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Senate

The Senate met at 10 a.m. and was called to order by the President pro tempore (Mr. LEAHY).

PRAYER

The Chaplain, Dr. Barry C. Black, offered the following prayer:

Let us pray.

Sovereign God, creator and sustainer of us all, You have been our dwelling place in all generations. Thank You for Your faithfulness, even when we are unfaithful.

Lead our lawmakers this day so they may work in a way that Your Name is honored. Lord, point out to them the road they should follow, as You give them the wisdom and courage to do their duty. Help them not to be dominated by what they have been, rather than by what they could become. May they never forget their accountability to You as servants and stewards of Your purposes.

We pray in Your great Name. Amen.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The President pro tempore led the Pledge of Allegiance, as follows:

I pledge allegiance to the Flag of the United States of America, and to the Republic for which it stands, one nation under God, indivisible, with liberty and justice for all.

RECOGNITION OF THE MAJORITY LEADER

The PRESIDENT pro tempore. The majority leader is recognized.

DEFAULT PREVENTION ACT OF 2013—MOTION TO PROCEED

Mr. REID. I move to proceed to Calendar No. 211, S. 1569, the debt limit bill.

The PRESIDENT pro tempore. The clerk will report the motion.

The bill clerk read as follows:

Motion to proceed to Calendar No. 211, S. 1569, a bill to ensure the complete and timely

payment of the obligations of the United States Government until December 31, 2014.

SCHEDULE

Mr. REID. Mr. President, the Senate will recess from 12:30 to 2:15 to allow for weekly caucus meetings.

There are productive negotiations going on with the Republican leader. I am confident we will be able to reach a compromise agreement this week in time to avert a catastrophic default on the Nation's bills. The Republican leader and I will keep our Members informed as to how negotiations are going.

I express my appreciation to everyone for their patience.

RESERVATION OF LEADERSHIP TIME

The PRESIDENT pro tempore. Under the previous order, the leadership time is reserved. Under the previous order, Senators are permitted to speak for up to 10 minutes each.

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

The PRESIDENT pro tempore. The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

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

Mr. LEAHY. Mr. President, the distinguished Presiding Officer is, like myself, a New Englander and knows what fall is like in our part of the country. Late last month, I was fortunate to enjoy the most lovely settings I think can be found anywhere at any time, as Vermont's hillsides are painted orange, yellow, and red by peak fall colors set against powder blue skies. Vermonters love these sublime few weeks. We happily welcome visitors around the United States. Actually, we welcome visitors from around the world. It is interesting to walk down the streets in some of our cities and hear several different languages being

spoken as visitors come here. They share the experience, and they hike and bike and fish, and they hunt in our extensive preserved natural areas.

But these best of times have become the worst of times, as Vermonters and visitors alike have found closed signs on their favorite natural areas due to the tea party shutdown of the Federal Government. The window is quickly closing in Vermont for the Fish and Wildlife biologists and national forest rangers who have work that must be done before the first snow falls. We know how Washington can close down for an inch or two of snow. In Vermont, we are talking about 10, 15, or 20 inches of snow. These Fish and Wildlife biologists and national forest rangers' schedules are dictated by the changing seasons and the biological clocks of nature. The House Republican leadership has been no more able to undo the law of the land—which is the Affordable Care Act—than they would be able to slow or stop Vermont's changing seasons.

Insisting on tying a repeal or a defunding of the Affordable Care Act to reopening the government is doing real and lasting damage to Vermont's economy and natural resources as fall quickly becomes winter.

The 26,000-acre Nulhegan national wildlife refuge in Vermont's Northeast Kingdom is among the best upland bird hunting areas in New England. There is plenty of room for everyone, but just days after the opening of grouse season, the refuge has been forced to hang up a closed sign and lock its gates. This has dealt a blow to the tourism economy of the small towns around the refuge that depend on these annual visitors and hunters.

The Missisquoi National Wildlife Refuge on the shores of Lake Champlain is, without a doubt, the best and most extensive freshwater duck habitat in New England. Huge meadows of wild rice attract thousands of migrating waterfowl and legions of bird watchers

• This "bullet" symbol identifies statements or insertions which are not spoken by a Member of the Senate on the floor.



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and hunters. Even with the fall migrations in full swing, the Missisquoi National Wildlife Refuge has hung up a closed sign and locked its gates for the start of the fall hunting season.

Hikers looking for the best panoramic views of Vermont's fall colors flock to the Appalachian Trail and Vermont's Long Trail which run together up the spine of the Green Mountains, through the 400,000-acre Green Mountain National Forest. Through-hikers, weekenders, and day trippers spread out to enjoy hundreds of miles of trails. But only a skeleton crew of forest rangers and fire crew remain on the job. Visitors centers and restrooms are closed; even volunteer workers have been pulled from the trail and forced to stop shelter work and trash collection at trailheads because of the tea party shutdown.

These may not seem like huge matters in the national scheme of things, but in a State of 600,000 people they are major. Not only are the livelihoods of Vermonters being devastated, but the things that we cherish the most about our State are being denied to people who want to come and see them.

Woodstock, VT, is the quintessential New England village and host to the Marsh-Billings-Rockefeller National Historical Park. The centerpiece of the park is the oldest sustainably managed forest in the United States. It is a beautiful forest. But visitors are denied access to this forest in all of its fall glory. Long-planned events at the park have been canceled and the gates have been locked.

Certainly there are many more places for visitors to enjoy—this has been a wonderful picture-perfect season. I am told by my friends and neighbors who live near our home in Vermont that it has been absolutely gorgeous. As much as I love all my colleagues and enjoy being with them, I would much rather be up there seeing the same view as Vermonters are. But the closing of our Federal lands, just as hunting seasons begin and the hillsides shine, is depriving Americans from experiencing the country's natural heritage and causing serious economic damage to the small towns, and the innkeepers and guides who depend upon these areas for their living. Foreign tourists, increasingly important to our economy, and their tour operators, are confused and disappointed by these outcomes. They say: this sort of thing has never happened in our country and yet you are the wealthiest and most powerful country on the earth; why are you doing this?

Other conservation work is being curtailed, as well, in ways likely to do lasting damage. Control of parasitic sea lamprey in Lake Champlain has to be accomplished each fall to protect the game fish and threatened species. There is a very short window when the sea lamprey treatments can be applied before these parasites migrate from the rivers to the lake. That window is fast closing. It is going to be missed if U.S.

Fish and Wildlife Service biologists remain on furlough. If these fall treatments do not take place, thousands of young sea lamprey will be allowed to reach the lake, where they are immune to treatment, live for years, and devastate the fishery. This will undo years of work, and taxpayer dollars invested in this program will be wasted by a small group of radical obstructionists who jump in front of the cameras and say things that make no sense at all.

In Vermont and across the country, there is a lot of work that needs to take place on Federal lands before winter snows sweep in. Snowmobiling is very popular among my constituents. It is a mainstay of our winter economy. But fall is the time the trails are graded and bridges repaired. Our most important trail networks are on Federal lands, and important maintenance is being delayed—deferred in some cases—due to the tea party shutdown. If trails are not opened before the snow flies, the devastating impact on tourism and local communities is going to last all winter long and impact people who want to go to work every day, who are hard-working, honest, good people who can't understand what is happening here in Washington.

Fall in Vermont is the most glorious season. It is my favorite one. We welcome visitors. We get outdoors more ourselves, and are busy preparing for the long winter to come. Our hard-working Federal partners are proud of the work they do on these Federal lands, and they know this manufactured tea party crisis is causing real and lasting damage to our natural resources and the Vermont economy.

National parks and refuges in Vermont are not the only places closed for business. According to the Coalition of National Park Service Retirees, every day the Federal Government is shuttered costs the National Park Service nearly \$½ million in lost fee collections nationwide. And the impacts are even greater for the surrounding communities that are losing \$76 million per day in visitor spending. While some in the tea party actually have the arrogance to go on television and argue that shutting down the Federal Government is saving us money, the truth is just the opposite. It is costing every one of us taxpayers money, and it is costing everybody in the private sector huge amounts of money. And now, as we reach day 15 of the tea party shutdown, the National Park Service has been denied over \$6 million in lost revenues, and local communities—not government workers, but local communities—honest, hard-working men and women have lost over \$1 billion. This is why several States have chosen to foot the bill to reopen a handful of national parks to stop further losses to local economies. The cost of shutting down the government, paying the lost revenue—that is what is keeping us in the red.

So I say to the small group of obstructionists, stop wasting time. Put

our government back to work. Show the rest of the world that we really are the great country we know we are. I want to get back to work for Vermonters; we owe it to our constituents to resolve this now and start making real decisions about our future.

Speaker BOEHNER should call up the Senate continuing resolution for a vote. It would receive bipartisan support, and we could put an end to this pointless tea party shutdown. We would reopen our Federal lands. We would be supporting our local economy.

There is more I can say, Mr. President, and I will, but I applaud Majority Leader REID for working with the Republican leader, Senator MCCONNELL. I applaud them for being what grownups should be, trying to bring us back and trying to bring our government back, showing what a great country we are so we do not have countries such as China saying: Oh, we should not rely on American currency. They are not reliable people.

We are getting this all over the world—Americans are not reliable. What damage these tea party obstructionists are doing to our great country. We ask our military to serve around the world and protect us—and maybe they will get paid, but a lot of the support for them, the VA and whatnot, is being closed down. It is shameful. The same people who shut down the government are saying it is terrible that the government is shut down. I think the American people can see through this.

I don't care what party you belong to or who you are, with the exemption of a small group, people know this country has to be open so it can work—can work for all of us—and can project an image of strength and stability throughout the world, can do the things that made us great in the past and that will keep making us great in the future, not this shabby exercise.

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

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. DURBIN. 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. DURBIN. Mr. President, for 2 weeks the government has been shut down. It is hard to imagine. It seems a lot longer if you have been sitting here in the midst of this maelstrom—2 weeks since the junior Senator from Texas took the floor and for 21 hours held the floor, giving a speech calling for the end of ObamaCare as we know it.

In that period of time we have learned a lot about ourselves. We learned a lot about this country. I think about the 800,000 Federal employees furloughed, many of whom struggle to get by and now have no paycheck coming in. It is a hardship that is totally unnecessary, a hardship that was

imposed on them because there was a strategy, a political strategy, political gamesmanship that said: We can sacrifice the well-being of those Federal employees and their families to make our political point.

It turns out they went further. They went further in suggesting they were going to cut off the benefits these government agencies offered. At this point in time, we have come to learn what that means. People who were turned away from the National Institutes of Health, children—some 30 children with cancer were turned away because that agency is closed. Families who were notified they had lost a loved one in battle were denied the basic benefits we provide to all families facing that terrible grief. There was a lack of food safety inspections when salmonella outbreaks were being reported around the country. The list goes on and on.

John F. Kennedy wrote a book called "Profiles in Courage" that talked about those in public service who showed extraordinary courage. I suggest it takes no courage whatsoever to hurt 800,000 innocent Federal employees. It takes no courage whatsoever to deny the basic benefits of government to thousands, maybe even millions, of American people. I think it is political cowardice.

Sadly, it has gone on for 2 straight weeks. The House did some curious thing there, where they voted to say: But we will pay these employees.

A friend of mine back in Edwardsville, IL, sent me an e-mail.

Let me get this straight. They closed down the Government, they turned the employees away, they said they don't have to come to work but they promised they were going to pay them? What is going on in Washington? What are you people thinking?

I couldn't defend it. I wouldn't even try. It is evidence of the kind of abandonment of reason which has become the hallmark of some Members of Congress.

What do the American people think? They are not happy with any of us, let's get it straight, but when it comes to the responsibility for this madness, they have said it is on the other side of the aisle. It is their idea—not just the tea party but many who were complicit in this strategy.

As if this were not enough, now in just 2 days, for the first time in the history of the United States of America, we face a default on our debt.

You might say: So what. Who cares. What difference would it make.

Listen to what Christine Lagarde, chief of the International Monetary Fund, said:

The failure to raise the debt ceiling would cause not only serious damage to the U.S. economy but also to the global economy as a result of spillover effects. . . .

In response to a question about debt prioritization proposals, she said:

When you are the largest economy in the world, when you are the safe haven in all circumstances, as has been the case, you can't go into that creative accounting business.

Christine Lagarde, chief of the International Monetary Fund.

It is an interesting thing in politics: you can always find somebody who is going to agree with almost any point of view. Tea party Republicans have rounded up some flat Earth economists who say default on the debt is really not a big deal. In fact, I have heard some of my colleagues on the floor argue that we just have to pick and choose who is going to get paid, that everything will work out and you really will not even notice.

It reminds me of the time—Mr. President, you were in the House when I was—when there was the Gingrich shutdown, Rush Limbaugh and others announced they would shut down the government and no one would notice. You don't really need a government. They noticed in a hurry. In less than 2 weeks they opened the government.

This, sadly, is much more grievous and will have terrible consequences for innocent people. If we default on our debt in 2 days, for first time in history we will destroy a global confidence in the U.S. dollar that we built up since World War II, since 1945. Right now the U.S. dollar is the most respected and strongest economy in the world, period, bar none. Countries far and wide that want to invest in the safest possible investment invest in U.S. Treasuries because they trust our government and its word that it will pay its debts. Those who are toying with this possibility of default are putting that at risk.

It is not just a matter of the views of the world. It is bad enough that we are being lectured to by Vladimir Putin about responsible governance—Vladimir Putin lectures to us about being a responsible government. That is bad. What is even worse is the impact on ordinary people and their lives. We know what happened when we went through the last recession. People who had carefully saved for their futures saw the bottom fall out of their savings accounts and their retirement accounts. We run that very same risk if we default on this debt again. We run that very same risk. And many hard-working families, people who have scrimped and saved for college education for their kids, for their own retirement, for their next home, will find that they are devastated by this default on our national debt. That is the most reckless and irresponsible single act we could undertake.

They asked a Member of the House, a Republican Member of the House, if yours was the deciding vote on extending the debt ceiling—if it was up to you, one person, to decide to extend the debt ceiling, would you vote for it? He said: Not unless there were some strings attached. You think to yourself: Still bargaining, right up to the edge of the cliff. Sadly, if we go over, the pain will be felt as much by that Congressman as it will by working families in Massachusetts and Illinois. That is what this is all about.

Paul Schott Stevens is president and CEO of the Investment Company Institute. At a banking committee hearing on October 10, he said:

I also will avoid parsing the differences among "technical default," "selective default," and "actual default," or whether missing a Social Security payment is equivalent to missing an interest payment or failing to redeem a maturing Treasury bill. All such discussion misses the point. The United States, like any other major debtor, must maintain the confidence of its creditors—or risk the consequences. . . .

Once Treasury has exercised the option to delay payments, investors will learn a lesson that cannot and will not be unlearned—even after all missed or delayed payments have been made good. That lesson is simple: Treasury securities are no longer as good as cash—they carry a future risk of further missed payments.

That future risk is a political creation. It is a bargaining tool by the Republicans, and it goes too far.

At a banking committee hearing, Gary Thomas, president of the National Association of Realtors, said:

[A]n increase in U.S. Treasury rates would result in higher mortgage rates. In the event of a default, U.S. Treasury prices would fall and yields, which move inversely to prices, would rise. . . . Historically, an increase in mortgage rates of 1 percentage point reduces home sales by roughly 350,000 to 450,000 units . . . [and] roughly 700,000 to 900,000 fewer jobs would be created. . . .

This is a job-killing strategy. Default on our national debt is a job-killing strategy.

Kenneth E. Bentsen, Jr., president of the Securities Industry and Financial Markets Association, said:

It is important to note that Treasury securities are a key factor in the daily financing of market operations, with the U.S. Treasury repo market totaling between \$1.2 and \$1.9 trillion daily. Undermining that market could have a deleterious effect on every major market participant.

If that were not bad enough, I have received some e-mails from some friends. The one that sticks in my mind is from a friend who does not live in my State. He is a man I have come to know. I am not going to use his name on the floor—I didn't ask his permission to—but I can certainly tell his story.

He sent his son off to war in Iraq. He and his wife took care of his son's wife and little baby while his son went off to fight in a war. Sadly, his son was the victim of an IED. As a result of that terrible incident, his son is quadriplegic and cannot speak.

People had given up on the son in his midtwenties; they recommended putting him in a nursing home. And his father said: I just won't let it happen. His father took him to a hospital in Chicago, a renowned hospital, the Rehabilitation Institute of Chicago. His son made dramatic progress. Eventually, he was able to return home with some limited function but was able to enjoy the things in life that make a difference to him. He loves to go hunting. His father picked up a mechanism whereby his son could actually go out,

sit in a blind, and fire at those ducks and feel as if he was back where he was before he went to war.

I cannot tell you the love that the mother and father have given to their son, daughter-in-law, and now their two children. They basically gave up their life and their business and, with the help of a lot of good people in the community, built a special home for their son so that he could get around in his motorized wheelchair. I have been down there. The outpouring of generosity and charity in North Carolina for this family is just amazing, and they continue to give their entire lives to their son and his wife and kids.

He wrote me an email and said:

I hope you are doing well. We see you on C-SPAN. Thank you for taking a moment to read about our concern. This concern is about my son. It affects him and thousands of other wounded veterans. We are quite concerned about what we are hearing coming out of the VA. The thought of the VA check not arriving in November has all of us nervous. We are sure this is a feeling in households across the country. We are praying that all the parties in Washington will soon come to terms. After years of war, a sagging economy, and now the shutdown, nerves are stretched. I am writing to you to see if there is a light at the end of this dark tunnel. My son and wife, after years of working to establish a near-normal life, have to start worrying about losing what they worked to return to and enjoy as a near-normal life.

In writing he said:

My mood does not mean to be so down, but as a parent of a family that has been through so much, the thought of this threat is very heart-wrenching.

Thank you for listening to me.

I think of that letter, and I think of that family worried about that VA check.

I received an e-mail yesterday from a family that is worried about whether they will receive their Social Security check. Why do we put the American people through this? Why do we put families through this? This is totally unnecessary.

We need to open this government. We should do it tomorrow morning, period. Just open it. We need to bring these people back to work to perform the services they need to perform for this great Nation, and we need to make certain we don't default come Thursday. The default would have a negative impact that would have far-reaching consequences beyond this political battle.

In years to come nobody may remember the names of the people involved in this political fight that goes on day after day on Capitol Hill, but they will remember the failure of the Congress to pay the Nation's debts, to stand for the full faith and credit of the United States, and to maintain our reputation as a leader in the world.

That is what is at stake. There is no political victory worth that. I hope Members on both sides will come to their senses.

I wish to salute our leader, Senator HARRY REID of Nevada. I have been standing by him through this. He has been stalwart and courageous. I know

he has been exhausted at times, but he keeps on fighting.

I also wish to salute Senator MITCH MCCONNELL of Kentucky, the Republican leader, who, over the last several days, has played a very active and positive role in trying to resolve this issue.

It is time for the Senate to show leadership. It is time for the Senate to come together on a bipartisan basis and show the path that takes us out of this political crisis.

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

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

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

Mr. HEINRICH. Mr. President, in the midst of the current crisis there have been some who have questioned the relevance of the Federal Government to our overall economy. Some have even called the current shutdown just a slimdown. But in my home State of New Mexico, there is no question that this government shutdown has been irresponsible, it has been reckless, and it has been absolutely devastating to our economy.

New Mexico serves the Nation in many ways, through our national labs and our military bases, with Federal lands and monuments that host Americans from every corner of the Nation. As a result, Federal dollars in 2010 were nearly 36 percent of our State's gross domestic product. This figure includes veterans' benefits, Social Security, and student financial aid.

Federal dollars go toward grants to help fund State and local health care, transportation, education, and housing. Many of us who have served as either city councilors or mayors, legislators or Governors realize the role Federal passthrough dollars play in keeping our States and municipalities solvent.

In New Mexico, Federal contracts are also critical for our small business community. Defense purchases account for almost two-thirds of total procurement spending. We are home to nearly 27,000 Federal workers—workers who want to go back to work, workers who just want to do their job.

Sandia National Laboratories and Los Alamos National Laboratory employ an additional 18,000 New Mexicans as contractors, and the U.S. Department of Energy's Waste Isolation Pilot Plant in Carlsbad employs 1,000 more. That is out of 2 million people. So it is an understatement to say that shutting down the Federal Government strikes at the heart of my State's economy.

Between sequestration furloughs, the shutdown, and the current impasse over averting a catastrophic default on the Nation's debt, hard-working, mid-

dle-class families across New Mexico are the ones who are saddled with uncertainty and hardship. These manufactured crises have very real consequences for these families.

Since the shutdown began, I have heard time and again from constituents who are paying the price for this reckless debacle. They say they feel like the collateral damage in the ongoing ideological battles in Washington, DC. Hard-working civil servants dedicated to their jobs and their country have been sent home without pay, while many others have to work through the shutdown without a paycheck.

Yesterday I spoke with a Rio Rancho resident named Chad Didier, a former marine who is now an air traffic controller in Albuquerque. During the shutdown he has been reporting to work every day to help keep our airspace safe, but he does not know when he will start getting a paycheck again. This comes on the heels of forgoing pay earlier this year due to sequestration.

As the father of four young children and the sole breadwinner in his family, he is worried about making rent next month and making his car payments on time. He is frustrated because he is doing everything he has been asked of him, everything he is supposed to do to take care of his family, to serve his country, but he feels his government has failed him.

Last week, because of the shutdown, the National Nuclear Security Administration ordered that Los Alamos and Sandia National Labs should be ready to shut down by October 21.

Katy Korkos with the Los Alamos Chamber of Commerce told the Los Alamos Monitor that the impact of the shutdown at LANL could hit subcontractors twice as hard as other entities because they will never be able to recover the income they are currently losing.

EnergySolutions, a subcontractor that processes and ships transuranic waste to the Waste Isolation Pilot Plant in Carlsbad, has already had to lay off 154 workers.

The general manager at a department store in Los Alamos was quoted in the newspaper as saying: "Anytime the lab sneezes, we catch cold."

In southern New Mexico, Crysta Quintero told the Las Cruces Sun-News that she was immediately worried for her 3-year-old son after hearing about the Federal Government shutdown. That is because she relies on the Federal WIC Program to supply a prescription baby formula for her son who has a disability. Unfortunately, Crysta is not alone. Tens of thousands of women and children in New Mexico who receive assistance from this program every month could be left without vital nutritional support if the shutdown continues to drag on.

What is also at stake is the incredible work being done at New Mexico's colleges and universities. These first-rate research institutions rely heavily

on Federal grants to fund staff, training, and projects, including clinical trials for cancer treatment. I am told those trials—and years of hard work—will have to pause or even stop if the government stays closed. Scientists will see their salaries reduced, and research students who want to dedicate their lives to finding the next cure will have to wait even longer just to earn their degree.

Because of the shutdown, important job-creating investments in small business—the very engine of our economy—are delayed. On average, over \$300,000 in Federal loans are approved for small businesses in New Mexico each and every day—but not today. Because of this reckless and irresponsible shutdown, those small businesses are not getting the loans to grow their business. They are not hiring new workers.

New Mexico is home to many of the Nation's most treasured public conservation lands, including national parks such as Carlsbad Caverns, BLM monuments such as the newly created Rio Grande del Norte, and national forests such as the Gila and Carson that are unstaffed during the fall hunting seasons. More than 4,000 men and women work on these public lands, and they are being forced to stay home.

Andrew Graves is an entomologist with the U.S. Forest Service in Albuquerque. Specifically, Andrew is in a program called Forest Health Protection that works across agency lines providing expertise and assistance to Federal and tribal land managers, foresters throughout New Mexico so they can deal with outbreaks of disease or insect infestations. Andrew says they have already canceled or postponed meetings and training because of the shutdown.

Each day the government remains closed, thousands of people who planned to visit our national parks and our wildlife refuges will be turned away. That does not just hurt the government. Restaurants and hotels, tire shops, and grocery stores feel this pain in towns such as Socorro, Taos, Grants, Alamogordo, and Las Cruces.

Because of the shutdown, the Bureau of Land Management has stopped processing energy leases on Federal land. A lengthy delay in the permitting process will not only take its toll on New Mexico's oil and gas industry but also on the revenues generated for New Mexico's public schools. The 8,000 New Mexican children enrolled in Head Start are feeling the impact of the shutdown on top of the cuts sequestration has already imposed on that critical program.

The shutdown also endangers the benefits that we owe over 170,000 veterans in New Mexico, people who served this country with distinction. The VA will run out of money to pay mandatory benefits by the end of October if we do not act.

Americans are fed up. Other debates in recent years have been just as heated, just as partisan, but this crisis is

far more dangerous for our country. The American people—my constituents in New Mexico—want their Federal Government to function again. The Federal workers in my State want to go back to work. Our constituents want us to move past the gridlock and actually govern. They want economic security and to be able to take care of their families.

It is time to reopen the government, it is time to take the threat of default off the table, and it is time to stop playing games with the livelihoods of hard-working Americans.

I yield the floor, and I 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. MURPHY. 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. MURPHY. We are now going into week three of a government shutdown, a totally unnecessary, totally avoidable, totally manufactured government shutdown that is now morphing together with a potential failure on behalf of the U.S. Government to pay its debts, the first time we have ever intentionally done that in our entire country's history.

This is not theoretical any longer. This is now right on top of us. On Thursday of this week we will no longer have enough money to pay all of the bills that come in to the government. We only have about 65 percent of the funds necessary to pay out all of the bills that come due to us, whether it is to our creditors or to the thousands of small businesses that rely on contracts with the Federal Government every week to pay their bills as well.

I appreciate all of my colleagues coming down here and talking about the real-world consequences of what this shutdown has meant and what a failure to pay our debts will mean. I come down and want to share a handful of stories from my State of Connecticut to tell you what is going on out there beyond the talking heads on the cable news networks. They are simple stories, but they are impactful because for hundreds of thousands of people in my State of Connecticut, there was no margin with which to operate when this shutdown hit and the consequential economic impact that has come to so many families. There was not any money stuffed under their mattress they could pull out and try to pay the bills they could not, now that their paycheck or their business had been lost.

This is a big deal to people in Connecticut, and in Hawaii, and to States all across our land because there was so much economic hurt that had already piled up for months and years that people had no wiggle room when the tea party decided to stick a knife

into the backs of already hurting families.

That is why this makes no sense. It is not as though we had the cushion as an economy, it is not as though families had the ability to take on a little extra hurt when the tea party decided to shut down our government—not that it would make sense even if we were living in heady economic times. But today, right now, for families who are getting killed by an economy that has recovered for the top 5 or 10 percent of America but certainly has not recovered for the bottom 80 percent, this is no time to be playing around with people's lives.

Every single year at the start of the home heating season, I go to a non-profit in Waterbury, CT, which dispenses home heating assistance to the thousands of families in the Greater Waterbury, CT, area who know that without a little bit of help from this agency they will literally not be able to heat their home, that their children will go cold that winter, because even though they are making money, they cannot keep up with the mounting bills.

Every single year, as I watch the sort of macroeconomic numbers get better for the economy, I keep on thinking that when I go to that agency in August or September or October, they are going to tell me: Guess what, CHRIS. Less people are coming in this year than last year to ask for home heating assistance.

We are in year five of this recession now. Every single year of those five, the number has gotten bigger—every single year. Even as unemployment goes down, demand for home heating assistance in Connecticut goes up. Why? Because the top echelon of our country has recovered but nobody else has. So that is why when this shutdown hit, it hurt so badly for someone such as Rich Martin in New London, CT. Rich did something heroic during this recession. He started a new business. Frankly, even more heroic, he started a bookstore and a record store in New London, CT called the Telegraph.

He said that business has been growing for the last 12 months. Every month he has been doing a little bit better. Then guess what. The shutdown. Rich wrote me and said: After growth in my business over the last 12 months, people have stopped coming in these last weeks. Because in New London, CT, where we make submarines for the U.S. Navy, where we have submariners at our base there, we have a whole lot of people who depend on the Federal Government or contracts from the Federal Government to be able to pay their employees. Nobody is coming into the Telegraph any more. His business is getting hurt. A business, a small businessman who did something great, is now wondering whether he can make it through the next couple of days and weeks.

Here is how the trickle-down of this happens: Kathi Sanborn in Hartford is

paying the bills right now by babysitting. She is babysitting for a couple. But the husband is a defense contractor. Guess what. He has been furloughed, so he cannot pay her to babysit. Frankly, he is home anyway, so he can look after the kids. So she does not have her babysitting gig any longer. He is out of work and she is out of work. Guess what. That is not where it ends. Because now that Kathi does not have her babysitting job, she is going to stop buying what she used to buy. She is going to have her groceries. She is not going to go to the store down the street for a purchase for herself. It just keeps on going.

Don Spaeth in Putnam, small business owner, runs a little restaurant there. Small town, Putnam. He says his business has dried up the last couple of weeks. People are not coming in.

Rich from Fairfield has a severely autistic son. He is an adult, so he was on Social Security disability. But he had his disability benefits cut off because they wanted to review his eligibility. Well, guess what. The reviewer has been furloughed for 2 weeks. So his son, who was hoping to be able to have his benefits turned back on, or at least have resolution so the family would know what to do, now cannot get a resolution to his disability claim. His son cannot pay the bills to the provider who gives him housing. He is potentially going to be out on the streets because he does not have a reviewer in the Social Security office. That hurts economically, but that hurts psychologically as well.

Interfaith Volunteer Caregivers in New Haven gets Federal money to do something really simple: Provide frail seniors with rides to their doctors' appointments. They lost their Federal funding for 2 weeks, so they cannot give rides any longer. So seniors are sitting home not able to get to their doctors' appointments. Think about that. You have an 85-year-old widow who has to worry every day if she is going to get sick because she lost her ride to the doctor's office.

Then let me read you this quote from Michael in Hartford. I do not even have to embellish it:

I am an attorney and work for the IRS. I have 3 children, a 16 year old girl and 8 year old twins. My wife is pregnant with my fourth child. My 16 year old is taking driver's education and wants her license. I cannot now pay for the insurance necessary for her. She also wanted to take a PSAT prep course, another \$1,200 that I don't have. She needs to start visiting college campuses. More money that I don't have. One of my twins, Sofia, had some learning disabilities and had private tutors and other professionals to assist her in staying on grade level in reading and math. I will soon run out of savings to pay for Sofia's support system because November 1st means that there is a mortgage payment, car payment, car insurance payments and the other dozen or so monthly bills that keep our household up and running. I do hope that the shutdown ends soon so that I can get back to work.

These stories can be repeated, frankly, hundreds of thousands of times over

all across this country. While to some people they may sound like small stories—a babysitter losing a job, the inability to get your disabled daughter a little bit of help for a couple months—they add up to \$1.6 billion in economic activity coming out of our country every single week.

They add up to unemployment claims jumping to their highest level last week in 6 months. They add up to consumer confidence being the lowest in this country since the Lehman Brothers collapse in 2008.

This doesn't happen in a vacuum. It is not as if we can tread water or move backwards economically while the rest of the world waits for us to resume our mantle of economic leadership.

China says they are looking to take their \$1.3 trillion in U.S. Treasuries and find someplace else for it.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator's time has expired.

Mr. MURPHY. I ask unanimous consent for the ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Without objection, it is so ordered.

Mr. MURPHY. Last month Japan announced its machinery sales were the best since 2008. The rest of the world is moving on.

If we are doing this much damage to the economy, why are we here? We are here mainly because tea party Republicans in the House see this misery as a bargaining chip. They couldn't get their way any other way. They couldn't win the legislative argument on the health care bill, a bill that passed the House and the Senate and was signed by the President. They couldn't win the judicial argument. It came before the Supreme Court, and the Supreme Court upheld the health care law. It couldn't win the electoral argument.

The health care bill was on the ballot in 2012. The President who ran on it and signed it was reelected by a wide margin. Every single Senator in this Chamber who supported it was returned to their seat.

Tea party Republicans have lost the argument on health care in all three of the traditional forums by which one would get their way in the legislative process—the legislative forum, judicial forum, and the electoral forum.

Just as a criminal fleeing the scene of a crime, they have been confronted with a last desperate option, which is to grab hold of the economy, put a gun to its head, and hope then that Democrats and President Obama will relent simply because of our compassion for people like Rich in New London, Kathi in New Hartford, Don in Putnam, the seniors who rely on Interfaith Caregivers in New Haven, and the young IRS attorney with a disabled daughter. They hope it will be our passion for those people which will cause us to do something other than what the people sent us to do and repeal, delay, or displace the health care law.

The good news is cooler heads are prevailing, that people do see—in this

Chamber at least—the need to let go of the hostage. Two weeks into the shutdown, the cumulative economic effects on the economy are real. Those stories I told from Connecticut can now be multiplied thousands of times, tens of thousands of times.

The House looks as if they are going to try to pass another partisan political bill loaded with add-ons as conditions to restart the government and pay our bills. The Senate is working on a different solution, a solution that could bring together Republicans and Democrats to at least temporarily end this crisis. On behalf of my constituents in Connecticut, we certainly hope that is the result.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Connecticut.

Mr. BLUMENTHAL. I am very pleased to follow my colleague from Connecticut in recounting to this body some of the voices we have been hearing from across our State, some of the individuals whose stories make very compelling evidence for the need of this body to heed the bipartisan spirit—indeed, nonpartisan spirit that so animates and moves this country—to demand that we get the job done yesterday. I used exactly that expression to tell this body how important action is to move forward.

I am on the floor today with thanks to our majority leader Senator REID, who has come to the floor and has so ably and courageously led us, not only on the Democratic side but also on the minority side as well. I hope we will demonstrate in this body the profile in courage the country expects and needs from us at this time.

I yield to the majority leader at this time if he has a message to bring to us.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The majority leader.

Mr. REID. I appreciate my friend's always courteous attitude. I appreciate it very much.

The House Republican leadership plan that is now out—and people may look at it—is a plan to advance an extreme piece of legislation and is nothing more than a blatant attack on bipartisanship.

The past several days we have been engaged in productive bipartisan negotiations in the Senate. Everyone knows this. We have been working across party lines and making steady progress to achieve an agreement that reopens the government, protects the full faith and credit of our country, and opens talks to put this country on a firm fiscal footing. Everyone needs to know that the measure under discussion in the House is no part of what we have negotiated in the Senate.

The debt is here. The deadline is looming. Rating agencies are talking about downgrading us as early as tonight, again.

I know I speak for many of us. We have been working in good faith when I say that we felt blindsided by news from the House, but this isn't the first

time. Extremist Republicans in the House of Representatives are attempting to torpedo the Senate's bipartisan progress with a bill that can't pass the Senate—can't pass the Senate and won't pass the Senate.

The House measure would take away the President's fundamental authority that has been in existence for as long as political science can remember. It has been in place for decade after decade after decade to prevent a catastrophic default on the Nation's bills. Out of spite, tea party Republicans are trying to take authority away from President Obama. They would never, ever consider doing this if it were President Romney, President Bush, President Bush, or President Reagan. Never.

As they have said—and they have cheered on the other side—the government is closed. We don't mind defaulting on the debt. It is good for the country. That is what they have said.

Their legislation would also make unacceptable major changes to ObamaCare. The House legislation doesn't even include a process for bipartisan negotiation on a sensible long-term budget. They throw out these numbers, think magic is going to happen, and somehow when January 15 arrives, everything will be hunky-dory. There are still processes we have to follow. They set no pattern, no schedule, no routine to do that.

For weeks Republicans have claimed they want to negotiate, but their legislation completely ignores the need to work together, craft a budget, and put our country on a fiscally sustainable path.

For years they have complained about why don't we have regular order here. They complained about lack of a budget. Now they don't even want us to negotiate a budget. It is hard to comprehend this logic, but the tea-party-driven part of the Republican Party doesn't follow logic. Why would they want to close the government for 15 days, have us default on our debt?

Introduction of this measure by House Republican leadership is unproductive and a waste of time. Let us be clear: The House legislation will not pass the Senate.

This is what the White House said only a few minutes ago:

The President has said repeatedly that members of Congress don't get to demand ransom for fulfilling their basic responsibilities to pass a budget and pay the nation's bills. Unfortunately, the latest proposal from House Republicans does just that in a partisan attempt to appease a small group of Tea Party Republicans who forced the government shutdown in the first place.

I am very disappointed with JOHN BOEHNER, who once again would try to preserve his role at the expense of the country.

I have worked hard to rise above bipartisanship and find common ground in the Senate. We have done that together for the good of the Nation. This is much bigger than the presiding Senator, who is from the State of Hawaii,

or the assistant leader, who is at my side. This is much bigger than that. It is much bigger than me, it is much bigger than the two Senators on the floor who are from Connecticut. We have Senator MURRAY, who is chairman of the Budget Committee. It is bigger than her. It is bigger than the senior Senator from New York, Senator SCHUMER, who is on the floor.

We have to start working together as a country. This is what we have been trying to do. This is so disappointing. On the eve of financial destruction for this great country, this is what it is—to appease a small group of people over there. I am so disappointed.

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

Mr. REID. I yield to the Senator.

Mr. DURBIN. I ask the majority leader, through the Chair, one of the key elements in this new proposal from Speaker BOEHNER is to diminish this President's authority to deal with a default on our national debt. This authority, so-called extraordinary measures or emergency measures, gives to Presidents, going back to President Kennedy, the wherewithal through the Treasury Department to try to avoid an economic disaster which could impact families, businesses, jobs, and the reputation of the United States in the world.

I ask of the majority leader, through the Chair, now that we have seen the Republican Party bring us so close to the precipice on a default, it is unimaginable to me that any President, including President Obama, would surrender this authority to keep America safe in light of this type of threat. Is this one of the key elements in terms of the problems associated with the Boehner proposal?

Mr. REID. Mr. President, to my friend, the senior Senator from Illinois, we have seen what has gone on these last few months, through this whole year, with a group of people who are giving press conferences, holding demonstrations. They want the government to stay closed. They wanted it closed in the first place.

The hardship we have over this country is awful. If that is not good enough, they are boasting they want the country to fail its obligations to pay its bills.

These are not new programs. These are obligations we have. That is one of the problems. The proposal they have would not allow—for example, my friend is the chair of what some say is the most important part of the Federal Government, to protect the safety and security of the United States, the subcommittee dealing with defense that was led many decades by Senator Dan Inouye. The proposal they have sent gives the President of the United States, the Chairman of the Chiefs of Staff, no flexibility whatsoever when sequestration kicks in on the 15th.

We are not asking to change those numbers. We agreed to those numbers. We voted to approve those numbers,

but they won't even allow flexibility to allow the Department of Defense to shift that money around. I do not know how the defense of this country can go forward if they don't have flexibility with losing \$22 billion beginning January 15. They don't even give authority for that.

The bill they are sending over is doomed to failure. It is doomed to failure legislatively and it is so awful for our country.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from New York.

Mr. SCHUMER. Mr. President, I would like to underscore for a brief moment what our leader has said: Default would be devastating to this country. Closing the government is awful for our country. Yesterday we all saw for the first time, after the government has been closed for too many days, when we are on the eve of default, some real progress—Leader REID and Leader MCCONNELL coming together on the outlines of a plan which made a great deal of sense, where each side had to give but could accept. And all of a sudden at the last minute, as the locomotive to avoid default is heading down the tracks and getting some steam, Speaker BOEHNER throws a log on the path. This is wrong.

He knows his proposal—we don't even know what it is yet. They have to tweak it probably to try to appease the hard right. But he knows his proposal with the measures in it already that have leaked out would not be signed by the President or pass the Senate. So instead of doing the right thing, looking at the Senate bipartisan proposal and moving forward on that, Speaker BOEHNER decides to light a match and throw it on the gasoline that is already all over the place. I hope he will desist.

We all have seen that the House can't lead in this regard. They can pass a lot of one-House bills, but they can't get anything done. Let him desist. Let him defer to the Democratic and Republican leaders here in this body so we can avoid default, open the government, and get back to America's business.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Connecticut.

Mr. BLUMENTHAL. Mr. President, let me add my voice to the eloquent and powerful remarks made by our majority leader and the Senator from New York, who have rightly deemed this House proposal an obstacle—indeed, an obstructionist move—designed to perpetuate and not end the shutdown, and to block and not enable our efforts to reach a bipartisan compromise which would allow America to continue paying its bills on time.

Those two goals—ending the shutdown and enabling America to pay its bills on time—are the predominant objectives we must have as a bipartisan effort goes forward here in the Senate. This House proposal is doomed to failure. It would be a failure not just for

the legislative process, not for the political actors here, but a failure for America.

I am reminded of the remarks so well made more than 10 days ago by the majority leader about one aspect of the effects of this shutdown on an industry very important to his State of Nevada and very important to the Presiding Officer's State of Hawaii—the tourism, lodging, and hotel industry. That impact is devastating.

As their Senator, I have heard this morning from staff and employees of the Starwood Hotels based in Stamford, CT, who have written to Members of Congress about the effects they see to their company and to others like theirs in this industry—hotel and tourism—which is vital to the State of Connecticut. In fact, we invest constructively and positively in promoting our State's tourism industry.

I will read from a letter from Amy Kilbury, associate director of IT finance at Starwood Hotels & Resorts Worldwide:

The current impasse, now in its third week, is having a negative impact both on the economy in general, and specifically on the travel and tourism industry, which depends on the confidence of business and individuals on the future stability of the economy. The shutdown is having ripple effects; as federal agencies have reduced their operations so have private government contractors, and in turn, this is affecting both business and leisure travel.

I ask unanimous consent to have printed in the RECORD this letter, and a letter written by the American Hotel and Lodging Association.

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

STARWOOD HOTELS &
RESORTS WORLDWIDE, INC.,
Stamford, CT.

DEAR REPRESENTATIVE HIMES, SENATOR MURPHY, AND SENATOR BLUMENTHAL: I am the Associate Director of IT Finance at Starwood Hotels & Resorts, which has its headquarters in Stamford, CT. I wish to express my concern over the impasse in government funding and the impending risk that the United States could default on its obligations, and to urge you to work with your colleagues to forge a bipartisan compromise to reopen the government and raise the debt ceiling.

The current impasse, now in its third week, is having a negative impact both on the economy in general, and specifically on the travel and tourism industry, which depends on the confidence of business and individuals on the future stability of the economy. The shutdown is having ripple effects; as federal agencies have reduced their operations so have private government contractors, and in turn, this is affecting both business and leisure travel.

There is no question that the future health of the American economy depends on policies that will restore robust economic growth and job creation while gradually reducing debt, and I know that you are committed to those objectives. The government shutdown, however, and even the threat of default, will only slow the economy down and jeopardize efforts to achieve a lasting economic recovery.

The next few days are very important and I hope that you will make a major contribu-

tion towards reaching a positive compromise that will move this Nation forward. You have my best wishes as you deal with the awesome challenges ahead.

Regards,

AMY KILBURY,
Assoc. Director, IT Finance.

AMERICAN HOTEL &
LODGING ASSOCIATION,
Washington, DC, October 10, 2013.

President BARACK OBAMA,
Members of the U.S. HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES,

Members of the U.S. SENATE.

The American Hotel & Lodging Association (AH&LA) and our members in every state and congressional district respectfully urge Congress and the President to reach an immediate agreement to fund the government and establish a degree of economic certainty to allow for continued growth.

Equally important is the looming breach of the debt limit and the need to come together on a plan to address our long-term fiscal challenges. Current fiscal uncertainty and the increasing lack of consumer confidence are disrupting recent economic progress and job creation, in which the lodging industry has played a significant role.

Analysts say that for each day the federal government is shut down, collective American income is reduced approximately \$200 million, and our nation's hotels are losing more than \$3 million in economic activity—putting jobs at risk and causing repercussions across many other related sectors. Communities near national parks are expected to lose \$76 million a day in visitor spending. In Yosemite National Park, for example, lodges and cabins scheduled to be filled to near capacity are instead giving thousands of visitors 48 hours to leave. Additionally, thousands who had planned to visit national parks are cancelling their trips and hotel reservations. Stories continue to pour in from AH&LA members about how their businesses are being negatively affected.

The impacts extend far beyond our national treasures. Hoteliers with international travelers have experienced a significant increase in cancellations because these visitors are confused on whether they will be able to enter and leave normally. Our members in northern states receive calls daily from Canadians checking to see if the border is open.

Current fiscal conditions are leading to increased consumer uncertainty, all to the detriment of economic growth. In short, the government shutdown is increasingly impairing the lodging industry's ability to hire, grow, and contribute to the economy.

It is imperative that Congress and the President act now to address the fast-approaching deadline to raise the U.S. debt limit, or else risk default and further economic damage. Acting to put the debt on a downward path into the future and addressing our long-term fiscal challenges are imperative to stronger consumer confidence, future job growth, and our nation's standing throughout the world. The lodging industry will continue to be a leader in U.S. economic growth if our leaders can provide fiscal certainty.

AH&LA and our members thank you for your efforts to address these critically important issues.

American Hotel & Lodging Association; America's Best Franchising, Inc.; Arizona Lodging & Tourism Association; Asian American Hotel Owners Association (AAHOA); Association of Starwood Franchisees & Owners—North America (ASFONA); Best Western International; Bev Kaftan, American Payment Solutions, Mesa, AZ; Brian Latture, The Hotel Group, Frank-

lin, TN; California Hotel & Lodging Association; Carlson Rezidor Hotel Group; Catherine DeVane, The Hotel Group, Franklin, TN; Chandler Wiens-Thayer, RHW Management, Overland Park, KS; Choice Hotels International; Chuck Donnelly, The Lodge at Mountaineer Square and The Grand Lodge, Gunnison County, CO; Colette Wear, Country Inn & Suites By Carlson, Lincoln, NE; Colorado Hotel & Lodging Association; Cortney Damiano, Best Western Plus, Olive Branch, MS; Delaware Hotel & Lodging Association; Douglas Dreher, The Hotel Group, Edmonds, WA; Florida Restaurant and Lodging Association; Georgia Hotel & Lodging Association; Hilton Worldwide; Host Hotels & Resorts.

Hotel Association of Washington, D.C.; Hyatt Hotels and Resorts; IHG Owners Association; InterContinental Hotels Group; Jeff Gouge, The Arctic Club Seattle, Seattle, WA 98104; Jeffrey T. Kmiec, The Greenbrier, White Sulphur Springs, WV; Jim Abrahamson, Interstate Hotels & Resorts, Arlington, VA; Joe Martin, Stillwater Hospitality, Stillwater, OK; John Shingler, President, Association of Starwood Franchisees & Owners; Josh Messer, Hilton Garden Inn—Eugene / Springfield, Springfield, OR; La Quinta Inns & Suites; Lara Latture, The Hotel Group, Franklin, TN; LaSalle Hotel Properties; Laurel Gaylor, La Quinta Inn & Suites Red Rock/Summerlin, Las Vegas, NV; Liban Abdi, Holiday Inn Express on the River, Corvallis, OR; Loews Hotels; Maine Innkeepers Association; Mark G. Carrier, B.F. Saul Company Hospitality Group, Bethesda, MD; Marriott International, Inc.; Massachusetts Lodging Association; Michigan Lodging and Tourism Association; Montana Lodging & Hospitality Association; New York State Hospitality & Tourism Association.

NewcrestImage; Ohio Hotel & Lodging Association; Oklahoma Hotel & Lodging Association; Opal Wedgewood, The Hotel Group, Franklin, TN; Paresh (Perry) Patel, MRPC Hotels, Newark, DE; Pedro Mandoki, Mandoki Hospitality Group, Gulf Shores, AL; Pennsylvania Restaurant & Lodging Association; Rhode Island Hospitality Association; Robert A. Alter, Seaview Investors, Corona Del Mar, CA; Ruby Goodwin, Pacific Palms Resort, City of Industry, CA; Sam Patel, Best Western Mountain View Inn, Springville, Utah; Shannon E. Johnson, Plaza Inn and Suites at Ashland Creek, Ashland, OR; Sonny Sailesh Babu, Atlantic Hotels Management, Carrollton, TX; South Carolina Restaurant & Lodging Association; Starwood Hotels & Resorts Worldwide; Steven Cooke, American Public University, Charles Town, WV; Tabitha Caldwell, The Hotel Group, Edmonds, WA; Tennessee Hospitality Association; Texas Hotel & Lodging Association; Toma G Brashear, Lanier Parking Solutions, Atlanta, GA; Warren Klug, Aspen Square Hotel, Aspen, CO; William Folkerts, Quality Inn & Suites, Watertown, SD; Wisconsin Hotel & Lodging Association.

Mr. BLUMENTHAL. These Starwood employees are writing to their Senators and Members of Congress because they see firsthand the effects on their livelihood and their lives. The stories recounted earlier by my colleague from Connecticut and those I recited yesterday on the floor are real effects in the lives of real people, negative and painful—indeed, devastating effects on people who depend on the economic flow of certain and stable work by the government, contractors, and small and large businesses like Starwood that are affected.

There is no question the future health of the American economy depends on the policies we need to adopt

and advance to sustain economic growth—indeed, to make it more robust to preserve job creation and, in fact, heighten and enhance it, and to make sure that these employees of Starwood are well served, not impeded, by the government they supported with their taxes and they elected with their votes. We have an obligation to them to do better than we have.

I was deeply moved by the story recounted by Senator DURBIN a short time ago on the floor about a young Iraq veteran more severely wounded than the ones I recounted yesterday. But he is a veteran like the individuals whose stories I told yesterday. They deserve better from our government. Indeed, they deserve an end to the kind of obstructionism we saw just a short time ago on the other side of this Congress, in the other branch of this legislative body, from Members of the House of Representatives who know the proposal they are making has no chance of adoption by the deadline we need to meet to make sure that the greatest Nation in the history of the world avoids default and continues to pay its bills on time.

The CEO of the American Hotel and Lodging Association, which represents Starwood, Katherine Lugar, said: Hotels are a major economic driver and job creator across the country, and the industry's ability to continue its growth is hamstrung by inaction from our policy members. The administration, the House of Representatives, and the Senate need to act swiftly in the best interests of the entire Nation and end this shutdown. Pay our bills on time.

That has been the objective of my colleagues on this side of the aisle and on the other side, like Senator McCAIN who has just come to the floor. That bipartisan effort has to be our objective. We need to do better for the American people and meet the obligations we now have.

As chairman of the subcommittee which has jurisdiction over the hotel and lodging industry, the commerce committee, we are hearing about how States such as Arizona, Hawaii, and Nevada, as well as Connecticut, are losing millions of dollars every day in economic activity. In fact, the Weir Farm National Historic Site in Connecticut is harmed, along with the Grand Canyon, and all the communities and industries associated with it. These issues are real and tangible. The harm is now and urgent.

I urge my colleagues to come together and resist the pressures and demonstrate the kinds of profiles of courage we have seen on both sides of the aisle—standing strong, speaking out, resisting partisanship—and coming together for the good of the country.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Arizona.

Mr. McCAIN. Mr. President, I thank my friend from Connecticut.

In the last 24 hours a lot has been taking place. A tentative agreement has been reached between both Republican and Democratic leaders. The Speaker of the House has come forward with what we believe is a plan which would reopen the government, extend the debt limit, and has several other provisions in it.

The reaction to that has been immediate automatic condemnation by the majority leader, by the White House, and by Democrats in the House, absolutely rejecting this proposal.

I don't understand that. I don't understand that visceral reaction in a most negative fashion. Why don't we try something like we used to do around this place? Why don't we say: You have a proposal to open the government; we have a proposal to open the government. Let's both pass; let's go to conference—which we could do in 24 hours—and resolve our differences.

I understand what the polling data says, that 74 percent of the American people disapprove of the Republican handling of this issue. And I agree. Some of us at the beginning said we are going on a fool's errand to believe we will be able to defund ObamaCare. We got ourselves in a ditch, and we have to stop digging. That is well understood here by certainly the overwhelming majority of my Republican colleagues. But for the majority leader and the Democrats in the House and the White House to say absolutely, categorically, we will not consider what the Republicans in the House of Representatives are doing, in my view is piling on. It is piling on and it is not right.

I urge my Democrat colleagues: Let's sit down and work this out. We have a proposal from the House. We have a proposal between the two leaders. Let's get this resolved. To categorically reject what the House of Representatives and the Speaker is doing—and I think he is pretty courageous in what he is doing—in my view is not serving the American people.

So let's stop this. Let's stop it, sit down, consider the Speaker's proposal, get our proposal done, and then get this resolved, which we could do in the next 24 hours.

I came to the floor to express my disappointment in the categorical rejection of a good-faith effort by the Speaker of the House—which doesn't contain all the provisions I want. I am sure the agreement made by both the Senate majority and Republican leaders will not be everything I want. Let's stop the condemnation. Let's consider the Republican House proposal as a serious proposal, as a way to end this gridlock, and then let's sit down together and get this thing done.

I again urge my Democratic colleagues. We know you have the upper hand. Isn't it time we help find a way out of this—which is what the American people want—rather than who won and who lost. The only people losing right now are the people of this country. As I have mentioned a couple

times before, Al Qaeda is not in shutdown.

I urge my Democratic colleagues and the White House to reconsider their categorical rejection of any proposal from the House of Representatives.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Ms. HEITKAMP). The Senator from Florida.

IRAN

Mr. RUBIO. Madam President, clearly the issue we are facing with regard to the budget, ObamaCare, the debt ceiling is a very important issue. In the hours and days to come I will have a lot more to say about it. I waited over the last few days, because of the urgency that confronts us domestically, to reserve my comments on the issue of Iran. At this point I believed I could no longer wait to speak out on it, so if my colleagues can indulge me for a few moments, I wish to talk about it because, as serious as the domestic challenge may be with regard to the budget, the spending, the debt limit, ObamaCare, we have another crisis brewing, one that goes to our national security interests, one that quite frankly for the most part unites us across the aisle; that is, the issue and the threat Iran's nuclear ambitions pose to the world.

The reason I believed I could no longer wait to address this is because I believe, as many of you do, that the world is entering a crucial time in the international efforts to stop Iran's nuclear program. On September 24 of this year, I, along with a group of other Senators, wrote to the President and we expressed our concerns about reports that the administration was contemplating making a fresh, new offer, fresh new series of offers to Iran. In that letter, we said Iran must not be allowed to develop a nuclear weapon; that is, if, God forbid, it becomes necessary, we could support the use of military force to prevent an Iranian bomb and that Iran must not be allowed to maintain any indigenous enrichment capability; and that now is not the time to suspend sanctions but to increase them on the Iranian regime.

All of us would like to wake tomorrow to the news that the Ayatollah has decided to abandon his nuclear weapons ambitions, but it is especially imperative on matters of national security that we not be guided simply by our hopes. We must be guided by reality. This is true in life in general, but it is especially true and important on issues of national security that we be guided by reality. That reality is that no matter how much Iran's political leaders say they do not have plans for a nuclear weapon, their actions say something else. They have dramatically increased their ability to enrich uranium and they continue to spend millions of dollars to expand their nuclear program and to develop long-range missiles which threaten not just Israel and Europe but eventually the United States.

The only reason you put so much money and time into developing long-range missiles is to put a nuclear weapon on them. That is what they have been doing. They have been developing this missile capability.

Recently, we heard all this new talk about there is a new President in Iran and he might be a reformer. We hope so. But this is also the same person who in the past has bragged about how he has fooled the world before and bought time for Iran's enrichment capacity to increase. In the end, by the way, even if he is a reformer, he is not the ultimate decisionmaker, nor is the Foreign Minister or any of these other civilians in their government. The ultimate decisionmaker is Iran's so-called Supreme Leader Ali Khamenei. So far no one has accused him of being a reformer.

Iran's leaders are making noises about negotiating with the world now because over the last few years the United States and the European Union have imposed very significant sanctions on Iran and these sanctions are starting to hurt the Iranian regime. It is hurting, although it has not stopped, their ability to export terrorism around the world. It is hurting, although it has not stopped, their ability to buy parts for their nuclear program and for their missile program.

Do you want to understand why they are doing all this now, what their plan is? It is not that hard to understand. What they are trying to do, they are trying to get us and the world to agree to weaken the sanctions without them having to agree to any concessions that are irreversible, to any concessions that irreversibly block their ability to one day build that weapon. This ambition of theirs, this plan they have is clear as day. They are trying to figure out if they can get these sanctions suspended or lifted without giving up too much. Then at some point in the future, when the world has moved on, when we are focused on other things, they can then make their move to build their bomb.

By the way, this is the model North Korea employed over a decade ago. They used a combination of belligerence and pretended negotiations to buy the time and the space. Now they are a nuclear power and they continue to develop their rocket technology—which does not just threaten South Korea and Japan but the west coast of the United States and potentially one day the entire country, our entire country.

This is why, as these talks between the so-called P5+1 group of nations and Iran restarted, we are at a critical juncture. We should talk to Iran. We should see if they are serious. But we cannot, under any circumstances, put at risk the hard-earned leverage that took so long to put in place and assemble.

First, we need to remember whom we are dealing with. We are talking about a regime that has earned the distrust

of the entire world through its secret nuclear program, a regime that admits foul play only when they are caught red-handed, a regime that supports terrorism, killing of Americans, and has an active hand in fueling conflicts that destabilize its neighbors. This is a regime that brutalizes its own people and denies them their basic freedoms. This is the regime, by the way, that plotted to assassinate the Saudi Ambassador in this city, in Washington DC.

Given this record, the erosion of trust in Tehran is simply too great, so the United States must look long and hard at what Iranian actions could qualify as what the administration likes to call credible confidence-building measures.

I say this because of whom we are dealing with. Sanctions on Iran should not be lifted or suspended until they agree to completely abandon any capability for enrichment or reprocessing. Iran has a right to a peaceful civilian nuclear energy program. But they do not have the right to enrich or reprocess. Holding this line is especially important in light of Iran's repeated and blatant disregard for international obligations in the past and even to this day.

Even a limited enrichment program and possession of sensitive reprocessing technologies is unacceptable because of the risk that such a program would once again be abused by Iran in the future for nefarious and dangerous purposes. Suspending sanctions before Iran not just suspends but abandons enrichment would give the Iranian regime exactly what they want, an eventual path to a nuclear weapon. Sanctions relief at this time would allow them to make advances on their broader strategic objectives in their region such as propping up the Assad regime in Syria, such as continuing to destabilize Iraq, such as supporting terrorist groups such as Hezbollah in Lebanon.

We cannot allow the No. 1 exporter of terrorism in the world this opportunity. Until Iran agrees to abandon enrichment and reprocessing, not only should we keep the current sanctions but the Congress should move to implement a new round of additional sanctions without delay. I would say that at some point Congress should consider making it very clear that if it becomes necessary, the President of the United States should reserve the right to take military action to prevent Iran from continuing to advance its nuclear weapons program.

The United States and the international community have succeeded in bringing Iran to the negotiating table through firm action, not through half measures. Personally, I hope, as do all of my colleagues, that there is a diplomatic solution to this problem. But Iran does not have forever to prove they are serious. We cannot allow them to use these talks to continue to buy time and space as they have for the last decade, as North Korea did before them, to buy time and space so they

can continue to develop their nuclear weapons capability. We cannot allow them to use these talks to continue to spread terror, to undermine their neighbors, and to threaten our country or our allies in Israel and around the world.

We cannot fall into their trap. Yes, we should be willing to talk. But talk alone should not slow down our actions. Until they act, we should continue to increase pressure and speak forcefully about what these people sitting across from us have done internationally and to their own people; otherwise, I truly believe at some point in the future we are going to awake to the news that Iran has tested a nuclear weapon and we may find ourselves stuck with the reality that they have the ability to put that weapon on a missile that can reach the United States. If that day should ever come, God help us all.

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

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The bill clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. NELSON. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

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

Mr. NELSON. Madam President, you know when you are driving along and your children keep asking you, are we there yet? Are we there yet? That is an appropriate question. I would have thought we were there—until now. We heard about the agreement that was hammered out between the two leaders in the Senate and now all kinds of changes wanting to be made in the House of Representatives. The countdown clock is ticking. The ominous sounds of default are being heard. The stock market, the New York Exchange, has reacted accordingly. Up on Friday, up again a little bit yesterday on the hopes, but today with the new news, down—not a huge amount but a significant amount.

It is reflective of this emotional roller coaster of what is at stake, which is the financial integrity of this country.

Enough is enough. The ridiculousness ought to stop. Let's go back and look where we have been over the course of the last 2 weeks.

All of this started with a shutdown of the Federal Government, of which there are untold stories of hardship and deprivation that are going on. That ought to be enough to spur people to action to stop the shutdown. What did the shutdown start with? It started because a small group in the House, maybe folks who would affiliate with the tea party, decided they want to take away the funding for the health care reform act, the Affordable Care Act. As a result, they forced this shutdown.

In the course of the last 2 weeks, about 1 week goes by and that crowd sees this is not working and so they

shift then their attacks to one of overall spending. But still today, with the two leaders in the Senate having basically come to an agreement, the House of Representatives is going back to the Affordable Care Act and wanting to extract additional things. And all the time the clock is ticking toward not only not being able to bring government back so it can function—stopping the shutdown—but also the potential default that is looming.

I really believe and I understand what the people in my State of Florida feel. They are fed up with this. It is so ridiculous. Yet that is what our politics has come to. The small group in the House of Representatives better start understanding that.

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

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The bill clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection and so ordered.

RECESS

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

Thereupon, the Senate, at 12:29 p.m., recessed until 2:15 p.m., and reassembled when called to order by the Presiding Officer (Ms. BALDWIN.)

DEFAULT PREVENTION ACT OF 2013—MOTION TO PROCEED—Continued

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Louisiana.

Mr. VITTER. Madam President, I rise to concur with the House of Representatives to consider and pass what they seem to be focused on, which is a compromise resolution to the crisis before us which includes “no Washington exemption” language regarding ObamaCare. I strongly support, of course, that language, and I strongly support that discussion and that effort in the House, and I really encourage all of our House colleagues to look hard at that and act on it. In particular, I would encourage my Louisiana colleagues to do that.

I have pushed this issue ever since we got back from the August recess. As the Presiding Officer knows, as we went into that August recess the Obama administration issued a rule—an illegal rule, in my opinion—without statutory authority, contrary to the ObamaCare statute, that gives Members of Congress and congressional staff special status, special exemption, or special subsidy, if you will, not in the law, and one not enjoyed in that way by any other American. This “no Washington exemption” language, which I have been an advocate of with many others here in the Senate and

with many House colleagues, would end that special elite status. That is what we need to do.

I think we need to do it for two crucial reasons—first of all, just on principle. I believe it should be the first rule of our democracy that Washington is treated as the rest of America is treated. What is good for America and what Congress and the administration—what Washington passes on America, it lives with itself with no special status, no special rules, no special exemption or subsidy. That should be true across the board. It should certainly be true regarding ObamaCare. That should be the first rule of American democracy.

Washington doesn't want that. It wants to impose these new rules on the rest of America; it doesn't want to live by them itself. It is sort of like when a person walks into a restaurant and hears that the chef never, ever eats at that restaurant, never, ever has a meal out of that kitchen, it makes a person wonder. The same thing is true here on a number of fronts, including ObamaCare.

So the first point is based on pure principle. Washington should live under the same rules it imposes on America across the board, including under ObamaCare. So Washington—Congress, all congressional staff, the President, the Vice President, their political appointees—should have to go to the same fallback option under ObamaCare that is there for all America—the so-called exchanges—and it should do that with no special rules or special deal or special subsidy or special exception. It should do that the same way ordinary Americans do, who in many cases—8 million-plus—are forced out of good health care coverage they have now through their employment and forced onto the ObamaCare exchanges.

The second reason this language is so important is a very practical one, because the sooner we make Washington live by the same ObamaCare rules as the rest of America, the quicker Washington will change ObamaCare in substantial ways, will fix it not just for Washington, as it did through the special illegal Obama administration rule on this subject, but for America. We need to align policymakers' personal interests in Washington along with the interests of the American people. The way we do that is to make them live by exactly the same rules, make them walk the walk of those Americans who have to go to the ObamaCare exchanges, in many cases against their will—8 million-plus—who were satisfied with the health coverage they had prior to ObamaCare and then who realized that under this law the promise by President Obama that “if you like the health care coverage you have now, you can keep it”—they realized the hard way that promise was a lie.

So there are two crucial reasons we must pass this language into law: first, the principle, and second, the practi-

cality—first, the principle that Washington should live under the same rules the same way as America and, second, the practicality that we need to visit upon Washington all of the burdens and challenges that face America under ObamaCare, including those 8 million-plus Americans going to the exchanges against their will.

Again, I encourage the House to include this “no Washington exemption” language in any compromise they put together with regard to these fiscal issues we are dealing with now. That would be enormously important. It would show leadership. I think it will resonate with the American people. The American people get this issue, and they resent—rightly so—Washington getting a special exemption or a special subsidy under ObamaCare that no other American in that situation gets.

Again, I urge the House to act on that important language. That would show leadership. That would align our personal interests with the folks we represent. That would honor what should be the first principle of American democracy: Washington lives under the same rules as the rest of America on ObamaCare and on everything else.

Thank you, Madam President. I yield the floor and suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

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

Mr. BROWN. Madam President, we still remain hopeful as the hours, unfortunately, click down towards what could happen in this country if we do not pay our debts. It has never happened in American history. I know when we woke up this morning, when America woke up, they saw Leader REID, the Democratic leader, the majority leader, and Leader MCCONNELL, the Republican leader from Kentucky, coming together in discussion, coming together on a plan, and they are pretty close to agreement.

We know there are still problems in the House of Representatives. I think some of us in this body are fans of Abraham Lincoln, and many of us have studied a lot of things Lincoln said and did. Lincoln used to talk about—when his staff wanted him to stay at the White House to win the war and free the slaves and preserve the Union—he said: I have to go out and get my public opinion bath.

I think some of my colleagues in the House could learn something from going out and listening to real people, not just going on talk radio, not just going to their country clubs, but to listen to people talk about their lives and what this government shutdown has meant.