

I believe Chuck Hagel is the right man for the fiscal challenges that will confront the Department of Defense. Putting aside sequester—which I dearly hope will not happen; Secretary Panetta has said it would be irresponsible for the Congress to allow it to happen, and many of us agree it must be avoided—and the challenges in the next month or series of months, the long-term outlook for the Department of Defense is that it must do more with less, and Secretary Hagel, if he is confirmed, will have that management task. He is one of the people in this country who is almost uniquely qualified to carry it out, and I believe he will, with great distinction. He will take care of our men and women in uniform and strengthen our national defense. He will do what he thinks is right, even if it is not popular.

Finally, Chuck Hagel is, as everyone has said, a good and decent man. And I thank in particular Senator MCCAIN for his very compelling and telling comments during our consideration before the vote in the Armed Services Committee. He said, and I agree, that no one should impugn Chuck Hagel's character. He is a person of integrity and character, and I believe he will have the respect at all levels of our defense—the men and women who serve and sacrifice every day, the men and women who are essential to our national security—and I recommend him and urge my colleagues to support him.

I respectfully hope he will be confirmed quickly and that it will be done on a bipartisan basis so we will be united—as our Armed Services Committee in this body is almost always united—in favor of the President's choice for this uniquely important responsibility.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Ms. BALDWIN). The Republican whip.

TIME TO GOVERN

Mr. CORNYN. Madam President, I rise to mark another sad record for the Senate: 1,387 days since the Senate has passed a budget—1,387 days.

The last time I checked the 2012 election was over, and of course it has been over for more than 3 months now. Unfortunately, the President still seems to be very much in campaign mode, giving speeches all around the country. For the time being, what we need, rather than a President on a perpetual campaign, is for Democrats and Republicans to work together to try and solve some of our Nation's most pressing problems, and there is no more important issue than our national debt.

Unfortunately, the President, after extracting about \$600 billion in new taxes as a result of the fiscal cliff negotiations, is still coming back to the well, and he is calling for tens of billions of dollars in new spending. At a time when we ought to be talking about bending the cost curve down, trying to rein in wasteful Washington spending, the President wants to spend more, and he wants to raise taxes to do it.

Perhaps worst of all, we know the promises we made to our seniors for Medicare and Social Security are imperiled. Unless we act together to save and protect Social Security and Medicare, they are on a pathway to bankruptcy, and that is irresponsible and wrong.

I am tempted to describe President Obama's spending and tax ideas as small ball, but they are worse than that. They represent a conscious decision to neglect some of the most pressing issues that confront our country. One might even say it is a dereliction of duty in the battle to save America.

Last week, the Congressional Budget Office projected our gross national debt will increase from \$16 trillion in 2012 to \$26 trillion in 2023. Now that may seem like a long way off, but since President Obama has been President, the national debt has gone up by 55 percent—just in the last 4 years. If we project that forward to 2023, when some of these young men and women who are working here as pages will be looking at entering the workforce and looking at their futures, all they will see ahead of them is debt and a reduced standard of living. This is what lies ahead for all of us unless we embrace real spending cuts and unless we deal with the unfunded liabilities of Medicare and Social Security.

If President Obama has a secret strategy for getting our debt under control, we would all love to hear it. His last two budget proposals failed to receive a single vote in the Senate. The last 2 years his budget has actually been put to a vote, no Democrat voted for it and no Republican, because it simply didn't address the problems I have described. I hope this year is different. Unfortunately, the President has already missed the statutory deadline for submitting his own budget, which was February 4. I hope when he finally gets around to sending us his proposed budget it is a serious plan for long-term debt reduction. Based on experience, I can't say I am overly optimistic, but hope springs eternal.

I guess one of the things that worries me the most is that in the President's State of the Union message, which he so eloquently delivered a few nights ago, he didn't say one word about his 2014 budget—not one word. I would urge the President to take a long hard look at the new Congressional Budget Office report. I would urge him to launch serious bipartisan budget negotiations as soon as possible so we can avoid another last-minute cliffhanger and another 2 a.m. Senate vote.

Above all, I would urge the President to take a look at a balanced budget amendment to the U.S. Constitution that I have cosponsored along with all of my colleagues on this side of the aisle. That amendment would require the Federal Government to balance its budget each and every year.

Is that such a crazy idea? Well, no. That is what every family has to do. That is what every small business has

to do. And that is what 49 States are required to do under their laws. This amendment to the Constitution would be the 28th amendment to the Constitution, including the first 10, which are, of course, our Bill of Rights. It would require a congressional supermajority to raise taxes or to raise the debt ceiling.

As I said a moment ago, families across America have to balance their budgets. And, of course, along with a budget brings the discipline of deciding what our priorities are—the things we have to have and we can't live without, the things we want but we have to defer, and then the things that maybe we would like to have but simply can't afford. Well, this number right here, 1,387 days since the Senate passed a budget, is one reason why our debt continues to go up by leaps and bounds, and there is no plan in sight to bring it under control.

Here is the bottom line for President Obama: The 2012 election is over, and now it is time to govern. It is time to move beyond the campaign rhetoric, drop the gimmicks and work across the aisle with Republicans to do what is right for the country. We are ready, willing, and able to engage with the President and our Democratic colleagues to try to address these problems that confront our country. In fact, there is no good reason for any of us to be here unless we are willing to do that.

Madam President, I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Delaware.

Mr. CARPER. Madam President, while the Senator from Texas is still on the floor, he knows I have a lot of respect and affection for him, and I am delighted to serve with him here and also to serve with him on the Finance Committee. I appreciate Senator SHAHEEN for letting me jump in for just a minute.

We agree on so much. We actually do. And not just the Senator and I but our colleagues here. And I think we fully recognize that although the deficit comes down from \$1.5 trillion to about \$850 billion or so, it is way too much. I think we also agree that one of the best ways to reduce the deficit is to strengthen and grow the economy.

I believe—and I think I heard the President say this the other night—there are three things we need to make sure we address.

One, we need to address—and the President said this—we need to address entitlement programs, not to savage old people or to savage poor people but to figure out how to get better health care results for less money to be able to preserve those programs for the long haul.

I think we will have an interesting proposal from Senator DURBIN later this year with respect to Social Security and putting it in a structured way, maybe a path forward on Social Security that makes it clear we are not trying to balance the budget on Social Security but actually do reforms that we

know are needed and I know are needed so we will have that program for the long haul.

I commend my side of the aisle, and I commend your side of the aisle. We acknowledge that we need some revenues, whether it is on the tax expenditure side, the deductions and loopholes and so forth, or finding other ways to raise revenue.

Third, we just came from a press conference this morning with Congressman ISSA, Congressman CUMMINGS, Senator COBURN, and myself to focus on the GAO and their high-risk list, high-risk ways for wasting money. That comes out today. Every 2 years they give us this high-risk list for how to find ways to save money and spend our tax dollars more efficiently.

We have all that working together, those three things: entitlement reform, some additional revenues, and actually looking in every nook and cranny to see how we can get a better result for less money. Those we can do together. My colleague and I have worked on some things together, and I want to work on those with the Senator, and I look forward to that. I think that if we do, a lot of our colleagues will join us.

Mr. CORNYN. Would the Senator yield for a question?

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Republican Whip.

Mr. CORNYN. Madam President, I would like to tell the distinguished Senator from Delaware how much I appreciate him and his friendship, and it is genuine.

I guess the thing that is so maddening about serving in the Senate is that everyone in this body—the Senator from Delaware, the Senator from New Hampshire—everyone who serves in this body understands the problems that confront our country that he so eloquently described in terms of unfunded liabilities for Medicare and Social Security, which are on a path to bankruptcy, the debt, and just imagine, if interest rates were to go up, what that would mean in terms of our ability to fund everything from safety net programs to national defense.

But it never seems to happen. The date never seems to arrive when we actually sit down and address it. And I believe this number of days without a budget is really symptomatic of the problem. But thanks to our colleagues across the Capitol—who passed a “no budget, no pay” bill, which has now been signed by the President—unless Congress passes a budget, we are not going to get paid, which is entirely appropriate and long overdue.

So I would just say to my friend, and he is my friend, that I appreciate his comments. I hope someday soon we can find a way, Republicans and Democrats alike—that is the only way it is going to happen—I hope we can get serious about this. Unfortunately, it hasn’t happened yet. I am an optimist. I think it can happen. But it is going to require Presidential leadership, and, frankly, that is one reason I wish the

President would get off the campaign trail. Now that he has won—he has another 4-year term—he doesn’t have to worry about running for election again, but then to work with us because that is the only way it is going to happen.

So I appreciate his comments and look forward to continuing to work with the Senator.

Mr. CARPER. Again, I thank Senator SHAHEEN and Senator HOEVEN for allowing us to have this colloquy.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from New Hampshire.

Mrs. SHAHEEN. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent to speak as if in morning business.

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

REMEMBERING CHARLIE MORGAN

Mrs. SHAHEEN. Madam President, today I rise with a heavy heart because our Nation has lost one of its outstanding citizens and many of us have lost a dear friend.

Charlie Morgan, chief warrant officer of the New Hampshire National Guard, passed away early Sunday morning with her wife Karen and their daughter Casey by her side. Chief Charlie Morgan was just 48 years old. For those of us who had the pleasure of knowing Charlie, it has been a difficult week. However, as I rise today, I take comfort in the opportunity I had to share part of Charlie’s life and work.

Many know Charlie for the national attention she received over the last several years advocating on behalf of her fellow gay servicemembers and their families. However, first and foremost, Charlie was a soldier. She enlisted in the U.S. Army in 1982. After a brief period away, Charlie returned to service as a member of the Kentucky National Guard in 1992, 1 year before the now-repealed don’t ask, don’t tell policy became law.

Following the terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001, Charlie returned for a third time, joining the 197th Fires Brigade of the New Hampshire National Guard, a tour that included a yearlong deployment in Kuwait.

In addition to the mental and emotional challenges of military service, Chief Warrant Officer Morgan shouldered the constant burden of keeping her life secret from her fellow soldiers. Married to her partner Karen in 2000, Charlie was unable to live openly under the military’s don’t ask, don’t tell policy.

Immediately following the repeal of don’t ask, don’t tell, Charlie made national news as one of the first servicemembers to publicly confirm her homosexuality and shed light on many of the remaining inequalities faced by same-sex military families.

I first met Charlie in 2011. She contacted my office during her deployment in Kuwait when she learned that despite the repeal of don’t ask, don’t tell, her partner Karen of over 10 years would not be allowed to attend mandatory National Guard Yellow Ribbon Reintegration Programs upon her return.

I was pleased to work with Secretary Panetta and the New Hampshire National Guard, which has been very supportive of Charlie, to ensure that she and her wife Karen would be able to participate in the program together.

However, as those of us who appreciated her determination understood, Charlie was not satisfied. She continued to vigorously pursue equal benefits for same-sex spouses, particularly survivors’ benefits and compensation still denied under the Defense of Marriage Act. And this was not an abstract issue for Charlie. In 2011 she was diagnosed for a second time with breast cancer. Concerned for the future well-being of her family, Charlie took aim at DOMA by challenging its constitutionality in Federal court, and her case is set to be heard by the Supreme Court later this year.

Several days ago my office sent out an online condolence card to the Morgan family, and the response from that card has been overwhelming. In less than a week we received over 2,000 messages of support from citizens all across our country, and I would like to read just a couple of those this morning.

From Hobkinton, NH, we heard: Charlie is a hero to many of us. Thank you for making your lives public so others can live their lives privately in love.

From Oregon, we heard: Thinking of you in this time of loss. It is also a loss for our country, but she leaves a legacy that will carry on.

From Fulton, IL, we heard: Thank you so much, Charlie, for all you have done. You will not be forgotten, and your service, work, and legacy will live on. Those of us left behind will honor you by continuing on in this all-important fight for equality.

I hope Charlie Morgan knew how many lives she touched and how greatly we admired her efforts. I know that she will be sorely missed and that her example will continue to guide us well into the future.

With Charlie’s memory in mind, I will soon be introducing the Charlie Morgan Act. This bill will end a number of restrictions on benefits for legal spouses of all military servicemembers and veterans regardless of their sexual orientation. Every individual who provides for our defense deserves the peace of mind that comes with knowing one’s family will be taken care of should the worst happen. No one should ever again go through what Charlie and her family had to go through. I hope all of us in the Senate will take up this legislation and act quickly to address this issue. It is long overdue.

Madam President, I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from North Dakota.

KEYSTONE XL PIPELINE PROJECT

Mr. HOEVEN. Madam President, I rise today for the purpose of engaging in a colloquy with my distinguished colleagues on the matter of the Keystone XL Pipeline for 30 minutes.