

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.

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

The resolution (S. Res. 58) was agreed to.

(The resolution is printed in today's RECORD under "Submitted Resolutions.")

Mrs. MURRAY. Madam President, with that, I know the Republican leaders are on their way and ready to discuss this. I hope tomorrow morning we take the responsible tack of replacing the sequester and getting our country back on track.

Thank you.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Texas.

FISCAL POLICY

Mr. CORNYN. Madam President, I want to start with some numbers that help put our spending budget debate in perspective.

Since President Obama became President of the United States, our gross national debt has gone up by 56 percent—56 percent. Over the next decade, unless we act responsibly, it is projected to rise by another 57 percent and reach a staggering \$26.1 trillion. I don't know anyone who can actually comprehend numbers that big, but that is what it is.

By comparison, the sequester—the much-dread sequester that is supposed to go into effect on Friday—would cut only 2.4 percent out of Federal spending for this next year. It would authorize \$85 billion in cuts for the current fiscal year, which, as I said, is only 2.4 percent of the total Federal budget—2.4 percent. Yet the President is now traveling around the country on Air Force One, telling us that a 2.4-percent spending cut will have a catastrophic effect on our economy and on jobs. Of course, this part is predictable: The only solution he seems to offer is raising taxes once again.

We saw in December during the debate over the fiscal cliff—and I know the American people must be getting nauseated with us lurching from one financial crisis to another, with the fiscal cliffs, sequestrations, debt ceiling, government shutdown threats. It is no wonder the American people look at Washington and wonder: Can't you guys get your act together? But the solution is not to keep on keeping on and spending money we don't have and racking up more debt and deficits, nor is the solution to continue to raise taxes on the very people we are depending upon to invest in new jobs and grow their current businesses to create jobs and opportunities for middle-class families.

Rather than the nightmare scenario the President likes to talk about, Republicans and Democrats would be happy to give the President and the administration some flexibility in how it implements these 2.4-percent cuts. Unfortunately, that doesn't seem to be what the President is looking for. He

doesn't seem to want to figure out how to manage these cuts as every family and every small business in America who is left with less income coming in the front door would have to do. He doesn't seem to want to manage it; he seems to want to use this to scare people in order to grow the size of government by raising more taxes. He seems to believe that only Washington and only the Federal Government can revive strong economic growth by steadily raising our levels of taxation and spending. That is sheer fantasy. The President either doesn't realize or he doesn't care that Federal spending levels are already unsustainable. Everybody knows this. This is not a mystery to anyone who has been paying attention.

For example, a single Federal program, Medicare, which our seniors rely upon to provide them the health care they need, already has \$37 trillion in unfunded liabilities; again, an astronomical number that I doubt any of us can fully comprehend. But \$37 trillion in unfunded liabilities is big. America's total unfunded liabilities—this is all the promises we have made which we have no current ability to pay for—exceed \$100 trillion. Meanwhile, the national debt keeps going up. It is now roughly \$16.5 trillion.

We are fortunate enough to now see interest rates that we have to pay on that debt at a historically low figure, but each additional percentage point of interest we would have to pay—if interest rates were simply to go up to their historic norms—would increase the cost of our service on that debt by trillions of dollars. Simply put, we cannot spend our way back into prosperity.

There are things the Federal Government can and should do to boost economic growth. We all understand this. The fact is the government is not what creates jobs. It is the private sector, small businesses in America, entrepreneurs, and the people who take a risk to start a new restaurant or open a hardware store. Actually, those small businesses are the ones that actually create many more jobs on a percentage basis than do the large Fortune 500 companies.

All we have to do is look around the country, and I know the Presiding Officer understands what is happening. We see some parts of the country that are growing fast and where jobs are plentiful. One of those is Texas, another one is North Dakota. There are some common elements in our story that I will talk about in a minute, but for the past 8 years "Chief Executive" magazine has ranked the best States in the country to do business. I would not have brought it up if it were not true, but the No. 1 State is the State of Texas. This week Forbes ranked the 10 best cities for good jobs, and half of those cities were in Texas—including Austin, Dallas, Fort Worth, Houston, and San Antonio.

Texas has nearly 32 percent more jobs today than it did in 1995—32 per-

cent. Over the same period the total number of jobs nationwide increased by only 12 percent. I would think curious people would wonder why. Our State accounts for 8 percent of the U.S. population, but we accounted for almost one-third of all private sector jobs in high-paying industries between 2002 and 2011. Let me say that again so everyone is clear. Our State accounts for 8 percent of the national population, but we accounted for almost one-third of all private sector job growth in high-paying industries between 2002 and 2011. That is remarkable.

Some might wonder what the secret is, and thank goodness the States still are the laboratories of democracy where we can demonstrate the policies that actually work rather than trying to mandate a one-size-fits-all policy from Washington, DC, that doesn't work.

The secret in my State is that we have, for example, no State income taxes. We are a relatively low income tax State, although people still pay sales and property taxes. We have minimal and sensible regulations because we know that not only do taxes depress economic growth, we know government—either State government, local government, or Federal Government—that issues punitive regulations can actually dampen economic growth and job creation.

We also have a relatively low level of per capita government spending. People don't come to Texas because they want handouts. They come to Texas because they want an opportunity to work, to achieve, and to live their dreams and in the process creating a lot of jobs and opportunity for other people. We are also—and I know this is where the Presiding Officer can identify with this statement—unapologetic about harvesting our State's abundant oil and gas reserves. Indeed, Texas oil production increased by 94 percent between September 2008 and September 2012. Shale gas is natural gas that is produced by hydraulic fracturing and horizontal drilling. It has been around—actually fracking—for roughly 60 years now. When done properly, it is safe and does not damage the water supply. The shale gas now available due to horizontal drilling and hydraulic fracturing has produced a shale gas revolution in this country.

The truth is that if we get out of the way and sensibly regulate this industry, open the Keystone XL Pipeline—which the President could do, but he has not yet done—it would not only create thousands of new jobs, it would create the potential for North American energy independence. Imagine how that would change the geopolitics of the planet. In instances where the Iranian regime threatens to shut down the Strait of Hormuz and block 20 percent of the world's oil supply, it would not have nearly the impact because our country would be North American energy independent within a decade or so.

Well, I should also footnote the fact that down in Eagle Ford Shale—which