

about whether we are going to keep government open, whether we are going to pay our bills. We must do that for the sake of the people of this country.

I want to mention one other issue. I filed yesterday legislation with many of my colleagues to make it clear that those Federal workers who are furloughed, we are going to fight to do what we did in the 1990s when we went on government shutdown, and pay all Federal workers. They are innocent. They should be made whole. My legislation is cosponsored by many of my colleagues. We have bipartisan support in the House of Representatives. We have to make sure we get that bill passed so every Federal worker is made whole as a result of this shutdown that is not their fault.

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

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The bill clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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 Madam President, I ask unanimous consent the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

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

EXTENSION OF MORNING BUSINESS

Mr. CARDIN. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent that morning business be extended until 5 p.m., and that all provisions under the previous order remain in effect, and that Senator REID be recognized following morning business and that all time spent in quorum calls be equally divided.

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

Mr. CARDIN. I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The bill clerk proceeded to call the roll.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Maryland.

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 Madam President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

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

CONTINUING APPROPRIATIONS

Ms. MIKULSKI. Madam President, I wish to speak as if in morning business and consume as much time as is necessary.

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

Ms. MIKULSKI. Wow, I think we are growing weary. I think we are growing weary of the gridlock, deadlock, and hammer lock on our government. I think we are growing weary of the partisan posturing by one faction in one party in one House. The American people want us to reopen government so that the government can meet the national security needs of the United States, protect the safety of the people of the United States, meet compelling human needs, and do what we can to

create jobs today, such as physical infrastructure, and to lay the groundwork for jobs tomorrow by investing in research and development.

The American people want a government that works as hard as they do, and so do I. Instead of working hard to serve our veterans or our elderly or promoting a growing economy, we are dealing with the shutdown of the government.

The House is sending us bills which on first blush seem attractive. I mean, who doesn't support our National Guard? Who doesn't want to fund NIH? I certainly do. NIH is located in my State. I am so proud of the men and women who work there. Funding also goes to great State universities doing research, such as the University of Wisconsin. They are out there doing it. We cannot cherry-pick. What they are doing now is a public relations ploy.

The House wants to send us cherry-picked solutions to the shutdown problem. It is contrived, and it is cynical. What I am asking the House of Representatives to do is take up the Senate bill we sent them that is a clean continued funding resolution. What does clean mean? It means it is stripped of politically motivated ideological riders.

The second thing is it would fund the government for 6 weeks. In that 6 weeks, it would give us the chance to work out what our funding should be for the rest of the year. I would hope we could find a way to cancel the sequester, which is to reduce public debt without reducing jobs or opportunity, and get us through the debt ceiling. Please—that bill is pending in the House now, and I ask that they do that instead of sending us these piecemeal solutions.

I remind my colleagues that the continuing funding resolution passed the Senate last Friday. It reopens the government, and it gives us the opportunity to renegotiate. I am willing to negotiate, but we can't capitulate to these partisan demands to defund ObamaCare and do other kinds of riders that work against us. To move forward, we need to pass the Senate continuing resolution.

I understand that later today the President is meeting with Speaker BOEHNER, NANCY PELOSI, Majority Leader REID, and Senator MCCONNELL. I hope that wiser heads will now prevail so we can get a path forward to reopen all of government, not just cherry-picked items—many of which are absolutely desirable—and open the entire Federal Government.

I know that the House wants to send something over to reopen NIH. Of course. That's what I just said. But what about the Centers for Disease Control? So we open NIH, but we don't open the Centers for Disease Control. It is an agency that is located in Atlanta, but it is part of our public health triad, which is the work at NIH, the work of the Food and Drug Administration, which stands sentry over the safety of our food supply and the safety and efficacy of our drugs and medical devices,

and then there is the Centers for Disease Control, which is down in Atlanta.

Right this very minute in Atlanta, GA, at the Centers for Disease Control, close to 9,000 people have been furloughed. Furlough is just a nice word that means layoff. It also means that it not only affects the labs in Atlanta, but it also affects labs in Colorado, Ohio, Pennsylvania, and West Virginia.

The work of the CDC is also nationwide because they are our biosurveillance system on infectious diseases. That means that State health departments—all 50 States and the territories—depend on the Centers for Disease Control to track and give them information on what the trends are related to infectious diseases. They are the ones who alert clinicians and pediatricians if there is a new kind of ear infection that could infect children. But because of the government shutdown, there is no one there who can do this.

Earlier this year—to give an example—Hepatitis A sickened 162 people in 10 States. The CDC linked the outbreak to pomegranate seeds coming in from a foreign country in a frozen berry mix. We were able to go right to the private sector. They complied with us right away, and we were able to get that off the market and contain this so it wouldn't spread to other people. They worked with the private sector in order to protect the American people.

Don't we want to reopen CDC? I could go over disease after disease and infection after infection which will not monitored. Let's take the common one, flu. We have all had the sniffles, but the sniffles can also kill people. On average more 200,000 Americans will be hospitalized because of flu and 3,000 Americans die from flu. Vaccines can prevent the flu.

The CDC, the Centers for Disease Control, were out there making sure there was enough vaccine available, that it was being distributed fairly and equitably in the United States, but also watching the infection trends because if a trend was heading to one State or one locale, the public health people could work together in order to accelerate or expand our flu vaccine. This is what they do.

Did you also know that there are disease detectives? Many people don't know that there are disease detectives. So what does Senator BARB mean when she says this?

Sometimes there is an outbreak and people get sick. People even die. They wonder what it is. They dial 911, and there is a group of people who are like a disease identification SWAT team. They work with the best and brightest at that State level, use the best technology in science from our country, and even around the world, to identify what that is. That is how we found out about Legionnaires' disease, and the Hantavirus disease which affected Indian reservations. That is how we

jumped in on the pomegranate seed situation. They get right in there. But you know what. Those people were furloughed. What is this?

Do I want to reopen NIH? I absolutely do, but I am going to talk about the Centers for Disease Control. I could also talk about other Federal employees and what shutting down means. It obviously isn't just public health.

I believe in Social Security. I really do. It has meant so much to so many people. It is one of the great earned benefits in our country. I want to make sure there is no false alarm here: Social Security checks will go out. However, as of this week, the people who work at Social Security, those who oversee eligibility benefits for the elderly and disability benefits for those who are unable to work, have been furloughed. Over the entire United States of America, Social Security has furloughed—there are 18,000 people who work in Social Security offices in local communities that were furloughed.

Social Security is everywhere. They provide access for the American people to apply for their Social Security, to apply for disability benefits, and also to apply for their Medicare—18,000 people. Social Security is headquartered in Maryland. This isn't because it is in Maryland. I know these workers. I know the exams they take to qualify to work for Social Security—whether it is a claims representative or an actuary predicting the trends. Those 18,000 people were proud to work for Social Security and make sure that one of the greatest social insurance programs ever was administered efficiently, effectively, and that the people who were eligible got what they earned.

Did you know that the overhead for running Social Security is less than 2 percent? It is lower than any private insurance company in America. Gosh. So they do it well and they do it smartly. They have been stretched because of sequester, but they are there. Right now, because of what we have been doing, we are only going to further delay these other benefits. So I want to open the doors of Social Security. When people apply, they want to be sure help is there. When people dial, they want people to be there.

That is all, by the way, coming back to NIH and what they want to send over from the House. It is in the Labor-HHS appropriations. That is under my very able subcommittee chairman, Senator TOM HARKIN.

Senator HARKIN has worked very hard on his bill to make sure we meet the needs but we do it in a way that is cost-efficient. Did my colleagues know that because of parliamentary obstructionism, Senator HARKIN has not been able to bring his bill to the floor since 2007—2007, year after year, hearing after hearing. When he wanted to bring up the funding for the Department of HHS, which these agencies are in—Education, as well as the Department of Labor, which has things such as mining safety in it—he could not even bring it

to the floor because they would not let him or it would be filibustered.

While everybody over there is strutting around saying we are going to fund NIH, after we shamed them into it yesterday, what they don't tell us is they can't move the Labor-HHS bill in the House. Do we know why? Because they fund it at \$122 billion. Do we know what level that is? That is the 2003 level. It is not even the 2012 level or the 2010 level. They want to fund it back to George Bush and right around the funding level of 2003. They want to take us back a decade. They want to take us back to the Dark Ages. Well, not in the Senate.

Senator HARKIN wanted to come to the floor with funding at \$164 billion, a slight increase from last year. There is a 42-percent difference between the House and the Senate Labor-HHS bill: \$164 billion to \$122 billion.

I want Senator HARKIN to be able to bring his bill to the floor and debate it. Do we want an NIH? Let's fund it. Do we want a Centers for Disease Control, which is in the State of Georgia, with two excellent Senators from Georgia. Then fund it. Let's debate. Let's discuss. Let's amend. Senator HARKIN cannot even get it to the floor. Over in the House, they can't move it either because the funding for Health and Human Services, Education, and the Department of Labor is at the 2003 level. So while they want to send us an individual bill for an individual agency—for HHS and so on—as desirable as it is, I want to reopen government. That is what the Senate bill is. I want to reopen negotiations. I would like to return to a regular order, where using the parliamentary tools, tactics, and even tricks cannot delay bringing a bill to the floor. Since 2007, Senator HARKIN has not been able to bring a bill to the floor for an open debate, unfettered by filibuster, to be able to discuss this.

So this is what this is all about. This isn't about numbers. This is about meeting compelling human needs. In the Labor-HHS subcommittee, we fund NIH, the Centers for Disease Control, the Social Security Administration, mining safety, Department of Education. This is what we should be working on. We should be working on education, money for the disabled, et cetera.

So I come to the floor again as the chair of the Appropriations Committee. I am proud of the work my subcommittee chairmen have done in getting bills ready to come to the floor for debate by following regular order. I so appreciate the cooperation we have received from the other side of the aisle in our committee. There has been a great sense of cooperation. We have had disputes and disagreements on funding levels and even matters of policy, but I had an open amendment process. Everybody had their say. Everybody had their day. We moved the bills forward. That is called regular order. That is called democracy. Everybody has their day and everybody has their say. But let's move the bill.

So let's reopen government. Let's have a true negotiation. I hope that out of the 5:30 meeting will come a path forward. But we have one now: Pass the Senate resolution in the House, come back, and let's let the work of the Senate and the U.S. Government get going again.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. HEINRICH). The Senator from Wyoming.

Mr. ENZI. Mr. President, I wish to thank the chairman of the Appropriations Committee for her comments and all of the effort she has made and the bipartisan cooperation there has been to get bills to the floor. But we are in kind of a pickle right now. We are talking about a continuing resolution. A continuing resolution means we didn't get our work done. If we had the appropriations bills passed through this body, we wouldn't need a continuing resolution. Every agency would understand what it can spend for the whole next year. Instead, we are quibbling over how long a continuing resolution we ought to have and what ought to be in it.

We haven't done total appropriations by the October 1 deadline for I am not even sure how many years. That would be the answer to what we are going through right now. If we got to debate each of those bills in a timely fashion, with an open amendment process—I appreciate there has been an open amendment process in the committee. I am always disturbed that we haven't had much of an open amendment process around here on the floor. Every time a bill comes to the floor—almost every time a bill comes to the floor—there are negotiations about how many amendments each side can have. I have seen those negotiations go on for 2 weeks. Do you know how many amendments we could vote on in 2 weeks? I think we could probably vote on 50, maybe 100 in 2 weeks. Instead, we don't vote on amendments, which gives everyone the impression, of course, that there isn't an open amendment process.

The longer the stopper is kept in the bottle, the more anger there is around here. I would say there is anger on both sides because both sides have amendments they would like to bring up.

We have to quit dealmaking and start legislating around here. This is the way this process was designed. They had legislation in the committee, but we need to have the ability to legislate on the floor—not allocating something to a few people on both sides of the aisle and both ends of the building to come back with some kind of a proposal by some kind of a fiscal falloff date, and that fiscal falloff date, of course, happens to be in statute that the year begins on October 1. That was yesterday. That is when every agency is supposed to know exactly how much they can spend.

How has that been affecting us? There was a sequester. The interesting thing about the sequester is it was 2.3 percent of the amount of money an

agency, program, department was to get. What did it actually turn out to be? It turned out to be 5.3 percent. Why did it turn out to be 5.3 percent? We were already eight-twelfths of the way through the year before they found out that there was going to be a sequester, that they found out for sure that there was going to be a limitation on their spending. They had already spent one-twelfth of what they spent the year before, each month, during that 8-month period and then found out that for the whole year's worth of revenue that they got—eight-twelfths of what they already spent—they have to take a 2.3-percent cut. That makes it a 5.3 cut. That makes it much more difficult.

Actually, CBO scored my penny plan—that is where we just do a 1-percent reduction in every dollar the U.S. Government spends, with flexibility—and if we add that to the sequester, which would bring it to 3.3 percent, they say the budget would balance in 2 years—2 years we could balance the budget. It hasn't happened for over a decade. It only happened four times, I think, in the last 50 years. But we could do it, and I am pretty sure the people would say if we had our appropriations done timely so the agencies knew what they were doing on October 1 and then had a sequester plus 1 percent, I think they could live with it. I think they could make effective cuts, if they wanted to.

One of our problems around here is that government doesn't usually like to make effective cuts. Government likes to make it hurt. When it hurts, people come back and are very upset at what has been taken away from them. But we have a lot of redundancy in government. We have a lot of waste. We have a lot of programs that are happening in a whole bunch of different agencies, none of which are effective, but we are still doing it everywhere. We could get rid of all that duplication or at least half of it. Half of it is all that could be totally effective and give them a little bit of a bonus for doing it. But we are now at a point where we are going to make it hurt.

There were World War II veterans in town yesterday. They were flown in here so they could see their memorial, a tribute to their tremendous efforts. What did they find? They found barricades. I have been to the World War II Memorial a lot of times. There haven't been any barricades there. I also didn't see another person there if I was there late at night. So what was the purpose of the barricades? We have the national parks. Did the national parks get shut down?

Here is the extreme this is being carried to: Over in Teton National Park they even have barricades at the turnouts. Turnouts can be used to fix a flat tire or get a rest if one is tired of driving. They can also be used to take pictures of gorgeous scenery such as the Tetons. That is what the turnouts are primarily designed for. But how much does it cost us if somebody pulls off

and takes a picture of mountains? How much could that cost us? How much does it save us by putting up barricades so they can't pull off the road? How much did it cost us to put barricades out there so they can't pull off the road and take pictures of the Tetons?

Throughout government, we are trying to make it hurt. We are trying to emphasize to people that we did so poorly they need to suffer, and if they suffer enough, they will get hold of us and make us reverse what we have done. We should have been busy last April working on appropriations and working through that process.

The President is about to leave on a trip. I am not planning on leaving until everything has been cleared up here, and I would suggest that he not do that either.

I got an interesting letter from one of my constituents that says: How does the private sector see the Federal Government? The private sector sees the Federal Government as a wagon being pulled by the private sector, and the wagon is filled with people who work for the Federal Government, and there aren't enough people pulling the wagon and too many people riding in the wagon. He makes quite a point. He does admit that the people riding in the wagon pay taxes too, but he also points out that those taxes came from the private sector to pay the wages from which the taxes are taken. So, yes, there are people riding in the wagon, even though they are working as well, but he is pointing out how the private sector has this extra load and now they are getting a little bit more of a load. He makes the point that we need more people in the private sector and said that maybe the private sector ought to shut down.

What would happen if the private sector shut down? What would happen if trucks did not haul any more goods across this country? What happens if the filling stations do not open? What happens with the myriad of things, groceries, the things we count on every day that come from the private sector? He just wanted me to know he is tired of pulling the wagon with so many people in the wagon.

We have a chance to reduce the load in the wagon, and we ought to take advantage of that, but we are not. We need to take advantage of that in a timely manner, and we need to get this wrapped up and get the government under way so people are not suffering in the "make it hurt atmosphere" we have right now. There is another way to do it. There is a better way to do it. We should have done it. We should have been doing it much earlier.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The majority leader.

Mr. REID. Mr. President, I have great affection for my friend from Wyoming. He is a fine man. I enjoy working with him. I am not going to nitpick what he said, but I am going to direct my attention to one thing he said: Why

didn't we do our appropriations bills? Mr. President, please, I would not expect that coming from him. We have tried. We were filibustered. We tried one here. Remember Transportation appropriations? We got one Republican vote. SUSAN COLLINS. They killed that. So do not come and lecture us on why didn't we do the bills last April.

I have often said I sympathize with JOHN BOEHNER, and I do. He has a very difficult job. Even when the Speaker would prefer to be reasonable, when he would prefer to be the Speaker of the House of Representatives—the whole House, Democrats and Republicans, because that is what he is—instead of just Speaker of the Republicans in the House of Representatives and sometimes appearing to be the Speaker for a minority within his majority—he seems to be kowtowing to everything they ask. This is the tea party. These voices in his caucus push him further and further to the right and over the cliff.

It can be difficult to balance the responsibilities of remaining true to one's party's core beliefs and doing the right thing for the government as a whole.

I would like to give a personal example. I try not to do that often, but I will give one today.

The Presiding Officer was not here during the Iraq war. I did not just oppose it, I thought it was bad for our country. I will give you some reasons why I did not like it at all. I hated it as much as I am sure JOHN BOEHNER dislikes the Affordable Care Act. But even though I voted for the 2002 authorization to confront Saddam Hussein, I quickly was appalled at how that authority was used, and the information that got me to vote for it was absolutely false. There were no clear objectives, not a coherent strategy. No one even knew in the administration the difference between Shias and Sunnis. There was no international support for that.

I spent many, for lack of a better description, gut-wrenching nights and some days trying to figure out what I should do. I was disgusted and mad at President Bush and Republicans in Congress that even one more American would be killed or maimed. I was so angry that I said things I wish I had not. They are in the history books. They are there. Some of my friends on the other side of the aisle, especially JOHN MCCAIN, as he can do, told me how wrong I was in opposing the war.

I thought I would be willing to do anything to stop that war, but I faced a choice in 2007. The Commander in Chief, President George Bush, requested \$93 billion for additional government funding to continue the war. Without that, no more war.

Congress sent President Bush a supplemental appropriations bill that ended his blank check in Iraq. He vetoed that bill. At this point, I could have taken the very same steps Speaker BOEHNER has taken this week. I

could have blocked funding for the Federal Government in order to block funding for that war. I faced immense pressure from the left—moveon.org. Oh, I got thousands and thousands and thousands of e-mails and letters from that organization, from my own base, to do just that.

It was a very difficult choice for me. I could put my own opposition to that senseless war and my fellow Democrats' opposition to the war before everything else. But as the leader of the Senate, I had an obligation to ensure the smooth operation of the Federal Government. I could not do both. I tried to figure out a way to do both. I could not figure out a way because there was no way. I could not do both.

It is a decision I took extremely seriously, as I know anyone else would. In the end, I actually defied the strident voices on the left urging me to stay true to my personal belief that the war in Iraq was an unjust war and that I should end that war at any cost, but I felt I had other responsibilities; one was to make sure our government was funded, that we did not lose face in front of the international community and resort to that kind of extremist legislative tactic. So we funded the government. We funded the war I did not like. My choice made a lot of Democrats very unhappy. It made people on my own staff upset with me, their boss. But looking back on that decision, I came to the right decision, in my own mind.

Today, the country finds itself perhaps in a similar situation. Republicans in Congress, for reasons we have discussed on the floor, are obsessed with ObamaCare. They do not like it. I have no reason to doubt their sincerity. I doubt their logic, but I do not doubt their sincerity when they say they believe the Affordable Care Act is damaging our country. They are wrong. They are wrong now, and time will show how truly wrong they are because millions of Americans, right now today, are already benefiting from this law, and millions more will benefit in the years to come. So when these history books are written that people will read, ObamaCare will be seen as one of the greatest single steps to help America. It is in the same league as Social Security and Medicare and it will provide quality affordable health care for America—all Americans. I understand why my Republican colleagues disagree with what I just said.

Unfortunately, though, when Speaker BOEHNER was faced with the same choice I was faced with in 2007, he made a very different decision. He put his own opposition to ObamaCare and his fellow Republicans' opposition to ObamaCare above all else, even above ensuring the strength of our economy and the smooth operation of this government we love. History will prove that to be shortsighted and wrong. But regardless of right or wrong, our responsibility as leaders is to find a path forward to reopen the government and protect our economy.

So earlier today, at a quarter to 11 or thereabouts—no, it was a quarter to 12 this morning—I offered JOHN BOEHNER, the Speaker of the House of Representatives, a reasonable compromise that respects both of our priorities.

Before the House is a Senate-passed legislative tool to reopen the government. The measure funds the government at the level chosen by not us but the House leaders, a level much lower than I would have chosen or Senator MURRAY would have chosen or the chairman of our Appropriations Committee Senator MIKULSKI would have chosen.

I propose that the Speaker allow this joint resolution to come for a vote before the full House of Representatives. Every Democrat will vote for that over there, and according to news reports, more than 100 House Republicans are prepared to vote for it as well.

In short, what it says is: Reopen the government. Then I, on behalf of the Democratic caucus, commit to name conferees to a budget conference, as the Speaker has requested. This conference can engage on the important fiscal issues facing our Nation. The Speaker has often cited these fiscal issues as the most important challenge to our generation.

A conference will be an appropriate place to have these discussions. In a letter that I wrote to the Speaker, we did not limit what we would talk about in the conference. In fact, I will read parts of this letter:

Now we find ourselves at loggerheads.

I say in the letter to JOHN BOEHNER:

There needs to be a path forward to reopen our Government and protect our economy. This is a communication to you offering a sensible, reasonable compromise.

Before the House you have the Senate-passed measure to reopen the Government, funded at the level that the House chose in its own legislation. I propose that you allow this joint resolution to pass, reopening the Government. And I commit to name conferees to a budget conference, as soon as the Government reopens. That conference can discuss the important fiscal issues facing our Nation. You and your Colleagues have repeatedly cited these fiscal issues as the things on which we need to work. This conference would be an appropriate place to have those discussions, where participants could raise whatever proposals—such as tax reform, health care, agriculture, and certainly discretionary spending like veterans, National Parks, and NIH—they felt appropriate.

That is pretty direct and to the point. These conferees could do whatever they wanted without the threat of a government shutdown and ensuing economic collapse hanging over their heads.

Together, we can end this government shutdown and work to address the important issues facing our Nation. Together, we can work to put our nation on sound fiscal footing by engaging in a responsible, long-term budget process—not 5 weeks like the CR that is now before us.

This morning on the Senate floor I warned of the effects of a Republican

government shutdown that have already come to bear. My colleagues have done this all day about what has this done to Federal employees generally? What has it done to NIH? What has it done to transportation? What has it done to the Centers for Disease Control? And on and on with all these programs that are now stunningly stopped.

There are many unintended consequences of this irresponsible and shortsighted shutdown. It is reckless and irresponsible.

But Speaker BOEHNER can end this Republican government shutdown today. We have given him what he wants. They sent over from the House: Let's go to conference. We are saying: We will go to conference on anything you want to go to conference on.

Defy the strident voices on the right urging you to put your personal beliefs and the beliefs of your caucus before the strength of our economy and the needs of our country.

I ask unanimous consent that the letter to which I referred be printed in the RECORD.

There being no objection, the material was ordered to be printed in the RECORD, as follow:

U.S. SENATE,

Washington, DC, October 2, 2013.

Hon. JOHN BOEHNER,
Speaker, House of Representatives,
Washington, DC.

DEAR MR. SPEAKER: I hated the Iraq war. I think I hated it as much as you hate the Affordable Care Act. Even though I voted in 2002 to give President Bush the authority to confront Saddam Hussein, I became appalled at how that authority was used—without clear objectives, a coherent strategy, or significant international support. There were many gut-wrenching nights when I struggled over what I needed to do to end the carnage. In those days, when President Bush was Commander in Chief, I could have taken the steps that you are taking now to block Government funding in order to gain leverage to end the war. I faced a lot of pressure from my own base to take that action. But I did not do that. I felt that it would have been devastating to America. Therefore, the Government was funded.

Now we find ourselves at loggerheads. There needs to be a path forward to reopen our Government and protect our economy. This is a communication to you offering a sensible, reasonable compromise.

Before the House you have the Senate-passed measure to reopen the Government, funded at the level that the House chose in its own legislation. I propose that you allow this joint resolution to pass, reopening the Government. And I commit to name conferees to a budget conference, as soon as the Government reopens. That conference can discuss the important fiscal issues facing our Nation. You and your Colleagues have repeatedly cited these fiscal issues as the things on which we need to work. This conference would be an appropriate place to have those discussions, where participants could raise whatever proposals—such as tax reform, health care, agriculture, and certainly discretionary spending like veterans, National Parks, and NIH—they felt appropriate.

I hope that we can work together in this fashion. Together, we can end this Government shutdown and work to address the important fiscal issues facing our Nation. I look forward to hearing from you.

Sincerely,

HARRY REID,
United States Senator.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Washington.

Mrs. MURRAY. Mr. President, Democrats and Republicans have some serious differences when it comes to our policies and our values and our priorities. But one thing we should be able to agree on—the bare minimum expected of us in Congress—is that we should not actively allow our constituents to be hurt.

That is why Senate Democrats will be here today with a clear message to Republicans: Open the government. End the shutdown. Allow the government to open, make sure our families and communities that we represent do not have to pay the price for the disagreements we have and then come back to the table and work with us on a long-term budget deal to avoid these constant crises.

Majority Leader REID has made it very clear to Speaker BOEHNER that he is willing to sit down and talk, and I truly hope House Republicans take him up on that.

On Monday night, as the government was shutting down, Speaker BOEHNER and the House Republicans lurched even deeper into the theater of the absurd. I was shocked. I could not believe my ears when I heard, with minutes to go before the shutdown began, Speaker BOEHNER was asking us for a conference on the spending bill. I thought: Is he serious? Is this some kind of joke?

Even by the standards of a party that shut down the government to stop the health care reform law that was going to come online yesterday, no matter what they did, that was bizarre.

I say to Speaker BOEHNER today: Yes, let's start a budget conference. It is a bit late. I have been fighting to start one for 6 months, but better late than never. Let's sit down, let's negotiate, let's work toward the balanced and bipartisan long-term budget deal that our constituents are expecting—a real budget conference, not like the photo op we saw in the House of Representatives yesterday; a budget conference where the two sides can sit at a table, offer some compromises and work toward a balanced and bipartisan long-term budget deal the American people expect.

But there is one condition. It is a reasonable one. It could not be more important. Speaker BOEHNER and the House Republicans should stop allowing our families and our communities to be hurt while we negotiate. They should pass our short-term bill, reopen the government, and then join us at the table for a budget conference where we can work together toward a long-term deal. This is common sense. It is the responsible thing to do. There is absolutely no reason why we should

not get the government back open, right now, while all of us get in a room and work on a deal.

Given that Republicans spent the day yesterday talking about their newfound interest in a conference, I think it would be helpful to go back a bit to remind people who are following us here today how we got to this point.

For 4 years Republicans in the Senate and in the House said it was critical that the Senate pass a budget. They came here to the floor, they blasted out press releases, they made it part of every one of their campaigns across the country.

At the beginning of this year, it seemed that Democrats and Republicans agreed on at least one thing: The budget debate should proceed through regular order. The House was going to pass their budget, the Senate was going to pass ours, and then we were going to get together in a conference room and work out our differences.

Senator MCCONNELL said back then that once the Senate and House passed budgets, “the work of conferencing must begin.” Republicans said a conference was the “best vehicle” for the budget debate “because we are doing it in plain sight.”

I absolutely agree. The Senate Budget Committee wrote our strong pro-growth, pro-middle-class long-term budget. I am sure the hours that we spent debating this budget are not forgotten by anybody on this floor. We spent a week here in an open process debating and voting on amendment after amendment until the very wee hours of the morning. On March 23, the Senate passed our budget. We all remember that. The House, by the way, passed theirs earlier that day.

I thought the next step would be we would go to a conference as quickly as possible. I went to the House Budget Committee chairman, Chairman RYAN. I told him the American people were expecting all of us to get in a room and work it out. I thought it was a no-brainer. We had significant differences between our two budgets, but I was ready to go to work with my colleagues and make compromises.

With 6 months to go before the end of the fiscal year, we had plenty of time. But I was absolutely floored when I heard the House Republicans had changed their mind. They no longer wanted to go to conference. They no longer wanted to follow regular order.

I am sure the idea of debating their budget and having it compared in an open and public forum was pretty unpleasant to them. They knew how unpopular their plans were to end Medicare as we know it and to cut taxes to the rich. But they put it in their budget and now it was their job to negotiate with them.

I came here to the Senate floor and I asked for consent to go to a budget conference. I was joined by Senator REID and many others. We asked to begin bipartisan negotiations. But Senate Republicans said no. We tried again

and again and again. On April 23, we were blocked—April 23, blocked by Senator TOOMEY; on May 6, Senator CRUZ stood up and objected; on May 7, May 8, May 9, May 14, and May 15, Senator MCCONNELL said no; on May 16, Senator LEE said no; on May 21, Senator PAUL blocked our negotiation; May 22, it was Senator RUBIO; May 23, Senator LEE; June 4, Senator RUBIO; June 12, Senator LEE; June 19, Senator TOOMEY; June 26, Senator CRUZ; July 11, Senator RUBIO; July 17, Senator LEE; on August 1, Senator RUBIO blocked us from starting a conference, right before the August recess.

We have come here 18 times. Every single time we tried to get in that room, every time we tried to start a conference and negotiate, Republicans stood and they blocked us.

By the way, it was not just Democrats either. Quite a few of our Senate Republicans joined us in pushing for a conference. My colleague Senator MCCAIN joined Democrats on the floor and said blocking a conference was “incomprehensible” and “insane.”

Senator CORKER said to “keep from appointing conferees is not consistent.”

Senator FLAKE said he “would like to see a conference.”

Republicans offered one excuse after another. By the way, none of them add up. First, they said they wanted a preconference framework, even though that is exactly what a budget is, and was exactly what we were negotiating over.

Then they said they would not allow us to go to conference unless we guaranteed in our budget that the wealthiest Americans and biggest corporations would be protected from paying a penny more in taxes. Then they said they did not want a bipartisan conference to take away the leverage that they would have during a debt ceiling debate. Then they called for a “do-over” of the budget debate, including another 50 hours of debate here on the floor, and a whole new round of unlimited amendments, even after, I will remind all of us, many of them praised the open floor debate that we had during the Senate budget debate.

Their story kept changing. Senator MCCAIN said Republicans’ preconditions and excuses were “absolutely out of line and unprecedented.” Senator COLLINS said that even though there is a lot we do not see eye to eye on, we should at least go to conference and make our best effort to make a deal.

The stalling from some Republicans was, to quote Senators MCCAIN and COLLINS, “a little bit bizarre” and “ironic, to say the least.”

Republicans kept making excuses for stalling. But the bottom line was that after spending years saying the most important thing was for the Senate to pass a budget, once we did, they ran away as quickly as they could. You know, I told Republicans again and again, right here on the Senate floor

and when I talked to them in private, if you do not join us in a conference and give us the time we need to work out a deal, you are going to be pushing us into a completely avoidable crisis. They did not listen. They did not want to conference. They did not want to negotiate. They thought they would have more leverage in a crisis. They were doing everything they could to push us to one. Well, they were right; they pushed us into a crisis. Now families across our country are paying the price.

If Speaker BOEHNER truly wants to negotiate and end this lurching from crisis to crisis, he would let the House vote to keep the government open. It would pass, by the way, with a strong bipartisan vote. Then he would join us at the table in a conference that I have been trying to start for months.

I am going to ask unanimous consent for the 19th time to start a budget conference. To be very clear, this is not a replacement for an immediate end to this shutdown. It would build on a short-term bill to end this crisis. It is not to negotiate a short-term deal while our families and our communities are being hurt by a shutdown. It is to make sure the door is open for long-term negotiations that can start as soon as the threat of a shutdown is taken off the table.

I am hopeful our Republican colleagues on the other side of the aisle who have watched as our constituents look on in amazement at the Senate and House as they say: We were unable to do the job that we have been asked to do, which is to govern the country in a responsible way—I would hope they would take a moment to pause and to say: It is time to stand. It is time to be a leader. It is time to stop holding our country and our communities hostage. It is time to stop putting fear into the lives of so many people. It is time to say, yes, we are going to open the government, we are not going to hold this country hostage, we are going to do our job. That is simply what we are asking to do today, allow the Senate bill to come up for a vote in the House. It will pass. We know we have the votes, Republicans and Democrats together, who want to stop this crisis.

Then we will sit down and do what we have been asked to do by the Republicans for a number of years now, to write a budget, to have the House write a budget and sit down and work out our differences.

I see Senator DURBIN here on the floor. Senator DURBIN worked on the Simpson-Bowles Commission for many years to try and resolve our differences. I think he would agree with me, it is time to get this done.

I see Senator WARNER on the floor right now. He has spent a great deal of time working to get us to a point where we can solve this crisis and have a way to go forward and a path that our country can rely on.

I think many of our colleagues are ready to get past this crisis, are ready

to open the government, and begin the responsible thing of working in the way we are supposed to. I hope they listen to Senator REID and what he offered them today. I hope they do the right thing so families across our country do not have to continue bearing the burden of the Republican Party's dysfunction and division.

With that, I ask unanimous consent that when the Senate receives a message from the House that they have passed H.J. Res. 59, as amended by the Senate, the Senate then proceed to the consideration of Calendar No. 33, H. Con. Res. 25; that the amendment at the desk, which is the text of S. Con. Res. 8, the budget resolution passed by the Senate, be inserted in lieu thereof; that H. Con. Res. 25, as amended, be agreed to, the motion to reconsider be considered made and laid upon the table; that the Senate proceed to a vote on a motion to insist on its amendment, request a conference with the House on the disagreeing votes of the two Houses, and authorize the Chair to appoint conferees on the part of the Senate, with all of the above occurring with no intervening action or debate.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection?

Mr. REID. Mr. President, in a second I am going to ask we go into a quorum call so the Republicans can give this due consideration. I do not want to try to rush into this, so we are going to go into a quorum call, giving the Republicans the opportunity to look at and study this consent agreement.

We have done what we thought the Speaker would want, what the Republican leader would want. We have said we will discuss whatever you want to talk about in the conference. We hope this is something they will accept.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

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

Is there objection to the request of the Senator from Washington?

The Senator from Pennsylvania.

Mr. TOOMEY. Reserving the right to object, I would point out a couple of things I didn't hear in the discussion of the Senator from Washington.

One is the fact that the House has passed three different measures to fund the government. That has already happened. They were sent over here, and each one was rejected by the Senate Democrats, one after another, so that we are now in a government shutdown.

I would also point out that after the Senate Democrats rejected every measure the Republicans sent over to fund the government, the Republican House sent over a measure to go to conference so that we could resolve this problem. I find it a little bit ironic, to say the

least, that our Democratic colleagues are saying: We need to go to conference on the budget resolution. Now, I know the terminology here can get confusing for people, but that is a vehicle that has nothing to do with the immediate problem we have right now, which is the funding of the government, because we don't have a continuing resolution to actually fund the discretionary spending of the government, and that having expired and our Democratic friends having voted down every attempt by the Republicans to fund the government, we are in this bind.

Now we have the unanimous consent request, if I have this right, that says that if the Republicans agree to every demand the Democrats have made beforehand, initially, then and only then would our Democratic friends like to have a conference on the budget. This is what I am hearing.

What I would ask is whether the Senator from Washington would consider a modification to the unanimous consent request, and this would be two things. One would be that they also would agree to go to conference on the CR so we can work out the problem that is preventing us from reopening the government. The other would be that when we go to conference—

Mr. SCHUMER. Would the Senator yield for a clarification?

Mr. TOOMEY. I yield to the Senator.

Mr. SCHUMER. Your request that we go to conference would be while the government is shut down. It doesn't matter in your request whether the government is shut down or not; is that correct?

Mr. TOOMEY. My request is that we try to find a resolution to the shutdown. Go to conference—

Mr. SCHUMER. While the government is shut down?

Mr. TOOMEY. Go immediately, right now. The government is shut down. Let's go right now to conference as the House has requested so that we can reopen the government and can work out an agreement rather than have this impasse. Let's try to break the impasse by trying to go to conference. That would be one condition.

Then I would go back to what our concern has been about the budget conference all along. I have asked unanimous consent to go to conference on the budget. I am a member of the Finance Committee. I would like us to do that. What I have objected to and what many of us have objected to is using it as an opportunity to break the Senate rules and airdrop in a debt ceiling increase without the opportunity to have the 60-vote threshold we ought to have in the Senate if we are going to consider increasing the debt burden on the American people.

I would ask unanimous consent that the Senator from Washington agree to those two modifications.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Does the Senator so modify her request?

Mrs. MURRAY. Mr. President, reserving the right to object, let me

make it very clear that what the Senator from Pennsylvania is asking is that we continue to hold our country, our communities, and our families hostage while they try to get something out of a conference. Mainly, the Senator is talking about saying ObamaCare will be repealed unless we pass a very short-term—a few weeks—continuing resolution. That is completely unacceptable not only to this Senator but to the vast majority of Americans.

The Senator is also saying we can talk while everyone is not at work while the government is shut down. We have been asking to talk for a long time, but the American people deserve to be able to go to work, get their paychecks, and to have our communities and our country running without the threat of this over their heads.

I object to the Senator's request.

I repeat my request that we allow the House to vote on the bill that was sent over to them, that they have the votes on, open the government, and then do as we have asked 19 times, do what the American people expect us to do, which is to go to conference and work out our disagreements.

I renew my original request.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection to the request of the Senator from Washington?

Mr. TOOMEY. The Senator from Washington objects to my request that we go to conference so we can resolve the impasse of the shutdown of government and instead wishes to go to conference on something else, which is the budget resolution, in the event it does not reopen the government.

I object.

Mrs. MURRAY. I object.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Objection is heard.

Mrs. MURRAY. Let me make it clear. The Senator from Washington does not believe we should be negotiating in the dark of night. The government should be open, public, and people should be able to see what we are doing. That is why our unanimous request was so important. I am so disappointed the Republicans are saying: Hold the country hostage. That is the place we are left in.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from New York.

Mr. SCHUMER. I know my colleague from Pennsylvania has gone. Let's clarify a few things because obfuscation is the rule of the day when you are not holding many cards.

First, the Senator from Pennsylvania said they have asked to open the government—they have asked, rather, to go to conference three times and open the government. Yes, they have—if ObamaCare is repealed, if ObamaCare is delayed for 1 year, and if the individual mandate is delayed for 1 year. That is not a request to go to conference. That is saying: Unless I get my way on ObamaCare—which has been voted on by these Chambers, which has been litigated in the election—I am

going to shut the government down. Their position hasn't changed. The bottom line is very simple. The bottom line now is very simple. The bottom line now is, oh, let's go to conference. All of a sudden—sure. Let's go to conference while cancer treatments are being refused. The more we delay, the worse that is. Let's go to conference while veterans' benefits can't be processed, and the more we delay, the more veterans will be hurt. Let's go to conference before 800,000 people get their paychecks, which they need to feed their families. Let's go to conference while the Statue of Liberty is closed and my little sandwich shop nearby is not making any revenue.

Please, I say to my colleague, what the Senator wants to do is use a bludgeon since a small group of tea party fanatics, as they are called, has Speaker BOEHNER in the palm of their hand and they have the power not to fund the government. They say: Until you do what we want, we won't fund the government. So nothing has changed, and there is no concession or willingness to negotiate on a fair basis by the other side—no.

Let me repeat to my colleague from Pennsylvania, you have it backward. You are saying: Let's negotiate, and then we might open the government. The right way to do it is by the resolution offered by the chairwoman of the Budget Committee. Let's open the government, and then we will be happy to sit down and negotiate. That is the fundamental difference here.

On whose side are the American people? Ours—70 to 22. On whose side is every Democrat at each end of Pennsylvania Avenue? Ours, of course. If you look at the quotations in the House and Senate, a large number of votes from the other side of the aisle are on our side too. But because a small number of irresponsible members of the tea party have Speaker BOEHNER in their control right now, we can't succeed. So the tea party shutdown, the shutdown, originated, engineered, and put into place by the tea party with Speaker BOEHNER's fearful acquiescence, is still the law of the day. It will not be for much longer. The pressure from the public, on the economy, and the pressure from Members on the other side of the aisle will increase, and I believe in a short while—in a short while—the other side will have to say: OK, we will fund the government; now let's sit down and talk. That is what Leader REID and Chairwoman MURRAY have simply asked for today. It will just take a few days more, but it will happen.

I wish the other side would acquiesce now because so many innocent millions are being held hostage and being hurt.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The assistant majority leader.

Mr. DURBIN. Mr. President, the unanimous consent request made by the Senator from the State of Washington is eminently sensible. It basi-

cally says: Why hold 800,000 Federal employees hostage while we go about the negotiation of our future budget? The majority leader has made this offer. He has said we are going to go forward. He has offered to Speaker BOEHNER the opportunity—the opportunity—for us to open the government and then get into meaningful negotiations on all of the major issues.

So what do we hear from the Senator from Pennsylvania, Senator TOOMEY? His objection. He wants to continue to keep the government shut down while we are supposed to initiate negotiations. Who pays the price for that? Well, it wouldn't be any Senator. The people who pay a price for it are those 800,000 furloughed employees and all of the people in America who count on their services every single day.

I have said it before, but it bears repeating. Two hundred people were turned away from the National Institutes of Health this week who wanted to enter clinical trials because of a serious life-threatening illness, including 30 children—cancer patients coming to the NIH with their parents for one last hopeful move to save their lives. So the Senator from Pennsylvania says: Sorry, we can't take care of those children. We can't take care of those seriously ill Americans. We have to sit down and negotiate.

It is easy for him, and perhaps easy for others to say it is all about us, but it isn't. It is all about America. It is all about the people we were sent here to represent. It is all about the reputation of this Nation.

What it will take to get beyond this current crisis is very obvious. We have unity on the Democratic side to open the government. We have sent a continuing resolution to the House to do the same. What has to happen now is for moderate Republicans to step forward.

It is interesting to me in the last 48 hours how few have come to the Senate Floor to talk about this issue. Privately they tell me they are torn and worried over what this is doing to our country and what it is doing to their party. But some moderate Republicans in the House of Representatives have spoken. I would like to, if I can, at this point, recount what has been said by some of those who have spoken.

Representative PAT MEEHAN, Republican of Pennsylvania, said:

At this point, I believe it's time for the House to vote for a clean, short-term funding bill to bring the Senate to the table and negotiate a responsible compromise.

A clean short-term funding bill. That has already passed the Senate. It is sitting in the House waiting for the Speaker to call it up.

Representative MIKE FITZPATRICK, another Republican from Pennsylvania. A Fitzpatrick aide tells the Philadelphia Inquirer the Congressman would support a clean funding bill if it came up for a vote.

Representative LOU BARLETTA, Republican of Pennsylvania. Barletta said

he would “absolutely” vote for a clean bill in order to avert a shutdown of the government.

Representative CHARLIE DENT, Republican of Pennsylvania said: “I’m prepared to vote for a clean continuing resolution,” he told the Huffington Post.

In addition to that, Representative JIM GERLACH, another Republican from Pennsylvania, issued a statement saying he would “vote in favor of a so-called clean budget bill.”

The list goes on—and I have mentioned a few on this list: Representative PAT MEEHAN, Republican of Pennsylvania; Representative SCOTT RIGELL—I am sorry if I mispronounced that—Republican of Virginia; Representative JON RUNYAN, Republican of New Jersey; Representative MIKE FITZPATRICK, Republican of Pennsylvania; Representative LOU BARLETTA, Republican of Pennsylvania; Representative PETER KING, Republican of New York; Representative DEVIN NUNES, Republican of California; Representative CHARLIE DENT, Republican of Pennsylvania; Representative FRANK WOLF, Republican of Virginia; Representative MICHAEL GRIMM, Republican of New York; Representative ERIK PAULSEN, Republican of Minnesota; Representative ROB WITTMAN, Republican of Virginia; Representative FRANK LOBIONDO, Republican of New Jersey; Representative RANDY FORBES, Republican of Virginia; Representative JIM GERLACH, Republican of Pennsylvania; Representative LEONARD LANCE, Republican of New Jersey, and Representative MIKE SIMPSON, Republican of Idaho.

Seventeen. Why is that number significant? It takes only two or three more Republican Congressmen—Republican Congressmen—to step up and say they will vote for the CR we sent over from the Senate to reopen the government of the United States of America.

There are six Republican Congressmen in my State of Illinois. I challenge all of them to join this group of their fellow colleagues and Democrats in the House who don’t want to punish America and 800,000 Federal workers.

What is at stake here? It isn’t just bragging rights about how this crisis ends. What is at stake is much more. It even goes beyond the life-and-death situation faced by hundreds at the National Institutes of Health. I am still stunned by what I was told yesterday by Senator FEINSTEIN. It is public knowledge. She announced it on the floor. Seventy-two percent—72 percent—of the civilian workforce in America’s intelligence agencies have been furloughed. What do they do? Well, I will tell you what they do. They listen closely to places and people all around the world to see a threat coming against the United States. They are sent to work each day with the most serious mission of almost anyone working for our government. They are sent there with the mission to avoid the next 9/11, to spare innocent people

across America the possibility of a terrorist attack.

I am not over-dramatizing it. That is what the intelligence agencies are all about every day. Today, almost three out of four of the professional men and women on the civilian side of intelligence are home. They are not listening. They are not watching. They have been sent home by this tea party Republican shutdown. It will only take about 3 more Republican Congressmen to step forward and say: This has to come to an end for the good of our Nation, for the safety of our Nation, and for the future of our economy. That is what we are up against.

What we are trying to do is get the conversation underway to resolve some major issues. I hope we are successful. But in the meantime, let us protect America. Let us serve the people who sent us here. Let us reopen this government as quickly as possible. It has gone on now for a day and a half. It should end this afternoon.

Speaker JOHN BOEHNER has it within his power to end this government shutdown in a matter of minutes—minutes—and then we can start a conversation about the important issues facing us. I think the President is right. We have to do this in a responsible manner and to say once and for all we are not going to hold the American people, the American taxpayers or America’s security, hostage to a political temper tantrum. We have to face our responsibilities honestly and directly.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. COONS). The Senator from Virginia.

Mr. WARNER. Mr. President, I want to thank my colleague, the Senator from Illinois for his comments on this issue. I will comment as well, but I also want to thank the chair of the Budget Committee for asking one more time and saying: Let’s negotiate this.

I think it is important to note, as the Senator from Illinois mentioned, some of the folks who say this is not just about the 800,000 Federal workers who are going on without pay, it is about national security. Seventy-two percent of the folks who work in the intelligence community, who are civilians, are furloughed today. It means our troops in harm’s way are in greater danger. Our embassies are in greater danger, and our country is in greater danger.

I also have heard some remarkable comments from some of our colleagues on the other side about the free enterprise system. I have to say I have spent longer in the free enterprise system than I have in elective office. I can never imagine two businesses that were negotiating saying: We are going to shut down our business rather than negotiate. I mean this really has entered into a new realm of the theater of the absurd.

We think about why so many of those Congressmen from Virginia have stepped up, and it is because this is not

just about the Federal workforce. I point out that today, at NASA Langley, one of our premier research institutions in America, where there are normally 3,500 employees, there are only six working today. But this doesn’t just affect NASA Langley. It affects the gas station nearby, where the folks who go to work at NASA Langley buy gas. It affects the shops and restaurants around there, where people go to eat.

I wonder what the folks who talk about the free enterprise system will say to that motel owner along Skyline Drive in Virginia or outside Yosemite who has a cancellation this weekend. That is not a government worker. That is part of the free enterprise system. No business leader in America, regardless of political stripe, thinks shutting down the Federal Government makes good business sense.

Earlier today, along with my colleagues from Maryland—Senator KING couldn’t be there, but he was very supportive—we brought in some—not faceless budgets but real folks who were directly affected by this shutdown. We had a woman who had worked for the National Science Foundation for close to 40 years, saying she had gone through a \$2,500 hit from furloughs already and was unsure. She hadn’t bought a car last week because this was hanging over her head. She felt she was going to be fine in some way, but she wondered what young scientist would come work in public service today. Again, in a free enterprise system—this is a competitive world—the rest of the world is not going to stop their science, their innovation, their creativity because America can’t get its act together and keep its government operating.

I have been occasionally called by some of my colleagues on this side of the aisle too reflexively bipartisan. There is always both sides of an argument. But on this argument, with these facts, there is no lack of clarity in my mind that holding not just our Federal workforce but the economy of America hostage, and saying that until we get our way we are not going to reopen the largest enterprise in the world—the Federal Government of the United States—is more irresponsible than anything I have seen, not only in my political life but in my business life.

I have had some of the same conversations my colleagues have had, and I know there is a great deal of uneasiness on the other side. I actually don’t believe this is Democrats versus Republicans. We have our bill over on the House side, and I believe, candidly, we will see the majority of the House Republicans join in reopening the government. Then let’s have this kind of very real debate about health care, about tax reform, about getting our country’s balance sheet right.

The notion that we are basically going to affect the lives of 800,000 folks who are furloughed, and countless millions of others who depend on those

services, or countless millions others in the free enterprise system who depend upon our workforce as their customers, is stunningly irresponsible. All of us here say we want our economy to recover. Well, let's get our balance sheet right. But in the meantime, let's open the government. Let these folks get back to their job, and let's have this conference that has been called for 18 different times.

I will close, and I know other folks have mentioned this. No matter what happens going forward, we are going to ask our Federal workforce to do more with less resources. Again, I have spent more time in the private sector than in the public sector. I have built companies. The last thing you do to your workforce, when you are asking them to do more with less, is disrespect them continuously the way we have done to the Federal workforce over the last 3 years—3 years without a pay increase, furloughs, being told that somehow they are riding in the wagon not driving the wagon.

Let me say, as somebody who got here because of a good public school, because of a student loan program, because I had a free enterprise system that allowed me to fail, but then succeed because there was a support system put forward by a Federal Government, I think those folks are pulling that wagon every bit as much as every other American.

I hope we will be able to get not only those folks in the House but others to be willing to say it is time to get this government bill, it is time to have a long overdue conversation about our balance sheet. I appeal to all of my colleagues, let's get this behind us. Please, don't bring somebody down here and say that under the free enterprise system somehow it is rational, logical, or makes good business sense to keep this government shuttered.

Mr. President, I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Iowa.

Mr. HARKIN. Mr. President, first of all, in all this mess there is some good news. The Affordable Care Act is up and running, and the people of America are responding in remarkable numbers.

Remember how the Republicans said this is bad, it is a failure? They kept saying it was a failure even though it had not even started. In the first 24 hours of healthcare.gov being up, the national marketplace, 4.7 million people visited. In California, which has its own State-run marketplace, 5 million people visited that site yesterday. I noted that I heard the Republican leader out here earlier today. In his home state of Kentucky, with 78,000 visitors, they started nearly 4,700 applications and completed more than 2,900 yesterday in the first day.

I think what this all indicates is the American people is hungry to get covered with health insurance. With 30 million people out there without health insurance, with a preexisting condition, or maybe they are ill right

now, maybe they have had other things happen or are out of work—now they can go on the marketplace and get health insurance coverage. And they are flocking to it, because it has been sorely needed for decades.

The Republicans still want to hold the government hostage and defund the Affordable Care Act. I would like to know what the Republican leader might say to those 4,700 people who applied in Kentucky yesterday. And we know it is going to be more as the weeks and months go by. We have 6 months to sign up. But think about those figures just in the first day.

Fifty-five thousand people went to Colorado's exchange and 1,450 created accounts to allow them to start shopping. I mentioned New York. There were 10 million attempts to reach their Web site.

We had some glitches. Yes, some Web sites froze because they didn't expect that many people to come on the first day.

Andrew Stryker was among the first people to purchase health care through the marketplace. Mr. Stryker is 34 years old and lives in Los Angeles where he is a freelancer. He has a pre-existing condition—high blood pressure—and says health insurance companies had denied him coverage on the individual market. He said signing up for coverage through the marketplace will save him over \$6,000 per year when compared with his monthly premium for his COBRA plan. For that, he said, I would have waited all day.

So the Affordable Care Act is up and running, and people all over this country are flocking to it to get the good news that they can get affordable coverage for themselves and their family.

The same is happening in my own State of Iowa, where the plans have come in as some of the lowest in the country.

So that is the good news. The bad news is Republicans here are still trying to stop it before too many people get health insurance because then they know they won't be able to turn it back. The people of America have waited too long to have health insurance coverage for themselves and their families. Now everyone can get health insurance at a price they can afford. So we are going to have health coverage not just for the healthy and the wealthy but for everyone in this country. That is the good news.

We are now in day 2 of the Federal shutdown. If we listen to some Members across the aisle and in the other body, one might get the sense that it is no big deal. The Congressman from my own State said, the sky hasn't fallen. We have had government shutdowns and the sky hasn't fallen, the roof hasn't caved in. No big deal. I may have paraphrased a little bit, but that is basically what he said. They seem to think you can simply turn off the Federal Government for a few days or a month or two and it won't matter. I don't understand this attitude, but it is

what we hear from Members of the other party.

Let me explain what a government shutdown means in the areas I am most familiar with as the chair of the Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions Committee and as chair of the Appropriations Committee that funds those programs.

As of yesterday, the National Institutes of Health stopped enrolling new patients in 497 ongoing clinical research trials. Of those trials, 255 are studying treatments for cancer and 50 involve children with cancer. These are ongoing clinical research trials right now—stopped—50 involving children with cancer. What do you say to those families? Clinical trials can't be completed if they don't have enough patients. But as long as there is a shutdown, the process stops.

I remind everyone, when I am talking about NIH I am not just talking about Bethesda, MD. I am talking about all over this country. NIH funds research and clinical trials in every State in this country. As of yesterday, the NIH began turning away people from its clinical research center. Each week of a shutdown, NIH estimates it will close its doors to 200 new patients who need help. Also yesterday the NIH stopped processing applications for new research grants. These applications are submitted by scientists all over the country, from universities and other places in our States, not just from Bethesda and not just from Washington, DC.

We might say OK, so they have stopped processing new research grants. So what. The sky hasn't fallen, the roof hasn't caved in, according to the Congressman from Iowa. We have no idea which of those grant applications might lead to the next cure for cancer or Alzheimer's or diabetes or might be that one bit of research that fits into that slot where other people can build on it to find cures. But so long as there is a shutdown, none of them will be considered. That is the effect on NIH.

I understand the House is proceeding to some kind of a measure to pass an appropriations measure just for NIH and maybe a couple other things, and they are going to send it over here. Do you know what they are missing if they want to talk about health? They are missing the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

The CDC is the premier public health agency—not just in America but in the world. The people who work there protect America from threats to our health and safety like infectious diseases, chronic diseases, outbreaks of foodborne disease. As of yesterday, the CDC—the premier public health agency in the world—is shut down. All of their labs are closed. The scientists are furloughed. The expert hotlines that physicians and the public call for information are turned off. The emergency operations center is on a skeleton crew for outbreak response. Maybe that

should give us some comfort. But the CDC is not doing any disease monitoring. So who is going to sound the alert if they are not doing the monitoring? I have to add, viruses don't just break out when the government is open.

I will never forget what our former chairman of the Appropriations Committee, and under whom I served some years ago, Mark Hatfield, the great Senator from Oregon, said when he gave his final speech here on the Senate floor. I remember it well. I remember him saying it is not the Russians are coming, the Russians are coming; it is the viruses are coming, the viruses are coming.

Senator Hatfield was looking ahead because he knew what was happening. We know for a fact that the viruses are coming because October is the beginning of flu season. And yet because the government is shut down, there is no one at CDC monitoring influenza.

Why is that important? For most of us, I suppose flu is an inconvenience. For most of us, we can go down here to the doctor's office and get our flu shot. But for many people, flu can be a matter of life and death. More than 200,000 Americans are hospitalized from flu every year. In a mild year, 3,000 Americans who get the flu will die. In a severe year, that toll can rise to almost 50,000.

So right now is precisely when the Center for Disease Control should begin monitoring which strains are circulating across the country, which communities are being hit hardest, so they can isolate it, find out what is happening, and keep it from spreading. As long as there is a shutdown, the CDC is not doing this.

This past April, a new strain of flu, H7N9, appeared in China during their flu season. It is very deadly. Twenty percent of the people who got it died. Thank goodness, we haven't had that outbreak in America; but as long as the CDC is shut down, no one is watching for it. No one is monitoring to see if that strain of flu might cause an outbreak someplace in this country.

I say that to tell people we may think everything is just fine and dandy. My fellow Congressman from Iowa may say, well, the sky hasn't fallen, the roof hasn't caved in. And I hope and pray we don't have an influenza outbreak. I hope and pray we don't have any serious virus outbreaks in the next few days. But viruses don't just wait around for the government to be open.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator has used 10 minutes of his time.

Mr. HARKIN. Under what order are we proceeding?

The PRESIDING OFFICER. There is a unanimous consent agreement that Senators will speak for 10 minutes.

Mr. HARKIN. I have more to say about the Centers for Disease Control, but I guess I will have to seek my 10 minutes later on in the day.

I thank the Chair.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from New Hampshire.

Ms. AYOTTE. Mr. President, if the Senator from Iowa needs a couple of minutes to wrap up, I don't think I will take my whole 10 minutes so I would be happy to cede to him a couple of minutes.

Mr. HARKIN. I thank the Senator. She is very kind. I have at least another 5 to 7 minutes to go. I have some data from CDC that I want to put in. So I thank her very much.

I have been talking about the Centers for Disease Control and what the shutdown means in terms of monitoring outbreaks, food-borne outbreaks, illnesses, virus outbreaks—and that is not happening now.

I want to turn to another thing; that is, what CDC is and how CDC keeps Americans safe every day, and that is in food safety.

The Centers for Disease Control has stopped its epidemiological work to identify potential outbreaks and link the outbreak to a food source. I can't tell you what might be missed while the CDC is shut down. I can give a few examples where recently the CDC has sounded the alarm and kept Americans safe.

Only 12 days ago, 162 people in 10 States became ill with hepatitis A as a result of eating contaminated frozen berries—the kinds of mixed berries you get in the grocery store freezer department. The States are as far apart as Arizona, California, New Jersey, Hawaii, and Wisconsin, but because of the expertise of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, they were able to go out, get this secured, recall the food, and trace it down. They traced it, believe it or not, to some pomegranate seeds that came from Turkey—not America but Turkey. This is another way in which the Centers for Disease Control protects the safety of Americans.

In August cyclospora infected 643 people who ate a particular salad mix in 25 States. A lot of people may remember that. The outbreak was first identified in my home State of Iowa. They immediately called the Centers for Disease Control, and then the CDC got a hold of other States. The next place it popped up was Texas—Iowa, then Texas. They traced it. CDC put its detectives, as I call them, to work. They isolated this salad mix, and it was traced to a place in Mexico. It was recalled. Yes, 643 people got sick, but we stopped it before it spread any further and before anybody died. That is what the CDC did.

Now, because of the government shutdown, CDC has stopped.

I hope there is not another outbreak like this, but one never knows. But the detectives on the CDC epidemiology team are now furloughed. What does that mean for the safety of Americans?

When the Congressman from Iowa on the other side said: Well, you know, the sky hasn't fallen and the roof hasn't caved in because the government has

shut down, implying that it is no big deal, I hope and pray we don't have a virus outbreak, a bacteria outbreak, or a food-borne outbreak such as I just mentioned. Well, will food contamination happen tomorrow? Will a flu outbreak happen this weekend?

I have heard people say: We shouldn't be too concerned about the shutdown. It might last only a few days.

To those I ask, how many days can we afford to lose when a virus emerges? In those few days, how many people will buy and eat a contaminated product? How many more people will catch the flu, West Nile virus, hepatitis or E. coli? I could go on and on. How long can we afford to put a blindfold on the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention?

I am not trying to unduly frighten anybody, but I am telling the facts. What I said here happened recently. This is not mythological. This is not maybe. These things actually happened within the last few weeks in America. People got sick. People lost work.

Again, we have to be concerned. Yes, maybe the sky hasn't fallen or the roof hasn't caved in. Is that what we have to have happen before we reopen the government? I say to that Congressman from Iowa, is that what has to happen—must a lot of people have to get sick, or do lot of people have to die? Then maybe we will say: Oh, I guess now we have to reopen the government. What a terrible way to run a government.

In another area—and again I am talking about things under my jurisdiction as the chair of this committee—the Social Security Administration furloughed 18,000 Federal employees and Social Security officers across the country—29 percent of the agency's workforce.

I suppose some would say: Well, so what. They are just bureaucrats.

Let's take a look at them. Checks will still go out, Social Security checks will still go out, disability and retirement claims will still come in, but that is it. What that will mean is delays in basic services for the 180,000 people who visit a Social Security office every day in America or the 445,000 people who call Social Security offices every day who have a problem, who have a question, maybe a lost card. Need I mention what it means when you have a lost Social Security card, don't have that ID, trying to get some health care services or something else and you don't have your Social Security card? Some 22,000 Americans a day file for retirement benefits. Twelve thousand a day apply for disability benefits.

As I said, Social Security will continue to accept those, but nothing will happen. That means the backlog piles up and piles up and piles up every day. Twenty-two thousand a day file for retirement benefits. They can file it, but nothing happens. So that just builds up day after day after day, and the backlog gets worse.

It already takes about 13 months, on average, to get a decision on an appeal for disability benefits. With this shutdown, it is going to be longer. It is going to be 14 months, 15 months and 18 months, and on and on. If you need a new Social Security card, sorry. As long as there is a shutdown, you can't get one. You cannot get a new Social Security card. If you need to replace your Medicare card, tough luck, you are going to have to wait a long time.

The Department of Labor staff, who investigate worker violations such as wage theft, will be at home instead of on the job. Some worker protection staff are still on the job but they are only looking at the highest risk facilities or responding after an accident has occurred. This isn't acceptable.

Take, for example, MSHA, the Mine Safety Health Administration. It is unable to conduct all of its required inspections because of the shutdown. How many safety and health violations won't be identified and corrected? How many miners are at risk of lifelong injuries and illnesses because of this shutdown?

As someone remarked the other day: You know, these mine operators, they can smell a mine inspector 2 miles away. Well, now, what are these mine operators going to do, when we know what their track record has been in the past, violating safety precautions? When they know they are not going to get inspected, will they ramp up production? They will get as much out of their miners as they can and they won't worry about the safety because the inspectors aren't coming around. How many miners will have their health affected or will be injured? I certainly hope not die, but you never know. That is just at the Department of Labor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. BLUMENTHAL). The Senator has used 10 minutes. I apologize for interrupting him.

Mr. HARKIN. I ask unanimous consent to speak for 10 more minutes.

Mr. President, it is not just our current workforce that is impacted by this stalemate. The government shutdown is also threatening to shut the door at Head Start classrooms. This month, grants for 22 Head Start providers are scheduled to be renewed. These are simply continuations of existing grants. The providers have already enrolled children. But after a shutdown, this funding will be cut off. As a result, 18,000 children and families that those programs serve are going to be losing access to early childhood education services this month—this month—this month.

As I said, I could go on and on, but I just wanted to point out how people are being affected by this shutdown. It may not be visible to all, but it is there, and it is hurtful to them and their families and to our country. This shutdown needs to stop. It is time for cooler heads to prevail. It is time to end this mindless, damaging, preventable shutdown.

There is one simple way to do it. All the Speaker of the House has to do is bring up a clean continuing resolution which is sitting over there right now—bring it to the floor of the House. The votes are there to pass it, and the government will be back in business tomorrow. If he did that, the shutdown would be over, and Americans would know their safety and health—everything from food to illnesses to viruses to bacteria and food safety—will again be protected by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. We would know the research and the operations of the National Institutes of Health will continue. We would know our workers will be safe once again on the job because of the Department of Labor. We would know our Social Security offices will be open and running and will be able to process claims and issue new Social Security cards and Medicare cards.

I just want to make it very clear there are a lot of people being hurt by this. They may not be on the front lines or highly visible, but they are out there and they are being hurt today. It is a shameful, shameful comment on a great nation like ours that we continue this government shutdown, hurting so many people in this country.

With that I yield the floor.

Ms. AYOTTE. Mr. President, as I said before—and I said certainly as I came to this floor last week—governing by crisis is no way to run a government. We simply have to get our act together and work together to get the government funded again, to not lose the forest for the trees in terms of addressing the fiscal challenges our country faces, to come up with a fiscally responsible plan that puts our Nation first and puts us on a path to economic security. And, frankly, we have wasted too much time and energy on political brinkmanship and self-inflicted fiscal crises that also keep us from focusing on the real challenges we face, including our \$17 trillion in debt, an economy that could be much stronger than it is right now to create the best climate for jobs in this country.

As I came to this floor last week, I reiterated my strongly held opposition to ObamaCare because I have seen the impact, hearing from businesses and individuals in New Hampshire concerned about rising health care costs. In New Hampshire, we only have one insurer that will be on the exchange, and 10 of our 26 hospitals will be excluded from the exchange.

But I also said last week that shutting down the government in an attempt to defund ObamaCare was not a winning strategy for success. Why? We have already seen exhibit A why it was not a winning strategy for success—because the government shut down yesterday and the ObamaCare exchanges opened and continued anyway. Why is that? We knew in advance that the Congressional Research Service had told us that the mandatory funding piece that was put in ObamaCare would

continue even if the government were to shut down. We have seen that happen.

While I continue to believe this law is wrong for America because it is causing rising health care costs, because of the notion—in fact, I think it was well said recently by the chairman of the board of trustees of the Frisbie Memorial Hospital, who originally supported the Affordable Care Act but recently came to say: I supported it because we were told we could keep our doctor, and that has turned out to be a lie.

I certainly want to work with my colleagues to do whatever I can to come up with ways that we can repeal ObamaCare, replace it with reforms that are actually going to drive down health care costs, allow people to keep their physicians, and foster more competition in the insurance sector to give people more choice, but we need to end where we are right now. We need to come to a resolution to keep this government funded in a fiscally responsible way.

I am glad congressional leaders are going to speak to the President tonight. We do not need another photo op. What we need is results. We need both sides of the aisle working together to negotiate, to come up with a plan to fund the government, to move forward, to find common ground.

I know there is some common ground in areas of ObamaCare that both sides of the aisle are concerned about—for example, the medical device tax. When we had the budget votes earlier this year, the vote was 79 to 20 to repeal the medical device tax. Members on both sides of the aisle decided that tax was not good for innovation, for jobs, and that it drives up health care costs. That is an area where we have had some common ground in how we can affect this health care law—a health care law I still deeply oppose, but it is time for us to make sure we can get the government funded again.

Why? In my home State of New Hampshire right now, at the Portsmouth Naval Shipyard—one of our Nation's four public shipyards—the skilled workers there are being put in jeopardy. They have a very important function to defend our Nation, to maintain our Virginia-class submarines. Yet, due to the government shutdown, more than 1,700 workers at the Portsmouth Naval Shipyard are being furloughed. Instead of maintaining our submarine fleet and defending our Nation, they are worried about their paychecks. It is wrong.

For our National Guard, more than 330 of our New Hampshire National Guard military technicians are being furloughed. These individuals lost 25 to 30 percent of their pay this summer when they were furloughed because of sequestration. This is no way to treat Americans who are helping defend our country. They play a critical role in the operations of our Guard. Yet we are also being told that the New Hampshire Air National Guard—if they do

not receive more furlough exceptions, they may have to shut down their air-refueling and air-bridge operations to Europe and the Middle East. This is about the defense of our Nation. Many of them canceled their civilian job days at work to come to their drill weekend this weekend, which is now being canceled, so they are losing those days of pay as well.

Yesterday I was answering my phones. I had a constituent call me saying that his family had saved for years for a vacation, that it was going to cost them \$25,000 to \$30,000, and they were at the Grand Canyon. They said: Senator AYOTTE, what is going on? We took our kids out of school for 2 weeks, we saved for years for this vacation, and we cannot go down into the canyon.

We must get this resolved, and we must look for common ground on both sides of the aisle to negotiate this, to get a responsible fiscal plan for the Nation.

By the way, we are fighting about 6 weeks of a continuing resolution right now. Give me a break. We should be looking at long-term funding for this Nation, not 6 weeks. To have this kind of impasse over 6 weeks? I can understand why the American people are frustrated and angry.

All I can say is that tonight, as congressional leaders on both sides of the aisle meet with the President of the United States, we do not need any more posturing. Let's give up the blame game on both sides. No more photo ops. You have all seen enough photo ops at this point. Come out of that meeting with results. Yes, results means that both sides are going to have to negotiate. Both sides are not going to get everything they want, but that is what people do in their daily lives. That is what I know people in New Hampshire do to resolve their differences. That is what the American people expect of us.

I hope this ends soon so we can move forward on behalf of this great Nation.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Vermont.

Mr. LEAHY. On Tuesday at midnight, the Federal Government shut its doors, closed for all but the most essential business concerning national security and the safety of the American people.

Mr. President, you know Vermonters, like Americans in every State and town of this country, are frustrated. They are angry and confused. They have seen Congress's inability to do its job and keep the government running. They have seen us pass a budget—we passed a continuing resolution here in the Senate—and a small group in the House of Representatives, a small group of Republicans said: No, we have to have everything we want or nothing.

Visual consequences of the shutdown can be found around Washington, where museums and national monuments are barricaded. But it is more than just that. It is more than that.

In the States, national parks and national refuges have closed their gates and thousands of Federal offices are shuttered. We heard this morning in the Senate Judiciary Committee from the Director of the National Security Agency, Keith Alexander, that as "each day goes by, the impact and the jeopardy [of a shutdown] to the safety and security of this country will increase." That is true, but the toll of this needless exercise is just beginning to be felt.

While some decry Federal spending as though it were some kind of communicable disease, millions of American families—Republicans, Democrats, Independents—rely on government-supported programs that provide the very lifeline keeping them afloat. Key nutrition programs like the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program support 100,000 Vermonters. Another 1,600 children and families benefit from Head Start. They are the ones who are going to create and run our jobs in the next generation. More than 117,000 seniors are enrolled in Medicare, and close to 200,000 Vermonters are enrolled in Medicaid. These Vermonters will continue to receive assistance through the shutdown, but at what pace, when and for how long is uncertain. They do not know how long this is going to continue.

The shutdown is hurting in other areas, too. Buyers hoping to purchase a home with a loan from the Federal Housing Administration will be turned away. Can you imagine that ripple effect, when real estate has finally started to pick back up?

What they are saying is: oh, the economy; we worry about the economy. They are trying to kill the economy by not letting the Federal Housing Administration work.

Our Nation's readiness to respond is threatened. In Vermont alone, 450 technicians in the National Guard were furloughed yesterday, and another 100 were released from active orders. That has a financial effect, of course, but the national security effects are amazing.

In Vermont we have a lot of agriculture. For farmers in Vermont requiring assistance from the Department of Agriculture, there is no one in the field and no one in the office; over 200 USDA workers—who, especially at this time of the year, are there to help Vermonters—have been forced to close up shop as a result of the shutdown.

WIC, the supplemental food program for pregnant women and young children is 100 percent federally funded; there is only two weeks of funding available in Vermont for the nearly 16,000 participants in the State.

We will say in two weeks, sorry, child, or sorry, pregnant woman, we cannot feed you. Can you just wait until we get our act together? We are eating very well, but could you go without food for a few weeks because we have a few more press conferences and a few more photo ops?

What will happen to them? Our Republican colleagues in the House will not say. They apparently do not care.

Just yesterday, my office heard from one Vermont organization, Rural Edge. With the assistance of the USDA Rural Rental Housing Loan Program, Rural Edge is building much needed affordable rental housing in St. Johnsbury, VT. The time has come for Rural Edge to pay their contractor. They have the money, but nobody is home at USDA's Rural Development office to authorize the payment, and the work is likely to stop. People are apt to be laid off. Winter is going to come, and the time to construct this affordable housing will be lost. This is just one of countless examples of how this needless shutdown has already started to impact my State. Every Senator could tell similar stories.

Many Americans think a government shutdown is a Washington, D.C. problem, and that the hundreds of thousands of Federal workers furloughed live in or near the Nation's capital. Nothing could be further from the truth. Federal agencies operate in all 50 States. We know that. More than 40 Federal agencies operate in Vermont, from the Department of Homeland Security, to the U.S. Postal Service, the Veterans Administration to the Department of Defense, the Department of Agriculture to the Department of Justice.

These agencies employ over over 7,000 people in my little State alone. Nearly 1,000 of these employees reported to work on Tuesday only to receive a furlough notice. These workers and their families are facing an unnecessary financial hardship, all because a handful of ideologues in Washington have elected to shut the government down rather than come to the table to find an acceptable way to pay our bills and respond to the needs of the American people.

These people have families. They have mortgages. They have payments. They have medical expenses. Suddenly, we said: Oh, I am sorry, people; Republicans in the House of Representatives—a small segment of them—are saying, we are making points for our supporters, so tough for you. You are not going to find an acceptable way to pay your bills. We want you to pay your bills; we are just not going to pay ours.

Failing to fund the government does not simply mean Federal workers are furloughed and government programs are suspended. No. Revenue streams for the Federal Government also dry up.

The Department of Education? Nobody is there to collect on defaulted student loans.

The Department of Justice? Civil fraud investigations and litigation, including False Claims Act and fraud cases that bring a lot of money back to the government, are on hold.

They are on hold.

The Internal Revenue Service? Audits that recoup millions in owed taxes

are suspended. Billions of American taxpayers' dollars invested across the country and around the world. A shutdown means no one is home monitoring those investments.

After ping-ponging a continuing resolution back and forth, the House of Representatives has now adopted a piecemeal approach to reopening the government, agency by agency. Cherry-picking the parts of the government they want to fund is no way to fulfill our responsibilities to the American people. Come on.

If they really care about having the government going, they should pass the appropriations bills and go to conference. Let's do it without being filibustered here by some of their same supporters. Go to conference and vote them up or down.

If Republicans in the House were so concerned with staffing our National Parks, they should have passed an Interior appropriations bill which would have funded not only the National Park Service, but also the Environmental Protection Agency, the Forest Service, and other agencies.

They did not.

If Republicans in the House want to address funding for individual agencies, there is a clear path forward. Let's reopen the government and get to the business of passing and conferring appropriations bills in regular order. Let's consider the spending bills that include funding for the National Parks and the Smithsonian, but which also include funding for wildfire prevention and clean drinking water.

Let's consider spending bills that fund the District of Columbia, along with the Treasury and Federal Judiciary.

The Democrats in the Senate have passed a continuing resolution to fund all Federal agencies and would provide us the time needed to consider a path forward over the next 6 weeks. This is a crisis driven by a handful of partisans in the House of Representatives who say: No, we can't do it.

Vote after vote, day after day, the Senate has rejected one flawed House proposal after another, and still the House has not voted on the clean continuing resolution passed by the Senate. For a handful of House members, there is no path to compromise to keep our government running.

We are elected officials sent here to make decisions—not slogans—on behalf of our constituents. We are sent here to make government work for the American people. This Vermonter, like so many others, is sick and tired of the politics-as-usual approach that has led to this shutdown.

Let's come to the table. Let's be grownups and do what we said we ran to do. Let's work together for the good of the American people, reopen the government, and find a responsible and reasonable way to get our fiscal house in order.

It's time for each of us to be a leader, not a sloganeer.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Indiana.

Mr. COATS. Mr. President, today is day 2 of the ongoing government shutdown, and negotiations to find a resolution to our differences remain at a stalemate. Actually, I don't think we can use the word "negotiations" because you really can't negotiate if there is only one side at the table. It takes two parties, and there is only one party there. Yesterday Majority Leader REID made it crystal clear when he blocked the House Republican proposal to sit down and talk. For months we have heard that Republicans need to sit down and talk—from the Senate. The House sent over a bill to do just that, and the majority leader blocked that.

To say that the people in my State are frustrated with this type of action is an understatement. Hoosiers and Americans are tired of the ongoing dysfunction in Washington and the inability of Congress and this administration to do our job. We can't do our jobs if we are not talking to each other and if the White House continues to be absent.

I recently learned that the President has called congressional leaders from both parties to come to the White House. I initially thought that was a positive step, but then I heard the news that the White House has already released a statement saying the President is doing this to reiterate he will not negotiate. So my question is: What is the point? Maybe it is a chance for a photo opportunity, but certainly no progress will be made on the stalemate we are addressing today, tomorrow, and perhaps for weeks ahead.

It is ironic that the President is willing to talk and negotiate with the President of Iran or the President of Russia but is unwilling to negotiate with Republicans or Democrats in the Congress. Sadly, this has been the model over at the White House—continued campaigning, ignoring governing, and assembling pseudo-campaign-like settings to blast Republicans. This is not a helpful strategy to achieve a resolution to this shutdown.

We have seen a series of attempts by House Republicans to send over legislation that would at least fund some of the more dysfunctional effects of a shutdown. Fortunately, we agreed we will fund our troops. They are in harm's way. They have families at home who are trying to pay the mortgage, keep things together, buy food for the kids, save money for their education. They do all of those things while their spouses are overseas defending our country. It would be unconscionable to stop their paychecks, and that is the positive step we have taken.

House Republicans have also offered a number of other initiatives—all of which has been deep-sixed by the majority leader. They are not even allowing debate—we can do that in this morning business time—under the bill. We simply have a motion to table

which does not even allow us an up-or-down vote.

I wish to mention two things that the House is going to send over—and it may already be here—which is five more proposals and they also involve our uniformed soldiers. I am a U.S. Army veteran, but I think every American—whether you are a Democrat or Republican, veteran or not—would agree we have a duty to remember, honor, and support those who have sacrificed so much to protect and defend our country. When they complete their service and come home, those veterans deserve to receive the care and support they need.

The House has sent over an act called Honoring Our Promise to America's Veterans Act. It is a bill that would provide funding for disability payments, the GI bill, education, training, and VA home loans under the same conditions as in effect at the end of the just completed fiscal year.

This legislation needs to be brought before us. It needs to be debated, and it needs to be passed—hopefully unanimously. I am asking the majority leader not to deep-six this legislation. This is too important for our veterans, it is needed, and it should be funded. Any attempt to deny this, I believe, would be a great disservice to the men and women who dedicated so much and put themselves at so great a risk to serve in our military.

Another one of those proposals—and there are five, but I will just talk about two—is the Pay Our Guard and Reserve Act. The bill provides funding for the pay and allowances of military personnel in the Reserve component who are scheduled to report for duty—many as early as this weekend. In Indiana, we have over 20,000 reservists and guardsmen. It is the fourth largest Army National Guard in the country and the sixth largest National Guard Force out of all of the 54 States, provinces, and territories when it is combined with the Air National Guard.

Indiana is home to two Air National Guard wings: the 122nd Fighter Wing in Fort Wayne and the 181st Intelligence Wing in Terre Haute, as well as the 434th Air Refueling Wing at Grissom Air Reserve Base.

The Senate unanimously approved to pay our troops and remove them from the crossfire of the government shutdown debate. Let's do the same for our reservists and guardsmen who are doing their traditional duty of one weekend a month for, as Winston Churchill said, "They are twice the citizen."

Some things simply need to rise above politics. Let's join together, address this issue, and make sure the men and women who have served our country do not pay the price for Washington's failure to govern.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Georgia.

Mr. ISAKSON. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that immediately

following my remarks, the Senator from Vermont, Mr. SANDERS, be recognized.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, so ordered.

TRIBUTE TO CHRIS CARR

Mr. ISAKSON. Mr. President, I rise not to talk about ObamaCare, not to talk about a shutdown, not to talk about the debate we have been going through the last couple of days but, rather, I rise to talk about a man by the name of Chris Carr, who is my chief of staff and has been my chief of staff since I have been in the Senate.

Chris will be leaving my office on November 1 to become the commissioner of economic development in the State of Georgia. It is a tremendous opportunity for him and my State. While it is a loss for me personally, it is a continuation of economic development in my State, where my fingerprint still lies because he will be replacing my former State director, Chris Cummiskey, who has been the commissioner of economic development in the State of Georgia, which means I will still have that fingerprint there.

Chris is a very special person who deserves a tribute on the floor of the Senate for all he has done for me, not just as a Member of the Senate or as my chief of staff but as a deep and abiding personal friend.

Chris joined me in 2003 when I announced I was going to run to replace Zell Miller, who retired as a Senator from Georgia. Before that, Chris had been an attorney at Alston & Bird for what he always refers to as a 15-minute brief time of period. But he went on from there to be an adviser to the Georgia Public Policy Foundation, and a dear friend of ours by the name of T. Rogers Wade, who, by the way, was the executive director for Herman Talmadge and chief of staff years ago in the Senate.

Chris joined me in 2003 for a great adventure—my race for the Senate. He guided us through a primary a lot of people said I couldn't win and a lot of people said I would never win without a runoff. My two opponents were a former Congressman from the State of Georgia and Herman Cain, who everybody knows later ran for President of the United States.

Georgia is a primary State that requires 50 percent plus 1 in terms of votes. So we had to get 50 percent plus 1 in a Republican primary. We did that without a runoff because of Chris's leadership, his dynamics, and his hard work in how he guided that campaign.

We won the general election by 58.8 percent. I brought Chris to Washington, DC, to be my chief of staff in my office, and he has done a phenomenal job. He has traveled with me to Africa—as the Presiding Officer knows because he has been with us on some of these trips. He has guided me through difficult times in my journey from the Foreign Relations Committee

to the Finance Committee to the Commerce Committee. He has been a great guiding hand.

Most important, he brought together a staff that has been loyal, dedicated, and gotten the job done for the people of the State of Georgia.

Chris is a great Georgian. He is what we refer to in our State as a “double dawg.” He graduated with his undergraduate degree from the University of Georgia—which I might add beat LSU very handily last Saturday—and then went to law school at the University of Georgia to get his second degree, a bachelor of law degree from the University of Georgia.

After that he went on, as I said, to Austin & Bird, and then to the Public Policy Foundation, but he has been with me ever since—almost a decade. During that period of time, he has served me as chief of staff. My deputy chief of staff, Joan Kirchner, will be replacing him as chief of staff, so we will have a continuity of service in our office.

I know I would not be where I am today if it weren't for Chris Carr. I know the State of Georgia is going to go places it never thought it would go because of his guiding leadership as commissioner of economic development.

So for a brief minute on the floor of the Senate, I wish to pay tribute to a friend, a chief of staff, a leader, someone who has had a positive influence on my life but, most importantly has had a positive influence on his country, the United States America.

I am thankful to Chris Carr for his support and thankful for all he has done for my State, my country, and our office.

I yield back my time and defer to the Senator from Vermont.

Mr. SANDERS. I thank the Senator from Georgia for yielding, and I ask unanimous consent to address the Senate.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. BROWN). Without objection, it is so ordered.

The Senator from Vermont.

CONTINUING APPROPRIATIONS

Mr. SANDERS. Mr. President, in Vermont and all across this country there is huge frustration with what is going on in Washington. It is clear to me that with the middle class of this country disappearing, with millions of Americans working longer hours for lower wages, with poverty today at an alltime high in terms of the number of people living in poverty, with young people graduating college deeply in debt and others not having the resources to go to college, with real unemployment at close to 14 percent, youth unemployment higher than that, minority unemployment very high, an infrastructure that is collapsing, with the IPCC, the scientists all over the world who are studying global warming and telling us we have a planetary cri-

sis that must be addressed by cutting greenhouse gas emissions, what people are seeing is that we have all these problems affecting them, their kids, and the planet, and in the Congress we cannot even get a budget passed.

People are angry in Vermont and across the country and they are frustrated. I know many people are saying a plague on everybody; you people are all terrible.

I just hope we can go a little bit beyond that and try to understand, in fact, what is happening and what the cause of this terrible government shutdown is and why 800,000 decent people who happen to work for the Federal Government are not at work, are not earning a paycheck, and are scared to death about how they are going to provide for their families or take care of other basic needs.

How did it happen? I think, very simply, what we should understand is that the Senate passed a conservative budget—continuing resolution—until November 15. It was much lower than I had wanted. In fact, it is a Republican budget. It includes this terrible sequestration—something I strongly opposed—that was passed as a compromise gesture, and it was sent to the House.

Here is the most important point people need to understand in terms of what is going on in Congress: Right now, according to a very knowledgeable source, the House of Representatives has the votes to pass a clean continuing resolution, the bill that was passed in the Senate. They have the votes. It is not a question of the Speaker coming forward and saying: Gee, I just don't have the votes. They have the votes.

The political problem is that the Speaker of the House of Representatives has chosen to be the Speaker of the Republican Party, not of the whole House of Representatives. What is happening is he has 30 or 40 extreme right-wing people who are absolutely insistent that they want to repeal or defund the Affordable Care Act, or ObamaCare. The only way they will support any budget is if there is language in it that defunds ObamaCare.

The reason we cannot support that language is not just because ObamaCare was passed close to 4 years ago and signed by the President and it is the law of the land, it is not just because the U.S. Supreme Court ruled that it was constitutional, it is not just because there was an election held last year in November in which this was perhaps the major issue and the President won reelection by 5 million votes—and in the Senate the Republicans lost two seats and in the House they lost some seats—the real reason we cannot accept that language is that we would begin to accept a terrible precedent.

What the precedent would be is that it doesn't matter what happens in an election. It doesn't matter what happens in terms of the normal legislative