

with the House. Nineteen times she was blocked by six tea party Republicans. Nineteen times, using the rules to protect the voice of the minority—which I understand they used not only their voice but what was used to protect them to prohibit the Senate from meeting with their House counterparts.

So Senate Democrats want to negotiate. There is PAUL RYAN. There is PATTY MURRAY. Let's have the budget conference and hammer it out. The Democrats have been ready to negotiate on a budget since March 23, 2013.

Let's have a conversation? We have been trying to have that conversation since March. Who has stopped us? HARRY REID didn't stop PATTY MURRAY. CHUCK SCHUMER didn't stop the Budget Committee. BARBARA MIKULSKI is not stopping it. Six tea party Republicans have stopped the ability of the Senate from going to the House to negotiate a budget.

Free the Budget Committee. Why is that so important? Because they not only come up with an overall budget in discretionary spending, mandatory spending, and revenues, but they put a cap on us appropriators. One of the outcomes of a budget agreement is they set the total amount of money the Appropriations Committee can spend on discretionary spending. To the shock of everybody, there is actually a cap on discretionary spending established by the Budget Committee. That has been the rule of the Budget Act going back to the 1970s. I would accept a cap agreed upon in a duly constituted process established by the rules of the House and the Senate—which is, we pass a budget, we meet in conference, we come back and give the appropriators what they call the 302(a)—the total cap we can spend—we take a look at it, and we meet and we follow the law. It also says what revenue should be and then total mandatory spending.

So when we hear Democrats won't negotiate—the Democrats have negotiated.

Going to this situation where we know the fiscal year expires October 1, the Senate put forth a bill. It came out of the Appropriations Committee. It was really, as the Chair, at my suggestion we would have a short-term funding resolution so we could deal with issues such as debt limit, canceling sequester for 2 years, and what our funding as a cap should be for 2014—short term, no new money, but a goal of getting us to canceling the sequester, following what the Budget Committee would set as the cap on us.

In order to get there, I was willing to compromise. I didn't want to. I felt it was too harsh, too rough on important discretionary spending. But sometimes you have to negotiate and compromise. So I was willing to compromise in order to get to negotiations. What was the compromise? The House has a level of \$986 billion. It follows fiscal 2013 at the sequester level, meaning reduced by over \$100 billion. I thought that \$986 billion was too low. The Senate bill

was \$1,058 trillion. That is over a \$70 billion difference.

But that is what a conference is. That is what negotiation is. So in order to get us across the dome into negotiations, I was willing to compromise, particularly on very important domestic spending.

The liberals who want to fund Head Start, who want to fund NIH—well, maybe we are not liberals. Maybe we are just Americans and, I believe, friends on the other side of the aisle—we were ready to go. So in my mind, as an appropriator, I have already compromised just to get us into the room. But they won't even take up that bill. They won't take up the bill that Speaker BOEHNER said he would pass if we agreed to their number—\$986 billion—to get us into the room to talk. If you tell the Senate: If you agree with us on this, just to get a short-term negotiation going, we will pass it, and then you don't, why should we believe it will be any different?

But as the chairman of the Appropriations Committee, I am ready to negotiate. I am ready to compromise. I have reached out to my House counterpart, the chair of Appropriations. We have a marvelous, civil, candid relationship. We are ready to go to work.

We differ on money. There is no doubt. The chairman of the House Appropriations Committee, Congressman HAL ROGERS, is a wonderful gentleman, but I will tell you he is a rock-ribbed, no-nonsense fiscal conservative. But that is OK by Senator BARB because that is what compromise is. That is doing what Colin Powell asked us to do: Let's talk things over. Let's find some sensible center. Let's make sure we run the U.S. Government in a smart, frugal, effective way. That is what it would take.

We are ready to do it, but we need—I need Speaker BOEHNER to pass the short-term CR so we can even get into the room to do this. So when you say Senate Democrats will not negotiate or will not compromise, it is not true.

Also, I heard the junior Senator from Kentucky say that the Senate has not approved appropriations bills. The Appropriations Committee, despite being hamstrung by not having a budget, reported 11 appropriations bills. Eight of them were supported by Republicans. By August 1, our Appropriations Committee had marked up every single bill except one, Interior. We had marked them up with bipartisan support. Eight of them had bipartisan support; three did not: Labor-HHS, Financial Services, and Legislative Branch.

Why did we not get that? Because the Labor-HHS bill and Financial Services play a role in funding ObamaCare. There we go again. Don't do anything that would fund ObamaCare. There we go again.

I am so fed up with those riders, those poison-pen riders. We could have done that to them. We chose not to. I would like to see the comprehensive immigration bill passed. I didn't put

any riders on the appropriations bills coming out of the Senate. I would have liked to have seen a farm bill. That has been worked on so hard by Senator STABENOW, the Senator from Michigan, and Senator ROBERTS, the Senator from Kansas—they worked wonderfully on a bipartisan farm bill. It was something to be proud of in the Senate. I would have liked to have attached that to the continuing. But we decided no riders, nothing cute, nothing clever, no earmarks, nothing like that—straightforward money bills ready to go to conference.

We could not get it, but they are passed. They are passed in the Appropriations Committee and we are waiting to get to work.

The Republicans, the tea party Republicans say they do not have the votes in the House to reopen government. Give it a chance. Put the vote to the floor. If we win, government is reopened. If we lose, at least we offered a suggestion and we can go back to the drawing board. But the solution to reopening the government lies on Speaker BOEHNER's desk. He says he wants to have a conversation. We say pick it up, have the vote. That puts the conversation to work for a short-term funding resolution.

We say to our six Republican Senators who have blocked the Budget Committee, let the Budget Committee go to conference. Let Senator PATTY MURRAY and Congressman PAUL RYAN meet to resolve these issues. Let's follow the regular order. Let's get back to the way this government and this country should function.

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

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The bill clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

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

RECESS

Ms. MIKULSKI. Madam President, I ask that the Senate stand in recess until 2:15.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the Senate stands in recess until 2:15 p.m.

Thereupon, the Senate, at 12:26 p.m., recessed until 2:15 p.m. and reassembled when called to order by the President pro tempore (Mr. LEAHY).

CONTINUING APPROPRIATIONS

QUORUM CALL

Mr. REID. Mr. President, I note the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDENT pro tempore. The clerk will call the roll to ascertain the presence of a quorum.

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll and the following Senators

entered the Chamber and answered to their names:

[Quorum No. 3]

Baldwin	Heitkamp	Murphy
Baucus	Johnson (SD)	Murray
Begich	Kaine	Pryor
Blumenthal	King	Reed
Boxer	Landrieu	Reid
Brown	Leahy	Schatz
Cantwell	Levin	Tester
Cardin	Markey	Udall (CO)
Casey	McCain	Warner
Durbin	McCaskill	Wyden
Heinrich	Menendez	

The PRESIDENT pro tempore. A quorum is not present.

Mr. REID. Mr. President, I move that the Sergeant at Arms be directed to request the presence of all absent Senators, and I ask for the yeas and nays.

The PRESIDENT pro tempore. Is there a sufficient second?

There is a sufficient second.

The question is on agreeing to the motion. The yeas and nays have been ordered, and the clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk called the roll.

The PRESIDENT pro tempore. Are there any other Senators in the Chamber desiring to vote?

Mr. DURBIN. I announce that the Senator from New Mexico (Mr. UDALL) is necessarily absent.

Mr. CORNYN. The following Senator is necessarily absent: the Senator from Oklahoma (Mr. INHOFE).

The result was announced—yeas 84, nays 14, as follows:

[Rollcall Vote No. 214 Leg.]

YEAS—84

Ayotte	Flake	Merkley
Baldwin	Franken	Mikulski
Barrasso	Gillibrand	Moran
Baucus	Graham	Murkowski
Begich	Grassley	Murphy
Bennet	Hagan	Murray
Blumenthal	Harkin	Nelson
Blunt	Hatch	Portman
Boozman	Heinrich	Pryor
Boxer	Heitkamp	Reed
Brown	Hirono	Reid
Burr	Hoeven	Rockefeller
Cantwell	Isakson	Sanders
Cardin	Johanns	Schatz
Carper	Johnson (SD)	Schumer
Casey	Kaine	Sessions
Chambliss	King	Shaheen
Chiesa	Kirk	Shelby
Coats	Klobuchar	Stabenow
Cochran	Landrieu	Tester
Collins	Leahy	Thune
Coons	Levin	Toomey
Corker	Manchin	Udall (CO)
Donnelly	Markey	Warner
Durbin	McCain	Warren
Enzi	McCaskill	Whitehouse
Feinstein	McConnell	Wicker
Fischer	Menendez	Wyden

NAYS—14

Alexander	Heller	Roberts
Coburn	Johnson (WI)	Rubio
Cornyn	Lee	Scott
Crapo	Paul	Vitter
Cruz	Risch	

NOT VOTING—2

Inhofe Udall (NM)

The motion was agreed to.

The PRESIDENT pro tempore. The majority leader is recognized.

Mr. REID. As soon as I finish my remarks, we will enter into an agreement on how the speakers will go forward.

The shutdown of the Federal Government is now affecting some families more than others. It is affecting families who are the most vulnerable, denying them the benefits to help with the funeral expenses of loved ones killed while serving our country.

This part of my presentation is not something I got from my staff; this is in the press right now:

The families of five U.S. servicemembers who were killed over the weekend in Afghanistan have been notified that they won't be receiving their benefit, normally wired to relatives within 36 hours of the death. The death gratuity is extended to help cover funeral costs and help with immediate living expenses until survivor benefits typically begin. The money also helps cover costs to fly families to Dover Air Force Base to witness a return of their loved ones in a flag-draped coffin.

"Washington may be shut down, but it's still asking people to go to war," says the head of the Council on Foreign Relations, Gayle Lemmon. "When people realize that they can serve and fight for their country, but that their families will get an I.O.U. until the shutdown is over, I think they're just shocked."

I know I am.

For example, LCpl Jeremiah Collins, 19 years old, was a marine who died Saturday while supporting combat operations in Afghanistan. He was one of the five killed, including four troop members who died Sunday by an improvised explosive device.

A law passed last week to continue paying civilian members of the military during the shutdown, but does not allow for payouts of the death benefit to the families of the fallen, officials told Andrea Mitchell of NBC.

One senior official said he was disgusted by the predicament.

That is where we are.

I have asked each Senator to come to the floor today because it is important that we have an opportunity to talk about the crisis facing this great Nation. This government shutdown is an embarrassment to our Nation—not only to the people of America but around the world. An economic conference in the Far East that President Obama was to attend—he couldn't because of the government shutdown. So who is there pontificating about how bad things are in America? The President of China. And that is what he is talking about—America can't pay its bills.

The families who lost five loved ones—it is an unbearable loss, but now they are being denied death benefits because of this senseless shutdown. It is shameful and embarrassing. There

are no words to describe this situation that at least I am capable of expressing, that America could fail the families of our fallen heroes. Appalling, frightening—everyone can come up with their own description.

It is time for us, Members of this august body, to stand before the American people and publicly discuss the path forward. Democrats stand unified, asking the Speaker to reopen the government—the whole government, not bits and pieces of the government. It is bad enough with all of the sequestration that has cut, for example, the National Institutes of Health this year by \$1.6 billion, and add to that the government shutdown, add to that the second year of sequestration, which will be another \$2 billion for the National Institutes of Health. This premier search we have in America for cures for disease, there has never been anything like it in the world; the Library of Congress, there has never been anyplace like it in the world. The great library in Egypt didn't compare to the Library of Congress. But there has been nothing ever in the history of the world like the National Institutes of Health. We are mindlessly going forward and cutting these scientists by billions of dollars.

We need to reopen the whole government—not in some piecemeal fashion that further demonstrates to the world that we are unable to find real solutions. Open the whole government so we can get back to work. Allow the government to do its duty by our military families and by every American family.

Quickly—I have said it before—in July of this year the Speaker of the House of Representatives and I sat down in his office. I was there, my chief of staff was there, and his chief of staff was there—the four of us. The Speaker wanted to figure out a way to go forward. We talked about a number of things. The one thing he was firm in, he said, it has to be at 2013 levels. I said: I can't do that; it is \$70 billion less than the budget we passed just a short time ago. So the conversation continued. In September we talked and talked.

I spoke to Chairman MURRAY and to Chairman MIKULSKI. It was really hard. They had worked so hard to get regular order back in the Senate. But, like the good soldiers they are, we decided to try to talk to the rest of the caucus and swallow really hard because we had the assurance—I had the assurance that we would have a clean CR now, in September. That didn't work. The Speaker didn't deliver on what he said he would deliver.

So the government closes and we have one thing after another coming over here and we send it right back.

The last thing they sent over a week ago was to say let's go to conference. So last Tuesday I sent him a letter, and in the first letter I talked about a very decisive time in my life when I voted for the Iraq war. Within weeks of that I felt I had been misled. But regardless of that, that is how I felt. So I became an opponent of that war, and I did everything I could to focus on that war, which was having our military subjected to violence, and that is an understatement. Thousands were being killed, tens of thousands wounded. The number of Iraqis who were being killed is really hard to demonstrate adequately.

There was a time that came in my life when we had an opportunity, under my direction, to shut the government down. How? By not funding the war. I made a decision—and that is in my letter to the Speaker—not to do that.

(Ms. BALDWIN assumed the Chair.)

I, frankly, received a lot of help from around the country. But that is what I did. And I do not look back at all. So I was trying to tell the Speaker: Do not do this. However, I said: You have done it, and you have asked for a conference. We will go to conference on anything you want to go to conference on. We don't care. But first you have to open the government and allow us to pay our bills. That is in the letter of last Tuesday.

Forty-five minutes after he got the letter, I called him. He said: No, I can't do that. So for someone to suggest we have not negotiated is just absolutely wrong.

Madam President, \$70 billion—it is the biggest compromise I have ever made in my career as a Member of Congress—some 31 years. It may not sound like much to some people, but it was really big. My caucus remembers what I asked them to do. So for someone to suggest to any of my Senators that we have not negotiated is simply unfair, and to say that we will not negotiate is unfair. I put it in writing. We are happy to go to conference. But you have to open the government. This is unfair—just like these five soldiers killed. So open the government, let us pay our bills, and we will negotiate on anything you want to negotiate.

I have spoken to the President. I am certainly not name-dropping. I have told my caucus this several times over the last 2 days. He cannot, as President of the United States, negotiate on paying the bills of the country, the debt ceiling. I think there are Senators over here who he has sat down with and talked to individually and as groups to talk about a budget deal. There were many conversations in the Oval Office that I attended to talk about a budget deal. He has put in writing things that he would be willing to do that, quite frankly, our base is not excited about. But he put it in writing. He is still waiting for the first sentence from the people he invited to dinner and met with—the first sentence—as to what they were willing to do.

As said late last week by Haley Barbour and Ed Gillespie, former chairs of the national Republican Party, Republicans—now, they said this, not me—there is a time now when Republicans have to start being for something, not against everything.

So I do not come here to argue and badger people. I am happy to talk about anything. Senator MURRAY will deliver a presentation in just a little bit. We know how hard she has worked. She has the respect of both Democrats and Republicans. But I repeat, when the Speaker said he wanted to go to conference last week, we said: Good. We will do that. I am not a one-man show over here. I clear everything with my caucus, with rare exception, before I go marching off into the blue.

So I repeat, we are ready to go to conference as soon as the Speaker reopens the government and removes the threat of default. He has to take yes for an answer. You folks have to take yes for an answer. We are just as willing to sit down and talk today as we were in the spring and as we were this summer. In the meantime, let's open the government and live up to our obligations as a country.

To that end, I will introduce a bill to allow the United States to pay its bills with no preconditions or strings attached. I will do that later today and start the so-called rule XIV process.

We may have our differences, Democrats and Republicans, but we should not hold the full faith and credit of this great country hostage while we resolve it. At a later time Senator BAUCUS will talk, and I hope he repeats here on this Senate floor what he told us in our caucus that we just completed: Great nations are not guaranteed greatness. There have been books written about it, and he will talk about one author, a famous author, who recently wrote a book about how great nations have to meet expectations. We are great today. That does not mean we will be forever. How is this country going to look to the world community if we no longer have the full faith and credit of the United States meaning anything?

I hope we can get Republican cooperation to move this bill quickly; that is, the debt ceiling bill. If not, the process could take us right up to the deadline—one day before.

I am optimistic, however, that my Republican colleagues here in the Senate will not filibuster this bill. I am cynical by nature. That way I am not disappointed as much as those who are optimistic. My friend, Senator SCHUMER, and I have ongoing issues. He is optimistic about everything. I am cynical about everything. But I am optimistic, even though that is against my nature, that Republicans are not going to hold the full faith and credit of the United States hostage. I hope I am right.

We need to reopen the Federal Government now—not 10 minutes before the debt ceiling is gone. We need to get back to the business of protecting

American families, back to the job of legislating. We are not doing anything in this body anymore. It is our job to legislate. That has always been our job; it always will be our job. Open the government, pay our bills, and let's negotiate.

It is my understanding that this consent request has been cleared. We will hear from the Republican leader. Then we will hear at that time from Senator MCCAIN for 15 minutes, followed by Senators DURBIN, SCHUMER, and MURRAY. I ask unanimous consent that be the case.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection?

Mr. REID. I ask unanimous consent that Senator MCCONNELL be recognized, which we really do not need consent for him. He has time under his leader time. Following his statement I ask unanimous consent that Senator MCCAIN be recognized for 15 minutes, then Senator DURBIN for 10, Senator SCHUMER for 10, Senator MURRAY for 10.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection?

The Republican whip.

Mr. CORNYN. Madam President, I would ask the distinguished majority leader if he would consider modifying his consent request so that we could alternate back and forth across the aisle. With that modification, I have no objection.

Mr. REID. Well, after we get this out of the way, you mean?

Mr. CORNYN. Madam President, the majority leader asked for a number of Democratic Senators to speak without any intervening speeches or remarks by Republicans. All I am suggesting is, after he and the Republican leader speak—

Mr. REID. Madam President, I say to my friend from Texas—

Mr. CORNYN. And after Senator MCCAIN speaks and a Democrat speaks, that a Republican gets to speak and so forth. That is all I am asking.

Mr. REID. I say, Madam President, through the Chair to my friend: three Democrats, two Republicans. It does not sound too outrageous to me. So would the Senator object to that?

Mr. CORNYN. I object.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Objection is heard.

Mr. REID. OK. So following Senator MCCONNELL, I will call upon Senator DURBIN.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Republican leader.

Mr. MCCONNELL. Madam President, I appreciate the comments of my good friend, the majority leader. I might say, however, that as much as I appreciate his comments to all of us, the real challenge is his relationship with the House and whether or not we can begin the discussion process to get to an outcome.

Nobody is happy with the government shutdown, certainly not anybody on this side, and not anybody on the other side. But I would remind everybody on both sides of the aisle that

Democratic Senators have said repeatedly ObamaCare is the law of the land and, basically, we should get used to it.

We have suggested various modifications, some of which enjoy bipartisan support. But, obviously, so far that is not something our friends on the other side are willing to do.

But let me also point out to all of you that the Budget Control Act is also the law of the land. It was negotiated on a bipartisan basis, signed by the President of the United States, and the Budget Control Act is the law of the land.

When my good friend the majority leader says he was negotiating with the House over the CR level, my view was that was not a negotiation, that was current law, in place, passed on a bipartisan basis, signed by the President of the United States—current law.

So I think I can pretty safely say that nobody on this side believes that we ought to revisit a law that has reduced government spending for 2 years in a row for the first time since the Korean War, at a time when we have a debt the size of our economy which makes it look a lot like a Western European country.

So as we go into whatever discussions we end up having to solve the shutdown problem, I would say to my friends on the other side, revisiting a law negotiated by the President, passed on a bipartisan basis, that is actually reducing government spending ought not to be a part of the final outcome.

But talk we should. The American people have given us divided government. And when you have divided government, it means you have to talk to each other. This is not 2009 and 2010 when our friends on the other side had a total hammerlock on all the government. We now have divided government. It means we have to talk to each other and get to an outcome.

I think it is far past time to get that done. I hope, given where we are today, there is adequate incentive to get those talks started, principally between the majority leader and the Speaker, to get us to the outcome we all want, and to get us there soon.

But let me just conclude by saying the Budget Control Act is the law of the land. If you believe in reducing government spending, it is working. My Members and the American people think reducing government spending is a good idea. So we have a law in place that is achieving those kinds of results. That is not something at a time when we have a debt the size of our economy that we ought to lightly walk away from.

So I hope my good friend, the majority leader, will, in addition to talking to us, which we appreciate, talk to the Speaker because that is how we resolve this crisis.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The assistant majority leader.

Mr. DURBIN. Madam President, since the beginning of this great Na-

tion, 1,948 men and women have served in the U.S. Senate. That service is a singular honor and carries with it an important responsibility. James Madison said the “use of the Senate is to consist in its proceeding with more coolness, with more system, and with more wisdom, than the popular branch.”

Throughout our history it was this Senate, many times in this very room, that took on the most difficult challenges facing America: the creation of the Federal judiciary, the abolition of slavery, decisions to go to war, and the advancement of civil rights.

At each of those moments, skeptics questioned whether there were Senators capable of resisting political pressure and whether there were Senators prepared to lead a divided nation.

My colleagues, this is our moment. This is our chance—our chance—to bring this Nation back from the precipice. We should agree to restore the functions of government, not in a piecemeal fashion but in an orderly process befitting a great nation. We should spare America’s workers and businesses the tragic consequences of a first-ever default on our Nation’s debt. And we should restore the time-honored process of legislating—legislating—by adopting a bipartisan budget with the House, by considering spending bills on the floor of this Chamber, and passing appropriations bills in an orderly process.

We can vote today, this afternoon, to go to conference on the budget and begin to resolve our differences with the House. If we fail, we know we will have diminished this great body and our great Nation—a nation which we have all taken a solemn oath to serve and protect.

So let’s agree to restore the functions of government—all of it. I have spoken with many of my colleagues and friends—and they are my friends—on the Republican side of the aisle. We have shared our frustrations at the current situation. To a person, each one of you has said to me: We have to bring this impasse to an end.

Waiting for the House of Representatives to save us is beneath the U.S. Senate.

We have our own responsibility and our own opportunity. We can come up with bipartisan Senate solutions. We can show the House of Representatives the path to end this crisis. Why are we waiting for them to show us? Let’s begin to restore the confidence of the American people in this institution, in the Senate. We can fund the government, we can go to conference on a budget, and we can extend our debt authority.

I see my friend Senator McCAIN on the floor. I know he is going to speak in just a moment. Over the last year I have seen moments in the Senate where we have defied our cynics and our critics: our successful bipartisan effort to pass a comprehensive immigration bill, a historic farm bill with

far-reaching reforms, and a bipartisan extension of the Student Loan Program.

We came together and we found common ground. We led as the Senate. Now we need to summon the political courage and purpose to find a bipartisan way to meet this challenge. I know it will not be easy, but I know we are up to the job. I know we have an opportunity that comes once perhaps in a political lifetime.

But I wish to say this: What we are dealing with in the Senate is not just another political dustup. This confrontation is of historic proportion. Let’s not wait on the House to find a solution. It is our responsibility as elected Members of the Senate to find that solution.

The solution I think is clear. Summon the political courage and the sense of purpose that comes down to us in the Senate, and throughout our Nation’s history it always has.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The majority leader.

Mr. REID. Madam President, the order now before the Senate is Senators be allowed to speak for up to 10 minutes each. I ask unanimous consent that Senator McCAIN be recognized for 15 minutes. Everyone else will continue on the other order of 10 minutes.

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

The Senator from Arizona.

Mr. McCAIN. I ask unanimous consent to return to the normal one side and then the other side as far as speakers are concerned.

Mr. REID. That is fine. That is our plan.

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

The Senator from Arizona.

Mr. McCAIN. Madam President, I say to my colleagues, I bring to your attention two events today that I think deserve our attention. The first one is a story entitled, “Grand Canyon food shortage turns dire.” The St. Mary’s Food Bank is set to deliver food boxes to Grand Canyon National Park today as a Federal shutdown strands thousands of employees inside the park without work and pay.

The Grand Canyon, thousands of people inside the park without food or pay. This great Nation, we are having to have charities deliver food to people who are trapped in the Grand Canyon.

Also today, “Shutdown outrage: Military death benefits denied to families of fallen troops.”

At least five families of U.S. military members killed . . . in Afghanistan over the weekend were given a double-whammy by federal officials. Not only have your loved ones died, but due to the government shutdown, you won’t receive a death benefit.

The approval rating of Congress we joke about, about being 12 percent or 11 percent. I have a line I use all of the time: We are down to blood relatives and paid staffers. But should not we as a body, Republicans, Democrats, no

matter who we are, should we not be embarrassed about this? Should we not be ashamed?

What do the American people think when they see that for those who served and sacrificed in the most honorable way, their families are not even eligible for death benefits? I am ashamed. I am embarrassed. All of us should be. The list goes on and on of people, of innocent Americans who have fallen victim to the reality that we cannot sit down and talk as grownups and address this issue.

I am not going to take the full 15 minutes because I frankly get a little bit emotional. But we started with a false premise on this side of the aisle that somehow we were going to repeal ObamaCare. That is after 25 days of debate, including up until Christmas Eve morning fighting against ObamaCare, and that is after a 2012 election where I traveled this country with passion, the first thing saying that the first thing we are going to do when Mitt Romney is President of the United States is repeal and replace ObamaCare. The American people spoke.

So somehow to think we were going to repeal ObamaCare, which would have required 67 Republican votes, of course, was a false premise and I think did the American people a grave disservice by convincing them that somehow we could.

Now, 70 percent of the American people, according to a Washington Post poll this morning, disapprove of Republicans, but they disapprove of Democrats as well. They disapprove of the President of the United States as well. Meanwhile, the Chinese, great role models of democracy, are now criticizing us because of a looming failure by the American Government to pay its debts, both domestic and abroad.

I say to my friend the majority leader, and he is my friend—we use that word with great abandon around here, but he and I have known each other now for 30 years—let's find a way to allow the adversary—I ask my good friend from Utah who is a history major, the words of Abraham Lincoln, "Charity toward all, malice toward none."

Let's find a way out of this. Let's find a way that we can sit down. I do not care if it is appointing people. I do not care if it is the informal conversations that we have been having back and forth. But there should be a way out of both of these dead ends that we are in.

How is this going to end? We know how it is going to end. We know how it is going to end. Sooner or later the government will resume its functions. Sooner or later we will raise the debt limit.

The question is, How do we get there? If there is anybody who disagrees that we are not going to reach that point, I would like to hear from them. So why don't we do this sooner rather than later? Why doesn't the Senate lead? I

have great respect for the other side of the Capitol, but I understand the contradictions that are there and the difficulties the Speaker has. I am in great sympathy there.

So why don't we get together? Why don't we sit down and—look, this body voted 70 to 29, I think it was, to repeal the medical device tax. Do my colleagues want to renounce that vote they took on the budget? Why don't we use that as one of the areas where we could reach agreement? What about the issue out there the American people believe that we are under a different health care system than they are and ours is a better deal than theirs?

There are a number of issues that we could sit down and negotiate within an hour if we will stop—stop attacking each other and impugning people's integrity and honor. So all I can say is let's start this afternoon. I do not care who it is or how it is shaped, but let's sit down and get out of this, so that these families whose loved ones just died—just died—will receive the benefits at least that would give them some comfort and solace in this terrible hour of tragedy.

I yield the floor.

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

Mr. REID. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that those on the Democratic side be in this order: SCHUMER, MURRAY, BAUCUS, MIKULSKI, WARNER, CARDIN, KLOBUCHAR, WHITEHOUSE, STABENOW.

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

The Senator from New York.

Mr. SCHUMER. Mr. President, I rise because we are getting very close to a time of crisis, perhaps one of the greatest economic crises this country has known. I have many good friends on the other side of the aisle. I do not doubt for a moment their motivation, their desire, and their love of country. It is every bit as strong as those of us on this side of the aisle.

So I make a heartfelt plea: We must come together and avoid a default of the United States. Many have said, I heard some even say on the other side, that default does not matter or it does not mean much. Let me explain the danger. There is a very real chance that if we default, there will be a recession greater than what occurred in 2008 and all too real a possibility it could put us into a depression.

Let me explain why. What happened in 2008 was simple. Mortgage securities declined in value immediately—dramatically they declined in value after Lehman and AIG went down. Banks' balance sheets instantly flipped from black to red. Loans were frozen, not only long-term loans but even overnight loans, lines of credit. The economy came to a screeching halt. We had to offer huge rescues or bailouts to overcome that. But even so, interest rates climbed.

If that happened with mortgage securities, the likelihood of it happening

with Treasuries is all the more frightening because Treasuries are more widely held, more internationally held, the currency of the land, of the world. If Treasuries were to dramatically drop in value the day we defaulted or, make no mistake about it, it could happen a day or two before, here is what would happen: The economy would decline dramatically. Things would freeze. Interest rates would go way up. The cost of a mortgage, the cost of a car loan, dramatically increasing, hurting every middle-class family. Home sales would decline. Auto sales would decline. Hundreds of thousands, millions would be laid off.

Why risk that? We all have political goals. They differ. That is reasonable. There is a time and a place, as the Scriptures say, "A season for everything." There is a time and a place to debate these things. It is not while our government is shut down and while our debt hangs in the balance, risking default. There is a simple and logical solution which good men and good women on both sides of the aisle can come to.

Let's open the government. Let's pay our bills. Then let's debate every issue you wish to debate. Nothing should be off the table. We are happy to go to a committee, a conference committee. The Senator from Washington has asked, I believe it is 18 times—will ask again in a few minutes. Of course we want a conference committee where we can discuss things but not at the price of keeping the government closed, hurting millions of families in every way, not at the price, even worse, of defaulting on our debt.

I would say, with all due respect to my colleagues in the House, they have it backward: First, go to conference and then decide whether to open the government or default. No one—liberal, conservative, Democrat, Republican—could say that is a rational strategy if you care about the country and worry about the risk of doing these things.

I understand the frustration with ObamaCare. We would argue there was an election in 2012. We would argue that every Democratic incumbent had to debate that issue over and over, as did President Obama when Governor Romney made it a major issue. The electorate decided they didn't want to get rid of ObamaCare. But we understand how passionately people feel, and we understand you will continue to try and do that. But again, there is a time and a season, and now is not the time and it is not the season when the government is shut down or default hangs in the balance.

I plead with my colleagues to allow us to come together. We want to negotiate. We want to sit down and talk to you. We are eager to do it. But first let's open the government, pay our bills, and then let's negotiate.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Washington.

Mrs. MURRAY. Mr. President, my understanding is we were going to go

back and forth, and if the Senator from Texas wishes to go, I will yield to him.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Texas.

Mr. CRUZ. Mr. President, I thank the majority leader for his impassioned remarks today, and all of us weep for those service men and women who have lost their lives in defense of this great Nation.

I would note this Senate can right now, today, move to correct the problem the majority leader described. The House of Representatives has passed eight separate bills funding vital priorities of the government. All eight of those bills now sit on the majority leader's desk. This Senate has not voted on those bills. To date, the majority leader has not allowed the Senate to have even one vote on the bills that would fund vital government functions. One of those bills is a bill that funds the VA—funds the Department of Veterans Affairs.

It seems to me we are going to have political differences, and those political differences are not going away anytime soon, but we ought to be able to say, regardless of what happens in the battle over the shutdown, that our veterans should be beyond politics. We should have bipartisan agreement on standing for our veterans.

Right now veterans disability payments are not funded. The House has passed legislation to fund that. That was bipartisan legislation, with a number of Democrats in the House, and yet the majority leader has not allowed the Senate to vote on it. The only thing in the way of funding the VA today is the Senate voting to do so—is the objection the majority leader has raised to funding the VA.

Let me note that the bill the House passed funding the VA is a clean CR on the VA. It doesn't mention ObamaCare. It doesn't say a word about ObamaCare. It simply says our veterans should be beyond partisan politics, regardless of the shutdown.

Let me also note this body has already engaged in bipartisan cooperation. Earlier in the course of this debate, the House of Representatives passed a bill to fund the men and women of the military—to pay their paychecks. For weeks there had been politicians suggesting if there were a government shutdown the men and women of the military would not be paid. The House passed a bill, a clean CR, that said we will fund the men and women in the military. I commend my friends on the Democratic side of the aisle, and I commend the majority leader, because the 54 Democrats in this body made the right decision to act in a bipartisan way and cooperate with the Republicans in this body and with the House of Representatives, and in 24 hours the bill funding the men and women of our military became law, went to the President and was signed into law. That is the way we are supposed to operate.

So I would ask: If we could work together in a bipartisan manner to say

we are not going to hold the men and women of the military hostage, why can't we work together in a bipartisan manner to say we are not going to hold our veterans hostage; that regardless of what happens in the shutdown, let's fund the VA now?

Likewise, the House of Representatives has passed a bill funding our parks and national memorials. We have seen day after day our World War II veterans coming to the World War II Memorial and facing barricades the administration has put up. The administration has expended money to keep them out. The House has passed a bill to fund our parks and our memorials. Let me suggest if the Senate would only vote, we could open every park and memorial in the country.

The House has passed a bill to fund FEMA. If the Senate would only vote, FEMA could be funded.

The House has passed a bill to fund the National Institutes of Health so we can provide vital cancer research. The majority leader spoke quite passionately just moments ago about the need to fund the National Institutes of Health. I agree with the majority leader, and I would ask the majority leader to withdraw the objection he has raised to funding the NIH.

Let me note, some have disparaged the House's approach as a piecemeal approach. Yet that is the traditional means of appropriating and legislating that for centuries this body has done. The VA is usually funded—just the VA—not connected to anything else. Why would the Senate want to hold veterans hostage because of disagreements over ObamaCare? I don't think we should. I think we should fund the VA right now.

Why would the Senate want to hold our parks and memorials hostage?

Why would the Senate want to hold the National Institutes of Health hostage?

Why would the Senate want to hold Federal workers hostage?

On Saturday, the House of Representatives unanimously passed a bill to provide back pay for Federal workers who had been furloughed. Every House Democrat who voted voted in favor of that. Yet the majority leader has not allowed this body to vote. I am going to say right now I agree with those House Democrats, and I urge that Senate Democrats stand with House Democrats who voted unanimously in favor of back pay for Federal workers.

We can work together with bipartisan compromise, but we can only do so if both sides come to the table. Right now the House of Representatives is working constructively to fund vital priorities and, unfortunately, President Obama, the majority leader, and Senate Democrats are refusing to negotiate, refusing to compromise. That is not a reasonable approach. It is not a path that will lead to resolving this.

I hope we come together, resolve this, fund our vital priorities and, at

the same time, respond to the millions of people who are hurting because of ObamaCare—who are losing their jobs, who are pushed into part-time work, who are facing skyrocketing insurance premiums and who are losing their health insurance.

We need to answer the call of our constituents. We need to answer the call of Teamsters president James Hoffa who put in writing that ObamaCare right now is destroying the health care of millions of working men and women. "Destroying" is the word Mr. Hoffa used. I think the Senate should respond to the concern Mr. Hoffa raised, and we should stand with millions of working men and women and we should protect their health care so the hundreds of millions of Americans who have health care right now don't lose it.

People all across this country are getting letters in the mail telling them they are losing their health care because of ObamaCare. We need to listen to them. So let's fund our government, let's fund our vital priorities, and let's listen to the American people and stop the No. 1 job killer in this country that is ObamaCare.

I urge this body to work together in a bipartisan manner to listen to the American people.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Washington.

Mrs. MURRAY. Mr. President, I think there is one thing every one of us can agree on: There are innumerable problems across our country—families who have been challenged, sad stories that should be taken care of in every part of our country, in each of our States, with families we know who are hurting because of this government shutdown. There is one answer to that, and it is an easy one. It is for the House of Representatives to simply take up the bill that is in the House today and pass it. We know there are enough Members of Congress who can pass that today and every problem we have heard about or haven't heard about yet will be solved. Republicans simply need to end this government shutdown so Americans stop hurting.

Our families also need to know they are not going to be threatened by a catastrophic default. And when that happens, we will be waiting at the table, as we are today, to negotiate a long-term deal in the budget conference that the other side has spent months blocking.

We have been trying to work with Republicans toward a fair, long-term budget deal for years. Since 2011, Democrats from the Senate to the House to the administration have sat in rooms, we have negotiated, we have talked, we have discussed, and we have offered compromise after compromise. We have tried regular committees, we have tried supercommittees. If there was a room where Democrats and Republicans could sit and talk, we found it and we got to work. But no matter

what we did, no matter how much we offered, we were unable to come to a place that we could agree was a fair and balanced approach that the American people deserved.

So this year, our Republican friends on the other side of the aisle asked us to return to regular order. That was the most important thing they said—for us to get to a place where we could find a budget deal that could be agreeable and we could move forward. That is exactly what we did. In the Senate we passed our budget more than 6 months ago. The House of Representatives did the same. Since that time we have asked 19 times to go to conference to work out our differences. Nineteen times we have come to the floor to say let's have regular order, let's work out our differences in a conference committee.

We wanted to get in a room with the House Republicans to sit at a table and do everything possible to bridge the divide between our two budgets. We knew it would not be easy. There are significant differences between the House and Senate budget. But the American people expected us to try and we were committed to doing that. Importantly, we wanted to make sure we had enough time to bridge that divide and get to this difficult deal so we would not be here today where we have lurched into another manufactured crisis.

Republicans rejected our attempts to sit down and negotiate. Every time we asked to go to a budget conference, we were shot down. Democrats came to the floor again and again, along with, I would add, a number of responsible Republicans who agreed. Even though they did not support the budget that was passed here, they agreed we should go to conference with the House Republicans and work out our deals. But each time we asked, a handful of Republicans objected and said: No discussions. They refused to allow us to go to a table. They had no interest in any discussions or negotiations or talk, and they pushed us until they got exactly what those few Republicans here wanted, and that was an avoidable—completely avoidable—government shutdown.

After spending 6 months rejecting talks, causing this crisis, now all of a sudden some of our Republican friends seem desperate to make it look as though they are the ones interested in negotiating. They know it is clear to families across the country the only reason this crisis continues is the House Republicans' refusal to take up the bill and pass it right now—a bill that will get our government open and running again.

And, by the way, they are now trying to do everything they can to distract their constituents from that simple fact. But the American people are smarter than that. They know the world did not begin the day of the government shutdown. They know it is not possible for Republicans to have just discovered negotiations 20 minutes be-

fore a shutdown, when all they need to do is take up the bill and vote.

The latest gimmick the House seems to be considering is to start another supercommittee to debate this issue. Instead of simply taking a vote to end this crisis, they want a repeat of 2011. They want another supercommittee. Well, as everyone here knows, I co-chaired that supercommittee, the Senator from Montana worked for hours and hours and days on end with me on that committee, and it failed. For reasons that we believe in and they believe in, which could be debated, the supercommittee did not come up with a resolution. I think House Republicans are going to have a lot of trouble explaining to those families who haven't seen a paycheck since this shutdown started that they should wait for another supercommittee to go to work.

Here is what should happen. House Republicans should end this crisis. They should simply allow a vote on our bill to end the shutdown, which would pass with bipartisan support.

They should stop threatening an economic catastrophe if they don't get their way, and we are happy to sit down and negotiate. We know on our side that negotiation on a budget deal is not going to make us happy. We know the House Republicans won't be happy. But that is how a democracy works—by working out our differences. Democrats are here today to say we are willing to negotiate and we are willing to work with our Republican counterparts to find a path forward. Of course we want to negotiate. We have tried to start a budget conference for 6 months.

I know the vast majority of my Republican colleagues came here to help our families and to help our communities. I know they came here to solve problems. The vast majority came here to work across the aisle to make the country better. So I urge our Republican colleagues here in the Senate today to support the unanimous consent we are about to offer to end this crisis, take the threats off the table, and sit down and work with us toward a balanced and bipartisan budget deal that I know so many of us in this room want.

UNANIMOUS CONSENT REQUESTS—H. CON. RES. 25

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

curing with no intervening action or debate.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection?

The Senator from Alabama.

Mr. SESSIONS. Mr. President, reserving the right to object, I think we should all note that this unanimous consent agreement essentially asks the Senate to direct the House on what to pass and to pass the CR the Senate desires. There won't be any need to, in effect, deal in that fashion. That won't work.

I would also note in response that there is a unanimous consent request agreement I could agree to and I think Members of this side would agree to, and that is that the Senate proceed to Calendar No. 33, H. Con. Res. 25; that the amendment at the desk, which is the text of S. Con. Res. 8, the budget resolution passed by the Senate, be inserted in lieu thereof; that H. Con. Res. 25, as amended, be agreed to, the motion to reconsider be considered made and laid upon the table; that the Senate proceed to a vote on a motion to insist on its amendment, requests a conference with the House on the disagreeing votes of the two Houses, and authorize the Chair to appoint conferees on the part of the Senate, with all of the above occurring with no intervening action or debate. I further ask consent that it not be in order for the Senate to consider a conference report that includes reconciliation instructions to raise the debt limit.

That is the reason there has been an objection over here—because, under the way we believe we should proceed, raising the debt limit is a legislative act that should be subject to 60 votes. The concern from Members of our conference who have objected is that if we put the debt limit on the budget, then we would only have to have 51 votes. They have insisted they would approve going to the House and having conference on the budget, but they want an agreement that they are not going to attempt to slip that through. And if it is not a problem, why won't they agree?

So for these reasons, we are not able to agree, and I would object.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Objection is heard.

Mrs. MURRAY. Mr. President, responding to the unanimous consent request the Senator from Alabama propounded, I reserve the right to object. We may have just reached the heart of the matter. While we hear day after day that our House Republican friends want to negotiate on the debt limit, the Senator from Alabama asked us now to specifically preclude ourselves from talking about that very subject. I respectfully suggest that perhaps the real problem here isn't that Democrats aren't talking to Republicans; it is that Republicans aren't even talking to each other.

I also would note that this modification the Senator from Alabama is asking would leave us in a shutdown facing hundreds of thousands of families

who would wonder when their next paycheck would come while we do our work.

So I object to the Senator's request, and I renew my unanimous consent.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Alabama objected to the request from the Senator from Washington.

Mr. SESSIONS. And I believe I understood she has renewed it, and so I would renew my objection.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Objection is heard to all requests.

Mr. SESSIONS. Mr. President, just briefly, I appreciate Senator MURRAY having passed a budget this year in the Senate for the first time in 4 years. It is a budget that is far from the kind of budget we should have, but it was one they stood up and voted for. That is something of value to begin our process around here.

I would note that the reason it is such an unacceptable proposal from my Democratic colleagues—very similar to what President Obama asked for—is that it raises taxes \$1 trillion over 10 years and raises spending \$1 trillion over 10 years. That is above the lawful Budget Control Act levels we agreed to on a bipartisan basis in August of 2011.

If we remember, the President insisted we have a debt ceiling increase then. He said that we couldn't negotiate on it, that the country would sink into oblivion if we even got close to the debt limit, and we all had to back down and just agree to raise the debt limit without any limits.

Polling data showed the American people did not believe we should raise the debt limit of America without at least cutting spending and reducing our deficits; the credit card Congress was on was going to be pulled back. So Republicans stood firm. An agreement was reached, and the President approved it. It had no tax increases and raised the debt ceiling \$2.1 trillion over 10 years. How much is that? We were projected to increase spending over 10 years by \$10 trillion. This would reduce the increase in spending from \$10 trillion to \$8 trillion—not enough to throw the government into default, disaster, and confusion if properly executed. And it certainly wasn't the best way it was done. So that was the agreement. Before the ink is dry, with a year or so under it, now our colleagues have already abandoned ship, thrown in the towel, and want to raise spending by \$1 trillion over what they agreed and raise taxes by another \$1 trillion. That is why we have a big disagreement.

What do our colleagues want? They want to tax more, spend more, with more debt. It is not the way to run America, and the American people know it. So somehow, in this debt crisis, we all have to work together. And I respect my colleagues, but I cannot agree to doing something in this process that violates the solemn agreement. We told the American people: OK, we have raised the debt ceiling \$2 trillion, but we reduced spending by \$2

trillion. The debt ceiling has already eased up by \$2.1 trillion, but we still made a promise we have to honor—that we will save \$2.1 trillion of growth over the next 10 years. That is our responsibility and duty.

Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the next two Republican Senators to be recognized would be Senator COLLINS from Maine followed by Senator MURKOWSKI from Alaska and that we would continue to alternate between both sides.

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

Mr. SESSIONS. I ask unanimous consent that Senator COLLINS be recognized at this time.

Mr. BAUCUS. Reserving the right to object, would the Senator repeat his request.

Mr. SESSIONS. I ask unanimous consent that the two Republican speakers on this side be Senator COLLINS from Maine and Senator MURKOWSKI and that we continue to alternate between both sides. Since I just butted in as part of our budget debate, I did not intend or desire to take Senator COLLINS' time. She has been patiently waiting next in line.

Mr. BAUCUS. I certainly will not object to that.

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

The Senator from Montana.

Mr. BAUCUS. Mr. President, I wish to underline the gravity of the financial condition our country is headed to at this point. I think in the back-and-forth we tend to overlook just how serious this matter is. Here in the Capitol we walk in the footprints of our forefathers. Walking through these halls, their presence is felt at every turn. Just outside this Chamber are the likenesses of Washington, Jefferson, Lincoln, and dozens of statesmen cast in bronze and marble.

At the end of this month a new leader will be added to the halls of Congress—Winston Churchill. A bust of the late Prime Minister will be added to the Capitol collection in the National Statutory Hall later this month.

Churchill once said, "The price of greatness is responsibility." We here in Congress have a great responsibility—a responsibility to conduct the business of this Nation, to represent and do what is right for our people and help the people we represent. That is our responsibility here. However, the inaction of a small group of Members in the House has crippled Congress and is now threatening to impede the ability of the United States to fulfill one of its greatest responsibilities—to pay the government's bills. It is completely irresponsible to threaten to default on the Nation's debt. Since 1789 this country has always honored its obligations. Even when the White House and Capitol were burned to the ground right here in 1814, America still honored its debts.

America is the greatest country on Earth. We are the leaders of the free

world. Nations look to us as examples in democracy. We are supposed to be "the shining city upon a hill," but unfortunately the shine risks being tarnished by a debt default.

I agree with many of my colleagues that more could be done to reduce the deficit and promote economic growth, but, as the President said, we cannot negotiate under the threat of default of the Nation's debt. It reminds me of what President Franklin Delano Roosevelt once said: Never fear to negotiate, but do not negotiate out of fear. Failing to raise the debt limit and shutting down the government are two fearful actions that should not be on the table as we attempt to negotiate other matters in our Nation's fiscal policy.

The path is clear. We need to open the government and raise the Nation's borrowing limit. Take away those two guns to our head as a country. Then and only then can we responsibly address the Nation's long-term budget challenges.

Right now we need to come together to ensure that we do not permit another self-inflicted wound to our Nation's economy, and that is what defaulting of the debt is—a self-inflicted wound with global consequences.

When is the X date? When is the date on which the U.S. Government can no longer pay its bills? We don't know exactly. It is uncertain, and that is part of the problem. Uncertainty creates unpredictability. Nobody knows for sure. The Treasury Secretary says it is October 17. That is as good a date as any. At that time we will have exhausted all "extraordinary measures" to stay under the debt limit. I reminded my colleagues that we have been over the debt limit since I think it is May. But we have been taking extraordinary measures; that is, not fulfilling other obligations; that is, not making the government contribution to, say, the government retirement system, for example—we are not doing that anymore. That is an extraordinary measure. We are not making that contribution so we can make other payments such as Medicare payments and other payments the government is obligated to make.

After October 17, after all extraordinary measures are exhausted, we would risk defaulting on payments. This is dangerous territory. As of next Thursday it is expected the Treasury Department will have only about \$30 billion cash on hand, barely enough to support the government for 1 or 2 weeks. After that the government's wallet is empty. We are in uncharted waters.

Again, this country has never in its history defaulted on the national debt. If the debt ceiling is reached, government would immediately have to slash its spending by 20 or 30 percent, driving the Nation back into recession.

Make no mistake about it. Social Security payments and Medicare would have to be slashed, veterans' benefits

hit, farm payments, farm funding, Department of Defense, payments to the disabled—every program this government runs will be devastated by cuts.

The default would also have global consequences, not just here in America but worldwide. Christine Lagarde, the Managing Director of the International Monetary Fund, warned that a failure of the United States to raise the debt ceiling could damage the entire global economy. She is right. Look at how precarious the European economy is right now, and the great effort the European countries have been undertaking to try to stabilize the southern countries in Europe, along with the creditors of the northern nations of Europe. She said it is “mission critical” that the debt limit be resolved as soon as possible. Mission critical, says Christine Lagarde, Managing Director of the IMF.

We are the most important economy in the world. We are the reserve currency for the world. Our Treasury bonds are the very foundation of the global financial system. Default would put the global economy in chaos. The New York Times has an article today entitled “Default Threat Generates Fear Around the Globe.”

Five years after the financial crisis in the United States helped spread a deep global recession—

Don't forget, Lehman Brothers collapsed 5 years ago in December.

—policy makers around the world again fear collateral damage, this time with their nations becoming victims not of Wall Street's excesses but of a political system in Washington that to many foreign eyes no longer seems to be able to function efficiently.

We have read the article. We know it is true. The plug has been pulled on negotiations between the United States and Europe on their trade agreements. Why? Because of the government shutdown, not so much the debt limit but the shutdown.

We also read articles, I am sure it is true, that President Obama had to cancel his trip to Southeast Asia because he had to stay here and try to work out this crisis. The United States is losing influence in Southeast Asia because he is not there. Who is there? President Xi, the President of China. President Xi is there, explaining to the Southeast Asian countries that China is their friend and he is making loans, an international development bank sponsored by China, tens and twenties of billions of dollars—not by the United States but China.

Those countries are trying to escape the gravitational pull of mainland China. President Xi's presence there helps increase their gravitational pull. The President of the United States is not there, not there to show to those other Southeast Asian countries that we care. He is not there because we are not doing our work. That is why he is not there.

His absence creates another almost deeper concern among countries, let's say in Southeast Asia. Where is the

United States going to be militarily if there is some military difficulty in Southeast Asia? Where is the United States going to be? Can the United States be counted on? Can the United States be trusted?

It seems as though there is a question there because the President is not in Southeast Asia and the other question is there because there is a question whether the United States is going to pay its debts, going to pay its bills. I think we eventually will, as the Senator from Arizona Senator MCCAIN said. I think most Members of this body think we eventually will. But let's get there now, not later.

There is a real danger here, a big danger here. The danger is we are going to get close to the cliff and get so close to it that we will go over it. We know the cliff is out there. The cliff is default. We know it is not too far away. We know we do not want to go over the cliff. We do not know exactly where that cliff is. We don't know. It may be closer than we think. We do not know what payments we have to make, when they are due. We do not know what the revenue is going to be. That is why the X date is so uncertain.

In addition to that, something might happen that triggers a catastrophic economic global response. I don't want to overstate this point, but back in 1914, the Archduke of Austria was assassinated—Serbia. That spark started World War I, that spark caused it.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The time of the Senator has expired.

Mr. BAUCUS. Very briefly, in addition, there have been other instances when pressure was being built up, people did not heed warnings, they let fate tempt them, and the result was collapse. There have been financial bubbles. The tulip bubble, for example. Lehman Brothers is another example. We knew with the mortgages being written that a bubble was building in that market, but we let it. We would say, oh, nothing is going to happen, but it eventually did.

I plead with my colleagues here. Remember, we cannot control fate. We can't control it. We can do our best. We all know that we are going to raise the debt ceiling, we all know we are going to open the government, so let's do it early rather than late.

I know it was exceeding my time a little bit, but I think it is important to remind ourselves.

I know we are the greatest country in the world.

The leader asked me to refer to a book I mentioned a couple of hours ago in the Democratic luncheon by Paul Kennedy, a Princeton historian. He pointed out in the sweep of history, civilizations and countries rise and fall. There is no guarantee that any country or civilization continues forever—Greeks, Romans, Persians, Genghis Khan, the United Kingdom—they rise and they fall. We are No. 1 right now. How long can we continue to be No. 1?

He also pointed out, Paul Kennedy, in the sweep of history, countries are defeated not by external armies but by internal decay. So I am saying let's not decay here. Let's resolve this as adults and let's be responsible in the spirit of Winston Churchill.

I apologize to my good friend from Maine for speaking on her time.

Ms. COLLINS. Mr. President, the government shutdown represents a failure to govern and must be brought to an end. Disabled veterans who have sacrificed so much for our country are waiting for their claims to be handled. Pregnant women and small children are at risk of their WIC benefits not being funded. Crucial biomedical research is being disrupted and the sickest of children are being turned away from clinical trials at the National Institutes of Health.

The impact goes far beyond the direct consequences for Federal employees and the programs they administer. One has only to look at the impact of the closure of Acadia National Park in my State of Maine to see the ripple effects on shopkeepers, servers at restaurants, inn owners and others who depend on revenue from these disappointed tourists.

That is why I have worked hard to put together a three-point plan to bring this impasse to a speedy end. I am very delighted that my friend and colleague from Alaska Senator MURKOWSKI has joined me in shaping and supporting this plan. Let me quickly describe it and let me give credit to those who have talked about concepts that have been incorporated into this plan—people such as my colleagues Senator HATCH and Senator TOOMEY, and on the House side, Representative KIND and Representative DENT.

The first point of the plan would fund government for the next 6 months at the level of \$986 billion, so that would allow government to immediately reopen.

Second, it would repeal the tax on medical devices and equipment such as x ray machines and pacemakers. This tax will only serve to drive up the cost of health care because it will be inevitably passed on to the consumer, it will stifle innovation, and industry estimates that it will lead to the loss of some 43,000 jobs. It is a tax that does not make sense.

The administration has pointed to the \$30 billion that would be raised by this tax over the next 10 years. Fair enough. There is a way to replace that revenue and it is a way that has beneficial consequences to many employers who are struggling to make pension contributions in this difficult economy. It would do so without in any way weakening the pension obligation to their workers. It is a complicated issue. It is called pension smoothing. But it is one that this body has dealt with before in the transportation bill known as MAP 21. We would extend that pension smoothing on the contributions which have been produced

by the fact that the Federal Reserve has held interest rates at a very low level.

I will describe this in more detail in a written statement. It is in the statement that I made on the Senate floor on Saturday. But suffice it to say that by smoothing these pension contributions, we can replace the lost revenue that would result from the repeal of the 2.3-percent tax on medical devices and equipment.

The third point of our plan, the Collins-Murkowski plan, includes a bill that Senator MARK UDALL and I introduced earlier this year that would provide flexibility to Federal managers in dealing with sequestration, but it does so in a way that preserves the important congressional oversight. Sequestration is a flawed policy because it does not discriminate between essential programs and those that are duplicative and wasteful. But if we are to have sequestration, surely we should give Federal managers the ability to set priorities and apply common sense in its administration instead of having across-the-board, equal meat axe cuts for every line item in their budgets.

But to ensure that this flexibility is not abused, we would have the Appropriations Committee oversee this process and have the right to reject the plans. It is very similar to the reprogramming requests that the Appropriations Committee receives now and either accepts or rejects when agencies want to move money from one account to another.

This would represent a modest proposal that could bring this impasse to an end, allow government to reopen, give those on both sides of the aisle who have voted during the course of the budget resolution by 79 votes to 20-something votes to repeal this harmful tax on medical equipment and devices and yet replace the revenue. I don't see how the administration could object to that because the revenue would be replaced. Yet this harmful tax would be repealed and we would give Federal agencies the flexibility to deal with sequestration.

There is something in the Collins-Murkowski plan that everyone on both sides of the aisle can point to. Yet it would get us out of this impasse that is increasingly harmful to our country and its image in the world.

It is past time for us to come out of our partisan corners, it is past time for us to stop fighting, and it is past time for us to reopen government. We have all made crystal clear what our positions are on ObamaCare at this point. Let's proceed with governing rather than continuing to embrace a strategy that will lead us only to a dead-end and whose consequences will be increasingly felt by our economy and by the American people. We can do this.

I ask my Democratic colleagues to take a close look at the plan we are putting forward. It is a reasonable approach. I ask my Democratic and Republican colleagues to come together.

Let's get this done. We can do it. We can legislate responsibly and in good faith.

I thank the Presiding Officer and yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Maryland.

Ms. MIKULSKI. Mr. President, I rise to respectfully say that we in the Senate and we in the Congress have to do what our constituents elected us to do and what the Constitution requires us to do: keep the United States Government open and make sure the United States of America pays its bills. To do that, we are open to negotiation and examining a variety of ideas, but the main idea is to go through the regular order in the committee process.

We can keep the government open and we can meet our responsibility on the public debt if we embark upon two solutions and they are in the hands of the other party. We call upon the House to pass the Senate continuing funding resolution that would reopen government and keep it going until November 15. It is not a long-term solution. If we get to it right now, we will fund it at 2013 levels, acknowledging the sequester level. That was a big compromise. I compromised, as the chair of the Appropriations Committee, to move that continuing funding resolution. It was \$70 billion less than what I wanted, but in order to get us in a room and get the conversation going and the negotiations going, I was willing to compromise.

I call upon the House to pass that. I call upon the Senate Republicans who have objected to going to the Budget Committee to lift their objection so we can take the Senate-passed budget and go to conference so we can get a budget.

Why is this important? For those who say we have to control spending, there is nobody who disputes that, but the way we control spending is to go through the regular budget process. I say to many of my colleagues who might not understand the Budget Control Act and I say to the American people who are listening, the way to control discretionary spending is to pass a budget that sets a cap on what the appropriators can spend in domestic spending.

I heard the wonderful Senator and distinguished war hero from Arizona JOHN MCCAIN ask us to get to it today. I agree. Let's get to it today and lift the objection for Senator MURRAY, the chair of the Budget Committee, to take appointed conferees so they can negotiate on the budget.

I say to my colleagues—again, to explain the Budget Control Act—we appropriators are not wild spenders. We appropriators can't go rogue in terms of wild runaway spending. We have a budget cap imposed upon us through a budget process and something called a 302(a), but we can't get the cap on spending unless the Budget Committee is able to move. This is very serious.

I have the high honor of representing the State of Maryland, and I see my

colleague from Maryland, Senator CARDIN, on the floor. We represent 5½ million people and a lot of civilian agencies. I note also on the floor are the distinguished Senators from Virginia, both of whom are former Governors of Virginia.

Between the four of us, we represent the largest concentration of Federal employees in the world. We represent Federal employees from the Department of Defense to the National Institutes of Health, to the National Institute of Standards and Technology. There is a rollcall of honor in service and duty that makes the United States a stronger country, a stronger economy, and so on.

When we speak about government, we know what we are talking about, and we know what is going on. Many have spoken about opening NIH. I want to open NIH. NIH, which is a clinical hospital, is not accepting new patients. This week 200 people have been turned away. Children in the United States of America were turned away. It is not just BARB MIKULSKI talking, the Washington Post reported on a lady who has cancer and wants to come to NIH, but she can't get into a clinical trial because it is closed down. They say: Senator BARB, open NIH. But we have to open the rest of the government.

Right now the Centers for Disease Control has a substantial number of its workforce furloughed. Having the CDC closed constitutes a danger to public health. Right this minute in 18 States, 278 people have been sickened by salmonella. Thank God there have been no deaths, but it is making people very sick. We don't have CDC on the job to track diseases and alert the public health departments around the United States of America so they can stand sentry to protect people against salmonella. Open the CDC. Open the whole government.

Just this week, in our own metropolitan area, a worker was killed trying to service the Metro. This should be under investigation. There was one death and several injuries. There was a bus crash in Tennessee, but right this very minute the National Transportation Safety Board has the majority of their people furloughed. They can't investigate the Metro accident, and they can't investigate the bus crash in Tennessee.

A few weeks ago Senator CARDIN and I were informed that a person had a terrible accident on the Bay Bridge in which a car went over the side of the bridge. We asked for an investigation to make sure our bridge is safe. That was under way, but now it is going to be delayed.

Let's take our FBI. Our FBI agents are on the job. They are being paid with IOUs. A group of FBI agents, called Voices from the Field, said to us, their U.S. Government: Guess what. We don't have gas for our cars. The FBI does not have gas for its cars. The agents' gas allowance is limited to 200 miles per week, and they can't even buy gas out of their own pocket.

Not only is the FBI running out of gas, I think we are running out of gas here. The way we fuel our tanks and get America running and rolling again is to reopen government. The way we reopen government is for Mr. BOEHNER, the Speaker of the House, in his job as Speaker, to bring up the vote on reopening the government and vote on the Senate-passed resolution.

We say to our colleagues on the other side of the aisle to lift their objection to the Budget Committee going to conference so the Budget Committee can come up with a budget with their caps on domestic discretionary spending. We will cap all discretionary spending. We appropriators will abide by the cap. We will not have runaway spending, and we will not go rogue. We will follow the rules, but I think we all need to follow the rules. Under the statutory requirement of the Budget Control Act, they were supposed to bring the budget back April 15. We passed one on March 23 and we have been waiting and waiting.

I wish to join with my colleague from Arizona. Let's get to it. Let's get the job done. Let's reopen government. Let's pay our bills. I am willing to negotiate. I am willing to compromise.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Alaska.

Ms. MURKOWSKI. Mr. President, from what I heard from those who have just spoken prior to me, it sounds as if we ought to be able to get something done. We listened to the chairman of the Appropriations Committee, with her commitment to advancing issues through the budget process. I think we too need to go to conference and get that moving.

We are sitting here in a kind of a rarefied world in the Senate Chamber. Some would suggest we live in a little bit of a bubble. Let me tell everyone about the folks who are not living in a bubble: the furloughed Federal employees and those who have been shut out of whatever it is that they had hoped they were going to be doing this past week and those in my State, for instance, who are looking to fill the family freezer.

It is moose season in my State, but now they were told they cannot access any of the refuge lands because Fish and Wildlife has said they cannot access the land regardless of what ANILCA provides and regardless of the full public access to these Federal lands. Those folks who are feeling the real impact of a government shutdown are not living in a bubble.

We just heard the chairman of the Finance Committee talk about the looming threat we are facing as we approach the debt limit, and he refers to a fiscal cliff. In fact, as a nation, we could lose our financial footing. We could go over that fiscal cliff.

For a lot of folks, they are already looking at their own fiscal cliff. They are not waiting for us to figure out what we are going to do or not do when it comes to dealing with the debt limit.

They are not getting paid. They are perhaps a small business, such as Seong's Sushi Bar & Chinese, which is located across the street from the Federal Building in Juneau. They are sitting there losing revenues on a daily basis because they don't have the customers they anticipate every day. The folks who frequent Capital Brew, which is a drive-through coffee shop that is also in Juneau across from the Federal Building, Bill's Mini Cache, which is a snack shop inside the Anchorage Federal building, these are folks who are looking at it, and they are feeling their own fiscal cliff right now, with or without the threat of the debt limit.

So they are looking at us and they are saying: Wait a minute. You told us a couple weeks ago that we were going to avert this shutdown, that we would figure out how we were going to pass a continuing resolution.

We didn't pass a continuing resolution. Somehow, that all gets wrapped up in ObamaCare. They are trying to figure out where the nexus is here between funding the government and what is going on with the Affordable Care Act. They then find out: We are in a government shutdown. What does that mean for me? I am sitting here in Alaska, 4,000 miles from Washington, DC. But then they learn Fish and Wildlife is saying: No, you can't go out and get the moose to put in your freezer to make it through the winter. Or you are the crab fisherman who is waiting at the crab grounds beginning October 15, but the quotas have not yet been determined from within the National Marine Fisheries Service center yet, so you can't go out. The revenues the industry might be able to derive, about \$7 million from the sale of great king crab that we would all love—a great market out there—but they are not going to be able to get out in the water because some Federal agency 4,000 miles from home hasn't delivered to them the quota.

So when we talk about these fiscal cliffs, it is not just waiting for us to hit a debt limit. It is what is happening with this government shutdown.

So what they are asking me—and I know each and every one of us is hearing from our constituents—is: So what is your plan? And oh, by the way, you better get on it pretty quick, because you have my attention now. What is the plan? So they see some of the things coming out of the House. The House has these mini efforts to fund a specific section, and it doesn't go anywhere here. We are told: Well, we want to open the whole thing. So if we can't open the whole thing and we can't open a portion of it, nothing happens. Nothing happens. So where is the plan? What are we going to do?

So I am pleased to stand with my friend from Maine Senator COLLINS as she has described a plan which I think is pretty reasonable. I think it is pretty sensible. When we think about those small, rational, reasonable steps that might get us to a place where we can

stop the madness, if you will, break this impasse—a proposal that would pull back on the medical device tax, with an offset, so that we are not eroding, we are not undercutting the revenues that would come in for the Affordable Care Act, a 6-month extension of the continuing resolution, as well as a sequestration with a little bit of flexibility and, oh, let's add in some oversight, it sounds pretty rational.

Some suggest maybe the President doesn't want to do this because it is a small incursion in his signature bill. Do my colleagues know what. Right now, what we need to be thinking about is who we work for, whether it is the crab fisherman who wants to get out in the water and who is waiting for NMFS to step it up, whether it is the family out in Galena who is hoping they are going to be able to get their moose before moose season closes, whether it is the guy at Seong's Sushi Bar and Chinese there in Juneau, or whether it is the Alaska family. I got an e-mail a couple of days ago. This family has been planning for a year to bring all the kids together, including boyfriends and girlfriends. They are going to do a great hike out in the Moab National Park for a week, and they are stuck. Nothing is going on, and their family vacation is ruined.

What about what is going on—this is an amazing one—in the Kenai River, which happens to proceed through some refuge areas. People can still go fishing now, and there is good rainbow fishing out there. But when you move down river through that refuge park, you better bring your lines in because we are going to have enforcement action on the river.

There are so many stories we can all attest to, and some of them are horrible. Some of them, as Senator McCAIN has indicated, are about families who are grieving the loss of their loved one—someone who has served this country with honor—being denied death benefits.

The country expects us to get our act together, and they expect us to do it without delay. They are not interested in knowing which side is going to gain more leverage the further we delay. Nobody is winning. I tell my friends the Democrats: You are not winning. And I tell my friends the Republicans: We are not winning. The administration is not winning. Everybody is losing when we cannot come together with a plan, with the resolve to do the job we are tasked to do, which is basic governing, and keeping the government open is basic governing.

So whether it is Senator COLLINS' plan, whether it is an effort that is yet to be created, as the Senator from Arizona challenged us, let's start this now. Let's not delay any further because real people—the people we care for, the people we are charged to help—are hurting right now. This goes beyond mere inconvenience. This is hurt.

So let's do what we have pledged to do. Let's do what we have signed up to

do, which is to work together. At the end of the day, this is not going to be a Republican plan or a Democratic plan or a Senate plan or a House plan. It is going to be a plan that allows us to govern.

With that, I thank the Chair and yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Virginia.

EXTENSION OF MORNING BUSINESS

Mr. WARNER. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent to extend the period of morning business for debate only until 7 p.m., and that all provisions of the previous order remain in effect.

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

CONTINUING APPROPRIATIONS

Mr. WARNER. Mr. President, I wish to follow up on the remarks of my colleagues and the Senators who have spoken before me.

It seems as though we have accepted this new normal, that shutting down the operations of the largest enterprise in America is acceptable. I concur with my colleague, the Senator from Alaska, about the real stories and real pain that is taking place because of this government shutdown. I commend some of my colleagues for their comments. When we read these tragic stories, whether it concerns NIH or it concerns our veterans or concerns our National Park Service, they say: Oh, but that part of the government we want to reopen. Does that mean that every other aspect of government remains closed until we can find that story?

I point out stories to my colleagues that were in both *The Washington Post* and *The New York Times* today—stories we should be celebrating about—three American Nobel Prize winners. Does that mean we should now reopen the NSF, because if the National Science Foundation isn't funded, there may not be a next generation of American Nobel Prize winners? Do we have to bring in a story about some child being hurt because their food or their meat or their fish wasn't inspected correctly?

I have to tell my colleagues, I spent a lot longer in business than I have in politics, and I have been involved in a lot of business negotiations. But I have never been involved in a negotiation that says during the negotiation we have to shut down the operations of our business and inflict pain not only upon our employees but upon the general economy across the board.

That is not the way to govern.

We have talked about stories about Federal workers. But I agree with the Senator from Alaska. It also hurts the hotel owners along the Skyline Drive in our State of Virginia and the government contractors who start and stop because they don't understand

how government is going to operate. I heard a story this morning about a small business outside a government facility in St. Louis that is hurting as well.

This piecemeal approach to reopening government makes no sense. What might be better—as we hear from some folks who want to have this piecemeal effect—is to ask: What parts of the government should stay closed. This is not the way to operate. We ought to reopen this government, put our people back to work, get this economy going again, and continue the very real conversations we have to have about getting our fiscal house in order.

What makes this different to me, in the 4½ years I have been in the Senate, than previous discussions and debates is that we have this—the first in my tenure in the Senate—government shutdown which disproportionately is hurting Virginia and Maryland. But it is literally hurting every community across America. But we have this tragedy, this catastrophe merging now into a deadline that is going to hit us next week where there are certain Members of Congress who say: It is OK if America defaults.

I find that stunning.

When we look back, we find there has never been a major industrial country in modern history that has defaulted. As a matter of fact, the last major country to default was Argentina, back in December of 2001. In the aftermath of that default, they had over 100 percent per annum inflation. Every family in Argentina saw literally 60 percent of their net worth disappear within a few weeks. America is not Argentina, but why would we even get close to that kind of potential economic catastrophe?

It has been mentioned already that America holds a record as the reserve currency for the world. When crises happen, as have happened around the world recently in many countries, people and capital flow into the dollar. That is because the dollar and the full faith and credit of the United States has never been suspect. There has never been a question of whether we are going to honor our commitments. Next week, or very shortly after, that history is going to be put potentially in jeopardy.

I have heard those who say we can prioritize payments. There is no business group in America or no economist that I know of, from left to right, who believes that somehow America can partially default and prioritize payments. Are we going to pay interest? Are we going to pay our troops?

Those of us who served at State levels realize that sometimes our budgets are close to 50 percent passthroughs from the Federal Government.

The Presiding Officer was the governor of the great State of West Virginia. How long before West Virginia defaults if America starts prioritizing its payments? How many other Detroit will there be all across America

if we were to take this type of irresponsible action? Even if there were some possibility that there might be some chance of some logic behind this partial payment scheme, it has never been tried before. No industrial country has ever gotten this close to a default. Why would we take the chance? Why would we play Russian roulette with only one bullet in two chambers? It is something that at this moment, for our national economy and the world economy, can be devastating.

I know we seem to all be repeating ourselves on both sides, but to me it seems very easy in a negotiation; we have differences. I would say to my colleagues I probably make folks on my side more angry than almost anyone else on these issues around getting our country's balance sheet in order. I am anxious to continue those discussions about tax reform, about entitlement reform, about bringing our debt-to-GDP ratio down. But that kind of negotiation hasn't happened while we have this government shutdown and the full faith and credit of the United States potentially in jeopardy.

So let's open the government, not just because we hear some tragic story about one component of the government, not just because we need to make the case about food inspectors, about the National Science Foundation, about NASA Langley where we do aeronautics research—3,500 people and 7 people were at work last week. China, India, other nations around the world are not stopping their research, not stopping their investments because we can't get our act together. Open this government. Take off the table the idea that America will default. Then I am anxious to join with colleagues on both sides of the aisle to get our country's balance sheet in order. But to continue to hold this economy and these stories of these Americans lives in this limbo is irresponsible beyond words.

So I hope we will go ahead and—agreeing with my colleagues who have spoken already, let's get this government open. Let's take and make sure we are going to honor and pay our debts, and let's get to the very real, important questions of how we get our Nation's balance sheet right.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Texas.

UNANIMOUS CONSENT REQUEST—H.J. RES. 72

Mr. CRUZ. Mr. President, I want to again thank the majority leader for bringing the attention of this body to the tragedy of those servicemen who lost their lives and the fact that, unfortunately, their families had been notified improperly, I believe, that they will not be paid the tax-free death gratuity they are entitled to under law. This is wrong. Every Member of this body agrees this is wrong. Every Republican agrees this is wrong, and I am confident every Democrat agrees it is wrong as well.

Indeed, the way this announcement that was made was highly troubling.