

to say: That is not the case. That is not the facts I have before me. We have compromised. We have negotiated. In fact, we have tried for months on this floor, more than 6 months, to get the compromise, to get the negotiation to move this forward. Instead, we find when we give an inch, they take a yard.

Today there are some, some in the other party, suggesting that if they are not granted a great big wish list, they will force us to default on our country's sovereign debt. We keep hearing from the other side about the need to compromise and negotiate. I could not agree more. The whole way this body is supposed to work is by following the rules, following the process, going to conference, negotiating and achieving a responsible result.

We have repeatedly solicited Republican input, accepted Republican amendments, and made painful compromises. Now my message is simple: We should be following the rules. We should be following the process of this body. We should turn on the lights. We should pay our bills. I would be happy, honored to continue working with Republican colleagues to find real solutions to our fiscal problems, the way we are supposed to, in a conference negotiating over the budget that was passed here more than 6 months ago.

To the colleagues with whom I share this Chamber but with whom we have some differences over why this government is shut down today, I hope you will listen to Master Sergeant DiLuzio and his family and to the thousands and thousands of other Americans who are writing in and calling our offices. They deserve better. This country deserves better. We need to show we can be the model of democracy that achieves responsible principled compromise.

To my colleagues and my friends in the other party: Stop blocking progress. Let's go to conference on the budget. Let's negotiate. But, first, let's get our folks back to work. Let's get the government open. Let's move forward in a way that honors the best of our traditions and our rules.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Florida.

EXTENSION OF MORNING BUSINESS

Mr. NELSON. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the period for morning business be extended 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. NELSON. Mr. President, I want to add my remarks now for the third time about this shutdown. I want to say this is not the way we ought to be running our government, and enough ought to be enough.

For example, as you know, the Secretary of Defense has figured out a way he can bring back most of the furloughed civilian employees—there may be a quarter of them who are still on furlough but most of them—by a law that passed here that saw most unintended consequences. But there was a little part of the law where he was able to bring them back for the national security and defense of this country.

But there are still gaping holes. For example, although the active-duty National Guard is not furloughed, a lot of the civilian force and the Reserve force of the Guard is furloughed.

I just talked to an F-22 pilot of the Virginia National Guard. He is a long-time fighter pilot in the U.S. Air Force, flew F-15s, now F-22s. He has transitioned to the National Guard, went to a unit that has the F-22s, which is the Virginia National Guard. All of those Reserve National Guard pilots are still coming in and flying, because we still have to protect the air defense of this country. They are flying, but they are not getting paid. Some of their technicians are there, still supporting the maintenance of the aircraft. Some of them are not getting paid. All of the ancillary support staff is on furlough.

In this example of the protection of the national security, in this particular case providing for our air defense through an Air National Guard unit, is this the way an air guard unit ought to be run?

Instead, it is not being run according to how it should be because of a political tantrum by certain people trying to get their way, instead of allowing the government to be functioning through its appropriations.

There is now a salmonella outbreak, 278 cases in 18 States, including my State of Florida. The Centers for Disease Control, which monitors at one time 30 different diseases operating in this country—now 68 percent of the Centers for Disease Control employees have been furloughed. So because of the salmonella outbreak that has occurred—it may be in the Presiding Officer's State as well. I will look it up afterwards and tell the Presiding Officer. It is in my State. I know it started in California, where most of the cases are.

But had the CDC been there in full force, instead of 68 percent of them being laid off, maybe we would not have had this outbreak, or they may have been able to spot it and stem it quickly before it spread to 17 other States.

I will give you another example: NASA. This little agency is the one that has the most people furloughed as a percentage of the workforce. Now 97 percent of NASA employees are furloughed. Since most of NASA's work is done by contractors, without the NASA supervisors there now, the contractors are being laid off. You take a place such as the Presiding Officer's State of Ohio, the NASA Glenn Research Cen-

ter, look at the impact to the people in that community.

You take a major space center elsewhere, such as the Johnson Space Center in Houston, the Kennedy Space Center in my State, look at what it is doing to the lives of people. But remember that we have a mission that is going to Mars that has a unique, one-time-in-2-years launch window, starting the middle of November into the first part of December. If that narrow 3-week launch window is missed because of the lack of preparation of this spacecraft to launch, there is not another launch window for 2 years. Because of that, we were able to get NASA to recall that team. They are there continuing to prepare the spacecraft. They are not getting paid. But at least we are not going to cause all of the additional delay of 2 years and all of the additional expense of keeping that team of scientists together, along with the staging of the spacecraft for another 2 years.

There are three examples: the National Guard, and the defense of this country; the salmonella outbreak, because of the layoffs of the CDC, the Centers for Disease Control; and NASA.

This should not be. Enough is enough. The political tantrum ought to stop. Let us get back to the business of governing.

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

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The bill clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. JOHNSON of South Dakota. I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

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

The Senator from South Dakota is recognized.

SOUTH DAKOTA BLIZZARD

Mr. JOHNSON of South Dakota. Mr. President, I rise to talk about the devastation that has been inflicted on many in my home State. An early season snowstorm has dumped 1 foot of snow and heavy winds on much of western South Dakota. The thoughts and prayers of Barbara and I are with those affected by this disastrous storm.

Communities and residents are wrestling with the damage caused by downed trees, and utility companies are facing power outages. County, community, and emergency officials have shared with my office numerous stories of volunteers stepping in to help to transport medicines and oxygen to residents stranded in their homes.

Neighbors are helping assist each other with cutting down tree limbs, snow removal, and getting essential food items and medical supplies to the elderly and disabled residents. There are countless reports of people helping to move stuck drivers out of snowdrifts or helping to shovel the roofs and snow from the home of a senior citizen or disabled residents. When people are in need, South Dakotans step up.

One of the most significant impacts of the storm has been on my State's livestock producers. "Tens of thousands of cattle killed in Friday's blizzard . . ." proclaims the Rapid City Journal headline.

Silvia Christen, with the South Dakota Stockgrowers Association, has shared with me gut-wrenching stories of ranchers who have lost their herds. She said a man near Interior found his cows had pushed themselves and their calves over a Badlands wall and killed many of them. He estimates his loss at 50 percent of his total herd.

A young man east of Hermosa estimates he lost 30 percent of his 200 breeding cows. He found them all in one pile in a draw covered in snow. He saw the heads and hooves sticking out from the snow and can't bring himself to go closer or dig them out. He stated:

I'm young, but I always thought I was a good rancher. I thought I'd taken care of them but I guess I should have done more.

He hung up the phone with an apology as his voice broke.

Our cowboys are resilient people, but this blizzard comes on the heels of a devastating drought last year from which ranchers still haven't fully recovered.

I am very proud of our State and local officials who have taken immediate action to assist those in need. The National Guard is conducting life-saving safety operations to ensure folks without power are OK and to open roads. The State is working with a local rendering company to assist with finding, identifying, and dealing with livestock that have been killed. Our ag organizations in the State are providing help and guidance to ranchers who were hit.

The one place where help is lacking is from the Federal Government. Because of the government shutdown, producers can't rely on their FSA offices for assistance.

Since Congress hasn't finished the farm bill, West River ranchers may have to wait for disaster assistance. The 2008 farm bill included several critical disaster assistance programs, including the Livestock Indemnity Program, which provides help to producers affected by natural disasters. Unfortunately, that program expired in 2011, and because Congress hasn't yet completed a comprehensive farm bill, there continues to be no funding available for them.

We passed a good farm bill here in the Senate twice in the past 2 years. I worked to include funding for these livestock disaster programs, which are in both the Senate and House bills. The Senate is ready to negotiate the farm bill, but the House hasn't appointed conferees. The longer they delay, the longer my constituents will suffer without disaster aid.

The House needs to pass a clean continuing resolution, and they need to appoint conferees so that we can finally finish the farm bill.

It will take many months for the Black Hills communities to clean up

from the October blizzard. For ranchers who lost livestock, it may take years to recover. But whatever Mother Nature has to deliver, it cannot dampen the spirit of South Dakotans.

Mr. President, I yield the floor, and I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mrs. FISCHER. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

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

CONTINUING APPROPRIATIONS

Mrs. FISCHER. Mr. President, I rise today to give voice to frustrated Nebraskans. I rise to testify to the simple truth that a government should not intentionally make life harder for its people. I rise to say: Enough. Enough press conferences. Enough brinkmanship. Enough dividing people of good will against one another.

I am still pretty new here, but I can say that in Nebraska and in so many other States across this Nation we actually work together—and not just on small bills but also on the big issues. I urge my colleagues to remember where we came from.

While I served in the Nebraska Legislature, we dealt with a major budget shortfall. We didn't go on TV or Twitter or fight; we legislated and we fixed the problem. That is the Nebraska way. We roll up our sleeves, we cut through the talking points, and we get to work.

Nebraskans are pragmatic. They are well informed, and they expect results. So when Nebraskans look at the dysfunction we have here in Washington, they are frustrated, and I am too. I am very frustrated. I am frustrated that this Congress can't pass appropriations bills that comply with the law. I am frustrated that this Congress cannot agree on a budget. I am frustrated with crisis management instead of responsible governance. I am frustrated with being told one thing only to learn it is just not true. I am frustrated with the willful ignorance that goes on in Washington when it comes to our debt. And I am frustrated with the lack of solutions.

The American people do not want us to just stand in opposition; they want us to put forth constructive ideas to solve problems. As a result of Congress's failure to agree on a spending plan, the government is shut down. The result? Well, in yesterday's Omaha World Herald there was a report that Nebraska farmers are unable to cash checks when they bring their grain in after harvest. The article noted:

State law requires elevators to include a lender's name on a check when a farmer has a loan against the grain. With no one at Farm Service Agency offices because of the shutdown, checks can't be cashed when the lender is the FSA.

"We've got millions of dollars of grain checks out there that farmers need," said

Dan Poppe, president of the Archer (Neb.) Cooperative Credit Union, with locations in Archer, Dannebrog and Central City.

He said entire rural economies count on the money.

"It impacts not only our farmers, who are relying heavily on the money, but also the local grocery store, hardware store, the feed and seed," Poppe said.

It is not just farmers and ranchers, it is also our manufacturers and our investors. A constituent from Waco, NB, wrote:

I am a Dow employee living in your district. This impasse is beginning to threaten Dow's investment in new U.S. manufacturing. Not only will a continued delay push back Dow's plans to create thousands of new American jobs, it will harm Dow's competitiveness and directly impact me and my family. Greater economic certainty will help Dow, its employees, and our State thrive.

The wife of a Federal law enforcement officer from Gretna wrote:

We are a single income family. We have a 2 and 3 year old and one more on the way. I am due in November. This shutdown will leave us unable to pay our bills.

A 23-year-old Department of Agriculture employee emailed me saying:

My wife works two jobs to help make ends meet, but we still live paycheck to paycheck. If this shutdown is not resolved within the next few days, we will be devastated financially.

A U.S. Air Force veteran wrote to tell me:

I applied for Social Security disability assistance on the 15th of August and my claim had gone for medical review on the 26th of August. I have no money, and I just found out yesterday that because of the shutdown SSA claims are on hold.

A furloughed Federal worker from Omaha called my office to say: We are all tired. We are tired of not getting a budget until the last minute. We are all tired. You guys need to do your job.

I agree. I hear these same messages over and over. Nebraskans are tired of the name calling and the blame games. They want to see government work, and they want to see it work well. They are not fooled by the rhetoric, and they expect us to govern responsibly. I agree. That is why I am talking with my colleagues—not publicly in front of the cameras but privately—to see if we can forge a way forward. But I believe we have to do more than just open the government. That is just the basics. We have to address our \$17 trillion debt. It is smothering this country, it is jeopardizing our national security, and it is a threat to our children's future.

Congress will soon vote on increasing the debt ceiling—the sixth debt limit increase in the past 5 years. Our national debt has almost doubled since 2006, and our debt limit has grown twice as much as our economy in the past 2 years. Shouldn't the opposite be true? Meanwhile, our economy's lethargic recovery continues sluggishly along at a rate of 1 to 2 percent. This is unacceptable.

Instead of growing our economy by reducing spending, cutting regulations, and overhauling an outdated tax code,