

when we retire, our Medicare and our Social Security is going to be different than our parents.

So instead of spending all of our time around here trying to figure out how to raise the debt limit, we need to spend more of our time trying to figure out what we can do to put in place a serious long-term plan to bring this debt under control so that our economy can start creating more of those good-paying, middle-class jobs, so that people can start building for themselves the better future they always dreamed of.

The American dream is under assault. That is the real crisis. When are we going to get serious about solving it? This dream of earning a better life is the universal hope of people everywhere. But we are reminded that for much of human history most people found themselves trapped by the circumstances of their birth. That meant no matter how hard they worked, no matter how talented they were, they were only going to go as far as their family went. They could only do whatever it was their parents did. One of the things that made America so special is that here that has been different. Here, through hard work and sacrifice, people from all walks of life, from every corner of the world, have had the real opportunity to earn for themselves a better life.

This is what we call the American dream. As Americans, that is our identity. It is what holds us together as a nation. It is what holds us together as a people, and it is what has made us exceptional.

I know people are discouraged about how tough times are. I know some people are very disappointed about how the last election turned out. I know many people are angry and, quite frankly, disgusted by the way this process is working or failing to work these days. But no matter how bad things may seem, we cannot give up on America and we cannot give up on the American dream. We have to do everything we can to make sure this country remains a place where anyone from anywhere can accomplish anything.

So despite how ugly Washington looks right now, I actually remain confident that, in the end, that is exactly what we are going to do. I have no doubt that, in the end, our children will grow up to be the most prosperous generation that ever lived. Despite all the challenges we face right now, when all is said and done, I believe with all my heart we will still go down in history as the generation that saved the American dream and left our children what our parents left for us—the single greatest Nation in the history of the world.

Madam President, I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Florida.

Mr. NELSON. Madam President, mindful of the hour and that the Senate is about to recess, I want to say to my colleague from Florida, who is my friend, that I have optimism and I have faith in our country as well.

I think it is interesting that the stock market, the Dow Jones, has surged 243 points—I just checked it a couple of minutes ago—on just the rumors that the debt ceiling will be lifted and we will not go through this crisis. But I am told at the other end of the Capitol, the House of Representatives is going to have difficulty in getting any agreement to stop the shutdown of the government and pass a continuing appropriations bill. So here we are, back in the soup again.

If we do just a short-term debt extension, lifting the debt ceiling, then for however long it is—5, 6 weeks—come Thanksgiving we are going to be back in the soup again.

There has got to be a change in attitude, and the attitude has got to be I respect the other fellow's point of view, I respect his difference of opinion, now let's work it out together. And it is only then we are going to solve this problem.

Madam President, I yield the floor.

RECESS SUBJECT TO THE CALL OF THE CHAIR

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the Senate stands in recess subject to the call of the Chair.

Thereupon, the Senate, at 1 p.m., recessed subject to the call of the Chair until 4:04 p.m. and reassembled when called to order by the Presiding Officer (Mr. COONS).

DEFAULT PREVENTION ACT OF 2013—MOTION TO PROCEED—Continued

Mr. REID. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the time until 6 p.m. be equally divided and controlled between the two leaders or their designees, and that the Democrats be limited to 10 minutes each. Basically, the reason is we have lots of speakers on this side. I need not say more.

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

The Senator from Michigan.

Ms. STABENOW. Mr. President, we are hearing a lot of discussion right now about the role of government and the role of the public sector.

We know there is a minority in the House of Representatives who ran on shutting the government down and think they have achieved something as we see the economy teetering now, as we see people who have been put out of work, who have mortgages, car payments, and concerns about their children and so on, and all the services that are in jeopardy, from food safety to law enforcement to what happens in the case of an oil spill and all of the things in between.

I found it interesting with our colleagues who have embraced the idea that in the greatest country in the world and in the greatest democracy in the world there is no need for the public sector. No one else is having this de-

bate around the world. They are embracing every tool of the public sector to embrace their private sector to try to beat us by outeducating and outinnovating us in a global economy, as the distinguished Presiding Officer understands. So we are in a global race where everybody understands it is all in. We use all the tools that we have.

We have the greatest private sector, the most robust private sector entrepreneurs that can beat anybody in the world. But we also have a public sector that creates the framework and support for that by having a rule of law, by having basic protections in place for the public.

As I had the opportunity to listen to our colleagues on the other side of the aisle, particularly in the House, it seems every time there is a story—a salmonella outbreak—gosh, we had better bring some folks back. We have veterans hurting so we had better bring something back. We have women and children not getting baby formula through the WIC Program so we should do something about that. We have concerns about national safety so we should do something about that. It is almost as if we are educating these Members about the role of government in this process as they go. I didn't realize we did that. So maybe that function ought to be working. It is a chaotic way for the greatest democracy to operate, but that seems to be what is happening right now.

I remember in my times traveling to China, the last time I was there, where they said to me: Oh, you are here in Beijing on a great day; you can see across the street.

We are lucky. We can see across the street almost every day because we collectively have decided that one of the things we need to do to be able to breathe the air is to have certain rules, certain protections and standards in place so we can breathe the air. That is important to do through the public sector. We can't say: I will do the air in front of this desk, and you do the air in front of this desk, and somebody else will protect the air over here. It doesn't work that way. We do it together. So we don't have to worry about saying: I am in D.C. on the 2 days a year we can breathe the air and look across the street. We have the confidence of knowing that we have a quality of life, including the ability to see across the street and breathe the air, because in a civilized society, the greatest democracy in the world, we have made sure that those standards are there for our citizens.

I remember on a trip to Russia a few years ago they were talking about wanting to get more private sector investment into Moscow in Russia. I came home talking to our businesses and they said: The problem is they don't have a rule of law. We don't trust how we can invest there because we are not confident in their government, their rule of law. We don't have that problem here. We have the epitome of a

system with checks and balances, a rule of law. Up until all of this had begun, we have had the confidence available in the private sector on how to invest and know that there is a system in place.

I had the opportunity, with my agriculture hat on a few months ago, to be in Haiti where we see a great desire, meeting with the Haitian president, to bring in more business and investment from the United States. The problem is, you bring a shipload of cargo into the harbor, and you can't get it off the ship without paying bribes. They have no law enforcement system, judicial system, rule of law.

That is not true in our country. We do it through something collectively that we call government, that creates a way for us to make sure we can drink the water, breathe the air, see across the street, drive on the roads, have the opportunity for education for all of our children, and know that we can walk into a restaurant and have some level of confidence that the food is safe or go into the grocery store and know that.

We have research institutions that suddenly, after our colleagues in the House have been saying—and for years I have had personal debates with folks who said: We don't need a National Institutes of Health. Let the private sector do it. Yet we know collectively we are willing to share a risk of basic research to try to find cancer cures, to go over and over again on research until they get that one that may be able to move forward and be successful, in which case the private sector comes in and takes it from there. But we have done it together and shared the risk because we know it is in all of our interests to save lives—in our own, our family Members, and others—whether it is Alzheimer's, Parkinson's, juvenile diabetes, cancer. All of those things are done collectively through this thing that we call government. That is why we have the best standard of living in the world. We are the wealthiest country in the world. We are the envy of the world. People want to come here and invest. They want to be a part of the opportunities in this country. And now we are debating whether or not, literally, there should be a public sector. Should we fund the police and the firefighters and the judicial system? There are those on the other side of the aisle who would say: We don't mean that. Every time we bring up something: We didn't mean that. I am not sure what they mean then in a civilized society.

We know we have challenges around issues of finance and debt. As chair of the Agriculture Committee, I am proud of the fact—and I have said so many times on the floor—that we are the only committee on a bipartisan basis that has actually brought a deficit reduction bill to the floor that has passed in the Senate. So I take a backseat to no one when we are looking at ways to cut duplication, to cut things that aren't important, to strengthen those things that are, and to save money.

But we do not do it by destroying our economy, by shutting down the services we all count on to protect us as consumers, to make sure our children have opportunities, to make sure we are safe and secure in this country. Obviously, that makes no sense. It is totally irresponsible.

What we are not talking about enough is that we have begun to see things happening in terms of the debt and deficit. We can continue to do that. In fact, the yearly deficit has been cut in half. I don't hear people talking about that, but the numbers say that.

A few years ago we set a goal of \$4 trillion in debt reduction over 10 years. We are more than halfway there—not all the way there, but we have put in place a mechanism through cuts, through new revenue, through interest savings yielding \$2.5 trillion in debt reduction out of the \$4 trillion.

What is happening by shutting down the Government and threatening a default? That debt is going to go back up. We are going to undermine the work we have already done by adding increased costs through interest payments and delays that will actually increase the debt. We saw that in the last go-around in 2011. Even though there was not actually a default on the full faith and credit of the United States of America, we saw it because of exactly what is happening now. We had a lot of talk—in my judgment some very irresponsible talk—and posturing back-and-forth instead of working together in a reasonable way. We saw the markets affected, a drop of 2,000 points in the market, \$800 billion in retirement savings of folks who worked hard all their lives and maybe are still working and cannot figure out why in the world we cannot work together in a reasonable, rational way to solve problems. There was \$800 billion retirement savings gone. During that time in 2011, that summer, July and August, anyone who was signing up for a new mortgage is paying on average \$100 more a month in payments because the interest rates were higher.

Instead of building on what we have already done together or even acknowledging it—it may not make good politics to acknowledge folks on the other side of the aisle. Unfortunately, it seems they certainly do not want to give credit to the President or give credit for anything we have actually been doing together. But the reality is the deficit has been cut in half and we are more than halfway to the goal that was set for savings over 10 years.

There is nothing that has been happening in the last few days—shutting down the government, threatening possible default on the full faith and credit of the United States—that is helping us reach that goal. It is actually going in the opposite direction. As interest rates go up, billions of dollars will be added to the debt.

We have tried to figure out over the last number of months how to continue bringing down the debt and tackling

long-term challenges while, by the way, creating jobs. The best way to get us out of debt is to create jobs so people can go back to work and be part of the economy. That is the best thing, and we are sure not hearing enough talk about that.

I am very proud to come from a State that makes things and grows things. It is manufacturing that is bringing us back, that is driving the economy, and it is agriculture where we have the biggest exports, in terms of export surpluses, in the country. We need to make things and grow things, focus on that. That will bring down the debt as we create more opportunities and more jobs.

In the last 6 months we have tried to go to a conference committee, a negotiating team, a formal negotiating process between the House and Senate on a 10-year budget that will bring down the debt, create jobs, do things in a fair and balanced way that puts middle class families first. We have tried to do that, as of today, 21 times. In fact, the chair of the Budget Committee has come to the floor and moved that we get to that process 21 times, joined by distinguished Members of the Republican caucus in the Senate who have come to say the same thing, let us go to a budget negotiation, a formal budget negotiation. Over 21 times the same folks who shut down the Government, the same folks who say it doesn't hurt anything if we default as a country, even though every economist, every business leader is begging and pleading and providing facts and information as to why it would be a complete disaster—the same people who are saying defaults don't matter, government doesn't work, except when they are reading something in the paper and somebody is saying there is a problem—they, those same people have, 21 times been able to block the Senate from going to a formal negotiation with the House on the budget.

We are in this crazy place where, on the one hand, when we step back we are actually seeing the economy slowly moving forward—of course until now, when it is beginning to be stymied by all of this. But the economy has been moving forward. The yearly deficit is coming down. We have been tackling the long-term debt. We are coming out of this. Then we have a group of folks who have decided in the big picture that there is no value in a democracy, in the greatest country in the world, in government. They don't seem to care about what it takes to provide an economy and so on.

Now they are saying they are willing to jeopardize the faith and credit of the United States of America, have America default on our bills and potentially send us not only and probably into a great recession similar to the one we just came out of, but economists tell us it could send us back even further, into the thirties or forties. They just do not know.

We are in a global marketplace right now where we don't know what happens when we default on our bills, when we lose the confidence of the world to invest in America or to even purchase our debt. We don't know what happens when small businesses see all their capital dry up and people are not able to get mortgage loans again or they cost much more than they did before and all the other ramifications of our not paying our bills.

There are colleagues who say the Secretary of the Treasury—who, by the way, came down and did an excellent job in the Finance Committee today. It was very serious. It was very sobering, but I thought he was clear and he was factual and I very much appreciate his coming to the Senate Finance Committee. But there are those who say he says October 17 is the last time extraordinary measures can be used to stop us from falling off the cliff and going into default and losing the full faith and credit of the United States—except, no, it could be the next day, it could be the day after.

Coming from a car State it reminds me of someone who is driving in their car and they look and it is on empty. You may have a little bit more. Sometimes they say you have 5 miles more, you have 10 miles more, maybe you have 30 miles more, but you are on empty and you are going to stop—the car is going to stop. The question is how often do you want to risk that and play that game when you know the car is going to stop.

That is, in my judgment, the kind of absurd and irresponsible debate going on right now—about whether the car stops immediately or in 2 miles or 3 miles or 30 miles. Why in the world would you want to put yourself in that position? Lord knows, defaulting on the full faith and credit of the United States of America is much more serious than running out of gas in your car.

There is no reason for this—none, zero. This is a manufactured crisis. Do we need to continue to work together to tackle the long-term debt of this country? Absolutely. Count me in. Do we need to focus on what is happening to middle-class families who are getting squeezed on all sides and have a hard time just holding on? Do we need to focus on jobs in this country, making things and growing things and outeducating and outinnovating the world? Absolutely. Count me in. Count me in at the head of the line on that.

We in Michigan right now, in terms of our hard work and ingenuity, take a backseat to nobody. But to find ourselves in this craziness is beyond my understanding. I know people at home are going: What in the world is going on here? Can't you guys just come together and figure this out and quit making up crises and quit creating artificial deadlines and get things done?

I think it is important at this point in our history that we remember President Ronald Reagan said: "Never be-

fore in our history has the Federal Government failed to honor its financial obligations."

We are the greatest country in the world. Others look to us. They want to be like us. They want a vibrant middle class like America has had. We need to fight hard to keep ours and keep it growing. We need to make sure we do not fail to honor the financial obligations of this great country.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Ohio.

Mr. PORTMAN. Mr. President, I just listened to my colleague from Michigan talking about the need to reopen the government and the need to deal with the debt. Of course, I agree with that, as do my colleagues on this side of the aisle. We also heard discussion about the fact that we should not be manufacturing crises. Unfortunately, we have a crisis on our hands; that is, the crisis of debt at record levels, so I wish to talk about that a little today and talk about why this discussion is so important, particularly on extending the debt limit because that would be the place naturally for us to deal with the problem that faces this generation and certainly future generations reaching this historic level of debt.

In a matter of days, we are told, our Nation is going to be reaching this debt limit which is \$16.7 trillion. Think about that. That is sixteen thousand billion dollars. It is impossible to comprehend that number, but let's try: \$16.7 trillion would produce a stack of \$1 bills 1 million miles high. That is enough, by the way, to go to the Moon and back. It is now bigger, by the way, than our entire economy. Only once in our history have we had debt as a percent of our economy so large and that was after World War II. We were able quickly to address that. We didn't have the long-term liabilities we have now, and we had very high defense spending from World War II we were able to reduce. But other than that, we have never been here before. I would say we are in uncharted territory.

By the way, it is not just that we have this huge level of debt and deficit and the overhang on the economy, but it is the fact that the economy is also weak. I think they are related. I think this huge level of debt and deficit is akin to a wet blanket over the economy.

Here is an interesting chart. It shows the debt limit rising twice as fast as the economy has grown in the last 2 years so the debt increase has gone up by about \$2.4 trillion and unfortunately our GDP increase has been less than half of that. That is the problem we are trying to face. It is a lot of back-and-forth.

I know for some people it looks as if this is politics. It is not. It is about a fundamental issue. There are fundamental disagreements, and I respect those disagreements, but we have to address this problem and we have to do

it in the context of the debt limit. If we do not, we will simply be kicking the can down the road again and letting down the people we represent. If you divide that debt among the American people, each of us—every man, woman, and child in America—owes around \$50,000. By the way, of course, that is far more than the annual per capita income for that man, woman, and child in America. If you think about that, it is about \$140,000 to \$150,000 per household on average. That is where we are today.

I don't think it is constructive to be pointing fingers of blame because, frankly, for decades Republicans and Democrats alike have spent more money than the government takes in. There have been more promises made than can be kept, and we have gone through a process of mortgaging the future of our kids and grandkids as a result. Here we are. In some respects, the greatest single act of bipartisanship here in the Congress has been the overspending. The question is not how we got here but what we are going to do about it. Where are we going?

Yesterday the President said that raising the Nation's credit limit by another \$1 trillion really pays for last year's deficit spending, not next year's spending. I guess we could have that debate. I would say it is about the future because we are borrowing more money to pay the bills of the country going forward, and that is what many of us want to talk about—how, going forward, we can reduce those bills.

The truth is that whether you say you are paying for the past or paying for the future, it really doesn't matter to the American people and it doesn't matter to our children and grandchildren who end up paying the bill. Long after we are gone, this huge level of debt and deficit is going to be something they are going to have to deal with.

We all know the consequences if we don't raise the debt limit. Without a debt limit increase, the Federal Government will be unable to borrow to meet its expenses. We are borrowing 20 cents of every dollar the Federal Government spends, so the government would be unable to meet all of its obligations.

There has been discussion about meeting the interest on the debt, and that is only about 8 percent of revenue coming in. I assume that could be met, but it is true that there are other obligations that can't be met if the government can't borrow because the government is spending more than it takes in and needs to borrow to make up the difference.

The deficit, some have said—including some of my colleagues on the other side of the aisle today—is lower now, and somehow that is an indication that we are OK in terms of the deficit. I would remind folks that the deficit this year is the fifth largest deficit in the history of our country—in our entire history. It is over \$640 billion. More

significantly, the Congressional Budget Office, which is the nonpartisan group around here that analyzes this stuff, says it is temporarily lower than \$1 trillion. In other words, they say that within a decade it will get back up to \$1 trillion. Whether it is \$640 billion or \$1 trillion, it is way too high.

Entitlement spending, by the way, will then push these annual deficits up to the equivalent of \$3.4 trillion a year—five times what they are today—within a few decades. That is based on the Congressional Budget Office. At that point, the national debt would be 2½ times as large as the entire economy. Today it is about the size of the economy; it is a little bigger. It would be 2½ times as large as our whole economy. I saw one CBO report recently that simply stops calculating the interest cost at that point because they cannot foresee our economy functioning under those kinds of conditions. Think about your own family budget or think about your business. You could not function either. The bank would not be able to lend you any money.

Both of these outcomes—default today and bankruptcy in the future—have unacceptable. That is why it is time for us to work together to try to do something about them. As the debt ceiling is raised, it is time to address the underlying problem. That is what we are saying.

By the way, the American people are saying that too. Based on the polling I have seen this week, the American people by better than a 2-to-1 margin are saying: Don't raise the debt limit without doing something about the spending. They get it because for them it is like the credit card—when you reach the limit, you realize you have to do something about the underlying problem, which is how much you are spending.

The President says: "Pass the debt limit increase now and we will address the spending later." I wish it were that simple, but I think he knows, as well as everybody in this Chamber and every person who is watching at home today, that Congress simply doesn't reduce spending unless it is forced to do so. If you don't think that is true, let me remind you of what the history is here. In the past three decades—I have gone back and looked at all of these deficit reduction plans that did get through Congress, and there were not many, but there were some. In every single instance where there was any significant deficit reduction, it came as a result of what? A discussion about the debt limit because that is the time in which there is some pressure here in Congress to actually do something about it. I found one in 2005, which was a relatively small reduction in spending, but otherwise every single one of them—the Gramm-Rudman rescissions in the 1980s; the 1990 Andrews Air Force Base agreement that the first President Bush conducted with Democrats; the 1993 balanced budget talks; the 1997 balanced budget agreement Bill Clin-

ton negotiated with Newt Gingrich—a Democratic President and a Republican Speaker; and, of course, the pay-go rules that many Democrats are fond of, those pay-go rules came out of a debt limit discussion; and finally, we only have to look back a couple of years ago to the Budget Control Act. As my colleague has said on his side of the aisle, there have been some successes in reducing spending on the discretionary side of spending—which is about one-third of the budget that is appropriated every year—that came out of the Budget Control Act, which is a result of what? The debt limit. In other words, Members listening to the folks back home.

I am listening to my constituents back home in Ohio right now, and they are saying: Don't max out the credit card again and go over the limit unless you do something about the problem. It is little wonder that the American people, by this margin of 2 to 1 that I talked about, are saying: Don't do it without the spending reductions. They know that is the only way the spending cuts are likely to happen.

Why is it that any increase in the debt limit should also include progrowth provisions? Well, because one way to get at the debt and deficit is spending restraint. We talked about the discretionary spending being about 35 percent of the budget, and we made progress there. The other 65 percent of the budget is the mandatory spending side, and we have not made progress there. The other part would be revenue, and on the first of this year taxes were raised by \$620 billion. What we have not done is deal with the mandatory side.

Finally, of course, economic growth helps. As we are extending the debt limit, we should also look at how we can help give the economy a shot in the arm. Tax reform is the way to do that, and I think there is a consensus in this body that we need to do it. That would seem to make sense as well.

We have already made progress on one of the three legs of the stool, which is dealing with the discretionary spending. It has been pretty much flat for the last couple of years. By the way, for the first time since the 1950s there has actually been a reduction in spending for 2 years in a row, but that is only 35 percent of the budget. The fastest growing—again, 65 percent of the budget—we have not dealt with. That 65 percent grows to 76 percent of the budget in the next 10 years based on the Congressional Budget Office.

On the tax side, the same Congressional Budget Office tells us that starting in 2014—that is next year, around the corner—taxes as a percentage of our economy will be above the historic level. In other words, there will be more taxes coming in from the tax increases that, in part, we passed earlier this year, but the part we have not dealt with is mandatory spending. It is the biggest and the fastest growing part of our spending. Let's face it. It is

politically difficult to deal with, but that is what we were hired to do, and that is what the President was hired to do in terms of providing leadership.

With ObamaCare, of course, we added a new health entitlement program to this part of the budget—the 65 percent. These health entitlements were already growing more quickly than the rest of the budget, even the rest of mandatory spending. In fact, the Congressional Budget Office tells us that in the next 10 years the health entitlement programs grow by over 100 percent. These are vital programs—Medicare and Medicaid—but they have to be reformed so they are sustainable in the future and are there for our kids and grandkids. With 10,000 baby boomers retiring every day and health care costs continuing to rise, we have a real problem, and we have to address it. All of us know that—Democrats and Republicans alike, as well as the President and the Congress. Again, history tells us the best way is to link this with the debt limit because that is the opportunity and has traditionally been the opportunity to make progress.

By the way, over the long term, overall revenue is projected to increase and discretionary spending is projected to be flat. The entire increase in our deficit—these huge debts and deficits going forward that I have been talking about—is due to the mandatory spending. Again, that is the Congressional Budget Office, not me.

A good place to start, of course, would be some of the mandatory spending reforms the President has proposed. That would seem to be less controversial. If they are in the President's budget, that means he supports them. The President sent up a budget this year, and he included over \$700 billion of spending reforms on the mandatory side of the budget. That is why what I have been advocating is, let's start there. Let's look at the President's own proposals. These are not the proposals that all Republicans support, but after all we should have a negotiation.

This notion that the President says he refuses to negotiate has never been true. Every President has negotiated. I think the American people are confused by this. How could the President of the United States say in the context of this debt limit discussion that he refuses to even talk to the other side? That makes no sense. The first President Bush rolled up his sleeves; we talked about the 1990 agreements. President Clinton rolled up his sleeves; we talked about the 1997 balanced budget agreement he negotiated with then-Speaker of the House Newt Gingrich. That is what Presidents do. We need them to lead, particularly on these tough issues.

As we talked about earlier, these are politically tough issues. The President says he doesn't want to be held hostage over the debt limit. He is not. He has been given the opportunity to lead using his own proposals—at least that is my suggestion.

We can also take a very simple step as we are going through this to be sure that this newest health care entitlement, which is the Affordable Care Act, which is a new entitlement program, doesn't become even more of a deficit driver than many of us on this side fear it will already be. The Affordable Care Act includes a provision that requires that when you get your subsidies under the exchanges, you have to verify your income. That makes sense. You have to verify your income between 100 percent of poverty and 400 percent of poverty. Below that it would be Medicaid, and above that it would be the subsidies under the exchanges.

Under a final regulation the administration put out, they said: We know you should verify your income, and that is what the law says, but we are going to give all of the exchanges another year to do it—not until 2015. Well, obviously the concern there is that that will be an invitation for fraud, waste, and for big new expenses.

As a result, the Federal Government body in charge of this, the CMS, came out and said: No, for Federal exchanges, we will require people to file their income, but not for State exchanges. There are about 17 States and the District of Columbia that have State exchanges. They said to them: You guys can wait—in fact, not just until 2015, but there is no date certain.

That is something we in the Congress should deal with. The Democrats here in the Chamber who voted for the Affordable Care Act certainly should support that because the intent of the bill when they signed up for it and when the President supported it was, of course, that you would verify your income. That is an example of a simple step we could take to prevent the distribution of subsidies until we have a system to verify those subsidies are going to the right people.

Finally, let's give the economy a shot in the arm. As part of this process, let's take a step forward and say: Let's reform the Tax Code. We are going to differ about the details, but let's get started on it.

So my proposal would be, as we have a vote on extending the debt limit, let's do these important reforms we talked about on the monetary side, but let's also commit to tax reform. Let's force the process. Let's facilitate it. Let's expedite it.

The American people are not looking for us to just get the spending under control; they want to see this economy grow. Again, they are not happy with this, where the debt is increasing at twice the rate of the economy. They want to see opportunities for their kids to get a job. They want to see the opportunity to have the dignity and self-respect that comes with a job.

We know that tax reform, done properly, will promote growth, it will create jobs. Again, we are going to differ on some of the details, and that is OK. Let's get started on it.

Perhaps the President doesn't think that spending and the deficits are a

real problem. If he thinks that, he should say it. He says just the opposite. He has said he does think it is necessary for us to address these problems. In fact, in his own budget, he sent proposals forward. So what we need to do is get together and negotiate and talk and deal with this underlying problem. A debt that is nearly \$17 trillion is unacceptable to everybody, I hope, and I would think we would welcome the sign that Republicans are giving now that we want to negotiate, we want to talk.

Negotiations, by the way, I don't think are a sign of weakness. I don't think coming to the table is a signal of a failure of leadership. I think just the opposite; I think it shows strength and shows leadership. Again, I can promise my colleagues Republicans don't support all of the President's suggested savings in his budget, and a purely Republican agenda would look very different from whatever might emerge from bipartisan negotiations. But, again, the American people sent us here to get this done.

Using President Obama's own proposals, let's take that first step toward entitlement and progrowth tax reform and onto some common ground to break the gridlock in DC and finally do something positive about that underlying problem we all acknowledge.

Yes, we face serious problems, real challenges, but we also have an opportunity to do something positive, to deal with the problem we all acknowledge—something that will not only prevent a debt limit crisis today but a debt crisis tomorrow.

I hope to move forward on this important project. I think we owe it to the people we represent.

I yield the remainder of my time.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from North Dakota.

Ms. HEITKAMP. Mr. President, October 1 was a significant day. Two things happened to the constituents in my State. The first we talk a lot about here, and that is basically the shutdown of the government, the failure to pass a continuing resolution that would keep the doors of government open for the thousands and thousands of Americans, and North Dakotans, who depend on government services. This horrible impasse continues to have a horrible impact and continues to have consequences that people didn't foresee.

The second thing that happened, which hasn't gotten a lot of attention, is the expiration of a long-term farm bill. After negotiating in this body, and with a large bipartisan vote, we were able to accommodate concerns. We came together after negotiating, and we came up with a package that included real reforms, eliminated direct payments, included real reform in SNAP, streamlined conservation programs, and basically offered \$25 billion of debt relief to the country. It was a great package.

We sent it over to the House and waited for the House to pass their farm

bill. They initially couldn't pass a farm bill. Then they decided to divide the farm bill, pass part of the farm bill, pass the other part of the farm bill with nutrition, now have a vote to bring them back together, and we are patiently awaiting the appointment of a conference committee.

The passage of the farm bill has never been a partisan issue. In fact, it is a regional issue. Things that are good for North Dakota may not be good for the Presiding Officer's State of Delaware, but we all work together, we all compromise, and we all come together.

This past weekend South Dakota and southwestern North Dakota were hit with a terrible snowstorm. Over 2 days that region was blanketed with anywhere from 2 feet to 7 feet of snow and contained winds over 70 miles an hour. Because of the early storm, tens of thousands of cattle died because they were suffocated, mired and drowned in stock dams or dropped in exhaustion. The pictures and the stories are devastating.

This image is one that is all too common after the recent blizzard in the Dakotas. These cattle that died over the weekend near Hettinger, ND, were owned by the Christman family. As is the case with many North Dakota ranchers, this hard-working family lost many cows and calves during this surprise fall storm.

What people may not understand about the cattle industry is they might think one cow is like the next cow; people can just replace them. These herds are the product of years and years of selective breeding, years and years of working to improve the quality of their herd and to meet different specifications in the market. They are more than cows. They contain an intellectual property component that is not easily replaced.

This is where the crisis of the dysfunction that is Washington, DC, meets natural disaster. When livestock die from a natural disaster, farmers report the number of cattle that died to the Farm Service Agency—the FSA. However, because the doors are closed on the Federal Government, North Dakota ranchers, South Dakota ranchers, anyone who is experiencing livestock losses, have no place to report those losses. And even worse, they have no one at USDA to consult with about the information they need to collect to eventually report their claims. This is critical information. If farmers aren't collecting the information they need to make disaster claims in the future, the safety nets put in place to provide some support to these hard-working ranchers may be denied simply because of a paperwork error.

Unfortunately, this is an avoidable problem. As has been the case with so many in recent years, it is the product of congressional dysfunction. Because we haven't passed a new farm bill, the livestock program that helps ranchers withstand losses to livestock herds due

to extreme weather events—the Livestock Indemnity Program—has expired, and the emergency assistance for livestock and honeybee producers program, which is in the stalled farm bill and which helps producers stay in business after they experience significant losses because of natural disaster, isn't available to the ranchers and the beekeepers who were hit the hardest by the storm. Until Congress passes a farm bill, livestock producers are in danger of losing their business, and they will not be eligible for support.

These ranchers and the farm bill are more collateral damage of the government shutdown. Because we are debating whether to fund the Federal Government, Congress isn't able to work on a farm bill. We have been waiting and waiting and waiting for the appointment of conferees. The chairwoman, I think, intends to make a floor speech about the farm bill yet today. She has been working very hard to encourage the collection of information and to encourage the appointment of conferees to the conference committee and get focused on this issue. Unfortunately, it is not happening until next week, if it even happens then.

In addition, the lack of assistance for ranchers in the aftermath of this devastating storm as a result of the shutdown is hurting farmers and agricultural industries, which is a key piece of North Dakota's economy.

Here are some additional examples of where the shutdown is hurting our farmers. Frequently, because farmers who use FSA loans have a joint obligation with FSA, when they receive their checks after they sell their products, the checks are frequently made out to both the Farm Service Agency and the farmer. Consequently, the farmer cannot cash the check unless he can get an endorsement from the Farm Service Agency. Guess what. They go, knock on the door, and no one is there to cosign their check. So that money in their hand that they need to make the investments for next year, that they need to pay the person who maybe supplies the feed, that they need to pay the fuel bill—that money is not available to them, even though they have earned it and they have sold their products. So the government shutdown prevents FSA from cashing these checks and from signing these checks. This is money the farmers have earned and they deserve, and denying them their income is outrageous.

What is worse, farmers and ranchers enrolled in the loan programs are new and beginning farmers, farmers who are just starting. It is a great thing that is happening in the Dakotas and all across farm country as we look at the increasing commodity prices and we look at a farm program that for the last 5 years has been stable and provided risk management. As a result, our farmers are getting younger and younger. The people who are going to feed the world and continue to develop

our rural areas are younger and younger. They cannot withstand cashflow problems. They cannot withstand this loss.

Another impact of the shutdown: Agricultural reports from the National Agriculture Statistics Service aren't available to farmers. These reports are crucial resources that farmers need to make decisions such as how to price crops, which commodities to grow, and when to sell those commodities, and the reports enable farmers to track cattle auction prices. Not only has NASS stopped putting out new reports about demand and supply, exports, and prices, but all Web sites with past information have been taken down because of the government shutdown.

Farmers aren't receiving assistance from farm programs. The Department of Agriculture's local farm services offices have been shut down because of the shutdown and, as a result, farmers can't apply for new loans, sign up acreages for farm programs, or receive government checks for the programs they are already enrolled in. Devastating to so many of our people living on fixed incomes in North Dakota, who have engaged in and basically put their land into the conservation reserve program, is conservation reserve checks are not being issued. That has a huge impact, particularly on those ranchers and those landowners who use CRP payments to supplement their Social Security.

The list goes on and on. As time continues, this list will only get longer and longer.

I understand the strategy, perhaps, in the House is to—whatever is the headline of the day, whatever becomes the issue of the day, we will simply write a little mini CR to take care of that, and say, see, we are dealing with that issue. But we know it is only a slice. It doesn't take care of those small businesses that have applied for small business loans and maybe got this close to being able to realize their dream and now have it delayed. It doesn't deal with the critical functions of government in its entirety. Instead, it picks and chooses the winners and losers. Let me tell my colleagues, these ranchers who have experienced this loss are the losers under this system.

It is time for this Congress to begin to do the responsible thing, which is open government, fund all of government, and start telling the American people that their interests are paramount. Start telling farmers and ranchers in the Dakotas who have experienced this tremendous loss that we care about their loss, that these programs have to work for them, and we have to do everything we can to make sure America is working again.

I wish to close with one thought. In the great recession, one place where we have experienced a tremendous amount of opportunity and support has been in agriculture. Those States that had a good agricultural base had some of the lowest unemployment numbers in the

country. Sixteen million jobs depend on agriculture in this country, and all they ask for in return is a little bit of help, a little bit of a safety net for guaranteeing a food supply in this country. But we can't seem to even deliver that obligation. We can't seem to deliver that promise. We have to tell the American people that their interests are ahead of any petty or partisan interest in this body and in this Congress. We have to get the Congress back working for the American people, particularly for the hard-hit ranchers and farmers of southeastern North Dakota and West River, SD.

Thank you, Mr. President. I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. MARKEY). The Senator from New Jersey.

Mr. MENENDEZ. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent to speak for up to 15 minutes.

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

Mr. MENENDEZ. Here we are again at the same crossroads. We know the landmarks. We know the signs. We have been here before. We negotiated in good faith to avert the last shutdown, the last default threat. We opposed the sequester, but that wasn't enough. So here we are, once again, and here we will be again in a week, a month, 6 months, a year, being asked for more concessions to a minority of extreme Republicans who seem to have forgotten that we operate under the rule of law. They simply have chosen to ignore it.

The fact is we passed the Affordable Care Act. It went through the legislative process, was signed by the President, tested in the Supreme Court, but so what, they say. It does not count. Similar to the schoolyard bully, they want a do-over or they will take over your lunch money.

The rightwing Republican minority claims to love the Constitution, adheres to the strictest interpretation of its tenets but apparently is not interested in living by it or by the rule of law that this Nation stands for and lives by.

They say Democrats have failed to negotiate in good faith and voted against trying to reach a compromise. The fact is for 6 months Senate Republicans have stood in the way of budget negotiations—what they want, negotiations—by blocking requests for Budget Committee members to conference with the House of Representatives. They have objected over 20 times to those budget negotiations.

The Senate followed regular order and passed a budget resolution for fiscal year 2014 on March 23 of this year. Our budget resolution provides just over \$1 trillion by replacing the irresponsible sequestration cuts while following the spending limit imposed by the Budget Control Act. The House wants to keep sequestration cuts by funding the government at \$976 billion or about \$80 billion less than the Senate. The fact is we have already compromised with the House by agreeing

to a continuing resolution at a level of \$986 billion—much closer to their numbers than to ours. If you ask me, that is more than \$70 billion in compromising. But they simply will not take eyes for an answer.

What the past weeks have shown us is that this is not even about budget numbers. They just want to make a political point, and they are holding the country hostage in order to make it. They simply do not want either the Affordable Care Act or, for that fact, this President to succeed. But that train has left the station. The President is already turning the economy around from the massive deficits he inherited when he took office, and the Affordable Care Act is the law of the land.

Make no mistake, it is not a coincidence that we are here again doing the same thing much like “Groundhog Day.” Mark my words, we will be here again tomorrow and in the future if the Republican shutdown strategy continues.

We are being asked to capitulate yet again at the threat that Republicans will keep the government shut down, that they will force America to default on its obligations and risk a global consequence and America’s leadership role in the world.

It is a deliberate, if fatally flawed, Republican strategy. One might go so far as to call it a conspiracy—adopted to achieve through bullying what they cannot achieve at the ballot box.

We know it is a deliberate effort hatched many months ago. In fact, it goes back to 2010 when the House Republicans threatened to push the Nation into defaulting on its obligations and shut down the government unless we agreed to aggressive and deep structural cuts that met their political objectives in the midst of one of the deepest recessions in our history, a recession President Obama inherited when he took office.

Then, in November of 2010, the antitax, antigovernment, antispending, antiprogress side of the Republican Party exercised their newfound power and hamstrung their leadership into rejecting any kind of compromise, forcing the House Speaker and majority leader to reject any grand bargain proposed by the Democrats. They did it gleefully. It was part of their strategy to block any successful effort to actually govern. They chose instead to fuel the rightwing flames, burn down the house, and bring government to a halt until they achieved their objectives.

From December 2 to December 21, 2010, we enacted four separate continuing resolutions to keep the government open—four of them—to keep the government functioning until March 4. Let’s not forget that these appropriations actually cut the Congressional Budget Office’s projection of discretionary spending from 2013 through 2022 by \$400 billion. But that was not enough. They wanted more.

On March 2, 2011, as the new deadline approached, we passed another short-

term CR, taking us to March 18—just 16 days—that cut spending by yet another \$4 billion. Still not enough.

On March 16, the deadline approaching once again, we passed another continuing resolution, taking us to April 8, with another \$6 billion in spending cuts. Was it enough? Of course not.

On April 4, House Republicans applauded the Speaker’s announcement to begin preparations, for what, yes, a shutdown of the government. Clearly, nothing is enough.

On April 14, just before midnight, the Speaker agreed to the seventh short-term extension with more cuts that analysts said would amount to an additional \$350 million in that year alone.

All in all, we agreed to \$40 billion in total cuts, and we have cut even more since then, including the current Senate-passed clean funding bill that would reopen the government today if the House would just pass it.

They say we have not taken votes. We have taken a bunch of votes on what they have sent us. They have not taken one vote on the one resolution we have sent them.

It is a clear pattern, a clear strategy. They will not stop. They will not take eyes for an answer, and they clearly will not govern until they achieve their political and ideological goal to end government as we know it. That has been their plan all along.

In fact, last Sunday the New York Times reported that after the President was sworn in to his second term, a coalition of top conservative activists, including former Attorney General Ed Meese, along with the Koch brothers, devised a take-no-prisoners legislative strategy to derail health care by shutting down the Federal Government. Now we are being blackmailed again. As further proof of this take-no-prisoners strategy, Jonathan Chait of New York magazine recently reported on something called the Williamsburg Accord. Mr. Chait wrote:

In January, [this year], demoralized House Republicans retreated to Williamsburg, Virginia, to plot out their legislative strategy for President Obama’s second term. . . .

They called it the Williamsburg Accord. He said:

If you want to grasp why Republicans are careening toward a potential federal government shutdown, and possibly toward provoking a sovereign debt crisis after that, you need to understand that this is the inevitable product of a conscious party strategy. . . .

His article goes on to say:

The way to make sense of it is that Republicans have planned since January to force Obama to accede to large chunks of the Republican agenda, without Republicans having to offer any policy concessions of their own.

That is not negotiation. We saw the implementation of that strategy beginning early in the spring when we did exactly what Republicans wanted. We passed a budget in the Senate, and the House passed a budget, and we attempted to go to conference to work

out the difference between the two. Actually, we have attempted to do that more than 20 times now, and every single time Republicans have blocked action.

For 6 months they have refused to talk, they have refused to negotiate, they have refused to have a conversation. As we now know, this all was planned out from the beginning, going back to their January Williamsburg Accord.

They have intentionally driven us to the edge of the cliff to serve their own political interests at the expense of the Nation’s economy, the jobs of working families, and the retirement savings of our seniors.

Now the GOP’s solution to get us out of this Republican shutdown is the equivalent of Whac-A-Mole. It is their form of governing. Whatever issue pops up that they see a problem with as a result of their shutdown, they draft a bill to address a single issue. Last week it was national parks. This week it was death benefits for soldiers. What will it be next? Anyone who has ever been on the boardwalk and has played that arcade game of Whac-A-Mole knows you can never quite get ahead of those pesky moles that keep popping up. How long do they plan to govern in this way?

Bill Moyers recently wrote in an essay:

Despite what they say, Obamacare is only one of their targets. Before they will allow the government to reopen, they demand employers be enabled to deny birth control coverage to female employees; they demand Obama cave on the Keystone pipeline . . . they demand the watchdogs over corporate pollution be muzzled and the big bad regulators of Wall Street sent home. Their ransom list goes on and on. The debt ceiling is next. . . .

At least let’s name this for what it is: sabotage of the democratic process.

Kevin Drum of Mother Jones wrote:

How do you get across how insurrectionary this is? Raising the debt ceiling isn’t a concession from Republicans that deserves a corresponding concession from Democrats. It’s the financial equivalent of a new nuclear bomb.

Warren Buffett used equally stark terms when he said in Fortune magazine:

It ought to be banned—

Referring to defaulting on the Nation’s obligations—

It ought to be banned as a weapon. . . . It should be like nuclear bombs, basically too horrible to use.

Clearly, in the name of some misguided allegiance to an extreme ideology, a handful of ultraconservative extremists in the Republican Party are putting at risk the rule of law. They are putting at risk the full faith and credit of the United States, America’s influence—as well as our obligations—around the world, and our national security, embassy security, intelligence collection apparatus, and American diplomats, Foreign Service officers, and contractors serving in posts around the world.

This is not a game. Real people are already being hurt by these tactics. I find it pathetic that some Republicans are willing to risk the full faith and credit of this Nation and inflict unnecessary harm on hard-working families and put the very principles of this democracy on the line all just to show how ideologically pure they are.

It is one thing to come to Washington wanting to destroy your government. It is quite another to destroy our economy in the process.

If you want to negotiate, let's negotiate. Let's do it constructively, in good faith, and without threats. Let's try, as we have tried over 20 times, to get to that moment. Let's reopen the government, let's pay our bills, and then we will negotiate.

It is time to reject the schoolyard bully political strategy that Republicans hatched months ago, ratchet down the rhetoric, and do the hard work of solving problems together.

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

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. GRASSLEY. Mr. President, 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 Iowa is recognized.

Mr. GRASSLEY. Mr. President, I heard the previous speaker plead for a solution. I think we are all pleading for that. We are now in our 10th day of a government shutdown—quite frankly, one that did not have to happen.

To some extent, it seems that this administration—meaning President Obama's administration—is going to great efforts to inflict as much pain through this shutdown as possible.

Mr. President, the administration went to great lengths to try to keep World War II veterans from viewing the memorial dedicated to their service, the World War II Memorial. It is an open-air memorial. It likely took more effort and personnel to close and barricade the memorial than it does to keep it open. It is one of those memorials where 24/7/365 you can go there. There is no reason it could not have been the same way during this recent period.

The government could be open and fully operating today but for the majority and its unwillingness to engage in legitimate debate over proposals to amend ObamaCare or any other legitimate issue of dispute. With regard to ObamaCare, not to defund or delay it is something that is not right in a body that is a deliberative body. You ought to consider all issues.

Instead of wasting a lot of time being in quorum calls or days of not voting, there could be legitimate discussions of pieces of legislation, and in the process maybe reach some sort of conclusion through what we call "regular order."

The House has passed and the Senate has defeated three different continuing

resolutions. Each one of those would have kept the government open and prevented a shutdown. That looks like that is something that was debated here and decided here. But it was decided in a manner that was not debatable, a motion to table the House amendments. These three offers from the House of Representatives were rejected by the Senate majority. We are in this position because the Senate majority refused to give the American people relief from the individual mandate and treat President Obama and his political appointees the same as all other Americans when it comes to Federal employees and officials being covered by health insurance.

In addition to negotiating an end to the government shutdown, Congress now needs to deal with the approaching debt limit. This will be the sixth debt limit increase in President Obama's 5 years in office. During President Obama's term in office thus far, the United States has added \$6 trillion to our national debt.

We had 4 consecutive years with annual deficits above \$1 trillion. Federal debt held by the public is now 73 percent of our gross domestic product. The historical average has been about 40 percent of GDP. This unsustainable debt path is threatening our economic growth and our stability.

This administration is quick to point out that the deficits have fallen faster than at any point since World War II. They fail to mention, however, that the deficit remains over \$600 billion this very year from highs near \$1.4 trillion. Remember to compare the \$600 billion for this year with the largest annual deficit under President Bush of \$458 billion.

Much of the recently improved deficit picture is also due to the spending cuts imposed by the Budget Control Act of August 2, 2011, that was enacted as part of the last debt ceiling increase. There is no better time to negotiate policies to address our fiscal problems than when debating debt ceilings.

But the President and the Secretary of the Treasury maintain that they will not negotiate on the debt limit. There happen to be families all over this country which, because of the slow economy and unemployment, are being forced to make tough decisions to make ends meet.

A lot of those families are looking at their budgets, looking right now trying to determine which expenses can be cut. Maybe they will try to reduce their cell phone bill or perhaps they will cancel a newspaper or a magazine subscription or perhaps eat at home instead of eating at restaurants.

The point is, when families face tight budgets and increasing debt, they look for ways to cut spending and get their fiscal house in order. That is the prudent thing to do. When bills come due, families make tough decisions on where to trim the budget. That is a family example of the Federal Government's legitimacy for looking at our spending.

At the very same time we are trying to increase the debt limit, we need to consider possibilities and make compromises to get our budget deficit down. Why can't the Federal Government then do the same? Why can't we use this opportunity to put our Nation on a sound fiscal course? Why can't we work right now to enact policies that will hopefully then negate the need to take on more debt.

This seems to be a reasonable proposition, to do this when you are talking about increasing the federal debt. Treasury Secretary Lew and his boss, President Obama, have repeated the talking points that negotiating deficit reduction policies on a debt ceiling increase is unprecedented. They claim that now is not the time to negotiate our budget and fiscal problems.

The President stated last month:

You have never seen in the history of the United States the debt ceiling or the threat of not raising the debt being used to extort a President or a governing party and trying to force issues that have nothing to do with the budget and nothing to do with the debt.

The President just does not understand history or even recent history when he makes such a statement. President Obama and Secretary Lew can make this claim as much as they want, but it does not make sense. It is not true. The Washington Post fact checker gave this exact quote from President Obama four Pinocchio's, which rates the statement as a "whopper."

The Post indicated that since 1953, Congress at times has used the debt limit as a way to force concessions by the executive branch on spending. It also states that the Congress has used the debt limit on many occasions to force changes in unrelated laws.

At least four major pieces of deficit reduction policies were enacted as part of a debt limit increase: Gramm-Rudman, 1985; the Budget Enforcement Act, 1990; the Balanced Budget Act, 1997; the Budget Control Act, 2011. So the facts are very clear. The debt limit has been used in the past as a means to enact different deficit reduction policies and other reforms. Surely the President knew these facts when he made that statement that the Washington Post fact checker rated as a "whopper" with 4 Pinocchio's.

According to the Congressional Research Service, since 1978, Congress has voted to raise the debt ceiling 53 times: 27 of those times or 51 percent of the time the debt limit increase was tied to reforms. I questioned Secretary Lew on this point this morning during our Finance Committee hearing. Unfortunately, I got the same tired talking points that have been proven time and again to be wrong.

It is difficult to understand how an administration can expect us to take them seriously on the offer of future negotiations when they misrepresent such simple facts. The President and Congress must come to the table and negotiate policies to get our fiscal

house in order. Does that put everything on the shoulders of the President of the United States? Absolutely not. It is just a fact that in this town, with our form of government, for over 225 years Presidential leadership is a very important part of the legislative process.

We have taken steps to address discretionary spending. We did that in 2011 with the Budget Control Act. Now it is time to tackle entitlements. Without reform, entitlement spending will continue to consume our budget. They will begin to squeeze out spending on discretionary spending, such as defense, education, and infrastructure. According to the CBO, spending on entitlements will double as a percentage of GDP from the historic average of 6.9 percent to 14.2 percent by 2038.

What does this mean for our economy? It means we will need to borrow more and more to fulfill our obligations. That will crowd out money that would otherwise be loaned in the private sector. This will lead to slower growth, less prosperity. It means that future generations may be less well-off than previous generations. The longer we kick the entitlement can down the road, the bigger the fiscal problems become and the harder the solutions will be.

It is time to make tough decisions and once and for all strengthen and secure these programs for future generations. These reforms will not take place without presidential leadership. The President must now demonstrate courage and the political will to put our Nation on a sound fiscal course.

That is not just the President's responsibility. That is a shared legislative responsibility between that end of Pennsylvania Avenue and this end. But it requires leadership that will bring people together. It requires compromise. It requires concession. Most of all, we need to get back to basics. We have to be sitting at a table across from each other negotiating. We will not be able to address those looming fiscal problems if President Obama is refusing even to sit across the table from Members of Congress, both Republicans and Democrats.

So I hope he will reconsider his "no negotiation" strategy so that we can reopen the government, deal with the debt ceiling and begin to address our unsustainable long-term fiscal challenges.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Delaware.

Mr. COONS. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the time until 7 p.m. be equally divided between the two leaders or their designees, with Senators on the majority side limited to 10 minutes each.

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

Mr. COONS. Mr. President, I have heard a number of speeches from my colleagues on the floor today, both while presiding and in the last few mo-

ments, that call on President Obama for Presidential leadership to help us reopen the government, address our serious long-term fiscal issues, and move us forward.

I want to note for the folks who might be watching that the President is at this very moment sitting with the leadership of the Republican caucus in the House of Representatives. Tomorrow morning, I believe, he has invited the Republican Members of this body to the White House for conversation.

I think we agree. One of the core challenges we face as this Federal shutdown goes into, I believe, its 10th day is discerning exactly why the Federal Government is still shut down. When initially taken over the cliff into the shutdown, it was to prevent the implementation of the Affordable Care Act. That is what a number of Senators said on this floor was their purpose. Now, many days and many unintended and unexpected harmful consequences later, we are told what this was really all about was to force the President to negotiate.

I serve on the Budget Committee. We passed, more than 200 days ago, more than 6 months ago, a budget on this floor, and we have tried to go to conference on that budget now 21 times.

Yet each time it was blocked, objected to by a small number of Senators from the other party.

Frankly, my expectation, my hope is that we will return to a rational rule-following process here, reopen the government, not default on our national debt, and begin those serious negotiations, those Budget Committee negotiations that are long overdue to deal with the very real challenges that are facing our country.

I wanted to speak today about one of the consequences of shutting down our Federal Government. We see new ones every day, and we hear about them on the Senate floor. As the days drag on, we hear more and more about the impacts of the shutdown, sometimes with surprise, sometimes with regret, sometimes with outrage.

There is a lot on the line, and we have heard a lot about what the shutdown means for the various functions of the executive branch and of the legislative branch. I have heard colleagues come and speak about the Nuclear Regulatory Commission, about the FDA, about its impact on higher education, its impact on families, and its impact on small businesses. I have heard many folks come to this floor and comment on how the executive branch and its functions that affect communities and families all over this country are affected by the shutdown.

We have heard from our constituents who are trying to reach Senators and are trying to seek our help with a variety of Federal services. They are frustrated that the legislative branch is largely shut down, but there is another branch to our three-branch coordinate government. Absent from this debate and discussion is how the shutdown is

affecting the judicial branch of our government.

When the Federal Government shut down 10 years ago, the Federal court system was initially seemingly largely unaffected because they had enough funds in reserve to remain open for 10 business days—a period that will come to an end early next week.

On Tuesday the Federal judiciary of the United States will run out of the reserve funds it has been using to stay open. The big question is, What happens then?

The chief judge of the bankruptcy court for the District of Delaware, my home State, told me:

We are really in an uncertain situation, particularly when it comes to employees. I am fearful for them and how they are going to be able to pay for rent and mortgages, and provide food and day-care for their families.

This is uncharted territory for our Federal judiciary. When the money runs out, Federal, circuit, and district courts will each be on their own, much like each Senator who has to choose which of his employees or her employees are essential, deemed vital, and need to stay, and which should be furloughed and stay home, uncertain whether they will be paid. Each district court and circuit court will figure out on its own how to keep the lights and which employees will keep working without a salary.

As the chair of the Senate Judiciary Subcommittee on Bankruptcy and the Courts, I have heard from a number of Federal judges this week who are frustrated by the amount of time they are spending trying to figure out what the shutdown means for their courts and their employees rather than doing the job for which they were confirmed, which is to judge cases.

This is an enormous distraction, a profound waste of time. This is not advancing our core objective, which should be growing our economy, strengthening our country, confronting the fiscal challenges in front of us, and working together to achieve some principled compromises in the Congress of the United States. In my view, Federal judges should be deciding cases, not deciding how to keep their courthouses running during this Federal Government shutdown. This needs to end. It could end literally today in a matter of minutes if Speaker BOEHNER would bring to the floor and allow a vote on a bill sent over from this Senate more than 10 days ago that would allow the Federal Government to reopen.

The judicial branch is not another Federal agency. It is not a program that can be suspended or a benefit that can be delayed. It is a branch. The Federal court system was created in our Constitution as the third pillar of our democracy. It is an independent branch of government whose fundamental mission is being undermined by folks, some of whom claim to love and to rigidly interpret the Constitution. Yet the consequences for our constitutional order of this senseless shutdown, I am

afraid, will soon become clear in the days ahead.

The subcommittee has heard from a number of Federal judges and clerks this week. I must warn you there are a lot of unanswered questions there. The path forward is murky. The central question in the courts—as it was here in Congress and in the executive branch—is who is considered “essential.” Is it the people directly involved in the resolution of cases or are the staff who support that process also expected to work without pay?

Here is the type of question our judiciary was dealing with today instead of resolving disputes or working on long-term cost-saving measures. Evidence in our Federal courts these days is typically presented electronically to jurors rather than handing out photocopies, which is great as long as the technology is working in the courtroom. Case files are processed electronically these days as well. But what if there is a problem? What if the technology doesn't work and a trial is disrupted? At what point does a technological glitch become a legitimate due process issue? If the courtroom technology can't get an upgrade to fix a bug, will it result in a costly mistrial? The Constitution and the Sixth Amendment guarantee criminal defendants a right to a speedy trial. What happens when our courts can't live up to that Sixth Amendment guarantee because of this ongoing Federal shutdown?

The problem is equally severe in civil and bankruptcy matters. With the DOJ's Office of the U.S. Trustee in shutdown status, the number of trustee attorneys in Delaware has been cut from seven to two. This can dramatically slow the bankruptcy process and leave real jobs and real lives hanging in the balance as cases are unresolved and as resolutions don't move forward.

This raises another fundamental question. At what point in this ongoing senseless shutdown does our civil justice system fail to live up to America's promise as a free market economy grounded in the rule of law?

When an investor anywhere in the world looks to make a bet on a new company, a new idea, that investor will obtain certain rights in exchange. Those rights may include a share of equity or a priority right in the event of liquidation. What gives those rights meaning is ultimately a highly functioning, impartial, and reliable court system. That historically has been one of our great advantages competitively in the world economy. Our courts, even while plagued by persistent vacancies, lack of new authorized judgeships, and the sequester, continue to perform this vital function. Without these courts, these rights mean nothing. Without the reliable enforcement of these rights, there is no more new investment, no more new job creation, and no more new ideas successfully brought to market. We are not the only country in the world competing for investment capital and for ideas. When we under-

mine our civil courts, we are being hostile to those very investors who could help get our economy back on track.

The Federal shutdown is already slowing the resolution of civil cases involving the Federal Government. Clerks at district courts around the country have confirmed to my subcommittee that the Department of Justice is requesting continuances broadly and across-the-board and trying to juggle the demands of their caseloads with the constraints of this reckless shutdown. Think about it. Social Security appeals, civil forfeiture cases, business disputes, consumer protection cases, Medicare fraud cases, incidents of employment discrimination—they are all being pushed to the background. This shutdown is bringing new meaning to Dr. King's famous words: “Justice too long delayed is justice denied.”

Only this morning I heard from the head of Delaware's district court, chief judge Gregory Sleet. He said, in essence—no insult intended, but his observation was that Congress is letting our country down. The subcommittee also spoke with a district court clerk yesterday who said—and I thought this was particularly striking—he was glad he was nearing retirement so he could escape the dysfunction of the Federal Government and our ongoing, seemingly routine manufactured crises.

This shutdown is exacerbating what is a more profound problem—a disregard for the upkeep of our Federal judiciary. More than 90 Federal judgeships are vacant. There are 39 vacancies that are deemed “judicial emergencies.” We need to do more to support and sustain the staffing, quality, and future investment that is required to make our Federal courts work as well as they possibly can.

I wish to make a point or two in conclusion. First, one of the essential questions every district court and circuit court will face is which of its employees are essential. After all of the cuts of the sequester and all of the burdens and challenges facing our Federal Government, aren't all the employees of our Federal judicial system, this separate branch, essential? The chief judge for the Third Judicial Circuit of the United States believes so, and I agree with him. This morning he announced that nearly “all functions, with few limited exceptions, are essential . . .” I join the chief judge of the Third Judicial Circuit and urge other circuits to follow suit and to recognize that this independent third branch of our constitutional order is essential.

Last, this shutdown has dragged morale in our courts and our court system to a new low. We in Congress are blessed with a record number of attorneys who serve in Congress. It is my hope that this body recognizes the unique value of our Federal court system. Our democracy cannot afford to furlough justice. We cannot shut the doors to our courthouses. It is my hope that Speaker BOEHNER, following the conversation unfolding at the White

House, will come back and put to the vote an action that will allow the courts and this country to get back to work.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Oklahoma.

Mr. COBURN. I understand that the order of the day is that time is divided equally until 7 o'clock, with the majority setting a limitation of 10 minutes but no limitation on the minority?

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator is correct.

Mr. COBURN. I rise to speak about the issue in front of us. I want to spend a few minutes putting things in context. I won't repeat things I have said routinely on the floor, but I think it is important for the American people to understand where we are in our country.

Using generally accepted accounting principles—these aren't my numbers—we have almost \$126 trillion in unfunded liabilities and we have \$17 trillion worth of debt. We have a lot of obligations in front of us. If we add up every asset in the United States—all the bank accounts, all the lands, all the possessions, everything we own, plus what we own outside of the United States—it comes to \$94 trillion. In essence, we are almost \$50 trillion in the hole. That is called a negative net worth.

I appreciate the comments of my colleague from Delaware. I have the greatest admiration for him. I am not one of those who think we should be in shutdown. I also am not one of those who think we should just, without any solution to our problem, raise the debt limit.

I would also note that we don't have to have a budget right now in the Senate because we agreed to the Budget Control Act, which sets the discretionary spending levels for the next 10 years in this country. They are set by law. What is important is that appropriations bills come through the committees—the House first and the Senate second—so that we can address the issues. We didn't do that in the Senate. They did about half of them in the House. We wouldn't have a continuing resolution—which, by the way, I think all of us agree is very difficult for our Federal employees to operate under.

But I wanted to make a couple of points. One is that in July of 2011, after 7 years of oversight, I put out \$9 trillion of what I think are commonsense eliminations and changes we could make that today would put us at a \$200 billion surplus instead of a \$750 billion deficit. Those savings were \$3 trillion total in discretionary spending, \$1 trillion in defense spending, \$2.7 trillion in terms of modernization of our health entitlement programs, and \$1 trillion from the Tax Code. We actually have earmarks in the Tax Code for those who are well-heeled and well-connected—a benefit—and the average American gets nothing. There are interest payment savings of \$1.3 trillion

and a 75-year solvency for the Social Security. That was put out 2½ years ago. Very little of it has been used. As a matter of fact, most people haven't read it. It was put out in a binder. We didn't print many binders because I am so tight, I don't want to print that many binders, but this is what it looks like. It is online. People may read it and see if it makes common sense. Most people won't.

I am going to spend some time outlining some of the things that came from that and some of the excesses of the Federal Government.

Most Americans know we are not efficient. They understand that we are not doing a good job spending their money, but they have no idea how bad it really is. I have actually spent the last 9 years in oversight of almost every segment of the Federal Government. None of us can be proud of the way we spend the money. Most of it is very well intentioned, honorably intentioned, with minimal oversight, minimal control, with over \$150 billion of fraud every year, and I am talking pure fraud, and with \$250 billion of real duplication—programs that do exactly the same thing, run by different agencies, with no consideration to streamline those. None of those things have been considered.

We won't even do tax reform to get rid of unemployment for millionaires. What people don't realize is we paid \$60 million out over the last 2 years to people who were making \$1 million a year. We are paying them unemployment. They hardly need the unemployment check. Yet we won't even regulate those kinds of things.

I think we have failed to do our job, and that is a Republican and Democratic thing. That is us. That is not a partisan statement.

The last time the President signed an individual spending bill into law—an individual appropriations bill—was 4 years ago. Four years ago was the last time he signed an independent appropriations bill into law. That tells you Congress hasn't done its job. We haven't passed them.

According to studies, if you poll the American people in terms of the sequester, less than one in four felt any impact at all from the sequester. And I think the sequester is a terrible way to determine spending. I voted against the Budget Control Act for that very reason, because we are not responsible enough to do the management and the oversight. But most Americans see no impact from it, and that is because in what we do there is so much waste and mismanagement. There is so much duplication, there is so much error that we could easily take that out and most people wouldn't notice it. They haven't noticed it.

Some of our Federal employees have noticed it, but the average American, 76 percent of them have never felt any impact from it whatsoever. They do not even know it happened. There has been no impact on their daily life. In-

creasing the debt limit and passing another CR isn't going to do a thing to eliminate government waste, fraud, or duplication.

It is time we kind of reassess where we are. One of the reasons I am against a debt limit increase is because it takes the pressure off Members of Congress to make the hard choices. If we raise the debt limit, that means we don't have to make the hard choices and we will run a deficit again and again. Toward the end of this decade, just 7 years from now, the deficits start climbing well above \$1 trillion again—\$1 trillion a year. Our deficit is growing twice as fast as our economy is—our debt is. It is growing twice as fast as our economy is. So we are going down in a hole.

We ought to be about—Democrats and Republicans—holding hands and saying let's stop this nonsense. Let's put some brakes on ourselves. Let's put in some limitations so we don't continue to fall prey to ducking the very difficult decisions facing this country. Households do that, businesses do it all the time. They assess where they are, they assess how deep the hole is, because nobody gives them the ability to say: You don't have to make those hard choices, we will give you more borrowing power. What they do is make those hard choices. We refuse to do so.

Another example. We just finished year end and there is this syndrome in Washington called "use it or lose it."

Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent to have printed in the RECORD an article from the Washington Post with the lead-in "As Congress fights over the budget, agencies go on their 'use it or lose it' shopping sprees."

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

[From the Washington Post, Sept. 28, 2013]
AS CONGRESS FIGHTS OVER THE BUDGET, AGENCIES GO ON THEIR "USE IT OR LOSE IT" SHOPPING SPREES

(By David A. Fahrenthold)

This past week, the Department of Veterans Affairs bought \$562,000 worth of artwork.

In a single day, the Agriculture Department spent \$144,000 on toner cartridges.

And, in a single purchase, the Coast Guard spent \$178,000 on "Cubicle Furniture Rehab."

This string of big-ticket purchases was an unmistakable sign: It was "use it or lose it" season again in Washington.

All week, while Congress fought over next year's budget, federal workers were immersed in a separate frantic drama. They were trying to spend the rest of this year's budget before it is too late.

The reason for their haste is a system set up by Congress that, in many cases, requires agencies to spend all their allotted funds by Sept. 30.

If they don't, the money becomes worthless to them on Oct. 1. And—even worse—if they fail to spend the money now, Congress could dock their funding in future years. The incentive, as always, is to spend.

So they spent. It was the return of one of Washington's oldest bad habits: a blitz of expensive decisions, made by agencies with little incentive to save.

Private contractors—worried that sequestration would result in a smaller spending

rush this year—brought in food to keep salespeople at their desks. Federal workers quizzed harried colleagues in the hallways, asking if they had spent it all yet.

"The way we budget [money] sets it up," said Sen. Tom Coburn (R-Okla.). "Because instead of being praised for not spending all your money, you get cut for not spending all your money. And so we've got a perverse incentive in there." But, Coburn said, "nobody's talking about it but me and you."

Coburn said he had meant to mention it in his floor speech Wednesday. Then, when he got to the podium, he forgot.

"Use it or lose it" season is not marked on any official government calendars. But in Washington, it is as real as Christmas. And as lucrative.

And—it appears—about as permanent. "We cannot expect our employees to believe that cost reduction efforts are serious if they see evidence of opportunistic spending in the last days of the Fiscal Year," President Lyndon B. Johnson wrote to underlings in May 1965. Even then, Johnson said an end-of-year binge was "an ancient practice—but that does not justify it or excuse it."

Today, government spending on contracts still spikes at the end of the fiscal year on Sept. 30.

In 2012, for instance, the government spent \$45 billion on contracts in the last week of September, according to calculations by the fiscal-conservative group Public Notice. That was more than any other week—9 percent of the year's contract spending money, spent in 2 percent of the year.

Much of it is spent smartly, on projects that had already gone through an extensive review.

But not all of it.

In 2010, for instance, the Internal Revenue Service had millions left over in an account to hire new personnel. The money would expire at year's end. Its solution was not a smart one.

The IRS spent the money on a lavish conference. Which included a "Star Trek" parody video starring IRS managers. Which was filmed on a "Star Trek" set that the IRS paid to build. (Sample dialogue: "We've received a distress call from the planet NoTax.")

"That is a major problem," acting IRS commissioner Daniel I. Werfel told Congress in June, explaining the role of "use it or lose it" in that debacle.

Other end-of-year mistakes are less spectacular—but they still cause problems. One recent study, for instance, found that information technology contracts signed at year's end often produced noticeably worse results than those signed in calmer times.

And late-September waste also weighs on its witnesses, federal workers. After President Obama set up an online suggestion box for federal workers, many asked to get rid of the "use it or lose it" system. They suggested "rolling over" money for use in the next year. And they listed dumb things they had seen bought: three years' worth of staples. Portable generators that never got used. One said the National Guard bought so much ammunition that firing it all became a chore.

"When you get BORED from shooting MACHINE GUNS, there is a problem," an anonymous employee wrote.

"People want to do the right thing," said Dean Sinclair, a former State Department employee who is crusading to change the system. "It's not that the federal workforce is filled with bad people. The system sort of forces them to make bad decisions."

He suggests giving bonuses to managers who return leftover money to the Treasury at year's end. "It takes time and effort to waste money," Sinclair said. "Remember that."

Obama, like presidents before him, has exhorted agencies to plan better and avoid rushed decisions at year's end. But the White House says Congress is making that job harder.

"Twenty-five percent of my business, right, will happen in this month. Twenty-five percent of my year," said Art Richer, the president of ImmixGroup, a contractor in Tysons Corner that helps software and computing companies seeking government business.

September in Washington used to be a time for selling face to face. Contractors visited the Pentagon. Small-town mayors queued up in the hallways at the Commerce Department, waiting to make a late-night pitch for grants.

But those buildings are off-limits now. So you sell from your desk. You sell with your voice. You sell with empathy, for the poor harried bureaucrat on the other end of the line. "Answer the phone smiling," Richer tells his people.

Of course, the feds were stressed. "We see them in the hallway, and you go, 'How much money are we going to lose?'" one Army officer said this past week. That officer was involved in setting budgets for future years, and the meaning was clear: How much money are you not going to spend? Whatever that number was, it would be taken out of budgets for fiscal 2015, too.

This is not normal math. But this was not a normal time in Washington: You didn't save money to spend it later. You spent now, to spend later. "They know they're under the gun," the officer said, who spoke anonymously to talk about internal budgeting discussions.

On Monday, Immix began bringing its sales team three catered meals a day. If workers walked to Subway, they might lose a sale. On that day, Immix handled \$16 million in business. A normal Monday is about \$2 million.

Across the government, agencies were making big-ticket purchases—buying things with this year's money that could be used next year.

On Monday, VA paid \$27,000 for an order of photographs showing sunsets, mountain peaks and country roads. They would go into a new center serving homeless veterans in Los Angeles; a spokeswoman described the art as "motivational and calming, professionally designed to enhance clinical operations."

On Tuesday, the USDA bought \$127,000 worth of toner cartridges ("end of year," the order explained). VA spent another \$220,000 on artwork for its hospitals.

On Wednesday, the Coast Guard paid \$178,000 for cubicle furniture, replacing high-walled cubes with low-walled ones to improve the air flow in a large office area.

"Other higher-priority projects were not able to be executed, so they moved [money] to this lower-priority project" before the year's end, said Coast Guard spokesman Carlos Diaz. "The money was going to be spent anyway."

On Thursday, VA was buying art again. It spent \$216,000 on artwork for a facility in Florida. In all, preliminary data showed that the agency made at least 18 percent of all its art purchases for the year in this one week. One-sixth of the buying in one-52nd of the year.

On Friday, the end was in sight.

"I feel good. Four days, right?" said Corey Forshee, a contracting officer at Joint Base Andrews in Maryland. Forshee was part of a team at Andrews that had done its best to beat the September rush.

The commander, trying to avoid a last-week rush, set his own deadline of Sept. 20. The pizza came early. The chaplain's office

visited early ("use it or lose it" season is traditionally stressful enough to get the chaplain involved). The buying was nearly done.

Now, they had to wait for the last act of the last act: the "fall-out money."

This was cash that other parts of the Air Force had not been able to spend. It would be redistributed to this office at the last minute.

"We're waiting for money for that," Forshee said, going down a list of unfunded projects. A roof for the workout area. A bathroom renovation. "Just waiting for money," he repeated.

Across Washington, everybody had to wait. "It's going to come down to Monday," said Richer, at ImmixGroup. On Friday, he said his sales had been about equal to last year's, despite worries about sequestration.

On Monday, Richer's people will sell until midnight. Then they will keep selling. "Money rolls across the continent," the feds say. Cash not spent in Washington might be spent by federal offices in California in the three hours before it is midnight there.

When it is midnight in California—3 a.m. in Washington—they will keep on. There are federal offices in Hawaii, after all. And it will still be three hours until midnight there.

Mr. COBURN. Let me give the American people a little taste of what we spent in the last week.

In the last week, the State Department spent \$5 million on new glassware for all our embassies. Was that something we needed to do? No. Was it an absolute requirement that we couldn't operate our embassies without another \$5 million worth of glassware? No. The State Department had \$5 million, and if they didn't spend it, they would be accused of not needing all their money. So they spent \$5 million on something that was not absolutely necessary.

In the last week, VA spent more than \$560,000 on artwork. As a matter of fact, in the last 2 days. I mean, we are bankrupt. We are running three-quarters of a trillion dollar deficit and we are going to buy a half million dollars worth of artwork because if we don't spend it on something we won't get it next year? Where does that fit in with any common sense? Where does that fit with the integrity or the honor that will preserve the future of our country? It doesn't. We have to change that.

We have not done things that incentivize Federal employees not to spend it and we will give you part of it next year for your budget and the rest of it against the debt our kids will have.

The Coast Guard, in the last day, spent \$178,000 on cubicle furniture rehab. They signed a contract on the last day and sent the check out the door. It may be it needed to be rehabbed, but they made sure they got it in this year to consume the money.

The Agriculture Department, in 1 day, spent \$144,000 on toner cartridges. Think about it—\$144,000. These are all small amounts relative to Washington numbers, but the principle is exactly the same.

On the night before the government closed, the last day of the fiscal year, the Pentagon awarded 94 contracts

right before midnight. I can't get the information on what they were yet, but I will. I will find out if they were necessary, if it is something that we needed to have in light of our debt and our dysfunction.

They also spent \$5 billion on everything from robot submarines, Finnish hand grenades only hours before the closing of the fiscal year. So they spent the money, not saying it was a priority, other than it was a priority to spend all the money we have because we are afraid we might not get enough money next year.

The Defense Logistics Agency spent \$65 million for military helmets on the last day, \$24 million for traveling wave tubes to amplify radio signals.

How do we think the hundreds of thousands of people who are furloughed right now feel about us spending money that way when that could be paying them and they could be working?

We are sick. We need a wakeup call.

Let me cite a couple others from the Department of Defense just to show you how parochialism plays into this. Twelve brandnew—brandnew—airplanes, C-27J Spartans, were delivered right before the end of the year. Guess where they are. They are in mothballs in Arizona in the desert because we don't need them. But we spent \$567 million for something we didn't need. So what do we do? We store them in the desert because the humidity is so low. So we take them right off the manufacturing line and fly them right to storage. They are not needed.

We have the same problem on the C-27As in Afghanistan. We spent \$596 million for those. We finally canceled the contracts because the supplier couldn't supply the spare parts. And you know what the military is getting ready to do, rather than bringing them home or giving them to somebody else? They are getting ready to cut them into pieces in Afghanistan—\$½ billion worth of airplanes.

Where is common sense in this country? Why wouldn't we think about maybe selling them to somebody else and getting some of our value back? But we are thinking about cutting them up.

Then there is the M1A1 Abrams tank. We had testimony from Secretary of the Army John McHugh saying this is the most modern piece of equipment the military has. Its average age is less than 2½ years old. We don't need any more M1A1 Abrams tanks, but they are still being produced this year to the tune of \$3 billion so we can keep people employed in a factory making something we don't need.

Isn't that wonderful? Isn't that a great way to steal the future of your kids? But I am sure the politicians where they are made are very happy we are continuing to buy something we don't need because it helps the economy in their area.

Despite the sequester, the National Science Foundation is still funding

hundreds of products and studies that do not fit with common sense or a priority. Even if they fit with common sense, they do not fit the priority of where we find ourselves financially.

The Department of Agriculture grants that were announced in the last week before we shut down, before we went to the next fiscal year and don't have a continuing CR—let me read this and see if you think this is how we should be spending our money: 35 wine-tasting projects, wine trail smart phone apps. We are going to supply the money for these. The Federal Government is going to supply the money for these so you can have a good time when you go to whatever vineyard it is. We are going to take Federal taxpayer money.

Those are private businesses. Yet we are spending our grandchildren's money on that?

Four Christmas tree initiatives: Virginia Christmas trees, Michigan Christmas trees; training seminars on how you sell Christmas trees.

You know, Christmas trees are in pretty good demand around Christmas. I am not sure you are going to markedly increase the demand for Christmas trees by learning how to sell them better.

The USA pear road show to China; social media for apples, radio advertisements—paid for by the Federal Government—for blueberries from New Jersey, strawberries, organizing a maple weekend in the state of our Presiding Officer—Massachusetts.

We are spending our grandkids' money, money we are borrowing, to do things that are not a priority. They may be a priority to those folks who get the money, but in terms of our national priorities, they are not anywhere close.

Other examples of ongoing government waste and duplication not eliminated but instead funded by the CR: \$30 billion for 47 job training programs that aren't working. They are not working. The GAO says they are not working, we know they are not working, and all of them duplicate one another except for three. But we are continuing to spend \$30 billion a year on them.

The House has passed a skills act which consolidated all of them. We won't even take it up over here. We won't even look at it. It would save us about \$7 billion or \$8 billion a year. They read the GAO report, they acted on it, but we won't.

We have 20 Federal programs across 12 different Federal agencies and offices for the study of invasive species. I think we ought to study invasive species, but I don't think we need 12 different Federal agencies involved in it. And I don't think we need 20 programs on it.

I mentioned the unemployment for millionaires. That is in the CR. We didn't do anything to fix that.

There is \$30 million for 15 different financial literacy programs at 15 dif-

ferent agencies. We just created a new one at the Consumer Financial Protection Bureau. Rather than eliminate the ones that are not working, we are creating more of them.

There is \$947,000 in the NASA budget to talk about foods that can be eaten on Mars. We are 30 years away from going to Mars. Yet we are going to spend \$1 million of taxpayer money we don't have to think about foods we might eat 30 years from now on Mars? I don't think that is a priority for us right now.

There is \$3 billion on 209 science, technology, engineering, and math programs at 13 different agencies. Think about that. We all know we need to get it together when it comes to education in our technical and scientific areas. But why would we have this many—209—programs, with 209 different sets of administrators and 209 sets of reporting?

There is billions of dollars in bonuses and Federal payments to contractors who fail to pay their own taxes. We have tried to pass in here multiple times that if you are a contractor with the Federal Government and you are not paying your taxes, you are either going to lose your contract or that tax debt is going to be reduced from what we pay you. But we can't get that through. So people who aren't carrying their fair share are still reaping the benefits of contracting with the Federal Government even though they are tax cheats.

Here is one small one, but this one really gets me. It is bigger than you would think. We have an agency that spends \$66 million a year. It is the NTIS. I asked GAO to study them. They studied them. In their report this year, GAO explained there is an office in the Department of Commerce, which is this office, that sells reports to other agencies.

When we had GAO study this, we found 74 percent of the reports they sell to other agencies you can get from this one Web site for free. Their budget hasn't gone down, it has expanded. But the need for the agency is going away. So why are we continuing to spend \$66 million—which is what we directly spend and doesn't count what they collect from all the other agencies—for only 26 percent of the information that is not available other than at Google? It makes no sense. It is called the National Technical Information Service, and it was established in 1950, tasked with collecting and distributing certain reports.

GAO noticed this 10 years ago; they noticed it again now. Congress has done nothing. What GAO estimates is 621,917 of the 841,000 reports this agency puts out are available for free on the Internet. Go to Google and every American can find it for free. All the agencies that are paying can find it for free. But we haven't eliminated this agency.

I will stop with that, and I will make a couple points.

It is wonderful that we have a difference of opinion in the Congress, but we can't have a difference of opinion about where this country is headed. We are bankrupt. People don't like to say that word. This is America; we couldn't be bankrupt. But from a balance sheet standpoint and from an income sheet standpoint, we are bankrupt.

So what are the American people to do about this? Are we to continue to spend money every year to the tune of \$500 billion to \$1 trillion and not make the tough choices or should we do something about it? Should there be a resolution to this addiction of spending money we don't have on things we don't need?

As a physician, for every person I have ever encountered who had an addiction, the first step in confronting that addiction is to recognize the reality of the addiction. Quite frankly, Members of Congress haven't done that. The American people have. They are figuring it out.

The reason I know we haven't recognized the addiction and we are not worried—we can say our debt can be such a percentage of GDP. We don't have to live within our means. We can handle it as long as we don't get above a certain percentage. That is the rationalization of an enabler in a family who allows somebody to continue to be addicted.

Every addiction needs a 12-step program, and the first step is recognizing that we are addicted. And we are. So one of the things the American people are starting to ask about us, given that we can't even pass a CR—and we are going to pass a debt limit increase and not make any of the hard choices. They won't be made this year. They won't be made next year. The only time we are going to make the hard choices is when the international financial community forces us to make those.

But what Americans are asking now, the confidence is so low, is who decides? Do we really represent their thoughts about spending, about priorities, about waste?

If we recognize that all this is there—these trillions and trillions of dollars over 10 years that could be changed without any marked impact on America, and we don't do anything about it—what they are asking is who is deciding? Who decides? Do I represent my constituents if I won't try to change these things?

The confidence level in us, as reflected in the polls, and when you talk to anybody, is they don't have any confidence in us because we won't admit to our addiction, come together, get on the wagon and solve the addiction.

A long time ago in this body I said there was a rumble out in America. It wasn't long after that the tea party came along. I know they are thought about with some disdain. They are not crazy. What they have done is lost confidence and they want something changed. But it is not just the tea party anymore. It doesn't matter your

political persuasion. They think we don't get it, that we are not willing to make the sacrifices of our own political careers to solve the problems. What we need to be doing, in my opinion—and my prescription for us is, American people, don't let us get out of the box by letting us raise again the shackles that are going to be increased by increasing the debt in this country. Because if we do—and we will—what will happen is we won't perform. We won't make the tough decisions. We won't make the sacrifices. There will be no sacrificial leadership on the part of Members of Congress. Their sacrifice will be, How do I get reelected, rather than I don't care if I lose; our country needs to be fixed, and we need to be about addressing that even if it costs me a political position.

When it is all said and done and America has blown through and we see the real results of our profligate spending and the hyperinflation and the marked decrease in the standard of living in this country, what they are going to remember about us is there was a challenge and we didn't rise to it. We didn't rise to the occasion. We saw short term and we forgot and ignored the long-term consequences of our actions.

My hope is that will change on both sides of the aisle; that we would truly embrace a long-term picture and recognize the tremendous difficulty. We have heard all this talk about how we have to raise the debt limit; otherwise, we are going to default. We are not going to default on our bonds, ever. It requires less than 7 percent of our total cashflow that comes into this country. We use that as a scare tactic.

I am not saying we should necessarily not increase the debt ceiling, but we sure shouldn't increase it until we have made a commitment that we are going to solve the problem, because we will be back here in 1½ years doing exactly the same thing with exactly the same excuses that say why we can't.

What America is wanting to hear from us is why we can. They are not wanting to hear about division. They are wanting to hear about unity. They are wanting to hear about what pulls our country together rather than tear it down. The best way to show them is that we are serious about solving this problem. I hope that is so.

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

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. FRANKEN). Without objection, it is so ordered.

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

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

Mr. BOOZMAN. Mr. President, this past weekend I was with a group of heroes from the "greatest generation." These men and women faced some of the biggest challenges our Nation has seen. They put aside their own needs to

make the country and the world a better place.

These World War II veterans from Arkansas were flown in on an Honor Flight to see their memorial. They didn't have much to say to me personally about the shutdown. We talked about it, but talked more about the branch of the service they were in, what they did during the war, and the various things that happened to them during that period—and, of course, about Razorback football. We didn't have to spend and take time to visit a great deal about the shutdown for me to know their thoughts. Their presence alone was enough of a reminder that we need to solve this issue.

As the shutdown drags on, it spills into the debt ceiling discussion. These are two major issues with very serious impacts if left unresolved.

To everyone outside of the Beltway, it seems both sides are digging their heels in deeper, both sides are ratcheting up the rhetoric, and nothing is getting done. The American people are tired of this. Dismissing the other side's offers without consideration and trading barbs do not help out one bit. No one is being asked to abandon their principles. What needs to happen, however, is both sides must respect the will of the American people.

We must find a way to do what the public demands—reopen the government and get our spending under control. The President and the Senate majority want to say that their health care law is an entirely separate issue from this debate. That is simply untrue. It is not the way Americans see it. One major reason the American people are rejecting it is because of its budget-busting pricetag. We have a budget that can't be strained any further. Our debt stands at almost \$17 trillion, and \$6 trillion of that has been added on President Obama's watch. You can't take on that much debt and pretend it is not a problem. Americans do not have the luxury of telling their credit card company to stop calling because they do not want to pay the debt that they racked up.

This mess could be avoided if we simply followed regular order here in Washington, but we have not done that in 10 years. What I mean by that is during my time in the Senate we have passed one individual appropriations bill prior to the end of the previous fiscal year. We didn't consider a single appropriations bill on the Senate floor last year. Let's return to regular order by passing an annual budget and the accompanying spending bills, not one large bill.

The good news is that many Members on both sides believe we simply need to get that done. But that doesn't get us out of our current mess. We have to get the government operating again, and we have to avoid a default.

Impassioned debates on major decisions like raising the debt ceiling in the past have resulted in positive policy changes. In fact, half of the 53

times Congress has agreed to raise the debt ceiling since 1978, they have attached conditions to it. The Gramm-Rudman act is a perfect example. We talked a lot about the need to cap spending in Washington. Gramm-Rudman actually did that, and it led to a balanced budget. Even the situation we are currently in with the Budget Control Act was born out of this type of constraint. Some in the Chamber still are not happy with that, but the Budget Control Act is the first time in a long time that we have managed to curb the growth in Washington spending.

Anyone who has ever bought a house or a car can tell you that it takes some time to reach a mutually beneficial agreement. There is lots of haggling involved. The owner says here is what it costs. The consumer makes an offer in return. This brings a counteroffer and so on. This continues until both parties reach an agreement where everyone is satisfied.

But the key to this process is that both parties have to engage in the discussion. Everybody needs to come to the table. It is simply not enough to say this is where I stand and I will not take any other options into consideration. I am fairly certain you will never buy a house with that approach.

The good news is it seems we are heading in a positive direction. I believe there is movement toward a consensus. At the very least, both sides seem to be coming out of their respective corners and discussing their options. We need everyone to come to the table, to develop a way forward that puts us on the path to fiscal responsibility. These discussions serve as a starting point for how to rein in reckless spending so we can eliminate the blank check, the philosophy that has become so pervasive in this town.

If we need inspiration to solve this problem, the men and the women I visited with at the World War II Memorial this past weekend are a perfect place to look. They have accurately been named the "greatest generation" in part for their willingness to take on enormous challenges because it was the right thing to do.

We have an enormous challenge in front of us now. Let's follow the inspiration of the "greatest generation." Let's put our country before ourselves and solve this problem.

I suggest the absence of a quorum. The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The assistant bill clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

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

CLOTURE MOTION

Mr. REID. Mr. President, with the Presiding Officer's permission, I ask the clerk to report the cloture motion I have filed.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The cloture motion having been presented

under rule XXII, the Chair directs the clerk to read the motion.

The legislative clerk read as follows:

CLOTURE MOTION

We, the undersigned Senators, in accordance with the provisions of rule XXII of the Standing Rules of the Senate, hereby move to bring to a close debate on the motion to proceed to S. 1569, a bill to ensure the complete and timely payment of the obligations of the United States Government until December 31, 2014.

Harry Reid, Max Baucus, Patty Murray, Charles E. Schumer, Richard J. Durbin, Barbara A. Mikulski, Sheldon Whitehouse, Mark Udall, Bill Nelson, Barbara Boxer, Jon Tester, Brian Schatz, Benjamin L. Cardin, Kirsten E. Gillibrand, Maria Cantwell, Tim Kaine, Elizabeth Warren.

Mr. REID. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the mandatory quorum required under rule XXII be waived.

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

MORNING BUSINESS

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

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

NAVY CELEBRATIONS

Mr. CARDIN. Mr. President, on October 13, 1775, Congress enacted legislation providing for the outfitting of America's first two warships, manned by crews of 80, to be sent out on a 3-month cruise. Their mission was to intercept transports carrying munitions and supplies to the British army in America. Navy missions have evolved significantly over the last 238 years; however, the essential role America's maritime forces play in defending our Nation and allowing prosperity to flourish is unchanged. The United States Navy has the finest men and women in uniform on, above, and below the high seas safeguarding America's interests at home and around the globe.

This Sunday we celebrate the U.S. Navy's 238th birthday. We remember the great sacrifices made by sailors who came before, we mourn those we lost along the way, we celebrate their successes and we applaud the new generation of sailors serving our great Nation today. The United States Navy is comprised of over 323,000 active duty sailors, over 109,000 on ready reserve, and a civilian force around 201,000. The United States Navy cannot exist without the commitment of its active duty, reserve and civilian forces, in addition to the support of Navy families. The sacrifices made by over 630,000 proud men and women serving the Navy provide the freedoms all Americans enjoy daily; freedoms paid for by those in uniform, many who are aboard the 102 ships deployed around the world as I

speak right now, serving on the front lines in defense of freedom.

There are no finer men and women in uniform anywhere in the world than those who serve the United States Navy. Today, the value of having a strong naval power cannot be underestimated; 70 percent of the Earth's surface is covered by water and 90 percent of international trade travels by the sea, which means our sailors need to be 100 percent on watch. No other branch of the military conducts missions on all fronts like the Navy does. The seas are America's lifeline; our Navy protects vital shipping lanes ensuring prosperity and free trade for our Nation and our friends abroad. The Navy is essential in protecting our Nation's cyber security at a time when, according to former Chief of Naval Operations Admiral Gary Roughead, 95 percent of digital information is traveling on cables at the bottom of the seas. Our national security is ever-dependent on our Nation's sea power. For each of these reasons and more, the United States Navy deserves our thanks and admiration.

I must also pay tribute as today marks the 168th anniversary of the United States Naval Academy. When Secretary of the Navy George Bancroft founded the Academy in Annapolis, MD, I think he could only dream that it would continue to inspire and help create the high caliber graduates it does today. I truly must commend those graduates and their brothers and sisters serving in arms. The incredible flexibility and can-do attitude of the Navy were instrumental to the withdrawal of military forces in Iraq and the drawdown of military forces in Afghanistan. From the Seabees to the Navy Seals, the entirety of the Department of the Navy is integral to securing our national defense around the world.

Artfully inscribed above the chapel doors at the Naval Academy are the Latin words "non sibi sed patriae." Though the Navy has no official motto, these words, translated as "not for self but country," encapsulate the sacrifice and dedication of our amazing Navy Men and Women serving across the globe today so that our society may be free. The real strength of our Navy is not the ships or weapons or technology at our disposal, but the highly trained, motivated, and professional sailors who make our Navy the envy of the world. For 238 years, the U.S. Navy has witnessed many changes in missions, in geopolitics, and in technology. But in all that time, the one thing that has not changed is the importance of quality people, for it is the sailors who make it all happen, and who make the real difference in a Navy's effectiveness. To all who serve: thank you for your continued vigilance. Let us remember our Navy sailors and Naval Academy midshipmen for their historic achievements in defense of our Nation and in defense of freedom, and wish them a happy birthday.

ADDITIONAL STATEMENTS

TRIBUTE TO MAJOR CHARLES H. CANNON

• Mr. CHAMBLISS. Mr. President, I wish to pay tribute to my constituent MAJ Charles H. Cannon for his exemplary dedication to duty and his service to the U.S. Army and to the United States of America. Major Cannon will depart from Active military duty in 2013 but will continue to serve in the National Guard in our great State of Georgia. He has served for the last 2 years as a congressional budget liaison for the Secretary of the Army.

A native of Moultrie, GA, Major Cannon left his family's 2,000-acre farm to become a cadet at the U.S. Military Academy at West Point in 1997. While there, Chas played for the Army football team and earned a bachelor's degree in systems engineering. He was commissioned as a field artillery officer in June of 2001, just 3 months before the horrific attacks on September 11 that would shape the rest of his active duty career.

Major Cannon's assignments have been diverse. While a lieutenant, he served in C Battery, 1-10 Field Artillery Battalion as a fire direction officer, platoon leader, and executive officer. His first deployment was with them during the ground invasion of Operation Iraqi Freedom. After promotion to captain, he served in 2-69 Armor Battalion as a staff officer during his second deployment to Diyala, Iraq. Eleven months later, as part of the surge, Chas returned to East Baghdad, Iraq for a 15-month deployment as the commander of A Battery, 1-10 Field Artillery Battalion.

After returning from his third deployment, Major Cannon earned a master of professional studies in legislative affairs from The George Washington University. He was then assigned as a congressional fellow in my office with a subsequent assignment as a legislative strategist in the office of the Chief of Legislative liaison and then as a budget liaison officer in the office of the Assistant Secretary of the Army for Financial Management and Comptroller, where he was tasked with managing the Army's wheeled and tracked vehicle portfolio.

Major Cannon's leadership throughout his career has positively impacted his soldiers, peers, and superiors. As a budget liaison officer he worked directly with the Senate and House Appropriations Committees to educate and inform Senators, Representatives, and staff about many diverse and important procurement initiatives of the U.S. Army.

On behalf of a grateful nation, I join my colleagues today in recognizing and commending MAJ Chas Cannon for over a decade of active service to his country. We wish Chas, his wife Beth, and their two little girls, Allie and Catherine, all the best as they continue their journey of service in the Georgia National Guard.●