

an economist at the Federal Reserve. He knows a great deal about the economy. His instinct is what led him to call this a "nutty appointment."

Continuing Mr. Poor's quote:

Kudlow pointed to Lew as part of the problem.

Part of the problem as to why we don't have a budget. He said he is part of the problem.

Once again citing the Poor article:

Kudlow cited Lew's lack of qualifications as another reason that President Obama's appointment was "completely irresponsible."

Quoting Mr. Kudlow, the article went on to say this:

"You know, this whole thing is kind of centered around the Senate, which hasn't done a budget in 1,351 days—so whatever that is, four years," Mr. Kudlow said.

And I will just add that today is the 1,400th day.

Continuing the quote:

"Now the White House might not even submit a budget, and now the White House had taken the budget director and chief of staff and put him over the Treasury, where Jack Lew is completely—and I mean completely unqualified to be Treasury Secretary."

He is talking about Lew, and sending him to be Secretary of Treasury.

Mr. Poor goes on quoting Mr. Kudlow, who explains:

"He has no financial experience. He has no international experience. He has no currency experience. He ripped off Citibank for a couple million dollars. He was there for one year. I mean, there's about a million people—give me a phone book, and I'll find somebody more qualified for Treasury Secretary than former OMB director Jack Lew. This is all of a piece. It is completely irresponsible."

Well, that is pretty clear, what he expresses there, what he believes. And I think that is valuable insight.

Are we just making this up? This staffer for Tip O'Neill, the Budget Director of OMB before and now Chief of Staff at the White House, is he really qualified to lead the United States of America in addressing the challenges of our time?

What about the Secretary of the Treasury position? Is that a matter of great importance? The Treasury is one of the four great senior Cabinet positions we have—Attorney General, Defense Secretary, State, and Treasury. The credibility of the Treasury Secretary is his greatest asset, and, as I have said, this statement raises the most grievous doubts about his credibility.

We have had great Secretaries. Albert Gallatin early on, who was a Swiss immigrant, helped create the House Ways and Means Committee and instituted the development of the Treasury. Simon Chase from Ohio stood as one of Lincoln's top aides and was responsible for the civil system of federally chartered banks. William McAdoo, a distinguished businessman, helped create the Federal Reserve System. Andrew Mellon, a brilliant Pennsylvania businessman, served as Secretary of Treasury. Henry Morgenthau, Jr., served as

FDR's Secretary from 1934 through 1945. William Simon, a successful businessman, served as Secretary under Nixon and Ford. He supervised the Nation's economic policies in crisis times.

So this nominee doesn't have the kind of background one would normally look for in a Secretary of Treasury, particularly when we are doing so poorly economically. We had a big recession, and we are coming out of it at a slower rate than we perhaps have ever seen other than the Great Depression.

Mr. Malpass testified at the Budget Committee yesterday about the Lew-Obama-Paul Krugman theory of borrowing money and spending money to stimulate the economy and get us out of the recession. All you have to do is look at it and see it didn't work. How much more evidence do you need?

So that is the advice we have been getting there. And this good staffer quality is what our Democratic chairman of the Finance Committee, Senator BAUCUS, seemed to see in Jack Lew during his recent confirmation hearings. He seemed to call into question the necessary stature the position requires and whether Jack Lew met those standards. This is what Senator BAUCUS said to Mr. Lew:

I'm going to ask you—it's clear you'd be a great staffer. I'm not talking about being a great, courageous staffer and telling the President what you think and don't think. I'm talking about something else. I'm talking about the public perception, the public demeanor, representing the United States across the country and around the world, be able to influence policy in a way that makes sense—most of us would tend to agree with. We may differ along the edges, but most everybody in this room agrees that needs to be done.

So even the chairman of the Finance Committee, a Democratic chairman, Senator BAUCUS, with great experience, certainly raised some questions about the nomination.

Madam President, I appreciate the opportunity to speak, and I look forward to Senator KAINE's remarks.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Virginia.

Mr. KAINE. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent to speak as in morning business and that the time count against the nomination.

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

ABNORMAL TIMES

Mr. KAINE. Madam President, it is an honor to stand here for my first speech on the Senate floor. I am honored to be part of this body and to speak where hundreds have spoken before and thousands will speak after me.

A normal first speech for a Senator is usually a proactive, forward-looking speech. We are not in normal times. A normal first speech for a Senator usually happens much later, after a Senator has been around for a number of months. We are not in normal times. A normal first speech for a Senator is often in connection with the introduc-

tion of a piece of legislation. We are not in normal times. So I am speaking a bit earlier than I would have thought likely when I took the oath of office on January 3, but I am speaking in particular because we are not in normal times, and the abnormality of the times has a huge effect on the Commonwealth I am proud to represent.

In the summer of 2011 Congress passed a bill we are now talking about, a bill dealing with the sequestration cuts of the Federal Government.

There is no precedent I am aware of in congressional history for what is about to happen in 48 hours.

Congress designed a set of punishing, nonstrategic, ugly cuts designed to hurt the economy and hurt individuals and all—however they voted on that bill—did not want these cuts to come into place. So those who voted for the package in the summer of 2011 did not want the sequester cuts to occur and believed we would find, through compromise, an alternative; and those who voted against the package in the summer of 2011 largely voted against it because they did not want these cuts to occur.

So the abnormality of the times is this: Never, to my knowledge, in the history of this body, has Congress designed a punishment that would hurt the lives of regular individuals and that would hurt the economy. It was designed with that knowledge, fully. All hoped it would not happen. Yet we are within 48 hours of allowing it to happen.

The effects this sequester will have on the country and the effects it will have on my Commonwealth are so significant and severe that I do feel compelled to speak a little earlier than I otherwise might have. I would also add I think the effects of these cuts on this institution and the credibility of this institution are equally severe.

What I wish to do in this speech is basically a couple things. I want to talk about the effect of these sequester cuts, if they happen, on regular people. I just returned from a tour around my State and I am just going to share some stories. I want to talk, with some data, about the short-term impacts of these cuts on the broader economy. Third, I want to talk about some long-term impacts, some impacts we are not necessarily thinking of right now but should cause us significant concern. Fourth, there is a way to avoid this, and I want to talk about how we can avoid allowing this self-inflicted wound to occur. Finally, I want to talk about the fact that there is an upside in this moment for us. This is not just about avoiding harming people, hurting the economy. It is not just about avoiding negatives. I think there is an upside for us and for this institution and for this Nation if we do this right.

Let me begin with my tour around Virginia. I am now a brandnew member of the Armed Services Committee, and I sit in a wonderful seat following John Warner, who was there for 30 years, and

Jim Webb, who was there before me. I am no replacement for either of those individuals and I have big shoes to fill. So I decided to take a tour around my State last week and visit the various touch points in the Commonwealth where we interact with our military and our national security.

The map of Virginia is a map of the military history of this country: Yorktown, where the Revolutionary War ended; Appomattox, where the Civil War ended; the Pentagon, where we were attacked on 9/11. We are the most connected State to the military. One in eight Virginians is a veteran—not one in eight adults, one in eight Virginians, from birth to death. Over 100,000 Active-Duty Guard and Reserve, DOD civilians, DOD contractors. By the time we add up all of those and their families and military families, we are probably talking about one in three Virginians.

I went to the places where Virginians work every day, as ship repairers in private shipyards, as Active Duty on naval bases, as DOD civilians working as nurses in Army hospitals, as young officer candidates training in ROTC programs, at VA hospitals. I went around the State, and let me tell you what I heard.

A few miles from here is Fort Belvoir Community Hospital, one of the pre-eminent institutions that treats wounded warriors. A wounded warrior still on Active service being treated there, his wife sitting right next to him, we talked, and she ventured this: Let's talk about these furloughs of these DOD civilian employees. My husband's nurses are all DOD civilians, and while the sequester protects Active Duty, it doesn't protect the civilians. What is it going to mean to my husband's medical treatment as he comes back from being wounded, injured defending this Nation, if the nurses and health professionals at this hospital are furloughed 1 day a week?

In the same roundtable, another wounded warrior said to me: Boy, the economy is really going to suffer if we have this sequester. We are going to lose jobs, and the economy could shrink. I am a reservist.

He was a wounded warrior as a reservist, waiting to go back into the civilian workforce into a job with a Federal agency that does national security. What is that going to mean to me? Is there a hiring freeze? Is there a pay freeze? Is this a furlough? This wounded warrior was wondering about his economic future.

At the shipyard at Newport News—what a good news story. We Americans, we Virginians, we manufacture the largest items that are manufactured on planet Earth—nuclear aircraft carriers—in that shipyard. What a wonderful American example of ingenuity that is. Yet in looking at these sequester cuts, as repairs and other projects and programs are being scaled back, the workers of that shipyard are asking about the stability of their work

and about whether the ships we put out and we put our people on will be truly ready to do the work they need to do.

At another private shipyard, the owner, a small businessman that has a shipyard in Hampton Roads, said: I have 50 employees. The way the Navy plans to deal with sequestration is to dramatically reduce maintenance in the third and fourth quarters of the year. I am going to issue WARN notices to tell 300 of my 450 employees they are not going to have a job. I just don't see how I can run this business without them, but I don't have the business to keep them if these sequestration cuts go through.

At a VA hospital in Richmond, the VA Corps services are protected under the sequester, but they are under hiring freezes. They compete with private sector hospitals to hire nurses and physicians, and they say that is getting tougher and tougher to do. They do research in Richmond about traumatic brain injury, and that research money is not protected from sequestration. So this research that will help us treat our wounded warriors better is in jeopardy if the sequester goes through.

It is not just military cuts. In Head Start, I talk with teachers who are facing significant cuts in programs for at-risk kids, even at a time where, because of the economy, the number of at-risk children in their classrooms is growing and growing and the number of children total in their classrooms is growing and growing.

On Monday a number of us were at National Airport to talk about the effect of sequester on something that is fairly basic, the experience of the Americans by the millions and millions who travel every day in the air: longer lines, potentially higher prices.

This is what Virginians were telling me as I went to talk to them about what we were doing in Washington and the likely consequences they were going to see in their lives. Again and again, what they said to me was go up and find a solution.

I went to a bluegrass concert on Saturday afternoon. I was wearing blue jeans and a Carhartt jacket and I was taking an hour off to listen to a set of music. I sat next to a guy who appeared to be about 80 years old, ramrod straight, energetic. He was a veteran wearing a cap from his Navy service. About halfway through the set he leaned over to me and he said: Now, I know you are here for music. You didn't come here to politic. I said: That is right. I am here for music. He said: So all I am going to say is this. There is not a single thing you are going to do, plus or minus—or not do—that will affect my quality of life. I am fine. But I am telling you, for the good of the country, you ought to go up and figure out a way to get people to work together and find some deal.

So that is what my citizens were saying to me on this trip, just in the last 2 weeks, at every stop: find a deal, work together. Not a single person

said: Protect my job, protect my program, protect my priority by making the cuts in other areas worse. Not one person said that. They were asking for a balanced approach, where there would be pain, where there would be a balance of cuts but also revenues, and we would try to tackle this in a targeted way.

Some statistics and thoughts. These are stories from individuals. Now let's look at the immediate impact on the Virginia economy and on other important goals: our military readiness and defense posture.

A couple weeks ago we heard at an Armed Services Committee meeting from Secretary Panetta and General Dempsey as Secretary Panetta was exiting in that role. They had just announced that CENTCOM—the portion of the military that controls the space including Afghanistan—wants to have two carriers in the Middle East to project American force to try to prevent or reduce any dangerous, provocative activities by Iran or anyone else and to protect our men and women in service, if the need should happen. Their military judgment was we needed two carriers and that force there to protect them. But about 2 weeks ago, the DOD Secretary said: We are not going to have two carriers; we are just going to have one.

Thousands of sailors who were on the verge of deploying, many of whom had sublet their apartments, put their cars in storage, sold their cars, cancelled their cell phones, sent families back to other places in the country to stay with their parents, learned within just a very few days it was all being turned topsy-turvy.

Having only one carrier in the Middle East, maybe nothing bad will happen. But when the military leadership of the country suggests we should have two and we decide, because of budget indecision, let's only have one, that sends a message. It sends a message to our friends, it sends a message to those we would be protecting that our commitment is wavering, and it also sends a message to our adversaries that our commitment might be wavering.

We heard many bits of testimony that day from General Dempsey and Secretary Panetta about how our readiness, our ability to respond with flexibility, gets compromised if we don't get this right.

On the National Guard side, I visited a National Guard Army called the Stonewall Brigade in Staunton, VA. Here is something interesting. This National Guard combat brigade, the Stonewall Brigade, their first action as a brigade was 20 years before the French and Indian Wars. Their first action as a brigade was in the 1740s. Since then, they have deployed again and again to protect Americans. Yet they were talking about sequestration affecting their ability to train their people.

One of the individuals who was the commander of that brigade said in a

very powerful way: I am going to send my people, and they are going to do their best, but I would rather send them 100 percent trained than 80 or 85 percent trained. If we act now after we sequester and reduce training, we will be sending people into service 80 or 85 percent trained.

Our DOD civilians, the Pentagon has announced it would take steps to furlough 800,000 civilian employees for up to 22 days a year. In Virginia alone—one State—90,000 individuals, beginning at the end of March, early April, will face the beginnings of furloughs 1 day a week for up to 22 weeks.

There aren't many towns and cities in Virginia that have more than 90,000 people. Yet we would take all those people and put their economic livelihood at risk for the foreseeable future as we try to figure this out. Let me tell you who some of these folks are. These are the nurses who treat our wounded warriors. These are our air traffic controllers who keep us safe in the air. Think of those individuals and the fact that they are trying to make a living for their families and they are trying to do good service for their fellow Virginians and fellow Americans and then multiply that by 90,000, and that is just one State's worth.

We all want a vibrant private sector. We all think the private sector being strong is the key to economic growth. The estimate of most economists is that Virginians, because of sequestration and reductions to private contracting, would stand to lose up to 200,000 jobs, 137,000 on the defense side and nearly 70 on the nondefense side.

The Newport News Shipbuilding company that I announced earlier, the largest industrial employer in Virginia, is preparing to shrink; facing smaller ship repairs and having to issue WARN notices to their employees. We see this all over the Commonwealth.

Educators. Virginia stands to lose \$14 million in funding for primary and secondary education, and this is funding that is targeted. It is targeted to funding to the most disadvantaged students, title I funding. One hundred ninety teachers' jobs are at risk and about 14,000 fewer disadvantaged students will receive these services. In a particular passion of mine, Head Start and early childhood education, 70,000 students nationally will lose their spaces in early childhood education Head Start because of the sequester; about 1,000 of those are in Virginia.

The statistics are grim, and these aren't just numbers on a page or numbers in a budget book. These are parents who are sitting at a kitchen table already worrying about how to make ends meet and finding that they are going to have 1 less day of work every week, potentially, for the next 20 weeks or people who spent their lives in shipbuilding and they are going to be given WARN notices, with no clear indication of when their company or other companies might start hiring again.

Those are the short-term impacts. Let me talk, for a minute, about some long-term impacts because these are the stories that aren't necessarily in the newspaper. But as I listened to my constituents last week, they made this case, and they made it in a way I found to be pretty compelling.

When the decision was announced about the USS *Truman* not being deployed, there was a 20-year-old airwoman aviator on the carrier who was quoted in the newspaper as saying: I was so excited to be on my first deployment for my country. I want to have a military career, but I am starting to think that might not be realistic.

We have a whole generation of young people who serve in the military, and they are our future generals and Joint Chiefs of Staff and future Deputy Secretaries of Defense and Secretaries of Defense in that leadership corps. They have decided they want to devote their future to protecting the Nation. But what is happening in this building is making them believe maybe this is not a realistic career choice.

I spoke to ROTC students at the University of Virginia. These are folks on the verge of commissioning as officers in all four primary service branches—Army, Marine, Air Force, Navy—and I spoke to them last week and one of them said this to me. I found this very chilling.

I am training to be an officer because I want to serve my country and guess what, I am willing to put myself into harm's way to known hostilities and unknown hostilities in the world, to serve my country. But I have to ask myself, am I willing to put my career at risk by making a career choice to pursue a path when I do not have confidence that the civilian political leadership of the country has a commitment to me and to my colleagues?

Being willing to face hostilities and enemy fire—they signed up for that. But as they think about their military careers, whether they would do their 4 years and leave or whether they would make a career out of it, the message we send from this building and this Capitol about whether we are committed to them is one of the factors they utilize to try to make their decisions.

Similarly, students around this Commonwealth and country who are thinking about being early childhood educators would wonder about the future of early childhood or Head Start programs. In a really funny interchange with some welders and the president of the shipyard, the Newport News Shipyard, which is run by Huntington Ingalls, he said: If we do layoffs or scale back and we lose nuclear engineers for the subs and carriers, they can find other jobs. In fact, the president, Mike Petters, a good friend, said: It is easier for this company to replace me, the CEO, than it is to replace a nuclear engineer.

But if our commitment to shipbuilding and ship repair and ship refurb is questionable and a nuclear engineer has other career options and they have to analyze which career option they

should pick, or a welder has other career options—and all do—and they have to decide which career options they pick, we will find it down the road increasingly difficult to have the kind of talent we need to do the jobs that need to be done to protect this Nation if we are not sending them a signal that we can find compromise, find agreements, and provide funding in an appropriate way for these critical services.

Here is the good news. The good news is we can avoid this. In fact, we have an obligation to avoid this. I was a little bit surprised when I came to the Senate to learn some things I did not know. I thought I was an educated observer. I was a little bit surprised, for example, that in the Budget Act that deals with how budgets are written, the budgets do not even go to the President. It is purely congressional. When the House and Senate pass a budget and then when it is compromised, it is purely congressional. Appropriations acts of course go to the President for signature, but they never get there unless Congress does them.

So while everyone has a responsibility to try to make this right, and the President and his team definitely have a responsibility, this is a congressional constitutional responsibility. There is a unique legislative prerogative for us to get this right and for us to avoid the self-inflicted damage to the economy and to people that every last person who voted was sure would not occur. Again, I say we are in a unique situation where we have designed a punishment and we would allow that punishment to affect individuals and our economy. I do not think there is a precedent that would be similar in the history of this body.

In order to address it, we have to find a balanced approach, as my citizens were telling me, and not gimmicks. No more sequester or supercommittee, no more continuing resolution. There is a process. We should follow that process. The process involves compromise. The process involves listening. And we need to do it.

I will say one more thing about why it is important that we do it, and not just for the economy. A lot of people think we are broken. I was struck in talks to some of my citizens that for as many people as do not like the current President, no one says to me that the Presidency as an institution is broken. For as many people as do not like this or that decision of the Supreme Court or the judiciary, no one says to me they think the judiciary is broken. But the third branch of government—really the first branch of government, we are first in the Constitution, the legislative branch—many people look at this potential sequester and other similar things and they worry about whether we are broken. So we not only have a constitutional obligation to fix it, we really need those of us, and all of us who care about this institution in the Capitol, we have to do our part to fix it.

The good news is that we can. Let me show you what we have done already by way of dealing with our fiscal challenges, and especially tackling deficits so we can try to get our balance sheet more in control. I have three very simple charts that are pretty easy to follow.

Congress, both Houses, and the President, have taken thus far, 2010 to now, steps that have reduced the deficit going forward over a 10-year period by about \$2.4 trillion. This is how this has been done. I get no credit for this because this all happened before I got here. This is what Congress has done over the last couple of years to reduce our deficit path and bring us closer to balance to the tune of \$2.4 trillion. We have done spending cuts of about 60 percent of the total. Because of some of these other actions, we have been able to project a savings in interest payments of another 14 percent. And with the decision at year end on the expiration of the Bush tax cuts and the bipartisan compromise that resulted, we have put in new revenue of about 26 percent of this total. All you have to know from looking at this chart is it is balanced.

We could argue the ratio. We might like it more red, more green, more blue. We could argue about the ratio. But it is a balanced approach of revenue, of spending cuts and of interest savings. That is what we have done already, and I give praise to the Members of Congress and the President who have been able to take that step.

But we all know we have more to do. So now that test is before us and that challenge and chore is on our table. We have more to do and there are two alternatives we will likely be debating and voting on within the next couple of days in this body, a Democratic approach and a GOP approach to how do we do more. That is because most would agree if we have done about \$2.4 trillion of deficit reduction already that we need to do about another \$1.5 trillion or so over the course of the next 10 years. We will be voting on one proposal tomorrow that has been advanced by the Democratic majority. That says we will additionally close our deficit over the course of this year. We will do it in a way that will push us forward to finding a bigger solution. And we will do it in a balanced way: 50 percent through new revenue, closing some corporate tax loopholes that have outlived their usefulness, raising rates at the top end for a very few Americans who can afford it. I talk to Virginians and they know we can afford it. So 50 percent of our additional deficit reduction would be on the new revenue side and 50 percent would be on spending cuts—spending cuts, many of which have already been agreed to in this body.

One of the core kinds of spending cuts—and it is important here—the spending cuts in the proposal we will vote on tomorrow are not across-the-board pain for everybody equally be-

cause everything is not worth everything else. They are targeted spending cuts, the right kind of spending cuts. So, for example, this body last summer voted on a farm bill to reduce significantly farm subsidies. It was bipartisan, Democratic and Republican votes. That bill died on the House side, but that notion that we can save money and that we should, that had bipartisan support, that is in the spending cuts component of the package we will talk about tomorrow, and that is the Democratic approach.

Is it magic? No, it is not magic. You might argue about the ratio. You might argue about the items. But the key to it is, just as what we have done so far to reduce the deficit by \$2.4 trillion has been a balanced approach, the approach we will vote on tomorrow on the Democratic side is a balanced approach.

There is also a Republican approach, or approaches. It was a little bit unclear as I took the floor whether there will be a single bill or multiple bills. But the GOP approach to this, which they laid on the table and which we will also debate and vote on, is, as you will see, all spending cuts. They might be different spending cuts from those in the sequester. In the context this will emerge. But there is no revenue in this approach. It is not a balanced approach, and I argue, based on what we have already done with the \$2.4 trillion, the right way to do this is to do it in a balanced way. That is the right thing for the economy. It is the right thing to soften the effect of these cuts. It is the right thing to make sure that people's lives are not needlessly turned topsy-turvy.

Can we save? Sure we can, and we should. But you cannot fix a balance sheet on just one side of the balance sheet. You have to look at both sides of the balance sheet, and I think that is what we will be debating over the next couple of days.

I have been thinking about this, and the last thing I will say before I close and talk about an upside is, when I was home in Richmond over the weekend after this week-long tour, knowing we would be coming here today to debate about these proposals, something happened in my hometown that I want to recommend to the contemplation of my colleagues here in the Senate. Virginia had been wrestling for two or three decades about what to do about transportation because it would be good for the economy for us to invest in transportation.

I will be candid and even sheepish. I was the Governor of Virginia and I strived for 4 years to get my legislature to do something meaningful, to invest in transportation, and aside from a few modest wins here or there I never was able to convince my legislature to do what I thought needed to be done.

Saturday in Richmond, 90 miles from here, 4 days ago, my Republican Governor, Bob McDonald, a friend, a Republican House of Delegates, over-

whelmingly Republican House of Delegates, 2 to 1, and a Republican Senate—it is a split Senate 20–20 but there is a President who breaks ties who is a Republican Lieutenant Governor so it is a Republican majority body—Republican Governor and Republican legislature decided to do something to benefit the economy and here is what they did. They did a package of \$880 million of revenue for transportation, annually when fully phased in, and 80 percent of the package is new revenue and 20 percent is spending cuts in general fund programs that would be repurposed to transportation.

For them to do that, they had to make a hard decision. For them to do something that was balanced, because an individual whose name is often mentioned in Washington, Grover Norquist, said can you not do this without violating your pledges, and others said it would be anathema to ever raise a tax or fee and it will be politically damaging and it will be economically wrong, and a Republican Governor and a Republican legislature looked at them and said: The right thing to do to benefit our economy is to take a balanced approach. And by an overwhelming majority in both Houses, supported by Republicans and Democrats and celebrated with excitement by a Republican Governor, this is what happened, 90 miles from here a few days ago in order to benefit the economy.

A transportation package is not a precise analog to what we are wrestling with here, but it is pretty close. This was a step that was taken to benefit the economy. It was done in a balanced way. We are faced with a fundamental decision about whether we are going to benefit the economy or whether we are going to intentionally allow something to happen that will hurt the economy. I think the lesson for what happened in Richmond is the economy benefits from a balanced approach and an imbalanced approach is not going to be the way we get to a solution that is good for the economy and good for people.

The last thing I will say is this. Much of my discussion has been about trying to avert bad things—people being furloughed, people losing their jobs, small ship repair yards potentially having to close, wounded warriors not having the nursing care they need, students eligible for Head Start not being able to go into classrooms, Guards men and women not receiving the kinds of training they need to go into the field and be fully prepared—much of what I have described has been about trying to avert negative consequences.

But the best part of all is I think we are in a unique moment where it is not just about averting the negative. I think we can do something that will have a positive effect, that will avert negative consequences, certainly, but by getting some certainty and by showing a spirit of compromise and cooperation, we will be sending a message from

this body that will have a positive effect on the economy.

There are some who see signs of the economy showing some strength. The stock market is doing pretty well. It is a bit volatile every day, but where are we on the stock market? We are doing pretty well. There was news about the housing prices and housing market coming up. Consumer confidence has been stronger than expected. These have not yet congealed into the trends we hope to see, but there are signs and there is evidence that we have an economy that is ready to achieve some lift.

If we look at our global competitors, we see that there are some weaknesses. This is a lesson I heard preached again and again by my senior Senator as he talked about global economies around the world. Senator WARNER talks about how Europe and the Euro Zone has its challenges, the Japanese economy has its challenges, and the Chinese economy has not been quite as strong as it had been. Our major global competitors are not just clicking on all eight cylinders.

If we do something right now, it will send a message throughout the economy that we are not only open for business, but there is a balanced approach that can be reached by a Senate and a Congress that is willing to work together and put country first and do what is right for the economy. I think we have every reason to believe we will not only avert the negative consequences I spent the last half hour talking about, but we will take those positive trends in the economy and put some more healing into the economy.

We will see some more lift that could be significant. We will see more of that cash that is in bank accounts invested back into the American economy. We will put some distance between ourselves and some of our other global competitors. This is what is at stake for us if we get this right.

It should be enough for us to do the right thing and find a balanced approach to avoid hurting people and to avoid hurting the economy. We will not only get an additional benefit if we act in a balanced way—because I believe we will avert those consequences—but we will see our economy lift in a more accelerated way.

I will conclude by saying this: This is a moment where we have a choice to make. I was with Leader REID an hour or two ago, and we sat through a beautiful ceremony where a statue was unveiled of Rosa Parks. One of the speakers talked about a very humble and pedestrian setting where she had a decision to make. The decision was, Do I just do what has always been done? Do I just kind of keep drifting into a situation that I know is unjust and unequal or do I decide to do something different?

We are drifting toward something that is very bad, something that Members of Congress believed strongly when the bill was first put in place should not happen and would harm people

and would harm our economy. That is the moment we are in right now, a moment to make a decision.

The decision is, Do we allow ourselves to drift in a way that hurts people or do we choose a balanced approach that will help people, strengthen the economy, strengthen our budget, strengthen our ability to create jobs, and strengthen the reputation of this body?

Thank you.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. HEINRICH). The Senator from Virginia.

CONGRATULATING SENATOR KAINE

Mr. WARNER. Mr. President, I rise very briefly to commend my friend of 33 years for his maiden speech and thoughtful exposition of the challenges which face our country. I have had the opportunity to know and work with TIM KAINE since we were in law school together. There is no one who is brighter; there is no one who brings more relentless optimism to any challenge. He is going to be a great addition to the Senate.

I know so many colleagues from both sides of the aisle have come to admire his intellect, his fairness, and his willingness to always do the right thing. I just wanted to rise briefly to commend my good friend. I know it is his first speech, but it will not be his last.

With that, I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from New York.

Mr. SCHUMER. I would like to add my congratulations to the junior Senator from Virginia for his maiden speech. We knew when he decided to run that he would be an outstanding Member. As his speech showed, he is living up to those high expectations. His speech was thoughtful, relevant, and showed both sides of the issue. That is the kind of trademark the junior Senator from Virginia has, and we look forward to working with him in the future.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. If no one yields time, the time will be charged equally to both sides.

Mr. SESSIONS. Mr. President, I wish to continue to share my concerns about the appointment of Mr. Jack Lew to be the Secretary of the Treasury of the United States, one of the four senior Cabinet positions that are so important to America.

I have delineated how he proposed the budget in 2011. He announced on CNN and several other Sunday morning shows—this is when he was going to introduce the budget the next day, and he was giving a preview of it.

“Our budget will get us, over the next several years, to the point where we can look the American people in the eye and say, we’re not adding to the debt anymore; we’re spending money that we have each year, and then we can work on bringing down our national debt.”

Now, that would be a thing to celebrate. But I am convinced that he and the White House officials had met and

they decided they weren’t going to change the tax-and-spend and deficit policies of the United States, but they knew that wasn’t going to be popular after 2010’s shellacking of big-spending politicians. So what did they decide to do? They decided to prepare a budget that made no real change in the spending trajectory of America, continuing us on, as Secretary Geithner said just a few weeks later, an unsustainable course, while telling the American people they did what they wanted.

As I indicated earlier, this budget he presented never had a single year in the 10 years of that budget in which the deficit fell below \$600 billion. That is larger than any deficit President Bush ever had in his 8 years, and it was going up during the last 5 years.

They said the deficit would go up \$740-some-odd billion in the 10th year. The Congressional Budget Office took their very same proposals—the independent CBO—and concluded that it would be \$1.2 trillion in the 10th year, in debt—a totally unsustainable debt course and getting worse in the outer years.

So I am very much of the belief that this Senate should not accept a man for the Secretary of the Treasury, to promote him to that august position, who makes this kind of representation about the budget he prepared as Director of the Office of Management and Budget. The budget got zero votes in the House twice and zero votes in the Senate twice. It has been panned by editorial boards all over America. He has been at the center of the political financial maneuvers of the Obama Administration from the beginning.

A lot of people are wondering why an agreement hasn’t been reached around here: Why don’t you agree? It is hard to agree if the man you are negotiating with is as out of contact with reality as the Wall Street Journal said of Hosni Mubarak shortly before he fell in Egypt. So I am baffled by it.

I wish to share now a few more thoughts about how this sequester we are talking about so much now happened, how it came about, and Mr. Lew’s role in it. In fact, he designed it. He proposed a budget later in February 2012 that would eliminate it, and now he denies ever creating it in the first place. From Bob Woodward’s book—he studied this carefully and talked to people, and I saw him on television this morning being quite firm about this. He has written a recent op-ed piece explaining the situation.

This is what Bob Woodward said in his book “The Price of Politics”:

Lew, Nabors, Sperling and Bruce Reed, Biden’s chief of staff, had finally decided to propose using language from the 1985 Gramm-Rudman-Hollings deficit reduction law as the model for the trigger . . . It would require a sequester with half the cuts from Defense, and the other half from domestic programs.

Later in the negotiations, Obama adviser David Plouffe reportedly said that he couldn’t believe that Republicans were going to agree to any deal with sequester as a trigger.