense to me.

This law was not amendable, so, sure, would it be better not to amend it on a resolution to support the government? Absolutely that would have been bet-

ter. Would it have been better for the Senate to pass a single appropriations bill of the 12 that were supposed to be passed before the spending year begins? Absolutely. That would have been a lot better. Would it have been better for the Senate to prioritize anything?

Senator MIKULSKI, the chairman of my committee, the Appropriations Committee, as was mentioned earlier, voted out most of the bills. Some of them were voted out on a partisan vote, some of them were voted out on a bipartisan vote, but only one got here, and it was one the leader knew couldn't possibly pass. So we haven't passed one bill. It would have been better to do it that way. We wouldn't be at this moment if in fact we passed the appropriations bills and agreed with the Senate.

Then the majority leader talks about the hardworking chairman of the Budget Committee, and said we can't do our work because we don't have a budget conference. Last year the majority leader said we don't even need a budget. It is too late for the budget. The spending year has begun. That was months ago when that should have happened. Why didn't that happen? Because the House passed a budget that obeyed the law and the law says we can't spend more than \$967 billion. That is the law, like it or not. Just like on my side of this discussion, ObamaCare is the law, like it or not.

Apparently that is a law we have to enforce, but we don't have to enforce the Budget Control Act because the Senate budget was over \$1 trillion—\$1.038 trillion was the Senate budget. Of course we are not going to have an agreement if we are \$70 billion or \$80 billion apart and one side obeys the law and the other doesn't.

Essentially for a week now Republicans in the House have been negotiating with themselves because there is nobody who is willing to negotiate. The President says negotiating on the debt ceiling is blackmail. It has never been blackmail before. In fact, we wouldn't have the Budget Control Act if we hadn't negotiated on the debt ceiling.

So it is blackmail to negotiate? This is a process where the House, the Senate, and the President are supposed to work together to move forward. The debt ceiling has been used over and over to talk about spending. It has been used a number of times to talk about things that weren't spending. Usually Congress is controlled by Democrats with Republican Presidents. And they said, ok, the President doesn't want to talk about this issue without the debt ceiling, so we are going to add it to the debt ceiling discussion. But more often than that, it has been used to talk about spending.

If you go to the banker and say: I have spent all the money you have given me, used up my line of credit, so I would like to extend the line of credit, I guarantee your banker will say either no, you have already exceeded what we told you you could borrow

from us to spend, or if we are going to do that, let's talk about your spending habits. Show me a plan that shows you will spend differently in the future than you spend now. But the President says that is blackmail. More than anybody else in the United States of America, the President of the United States is in a position to figure out what he is for that the Congress would be willing to do. That is not happening, and that has not happened.

There is plenty of blame for the fact that there is no funding today, but there are also plenty of victims. Everybody who depends on the government is a victim. Social Security checks are going to go out, but you can't apply for Social Security if you don't have it. If your check is lost or didn't go out, you can't find out why that happened. People in harm's way: The border control agents, the Immigration and Customs Enforcement people are out there, but their paycheck for their family is not coming.

How could we have solved that yesterday? I am confident that one of the ways we could have solved that is by saying, okay, we won't collect this \$4 billion from individuals just as we are not collecting the \$12 billion from companies.

The reason this health care law continues to be such a problem is it was never amendable, and it was never discussed. Even the President said, as he does some of these unilateral things, if this were a normal circumstance, I would go to Congress and ask them to change the law, but it is not a normal circumstance. I can't find that anywhere in the Constitution where the President gets to decide if the Constitution applies or doesn't apply.

Everybody is to blame here because the Congress is not doing the work Congress is supposed to do and the President is not leading. Americans are going to suffer because the Congress and the President haven't done their job.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Wyoming.

Mr. BARRASSO. Mr. President, as my colleague from Missouri said, as we are here on the floor today, much of the Federal Government has been shut down. It is shut down because of the Democrats' unwillingness to compromise on keeping the government open and delivering fairness to all Americans.

While employers got a pass from the President on his health care law, the American people still face a mandate that they start signing up for Washington-approved health insurance and the exchange is open today. The House of Representatives took the reasonable and responsible step of keeping the government open while eliminating the health care law's unfairness.

It is unfair that the mandate for health care law will not be delayed for individuals for a year but does delay the mandate for businesses. It is also

unfair to refuse to eliminate special exemptions under the health care law for Members of Congress. That wasn't in the health care law at all. Yet the President has granted special exemptions that I believe show the unfairness of the approach by the Democrats.

President Obama saw that other parts of the health care law won't work and weren't ready. He has currently signed seven different bills which will repeal and defund other parts of his law. In the interest of fairness, he should deal with these parts that are seen all across the country as very unfair.

The President has allowed exemptions and changed the laws for specific groups. He has delayed the employer mandate for a year. The question is: Why does he oppose delaying the individual mandate for a year as well? Why do the bosses get an exemption but not the workers? That is what someone asked me at a health fair in Lovell, WY, over this past weekend.

The American people already know the health care law is unaffordable, unworkable, unpopular, and now families are also saying the health care law is unfair. The House has asked us to treat all Americans fairly, but the President and the majority leader refuse to do that. If you look at their rhetoric over the past week or so, Washington Democrats seemed eager for a government shutdown. Well, they got their wish. Meanwhile, the administration is still promising people great benefits from the new government-run health insurance exchanges. Today hard-working Americans get to see which promises are kept and which have been broken. I think what people are going to learn today can be summed up in two words: Buyer beware.

Here is how the Wall Street Journal put it yesterday. This is their front-page article: "Late Snags on Eve of Health Rollout."

The article says the Obama administration officials are scrambling to get the health law's insurance marketplaces ready to open on Tuesday but keep hitting technical problems, while government-funded field workers across the country say they are not fully prepared to help Americans enroll in the program.

The reports in the news today show a system failure across the country as the exchange goes live. Remember what the President said in his address to the Nation Saturday. He said they are opening on Tuesday no matter what—no matter what, they are opening today.

Well, I think the people across the country are going to have more than just technical problems. First of all, people are going to see significantly higher costs. Last week, the President promised to give Americans, and I quote, "high-quality affordable health care for less than their cell phone bill."

Remember, the average monthly cell phone bill is \$71. In Cheyenne, WY, the least expensive plan a 27-year-old man

can buy will be \$271. The President said less than \$71. Why is it \$271 a month in Cheyenne, WY? And that is for a healthy 27-year-old. So before the health care law, before the exchanges, they could buy a plan such as that for \$82; now, \$271—a lot more than a cell phone bill.

The White House isn't even disputing anymore that prices will be higher for many people. Now the White House is arguing that consumers will spend more, but they will get, as they say, better insurance.

The administration is also saying that prices are going up less than they had previously estimated. They previously estimated they were going to go up a lot. Now they are estimating they are not going to go up quite as much as a lot, but they are still going to go up. A smaller increase isn't what the President promised. He said families could pay \$2,500 less a year. That is what the President promised. It is not what is happening.

Prices in the exchanges are up all across the country. In California, the cheapest plan at the silver level will cost a 40-year-old in Los Angeles \$242 a month. That same person, because of something in the law called community ratings, buying the same plan in Sacramento, CA, would pay \$330 a month. I see the astonishing looks on faces of folks in this Chamber. They can't believe it. They say, How can it be true? Perhaps they should have read the law, read the bill before they voted to pass it. The price is 38 percent more in Sacramento than in L.A. for the same identical policy, for the same 40-year-old person.

In addition to the higher cost of insurance premiums, there are also higher out-of-pocket costs, higher copayments, higher deductibles—all things that are going to make people look at this and say, Cheaper than my cell phone bill? Not a chance. All of that means more money out of the wallets of hard-working Americans and more sticker shock.

The second thing people are learning today as they sign up in the exchanges is that many of them will actually lose their doctor. I practiced medicine for 25 years. I know how important it is for patients to have a long-term relationship with their caregivers. The exchanges—the mandates coming out of this President's health care law—break that bond. That is because insurance companies needed to find ways to keep rates from going even higher. So what they have done is limited the doctors and limited the hospitals that patients can visit.

In New Hampshire, Anthem BlueCross BlueShield is excluding 10 of the 28 hospitals in the State from the exchange. A young mother may not be able to keep seeing the pediatrician whom she knows and trusts with her children's care. That wasn't supposed to happen. The President promised that if you liked your doctor, you could keep your doctor. Today, many

Americans are finding out that is just not the case.

On Sunday, a few days ago, Howard Dean, the former head of the Democratic National Committee, admitted that one of the unintended consequences of the law is that small businesses are going to dump their employees into the exchange. The people who work at those small businesses don't get to keep the insurance they had, and they may not get to keep the doctor they had either.

A third thing people are going to start to see today as the exchanges open for business is that there is a definite risk of fraud and identity theft. How can that be? The administration has hired so-called navigators—people to help enroll consumers in the exchanges. It turns out that these workers aren't well trained or even subject to consistent background checks. Even the Obama administration has been warning that con artists will take advantage of confusion over the law to steal people's identities. As I said earlier, buyer beware. Security may also be inadequate in the giant government "data hub." These are the huge databases of detailed personal information about everyone in the exchanges. The information will be available to people in many different government agencies, in the whole chart of all the different places that this data is going to be sent all throughout government. The administration promises that the data hub will work, but they will not talk about what they have done to ensure that it is secure.

Finally, we know that today there are going to be a lot of customer service system failures. President Obama said that buying insurance through the exchanges would be like shopping at Amazon.com. It is shaping up to be much less consistent than that. Instead of simply clicking a few buttons online, many people are spending hours following up with phone calls, e-mails, and faxes. Faxes?

As recently as two weeks ago, government software couldn't reliably tell people the correct price for their insurance. Late last week, the administration delayed enrollment of some of its small business exchanges. Washington, DC, said last week that parts of its exchanges also weren't ready. In the State of Oregon, State officials say the software problems will force them to delay their Web site. People there will have to find other ways to get help for signing up.

That is not how Amazon.com works. That is not what the President promised.

It didn't have to be this way. The American people knew what they wanted from health care reform. They wanted lower costs and more accessible, quality care. President Obama could have drafted a law that actually addressed Americans' concerns. Instead, he forced through a law making health care more complicated, more uncertain, and more expensive.

Now is the time for the American people to hold the President to his promises. Coverage in the exchanges, as he said, should cost less than your cell phone bill, be as easy and secure as Amazon, and let people keep their doctors. How well those promises hold up will be the real legacy of the Obama health care law.

Thank you, Mr. President. I yield the floor and I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. SCHATZ). The clerk will call the roll.

The assistant bill clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. BARRASSO. 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. BARRASSO. I ask unanimous consent that the time be equally divided between both parties.

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

Mr. BARRASSO. Thank you, Mr. President. 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. LEE. 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. LEE. Mr. President, yesterday when the President of the United States addressed the American people, he was very clear about what a shutdown would mean. He said:

Office buildings would close. Paychecks would be delayed. Vital services that seniors and veterans, women and children, businesses and our economy depend on would be hamstrung. Business owners would see delays in raising capital, seeking infrastructure permits or rebuilding after Hurricane Sandy.

Veterans, who have sacrificed for their country, will find their support centers unstaffed. Tourists will find every one of America's national parks and monuments, from Yosemite to the Smithsonian to the Statue of Liberty, immediately closed. And of course, the communities and small businesses that rely on these national treasures for their livelihoods will be out of customers and out of luck.

I share the President's concerns about what will happen to the American people—about "real people," as one of my colleagues put it yesterday—during and in connection with a government shutdown.

I wish to focus our attention in the coming hours and days on these people. I think it is also important that we continue to focus as well on those who are already hurting—hurting for reasons that don't have to do with the shutdown.

So I would like to turn for a moment to people who are and for a number of months have been already feeling the negative effects of another government policy the President and his allies in Congress staunchly defend.

ObamaCare happens to be the No. 1 job killer in the country. A recent analysis documented hundreds of businesses that are cutting back hours to avoid the crushing cost of ObamaCare's severe mandates. As a result, major unions have said ObamaCare could destroy the 40-hour workweek—the backbone of the American economy. People are losing their health insurance. Just a week ago Friday, 20,000 people—employees of Home Depot—were informed they would be losing their health insurance. UPS is no longer going to provide health insurance for spouses of employees. The grocery store chain Trader Joe's has dropped health care coverage for part-time workers altogether.

For everyone who has been furloughed by the government shutdown, the change hopefully will be temporary—perhaps lasting a few days, maybe even a few hours—if the Democrats decide to negotiate. For everyone who has lost a job, had their hours cut, their wages reduced, or who no longer receives health insurance, the change could well prove to be far more permanent. Do we not have an obligation to do something for those people? I think we do. So let's look for the path forward. Let's return to the President's concern about those who are hurt by a government shutdown.

One positive and encouraging step was taken yesterday in response to action taken by the House of Representatives late Saturday night. Late Saturday night, of course, the House of Representatives passed a bill to ensure that all Active-Duty military personnel—the brave men and women in uniform who serve us bravely—will continue to get paid. Yesterday the Senate took up that measure and passed it unanimously. It did so in a matter of minutes, in a seemingly effortless legislative act.

I think we can do the exact same thing with a number of noncontroversial spending bills that fund aspects of government that Americans overwhelmingly support, that Americans acknowledge we need, and that are completely unrelated to ObamaCare. My plan, in other words, would involve setting up segmented continuing resolutions, appropriations measures that would keep the funding going at current levels to various areas within government, including the Department of Defense, the Department of Homeland Security, military construction, CJS, which includes funding for the Department of Justice, the Federal Court system, the FBI, NASA, the National Weather Service, for example, and also the U.S. Department of the Interior, which includes our national parks.

I mention national parks with special interest because today is the first day of what we hope will be a short, quickly resolved government shutdown. We have at least two Honor Flights coming in from around the country bringing World War II veterans—members of the "greatest generation"—to Wash-

ington, DC, who plan to visit the World War II veterans memorial, a memorial designed specifically for them. When they arrive, if nothing changes between now and then, they will painfully discover what we have learned this morning, which is that those parts of the National Mall have been fenced off and barricaded. They will not be able to get in. They will not even be able to get very close. This is unfortunate and, just as important, it is unnecessary. We can act. We should act. We must act today to resolve this. There is absolutely no reason this noncontroversial aspect of our Federal Government's operations should continue 1 more day or even 1 more hour, for that matter, without being funded.

This is an effort to compromise, an effort that is badly needed, an effort that comes in the wake of other efforts to compromise that have for the most part failed. The House of Representatives has tried now three different times to avoid a shutdown, passing three different measures to make sure our government would continue to be funded. Senator REID and those Members of his conference who support him have rejected all three plans, rejected all three offers to keep the government funded, accusing Republicans of playing games with ObamaCare.

In light of that, let's leave ObamaCare for another day and not hold the vast majority of government functions hostage when the vast majority of government functions do not have anything to do with the implementation and enforcement of ObamaCare. We did it yesterday. We did it. It worked well. It was seamless. It was done with absolute unanimous consent. We did it with respect to Active-Duty military pay yesterday. We can do it for veterans benefits, for border security, for national parks, and for many other government agencies. We can keep government open. We can keep those aspects of our Federal Government funded. We can do so. We should do so. Together, we will do so.

I look forward to having these discussions in the coming hours to make sure we can continue to work together as colleagues. We may not agree on everything, but in those areas where we should agree and where we in reality do agree, let's keep the government funded.

I suggest the absence of a quorum and ask unanimous consent that the time during any quorum call be equally divided between the two parties.

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

The clerk will call the roll.

The assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. BLUMENTHAL. I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

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

Mr. BLUMENTHAL. Mr. President, today is a day of enormous promise and needless tragedy. The promise is the

beginning, another step forward, in America's progress toward providing all America with affordable health care. It is a welcome day because Americans can now enroll in health insurance through the Affordable Care Act. But it is a needlessly tragic day because, in the midst of a tragic economic recovery, millions of Americans are out of work now—an extremist faction having sworn to its followers the Affordable Care Act would never be allowed to stand have now shut down the government because they did not get their way.

I wish to begin by talking directly to the people of Connecticut. Today is an enormously frustrating one for me because in the years and decades of public service I have sought to provide to people in Connecticut, never have I been barred, as we are today, each of us in this Chamber, from serving those needs individually, from phoning them and proactively putting staff on issues that concern them.

Due to the shutdown of the Federal Government, our office operations in both Hartford and Bridgeport are severely reduced, as well as in Washington. If a constituent needs help, if there is an emergency, if there is an issue that is time sensitive, you can reach our office and we will provide help. We will endeavor to meet any issue that concerns the health and safety and lives of the people of Connecticut and in no way is our commitment to you diminished.

I regret that our staff will be handicapped by the legal constraints. Indeed, we are, in many instances, not permitted to work in the ways that we have. But I can assure you we are continuing to serve you.

Today, in Connecticut, enrollment in our health exchanges will ensure access to more affordable quality health care for millions of middle-class families. Access to affordable quality health coverage is a basic right. We cannot deny it and we cannot turn back the clock. We need to work together—Republicans and Democrats—to improve and strengthen it and to bring down the cost of health care. The task ahead is to reform health care delivery to bring down the rising—in fact, the astronomically increasing—cost of health care, and to build on the work that has already begun under the Affordable Care Act and before it.

There is a real difference between an America with affordable health care and one that lacks it. It is an America where being a woman is no longer a preexisting condition, where a family who is responsible and pays for health insurance knows when they arrive at the delivery room they will not be bankrupted by the bill, and where children are not denied care because they happen to get sick.

We are at an impasse in Washington because of a matter of principle. The kind of hostage-taking we see here cannot be allowed to take place. It has no legitimate role in a spending bill. The

bill before us would enable government to continue the people's work, to continue to do business for the American people. That is our job, and the attempt has been to attach to that resolution a completely unrelated demand that the Affordable Care Act be defunded or delayed or destroyed. To tie health care repeal to a funding bill is akin to tying immigration reform to the National Defense Authorization Act. It is a dangerous precedent and it cannot be permitted. If we accept this take-or-leave-it approach that led to this shutdown, we will be forced to govern this way—or fail to govern this way—in the future.

In fact, the resolution before us already involves compromises—less money than is necessary, for example, to rebuild our roads and bridges, to engage in infrastructure, repair and rebuilding. Rather than nation-building abroad, more nation-building here at home has to be done and more investment is required. The compromises in this funding bill have been made in the amounts of money included in it.

The impacts of this shutdown will be felt throughout our economy, in all 50 States, and in thousands of jobs in Connecticut if the shutdown continues for weeks or months. There are millions of families nationally and thousands in Connecticut who will go without paychecks. There are 9,000 Federal employees in Connecticut who will be affected. Their work is important, but the ripple effect is equally important. The losses of income and diminished consumer demand will further inhibit economic growth. Defense contractors will lose their contracts or possibly fail to receive checks when they need them.

A shutdown does nothing to address our need to agree on a responsible budget and replace the slash-and-burn, across-the-board sequestration cuts that are continued in this resolution.

A shutdown undermines one of the key engines of economic growth in this country, research and innovation, such as the research done at the Coast Guard's Research and Development Center in New London, CT. What if the studies in that facility led to better ways to secure our borders, to rescue people lost at sea. Who knows what future innovations will be sacrificed at the National Institutes of Health across the country and in companies around Connecticut.

The lifeblood of our economy—job creation, research and innovation, investment in the future—is undercut and undermined by this shutdown. In fact, even as we go through this process in Washington, the Northeast region is seeking to recover from a shutdown in train service that occurred just days ago. That shutdown has been remedied to some extent—an inadequate degree—so that half or slightly more of the service has been restored. The failures in the feeder cable that led to this shutdown are directly due to a failure of investment in infrastructure, just as the derailment and collision

that was caused months ago reflected a failure to invest in infrastructure. Right before our eyes, as we engage in this kind of conduct in Washington that led to a shutdown, are the consequences of investment failure in our roads and bridges and train system.

With displaced workers struggling to get back into the labor market and businesses in need of specific skills, it is shocking we should cut back first on job training through these unresolved sequester cuts that are projected to force Connecticut's job training services to assist 9,360 fewer job seekers than they otherwise would.

We need to come together now. The message to Speaker BOEHNER has to be: Let the House vote. There are reasonable minds on both sides of the aisle who say let's have a simple, straightforward spending bill without these unrelated demands, without the blackmail and hostage-taking tactics. Let us come together on that kind of simple, straightforward way of continuing the people's business and the government's work for the people.

Many of my colleagues and I listened with great interest to the Senator from Alaska and others on the other side of the aisle saying we should let common sense and compromise prevail and deal with the issues relating to the Affordable Care Act, for immigration, separately and distinctly. They are measures that deserve and need attention, and there are ways to strengthen and improve many of our laws. But let's deal with them on their merits, not as demands or conditions for continuing the people's work by their government.

I truly believe, as we look back on this day, it will be with pride in another step forward for health care reform in this country. A lot of work remains to be done. Bringing down the cost of health care is a task, an unmet challenge that needs to be addressed, as well as other ways to strengthen and improve our health care system and the law itself. Let the House vote on a measure that provides simple, straightforward funding to continue the work of government for its people and allows the economy to continue its recovery and growth, that allows job creators to do their work, and that allows our working families—middle-class families—to have the benefits of education and Social Security and the veterans' benefits they vitally need. These essential functions must continue.

Let the House vote. Let reason prevail, and we can return to the work that government should be doing for its people.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Ms. HEITKAMP). The Senator from South Dakota.

Mr. THUNE. Madam President, I think the American public overwhelmingly opposes ObamaCare. Every survey shows that, and all of us traveling back and forth to our States hear it. But they also support keeping the government open.

We have had an opportunity over the course of the last several days to deal with both of those issues. In fact, in order to avoid a government shutdown, you have to have people who are willing to work together and come to a solution. The House of Representatives has not once, not twice, but three times sent to the Senate proposals that would fund the government and that would make some changes to ObamaCare that would provide the same sort of relief to every American that big businesses have received from the President by virtue of some of his waivers and exemptions. On all three occasions that was turned down—tabled—when it got to the Senate.

So what did the House of Representatives do? Their most recent proposal advanced to the Senate was to allow the House and the Senate to go to conference, to work out the differences. They asked the Senate to appoint conferees to a conference committee, where Senators and House Members might be able to sit down, Democrats and Republicans, and actually hammer out some sort of solution to the challenge we face in front of us. That got tabled this morning. That is the first time I have ever seen that happen in my time in the Congress—and maybe the first time it has ever happened—where one body has asked for a conference and asked for appointing of conferees and it was tabled.

It was not just turned down. We didn't say: No, we are not going to do it now; we will do it another time. But we actually tabled the motion—tabling a motion of the House of Representatives to have a conference on how to work out the situation and in a way that will allow us to keep the government open and hopefully provide middle-class Americans some relief and the economy—the taxpayers and employers across this country—some relief from ObamaCare.

So we are where we are now—with the House of Representatives having suggested to the Senate that we sit down together in a conference committee and work out our differences—and the Senate having rejected that.

We could all argue about how we initially got where we are. I think it all starts when we don't do things the way they are intended to be done around here—in other words, taking the appropriations process and moving those bills forward.

Here in the Senate we had an opportunity, as we do every year, to move the individual appropriations bills. There are 12 separate appropriations bills that historically have been the way in which we have funded the government. This year we didn't move a single appropriations bill through the Senate. The House of Representatives moved four of the bills through the process. They didn't get through all of them, but at least they got some of the appropriations bills completed. But here in the Senate, we didn't do a single appropriations bill.

We all saw this coming. It is not as if there is any secret or surprise. So what happens is there is a calendar, and when those deadlines aren't met, we get up against the end of the fiscal year, the way we are right now, and we have this huge push to try to keep the government from shutting down, and we generally do it in the form of a continuing resolution. But the fact is, if the Senate had done any of its work earlier this year, if we had taken up any of the appropriations bills and passed them, we wouldn't be in this crisis moment we have in front of us now.

Why is it that so many Republicans in both the House and Senate—and, I would daresay, Democrats as well, although they haven't demonstrated it with their votes—are concerned about what is happening with ObamaCare? Obviously, as more information becomes available about ObamaCare, the more concerns, the more frustrations, the more questions the American people have.

I mentioned this previously, but in my State of South Dakota, according to the report put out last week by the Health and Human Services Department, if you compare the premiums that a 30-year-old male and a 30-year-old female would pay in the State of South Dakota for a bronze plan in the exchanges, the increase in premium for people in that age category would be for a man 393 percent and for a woman 223 percent. So for a 30-year-old female in the State of South Dakota, the annual increase in insurance premiums would be \$1,500, and if you are a male in the State of South Dakota, the annual increase would be \$2,000. So there is a real concern about the impact this will have, as these exchanges get up and running, on what people are currently paying for health care coverage.

There is also a lot of evidence and data out there now that suggests it doesn't apply just to a 30-year-old male or female in my State of South Dakota, but it also applies to families. There are many families across this country who are obviously concerned about how this is going to impact the cost of health insurance for them. If we look at what health insurance costs have done for families since the President took office, they have gone up on average about \$3,000. Since ObamaCare passed, those premiums have gone up for families by about \$2,500. So we have seen premiums going up already.

We have a lot of concerns as these exchanges get up and running starting today about what impact they will have on premiums for middle-class Americans. That is why there is a lot of concern and anxiety across the country today with regard to the impacts of ObamaCare.

We also have a lot of concerns about how this will impact jobs and the economy. We have already seen that a majority of the jobs created this year are part-time jobs. There are many reasons for that, but if we talk to employers, one of the things they will point out is

that the requirements in the new health care law are that if they have 50 or more employees, they have to offer government-approved health care or pay a penalty. So a lot of employers are trying to stay under that 50-employee minimum or threshold so they don't have to face that requirement. So what happens? They either don't hire people they were otherwise going to hire or they look at ways to reduce their workforce.

It applies in another way because the definition of "full-time employee" in the law is 30 hours per week. Again, employers will be subject to the same sorts of penalties, so what many are doing is instead of hiring full-time workers, they are hiring part-time workers, 29-hour-a-week workers. Obviously, 29 hours a week doesn't give you the kind of pay that would allow you to meet the needs your family has. So more and more people are working two jobs, and we see the impact and the distortion this new law is creating in the workplace and for a lot of employers.

There was a lot of anxiety and angst about that, which I think was voiced to the President and to his administration. So what does the President do? The President decided to delay the employer mandate in the law for 1 year. I think employers took great comfort at least in knowing it is not going to be there for this year, but they are also still very worried about what will happen when it does kick in in the following year.

But there are all these employers, and people may say: Who are these people? I don't know how one can travel their State or anywhere else outside of their State and not hear from employers who are expressing concerns and asking questions about what this is going to mean for them and expressing grave reservations about the impact it is going to have on their ability to create jobs.

So as we speak with these various employers and get lots of anecdotal evidence—last week there was an interview done with employers in my State of South Dakota. A person was asked about how this would impact them, and he said: I guess we are probably not going to hire as many people as we otherwise would have hired. He said: I think that is going to be happening with businesses all over the country.

That is one example from my State of South Dakota, but if we look at sort of the aggregate, according to Investor's Business Daily there are some 300 businesses that have said they are going to reduce the size of their workforce or not hire people they otherwise might hire as a result of the impact of ObamaCare. So we see more and more of the experience, the evidence that we get day to day speaking with employers in our individual States, but we also start seeing this cumulative effect and more and more businesses expressing those concerns.

When we look at the economy today and where we are, we find out very

quickly that the unemployment rate, which has been at north of 7 percent, 7.5 percent for a long time now—when we add back into that equation the number of people who have either stopped looking for work or who are working part time when they would rather be working full time, the actual number is much higher. We have about 22 million Americans, and the unemployment rate climbs quickly into the double-digit territory when we add those people back. The labor participation rate—which is the number of people in the workforce relative to the number of people who could be—is at the lowest level literally in 35 years.

So we have a historically low labor participation rate, fewer people actually looking for work, some just flat having given up on it. We have a very soft economy. I don't think anybody would describe the economy today as being robust. We have a chronically high unemployment rate, jobs that are being created being part-time jobs, and so we have the overall average household income in this country actually going down. In fact, if we look at the statistics since the President took office, the average household income has gone down by about \$3,700 per family—\$3,700 less income for the average household—\$3,000 higher in health care costs, and we can see how middle-class families are getting increasingly squeezed by what is happening as a result of ObamaCare.

One of the more recent suggestions that came over from the House of Representatives last evening came back with a funding resolution to fund the government and there were a couple of provisions that dealt with some of these more onerous provisions in the ObamaCare law. One had to do with the individual mandate.

The whole theory behind giving people relief from that is to give them the same treatment, to be fair, that employers get. If the President has chosen to waive the employer mandate for big businesses—which he has for 1 year—why then require individuals to have insurance?

There is going to be a significant cost associated when everybody has to buy insurance. It is about a \$12 billion cost to people across this country. The question then is, If you are going to give the temporary relief to the business community, why would you not in a fair way at least make sure individuals are treated the same way?

That seemed to be a pretty compelling argument. If you are going to do something that actually does impact in a favorable way people across this country who are going to be suffering even more from the harmful effects of ObamaCare, it would strike us as at least reasonable to suggest giving a 1-year delay to people under the individual mandate—the same delay the President has given big businesses under the employer mandate.

The other provision attached to the continuing resolution proposal ad-

vanced by the House last night had to do with treating Members of Congress, their staff, and people here in Washington, DC, the same as everybody else. It strikes me again, at least, that if we are going to have these policies, everybody ought to be treated the same way.

Frankly, my hope would be that we could relieve everybody. I would love to see us permanently delay this so that no American would be subject to the harmful impacts and effects of ObamaCare. But for sure, for certain, people here in Washington, DC, should not be exempt. There should not be a separate carve-out or separate treatment for people here in Washington, DC, compared to other people around the country.

So the legislation that came over from the House last night included a 1-year delay in the individual mandate—trying to treat individuals and people across the country the same way as businesses are being treated in terms of the way the law is being applied—and secondly, make sure people here in Washington, DC, Members of Congress and their staff and others, are treated the same way as everybody else around the country. In other words, there is no exemption, there is no carve-out, there is no preferential treatment for people here in Washington, DC. Those were the two things that were attached to the funding resolution last night. That got tabled here in the Senate.

So having sent now three different proposals over, I think the House of Representatives has decided, OK, clearly the Senate doesn't like any of our ideas. Let's get together and have a conference committee.

So that was proposed, and—again, something I have never seen done before—there was a motion to table a request to go to conference. We get a lot of requests to go to conference. Sometimes those are not adhered to, and you have a debate about various conference meetings on various pieces of legislation that we deal with here in Congress. But I have never seen a tabling motion on a request to go to conference. It is a pretty clear indication that the Senate has no interest in resolving this matter; otherwise, they would at least sit down with our counterparts in the House of Representatives and say: What can we do to find that middle ground? What can we do to find that consensus? How can we resolve the differences we have here in a way that will keep the government up and functioning and hopefully provide some relief for people who are struggling under the impacts of ObamaCare?

So that is where we are today. What is interesting about it is our colleagues on the other side, the Democrats—not all of them because they weren't all here at the time, but those who were all voted in favor of ObamaCare. There isn't a single Republican who was here at that time who did, nor are there any here today who would. In fact, every time we have had an opportunity to vote to repeal all or parts of it, every-

body on this side of the aisle has voted for that.

Now, our colleagues on the other side continually hold out this argument that, after all, this is the law of the land. Frankly, they are right. It is the law of the land. But it is pretty obvious that at least in the President's view there are parts of the law that don't need to be applied right away; otherwise, he wouldn't have extended a 1-year delay or a 1-year waiver under the employer mandate.

So it is pretty clear that the President has a different view than perhaps his allies here in the Senate with regard to what that law actually means. He has been perfectly willing on not just that occasion but on other occasions to take portions of a law and not apply them, to waive them and provide exemptions for particular groups of people—namely, those here on Capitol Hill and also big businesses around the country. So there is a very discriminate way in which the President is approaching this law. It seems to me, at least, that in fairness he would give the same favorable treatment to individuals that he has given to big businesses.

The other thing that is really interesting about the folks on the other side of the aisle saying this is the law of the land is that there are many things that are the law of the land. The Budget Act is the law of the land. The Budget Act, which was passed back in the 1970s—1973 or 1974—is the budget law that Congress has been under now for the past almost 40 years. Yet for 3 consecutive years in a row the Democratic majority didn't even pass a budget, didn't move it through the committee, didn't bring it to the floor, just said: We don't need to do it. We will just ignore the law. That happened for 3 years in a row.

So I would suggest that our colleagues on the other side who are quick to say that ObamaCare is the law of the land are very willing, when it serves their purposes or they find it convenient, to completely ignore other laws that have been on the books for a much longer period of time. So that argument really misses the point.

I guess what I would say is that I hope this can be resolved. It needs to be resolved. I think we need to provide some relief for the American people from the impacts of ObamaCare. Clearly, our economy needs a break. The American workers and middle-class families need a break. Employers have already been given a break—big businesses, by the President, have been given a 1-year delay under the law.

Why not apply that to others who are going to be hurt in an equal fashion.

Just to put a fine point on why it is important, we think, to have some delays—today is the day they roll out the exchanges. But if you look at what the reports are about, whether or not those things are ready, up and ready to go, it is pretty clear they are not ready for prime time. We hear about glitches,

which is the President's word—I think that is a kind word—malfunctions, inaccuracies, bumps in the road. We have heard them described all those different ways. But the clear reality is that this thing is not ready for prime time. Why would we not delay it?

There was a story yesterday in the Wall Street Journal and the headline was "Late Snags on Eve of Health Roll-out."

Nonprofit groups and brokers that will help enroll consumers in the marketplaces, known as exchanges, say they haven't yet had a chance to preview the systems. Technical problems have limited certification for some nonprofit workers involved. And some of these groups say they haven't fully staffed up for the influx.

The exchange software that determines whether people get . . . subsidies was returning accurate determinations about two-thirds of the time late Friday, up from less than 50 percent earlier in the week.

At least they are trending in the right direction.

Additionally, one Web broker agreement with CMS to sell Federal exchange health plans, announced that it will not be able to offer those plans on October 1, blaming CMS delays.

The point is this is clearly not ready for prime time. Last week the District of Columbia said they are experiencing a very high error rate. Error rates, malfunctions, inaccuracies, bumps, glitches—these all seem to me to suggest that this is something that needs to be delayed. I think that would make the most sense, given the President has already acknowledged that for big businesses, for employers. It ought to be delayed for a year.

I think there is bipartisan support for giving individuals and families relief just like businesses have been granted. We have a Democratic Senator, a colleague from West Virginia, who said last week a delay for individuals would be very reasonable and sensible. But this week Senate Democrats voted in lockstep with the President and refused to give low-income and middle-class families that same relief that has been provided to big businesses and to some of the President's allies.

We are now in a holding pattern. It seems to me at least that the ball is in the Senate majority leader's court. The House of Representatives has asked for a conference, which has been rejected. The response was we are not going to sit down, we are not going to negotiate this. The President has said we are not going to negotiate. We are not going to sit down. We do not believe there is any room here for negotiation.

I think the American people are going to perceive that to be an unreasonable position because I think most people understand when we come here we have differences of opinion. But the way you resolve those is you sit down and work out those differences. You try to come to some resolution that would allow everybody to move forward.

What we have seen here is that time after time, the House of Representa-

tives has sent to the Senate proposals. Those have been tabled here, and the House has sent back another one. I said three times now that has happened. Finally, the House of Representatives said: OK, we get it. You do not like what we are sending you. Let's sit down and see if we can work this out. Let's have a conference and see if we can work out our differences. That was tabled by the majority leader earlier today.

What is coming out of the White House, what is coming out of the Democrat majority is: Sorry, we don't negotiate. We are not going to sit down. We are not going to try to find common ground. We are not going to try to find a bipartisan solution to this. We are going to have it our way, and you can take it or leave it.

I don't think that is what the American people sent us here to do. I think they sent us here to do the people's business. I said before, when I started my remarks, I believe the American people overwhelmingly dislike ObamaCare and the effect it is having. I think they overwhelmingly believe the government should stay open. I think we can accomplish both of those objectives, hopefully sooner rather than later, if both sides will sit down in good faith and actually try to work out a solution.

That is certainly not going to happen as long as the President continues to stay dug in. It appears he has drawn a line in the sand. That seems to be the tactic and the approach that is being taken by the Senate majority, by the Democratic leader. That is not going to get us to an answer. That is not going to get us to a solution. All that is going to do is to provide even more frustration, even greater disdain and cynicism from the American people when they see the in-fighting that is going on here and a lack of a willingness on the part of the Democratic majority to sit down with House Republicans and figure out what is in the best interests of the American people as we move forward.

I hope we can do better. The American people deserve better. Future generations deserve better from us.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Tennessee.

Mr. ALEXANDER. I ask unanimous consent to speak as in morning business.

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

Mr. ALEXANDER. Madam President, this government shutdown is disappointing to me. It's disappointing to those who are affected by it, and I'm sure it's disappointing to the American people. Because they're seeing their government not function in such a visible way.

What is especially disappointing to me is the unwillingness of the President and Senate Democrats to make a reasonable effort to resolve the real differences of opinion that exist here.

It's not unusual, Madam President, that we have differences of opinion in Washington, DC. In fact, the Founders created a government here with the expectation that it would kick up to the Nation's Capitol the disputes we couldn't resolve in our own families, disputes we couldn't resolve in our city councils, in county commissions, and our State legislatures and State government. And the Founders intended that those disputes, which are in this body, not be resolved easily by creating a system of checks and balances: A Supreme Court, a Presidency, and a Congress.

And by creating, in this body, the rules that make it very difficult to come to a result.

The idea was that we didn't want a king.

A king is efficient. Tyranny is efficient.

Our Founders didn't want that.

They didn't want a despot. They wanted a way to get, eventually, to a result. They sought to avoid the tyranny of the majority by creating these checks and balances and these rules in the Senate. They sought to create a situation where the majority couldn't ride roughshod over the minority.

But I do not think the Founders envisioned a system of checks and balances that produced a permanent stalemate on issues that are important to the American people. Even in the most contentious of issues—and there have been many issues in our history much more contentious than anything we are dealing with today.

They didn't envision that the government would simply shut down or stop operating or stop trying to come to a result. That is why I find the attitude of the President and the Senate Democrats so disappointing.

By any fair measure, the proposals by the Republican House of Representatives to bring this to a solution are reasonable proposals. Let's look at what they've proposed.

They proposed that we continue funding the government. Every single proposal the House has made to this body is that we continue funding the government. And they've proposed that we also, at the same time, No. 1, be fair to the middle class by delaying the individual mandate in the new health care law for a year.

Now, the President has already himself delayed seven major provisions in the new health care law that is supposed to take effect today. These include the employer mandate, which is \$12 billion over 10 years for corporations. Yet the President and Senate Democrats are saying we can give the employers a \$12 billion break by a 1-year delay, but we're going to stick it to the middle class of America by fining them \$95 if they do not buy health care and sending the IRS out to collect it next year if they fail to do it.

What we suggested was, since the President himself has already delayed seven major provisions, since the regulations aren't written, let's also delay

the individual mandate for a year. That would be fair to the middle class.

No. 2, the House has suggested that we can continue funding the government and be fair to those who are ill by repealing the medical device tax. Seventy-nine senators have voted for the medical device tax repeal, including a large number of Democratic senators.

No. 3, the House Republicans have said, let's continue to fund the government and be fair to the American people when it comes to health care. Treat the American people the same way Congress is treated.

And finally, most recently, the House Republicans have said, let's continue to fund the government and can we not just sit down and talk about it? Have a conference?

Which is the way, under our rules established by the Constitution, we're always supposed to resolve disputes. And the answer has been no from the Senate Democrats.

No, to giving the same consideration to the middle class, the people who are required to buy health insurance; no, to giving fairness to those who are ill by repealing the medical device tax; no, to giving fairness to the American people by treating them the same way Congress is treated; and no, to giving fairness to the system in saying can we not just sit down and talk in a conference, which is our way of resolving disputes.

And the answer by the President and the Senate Democrats is no, no, no.

The President's role is to bring us together. He said that during his campaigns. He has a great capacity for persuading the American people that he is right. He seems to be able to talk with the Iranian rulers, but not to the congressional leaders.

Our goal is fairness for the middle class, fairness for the taxpayer.

Our latest offer from the House of Representatives was, let's keep the government running and let's sit down according to our rules and have a conference and talk about it.

This stubbornness in the face of reasonableness will not be good for our country, will not be good for either political party, it will not help us to achieve the kind of result on this and other issues that the Founders intended by creating a system of checks and balances in our democratic form of government.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Maryland.

Mr. CARDIN. I ask unanimous consent to be able to speak as in morning business for up to 10 minutes.

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

Mr. CARDIN. I yield first to the majority leader.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The majority leader is recognized.

Mr. REID. Madam President, the Speaker of the United States House of Representatives holds the key to reopen the Federal Government. It is an

easy key to use. In fact, it is very simple. The key is to allow 435 Members of the House of Representatives to vote to reopen the Government, and do it now. It is not too late to avert the worst economic problems that this shutdown relates to. But you see, I am not the only one calling for the Speaker to open the government. I am not the only one calling on him to do the right thing.

This is what Republican Congressman SCOTT RIGELL, from Virginia said. He said it this morning. It is a direct quote:

We fought the good fight. It is time for a clean CR.

That is a Republican Congressman. If the House votes to reopen the government, Democrats will gladly go to conference. Unfortunately, I read that Speaker BOEHNER and House Republicans are engaging in silly political stunts instead. What he is going to do is have some Republicans, Members of the Congress, sit down for a photo op across from empty chairs. That is really unique. Has that ever been done before? Maybe only five or six thousand times since I have been in Washington. What they are really sitting down to instead of empty chairs is an empty stunt. I say to the House Republicans, it is time for the photo ops and those silly stunts to end. Shutting down the government is not kid stuff. That is kid stuff. Shutting down the government is deadly serious.

The business community has warned of the economic consequences of the shutdown. It is now being proven. For every day the Speaker refuses to use the key to reopen government, it costs the American economy billions of dollars—every day. The solution is as clear this morning as it was last night: Reopen the government. He holds the key to putting millions of public servants back to work. Once that happens we are happy to go to conference. But only if the government is reopened.

ORDER OF PROCEDURE

Madam President, I ask unanimous consent that following the remarks of Senator CARDIN, the Senate recess as provided under the previous order.

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

The Senator from Maryland.

CONTINUING APPROPRIATIONS

Mr. CARDIN. Madam President, I see my colleague from Tennessee just left the floor, and I was listening to his comments. I know he is having a hard time—as many of our Senate colleagues are—understanding or justifying the actions of the Republicans in the House.

Make no mistake about it, this is a House Republican shutdown of the government. The majority leader was talking about the consequences. The House Republicans have tried to hold all of us hostage, but it is not going to work.

When they talk about negotiating, the majority leader is absolutely right: We have tried on numerous occasions to get to a conference on the budget only to find objections from the Republicans to sit around the table to talk about the budget of the country. We are not going to yield to extreme measures. We should have the government open, and then we should be negotiating the issues that are important.

I take this time to talk about our Federal workforce and to talk about the impact this shutdown will have on Federal workers and the people of Maryland and the people of our Nation. I am proud to represent Maryland in the Senate.

Once again Federal workers are going to be asked to make sacrifices on behalf of their country, but this time they don't understand it. This shutdown will have a negative impact on them and on our country. For 3 years Federal workers have been working without a pay increase or an adjustment of salary. I had my staff check some of the statistics on the number of Federal workers we have today compared to the historic numbers. We actually have fewer workers per capita today than we did in the 1950s. We are asking our Federal workforce to do more with less, and we are asking them to continue to work under sequestration when many have been furloughed.

Now our Federal workforce has been furloughed in great numbers and are uncertain as to whether they will receive a paycheck. There are Federal workers who are working today and they don't know when they are going to get their paychecks. It is wrong, and it is going to hurt families. They are going to have to try to figure out how to pay their bills without getting a paycheck.

This goes well beyond the Federal workers themselves. Look at the reductions we see in the Federal workforce here in the Washington area. What do you think is happening to the retail establishments, the small businesses, and our economy? We estimated in Maryland that we would lose \$15 million a day for every day the Federal Government is closed.

Mark Zandi said the impact of a Federal shutdown will increase unemployment by half a percent. In 1995 to 1996, the last time we had a shutdown, OMB estimated it cost the taxpayers \$1.4 billion. This is wasting taxpayers' money, and it is putting people under incredible stress as to how they are going to pay their bills. For what? To move an extreme agenda, to try to see if hostage-taking works in the Congress? This will have a major negative impact on our economy.

The private sector has recently created 7.5 million jobs over the last 42 months. There are more people on private nonfarm payrolls than at any time since September 2008. Jobless claims are close to a 5-year low. The second quarter of 2013 marked nine consecutive quarters of economic