

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

process of the Congress. What we would be saying is that a small group of people can blackmail the American people and hold the American people hostage unless they get their way.

If they are successful in succeeding in terms of what they want to do right now, I can absolutely guarantee that in 2 weeks, when this Congress and the White House are going to have to deal with the debt ceiling and the question of whether, for the first time in the history of the United States of America, we do not pay our bills, the money we owe, we could drive the American financial system and the world's financial system into what economists are describing as a catastrophic situation. Nobody knows what will happen. It has never occurred before, that the largest economy in the world would say, We are deadbeats; we are not paying our bills. But some economists believe this could have a huge impact all over the world: financial chaos, significant shrinkage of GDPs all over the world—gross domestic products—more and more unemployment, at a moment when the world's financial system is already fragile.

People don't have to believe BERNIE SANDERS in saying that. Ironically, we have all of these guys on Wall Street—no friends of mine. We have the Chamber of Commerce and all the multizillion-dollar businesses, saying to the Republicans: Don't do it. Don't take us over the edge; it will have a catastrophic impact on the economy.

When we talk about what is going on here, I don't want people to take my word for it. I have a political position and people know what that is. But I want you to hear what some responsible Republicans are saying about the reckless actions taking place in the House. I am not going to read them all, but let me read just a few. These statements are what Republicans are saying about the House Republican attempt to attach ObamaCare to the budget resolution and bring the U.S. Government to a shutdown.

SAXBY CHAMBLISS, Republican Senator from the State of Georgia, who is no friend of ObamaCare, says:

I'd love to defund ObamaCare too, but shutting down the government and playing into the hands of the President politically is not the right thing to do. Plus, it is going to do great harm on the American people if we pursue that course. We have been there; it didn't work.

DAN COATS, Republican from Indiana, on the floor a moment ago:

Here's the hard truth. President Obama will not overturn his signature legislation so long as he is President and the Democrats have control of the Senate. Along with these political realities, refusing to pass legislation to keep the government funded will not stop ObamaCare from going into effect.

Representative PETER KING, Republican from New York, in the House:

We should not be closing down the government under any circumstances. That doesn't work. It's wrong, and you know, ObamaCare care passed. We have to try to defund it. We have to try to find ways to repeal it, but the

fact is we shouldn't be using it as a threat to shut down the government.

Many more Republicans are saying the same.

What we believe right now is that a significant majority in the House of Representatives today is prepared to end the shutdown if the Speaker will give them the opportunity.

Interestingly enough, while we have great discussions here about ObamaCare and many of my Republican friends come to the floor to say how terrible it is, the American people are today in a sense voicing their opinion on ObamaCare all over this country—in their homes and in their offices all across America. Nationally, more than 10 million Americans have gone onto the Web site healthcare.gov and other Web sites to look for affordable health insurance plans under ObamaCare or to receive more information—10 million Americans in a 2-day period.

The truth of the matter is 48 million Americans have no health insurance—something my Republican friends forget. Many of them are paying much more than they can afford for health insurance. So, yes, people want an opportunity to get insurance if they don't have it and they want an opportunity to get more affordable insurance if they can. So while these guys are talking about ending ObamaCare, millions and millions of people all across the country are trying to find out how they can get into the program, and these guys are saying, Well, we don't care what millions of people want; we are going to defund it.

I mentioned 10 million people have gone to the Federal Web site. In my small State of Vermont, more than 13,000 people have visited our Affordable Care Act Web site. California, if we can believe this—one State—has reported 5 million visits to its Affordable Care Act Web site. In Kentucky, more than 78,000 visitors have gone to its Affordable Care Act Web site. Importantly, Kentucky is the only State in the South that has chosen to participate fully in ObamaCare by both expanding Medicaid and operating a State-level health insurance exchange.

In New York State, almost 10 million people visited the Web site on the first day.

So, to nobody's surprise, if people don't have any health insurance, or if people today have health insurance they cannot afford, and they are given an opportunity to come into a program which provides them with some help, people are taking advantage of it.

As millions and millions of people are trying to figure out how they can get into the system, we have our Republican friends over in the House who are saying, No, we want to defund it; we don't want to give people that opportunity.

There is a Web site called nationofchange.org, a very good Web site. I wish to read some of the headlines they have assembled about how

people are responding to the Affordable Care Act. In Connecticut: "Health Care Plans Begin: 28,000-plus Go Online to State Marketplace."

Georgia: "Enrollment Sites Are Swamped On First Day," according to the Augusta Chronicle.

Idaho: "Idaho Health Exchange Launches With Few Hiccups," Idaho Statesman.

Indiana: "Insurance Marketplace Draws Strong Early Interest," from Journal and Courier.

Kentucky: "Kynect Opens To High Demand," the Courier-Journal.

Maine: "Insurance Marketplace Opens To Flood of Interest."

Delaware: "Off And Running In New Market: Website Overwhelmed On First Day Of Access."

Michigan: "Insurance Exchange Debut Draws Millions," the Detroit News.

New Mexico: "ObamaCare: Plenty Of Interest, a Bevy Of Computer Snags."

On and on and on.

Colorado: "Heavy Traffic Slows Health Website On Debut Day."

All across the country, to nobody's great surprise, people who have no health insurance are saying, Yes, we don't want to go throughout life worrying about whether we are going to go bankrupt or whether we are going to be able to go to a doctor, and they are trying to get more information about the Affordable Care Act, and they are signing up in huge numbers—higher than people had anticipated.

Our Republican friends in the House are saying, We don't care that on the first day 10 million people expressed interest in this legislation. We want to end it. We want to end it.

It passed. It is the law. Millions of people are signing up, gaining information. And they are saying, We will continue to shut down the U.S. Government, deny a paycheck to 800,000 American workers; we don't care what happens to them, unless we get our way. And right here in the Senate—and in the House—we have sensible Republicans who are saying what is obvious: You don't have to agree with ObamaCare. I don't agree with ObamaCare. I think it needs to be improved. I believe in a Medicare-for-all, single-payer program. But at least ObamaCare is providing health insurance to some 20 million Americans today who do not have it.

I think it is important to make a point that is not being made often enough in terms of putting what is going on today with this shutdown in a broader context. Of course we can have an argument over ObamaCare. I don't think it is perfect; I want to see it improved. But where our extreme right-wing friends in the House are coming from is a lot more than trying to end ObamaCare. Everybody needs to understand this, and I think there is too little discussion on this issue. What we are looking at is a small group of people—these are tea party folks, right-wing extremist people—people who are

funded by billionaires such as the Koch brothers who are worth some \$71 billion, and I want to tell my colleagues what their vision is for America, because this is not just about ObamaCare. It is a vision for America and what these guys want to accomplish. For them, I should say—and some of them have been quite public about it—shutting down the government is great. It is great because they don't believe in the concept of government.

I think one of the good sources we can use to get a clue as to where these rightwing extremists are coming from is the Texas Republican Party platform of 2010. I want to use that. I could use other sources, but Texas is a very large State. Texas is today controlled by very conservative Republicans. And the truth is that the party platform of Texas, of one State, ends up being the—the ideas in it end up being adopted more or less by Republicans here in the Congress and all over the country. What they say is—this is not some small fringe group. I am not finding some whacko group out there. This is the State of Texas Republican Party platform of 2012.

I want to be very clear in telling my colleagues what this platform they have is about. These are the ideas by and large that our rightwing extremist friends believe in. It is about a lot more than ObamaCare. This is what the 2012 Republican Party platform states:

We support an immediate and orderly transition to a system of private pensions based on the concept of individual retirement accounts, and gradually phasing out the Social Security tax.

Well, if we phase out the Social Security tax, we are ending Social Security. Goodbye, Social Security. In my view, Social Security is probably the most important program ever passed by this U.S. Government. Today, over 50 million people are in the Social Security system. Social Security has gone a very long way in lowering poverty for senior citizens. Before Social Security, it was close to 50 percent; now it is somewhere around 10 percent. We have a long way to go to get that number lower, but we have made real progress.

What they are saying is they want to eliminate Social Security funding, eliminate Social Security, and when they do that, I am not quite sure what happens to a working person when that person is 67, 68, 75 years of age. No Social Security. And for people who doubt me, go to the Texas Republican Party platform. I just read exactly their quote.

This is the other thing they want to do—and I speak now as the proud chairman of the Senate Committee on Veterans' Affairs. We have oversight over what the Veterans' Administration is doing. Within the Veterans' Administration right now, we have about 152 VA hospitals, we have some 900 community-based outreach clinics, we have hundreds of vet centers. In my

view, they are providing not perfect but pretty good health care for the veterans of America, some 6 million of whom are now within the VA health care system. It is something I believe we should expand. I think we should make VA health care available to every veteran in this country.

This is what the Texas Republican Party platform says:

We support the privatization of veteran's healthcare.

I am not quite sure what that means, but it means ending the VA system as we know it because the VA is a government-funded system. If you privatize it—you can do it in a million ways—but, most likely, it sounds to me as though you would give veterans a voucher, something similar to what the Republicans in the House wanted to do with Medicare. Give people a sum of money. Go out, find the doctor or hospital you need. I think that is a terrible idea for the veterans of this country. But, again, I quote the Texas Republican Party platform of 2012:

We support the privatization of veteran's healthcare.

Another plank in terms of what they want:

We support abolishing all federal agencies whose activities are not specifically enumerated in the Constitution; including the Departments of Education and Energy.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator's time has expired.

Mr. SANDERS. Did I have a time limit? I was not aware there was a time limit.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The only time remaining is for Republicans.

Mr. SANDERS. I see. Let me conclude, if I may. I ask unanimous consent for 2 additional minutes.

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

Mr. SANDERS. Let me say this: This debate is a lot bigger than whether the Republicans are successful in shutting down the government because of their insistence that ObamaCare be defunded. This debate is about whether a minority of the people in the House of Representatives is able to blackmail and hold hostage the American people and the U.S. Congress and the President and say: If we do not get our way, we do not care what happens to 800,000 workers and the millions of people who depend on government services. We do not care. It is our way or the highway. And in 2 weeks, these same people, I assure you, will be saying: We do not care if there is an international financial collapse, maybe the loss of millions of jobs. We do not care unless we get our way.

To surrender to that approach would be a horrible precedent because I can guarantee you absolutely that if we move down that path of government, they will be back again and again, and maybe next year it is: We are going to shut down the government unless you abolish Social Security; we are going to shut down the government unless you end the concept of the minimum

wage because we do not believe in the minimum wage.

I hope that Speaker BOEHNER becomes the Speaker of the U.S. House of Representatives and not just for the Republican Party. Let the Members of the House vote. And if they do, I believe this government will be reopened within hours.

With that, I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator's time has expired.

The Senator from Oklahoma is recognized.

Mr. COBURN. Mr. President, I will respond to a couple points my colleague from Vermont referred to. If one looks at the votes on everything that has come to the Senate thus far, I think the lowest vote total was 221, which is a majority of the House. A majority of the House spoke. What we do with it is our business here in the Senate. So it is not necessarily a minority of the minority. If it were, you would not have 221 votes. That is the first point I make.

The second: I do not know what the Texas Republican Party's platform is. But yours truly has thought that one of the things we ought to do for veterans is to give them real health care rather than promise them health care and then make them travel 200 miles to get it.

So part of privatization is giving veterans who have service-connected health care available to them a card that says you can go wherever you want so you do not have to travel—like in Oklahoma, if you are going to have a knee operation—145 miles to the VA center in Oklahoma City. You can actually get it done by an orthopedist who has a whole lot more experience than a local hospital, paid for at Medicare rates.

So the point is, there are options that will give our veterans better access than they have now. I do not know if that is what they are talking about. But that was part of the Patient's Choice Act that was never considered by the Senate.

I want to spend some time talking about where we are and why we are here, and then I want to talk about the continuing resolution, whether it has something attached to it or not.

As I look at the process, what I see us stuck on has to do with a principle that has been true throughout our Nation. When you do big things in government, the only way those things are successful is when they are done in a bipartisan manner. To quote Daniel Patrick Moynihan: Historic laws don't pass barely. They pass 70-to-30 or they fail. They either fail in implementation or they fail in acceptance by the American public.

I applaud the vigor of my friends in opposing the Affordable Care Act. As a practicing physician, I see what this is ultimately going to do. As the majority leader has spoken, the whole idea behind this—and I think my colleague from Vermont would concur—is for a

single-payer government system as a better solution.

Certainly what we had was not working well. I would not disagree with that. But not having a bipartisan health care bill, rather than a strictly partisan health care bill, has probably instigated a lot of the problems we have with this bill, besides the fact that over 62 percent of the American public do not favor this bill. They do not want the Government shutdown over it. That is obvious. But we are where we are.

One of the reasons we are where we are is failed leadership, both by Republicans and Democrats, and a polarization in our country that is not healthy.

So we have now said—with 800,000 employees on furlough, having a real but small negative effect on our economy—what has to happen when you have people far apart? What you have to have is leadership that says: I am going to try to solve this problem by brokering toward the middle. I do not know what that middle is. But what I have not seen yet in the leadership, including the President, is a willingness to find the common ground that will move us in a direction that puts us where we need to be.

The thing we forget too often in the Senate is that we are all Americans, every one of us. What we do up here matters. It has a profound effect on individual lives. The fact that we find ourselves unable to come to a consensus on this very difficult subject is what happens when you have an absence of leadership.

So it is great that the President is meeting or has met with the leaders of the House and the Senate. It would be great if they spent time working on a solution rather than giving press reports after the meeting. It would be good for all Americans if we were not in a government shutdown.

The very premise that you can get the President and those who have foisted the Affordable Care Act—which I think will be highly unaffordable for our children and us—to change this law at this time is probably not going to happen.

But there has to be a way for a continuation of dialog rather than to say: We will not consider anything. So the House today is going to offer up several bills that will actually take care of very great necessities of this country. It will be unfortunate if we do not consider them. We can vote them down. But not considering is not talking. It is not reaching across and trying to find a solution. It is hardening positions.

I would think the American people would want us to take a timeout and say: What are you doing? What is your job? I recently got a letter from the Liberty Foundation of America, from a man I greatly respect, Dr. David Brown, a renowned orthopedist in Oklahoma. What he is saying to people in America today is a recognition of the failure of our leadership.

I ask unanimous consent his letter be printed in the RECORD.

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

THE LIBERTY FOUNDATION OF AMERICA,

Oklahoma City, OK, September 30, 2013.

Subject: An Open Letter to the Leadership of the United States of America.

TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN: The vast majority of the American people oppose the Affordable Care Act, many because the measure is proving to be quite unaffordable. We have a nation falling off the edge of the fiscal cliff, and the best our government can do is have our President assure the people that our deficit has decreased in its growth rate—meaning we are still going broke but luckily at a slower pace than before. We have an extremely dysfunctional federal government; the two legislative branches can't put aside differences to accomplish anything positive for the country, the executive is merely interested in popularity and amassing power, and the judiciary has forgotten how to read the Constitution. It has been stated, and surely was intended, that we have a representative form of democracy—one "Of the People, For the People and By the People"—something for which many men and women greater than us made the ultimate sacrifice. Therefore, when the government reaches such a level of dysfunction and incompetence as present, it becomes imperative that the people take over responsibility and monitor that government with essential diligence. Today, our nation has reached a necessary impasse, with countless Washington-based solutions that solve little, if anything. Therefore, it behooves each and every state to monitor their representation in Washington—to the tune of each and every vote—and publicize this information, unedited, so the people can ensure their interests and that of their state are truly represented, as opposed to the vested Washington interests that currently enjoy splendor. The status of our country's ineffective leadership from all three branches and the unsatisfactory biased reporting needs to be bypassed for America to solve her problems.

To those elected officials in our nation's capital: Do not follow; lead or get the hell out of the way.

To my colleagues in each state-based organization: You are the closest to the grassroots—the people, the voters. Do your duty for the United States of America.

Respectfully,

DAVID R. BROWN, M.D.,

Trustee; The Liberty Foundation of America,
Chairman Emeritus; The Heritage
Foundation, Chairman & Founder; The
Oklahoma Council of Public Affairs.

Mr. COBURN. He makes some profound observations about where we are and the lack of leadership. Here is a practicing orthopedist who loves his country, who wants us to solve the problems, who wants us to take back control of our government and do what is in the best long-term interests of the country, not what is in the best long-term interests of a politician or a political party. I think that is where we have gotten off. Everything is measured by the next election rather than by the next generation.

Although I do not always agree with my colleagues, as most of them know, I am willing to work and compromise and meet as long as we are attaining long-term good goals for our fellow countrymen and for our children.

The other issue I want to talk about is the CR itself, because lost in all of

this battle is a CR that plays a lot of games on the American people. It is disappointing for me to see that we play games with mandatory spending by moving numbers from one year to the next year so we can actually spend more money in a present year.

I did not vote to have a sequester because I think it is an idiotic way to cut spending. But I do support trimming the spending of the Federal Government. As a matter of fact, nobody in the last 9 years has done more to offer amendments, to outline duplication, to outline fraud, to outline abuse than I have on the floor of the Senate.

So it is one thing to do it stupidly. It is wholly another to actually keep your commitments to the American people. The vast majority of my colleagues on the other side of the aisle voted for the Budget Control Act, as did most Republicans. So we have a commitment to keep our word.

I will outline to you that—first of all, I will make two points. One is that we are not keeping our word with the continuing resolution coming from the House. It actually will spend \$38 billion more than what we promised the American people we would spend. I know in Washington \$38 billion is not a large amount of money. But the way you get rid of trillion-dollar deficits is a billion dollars at a time—or \$38 billion at a time.

I am disheartened we are playing the green-eyeshade and walnut-shell game on the American people with this bill.

To make my point, I would like to outline some of the spending and some of the false maneuvers that have been done in what is called CHIMPS, which are changes in mandatory program spending.

We have a program in the United States called the DOJ Assets Forfeiture Fund. These are funds that the Justice Department collects that are forfeited by criminals, by people breaking the law, whether it be a car in a drug bust or the money from a drug bust. So what we are going to do is take that money out of that fund, which goes toward things that actually enforce our law enforcement, and plus that down—in other words, steal that money—so we can spend more money somewhere else. That is just \$723 million. It is almost \$1 billion.

More concerning to me is the fact that there is a victims compensation fund in this country—and that is where criminals pay into a fund to compensate victims—there is \$8.9 billion in that fund, supposedly. But last year the appropriators did exactly the same. They took that \$8.9 billion and said they would pay it back next year—this year—and they were allowed to spend almost \$9 billion more on other things, taking that money that should have been given to victims and spending it through the Federal Government.

Lo and behold, they did not add the \$8.9 billion back this year. They counted the same thing again. So now we have \$18 billion of not taxpayer money

but criminal money that should be going to victims that is now going to be spent on other things, and the victims will not receive the money that is due them through either court orders or judgments.

Finally, there is a lot of spending in the bill that most Americans would see as foolish. I thought I would outline just a little bit of it.

One other point I would make. The U.S. Patent and Trademark Office collects fees when you file a patent. For years they have been falling further and further behind. Thankfully, they got caught up. But the money that is paid for a patent application has been siphoned off, not for patent applications but for spending on other things. It is a user fee. Consequently, now it is over 8 months if you file a patent before someone ever even looks at that at the Patent Office. It is 27 months before you get a response. If we are going to get ahead and compete in this competitive world, we have to allow our Patent Office to work. They are taking hundreds of millions of dollars from the Patent and Trademark Office.

What does the CR spend money on that we really should not? Here are some examples for last year when we spent money that we should not have: funding for the National Science Foundation for the development of a Snooki, a robot bird that impersonates a female sage grouse; funding an NSF grant that studies American attitudes toward the filibuster in the Senate; an NSF grant, *sitegrabber.com*, a new Web site to rate the trustworthiness of other Web sites; an NSF grant funding *ecoATM*, a company commercializing an ATM to give out cash if you give them your old cell phone—that is totally a private separate sector venture, yet we are funding that, in an era when we have a \$750 billion deficit this year and a \$17 trillion debt—an NSF grant paying for participant expenses to attend an annual snowmobile competition in Michigan through 2015.

I do not think that is a priority when we are struggling to pay our bills.

I have a list of Department of Agriculture grants. I will put those in the RECORD.

We are still spending \$30 billion a year for 47 job training programs, none of which have a metric on them. All but three, according to the Government Accountability Office, overlap one another, in other words, do the same thing.

There are 20 Federal programs across 12 different Federal agencies for the study of invasive species. I think we should study invasive species, but I do not think we should have 12 agencies studying them. I think we should have one agency study them. We ought to concentrate the dollars so we get good value out of that.

We are still sending unemployment checks to people who make more than \$1 million a year.

We have 15 different financial literacy programs, a new one being cre-

ated by the Consumer Financial Protection Bureau. This is across 15 different agencies. We are spending millions on that.

We are spending \$1 million for NASA to test food that can be eaten on Mars 30 years from now. I would not think that is a priority.

We are spending \$4 billion for 250 different grant programs at the Department of Justice which, as GAO says, has the worst record of any agency in terms of monitoring their grants and the veracity and the compliance of those grants.

We are spending \$3 billion on 209 different programs for science, technology, engineering, and math across 13 different Federal agencies. I think it is fine if we want to incentivize that, but do we really need over 200 programs to do that? No, we do not. But we have not addressed any of that. It has been known.

We have the GAO out with a report, their third report this year, and they will come with another one next year, outlining at least \$250 billion that could be saved by the Federal Government on duplicative services; in other words, multiple agencies doing the same thing, stepping on each other.

Not one bill has come before this body that addresses that \$250 billion expenditure that could be saved every year, not one bill in this session of Congress. So we are having a fight over spending. Yet Congress is the very real problem we are having on spending. We need to look at what the real problem is. The real problem is the failure to do our job, the failure to look at programs and see if they are effective, the failure to look at programs and see if they are truly a role for the Federal Government as far as the Constitution and as far as common sense, a failure to offer substantive changes or have the ability to offer substantive changes to those bills.

I will conclude with one final remark. The Appropriations Committee did a good job this year, even though at higher levels above the Budget Control Act, of getting their bills in order. Only one of those bills was offered on the floor. It was withdrawn when Members of my caucus were not allowed to offer amendments, because it was not going anywhere if we were not allowed minority rights to offer amendments to change an appropriations bill. So we are doing a continuing resolution to fund the government and handicapping the very employees we are going to ask to make good decisions for our country, because we will not pass appropriation bills on time. We do not need a budget to pass appropriations bills, because we have the Budget Control Act that spells out where we are going to be on discretionary spending for the next 10 years. We know what the levels are.

Consequently, we end up at an impasse over a continuing resolution—over a continuing resolution that says we have not done our job anyway. I

think what Dr. David Brown says in his letter is quite accurate. There is a total lack of leadership in this city, sitting at the executive branch, in the House and in the Senate. Only America can change that. I hope it does.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Delaware is recognized.

Mr. COONS. Mr. President, I come to the floor today to repeat a point that I think is worth repeating, which is that on this second day of the shutdown of our Federal Government, we need to focus more on manufacturing jobs than on manufacturing crises.

I have been here as a Senator now just 3 years. As the Presiding Officer knows, and many of my other colleagues know, the folks from home are calling us in record numbers to say they want us to listen to each other, to work together, and to try to help to get America back to work.

We all remember where we were 5 years ago at the depth of the fiscal crisis, our financial system in collapse and our economy on life support. Millions lost their jobs and millions more lost their savings. We have begun to recover and to heal. We have had 7½ million jobs created over the last 42 months, jobless claims are now at a 5-year low, and we have had 9 consecutive quarters of economic growth. I think we need to find ways to work together to continue to sustain that forward movement. The shutdown of this government does not help in any way.

One thing I want to highlight is some good news we have had. We just learned the manufacturing sector grew last month at its fastest pace in more than 2 years. We need to invest in that success and invest in that growth.

In the first decade of this century, we lost 6 million manufacturing jobs in this country, good-paying jobs, high-skilled jobs, jobs that come with benefits, jobs you can raise a family on. In the last 3 years, we have gained back half a million manufacturing jobs, but we are still way short of where we were in 2000.

There are a few items we could focus on that would help us grow this sector: skills training, opening markets abroad, expanding access to capital, and creating a national manufacturing strategy. I hope to come back to the floor and speak to these in much more detail in the days ahead.

Let me close by saying something that I think is simple. A shutdown is not the answer to this ongoing economic recovery. Defaulting on our debt is not the answer to what the folks from our home States are calling and asking us to do. The answer is for the Speaker of the House to allow the House to vote on a bill passed in this Chamber that, if adopted, would reopen the Federal Government and allow us to work together to revitalize our economy.

I yield the floor.

MORNING BUSINESS

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The majority leader.

Mr. REID. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate proceed to a period of morning business, with Senators permitted to speak for up to 10 minutes each.

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

ADDITIONAL STATEMENTS

ABILITYONE PROGRAM

• Mr. PRYOR. Mr. President, today I wish to recognize an organization that has been providing opportunities for Arkansans that are blind or visually impaired since 1940. The Arkansas Lighthouse for the Blind started as a dream of a blind Methodist minister, the late Rev. Jeff Smith, and became a reality thanks to \$100 in donations from friends. Since those humble beginnings, the Arkansas Lighthouse for the Blind has grown into a nationally recognized manufacturing business, now employing over 80 people in Little Rock.

The Arkansas Lighthouse for the Blind is a partner of the AbilityOne Program, a Federal purchasing program that enables over 47,000 Americans who are blind or severely disabled to work and provides products and services to Federal and commercial customers. This year marks the 75th anniversary of AbilityOne, and I am pleased to have such an important organization promoting the employment and advancement of people who are blind and visually impaired in my State.

Today in America, 70 percent of blind and visually impaired working-aged Americans are not employed. Through the AbilityOne Program, organizations like Arkansas Lighthouse for the Blind harnesses the purchasing power of the Federal government to provide quality products and services from participating community-based nonprofit agencies dedicated to training and employing individuals with disabilities. These workers proudly manufacture a wide range of paper, textile, and apparel products. From the small SKILCRAFT memo pads on our desks, to the shirts on the backs of our men and women in uniform, they are a part of our American manufacturing base that keeps our government moving each and every day.

I have visited the Arkansas Lighthouse for the Blind and had several opportunities to meet with their employees. During each interaction, I have been impressed by the opportunities this organization provides their associates, both personally and professionally. It is a place that truly lives up to its mission and expands opportunity for persons who are blind throughout the State. I am a proud AbilityOne Champion and appreciate this partnership which allows us to

work together to expand opportunities for individuals with disabilities.

The month of October serves as National Disability Employment Awareness Month and I recognize the Arkansas Lighthouse for the Blind, as well as the AbilityOne program, for the opportunities they have provided for Americans with disabilities. Americans that have worked through this program over the years have acquired job skills and training, received good wages and benefits, as well as gained greater independence and quality of life. It is for this reason that I stand in support of the work they do each and every day to open doors of opportunity for Americans who are blind or visually impaired. •

EXECUTIVE AND OTHER COMMUNICATIONS

The following communications were laid before the Senate, together with accompanying papers, reports, and documents, and were referred as indicated:

EC-3273. A communication from the Acting Assistant Secretary, Bureau of Political-Military Affairs, Department of State, transmitting, pursuant to law, an addendum to a certification, transmittal number: DDTC 2013-1595, of the proposed sale or export of defense articles and/or defense services to a Middle East country regarding any possible effects such a sale might have relating to Israel's Qualitative Military Edge over military threats to Israel; to the Committee on Foreign Relations.

EC-3274. A communication from the Under Secretary of Defense (Global Strategic Affairs), transmitting, pursuant to law, the Department of Defense's 2013 annual report to Congress entitled "The Worldwide Nuclear, Biological, and Chemical Weapons and Ballistic and Cruise Missile Threat" (DCN OSS 2013-1593); to the Committee on Armed Services.

EC-3275. A communication from the Director of Defense Procurement and Acquisition Policy, Department of Defense, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled "Defense Federal Acquisition Regulation Supplement: Allowability of Legal Costs for Whistleblower Proceedings" ((RIN0750-A104) (DFARS Case 2013-D022)) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on September 27, 2013; to the Committee on Armed Services.

EC-3276. A communication from the Director of Defense Procurement and Acquisition Policy, Department of Defense, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled "Defense Federal Acquisition Regulation Supplement: Acquisitions in Support Operations in Afghanistan" ((RIN0750-AH98) (DFARS Case 2013-D009)) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on September 27, 2013; to the Committee on Armed Services.

EC-3277. A communication from the Director of Defense Procurement and Acquisition Policy, Department of Defense, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled "Defense Federal Acquisition Regulation Supplement: Enhancement of Contractor Employee Whistleblower Protections" ((RIN0750-AH) (DFARS Case 2013-D010)) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on September 27, 2013; to the Committee on Armed Services.

EC-3278. A communication from the Secretary of the Securities and Exchange Commission, transmitting, pursuant to law, the

report of a rule entitled "Temporary Registration as a Municipal Advisor; Required Amendments; and Withdrawal from Temporary Registration" (RIN3235-AK69) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on September 26, 2013; to the Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs.

EC-3279. A communication from the Secretary of the Securities and Exchange Commission, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled "Registration of Municipal Advisors" (RIN3235-AJ86) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on September 26, 2013; to the Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs.

EC-3280. A communication from the Director of Congressional Affairs, Nuclear Regulatory Commission, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled "Maintenance, Testing, and Replacement of Vented Lead-Acid Storage Batteries for Nuclear Power Plants" (Regulatory Guide 1.129, Revision 3) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on September 27, 2013; to the Committee on Environment and Public Works.

EC-3281. A communication from the Chief of the Trade and Commercial Regulations Branch, Customs and Border Protection, Department of Homeland Security, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled "United States - Colombia Trade Promotion Agreement" (RIN1515-AD88) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on September 27, 2013; to the Committee on Finance.

EC-3282. A communication from the Chief of the Trade and Commercial Regulations Branch, Customs and Border Protection, Department of Homeland Security, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled "United States - Panama Trade Promotion Agreement" (RIN1515-AD93) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on September 27, 2013; to the Committee on Finance.

EC-3283. A communication from the Federal Register Certifying Officer, Financial Management Service, Department of the Treasury, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled "Regulatory Reorganization; Administrative Changes to Regulations Due to Consolidation of the Financial Management Service and the Bureau of the Public Debt into the Bureau of the Fiscal Service" (RIN1510-AB31) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on September 27, 2011; to the Committee on Finance.

EC-3284. A communication from the Assistant Administrator, Bureau for Legislative and Public Affairs, U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID), transmitting, pursuant to law, a report responding to a GAO report entitled "Haiti Reconstruction: USAID Infrastructure Projects Have Had Mixed Results and Face Sustainability Challenges"; to the Committee on Foreign Relations.

EC-3285. A communication from the Director of Regulations and Policy Management Staff, Food and Drug Administration, Department of Health and Human Services, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled "Unique Device Identification System" (Docket No. FDA-2011-N-0090) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on September 27, 2013; to the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions.

EC-3286. A communication from the Assistant General Counsel, Federal Retirement Thrift Investment Board, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled "Implementation of United States v. Windsor" (5 CFR Parts 1651 and 1690) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on