

described what they claim to be as the piecemeal approach as following my priorities. Several Democrats have used that language publicly. I must note, I find it quite ironic because if I were to stand here and say it is my priority and not the priority of the Democrats to fund veterans, it is my priority and not the priority of the Democrats to fund the National Guard, it is my priority and not the priority of the Democrats to fund our national parks, it is my priority and not the priority of the Democrats to fund research for health care, they would, quite rightly, be able to rise and claim under rule XIX that I was impugning their motives.

I cannot imagine a greater insult than to claim it is not the priority of Members of this body to treat fairly our veterans, and yet what I find so striking is that so many Democrats go out publicly and embrace that. They say: Funding the veterans is CRUZ's priority, not ours.

Yet I will note, even on that front, the funding proposals the House of Representatives has passed are not even the House's priorities—although under the Constitution they have a legitimate role laying out their priorities for funding—they are President Obama's priorities.

Just a few days ago, the President gave a speech to this country, a speech that all of us watched closely, in which the President said if a shutdown occurred “veterans who've sacrificed for their country will find their support centers understaffed.”

The President also said, with regard to parks, as we are discussing now, and memorials: “Tourists will find every one of America's national parks and monuments, from Yosemite to the Smithsonian to the Statue of Liberty immediately closed.”

To the credit of the House of Representatives, they listened to the President's speech, they listened to President Obama's priorities, and the House of Representatives acted with bipartisan cooperation. They said: Mr. President, we have heard your priorities. Let's fund them. Let's work together.

I would note my friend from Maryland a moment ago gave a speech about how important it is, he thinks, that we should fund food inspectors in the Department of Agriculture and also our intelligence community. I would note to my friend from Maryland, I fully agree with him and, indeed, would be happy to work arm in arm and to fund the intelligence community, fully fund them today. The only impediment to that happening is that the Democrats in this body are objecting, and that is what should be abundantly clear.

When it comes to parks, when it comes to memorials, we have all read about World War II veterans being turned away from the World War II Memorial. We have all read about Mount Vernon, which is privately owned—the Federal Government blocking the parking lots.

Mr. REID addressed the Chair.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The majority leader.

Mr. REID. I ask permission to direct a question through the Chair to my friend from Texas.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Does the Senator yield for a question?

Mr. CRUZ. I am happy to yield for a question from the majority leader.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The majority leader.

Mr. REID. Mr. President, my question is that I was under the assumption that my friend would offer the consent requests, as we do here with brief responses in the competing consent requests, and then the Senator would speak for 20 minutes. My only concern is this: one, two, three—I have five or six Senators over here wishing to speak. So my question is this: Does the Senator wish to take 20 minutes following this in addition to what time he has taken now?

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Texas.

Mr. CRUZ. I thank the majority leader for his question. At his request I began with these unanimous consent requests. It was my intention to give my remarks at the end. But I would note, in each of the objections, my friends on the Democratic side of the aisle have chosen to stand and give their remarks. If remarks are to be given by the Democrats, then it is certainly appropriate that some response be given. So if the courtesy the majority leader was asking was that none of the remarks that his friends and colleagues make have any response, that was not a courtesy I was prepared to give. I was prepared and am prepared to work and cooperate on timing but not to allow only one side of the discussion to be presented.

Mr. REID. Further, Mr. President, I propound a unanimous consent request, and the request is: When the Senator from Texas finishes his consent that he is asking—and there is one more, as I understand it—then I ask permission that the next Senators to be recognized be Senator MIKULSKI for 10 minutes, the Senator from Florida—so it is not bad. Only a couple speakers. So we have Senator MIKULSKI, who will be recognized for up to 15 minutes. I apologize for the interruption. The floor is the Senator's from Texas.

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

The Senator from Texas.

Is there objection to the modification?

Mr. CRUZ. The modification—

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection to the modification of the request of the Senator from Texas by the Senator from New York?

Mr. CRUZ. Reserving the right to object, the modification that the Senator from New York has suggested is that he is unwilling to open our national parks, to open our memorials, unless every other aspect of the government is opened immediately and ObamaCare

is forced upon the American people. That is, quite simply and directly, saying that the Senate will not respond to President Obama's priorities.

President Obama gave a speech to this country saying we should open our parks, we should open our memorials. The House of Representatives said: Mr. President, we, the Republicans, will work with you to do that, and today the Democrats in the Senate are objecting and saying: No, we want every park closed, every memorial closed. All of that will be held hostage until ObamaCare is forced on every American.

I find that highly objectionable, and I object.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Objection is heard.

Is there objection to the original request?

Mr. SCHUMER. Reserving the right to object, and I will be brief—

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from New York.

Mr. SCHUMER. I just want to make this point: The junior Senator from Texas has said it is President Obama and the Democrats who are shutting the government down. My modification, which he just objected to, would open the entire government. We put it on the floor. We are all for it. He objected to it. Therefore, I object to the proposal of the junior Senator from Texas.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Objection is heard.

The Senator from Texas.

UNANIMOUS CONSENT REQUEST— H.J. RES. 73

Mr. CRUZ. Mr. President, the fourth unanimous consent request that I would promulgate: I ask unanimous consent that the Senate proceed to the immediate consideration of H.J. Res. 73, making continuing appropriations for the National Institutes of Health for fiscal year 2014; I ask further consent that the measure be read three times and passed, and the motion to reconsider be considered made and laid upon the table.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection?

The majority leader.

Mr. REID. Mr. President, prior to my responding to my friend, I would use just a few minutes of leader time—I will be very brief—with permission.

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

Mr. REID. Here is what I am going to say.

Mr. President, we have heard this back-and-forth stuff about veterans. But in addition to what the Senator from Washington said, let me read one paragraph from the RECORD of yesterday:

I would note also that I believe the resolution the Senator is offering and suggested be passed provides only partial funding for the VA. There is no funding here to operate the national cemeteries. There is no funding for

the Board of Veterans' Appeals. There is no funding for constructing VA hospitals and their clinics. There is no funding, actually, to operate the IT system that the entire VA needs in order to continue going forward.

I reserve the right to object to the request of my friend from Texas.

I object, as do most Americans. There is no reason for us to have to choose between important government functions, as has been said by my three colleagues so brilliantly this morning. But I guess my objection is best paraphrased by reading a column from the Washington Post by Dana Milbank. Here is what he said:

House Republicans continued what might be called the lifeboat strategy: deciding which government functions are worth saving. In: veterans, the troops and tourist attractions. Out: poor children, pregnant women and just about every government function that regulates business. . . . Here are some of the functions not boarding the GOP lifeboats: market regulation, chemical spill investigations, antitrust enforcement, worksite immigration checks, workplace safety inspections, the Environmental Protection Agency . . . communications and trade regulation, nutrition for 9 million children and pregnant women, flu monitoring and other functions of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, and housing rental assistance for the poor.

I spent, 1 month ago, a day at the National Institutes of Health. I remember so clearly one Institute I went to where this young girl, about 12 years old—she had come back for her second visit. She has a disease that they do not know for sure what it is. But they were trying to figure out what she had, and they felt they were on the cusp of being able to figure that out. Her parents, of course, were very happy.

We know how important it is that little children, babies, adults be taken care of, especially toward the time when they have no hope. That is what NIH is about: hope.

I truly believe we should open the government, all the government. This is a trip down a road that is so foolish. We need not be there. If people have a problem with ObamaCare—and I know my friend, the junior Senator from Texas, does not care for ObamaCare—let's do it in a context that is reasonable and fair, not have all the people in America who are so troubled with this—

I heard an interview with the Governor of Maryland this morning. They are losing \$15 million or \$20 million a day because of the government being closed in Maryland. I would ask my friend to accept a modification. It is a modification that is so well-intentioned. What it would do is open the government. It would take care of the National Institutes of Health, it would take care of the veterans, including all the stuff that is left out of the consent we have here before which I read into the RECORD a minute ago, it would take care of the national parks, and in Nevada we are really desperate to have those open. We have one 70 minutes outside of Las Vegas where 1 million people a year visit. We have one about

12 miles outside of Las Vegas where we have 600,000 people a year visit, Lake Mead. The other is Red Rock, and others. We have a Great Basin National Park. We want to open that. That would solve this problem.

So I ask unanimous consent that the consent of my friend from Texas be modified, that an amendment which is at the desk be agreed to; that the joint resolution, as amended, be read a third time and passed, the motion to reconsider be considered made and laid on the table, with no intervening action or debate.

This amendment is the text that passed the Senate and is a clean continuing resolution for the entire government. It is something that is already over in the House and reportedly has the support of a majority of Members of the House.

Finally, the statement I made, if that little girl came back there now for her clinical trial, likely she would not be able to have any help, just as we learned earlier this week there were 200 people who were turned away from clinical trials, 30 of whom were babies and children.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Does the Senator agree to so modify his original request?

Mr. CRUZ. Mr. President, reserving the right to object, I would note that the majority leader made a plea for compromise. I think most Americans want to see a compromise. The House of Representatives has repeatedly compromised already.

It is the view of every Republican in this body and, indeed, every Republican in the House that ObamaCare should be entirely and completely repealed. Nonetheless, the House started with a compromise of saying not repealing ObamaCare but simply it should be defunded. They funded the entire Federal Government and defunded ObamaCare. It came to the Senate. The majority leader and 54 Democrats voted in lockstep to say: No, absolutely not. We will not talk. We will not compromise.

The House then came with a second compromise. They said: Fine. If the Senate will not agree to fully defund ObamaCare, then let's all agree to a reasonable 1-year delay.

President Obama has already delayed ObamaCare for big business. Let's treat hard-working American families at least as well as big business. Let's have a 1-year delay, because we are seeing how badly this thing has worked. Now that is a big compromise from defunding.

It came over to the Senate. The majority leader and 54 Senate Democrats said: No, absolutely not. We will not talk. We will not compromise. Shut the government down.

The House came back a third time and said: Okay. How about we simply delay the individual mandate, one small portion of ObamaCare, and we revoke the congressional exemption that President Obama illegally gave Mem-

bers of this Congress to exempt us from the burdens of ObamaCare that are inflicted on millions of Americans.

That offer represented an enormous compromise from the view of Republicans that ObamaCare should be repealed in its entirety. What did the Senate say? Did the Senate say: Let's sit down and work something out? Did the Senate say: Let's meet and find a middle ground? No. The majority leader and 54 Senate Democrats said: Absolutely not. No, we will not talk. We will not compromise. Shut the government down. That is why the government is shut down right now.

Just a moment ago, the majority leader gave his latest offer. It was: Give us everything we demand, 100 percent, no compromise, no middle ground. That is the position of the Democrats in this body. That is not a reasonable position. That is not the way people work together to find a middle ground.

You know, it was reported that the majority leader urged the President not even to talk to congressional leaders. The President apparently had a change of heart and sat down with congressional leaders and had what, by all accounts, was an extraordinary conversation, where President Obama told Congressional leaders: I called you over here to say I am not going to talk to you. I am not going to negotiate. I must admit, that is a remarkable conversation, to call someone over to say: Hi, good to see you. We are not going to talk.

If this matter is going to be resolved, we need to see good faith among Members on both sides. Republicans have repeatedly been offering compromises to resolve this shutdown. Unfortunately, the behavior of the majority party in this body has been my way or the highway.

One can only assume their stated public belief, from a senior administration official from the Obama administration who said: We think we are winning politically.

I am paraphrasing.

But we don't care when the shutdown ends.

That is a paraphrase. That is not exact. But that was certainly the thrust of the statement by what was described as a senior administration official. I think that is cynical. I think that is partisan. I do not think that is what we should be doing. So I wish the majority leader and the Democrats would accede to what should be shared bipartisan priorities. But it appears right now that they are not, that their position is: Give us everything. Fully fund ObamaCare and force it on the American people. That I cannot consent to. So I object.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Objection is heard.

Is there objection to the original request?

Mr. REID. Mr. President, still reserving my right to object, my friend from Texas—and I have developed a relationship with him—talks about a meeting

that he did not attend. I was there. I was one of five people, the President, Speaker BOEHNER, Leader MCCONNELL, Leader PELOSI, and me—the Vice President was also there. I am sorry.

I attended that meeting. The President did not say: Come on in, I am not going to talk to you, I have nothing to say, words to that effect. The meeting lasted an hour and 20 minutes. There were a lot of things said. But one thing that was not said is this “Alice in Wonderland” what took place in that meeting, when someone talks about the meeting who was not there.

Let’s talk about compromise. My friend brought up compromise. We have before us a continuing resolution. My friend, the Speaker of the House of Representatives, JOHN BOEHNER, called me and said: We have got to work this out. We have got to get this done quickly.

I thought: So how are we going to get it done? This was on September 9 after our recess ended. He said: We have got to have the 988 number for this year.

I said: I cannot do that. I cannot do that. Chairman MURRAY’s number is \$70 billion above that that we passed here in the Senate. We passed that. I cannot agree to 988.

He said: You have got to do it. I do not want to be fighting. I want to get this done.

So I talked to Chairman MURRAY, Chairman MIKULSKI, and others. Even though it was desperately hard to do—because we do not like the number 988, we do not like it. It is not our number—we agreed to do it. That was a compromise. I have been in Congress 31 years. That is the biggest compromise I have ever made. My caucus did not like it, but we did it in an effort to have a clean CR.

You talk about compromise, that was big time. But, Speaker BOEHNER, I am sure, was well intentioned. He could not get it done. He could not get it done. It was his idea how to get it done.

Then, talking about further compromise, one of the last things we had walked over from the House is: Go to conference. So I thought: I have something. It is an offer so good that he cannot refuse. What did I do? With the cooperation of all 53 Democratic Senators, here is what we agreed to do: Open the government. What we will do is go to conference. Not on little select areas. We will go to conference on a list of everything. I listed everything—not everything, but everything I could think of. We listed agriculture, we listed discretionary spending and, yes, we listed health care.

I gave the letter to the Speaker. I talked to him 45 minutes later. He said: I can’t do it.

Wow.

I know what legislation is all about. It is the art of compromise. I understand that. We have compromised in big-time fashion. The problem is that the Speaker and some other Republican Members of Congress are in a real

bind because the only thing they want to talk about is the law that passed 4 years ago, which the Supreme Court declared constitutional. This is a little unusual, I would think, in my experience here.

So we are where we are because we not only have the government shut-down, but we have the full faith and credit of our Nation before us in a week or 10 days.

I suggest, I do not want anyone to say I have not compromised. All one needs to do is talk to any Member of my caucus and they will talk about how difficult it has been for us to accept that number, and agree to go to conference on anything.

I object.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Objection is heard.

Mr. REID. If my friend would yield, following his statement of 20 minutes, I ask unanimous consent that the following Senators be recognized: MIKULSKI already has 15 minutes; MURRAY, I ask unanimous consent that she follow MIKULSKI for 10 minutes; HEINRICH, 10 minutes; SCHUMER, 15 minutes.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Are those the next Senators in order or on the Democratic side?

Mr. REID. If some Republicans want to come and talk, my friends, I would be happy to yield to any of them. But we have not had a large number of people over here this morning.

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

Mr. CRUZ. Mr. President, Bismarck famously talked about legislation being like making sausages. There are aspects of both that are not pretty. I wish we saw our elected leaders in both parties working together to listen to the American people.

You know, the majority leader talks about a meeting at the White House. I will note, he noted that I was not at that meeting. That is certainly true. But the statement that the President said he would not negotiate came directly from Speaker BOEHNER who was at that meeting, who came and gave a press conference immediately thereafter.

I know the majority leader is not impugning the integrity of the Speaker of the House or disputing that that is exactly what President Obama said and what the position of the Democrats is. Their position is: Give us 100 percent of what we want or the government stays shut down. That, quite simply, is not reasonable.

I would like to address for a moment a few of the arguments that have been raised against these very reasonable bipartisan proposals to fund essential priorities in our government because I think the arguments do not withstand scrutiny. There are some on the Democratic side of the aisle who have said: We are not going to pick and choose. Indeed, the majority leader said: There is no reason to have to choose between government priorities.

Let me suggest that is the essence of legislation. We have a \$17 trillion debt,

because far too many people have said, as the majority leader just did, there is no reason to choose between priorities; we should spend on everything.

I would note also that what the Democrats in this Chamber deride as a piecemeal strategy is the traditional means of appropriating and legislating. The only reason we have this omnibus continuing resolution is because Congress has failed to do its job to appropriate on specific subject matters.

So we should be considering the VA on its own merits. I would note, the majority leader is right, that the House bill funded the most critical components of the VA: pension, home loan, GI bill, and disability payments. But I would readily accede to the majority leader that if he would like a continuing resolution that funds the entirety of the VA, including the elements he laid out, I think we could reach a unanimous consent agreement on that within hours.

The traditional means of legislating is one subject at a time. It is not typical when considering funding for the VA that the argument be about unrelated matters, whether it is the Department of Agriculture or ObamaCare. The way this body has always operated is it has considered one subject matter at a time—except when Congress has failed to appropriate, and then everything has gotten lumped together in a giant omnibus bill. But there is no reason for that.

Secondly, every bit as critically, we have done it already. This is not theoretical. At the beginning of this proceeding the House of Representatives unanimously passed a bill saying: Let’s fund the men and women of our military. When it came over, a great many people expected the majority leader to do what the majority leader just did—to object to funding the men and women of our military. Indeed, some 20 Republican Senators came to the floor prepared to make the argument that we shouldn’t hold the men and women of the military hostage. Yet, much to our very pleasant surprise, the majority leader reconsidered. He decided, one must assume, that it was not defensible to hold hostage the paychecks of the men and women of the military. The majority leader agreed, and this body unanimously passed funding for the men and women of the military. He said: Regardless of what happens with a government shutdown, our soldiers, sailors, airmen, and marines should not be held hostage. They should get their paychecks.

Indeed, I rose on the Senate floor. I commended the majority leader for doing the right thing and for acting in a bipartisan manner. Yet, sadly, that was the last of that behavior we were to see. I hope that majority leader returns. I hope the majority leader who said we are going to fund the men and women of our military returns to say the same thing to our veterans. I hope that majority leader returns to say the same thing to our National Guard. I

hope that majority leader returns to say the same thing to our parks and war memorials. I hope that majority leader returns to say the same thing to the National Institutes of Health and to say the same thing to children who are facing life-threatening diseases such as cancer.

We may not be able to resolve 100 percent of this impasse today; there are differences. To resolve those differences will take sitting down, talking, and working through the matters of this disagreement. One side of this Chamber is prepared to do this. The Democrats are not. In the meantime, it ought to be a bipartisan priority to fund our veterans.

A second possible objection—I can see some watching this debate who think, well, OK, but if you fund the VA, doesn't that mean the Democrats have given in on ObamaCare? Somehow it has to be connected to ObamaCare, right?

As every Member of this body knows, the VA is totally disconnected. The VA bill that passed the House doesn't implicate ObamaCare, doesn't mention ObamaCare, and does nothing on ObamaCare. We have a disagreement on ObamaCare. Part of this body thinks it is a terrific bill. Part of this body thinks it is a train wreck, a disaster that is hurting millions of Americans. That is an important debate. Whether our veterans get their disability payments shouldn't be held hostage to resolving that debate. It is exactly like the bill my friends on the Democratic side of the aisle already voted for to fund the men and women of the military. It is exactly the same. They have done it once, and yet, for whatever reason, they have made a decision that certainly appears to the public to be cynical and partisan.

There should be no confusion. The House of Representatives has overwhelmingly voted to protect our veterans and fund the VA, and 35 Democrats joined Republicans in the House to do that—35. It was bipartisan legislation. It came over here. Every Senate Republican agrees we should fund the VA, we should pass this bill. There is unanimity. Indeed, the President, when he addressed the Nation, said his priority was to fund the VA. We have Republicans and Democrats in the House agreeing we should fund the VA. We have Republicans in the Senate and a Democratic President of the United States agreeing we should fund the VA. Sadly, we have Democrats in the Senate and a majority leader in the Senate objecting and stopping the VA from being funded.

If my friends on the Democratic side of the aisle simply stood right now and withdrew their objection, by the end of the day the VA would receive its funding. If my friends on the Democratic side of the aisle simply stood and withdrew their objection, by the end of the day our friends in the Reserves would receive their paychecks or have the paychecks and the funding returned. If

my friends on the Democratic side of the aisle withdrew their objection, by the end of the day our national parks and memorials would have their funding and we would be able to open our Statue of Liberty and open our war memorials. By the end of the day we could restore the funding to the National Institutes of Health.

Let me note that there are many other priorities. My friend from Maryland, when he was talking about other priorities, said there are a great many aspects of government. For example, earlier this week the Director of National Intelligence and the head of the NSA testified before the Senate Intelligence Committee. The head of national intelligence said that some 70 percent of civilian employees in the intelligence community have been furloughed and that represents a real threat to our national security. If that is right, where is the Commander in Chief? Why is the President of the United States not saying: Regardless of what you do in the rest of the budget, don't expose us to national security threats. Let's fully fund the Department of Defense. Let's fully fund our intelligence agencies.

Indeed, I would note that one Senator, the junior Senator from Arizona, asked the head of national intelligence: Have you advised the President that Congress should pass a continuing resolution funding the intelligence community as we did for the members of the Armed Forces?

The answer from the head of national intelligence, appointed by President Obama, was this: Yes, Congress should do it, and, yes, I will advise the President.

Now we have Senate Democrats who are not listening to the testimony and advice of the members of our intelligence community who say there is a grave national security threat against which we are not adequately prepared to defend ourselves. Surely partisan politics should end. Surely at that point we should be able to come together and say: We can keep fighting on ObamaCare. We may have disagreements, and eventually we will work it out, but surely we shouldn't expose our national security to threats from terrorists or attacks on our homeland in the meantime. That ought to be 100-to-0.

At the end of the day, there is only one explanation that makes sense for why you saw one Democrat after another standing up and objecting: No, don't fund the VA. No, don't fund the Reserve members of our military. No, don't fund the parks. No, don't fund the memorials. No, don't fund the National Institutes of Health.

The only explanation that is at all plausible is that many Members of this body agree with some of the pundits that this shutdown benefits the political fortunes of Democrats. I hope people are focused on things other than political fortunes and partisan politics because I know each one of us takes se-

riously the obligation we have to our constituents back home. I hope that is not going on, but it is hard for the American people not to be cynical when they read about Mount Vernon—which is privately owned and operated and doesn't get its money from the Federal Government—being effectively forced to shut down because the Federal Government blocked the parking lots and put up barricades to prevent people from going to Mount Vernon. It is hard not to be cynical when we read about what my friend Senator JOHN THUNE told me about Mount Rushmore. The Federal Government erected barricades on the roads leading to Mount Rushmore—spent the money to do it, mind you. There is a shutdown. They spent the money to erect the barricades. The problem is that those aren't Federal roads, those are State roads. The Governor said: Take them down. The only conclusion that is possible there is that we are seeing cynical, partisan, gamesmanship—a decision by President Obama and, unfortunately, by Democrats in this body that inflicting maximum pain on the American people will yield political benefits.

We ought to be able to agree that our veterans are above politics. We ought to be able to agree that our war memorials are above politics. We ought to be able to come together and agree that defending national security and defending against terrorist threats is above politics. Everyone in Congress is prepared to do so except for the majority leader and the Senate Democrats who are insisting that everything be shut down.

If a Federal Government worker is at home today furloughed, you should know that the reason is in large part because the Senate Democrats refused to let you come back to work, because we could agree, for significant portions of the Federal Government, to come back to work Monday morning if, simply, the Democrats would stop objecting and stop insisting that they get everything on ObamaCare.

Let me note that the issue on ObamaCare is very simple. Is there a double standard? President Obama has exempted Big Business and has exempted Members of Congress. Yet he has forced a government shutdown to deny that savings exemption to hard-working Americans, millions of hard-working Americans who are losing their jobs, being forced into part-time work, facing skyrocketing health insurance premiums, and losing their health insurance.

Let me remind this body of the words of James Hoffa, president of the Teamsters: ObamaCare is destroying the health care—he used the words “destroying the health care of millions of working men and women in this country.” If you don't believe me, perhaps James Hoffa—who put it in writing that it is destroying the health care of millions of men and women—will underscore what this fight is about. All of the seniors, all of the people with disabilities, all of the people who are now

getting notices that they are losing their health insurance—that is what this fight is about.

At a minimum, we ought to agree on common priorities. We ought to come together today, right now, and fund the VA. We ought to come together today, right now, and fund our reservists in the National Guard. We ought to come together today, right now, and fund our national parks, open our memorials, and stop barricading and sending police officers to prevent World War II veterans from visiting to the World War II Memorial. We ought to come together, right now, to fund the National Institutes of Health because everyone agrees on that.

The decision to hold those priorities hostage because the Democrats want to force ObamaCare on everyone—it is not related to them, has nothing to do with them, and it is all about political leverage. That is not the way we should be doing our jobs. We should be listening to the people, and we should make DC listen.

Thank you, Mr. President.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Maryland.

Ms. MIKULSKI. I ask unanimous consent that Senator LEVIN be the next Democratic speaker following Senator SCHUMER's remarks.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection?

Without objection, it is so ordered.

Ms. MIKULSKI. Before I go into my comments, I want to express my thanks to the Capitol Police, to the Secret Service, and to all who responded to yesterday's pretty scary and dramatic incident. I also want to express my hope that the injured Capitol Police officer quickly and fully recovers, and to the little girl who has now been left without her mother—I hope that as this great tragedy unfolds, we give support to the people who have suffered.

My colleague from Texas has laid out a vision of how he would like to see the day end. He would like to see the day end with funding for VA, NIH, and with the Park Service open, and I think there was one more item, but I will stick with those three—NIH, FDA and VA. He would like to see them open for business at the end of the day.

I have a different vision for the end of the day. At the end of the day today, I would like to see the House of Representatives consider and vote on the Senate-passed continuing funding resolution that would reopen the entire Federal Government and keep it open—not for a long term because we have fiscal issues through November 15—at fiscal year 2013 levels. At the end of the day, if they took up the Senate-passed resolution and actually voted on it, the Federal Government would be open.

At the end of the day, people would actually be back on the job, getting paid for the job they signed up to do, and we would have the Government of the United States of America working the way it should.

At the end of the day, it means the Capitol Hill police officers who were at

their duty stations would get their pay. Now they are working without pay.

Under my vision of America, if we open the entire U.S. Government, it means FBI agents who are currently working and doing their job protecting America would be paid. Right now, FBI agents and other Federal law enforcement are working for IOUs. Those very FBI agents we count on are using their own money to put gas in the cars they need to use to go after the bad guys or the bad girls. So under the Mikulski recommendation that was passed by the Senate, at the end of the day, FBI agents would be paid and they wouldn't have to use their own money to put gas in their cars. That is what my vision of the end of the day is. We have to reopen government.

The cynical strategy of the other side, given with ruffles and flourishes and pomp—self-righteously standing up for our veterans, opening our national parks, and funding NIH—really is hollow. It would be great if they actually understood how government works.

Let's take the VA disability claim process. In order to get your disability benefits, your eligibility is determined not only by the VA but with information you get from the civilian workforce at DOD, from the Social Security Administration headquartered in Woodlawn, MD—where 9,000 Federal employees are furloughed—or you would get it from the Internal Revenue Service—also headquartered in Maryland, where 5,000 Federal employees are furloughed. So if we reopened the government, at the end of the day, yes, veterans would get their benefits, but they will get them because not only is the VA open but so is Social Security, and the civilian workforce will be working at DOD and the people who work at the Internal Revenue Service will be there making sure all the paperwork is done in the way it should be. That is what the end of the day should look like.

My colleague from Texas talks about how he would like to reopen NIH. Oh, boy, so would I. Seventy-one percent of the people at NIH right this minute are furloughed. He wants to, at the end of the day, open NIH. So do I. But I also know that after they do their research and they have engaged in all of that, our private sector comes in and begins to develop the products, and they need to take those great ideas—the great ideas that turn into the new products that will save lives and create jobs in the United States—to the FDA, the Food and Drug Administration.

So at the end of the day, we want to help NIH stay open, to find the cures for the diseases we want them to find, but we also want the private sector inventing the products to be able to take those great ideas and turn them into what can save lives here and to be able to sell them around the world because they have been certified as safe and effective. So at the end of the day, I would like to open the FDA.

But I don't want to do it one agency at a time. I want to reopen the entire Federal Government. It seems that whenever we now shame them with regard to the reality of the closing of a particular agency, they then decide that agency is important and the House then passes a bill. I don't want shame, I don't want blame, and I don't want political games. I want the Government of the United States of America to be open.

Now let's go to another agency. They haven't even talked about some of these other agencies. Let's take the weather service. Right now storm clouds are gathering not only here in Washington, DC, over politics, but they are gathering in the Southeast. A hurricane is on its way. The weather service is also in Maryland. Eight hundred people are supposed to be on their job.

I was there during another hurricane, just a few months ago. Last October, I was there while they were at their duty station for Hurricane Sandy. We watched this hurricane come. It was devastating. We all recall how devastating it was. In my own State, my mountain counties were hit by a blizzard, and down over on the eastern shore, they were hit by the hurricane, wiping out whole communities and neighborhoods, some people owning family homes and farms that go back generations.

Those very weather service people are furloughed. They are absolutely furloughed. The weather service is calling them back, but they are going to be working without pay.

Let me put a human face on what I am talking about. Yesterday I spoke to Amy Fritz. She works at the weather service. She has two master's degrees, one in meteorology and the other as a physical oceanographer. Her job is to predict storm surges coming from the hurricane. Her work helps to predict how walls of water will come ashore and knowing where that is going to happen, what is going to happen, and how we can begin to protect ourselves so that while we try to save property we can definitely provide protection for lives.

Amy is the primary breadwinner in her family. She is now not getting paid. She has \$130,000 in student loans so she could get that great education. And she wanted that great education because she thought: I can serve America. I can be a good scientist and a great American. Well, at the end of the day, I want the weather service open. At the end of the day, I want Amy getting paid.

At the end of the day, I want the entire Federal Government open, not just whatever agency emerges as part of their strategy. Every part of the Federal Government somewhere is playing an essential part in the lives of people in this country and to the communities which they serve.

Last night there was something called the "Sammie" Awards. These are awards given to Federal employees

because of their outstanding service. They have either saved lives or they have saved money. Well, let me tell you, there was one Federal employee at the National Institutes of Standards. He has a new way of being able to protect us against fires. Another Federal employee, who has also been furloughed, has come up with how to save \$1 billion. Employee after employee.

I say to all the Federal employees who might be watching: At the end of the day, I think you are important. At the end of the day, whatever job you do, I want you to do it well. I want you to strive for competence and excellence. But I want to do my job well. I extend my hand to the other side of the aisle, as I have done repeatedly during the year I have chaired this Committee on Appropriations. I have negotiated, I have compromised, and I will continue to do the same, because at the end of the day I want the Federal Government open doing the job those people were trained to do and that we hired them to do. I want the Federal employees to be able to be at their job, doing the duty they signed up for. Every job has an important mission, whether you are a meat inspector, a poultry inspector, or you work at the weather service.

So we can continue to do this, where they send over to us one program at a time. My gosh. Once again, we are wasting time. And where is our standing in the world? At the end of the day, I want us to be respected. I want us to be respected. What do they think about us around the world? In hearing after hearing, there is a lot of hand-wringing and chest-pounding over what we need to do about China, but China isn't doing this to us. We are doing it to ourselves. There is no foreign predator attacking our Federal Government, we are just defunding it. That is what a shutdown is. We are not funding the Federal Government.

This is not the way the United States of America should be operating. I know the calls I am getting from the over 100,000 Federal employees I represent, and they want to be on their job. It is not only they want to get paid, they actually want to work. And you know, they are prohibited from taking anything home where they could be working. This is terrible.

So at the end of the day, let us find a new way. At the end of the day, let us find a new way to keep the government open. At the end of the day, let us be proud of ourselves and let the Federal Government be reopened.

I once again conclude my remarks by saying to the House of Representatives: Please, take up the Senate's continuing funding resolution that would reopen the Federal Government right away and get us at the desk so that we could negotiate further fiscal compromises. That is the way I would like to see the day end.

Mr. President, I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Washington.

Mrs. MURRAY. Mr. President, I thank the Senator from Maryland for

her very emotional response and her great statement. I hope all of our colleagues on both sides of the aisle and both sides of the Capitol listen to what she just said to us. She represents a State that is probably impacted as much, if not more, than any other State because of the number of Federal employees who work at FDA and NIH and our other Federal agencies. But she did not come to the floor and say: Open all of the jobs in my State and make sure my State is taken care of. She came to say: Open the Federal Government so every American in every State in every part of our country is taken care of.

And she is right. I share her vision for the end of the day, not that we take a few here and a few there—whatever one individual decides is important here today—but that our entire country gets back to work. And I really share her vision that Speaker BOEHNER simply take up the bill that is at his desk. Allow it to pass. It has the votes. And at the end of the day, we can be proud our country is back to work. So I thank the Senator from Maryland for her very well-stated remarks.

I wanted to speak today about what is going on. Representative MARLIN STUTZMAN said something that I think sums up the House Republican position perfectly. He said yesterday: We're not going to be disrespected. We have to get something out of this, and I don't know what that even is.

We have to get something out of this—the Republicans in the House. I think that statement makes it very clear. First of all, House Republicans have exactly one set of interests in their mind: Their own. And secondly, they couldn't be more removed from the impacts of the shutdown being felt across the country. Every day Speaker BOEHNER refuses to reopen the government is another day of inconvenience and stress and uncertainty for families and communities we all serve. And because House Republicans clearly aren't getting the message yet, today I want to describe some of what my constituents in Washington State—over 2,000 miles away from here—are saying about the effects of a shutdown.

The families I talk to in Washington State aren't interested in the partisan, political strategizing that goes on in Washington, DC. They have a lot more important issues on their minds right now. Every day they are reading about how the government shutdown is affecting their community. Many are feeling the impacts themselves.

There are about 50,000 Federal employees in Washington State. Thousands are being sent home without pay. The shutdown is going to put a serious burden on many of these workers' families, but the consequences reach even further. This week, the Seattle Times spoke to a deli owner, whose job happens to be in downtown Seattle. She gets about 30 percent of her sales from Federal workers in the building that is across the street from her.

Without their business now, they are all home. And without knowing how long this shutdown is going to last, she is concerned about how she is going to pay her rent and pay her employees. She says, "I don't think [Congress] is thinking of people like us." Well, it is hard to disagree with that. The shutdown is affecting so many. In fact, it is affecting other crucial parts of my home State of Washington. Our national parks are closed—campers and hikers have been asked to leave. And if the government doesn't open soon, participants in the Bering Sea king crab fishery—about which my colleague from Alaska spoke earlier this morning when I was on the floor—many of them are based in Washington State, and they are going to face significant economic losses. Why? Because NOAA employees are needed to process and issue their quotas. They have all been furloughed. There is no one to do the work they need to do their job.

I spoke to some of my constituents in the Washington State construction industry. They told me their business is slow because of all of the uncertainty about where our economy is going because of the shutdown and because of the looming guidelines. And there is so much more.

While our active duty military will continue to get paid, some of those who have heroically served our country are being affected. Furloughs in Washington State and across our country have forced our veterans to stay home and lose pay. As the shutdown continues, veterans are watching, and they are waiting, because if this government doesn't open soon, VA benefits—which many of our veterans rely on just to make ends meet—and support from the GI bill is going to stop.

Our veterans should not under any circumstances be burdened by partisan games. But unfortunately, the longer this shutdown goes on, the more they are having to sacrifice. And this shutdown is affecting the dedicated civilian employees who support our military. We have as many as 8,000 civilian employees at Joint Base Lewis-McChord who have been impacted. Some are going to work without pay and some have been sent home without pay, without any sense or idea of when they are going to be able to return. And, by the way, many of those workers are veterans—and many have already been victims of the gridlock and brinkmanship here in our Nation's capital.

A Washington State news station spoke with Joint Base Lewis-McChord employee Matthew Hines earlier this week, and he said his family already lost \$1,300 because of the sequestration furloughs this summer. They are struggling to pay their bills and had to refinance their mortgage. This week, Matthew and his family were left wondering whether they would face more lost pay and more uncertainty.

The shutdown is creating uncertainty for struggling families as well those who depend on nutrition assistance programs. The Spokesman-Review

in Spokane, WA, talked with Rosa Chavira, the mother of an 11-month-old girl. Rosa gets support—because she needs it right now—from the Women, Infants, and Children Program, WIC. It helps her to put food on the table. We are now hearing that the Washington State Department of Health is estimating that WIC funds would be threatened as early as next month if this continues. So next month, just a few weeks away, if we are still in a shutdown, Rosa might take her vouchers to the grocery store and be unable to buy any food for her family. As Rosa told the Spokesman-Review, that is a scary situation.

What I just talked about are a few of the examples we are seeing in my home State of Washington, but I know that families and communities across this country could tell a lot of similar stories. This is beyond frustrating for me. It is beyond frustrating for my fellow Democrats and many Republicans—including, by the way, at least 20 in the House of Representatives, so far, who see absolutely no reason why this shutdown has to continue. We may not agree on much, but there does seem to be bipartisan agreement that the shutdown has to end. And once it does, we should begin the negotiations that many of us, including myself, have been calling for on the floor since March and work toward a bipartisan agreement that ends the brinkmanship, ends the manufactured crises that are so harmful to our workers and to the economy.

I know Speaker BOEHNER and the tea party aren't on the same page as the rest of us about that yet. But as we continue to hear from thousands of Americans—from fishermen to small business owners to struggling moms—who are being hurt as this shutdown occurs, I hope they will at least stop standing in the way of those of us who are ready to get to work.

I will close by quoting Kirsten Watts from Tacoma, WA. She works with the Bonneville Power Administration in Seattle, and she told the Seattle Times:

It's just sad that the government is playing games with people's livelihoods.

Kirsten said that workers at her agency would still be coming in, but she is worried about the others who will not be. She was thinking about how this shutdown will impact others.

I think Speaker BOEHNER and the tea party—who, according to Representative STUTZMAN, are laser-focused on what is in it for them—could learn a lot from that approach.

So I say today to Speaker BOEHNER: Open the government. Let everybody go back to work. Stop hurting our economy.

All that it requires is bringing the Senate-passed continuing resolution up for a vote on the House floor so that the Democrats and Republicans who want the government to reopen can pass it. Once the government is open, we would be more than happy to sit

down and work out our longer-term budget agreement. But we are not going to do it with our families, workers, and small businesses being held hostage.

This is not the time to talk about opening the government. It is time to actually do it. The entire country is watching and wondering how we got to this point. Let's do the right thing and show them we can work together and fulfill the basic responsibilities we were elected to do.

Mr. President, I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from South Dakota.

Mr. THUNE. Mr. President, like many other Members who spoke on the floor today, I too want to acknowledge the extraordinary work that is done by the Capitol Police officers.

Every single day they work around here protecting the people who work and visit here. Yesterday was another great example of the skill, the professionalism, and the courage that they display on a daily basis in a very quiet and humble way, and I wish to express—on my own behalf and for the people that I represent—our appreciation for their extraordinary work and the remarkable way in which they go about their jobs and express how very grateful we all are for that.

I wish to talk about what is happening here in Washington, DC. Unfortunately, we find ourselves on the 4th day of what is a completely avoidable partial government shutdown. It is not like we didn't see this coming. The fiscal year ends every year on September 30. So it wasn't a deadline that we didn't know was coming. In fact, as I pointed out before, the House of Representatives completed work on four appropriation bills. Unfortunately, here in the Senate we didn't move appropriation bills across the floor to comply with the Budget Control Act. We didn't pass a single one this fiscal year.

Then recognizing the need to act at the end of the fiscal year as it approached, the House passed and sent to the Senate a continuing resolution on September 20—2 weeks ago. Instead of acting quickly to bring us to a resolution to keep the government funded, Senate leadership continued to stall, unwilling to negotiate.

The House has now sent us four comprehensive proposals to fund the government and to provide fairness under the law when it comes to ObamaCare. One of these proposals included a request for a conference committee so we could get to work resolving our differences. It was a very straightforward request. The other proposals that had been sent over here—which had other elements in them dealing with ObamaCare, as well as government funding—were rejected by the Senate. They were tabled here. So this was a proposal that was very simple and straightforward. All it asked was, let's have a conference. Let's sit down and try to work out our differences.

Unfortunately, the Democratic majority here in the Senate insisted that they will not negotiate. They tabled the motion—the request to go to conference with the House of Representatives.

So far this week the House of Representatives has sent us five bills to fund various parts of our government. I understand they are continuing to work on additional bills today. These are bills that would ensure that our veterans get paid and that children can continue to have access to life-saving treatments.

Yesterday morning my Republican colleagues and I came to the floor and requested that several of these commonsense bills that the House has sent to us be agreed to by unanimous consent here in the Senate.

Specifically, I asked for a unanimous consent agreement for the Pay Our Guard and Reserve Act. This bill would ensure that the men and women who proudly serve in our National Guard and Reserve—those who have bravely answered the call to protect and defend our country—continue to train and to get paid for their service. Congress should send a clear message to these men and women who stand ready to serve in overseas conflicts or to respond to domestic disasters, that they will not be impacted by the spending disagreements here in Washington. Unfortunately, our friends on the other side of the aisle objected to these requests and, unbelievably, the President of the United States has actually threatened to veto those very measures.

Congress has already passed by unanimous consent a bill to ensure that active duty military personnel are paid during this lapse in government funding. It is unclear to me why Senate Democrats wouldn't pass similar measures to fund these important services. After all, taking care of active duty military personnel is something that everybody agreed to here by unanimous consent. That rarely happens around here in the Senate. But Democrats and Republicans agreed that this is a priority. We have to make sure the active men and women in our military who defend this country on a daily basis get paid despite the dysfunction here in Washington, DC. All the bill I offered yesterday simply would have done is to apply that same treatment to our Guard and Reserve.

In my State of South Dakota, we have about 4,300 members of the Army and Air National Guard—a couple hundred of which are deployed right now, and the remainder have training functions that they perform on a regular basis. If we don't get this issue resolved, they are not going to be able to meet those training requirements. As we all know, they respond to domestic disasters, to emergencies that require their assistance here at home, as well as on a regular basis are now being deployed to meet the military requirements that we have in many of the

conflicts in which we are involved around the world.

So it strikes me as very strange that Democrats would refuse to act or engage in a meaningful debate in order to find common ground on issues like this and to get our government back up and running.

I think the people I represent in the State of South Dakota, like a lot of other people across the country, expect their leaders to work together to resolve their differences. The position of the Democratic leadership is that they will not negotiate and simply work together. That is not a position I believe is reasonable. We have heard it from the President; we have heard it from the Democratic leaders here in the Senate: We are not going to negotiate.

I think most Americans believe they sent us here to Washington, DC, to work together, realizing there are differences—legitimate differences—about how to solve problems and how to approach issues. But they believe, on a very basic level, that the responsibility we have as their elected officials is to sit down and to try to figure out how to solve these problems.

To say that we will not negotiate as a starting position is a completely unreasonable position to take, in the eyes, I believe, of the American people.

The dysfunction and the gridlock that we have here in Washington, DC, is simply unacceptable.

On Wednesday, the President invited congressional leaders to the White House for what, unfortunately, turned out to be yet another photo opportunity, a publicity stunt. The President waited until after the 11th hour, 2 days into a partial government shutdown, to even engage in a face-to-face way with congressional leaders. It strikes me that when you invite people to the table and in the same breath make explicit that you are not willing to negotiate, that very little work is going to get done for the American people.

I hope we would see better from our President and better from our leaders in the Senate. It seems like the Democrats are very content to take their ball and go home. Four days into a partial government shutdown, they still refuse to negotiate.

We haven't experienced a government shutdown for nearly 20 years. I pose to my friends on the other side of the aisle that the willingness of leaders in both parties to negotiate in good faith during previous negotiations is something from which we could take a lesson.

Going back to 1995 and 1996, former Speaker of the House Newt Gingrich, when he was talking about the shutdowns in that period, said:

Bill Clinton and I would talk, if not every day . . . we would talk five days a week before the shutdown, after the shutdowns.

We met face to face for 35 days in the White House trying to hammer things out . . .

As we know, ending this unnecessary shutdown is not the only challenge we

are dealing with here in Washington. But when it comes to the debt ceiling—which Treasury tells us will be reached in the next few weeks—Democrats refuse to come to the table to enact responsible spending reforms as part of that package. The American people disagree.

According to a recent Bloomberg poll, Americans by a 2-to-1 margin disagree with President Barack Obama's contention that Congress should raise the U.S. debt limit without conditions. The American people understand that if we continue to borrow and borrow like there is no tomorrow and pile that burden on the backs of our children and grandchildren—they understand that if you are going to increase the debt limit, if you are going to ask for a bigger credit card limit, that you ought to be doing something about the debt. That is why, by a 2-to-1 margin, they believe that if you are going to raise the debt limit, you ought to do something to address the underlying debt. In fact, 61 percent of Americans, according to that poll, believe it is right to require spending cuts when the debt ceiling is raised even if it risks default.

I do not believe we ought to have a default, but I believe a negotiation on the debt limit makes sense if we are serious about doing something about the debt. Every time in the past when we have had major budget deals—when we go back to the Gramm-Rudman deal in 1985 or the 1990 budget agreement or the 1993 budget agreement or the 1997 budget agreement or the one more recently, in 2011, the Budget Control Act, it was always done around and in association with an increase in the debt limit. There is a clear precedent, clear history, when we are facing an increase in the debt limit, of having a serious substantive debate in this country about how to address the debt. In many cases, those led to some of the few times in our Nation's history when we have actually gotten budget agreements that did something to reduce spending.

It might come as a surprise to some of my colleagues here also that inasmuch as many of us do not like the sequester that came out of the Budget Control Act of 2011—

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. DONNELLY). The time of the Senator has expired.

Mr. THUNE. I ask unanimous consent for an additional minute.

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

Mr. THUNE. Mr. President, what came out of that was now, for the first time since the 1950s, literally since the Korean war, government spending has gone down for 2 consecutive years.

It can be done. It can be done when reasonable people are willing to sit down and negotiate, but that requires the engagement of the Chief Executive, of the President of the United States, and it requires the good will of the people here in the Senate. It does not en-

tail taking a position that "we will not negotiate." That is not a position. What we need is an opportunity where we can sit down together and focus on these big challenges we have. In the meantime, we continue to have opportunities to vote to fund veterans programs, to vote to fund our National Guard and Reserve, to fund the National Institutes of Health—important priorities many of my colleagues on the other side have talked about.

We have bills coming over from the House of Representatives. We could do like we did with the military pay act—pick them up and pass them by unanimous consent so we do not have to worry about any of these issues not being addressed and important programs and projects not being funded. That is all it takes. I hope that can happen.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from New Mexico.

Mr. HEINRICH. Mr. President, we are here today with our government doors shuttered because of a failure to understand basic civics. Frankly, this "my way or the highway" brinkmanship has been building so long here in Washington that I would not be surprised if the American people say "a pox on both your houses, Republican and Democratic."

Why are we in this fix? How did we get here? Sometimes when you are lost in the woods, it helps to retrace your footsteps so you can find the way back out. We are here because some of our colleagues have forgotten their middle school civics lesson. They have forgotten the "I'm Just a Bill" episode of "Schoolhouse Rock" that some of the folks in the seventies and eighties remember that reminds us all that to pass a bill or repeal a bill, you have to meet certain tests. You need a majority of the House of Representatives. You need a majority in the Senate. If someone is going to filibuster, you need 60 votes. And you need the signature and the support of the President.

We are here because my colleagues who want to repeal the Affordable Care Act do not have a majority of the Senate. They certainly do not control the White House despite waging an entire election over the health care law. Since they cannot repeal the health care law the way we all learned about in middle school, they decided to try something new. They have taken the government hostage. They have said: If you do not give us what we want, we are going to close down the Federal Government.

Can you imagine what it would look like if Democrats employed this kind of reckless and irresponsible tactic? What if we said: Unless you raise the minimum wage to \$15 an hour, we are not going to pass a spending bill. Remember in 2009 when our party tried to pass a cap-and-trade bill? We did not have the votes to overcome the filibuster in the Senate, so I guess the lesson here is that we should have refused

to fund the government until Republicans relented and passed a cap-and-trade bill. Can you imagine. That is not how our democracy works, it is not what our Founders envisioned, and it is not compromise. It is extortion.

It is our job to pass a spending bill every year. We can fight about how big that bill is. We can fight about how small that bill is going to be. But constitutional duty is not optional. Some are saying there needs to be further compromise on the spending bill, but it is clear that sometimes the Republican House does not know when to declare a victory. They actually got the spending levels they asked for. In the interests of keeping the government open, the Senate accepted House spending levels, sequester levels, in our funding resolution. I do not like those spending levels. Most Democrats do not support those spending levels. But we are not willing to risk the entire economy or well-being of our constituents just to get our way.

The bottom line is this: It is time to reopen the government—no strings attached, no policy riders, and no more hostage-taking, just a clean funding bill that stops hurting our public servants, our communities, and our economy, a clean funding resolution that keeps the lights on while we negotiate over a long-term budget. The Senate had the votes to pass such a bill, and we did. The House also has the votes to pass a clean funding bill, but Speaker BOEHNER will not bring it to the floor. He will not put it up for a vote because the most extreme Members of his caucus want to play hostage politics instead.

It is time to end this. It is time to drop the hostage politics and simply pass the one plan that has the votes to pass both Chambers—a clean funding bill.

Speaker BOEHNER, let them vote. Let your Members vote their conscience on a clean funding resolution. It is your duty, Mr. Speaker. Just let them vote. That is all we ask.

I yield.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from New York.

EXTENSION OF MORNING BUSINESS

Mr. SCHUMER. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the period of morning business be extended until 4 p.m. and that all provisions of the previous order remain in effect.

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

Mr. SCHUMER. Mr. President, my good friend the Senator from Alabama has graciously agreed to let us flip the order, so I am going to now, before he does, ask unanimous consent that be done and that it not change the alternating pattern, Republican and Democrat.

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

CONTINUING APPROPRIATIONS

Mr. SCHUMER. Mr. President, I rise to talk about an aspect of the tea party government shutdown that has not gotten the attention it deserves. Sadly, the effects of this tea party shutdown do not stop at our water's edge. The shutdown is putting our national security at risk. The senior Senator from California, the chair of the Intelligence Committee, has talked to us about how 72 percent of our intelligence employees are not working. They are not all useless or laggards or slackers. In fact, there is a high degree of professionalism in the CIA, NSA, and like agencies. To have close to three-quarters of them not on the job puts every American at risk.

There is another area that is putting us at risk. We all know that the greatest threat to our national security and to that of Israel—or one of the greatest threats to our national security and the greatest threat to Israel is a nuclear Iran. In order to punish Iran for their pursuit of nuclear weapons, Republicans and Democrats, in a bipartisan way, led in many instances by two of my good friends here, the Democratic senior Senator from New Jersey Mr. MENENDEZ and the Republican senior Senator from South Carolina Mr. GRAHAM—they have come together to pass tough sanctions that would have a crippling effect on Iran's economy, and this body in a bipartisan way and the other body in a bipartisan way have passed those.

Just last week we saw some of the first results and progress, as President Ruhani said he was open to talks on the nuclear program. Iran had been intransigent before that. We don't even know if they really want to give up nuclear weapons or whether this is a feint, but we certainly know the sanctions are having a dramatic effect. What has changed Iran's mind? Have they suddenly had a change of heart out of the blue? No. The only thing that changed their minds is the sanctions, and that is why they are at least acting differently than they have acted in the past. Who knows. Hopefully they may actually do something real if the sanctions continue. We know that these tough sanctions are a huge weight around the ankles of the Iranian economy.

But right now, when Iran feels cornered for the first time, the shutdown of our government could well take that pressure off the Iranians, and it comes at exactly the wrong time. That is because the shutdown and its concomitant furloughs are preventing us from fully enforcing the sanctions, allowing the companies that are trying to do business with Iran to escape punishment and allowing the Iranian economy to expand faster than it normally would have. There are many companies that try to evade these sanctions, but the Federal Government has cops on the beat who have been, by and large, overwhelmingly successful in making sure nobody can slip through the

cracks and do business with Iran. But now, because of the government shutdown and furloughs, those offices are greatly weakened.

Two of the major offices in the Treasury Department that enforce sanctions—the Office of Intelligence and Analysis and the Financial Crimes Enforcement Network—have only 30 of their 345 employees. Let me repeat that. Two of the most important offices that enforce sanctions have less than 10 percent of their employees. Ninety percent-plus are on furlough. They cannot work.

The Office of Terrorist Financing and Intelligence—a vital part of our enforcing tough sanctions against Iran—is usually staffed by 10 people. Right now they just have one—10 percent.

The Treasury Department's Office of Foreign Assets Control—the primary office responsible for enforcing these sanctions and punishing those who violate them—is also operating with a skeleton staff.

Just at a time when we need the sanctions to continue to bite, this government shutdown is making it a lot easier for rogue actors to sell oil and trade with the Iranian regime. We all know that those who try to avoid sanctions find the weakest place. Now, with so few of our people on the job because of the shutdown, it is going to be a lot easier for them. New sanctions designations will halt. We will not be able to investigate sanction violations. We cannot punish those who have violated the sanctions. The government shutdown sends a dramatic and strong signal to those who seek to violate the sanctions and give the Iranian regime hope that they can continue to keep nuclear weapons. It could not come at a worse time. The Iranian sanctions have been our best pressure point, and the shutdown is letting the pressure off Iran at exactly the wrong time.

We have seen a pattern over the last few days, and I have a feeling I know what the response from the other side of the aisle—particularly the junior Senator from Texas—will be. He will say: OK, Democrats, that is a good point. Let's fund the sanctions, and maybe tomorrow or the next day we will have a bill on the floor to restore those offices in the Treasury Department. Then maybe we will point out that the government shutdown is hurting middle-class students from getting college loans. Again, that was something that had bipartisan support. Then maybe the junior Senator from Texas or House Republicans will say: OK. Let's fund it too. After a while, it gets a little ridiculous.

The House Republicans, and their seeming acquiescence to the junior Senator from Texas, have given the junior Senator from Texas a veto power over which parts of the Federal Government are funded and which are not. At the request of the junior Senator from Texas—who has fervently and passionately said don't fund the government unless ObamaCare is