

SEQUESTER IMPACT

Ms. MIKULSKI. Mr. President, today I rise to speak on the impact of sequester on the American people, on their safety, their security, our economy, and the way local and State governments can use wise resources to protect their people.

I know we have each been assigned 10 minutes. I have a robust number of Appropriations Committee members who want to speak. I will ask the Chair to let me know when I have used 5 minutes, and if Senator LANDRIEU arrives, I will then yield to her.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The Senator will be so notified.

Ms. MIKULSKI. I come today not only as the chair of the entire Appropriations Committee but as the chair of the subcommittee that funds the Commerce Department, Justice Department, and the majority of our science agencies.

I wish to talk about the impact on public safety and our future, but you have to know I come with a heavy heart.

I note and bring to the attention of my colleagues that a guard was killed in a Federal prison on Monday. This guard worked at the Federal penitentiary in Canaan, PA. He was stabbed and attacked by a prisoner with homemade weapons. The entire Justice Department, the Office of Prisons, the union people who represent them, all mourn at Mr. Eric Williams' death. We don't know the full extent, and I will be asking for a report on the investigation on how this happened. But one of the things I do know as the chair of the committee, we face prison overcrowding. We have Federal prisons, some we don't even open because we refuse to put the money in.

You can say: Well, Senator BARB, you are on the committee. Why don't you put the money in? We are in gridlock, deadlock, hammerlock on not being able to move our bills in regular order with due diligence and oversight. That is why we are at this crisis of sequester: Oh, boy. Can't we just cut 2 percent like American families?

American families don't run prisons. They don't build their own roads. They don't have to put out their own local police department. They depend on their government to do that. They are willing to expend revenue, pay taxes so they are protected. There are reasons people are in Federal prison. They were bad guys and gals who did bad things, and when they are in prison, they still want to do bad things, such as attack a prison guard. Do you know what sequester will mean? Across-the-board cuts. It will have a direct impact on America's prisons.

Oh, sure. The prisoners will still have their food. They will still have their hour to be able to do their exercise. But the prison guards will face furloughs, layoffs, and even reductions in the workforce. We are placing them at risk while they protect us from risk. Where are our national priorities?

One of the ways we can honor this man is to get serious about our appropriations process. I wish to cancel the sequester and come up with a balanced solution of revenues and strategic, targeted cuts, not across-the-board cuts to 1,300 correctional guards who might face layoffs.

About our Federal prosecutors. We in Maryland have one of the best U.S. attorneys going after violent gangs, drug cartels, child predators, mortgage frauds. But we are going to say to those smart lawyers who can make megabucks in law firms, stick with us. But when you do, you can be laid off and furloughed. Why is it that the criminals are able to hire the lawyers, but the Federal Government doesn't want to pay for them? Priorities.

We need to be able to have the right law enforcement at the Federal and State level to catch the bad guys, whether it is white-collar crime, such as mortgage fraud, or street crime, or despicable crimes such as trafficking in women and children.

We have to look out for our FBI, our major force in counterterrorism. They face, again, layoffs, and it will go to our local law enforcement. We will be cutting the funds for things such as the Byrne grants, which enable local law enforcement to put cops on the beat and buy the equipment they need to protect themselves. There is a program here that we have a line item. It is not the biggest thing in the Federal budget, but it is the biggest thing to cops. Why? Because it buys bulletproof vests.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. I advise the Senator she has consumed 5 minutes.

Ms. MIKULSKI. I could talk another 55. I could talk another 505. But I want everyone to get the point that cuts have consequences. So things such as, oh, why don't we cut the budget as families do—well, let's do what families do. They, first of all, make plans and stick to them. I think it is time we have a regular order.

I want to deal with this sequester now. I want to look at this thing called the continuing resolution so it resolves the funding for fiscal 2013, for fiscal 2014, to work on a bipartisan basis across the aisle and across the dome. Let's look at our spending, how we protect the American people, and make public investments that help create jobs today and jobs tomorrow.

In conclusion, before I turn to my most able subcommittee chair on Homeland Security, Senator LANDRIEU, I just wish to say to the family of Officer Eric Williams, the entire Senate wishes to express its condolences to the family. I believe we can show our deepest sympathy by making sure it doesn't happen in our Federal prisons. Let's get on and solve the problem of sequester. Let's work together and get the job done.

I yield to Senator LANDRIEU, the chair of the Subcommittee on Homeland Security, a very crucial committee.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The Senator from Louisiana.

Ms. LANDRIEU. Mr. President, I appreciate—and we all do—all the Senators, even Senators on the other side of the aisle I think admire her tenacity and her leadership and, most importantly, her knowledge and understanding of the importance of the Federal budget on the private sector economy. Obviously, the Senator from Maryland understands its impacts on Maryland, but she also understands the impacts to our Nation.

No one speaks more passionately and more knowledgeably about the challenges before families than Senator BARBARA MIKULSKI from Maryland, from a working-class family herself. Her parents and grandparents, immigrants to this country, operating a small business, a bakery—a wonderful business—not only understanding how to run their own business themselves but for all the neighbors who came in every day to talk about their problems.

When the Senator says she knows what families do in tight budget times, she is correct. Families do cut back, but they plan their reductions. They don't pull the rug out from underneath the college tuition for their kids. They don't kick grandma out on the street and put her in a homeless shelter. They make smart decisions about budgets. Let me say to my colleagues on the other side who fail to understand the other part of the equation, they also try to bring in more revenue to the family base. Either the wife gets a job or the husband gets a job or the wife goes back to school to get a nursing degree so instead of making \$6 an hour, she can bring in \$16 or \$18 an hour.

Families work on both sides of the equation. But for some reason, we have half this Chamber that only wants to work on one side of the equation. It is only about cuts, cuts, and more cuts, even though they are senseless, they are dangerous, they do not make sense for our country, and they most certainly don't just impact the government—of course, which is the enemy of the other side—they impact our economy. They impact our ability to grow this economy. Every cut that comes down in a senseless way, and even cuts that are planned, are harmful to the private sector.

I know this not only as a Senator from Louisiana and chair of the Homeland Security Committee but particularly as chair of the Small Business Committee. Our phone has been ringing off the hook with small businesses—not government workers but private sector workers and contractors—that are afraid, and have every reason to be, about the results of this sequester to their bottom line because they are providing the government a good service or a product the government needs, whether it is in health care, whether it is in education or whether it is in homeland security. But I digress a little bit. So let me get back to the central message as chair of Homeland Security.

I rise to speak in opposition to the damaging sequester that is scheduled to take effect this Friday. There is no question Congress must act to reduce our annual deficits—must continue to act. Let me underline “continue.” We have been reducing spending. We have set targets of spending lower than what would have normally been set because we are tightening our belts. We were trying to tighten our belts even at a time when the economy was shrinking. Most economists will tell us that in times of economic constriction, governments need to spend more money to try to prime the pump to get the country moving in the right direction. The President has led in this direction. We have helped to follow his lead; therefore, avoiding the worsening of a depression and a recession.

But contrary to the evidence all over the place that this is working, the other side is going to ratchet it down with these senseless reductions—and even well-planned reductions at this point are very difficult—and rejecting a balanced approach which Democrats have called for. Most independent observers understand we have to have an increase of revenues coming in because we are at the lowest level to the GDP since Eisenhower was President and some continued reductions. But they are rejecting that and going cuts only, cuts only. They said: We raised revenues. That is it. We raised \$600 billion. We can't go any more. I am here to tell you, we have to go a little bit more, and the sooner we do that, the better we are going to be.

There are people who make over \$1 million in this country or companies that are enjoying loopholes they shouldn't be enjoying at the expense of the middle class and at the expense of the economic growth potential of this country, which is substantial, contrary to the laments on the other side of this aisle that the sky is falling.

Every businessperson I talk to says: You know what, Senator. There is such promise out there. This energy industry is getting ready to boom. Natural gas is a great blessing to our Nation. But we may not experience any of that because we can't get 5 cents to invest in an airport or dredge one of the bayous or rivers in my State because of the tightening down of these spending cuts.

The other side of the aisle, despite the mounting evidence, continues to argue against any revenues. Their cuts-only approach, cut it all, cut it now; don't worry about what you cut, just cut it, is not going to lead this country to economic prosperity.

The reality is our deficit reduction so far has been completely lopsided: 72 percent has come from spending cuts, only 28 percent from revenues. It is not balanced, and we have to find a balance. We have already cut \$1.5 trillion from discretionary spending over 10 years. In recent years, revenues coming in to the Federal Government as a percentage of GDP were at the lowest lev-

els since Eisenhower. I said 16 percent. My notes say 15.1 percent. So let me correct myself. I didn't realize it was that low. I thought it was 16.7.

So while I support cuts—and have supported them in the past and continue to try to find them in my own budget, \$42 billion for Homeland Security—we must have a balance.

This sequester that is going to go into effect in Louisiana will cost us \$15.8 million in funding for primary and secondary education. Early Head Start services will be cut to over 1,400 children who desperately need a better start in life. Our ability to develop oil and gas will slow down due to Interior Department cuts. Louisiana's Department of Defense civilian employees—over 7,000—will be furloughed, costing Louisiana residents \$36 million in gross pay.

As chairman of the committee, I am asking for the Senate to consider the impacts of these cuts on securing our homeland. We have made a tremendous amount of progress. We have avoided attacks, and some have been very close calls. This is not done because of a wish and a prayer. This is done because of smart research, investing in border security, investing in cybersecurity, investing in training of local police officers who can identify threats on the ground, whether it is in New York or Baton Rouge or New Orleans. We have avoided some attacks. As the Senator from Washington State knows, this does not just happen by magic. This happens because we are making investments in people, in their training. This is at risk today.

The sequester would effectively decrease the number of Border Patrol agents by 5,000.

I wish to make a statement and ask for 2 more minutes. I understand the Senator from Arizona, Mr. McCain, and the Senator from South Carolina, LINDSEY GRAHAM, met with the President to talk about immigration reform. I am very glad we may make some progress on bipartisan support for immigration reform. Clearly, the country is asking for it, the business community needs it, our agricultural sector needs it, and the Latino population deserves it. But are we going to try to do education reform on a reduced budget in Homeland Security? What do they expect us to do in a Homeland Security budget without giving us some additional resources to hire the additional judges who are going to be needed, the additional patrols, et cetera? So I ask Senator McCain, how are we going to afford this in the Homeland Security budget? I look forward to having that discussion with him. On cyber security, the sequester would delay for a year the ability of the Department of Homeland Security to deploy technology to protect our Federal computer systems from attack.

In the last minute I have, I ask unanimous consent to have printed in the RECORD a letter we received this morning from Secretary Napolitano, who is

preparing her agency for difficult tasks.

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

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF
HOMELAND SECURITY,
Washington, DC, February 26, 2013.

Hon. MARY L. LANDRIEU, Chairman,
Subcommittee on Homeland Security Appropriations,
U.S. Senate, Washington, DC.

DEAR CHAIRMAN LANDRIEU: Thank you for your comments during the Senate Appropriations Committee's February 14, 2013, hearing on sequestration. I share your deep concerns and wanted to follow up on your request to identify impacts to our Nation's economy and international trade activities that this unprecedented budget reduction to the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) would have.

Sequestration would have significant impacts on our economy, including travel, tourism and trade. Reductions mandated under sequestration would require furloughs and reduced staffing at our Nation's ports of entry and airport security checkpoints, which would have serious consequences to the flow of trade and travel throughout the country.

Trade and travel is absolutely essential to our economy. According to the U.S. Travel Association, one new American job is created for every 33 travelers arriving from overseas. DHS's U.S. Customs and Border Protection (CBP) staff and operate 329 ports of entry across the country, welcoming travelers and facilitating the flow of goods essential to our economy. Each day, almost one million people arrive at these ports of entry by land, sea, and air. In Fiscal Year 2012 alone, DHS processed more than 350 million travelers, including more than 98 million international air travelers as well as \$2.3 trillion worth of trade.

The automatic budget reductions that could be implemented on March 1, 2013 would be disruptive and destructive to our Nation's security and economy. At major gateway airports average wait times will increase by 30-50%. At our busiest airports, such as John F. Kennedy International, Los Angeles International, and Chicago O'Hare, peak wait times could grow to over four hours or more during the summer travel season. Such delays would affect air travel significantly, potentially causing thousands of passengers to miss flights with economic consequences at the local, national, and international levels. New flights that bring in hundreds of millions of dollars to the U.S. economy would be delayed or potentially denied due to reduced staffing.

Sequestration will also impact our Nation's land borders. For example, daily peak wait times at the El Paso Bridge of the Americas would increase from one hour to over three hours. Peak wait times at the Port of Buffalo Lewiston Bridge would increase by nearly six hours, significantly slowing travel across the northern border. Midsize and smaller ports would experience constrained hours of operation, affecting local cross-border communities.

At our seaports, delays in container examinations would increase to up to five days, resulting in increased costs to the trade community and reduced availability of consumer goods and raw materials. At cruise terminals, processing times could increase to up to six hours, causing passengers to miss connecting flights, delaying trips, and increasing costs.

Last year, the Transportation Security Administration (TSA) screened approximately 640 million people and their carry-on items at checkpoints, and more than 426 million

checked bags. DHS also screened over 629 million pounds of cargo with TSA proprietary canine teams. Sequestration would require TSA to reduce overtime and not backfill vacant Transportation Security Officer positions, leading to increases in airline passenger wait times by as much as an hour during peak travel periods at our Nation's largest and busiest airports.

Additional effects of sequestration would be felt by the American public from reductions to U.S. Coast Guard (USCG) fisheries law enforcement, aids to navigation, and other important activities that help ensure the safe flow of commerce along U.S. waterways and the protection of natural resources. These reductions will impact the Coast Guard's ability to respond to issues impacting the U.S. Marine Transportation System that generates more than \$3.2 trillion of total economic activity, moves 78% of foreign trade, and sustains over 13 million jobs each year. USCG also will have to reduce its patrols of the 3.4 million square mile U.S. Exclusive Economic Zone—impacting fisheries enforcement and resulting in more incursions by foreign vessels, exploiting our natural resources. Reduced Coast Guard presence protecting the U.S. fishing industry would impact an industry which generates \$32 billion in income and supports over one million jobs annually.

The Department appreciates the strong support it has received from Congress over the past 10 years. As we approach March 1, I urge Congress to act to prevent sequestration and ensure that DHS can continue to meet evolving threats and maintain the security of our Nation and citizens. Should you have any questions or concerns at any time, please do not hesitate to contact me at (202) 282-8203.

Yours very truly,

JANET NAPOLITANO.

Ms. LANDRIEU. I ask for 30 seconds to complete my remarks.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Ms. HEITKAMP). Without objection, it is so ordered.

Ms. LANDRIEU. One of the issues I have been very focused on is international travel. I do not have the time to go into the details. It is an important industry for our country, not just for Louisiana and New Orleans, which are way up on the list of places people want to come. The travel industry is important.

Last week Roger Dow said:

Travel has led the nation's economic recovery—generating more than 50 percent of all jobs created since the beginning of the recession. The indiscriminate sequester cuts threaten to derail travel-led recovery. These across-the-board cuts may punish travelers with flight delays, long security lines at [TSA] checkpoints and multi-hour waits to clear Customs and Border Protection.

This is not a time to cut back on investments we have made in increasing travel, 10 years after 9/11 ground this industry to a halt. Now is not the time to put up a yellow light or a red light, and that is what the sequester is going to do—it is going to be blinking yellow at a time when we need green all the way.

We need to find a way to break through. This Senator is willing to compromise.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Rhode Island.

Mr. REED. Madam President, I rise as chairman of the Interior Appropriations Subcommittee to highlight the urgency and importance of addressing sequestration. These imminent cuts will have real impacts on the environment and on thousands of jobs related to infrastructure investment and environmental protection.

The reductions required by sequestration will also come on top of other deep cuts these programs have already absorbed over the last 2 years. Even though Interior bill programs make up less than 3 percent of total Federal discretionary spending, we have already seen more than \$2 billion in cuts to environmental programs over the past 2 years. If sequestration moves forward, it will mean an additional \$1.6 billion in across-the-board cuts to the Interior bill.

We have already been forced to take \$1 billion out of water infrastructure funding. Under sequestration, EPA's State Clean Water and Drinking Water Revolving Fund Programs will lose another \$130 million. In addition to potential public health impacts, these cuts will mean 7,000 fewer construction jobs at a time we need to put more people to work. These cuts will be made worse by more than \$50 million in additional reductions to grants that help States run their environmental agencies, including supporting clean water programs. The consequences will fall squarely on communities such as those in my home State of Rhode Island that are already struggling to keep pace with their infrastructure needs.

Just as we cannot place the burden of our Nation's growing financial debt on our children, we cannot place the burden of repairing our failing infrastructure on the next generation also. We have immediate needs that require immediate investment.

I am also concerned about cuts to our Nation's land management agencies, including the National Park Service, which is slated for \$130 million in cuts. Sequestration will affect all 398 of our national parks, from the largest to the smallest. It means fewer seasonal personnel to assist visitors, which means fewer jobs. It also means fewer visitor services, more facility closures, and less upkeep and maintenance of our Nation's premier public lands.

These cuts are obviously bad news for the millions of people who visit our national parks every year, but it is worth pointing out that these cuts are also bad news for local economies that depend on national parks. Nationwide, parks support more than 250,000 private sector jobs and contribute almost \$13 billion annually to local economies. Even Roger Williams National Memorial in my home State of Rhode Island attracted nearly 51,000 visitors in 2011, with nonlocal visitors adding more than \$3.2 million to the local economy. The Roger Williams National Memorial is one of the smallest of our national parks. Even this small park is a major factor in my community. These clo-

sures and cutbacks will certainly affect the bottom line of communities across this Nation if fewer families are able to visit and enjoy our Federal lands and our national forests.

Sequestration will also impact programs that generate revenue for the Federal Government. The Interior Department oversees onshore and offshore energy development and expects those activities will be slowed dramatically.

The trial for the 2010 Gulf of Mexico oil spill—and my colleague from Louisiana was so effective and so critical to the response of the Federal Government for her home State of Louisiana and the whole gulf coast—that started on Monday is an important reminder of how critical these activities are to preventing these disasters rather than somehow try to recoup losses after the fact. Yet the Department will be forced to furlough employees who conduct lease sales, issue permits for new development, conduct environmental reviews, and inspect operations. That is no way to run a railroad or a national Department of Interior.

These cuts could result in 300 fewer onshore oil and gas leases in Western States and processing delays for the 550 offshore exploration and development plans expected this year. Companies may decide that development is not worth it because of the uncertainty, which will lead to less production and smaller royalties for the Treasury. In other words, the cuts required by sequestration could actually end up costing the government money rather than saving money and could take away from the developing ability of the United States to become more and more energy independent through production within the country rather than buying petrochemicals and petroleum products from overseas.

The sequester is a real problem for environmental programs in the Interior bill and throughout nearly all government programs. But there are ways to prevent this meat-ax approach to addressing the budget. Indeed, Democrats have put forward a specific and clear plan—half cuts and half revenue—to replace the sequester. Simply, we have put a plan forward that puts jobs first by cutting specific wasteful spending and closing dubious tax loopholes. This bill gives the economy more breathing room by offsetting the sequester with smart policies that should be enacted even if there were no threat of sequester.

Let's be clear what is at stake. The Director of the nonpartisan Congressional Budget Office recently testified that the 2013 sequester will result in 750,000 lost jobs and a 0.6-percent reduction in GDP for 2013. Lost jobs and lower growth—that is what sequester is going to produce. I don't think the people of Rhode Island or anyone else in the United States wants to have Congress support policies that mean fewer jobs. We have a crisis in Rhode Island, a jobs crisis that should be addressed before anything else.

We hear from the other side of the Capitol that we must have a sequester to address the budget. But over the last few years, as my colleagues have pointed out, we have slashed the deficit by \$2.4 trillion over the next 10 years. The bulk of that reduction, \$1.7 trillion, has come through spending cuts. We have been cutting. Indeed, my Republican colleagues have repeatedly held the economy hostage in order to cut spending that benefits the vast majority of Americans and protect tax cuts that benefit the wealthy few. That is not economically efficient, and that is not fair.

We see the results in my home State of Rhode Island—a 10.2-percent unemployment rate. That is unacceptably high. And 12.3 million Americans across the country are still unemployed. This Republican agenda of protecting the wealthiest and not investing in job creation is out of step with the majority of Americans. Most Americans would prefer right now that we address the jobs crisis. And by the way, more people working means we also address the deficit. They pay taxes, they don't qualify for unemployment insurance, and they don't apply for other programs. That is the smart way and the way we should deal, at least in part, with our deficit problem.

We should not be jeopardizing our economy. We should not be allowing these loopholes to exist that allow multinational corporations to ship our jobs overseas. We should not let these loopholes that give benefits to oil and gas companies that are recording historic profits linger, all ultimately at the expense of investing in programs like those that will put Americans to work in the parks and rebuilding our infrastructure across America. More austerity—and that is what this sequester is all about, especially in the form of these reckless cuts—will hurt the economy. We should instead be working to create jobs.

We should also recall that we are here today as a legacy of the Republican brinkmanship of threatening to allow the United States to default on its national debt. That is why we are here. Let's not forget that. The sequester was a means to avoid what would have been a catastrophic default.

Now we have the opportunity to change course, to invest in our people and invest in growth and do it in a balanced way. We cannot cut our way to prosperity. The President said that. These contractionary policies—this austerity the Republicans are urging upon us—will reduce economic growth at a time we need to expand economic growth, not only to create jobs but to truly address the deficit in a responsible, reasonable way. We have come through the threat of default on the debt with severe and unbalanced spending cuts. Now is the time to have a balanced approach. I urge that this balanced approach be adopted quickly.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Washington.

Mrs. MURRAY. How much time remains on our side?

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The majority has 2 minutes remaining.

Mrs. MURRAY. Madam President, I have come today to join the other Appropriations subcommittee chairs to really implore the Senate and this country to take a look at what will happen if sequestration occurs.

In just one day, unless Republicans drop their opposition to our compromise bill, sequestration will be a reality.

Now, we have heard from a wide range of economists and other experts about how harmful these cuts will be to our economy. They will hurt job creation, reduce our economic growth, and impact the most vulnerable among us.

According to HUD, the cuts required under sequestration would put 125,000 tenants at immediate risk of losing their housing vouchers, leaving low-income residents facing higher rents, eviction or homelessness.

At the same time, communities would be left with fewer ways to help the homeless.

In fact, the cuts would place formerly homeless people back on the streets, since HUD estimates that the cuts would threaten housing or access to emergency shelter for 100,000 people.

Sequestration will also disrupt some of the most fundamental work of our government, such as its management of the air transportation system.

Every year, U.S. airlines carry hundreds of millions of passengers, many of them travelling for business or tourism. And our aviation system carries freight valued at hundreds of millions of dollars every year.

This is possible because the FAA is a world leader in managing air traffic and protecting the safety of our skies.

These cuts will force them to furlough their entire workforce, including each and every air traffic controller and safety inspector.

With these furloughs, we can expect that every FAA facility and every air traffic control tower will be short-staffed every day of the week through the rest of this fiscal year.

In order to protect the safety of our skies, they will be forced to reduce the level of air traffic.

For these reasons and so many more, sequestration is the wrong answer to the fiscal challenges facing the country.

The cuts will hurt the most vulnerable in our society, and it will hurt our ability to compete in the global economy.

There is no question that we must address our deficit, but we must be smart about how we do it.

That is why Democrats have put forward a credible, responsible plan to replace sequestration.

Our legislation builds on the precedent set in the year-end deal, and it is in line with the balanced approach the American people favor.

It would replace half of the first year of sequestration with responsible

spending cuts, and half of it with revenue from those who can afford it most.

Our bill calls on the wealthiest Americans to pay at least the same marginal tax rate on their income as middle-class families pay, and would eliminate needless tax breaks for oil and gas companies and companies shipping jobs overseas.

At the same time, it would make responsible cuts.

Our bill would eliminate direct payments to farmers that have been paid out even during good times, and for crops farmers were not even growing.

And as the drawdown from Afghanistan is completed, our bill will make adjustments to our military that are in line with a strong 21st century strategy.

This legislation meets Republicans halfway.

It would protect the families and communities we represent from slower economic growth, fewer jobs, and weakened national defense.

And it would allow us to move past sequestration, towards working on a fair, comprehensive budget deal that provides certainty for American families and businesses.

So I would like to ask my Republican colleagues to seriously consider our proposal.

The American people want a balanced deal. Let's deliver.

We have heard people talk about job creation being impacted, reducing our economic growth, impacting the most vulnerable among us. In my subcommittee that oversees transportation and housing, we are going to see incredible impacts. HUD housing would have to put 125,000 tenants at immediate risk of losing their housing vouchers and putting them back on the streets at a time when we are just starting to really focus on our veterans and that growing number of veterans who are on our streets and making an impact across the spectrum. We will see a huge impact on housing.

On the transportation side, every sector we oversee will be impacted. We have heard a lot of talk about our U.S. airlines. They carry hundreds of millions of passengers every year. It is a huge impact on our economy. Our FAA is a world leader in managing air traffic and protecting the safety of our skies. These cuts will force the FAA to literally furlough every single employee and impact our air traffic control and safety systems.

It does not have to be this way. The Senate majority has put forward a very balanced approach to replace sequester, and in the longer term, as budget chair, we are working now to bring to the Senate a 10-year budget plan that will replace sequestration in a responsible way, work us to a manageable debt and deficit, and invest in our country again so we can grow. Let's get out of this crisis-management mode, pass a replacement to sequestration in the short term that we have offered,

and get back to the regular order in the Senate. That means our country can get back to managing their families and their businesses and communities in a responsible way. We can do that by voting to put in place our replacement. I urge our colleagues to do that tomorrow morning when we have a chance to vote on that.

Mr. LEAHY. Mr. President, I want to thank the Senator from Maryland and commend the very energetic way she has taken on her new responsibilities as Chairwoman of the Appropriations Committee. She has played a leading role in educating other Senators and the American people about the real impacts of sequestration.

While most of the media has focused on the projected consequences for programs and jobs here at home, there are also consequences for the budget of the Department of State and foreign operations, which is directly related to the national security of the United States.

It might interest people to know that the entire Department of State and foreign operations budget amounts to one percent of the Federal budget, not the 15 or 20 percent many mistakenly believe.

That one percent is what we have to operate our embassies and consulates in over 290 countries, to process visas, carry out diplomacy, respond to humanitarian crises, and build alliances with security and trading partners. There are dozens of examples of how sequestration would harm these efforts, but I will mention just three:

Cuts in diplomatic security at a time when everyone agrees we need to do more to protect our Foreign Service Officers overseas. Funding for local guards, diplomatic security personnel, and embassy security would be reduced by \$181 million from the current level.

This would force the Department of State to choose between reducing the number of local guards at overseas posts, delaying maintenance at existing facilities, or postponing construction of secure facilities to replace those that do not meet current safety standards at a time of increasing attacks against U.S. overseas diplomatic posts.

Global Health programs that prevent the spread of AIDS and pay for vaccines for children, women's health, and to combat malaria and tuberculosis, would be cut by \$468 million from the current level.

A reduction of this size would end life-saving drugs to more than 165,000 people infected with the AIDS virus. It would result in thousands more deaths from malaria. Tens of thousands of people infected with TB will not receive treatment. And the health of millions of Americans who travel, study, work, and serve in our Armed Forces around the world would be put at greater risk.

Funding for disaster and refugee aid would be cut by \$156 million from the current levels. With 750,000 Syrian refugees and 5,000 fleeing the country each

day, now is not the time to cut these programs. Other funds to help victims of drought, famine, and extremist violence in Mali, Somalia, and Sudan, and to prevent those crises from getting worse, will also be cut.

These are just a few examples of the real world consequences, not only for the people of those countries but for the security of the United States. People need to know what is at stake.

As has been pointed out repeatedly, sequestration was included in the Budget Control Act as an incentive to negotiate. The idea was that it would have such catastrophic consequences that rational minds would replace it with a thoughtful and balanced approach to deficit reduction.

That has not happened. To the contrary, just days before the sequester is to take effect our friends in the minority party whose only answer is to slash government programs and particularly those that help the neediest, have apparently decided that sequestration is not so bad after all.

MILITARY CONSTRUCTION AND VETERANS PROGRAMS

Mr. JOHNSON. Mr. President, I thank Chairwoman MIKULSKI for organizing this colloquy among Appropriations Subcommittee Chairs regarding the real consequences of the upcoming sequester on this Nation.

Fortunately, America's veterans are spared from the direct impact of the sequester, as all programs funded through the Department of Veterans Affairs are exempt. Veterans hospitals and clinics will continue to operate normally, veterans benefits will be processed and paid, and other veterans services will continue uninterrupted.

But make no mistake about it; veterans are no more immune than any other American from the collateral damage that these senseless automatic spending cuts will inflict. Bear in mind that veterans are parents and teachers, firefighters and law enforcement officers, border patrol agents and small business owners. A large number of civilian jobs at the Departments of Defense and Homeland Security, among other federal agencies, are held by veterans. In fact, veterans comprise 44 percent of the Defense Department's civilian workforce. Veterans are subject to the same risk as any other government employee of being furloughed or laid off because of the sequester, and veteran-owned businesses face the same risk as any other small business of losing crucial government contracts.

This is not some abstract inside-the-beltway issue. Eighty-six percent of the Defense Department's civilian workforce resides outside of the Washington metropolitan area. In my home state of South Dakota, approximately 1,000 Defense Department civilian employees are slated to be furloughed, reducing gross pay by about \$6.3 million. This loss in income will surely reverberate throughout the local economy.

The ripple effect of the sequester on the economy and job market nation-

wide is particularly worrisome for veterans of the Iraq and Afghanistan wars, who already face higher unemployment rates than the general population. According to the Bureau of Labor Statistics, veterans of these two wars are dealing with an unemployment rate of 11.7 percent, compared to a national unemployment rate of 7.9 percent. The employment picture for Iraq and Afghanistan-era women veterans is even bleaker: 17.1 percent compared to a national unemployment rate for women of 7.4 percent. Furloughs, layoffs, and civilian hiring freezes have the potential to make a bad problem far worse for these veterans.

So yes, the VA is spared a direct hit from the budget axe triggered by the sequester, but veterans are not.

Another impact of the sequester that will be felt across this country is funding for military construction, which is poised to lose more than \$1 billion as a result of sequestration. Like other agencies, the Defense Department does not have the flexibility to choose where to cut military construction every single project planned for construction in fiscal year 2013 will be forced to take a funding cut of approximately 9 percent.

The fiscal year 2013 program comprises more than 250 military construction projects in 42 states, the District of Columbia and overseas. As a result of sequestration, every one of those projects will have to be reassessed to determine if it can be executed at the lower funding level, or if it will need to be delayed or cancelled. The Defense Department can shift funding from one project to another through a congressional reprogramming, but that means the Department will be the sole arbiter of choosing winners and losers among the projects that Congress has already authorized. Moreover, reprogramming actions are time consuming and labor intensive, and at a time when the Department will be understaffed due to furloughs and a hiring freeze, the likelihood of delays or deferrals of military construction projects is high. Not only does this affect mission critical and quality of life projects on military installations, but it also impacts the local construction industry, and thus the local economy, in hundreds of communities throughout the Nation.

Carpet bombing the federal budget with across-the-board spending cuts is neither wise nor prudent. It's about as smart as a surgeon performing heart surgery with an axe. There will be casualties, and veterans and military families will be among those casualties.

Mr. President, I yield the floor.

Ms. MIKULSKI. Mr. President, I thank my colleague from South Dakota, the Chairman of the Military Construction and Veterans Affairs Subcommittee, for presenting a stark and compelling explanation of the impact of sequestration on veterans and military installations, and the consequences these ill-advised budget cuts will have on local communities.

I am particularly troubled by the impact these cuts could have on Iraq and Afghanistan war veterans who are already struggling to find jobs, many of whom are also coping with combat-related physical and mental health issues. The unemployment rate among women veterans is truly shocking. These brave Americans have served on the frontlines of our war on terrorism, and they should not be subject on their return home to a manufactured budget meltdown that could further complicate their job prospects and job security.

Of course we need to rein in the federal debt, but we need to do so in a thoughtful, constructive way that brings both reasoned budget cuts and additional revenue to the table. The President has called for, and Senate Democrats are proposing, a balanced way forward.

NNSA AND CCE

Ms. MIKULSKI. As the Chairman of the Energy and Water Development Appropriations Subcommittee, I would ask the Senator from California to describe the impact of sequestration on the Department of Energy and the Corps of Engineers.

Please provide specific examples that would help Members of Congress and the American people understand the consequences of sequestration on basic and applied research for future energy technologies, nuclear weapons modernization and nonproliferation activities, and maintaining critical water infrastructure.

Mrs. FEINSTEIN. I thank the Senator for her leadership on bringing much needed attention to the arbitrary and damaging cuts of sequestration on important government programs.

I would like to start by highlighting the impact of sequestration on national security activities. A semi-autonomous agency within the Department of Energy, known as the National Nuclear Security Administration, or NNSA, is responsible for safeguarding the country's nuclear weapons stockpile.

NNSA has recently embarked on a major modernization effort. The purpose is to upgrade aging infrastructure and replace aging components in nuclear weapons. These investments are being made so that NNSA can reduce the size of the stockpile, consistent with New START Treaty obligations, and certify each year that nuclear weapons remain safe, secure, and effective without underground nuclear testing.

Sequestration would cut close to \$600 million from the nuclear weapons program, essentially freezing and reversing modernization efforts. Specifically, cuts in funding would put at risk NNSA's ability to refurbish nuclear weapons that are needed by the Air Force and Navy to meet nuclear deterrence missions, delay construction of facilities needed to replace old facilities that do not meet modern health and safety standards but are necessary

to manufacture critical nuclear weapons components, result in furloughs and/or lay-offs of up to 5,000 contractors at the eight NNSA sites across the country, and reduce oversight of NNSA nuclear facilities resulting in less frequent and thorough audits and evaluations of security at the sites. This would come at a time when security lapses have occurred at a major site storing nuclear weapons materials.

Ms. MIKULSKI. It is my understanding that NNSA also funds non-proliferation activities. Would sequestration undermine the 4 year goal of securing all vulnerable nuclear materials around the world by the end of December 2013?

Mrs. FEINSTEIN. NNSA has sufficient funding to meet the 4 year goal, but securing materials is not the same as permanently removing and disposing of them. Even with the 4 year goal nearly complete, thousands of kilograms of highly enriched uranium and plutonium enough materials for dozens of nuclear weapons still present a terrorism risk. Terrorists are indifferent to sequestration.

The sequester would impose cuts of nearly \$200 million from the non-proliferation program. Efforts to remove additional nuclear materials would be delayed. In addition, NNSA would not be able to deploy additional radiation detection equipment at border crossings that are most vulnerable to nuclear and radiological smuggling. Of particular concern is NNSA missing the deadline to build and deploy new, more accurate sensors that can detect other countries' nuclear weapons tests. NNSA would not be able to build the sensors before the Air Force is scheduled to launch its satellites.

Ms. MIKULSKI. Equally important to our national security are efforts to reduce U.S. dependency on foreign oil and mitigating the effects of global warming. What impact will sequestration have on basic research needed to accelerate future energy technologies?

Mrs. FEINSTEIN. The Department of Energy maintains U.S. leadership in scientific and technological innovation by supporting basic research through its Office of Science. The goal is to advance energy technologies and operate world-leading facilities to accelerate scientific discoveries.

Sequestration would cut about \$250 million from the Office of Science. Specifically, these cuts would result in hundreds of layoffs at national labs, universities, research facilities, and private sector companies that rely on Office of Science funding grants for energy research, reduce operations of major scientific facilities, meaning less research and development in one of the highest priority research areas designing novel materials which is critical to advancing energy technologies, stop almost all construction projects that are replacing aging infrastructure at the national labs that are needed to support science missions and attract the best scientists from around the coun-

try and the world, and allow no, or very few, new awards to advance high performance computing to stay ahead of Chinese competition and develop the next generation system, known as exascale, before the U.S. reaches the limits of current technology.

These cuts would come at a time when many other countries are making significant investments in energy research and development. Many experts are already warning that current investments are not sufficient to maintain U.S. competitiveness in energy technologies.

Ms. MIKULSKI. Before our time is up, let's also discuss the impact of sequestration on water infrastructure. What will be the impact on the Civil Corps of Engineers?

Mrs. FEINSTEIN. With sequestration, the Corps would likely have to close 57 recreation areas and partially close 186 recreation sites. There would also be no funding for 52 ongoing studies that were funded in FY 2012, 65 construction projects that were funded in FY 2012, and 43 dredging projects that were funded in FY 2012.

As the studies and construction projects are cost shared with non-Federal sponsors, over 115 local sponsors would be left with no Federal share to match their contributions for these studies and projects, further delaying completion of these studies and projects. In addition, only the bare minimum funding for dredging of ports and harbors will be available. This will lead to inefficiencies in transportation due to required light-loading which will ultimately lead to increases in consumer costs.

The long term effect of these delays is increasing the costs of construction projects. More money needed to complete current construction projects means less or no funding for future projects already planned.

I thank Senator MIKULSKI for the colloquy today on this issue.

Ms. MIKULSKI. I thank Senator FEINSTEIN for her sobering assessment of the impacts of sequestration.

AUTHORIZING THE REPORTING OF COMMITTEE FUNDING RESOLUTIONS

Mrs. MURRAY. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate proceed to the immediate consideration of S. Res. 58, submitted earlier today.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report the resolution by title.

The legislative clerk read as follows:

A resolution (S. Res. 58) authorizing the reporting of committee funding resolutions for the period March 1, 2013 through September 30, 2013.

There being no objection, the Senate proceeded to consider the resolution.

Mrs. MURRAY. I ask unanimous consent that the resolution be agreed to and the motion to reconsider be laid upon the table, with no intervening action or debate.