

Corps Forces Special Operations Command based out of Camp Lejeune, NC.

In late February of this year, Master Sergeant Torian was laid to rest with full military honors at Arlington National Cemetery. Just last month at the Memorial Day ceremonies in Aaron's native McCracken County, KY, county officials unveiled a commemorative street sign for MSgt Aaron C. Torian. For 1 year it will be displayed in front of the county courthouse and then placed permanently at a location of his family members' choosing.

"Thank God for the blessing and honor of allowing me to be your mom," says Aaron's mother Esta. "Semper Fi—always faithful. My son, you are a true American hero."

We are thinking of Aaron's family today as I share his story with my Senate colleagues, including his wife Jurley, his children Elijah, Laura Bella, and Avery, his mother and stepfather Esta and Jim Smith, his father Joe Torian, and many other beloved family members and friends.

I want the family of MSgt Aaron C. Torian to know that just as his life of dedication and service is recognized at the McCracken County Courthouse and in the hallowed shrine of Arlington, so too it is recognized in the Senate.

I know all of my colleagues join me in solemn reverence and gratitude for this brave young man's willingness to pledge everything for our country. We honor his supreme sacrifice on behalf of all Americans.

RESERVATION OF LEADER TIME

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Under the previous order, the leadership time is reserved.

COMMERCE, JUSTICE, SCIENCE, AND RELATED AGENCIES APPROPRIATIONS ACT, 2015—MOTION TO PROCEED

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Under the previous order, the Senate will resume consideration of the motion to proceed to H.R. 4660.

The clerk will report the motion.

The assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

Motion to proceed to Calendar No. 428, H.R. 4660, a bill making appropriations for the Departments of Commerce and Justice, Science, and Related Agencies for the fiscal year ending September 30, 2015, and for other purposes.

Ms. MIKULSKI. Mr. President, we bring to the floor our fiscal year 2015 spending bill, but before the Republican leader leaves, as the Senator from Maryland, I too would like to join with great respect in condolences for Master Sergeant Torian's family. For all of us who are Senators who have constituent families where people have died, we have to be in this together.

These are times when we are not the Republican Party or the Democratic Party. We are not red or blue. We have to be red, white, and blue. From this

side of the aisle to that side of the aisle, Godspeed to his family, and I thank the Senator for bringing this wonderful young man to the attention of the Senate. Those remarks were quite poignant and moving.

We have to stand by those families—the widow, the children who will need an education, and let's do it shoulder to shoulder.

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, I thank my colleague from Maryland for her additional comments about this wonderful young man.

Ms. MIKULSKI. Mr. President, today we bring to the floor on a bipartisan basis the annual appropriation bills of the Commerce-Justice-Science bill, the Subcommittee on Transportation, Housing and Urban Development, and also the Agriculture, Rural Development, and Food and Drug Administration. I wish to thank all of the members of the Appropriations Committee for their tremendous work on these bills. First, I wish to say a special word about my vice chairman RICHARD SHELBY, who has done the hard work and the due diligence of helping move the entire process but also moving, in particular, our bill that funds the Commerce Department, Justice Department, and the science programs, such as our space program.

In terms of transportation, we have the able leadership of Senator MURRAY, with her vice chairman Senator COLLINS; and on agriculture, chairman MARK PRYOR and, again, his vice chairman ROY BLUNT.

This process is about moving America forward. This legislation we are putting before the Senate today puts America's middle-class families first, creating opportunity by creating jobs today.

With investments in physical infrastructure in the transportation and housing bill, we are building roads and bridges, repairing them, and updating transit lines and rail lines, so we literally and figuratively can keep America on the move. At the same time we are also meeting America's compelling human needs with our investment in home ownership as well as in housing and in urban and economic development.

We also create jobs tomorrow with investments in research and discovery. What we do in these important science agencies is drive innovation, leading to new products and new jobs. And guess what. Science saves lives.

When we look at Commerce-Justice-Science appropriations, we see that we fund the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration—a lot of words with a lot of alphabet, synonyms and acronyms and so on.

At the end of the day, we fund the weather service. What does the weather service do? They predict weather. They predict immediate weather, such as is it going to rain this afternoon, and they predict weather emergencies, whether we are going to have a tornado.

Our hearts go out, again, on the other side of the aisle, to the people of Kansas, where they were hit by a double tornado—an unprecedented weather event. They are calling it the twin sisters, referring to what happened in Nebraska. They were the ugly sisters, but they were made less ugly because of the way the weather service could help alert the people in that community. That is what we fund.

We protect the American people by making sure we fight crime and terrorism by funding Federal law enforcement; by making sure our medicines and medical devices are safe by funding the Food and Drug Administration; and we meet compelling human needs, whether we are talking about affordable housing or affordable food.

While we do it, we are also reforming the agencies. Sure, people talk about appropriators as spenders, but we have a sense in this committee on both sides of the aisle—and I must say that Senator SHELBY has helped lead this—that we need to be a more frugal government. We need to get value for our dollar, demonstrating that we need to be able to save money or use money. We are going to spend very wisely.

It has been 3 years since we were able to bring an appropriations bill to the floor. I am not going to go into all the reasons why. "Why" doesn't get the job done. What we need to do is return to regular order. So what does that mean? Today we have these three bills pending. It means we want to enact all of our appropriations bills by October 1. We want to keep government operating not on autopilot, not on shutdown, nor on lavish spending. We have to reduce our Federal deficit, but we also have to reduce other deficits, particularly in the area of deficits related to innovation as well as the fact that our crime rates are on the rise in many cities and we need to reduce them. The American people today want to make sure we have a government they can count on. But they need to count on the fact that not only are we open and doing business but that when we are, we are smarter about it.

Vice Chairman SHELBY and I have been working on a bipartisan basis. We have been working on a bicameral basis. That means hands across the aisle, hands across the dome to restore regular order and civility in this process.

I look forward to moving this bill. I would say to my colleagues who are listening, many of my colleagues saw a few months ago the way Senator LAMAR ALEXANDER, Senator TOM HARKIN, Senator RICHARD BURR, and I moved a bipartisan bill on the child care and development block grant. That had not been reauthorized since 1996, but we showed we could do it. We cleared 18 amendments. We actually had votes on amendments. We had an open process where amendments could be offered, discussed, debated, and at the end of the day voted on because we had a process that worked. As Senators

who worked together, we were able to pass that bill.

Senator SHELBY and I are providing leadership today to be able to do that. So we ask our colleagues to support us in coming to an agreement on the motion to proceed so that we can move ahead on this bill. We are making progress. There are several bills we have already moved out of the committee, and we will be moving more. But right now, today, we want to move these three bills and do it in a way that we are proud of what we do, we are proud of our process, we are proud of our conduct, and we are proud that we did it in the right way, with debate, discussion, and the votes that are required.

Mr. President, I yield the floor.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The Senator from Alabama.

Mr. SHELBY. Mr. President, this morning I wish to join my longtime colleague and friend, the senior Senator from Maryland and chair of the Senate Appropriations Committee, Senator BARBARA MIKULSKI, in supporting the consideration of three bills before us today. All three bills received strong bipartisan support at the full Committee on Appropriations level.

I am pleased we have begun to reestablish regular order in the appropriations process. We started that last year, and we need to continue it, and we are.

After the uncertainty of sequestration and last year's disagreement over the Budget Control Act caps, this past December's Murray-Ryan budget deal provided the clarity needed to move us toward a regular budget and a regular appropriations process. The Murray-Ryan deal, which became the Bipartisan Budget Act, provided a compromise solution that ended the congressional deadlock over top-line discretionary spending.

While I appreciate that the chairwoman was operating in a tight fiscal environment, we did not ultimately agree everywhere on how to allocate funds within the new caps. All 14 Republican members of the Appropriations Committee wrote to the chair on May 21 of this year expressing our concerns over the use of budgetary mechanisms in subcommittee allocations. In that letter we also stated and we continue to express our opposition to increasing the level of total CHIMPs in the Federal discretionary budget beyond current levels.

While we continue to have concerns about how the majority reached total 302(b) allocations, the bills before us today for the most part reached their allocations by making tough choices; that is, shifting resources from lower to higher priority programs.

The allocations for the CJS, transportation and housing, and Agriculture bills conform to the intent of the Murray-Ryan deal. Both the Commerce-Justice-Science bill and the Agriculture bill actually decrease spending compared to the current enacted levels,

while still being sufficient to meet the needs of the agencies. I am pleased to have worked with the chairwoman to ensure that the CJS bill successfully balanced the important and competing interests of law enforcement, scientific advancement, and U.S. competitiveness. The Transportation, Housing and Urban Development bill has a moderate increase of only 1.4 percent, after taking into account the scorekeeping difference between OMB and CBO on FHA loan receipts.

I believe passing these funding measures will give Congress a voice in government spending that it was constitutionally intended to have. Instead of ceding spending discretion to the executive branch or simply locking in place priorities that have become outdated—as a continuing resolution would do—this bill includes hundreds of limits on how taxpayer dollars can be spent. While I might not agree with every item in each bill, I think we have found solid middle ground upon which both sides of the aisle can comfortably stand.

Once again, I thank the chair, Senator MIKULSKI, for her willingness to work together, and I encourage my colleagues to come to the floor and offer their amendments so we can debate the merits of them.

Thank you. I yield the floor.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The Senator from Maryland.

Ms. MIKULSKI. Mr. President, I thank the vice chairman for his remarks. I think he makes excellent points. We had a tough top line to meet. The CBO score—these budgets speak words that people are trying to follow. The Congressional Budget Office actually says how much things will cost, and when they took a look at what our FHA program and certain mortgage rates would cost, they found out we overestimated revenue by \$4 billion. That is a lot of money even by Washington standards. So we had to adjust accordingly, and it has not been easy.

I will tell my colleagues that we are now coming down to talk about where we really are now—what are the agencies we want to fund, why we want to fund them at the amount we do, and what problems they actually solve for the American people. The American people have a right to ask at the end of the day not “did you spend money” but “what did you spend it on and what did we get for it? Are we a stronger country? Do we have a better economy? Do our children have a brighter future? Are we meeting compelling human needs?” I think in these three bills the answer is yes.

When we look at Commerce-Justice-Science appropriations, we want to tell our colleagues what we have done. It really funds several different agencies, and it comes to a total of \$51.2 billion. It is consistent with the CJS allocation, and it is \$398 million less—I want to say this clearly. What we are doing in the Commerce-Justice-Science bill,

we are spending less money than we did last year, but we think we are getting more value for the dollar. We are \$398 million below what we spent last year, but at the same time we have kept our communities safe, we have promoted jobs, and we have promoted innovation.

We used our spending to guide Federal decisions from Federal law enforcement to space exploration. The CJS bill provides \$28 billion for the Justice Department. This is \$260 million more than 2014. We did this because we believe the Justice Department is an agency that people in local communities feel they need to be able to count on. It keeps America safe from crime and terrorism. It protects communities at the local level. It protects families against domestic violence and sexual predators. And the job of the Justice Department is to administer justice fairly.

This bill funds key law enforcement and prosecution agencies. What do we mean by that? Federal law enforcement is made up of the FBI, the Drug Enforcement Administration, the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives, the U.S. Marshals Service, and the U.S. attorneys who actually prosecute the bad guys or the bad gals for everything from mortgage fraud, to cyber terrorism, to drug dealing and drug cartels, so they can keep us safe from all of this, protecting us against gangs, drug dealers. Why is it important? Federal law enforcement goes after gang activity, fraudsters trying to be more predatory.

What is the result in this funding? We have done a lot. In my own home State of Maryland, over the last year our Federal law enforcement has arrested 280 violent fugitives. Federal law enforcement brought down child pornographers and traffickers, bank robbers, and took a big whack at the heroin trafficking rings. I am really proud of them. I am proud of what they do in Maryland, and I am proud of what they do around the world.

Look at how our FBI, working with our special operations, brought to heel and brought into our custody one of the men who killed our Embassy personnel in Benghazi. Let's do a big hurrah for the FBI and special ops, but let's do our hurrah not only with words but putting the money in the Federal checkbook so they get to be able to continue to do the job of keeping America safe.

There are many other aspects of this bill that are important. This is why we look out for our State and local departments.

We have also put in an important investment in the Violence Against Women Act. We are spending \$430 million to give grants to prevent and prosecute domestic violence and also to be able to deal and help with rape victims.

This bill puts money in the Federal checkbook to put more police officers on the beat. But I like the fact that we are actually protecting them with more bulletproof vests and being able to do other work.

This bill also addresses the backlog of sexual assaults, making sure we test no matter where they are. We have seen time and time again that evidence is gathered and that somehow or another it is in some box in some lab or some police department. Rape victims cannot be dually assaulted—one by the predator who attacked them and then by a lackluster prosecutorial system. If you gather the evidence, test it and use it to make sure we have the right predator. Prosecute the predator. See if they are a serial predator. Let's not doubly assault the victim by not only what happened to them on the street but also what happens to them in the criminal justice system.

So we are doing a lot. I feel very strongly about this, but I also feel very strongly about the need to create jobs. This bill provides \$8.6 billion for the Department of Commerce, which helps them protect our patents, promotes trade and economic development. It helps our coastal economies with sustainable fisheries and healthy oceans. It exports American goods and services and supports more than 11 million jobs.

This bill does a lot by putting our Commercial Service officers—those who actually work in embassies—to work, with business to be able to help them. And we make sure they are not only in Europe but they are in Asia and Africa, where the new opportunities are.

Our dynamic Secretary of Commerce has focused on bringing foreign investments to the United States, and we have seen what they have meant to Maryland and what they have meant in Alabama and what they have meant in America.

We also, through the Commerce Department, help with our weather bureau. I am going to say more about it, but what I want to talk about right now is the National Science Foundation—one of our other main agencies—because it does the basic research in science, technology, and engineering.

Then there is NASA. I am going to say more about NASA later. I know we have others waiting to speak. For NASA, actually, we have done more than what the President wanted to do because we wanted to have a balanced space program. We have particularly emphasized human space flight, a reliable transportation system, and space science.

We have here where we are creating jobs, we are protecting people in their communities, and we are laying the groundwork for jobs of the future. There are many other issues I will talk about as the bill unfolds.

Senator SHELBY and I have worked very closely with Senator COBURN. Everybody knows Senator COBURN prides himself on being a watchdog on Federal spending. And you know what. He has been. I love some of his ideas; some give me a little pause. But we actually met. We actually met to see what we could do to be able to reform our government so we could get more value for

the dollar. I am going to have a separate speech just on that so the American people know, when they say "Watch what you spend, Barb," I really am doing it. So is Senator SHELBY. So are the members of our committee.

I yield the floor.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The Senator from Alabama.

Mr. SHELBY. Mr. President, again I rise today in support of, specifically, the Commerce-Justice-Science appropriations bill, where I am the ranking member for the Republicans.

I appreciate the leadership, as I have said earlier, of the chair on this particular bill. We have worked together for many years. I chaired this subcommittee at one time, and I believe the bill being considered today reflects a strong bipartisan effort.

The competing interests of the Commerce-Justice-Science appropriations bill always prove challenging, but I believe this bill strikes the appropriate balance.

The allocation for the CJS bill; that is, the Commerce-Justice-Science bill; is \$51.2 billion, which is just below the fiscal year 2014 enacted level—yes, below. Working within this allocation, we sought to balance priorities, hold agencies accountable for their work, and demand efficiencies to stretch limited Federal dollars. Ultimately, these efforts ensure that Federal resources are spent efficiently and effectively.

The bill before us provides robust funding for the Department of Justice and law enforcement grant programs totaling \$28 billion. It focuses attention and resources on some of the most difficult issues plaguing the Nation, including human trafficking, gang violence, child predation, a growing heroin crisis, threats to cyber security, and domestic terrorism.

Grant programs such as VALOR, Byrne, veterans courts, crime lab improvements, violence against women, and the COPS Program will receive funding to advance the important work being done at the State and local level in our Nation.

Moreover, the bill ensures that the Department maintains its focus on evidence-based programs and activities that have a proven record of effectiveness. This requirement emphasizes the committee's commitment to ensuring that Federal dollars are not just spent but are spent wisely.

The bill also includes \$8.6 billion for the Department of Commerce, which is responsible for a range of issues, including weather forecasting, economic development, trade promotion, and fisheries conservation, among others.

The bill prioritizes resources to support NOAA's next generation of weather satellites that will enable the National Weather Service to continue to provide timely warnings for dangerous weather outbreaks that we all experience. To ensure that these weather satellites stay on budget and are delivered on time, the bill continues and expands stringent oversight requirements in-

volving the inspector general. I believe our Nation cannot afford cost increases and schedule delays in these programs, and we expect that these oversight requirements will help avoid such a scenario. These satellites are essential to weather forecasters across the country. Without them, forecasters would be unable to provide important warnings about devastating storms, tornado outbreaks, and hurricanes, putting the safety of the American people at risk.

The bill also provides sufficient resources and direction to improve the management of the Nation's fisheries, including new approaches to manage red snapper in the Gulf of Mexico. These new approaches should provide a more equitable system for commercial fishermen and increase the number of fishing days for recreational anglers.

The bill also provides \$18 billion for NASA, the National Aeronautics and Space Administration. In order to preserve the planned launch schedule in 2017 for the heavy lift launch vehicle, or SLS, the bill includes \$1.7 billion for SLS rocket development, which is very crucial. It also maintains focus on these efforts by requiring NASA to follow its own internal guidance regarding joint confidence levels in future funding requests.

The bill also preserves important funding for ongoing activities of the International Space Station and other vital science research missions.

In addition, the bill safeguards the advancement of efforts underway to develop a U.S. vehicle to transport our astronauts to the space station. I believe those efforts must continue in a transparent way to ensure that the government is not saddled with mounting bills and no recourse.

I commend the chair for working with me to include language that requires certified cost and pricing data for the crew vehicle development contract. The goal of the language is not to up-end a fixed-price contract; rather, the goal is to make certain that the price NASA has agreed to pay for vehicle development matches actual development expenditures. NASA and its contractors have a history of cost overruns and schedule delays, whether the contract has a fixed price or not. With no other U.S.-based options to get to the space station, I believe we cannot find ourselves at the eleventh hour with an overburdened program that requires a bailout to succeed.

Once again, these measures are included to ensure that the government is not just spending taxpayer money, but that it is doing so in a cost-effective manner.

I reiterate my belief that the bill reflects the Senate's priorities and the needs of our Nation. I urge my colleagues to support this bill.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Ms. HEITKAMP). The Senator from Wash-

Mrs. MURRAY. Madam President, I am pleased the Senate is now considering appropriations bills that fund important segments of our Federal Government. Those include the agencies responsible for scientific research, justice and nutrition programs, as well as the Departments of Transportation and Housing and Urban Development.

It has been some time since we have been able to fund the operations of the government through regular order, so it is encouraging that leaders on both sides of the aisle have been able to work together now to pursue that goal.

As we are here today considering these bills, I think it is helpful to remember where we were at this time last year. We were unable to start a budget conference. There was a government shutdown looming just a few months ahead, and businesses and families across the country had absolutely no certainty about whether their government could even keep the lights on.

Today we have more certainty thanks to the 2-year budget agreement, and building on the bipartisan work we all did to reach that agreement, the members of our committee, Senator COLLINS and I, have been able to put together a transportation and housing bill that makes responsible investments in infrastructure and community development and helps protect the most vulnerable among us.

Less than 2 weeks ago the Appropriations Committee approved the transportation and housing bill by a vote of 29 to 1—an extremely strong show of bipartisan support. This bill received such remarkable support because it helps families and communities, it gets workers back on the job, and it lays down a strong foundation for long-term and broad-based economic growth. It does this in a manner that is fiscally responsible, with growth of just a little more than 1 percent over the fiscal year 2014 level when looking at the program funding levels and factoring in FHA receipts, which do vary from year to year. After adjusting for inflation, the funding in this bill is actually 2.5 percent less than what it was in fiscal year 2008, as a result of the spending cuts we have now applied to discretionary appropriations.

This bill is timely. It makes critical, targeted investments to address concerns that have developed over the past year. In light of the dramatic growth in domestic energy production, it includes new resources to strengthen oversight of energy shipments by rail to keep our communities safe, including funding for additional rail safety and hazardous materials inspectors, training for first responders, more track inspections, research into the volatility of crude oil, and requirements for stronger tank car designs.

This bill includes \$10 million to improve vehicle safety defects analysis and investigation, to help ensure we do not see a repeat of the Department of Transportation's failure to detect unsafe parts in General Motors and other manufacturers' vehicles.

This bill provides an additional 10,000 vouchers to move us closer to finally eliminating homelessness among our Nation's veterans. Due to these investments, we have been able to reduce the number of homeless vets on our Nation's streets by 24 percent since 2010. We are well on our way to eliminating it altogether.

Our bill includes direction to help communities implement the Violence Against Women Act in Federal housing programs as well as resources to improve coordination between housing programs and domestic violence survivors services. It makes it possible for HUD to support youth aging out of foster care, giving them more time to find stability and save money, thereby helping to reduce the elevated risk of homelessness facing those vulnerable young people.

This bill invests in our communities. It provides \$3 billion for community development grants to State and local governments to help communities fund projects that meet their unique needs and support efforts to create jobs and \$950 million for the HOME Program to help create affordable housing.

It ensures the FAA has sufficient funding to continue rebuilding its workforce after the disruptive effects of last year's sequestration. It fully funds the FAA's airport grants and research programs as well as the contract towers and Essential Air Service Program that so many of our rural communities depend on.

It includes sufficient funding for HUD's house and homeless assistance program, to preserve this vital piece of the Nation's safety net. More than half of the 5.4 million very low-income households that depend upon the housing assistance provided in this bill include someone elderly, disabled, or both. Without these programs, many of these individuals would be homeless.

The bill includes \$90 million for Choice Neighborhoods. That is a program that helps tear down and rebuild distressed public housing as well as language making it possible for more local authorities to access private capital through the Rental Assistance Demonstration to renovate our aging housing stock. Notably, it includes reforms to make the programs in this bill more accountable and more effective. These include provisions to make it easier for public housing authorities to manage their capital and operations needs as well as resources for HUD to use the lessons it has learned since Hurricane Katrina to develop templates that communities can quickly implement to speed recovery effectively following a disaster.

The bill streamlines environmental reviews for Native American housing. It works to ensure accountability for property owners who do not maintain the quality of their HUD assisted housing. It increases accountability in the CDBG Program.

That is our bill. We do make tough choices. To fund increases for inflation

and other uncontrollable costs, we made the very difficult choice of trimming funding for programs that Members care about, including the TIGER and HOME Program. In short, this bill is a good bill.

I note that most of the transportation funding, a total of just over \$50 billion, comes from our highway trust fund. As we all know, right now, the highway trust fund is headed toward a crisis. The Department of Transportation expects the balances in this fund to reach critical levels later this summer. To deal with this uncertainty, States now are already bracing for the worst-case scenario. Some States such as Arkansas have already put their projects on hold. This crisis could also hurt workers in the construction industry who depend on jobs to repair our roads and bridges.

If Congress does not act, a shortfall in the highway trust fund will put at risk the funding we have included here in our THUD bill. We need immediate action to solve that crisis well before October when the new fiscal year starts. We need to work together to avoid that unnecessary and preventable crisis. In the meantime, I am glad we are turning to the transportation and housing bill and getting the work of the Appropriations Committee done.

Together with the Senator from Maine, SUSAN COLLINS, I encourage Members to bring their amendments to the floor and to work with us to make it even better. This bill enjoys broad bipartisan support, because it takes a practical approach to addressing the real needs we find in the transportation and housing sectors.

The investments it makes would improve safety, increase efficiency, and help our communities, and lay down a strong foundation for long-term and broad-based economic growth and help position our country and our economy to compete in winning the 21st century global economy. I urge our colleagues to support our bipartisan bill. I hope we can move rapidly to final passage.

Before I yield, I do want to thank Chairman MIKULSKI for her support and leadership. As the former chair of the VA HUD subcommittee, she appreciates the importance of the investments in our bill. This bill includes priorities of Members on both sides of the aisle, reflecting the Appropriations Committee's bipartisan tradition.

I thank our entire committee for their work. I especially want to take a moment to express my thanks to my ranking member Senator COLLINS and her staff for all of their hard work and cooperation throughout this process. I am proud that together we have written a bill that works for families and communities. Investing in families and communities and long-term economic growth should not be a partisan issue. I think the bipartisan work that went into this bill and the strong support it received in committee proves it does not have to be.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Maine.

Ms. COLLINS. Madam President, I am told the Senator from Washington State has a very brief statement she would like to make. I ask unanimous consent that she be allowed up to 3 minutes to make her statement before I reclaim the floor.

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

Ms. CANTWELL. Madam President, I thank the Senator from Maine. I will explain to her later how Maine continues to play a very interesting role in such an important issue.

(The further remarks of Ms. CANTWELL are printed in today's RECORD under "Morning Business.")

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Maine.

Ms. COLLINS. Madam President, I am pleased to join with Chairman MURRAY as we hope to begin floor consideration of the bipartisan fiscal year 2015 appropriations bill for Transportation, Housing and Urban Development, and Related Agencies.

As usual, it has been a great pleasure to work with Chairman MURRAY. She is extremely fair-minded and bipartisan in the approach she has taken to this bill. I also thank her staff for working closely with my staff as we sought to craft a bill that I believe deserves the support of all of our colleagues.

Let me also take this opportunity to thank Chairwoman MIKULSKI and Vice Chairman SHELBY for their extraordinary leadership in advancing those three appropriations bills through what at times is turning out to be a daunting process. It is my hope and expectation that we can give Members of this body the opportunity to debate all three of these bills, to offer amendments, and ultimately to pass them, and that we have an open and transparent process.

I would encourage cooperation on both sides of the aisle. It is in the best interests of this country for us to do our work in the regular order, in the normal process, and to pass these bills, and then to hold conferences with the House to iron out any differences.

Last week the House did approve its own version of the THUD appropriations bill. This is an important step in the process which will eventually allow the two Chambers to meet in conference and produce a final bill to send to the President for his signature. I commend the leaders of the Appropriations Committee and also the floor leaders for making sure we have the time available to bring these bills to the floor.

There is no reason we cannot pass each one of the appropriations bills, have a conference with the House, and get them to the President before the start of the fiscal year so we can avoid gigantic omnibus bills that are a poor way to legislate or, even worse, continuing resolutions that lock into law increased costs and priorities that may no longer reflect today's needs.

The THUD bill before us today is essentially a jobs bill. It provides \$54.4 billion in responsible investments in transportation and housing programs, and it includes input from Members on both sides of the aisle. Every Senator has unmet transportation and housing needs in his or her State, from crumbling roads and unsafe bridges to a growing population of vulnerable low-income families, seniors, and disabled individuals in need of housing assistance.

Chairman MURRAY and I worked very hard to accommodate the input from many Members. This bill we bring before you received overwhelming support in the full Appropriations Committee. In fact, as Chairman MURRAY mentioned, the vote was 29 to 1 to report this bill to the full Senate. It is essential to acknowledge that this year's THUD bill is directly affected by nearly a \$3 billion reduction in Federal Housing Authority receipts for fiscal year 2015. As a result, we were faced with making very difficult decisions to ensure that the Federal investments in this bill were prioritized to meet the most critical needs.

One of the most pressing issues this bill addresses has not received a great deal of attention, so I want to spend a moment on it; that is, the safe transportation of crude oil and other hazardous materials by rail. I know the Presiding Officer is very familiar with this issue. I am pleased to say our transportation bill strengthens three components to help ensure the safe transportation of crude oil and other hazardous materials. It focuses on prevention, mitigation, and response. If you talk to any emergency responder, they will tell you those are the three critical components.

We do so without adopting the President's poorly conceived proposal, which would have created yet another level of bureaucracy in the Secretary's office. Instead, we chose what I believe to be a wiser course. We provided funding directly to the agencies to support additional rail inspectors, advance research efforts, and to establish cooperative training programs.

I know firsthand how horrific these disasters can be, because last year there was a terrible derailment in Lac-Mégantic, Quebec, 30 miles from the border of Maine, that cost 47 lives and essentially destroyed this picturesque village. I was very proud that 30 Maine firefighters responded to the call for help from their Canadian counterparts.

Senator MURRAY and I held an oversight hearing to look at rail safety, and the fire chief from Rangeley, ME, Tim Pellerin, testified before our committee at our oversight hearing. He provided gripping testimony about this extraordinarily dangerous experience, as well as thoughtful recommendations about what should be done. I want to tell the chief that we listened to him, and a lot of our recommendations in the bill—particularly with regard to training—reflect the advice he gave us

as a first responder on that very dangerous scene.

Turning to another issue, this bill provides \$550 million for the TIGER Program, an effective initiative that helps advance transportation infrastructure projects. We have seen firsthand how TIGER projects create good jobs and support economic growth in our home States.

Turning now to air travel, the aviation investments included in our bill will continue to modernize our Nation's air traffic system. These investments are creating safer skies and a more efficient air space to move the flying public.

In addition to transportation programs, our bill provides sufficient but not generous funding to keep pace with the rising cost of housing vulnerable families. More than 4 million families will continue to receive critical rental assistance for their housing. Without it, many of these families would otherwise become homeless.

Chairman MURRAY and I continue to share a strong commitment—indeed, a passion—to reducing homelessness in this country. For that reason we have included more than \$2 billion for homeless assistance grants. Since 2010 we have reduced overall chronic homelessness by 16 percent and veterans homelessness by 24 percent.

These programs are working, and we have the data to prove it. That is why our bill builds on these successes and provides an additional 10,000 HUD-VASH vouchers to serve our Nation's veterans.

We have an obligation to our Nation's veterans. That has been very much on our minds recently, and we can point with pride to the reduction by 24 percent in homelessness among veterans, but we want to complete the job. We don't want any veteran to be homeless, and we are making progress through this well-conceived program.

While our bill helps families in need and our Nation's veterans, it also invests in our communities. Boosting local economies is critical to job creation and helping families obtain financial security. Our legislation supports these local development efforts by providing more than \$3 billion for Community Development Block Grants.

I am sure the Presiding Officer has had the experience, as most Members have, of talking to State and local officials about the Community Development Block Grant Program. It is an extremely popular program with States and communities because it allows them to tailor the Federal funds to support locally driven economic and job-creation projects. It isn't Washington telling them how this money should be spent but, rather, providing the flexibility so that they can meet local economic development needs and help to create new jobs.

The bill before us does not solve all of the problems in either the Department of Transportation or in the Department of Housing and Urban Development; we don't have the money to do that.

Most notably, the administration's budget does not come up with a realistic way to address the urgent need to prevent the highway trust fund from becoming insolvent in August.

There should be no doubt in the mind of any Member of this body, if the administration and Congress do not take action before the August recess, State departments of transportation will not be reimbursed for work that has already been completed and new projects will likely grind to a halt and jobs, good construction jobs, will be lost.

The administration must present an achievable plan to avoid this disruption, these lost jobs, these stalled transportation projects, and Congress must work in good faith to secure passage.

Transportation is the lifeline of our economy, supporting millions of jobs and moving people and products. When coupled with the housing and economic development projects, the fiscal year 2015 transportation and housing appropriations bill will create jobs now when they are needed most and will establish the foundation for future growth.

Just as important to our economic future, however, is reining in excessive Federal spending and getting our national debt under control, which must be a priority governmentwide.

We have met the budget allocations that have been provided to us. In setting priorities for fiscal year 2015, I believe our T-HUD bill strikes the right balance between thoughtful investment and the necessary fiscal restraint.

I appreciate the opportunity to present this legislation to the Members of this Chamber. As we continue the debate on these bills, I urge my colleagues to consider how important it is that we complete our work on time, and I hope they will support the efforts of the Appropriations Committee.

I thank the Chair.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Maryland.

Ms. MIKULSKI. I yield to the majority leader.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The majority leader.

NFL FOOTBALL

Mr. REID. I appreciate the chairman of the Appropriations Committee being so kind.

There are 27 tribes in the State of Nevada, Native Americans. The issue regarding the name Redskins is very important to every one of those tribes. Every time they hear this name, it is a sad reminder of a long tradition of racism and bigotry.

A month or so ago, Daniel Snyder, the owner of the team, had some people come to Nevada and agree to buy one of the Indian tribes a car if they would say nice things about the Redskins. They refused.

This is extremely important to Native Americans all over the country, that they no longer use this name. It is racist.

Daniel Snyder says it is about tradition. I ask: What tradition? The tradition of racism, that is all this name leaves in its wake.

The writing is on the wall. The writing is on the wall in giant blinking neon lights. This name will change and justice will be done for the tribes in Nevada and across the Nation who care so deeply about this issue.

The Patent and Trademark Office today took away all the trademarks. The Redskins no longer have trademarks. They are gone.

So as I understand the law, if the Presiding Officer wants to use the name Redskins and sell them shirts, she can do that. There is no trademark anymore for the Redskins.

Daniel Snyder may be the last person in the world to realize this, but it is only a matter of time before he is forced to do what is right and change the name.

The leader on this issue is the junior Senator from the State of Washington. Senator CANTWELL has been tireless in showing the American people how unfair it is for the Redskins' name to be used as it is. I think she is one of the leading causes that the U.S. Patent and Trademark Office said it is no longer—no longer—a trademark. They did that this morning.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Maryland.

Ms. MIKULSKI. Madam President, I know Senator COLLINS and Senator MURRAY are leaving to go to the DOD to meet with Secretary Hagel, and we both look forward to their return this afternoon, but I want to acknowledge the great role they played in putting together the appropriations and transportation funding for the entire United States of America, as well as the Department of Housing and Urban Development.

We are going to talk more about transportation because it literally keeps America rolling, whether it is the kinds of problems we solved with the issues around safety, congestion—they are absolutely crucial. But also what they talked about in their bill is housing and urban development and how—it is also the famous HUD bill—it does not only do urban development.

I know the Presiding Officer is from the State of North Dakota, whose terrain and challenges are very different than my State, a coastal State. But the Presiding Officer would be interested to know—because she has been hit by some bad weather—that when Hurricane Sandy hit, my State was hit by two things: a hurricane—a hurricane on my Eastern Shore, in which a whole town was underwater and literally people had to be rescued by Zodiacs, by boats, and so on.

Then out in western Maryland, our mountain counties, people were hit by a blizzard. It was so bad that regular

snowplows, local government, and the private sector weren't working. The Governor had to bring in the National Guard—and God bless our State troopers and first responders. They were bringing out senior citizens on snowmobiles and things strapped to their chests to get them to safety because the free zone was there.

I tell that poignant story because while we looked to FEMA to rescue, it was really the Community Development Block Grant money that helped local communities come back. FEMA was there for readiness, so we were ready to respond. It was ready to respond. But the big job of rehabilitation always comes through CDBG. I am going to talk about it because it is a lot of letters—one more agency with a lot of letters—but it is also a big impact. What we need to be able to focus on is this is Federal spending with local decisionmaking. It is money that comes to local communities to eliminate blight and to create jobs. Blight can come from a natural disaster or communities that are aging with that kind of impact.

We hope we have support for the bill, but, gee, they did a good job and they did it with diligence, civility, collegiality and common sense, as is characteristic.

I would point out we have tried to use common sense too. Working with Senator SHELBY, as I have said, I am going to emphasize the word "frugality." How do we make sure we get value for the taxpayers' dollar.

It is something in which I strongly believe. My colleague has been a Federal watchdog. He, like I, believes in the funding of these agencies. These watchdog agencies are absolutely crucial.

The Appropriations Committee, under my chairmanship but with the strong concurrence of the vice chairman, believes in the inspectors general.

Congress can hold an investigation and we can pound our chests and put glasses on our noses and ask tough questions, but we need the kind of truly drilling down to know what agencies are doing and are they making sure we avoid boondoggles, waste, stupidity, and at the same time terrible cost overruns.

Thanks to working on a bipartisan basis, we have insisted that inspectors general be at every hearing. This has been a new innovation of the leadership of Senator SHELBY and me. We want the inspectors general to be part of our official record so we know the top 10 issues they brought to our attention to stand sentry, and we put money in the Federal checkbook to fund them.

We funded the Commerce Department IG at \$30.6 million, \$600 million above 2014 for Justice to make sure grant programs were well administered for NASA, to avoid techno-boondoggles, and for the NSF, so they too keep an eye on it.

We are going to talk more about the problems they identified and the problems we solved, but I note on the floor

Senator PRYOR from Arkansas, who has chaired the Subcommittee on Agriculture, Rural Development, FDA, an important subcommittee that is part of our overall bill today.

I yield the floor for Senator PRYOR.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Arkansas.

Mr. PRYOR. Madam President, I rise in support of the fiscal year 2015 Agriculture appropriations bill. I know Senator BLUNT, the ranking member, is on his way over. We were just in another subcommittee hearing and we were asking questions.

Before I say anything else, I thank Senator BLUNT because he has been a great partner to work with. He has been outstanding. He knows this stuff. He works hard. He knows how to work the system. He has been great. He is one of those guys we can trust, and he is very bipartisan. If we had more folks like Senator BLUNT around here, we would get a lot more done. He is doing great work for the country by doing what he is doing.

This is a commonsense and bipartisan bill. It did pass unanimously coming out of the full Appropriations Committee last month, and I am confident my colleagues will support it. When they have a chance to see it, they will like it. I heartily encourage everyone to take a good look at it and support it for final passage.

Agriculture, as we know very well, is something America does better than anybody else in the world. We are the envy of the world when it comes to agriculture. We do it right. We are the gold standard. We are what every other nation in the world wants to be. It is of course rural America's No. 1 industry. So when we talk about agriculture and rural America, it is doing something we can be extremely proud of in this body and in this country because they do it better than anybody else.

I learned a lesson 1 or 2 years ago when Senator STABENOW took over as chairwoman of the Senate Agriculture Committee. She told me everybody thinks of Michigan and they think of automobile manufacturing—heavy industry—as the No. 1 industry, and it is in Michigan, but agriculture is No. 2.

If we were to go around a map of the United States, that is what we would see pretty much in almost every State. Agriculture is either the No. 1 industry or No. 2. In a few cases it is the No. 3 industry. I could go around to all 50 States, but in Arkansas, as an example, agriculture equals a full 25 percent of our State's economy. So 25 percent of our economy is agriculture or agra related.

Again, if we look around the country, we will see numbers similar to that in many States. It contributes \$17 billion in economic activity to Arkansas. It also supports thousands and thousands of jobs—in fact, about one in six jobs. We could put up a chart similar to this for any State in the Union. The numbers may change from State to State, but they will be generally the same.

The Agriculture appropriations bill we are talking about builds on the strengths of our agricultural industry. It invests in the Farm Service Agency. It prohibits the closure of FSA offices, which provide vital services to our farmers and ranchers, and it provides funding for farm ownership loans. It also invests in the Agricultural Research Service and the Natural Resources Conservation Service so America can continue to innovate and make our agricultural products more efficient.

This is another area America truly leads the world in, agricultural innovation. Agriculture is actually very science-based and very innovative. It doesn't always get credit for being high-tech, but it actually is. So much of that basic research and the things that make a difference out in the field happen in this legislation, but that is not all the bill does. It also makes smart investments to help improve job opportunities and quality of life for families in rural America.

One thing we don't want to see is the old "Tale of Two Americas," where urban and suburban get all the money, get the latest and the greatest and the best and the cutting edge and rural America is left behind. That can happen and it does happen in Washington, unfortunately, quite a bit—but not in this bill. This bill's primary emphasis is on rural America. It is one of the few bills we talk about in any given Congress that does focus on rural America. It makes smart investments there.

It maintains funding for the Rural Development Water and Waste Disposal Program to help many of our very small communities obtain clean water and sanitary waste disposal systems. Here again, just because one lives in smalltown America doesn't mean they shouldn't have clean water. Everybody should have clean water. So this bill makes sure that happens.

It increases funding for the Food and Drug Administration to ensure that our food and our drug supply remains the safest and the most reliable in the world. There again FDA is in this bill. Everybody in the world wants to be like FDA. Everybody wants the integrity we have in our system for our food and our drugs. We fund FDA here.

It provides funding for the Food Safety and Inspection Service to keep our food supply safe, and it sustains the school meals equipment grants so our schools can continue to provide healthy meals for kids.

We also included in this legislation money for disaster relief. Some people have asked me: Why? Why should we do that? I have a photograph recently taken in Arkansas. This is just one example of the devastating effects of a tornado.

Here we look at what used to be someone's home. We have to remember these people worked all their lives to have this house, and in about 45 seconds this is what was left of it. It may be hard to see on the television, but

right here is a motorcycle, a pickup truck, a power line lying in the yard, a few appliances, a few people hugging, but one thing we see is their pride in America, where they put up their flag. Even in the most adverse circumstances they came together and pulled together to make that happen.

So we put disaster money into this legislation because our country needs disaster money. We need to make sure disasters are fully funded and we have those resources when our neighbors need it the most.

In this storm lives were lost, homes were completely wiped out, and many communities were left in ruins. Arkansas is not unique. I wish I could say this didn't happen, but it does happen periodically around the country. This bill provides funding to help States respond when natural disaster strikes.

My view is that supporting this legislation is a no-brainer. It is bipartisan. It is a good, commonsense, solid piece of legislation. It sustains our agricultural producers, our communities and our families, and it strengthens our economy and secures the future of our Nation.

Before I turn it over to my colleague from Missouri—and I know we are all anxious to hear what he says—there has been a question, as I have talked to many of my colleagues both on the Democratic and the Republican side, about whether we will allow amendments. The answer is: Absolutely, yes; we would like to see amendments.

I cannot speak for everyone in the Chamber, but from the members of the Appropriations Committee who are involved in this legislation, including the chairwoman and the ranking member, yes, we want to talk to Senators about their amendments. It is a little bit like the Statue of Liberty: "Give me your tired, your poor, your huddled masses yearning to breathe free." We want to see those amendments. We want to talk about them.

We are hoping we will be able to put together managers' packages. We are hoping we will be able to find common ground and make this bill better as it goes through the process. Certainly we don't want a lot of funny business on that. We want real amendments, good amendments, amendments that are important to moving this forward.

I know many of my colleagues have been frustrated, but we would like to talk to as many Members as possible about their amendments. I will be on the floor on and off most of the day, either on the floor or near the floor all day. So if anyone's office wants to talk to me about amendments or any Member wants to talk about amendments, I will be glad to do that.

I yield the floor for my colleague from Missouri.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Missouri.

Mr. BLUNT. Madam President, I am pleased to join the Senator from Arkansas in introducing this bill. He has been a great person to work with.

I also fully associate myself with his comments about our colleagues' ability to amend these bills. Senator MIKULSKI and Senator SHELBY have been real advocates for us getting back to the process the way it essentially worked in the country for a couple hundred years. We got out of the habit of bringing these bills to the floor, letting Members come to the floor and offer better ways to spend this money or if they want to propose not to spend it at all, that is one of the proposals they can make.

The Senator from Arkansas and I have worked to make the tough choices, but seldom is a bill so perfect that it can't be improved, and there is nothing wrong with defending the decisions we have made.

I believe one of the real losses for the country and the Senate of these bills not coming to the floor in recent years is that Members of the Senate haven't had to hear the debate. Members who bring a bill to the floor haven't had to defend the bill. Before we know it, if we don't have to defend what we are for, we have a hard time remembering why we are for what we are for.

This process makes sense if we do it the right way. Certainly, Senator PRYOR has wanted to approach this in that way, and maybe, more importantly, from both our points of view, Senator MIKULSKI and Senator SHELBY have been advocating that we bring these bills to the floor and we debate these priorities.

I am particularly pleased to join with Senator PRYOR in introducing this bill and bringing this bill to the floor, the fiscal year 2015 Agriculture appropriations bill, for agriculture, for rural development, for the Food and Drug Administration, and the things that relate to those agencies. The Senator made a good point already about how important this industry is. In Missouri as in Arkansas, agriculture is the No. 1 industry. In my State it is responsible for 16 percent of the State's workforce. Frankly, as world food needs develop, I believe the percentage of our workforce that will have jobs because of agriculture—growing, producing, and processing it, figuring out how to get it to markets around the world—will be an even higher percentage in the future. I think agriculture is the No. 1 industry in most States. If it is not the No. 1 industry, it is right there at the top.

For 150 years now the Federal Government, through what would become the Department of Agriculture after a bill President Lincoln signed in 1862, has been doing many of the things we want to continue to do in this bill. This is not a newfound obligation on the part of the Federal Government. This is not something for which the Federal Government just decided it needed to have some responsibility. This is something that 150 years ago the Federal Government said: You know, we don't need to have—as the land grant universities were founded, the Federal Government said: We need to help these

universities manage the research they are doing so that what they are doing can be shared throughout our country, so it is not needlessly duplicated, so it is properly not only allocated but funded.

So the activities in this bill include one of my priorities, which is agricultural research. It includes conservation activities, housing and business loans for rural communities, domestic and international nutrition programs, and food and drug safety. Certainly all of those have a top priority on the list of different individual Members of the Senate. It would be hard to find a Senator who didn't have near the top of their priority list one of the things this bill does.

The Senator from Arkansas and I have made difficult decisions in drafting this bill. Aside from the disaster recovery efforts, the bill is \$90 million below last year's bill. I think it represents a responsible approach to the funding of these priorities but at the same time tightening our belts as we work to live within our means.

We have prioritized programs that protect public health and maintain the strength of our Nation's agricultural economy. Agriculture is one of the few sectors in our economy that consistently enjoy a trade surplus. Last year was our strongest export year in ag products in the history of the country. Recent information from the Department of Agriculture indicates that 2014 is going to set a new record. We need to continue to work through the U.S. Department of Agriculture to open new markets, and we are doing that—particularly markets in Asia and Europe that need to be more open to our products. Expanding agricultural exports is vital. Every \$1 billion in agricultural exports supports an estimated 8,000 American jobs.

If we need to have a domestic priority in the Congress today, it is more private sector jobs. One way to do that is to continue to do what we are doing in this bill and to do it even better.

Opening export markets is only one piece of the puzzle that maintains our agricultural economy. The American farmer is the best in the world at producing products that are desired worldwide in the global marketplace. Smart investment in ag research has helped us get to that point. We have products with a quality, with a market sensitivity, and with a health and nutrition value that people all over the world want.

This bill places significant emphasis on maintaining research at our land grant universities and our non-land grant university systems that have a commitment to agriculture and funding competitive research beyond that in things such as the Agriculture and Food Research Initiative.

These programs are critical to our increased production. Every dollar spent in agricultural research results in around a \$20 return to the U.S. economy. By the way, that comes year

after year. Once you create that notch and work to try to improve it, it continues to come.

This bill will also provide our rural communities with even more ability to compete both here and abroad.

In a bill where many items didn't get the funding that was requested, we fully funded the Food and Drug Administration request. It is important to the chairman, important to our committee, and important as we look at the health and safety of the products for which the Food and Drug Administration is responsible.

Again, I thank the Senator from Arkansas for his leadership. I thank our chairman and ranking member of the full committee for working so hard to see these bills debated on the floor. I look forward to working with our colleagues as they come up with ways to improve this bill. It is one of the three bills that are on the floor this week.

I hope we can return to a day very quickly where all the appropriations bills are on the floor in as small a group as possible and where they are all open to amendment. We have to get back into the practice of remembering why we are for what we are for and why we have decided to propose that the hard-earned dollars of American families should be spent for these things as opposed to not spending them all or spending them on something else. It is a process that will work if the Senate shares the commitment of the chairman and Senator SHELBY and I think everybody on the Appropriations Committee to try to get back into the business of doing this business publicly and openly and in the right way.

Madam President, I will yield for Senator PRYOR.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Arkansas.

Mr. PRYOR. I have a few more comments after listening to my colleague from Missouri. I did want to mention a few.

The first point is on exports. We all know we have a bad trade deficit. We all know that. But it would be horrendous if it were not for agriculture. Agriculture is really a huge net plus for us when it comes to exporters. You may ask yourself why that is. It is because we raise the safest, highest quality food in the world, and other people want it. There is no question that when that food shows up on shelves in foreign countries, if this says "Made in the USA," sometimes they can charge a premium because they know the USDA seal of approval is of the highest quality you can find anywhere in the world. So exports are very important.

We heard the President—not just this President but the previous President as well—talk about exports and how many jobs exports create. We need to get back in the exportation business, and agriculture is a great way to do that.

Senator BLUNT alluded to research. There are some tremendous numbers in research. For every dollar of research, you get a \$20 return to the U.S. economy. That is a no-brainer. That is

smart policy. That is the right thing to do. It is good for the economy.

But also we both had an experience a few weeks ago where Bill Gates, who founded Microsoft, came in and talked to us about American agricultural research and how important it is in feeding the world. One aspect that struck me is here is a man—Bill Gates—who has been an economic revolutionary. He has changed the world with Microsoft and the digital revolution and the high-tech and all the efforts in which he has been involved. He has been at the cutting edge of so much of that change we have seen in our economy and the world's economy in the last 20-, 30-plus years. It is phenomenal. But here he is in the autumn of his life, and what does he come back to? Agriculture—something that is so basic that we take for granted, but because he has seen the work in the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation, he has seen the work around the world, he has seen the abject poverty, and he has seen the starvation, he knows that when they get their hands on American products such as seed, fertilizer—all the things we take for granted—that would be a life-changer for those people around the world.

I think it was Senator BLUNT who said his experience is that when people have been eating bad food all their lives, once they get a chance to eat good food, they don't want to go back to bad food. That is what Bill Gates is talking about, and that is where ag research comes in. That is how this piece of the puzzle fits.

There is another point I want to make about rural America. Generally in this legislation we have provisions for rural water, rural housing, rural broadband, rural electricity. Again, we have to understand the economics of that. If you wanted to add broadband somewhere, if you wanted to do it, say, in suburban Washington, DC, obviously you have in many cases relatively high income levels and you have population density. You have what makes it economically feasible. But if you are out in rural America, you want those people to have access to broadband, but you get so many fewer customers per mile. That is why we help. This is sort of the premise of the old Universal Service Fund we have had for a long time in telephone to help expand that network to every single home in America. Now, of course, we have a lot of wireless technologies and whatnot. So we want to make that readily available to rural America.

The last bit of substance I wanted to add to what Senator BLUNT mentioned is the funding for the Food and Drug Administration. I am not sure there is an agency that is responsible for more innovation than the FDA. We need to keep the FDA stable. We need to keep them well funded. They need to be able to approve drugs and do the testing they need to do.

One of the new frontiers they are dealing with is nanotechnology. We are

seeing nano products enter the marketplace all over this economy, and there has been very little testing on that for human safety. So the FDA is doing that. We need to continue to fund them so they can do the job. We don't want them to be an obstacle to innovation; we want them to be a partner in innovation. Let these companies that come in and have these great products, whatever they are—cosmetics, food, whatever—let them innovate and do that and again create American jobs and enhance the marketplace. But in order for the FDA to do that, we need to fund them.

Senator BLUNT is right. We have the best system of government in the world, bar none. And the U.S. Senate always has its moments where it gets a few rough edges. This is democracy at its finest. People don't always agree. They fuss and fight and things get balled up here and there. But our system works, and it works great if we let it work.

I think what the chairwoman and the ranking member of the full committee are saying is: We want the process to work. We want it to work. We want to talk about amendments. We want to have amendments. We want to have votes. We want to get back to regular order, whatever that means in the Senate. But most of us know what that means. It means getting back to where Senators can participate in the process, but it is also done in good will and good faith.

With that, Madam President, I would yield the floor, but I would encourage my colleagues to look closely at and support this legislation.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Maryland.

Ms. MIKULSKI. Madam President, I note that the distinguished Senator from Arizona is on the floor, and we want to be sure he has an opportunity to speak.

I do have a housekeeping matter to take care of and just a few words—about three sentences—about ag, but I want the Senator from Arizona to be heard.

Madam President, I wish to comment on the Agriculture bill, but I will keep that for later on in the day. I will be on the floor along with Senator SHELBY trying to move this bill in a way that we could complete the motion to proceed and that we could move to amendments.

Right now, I wish to compliment both the Senator from Arkansas and the Senator from Missouri, Senators PRYOR and BLUNT, for the excellent way they have moved the agriculture FDA bill. They have worked on a bipartisan basis. They have met compelling human needs—in other words, feed America first; see how we can feed others in need around the world; look out for everyone from the family farm to also food safety because now so much of our food is also imported. At the same time, they have supported the Food and Drug Administration. That is

an agency located in Maryland that is responsible for oversight of the food supply but also our pharmaceuticals, biotech, and medical devices.

My colleagues have spoken eloquently about exports, particularly with food. I will speak later today about the exports of pharmaceuticals, biotech, and medical devices because there are countries around the world that want to look out for their own people, but they don't have an FDA. So when we have products—life science products—that save lives or improve lives and they have been stamped by the FDA as safe and effective, then countries know they can buy them with confidence. This means those areas of endeavor are not only good for jobs in this country, great for improving the lives of people in our country, but they are also a major source of the new American export economy.

I think they did a great job, and I will say more about it. But right now, unless Senator SHELBY has something to say, we can go to our Senate colleague from Arizona.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Arizona.

Mr. MCCAIN. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent to address the Senate as if in morning business, and I wish to enter into a colloquy with the Senator from South Carolina when he arrives.

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

IRAQ

Mr. MCCAIN. Madam President, I come to the floor this morning with my colleague, the Senator from South Carolina, to put to rest once and for all the claim we hear so often today: President Obama wanted to leave a residual force of U.S. troops in Iraq after 2011. He tried his hardest to do so, but Iraqi leaders prevented that from happening because they demanded that Iraq's parliament approve legislation to grant privileges and immunities for U.S. troops that would remain in the country.

This is a very important item and aspect of the debate that is now going on, and it is a claim that was made in growing desperation these days as it becomes increasingly clear for all to see that the President's mishandling of Iraq for the past 5 years and his consistent inaction on Syria has now brought us to the verge of disaster.

The Islamic State of Iraq and Syria—a more ambitious, more violent, and more radical offshoot of Al Qaeda—has now taken over a swath of territory in Iraq and Syria that is the size of the State of Indiana. It is the largest terrorist safe haven in history. The ISIS's offensive is now reigniting sectarian conflict in Iraq and threatening to erase the gains that nearly 4,500 brave young Americans gave their lives to secure and was largely secured when the President took office in January in 2009. In January 2009 the surge had succeeded. Iraq was not violent. The surge had succeeded. We had won the war. In

the words of General Keane: We won the war and lost the peace. And that is a fact.

The administration and its defenders are now scrambling to pin the blame for this catastrophic failure on anyone but themselves. They are trying to blame the Bush administration, and they are trying to blame people like myself and the Senator from South Carolina for voting to authorize the war while conveniently forgetting that Vice President BIDEN, the Secretary of State, the Secretary of Defense, his predecessor, Secretary Clinton, and many other Democrats still serving in this body voted for the war in Iraq as well.

They also seem to have forgotten that the Senator from South Carolina and I began criticizing the Bush administration as early as 2003 for their mishandling of the war and calling for a change in strategy. In fact, in 2006 I called for the firing of the Secretary of Defense, Secretary Rumsfeld, because of the mishandling of the war. Indeed, the very strategy that was finally adopted with enormous success was thanks to a great leader named General David Petraeus and a great ambassador by the name of Ryan Crocker.

Most of all, the administration and its defenders are trying to blame the failures of Iraq on Iraq's leaders. To be sure, the lion's share of the blame for Iraq's current problems lies squarely with Prime Minister Maliki and other Iraqi leaders. But the administration cannot escape its own responsibility for the current disaster. This is something that the Senator from South Carolina and I saw firsthand, and we stated that over and over. In order to set this debate to rest once and for all, we would like to review the record.

We predicted that when all the troops were withdrawn there would be the events that are taking place today—not as rapidly, but we predicted that Iraq would fall into chaos if we withdrew all the troops and did not leave a residual force behind as we have in South Korea, Germany, Japan, Bosnia, and other countries after the conflict had ended.

From its first day in office, the Obama administration signaled a hands-off approach to Iraq. It immediately pushed for a faster drawdown of U.S. forces than our commanders recommended. It appointed an ambassador to Iraq, Christopher Hill, who had no experience working on Iraq or serving anywhere in the Arab world. I think he is a fine man, but he had no experience. It adopted a hands-off approach of shaping Iraqi politics, which was demonstrated most vividly as it refused for months and months to take a hands-on approach with Iraqi leaders and help them broker the necessary compromises about the country's future in the aftermath of the 2010 elections in Iraq.

Nowhere was the Obama administration's failure more pronounced than during the debate over whether to

maintain a limited number of U.S. troops in Iraq beyond the 2011 expiration of the 2008 Status of Forces Agreement or SOFA. The administration is quick to lay blame on others for the fact that they tried and failed to keep a limited presence of troops in Iraq. They blamed the Bush administration, of course, for mandating the withdrawal in the 2008 SOFA. This does not ring true, however, because as former Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice has made clear, the plan all along was to renegotiate the agreement to allow for a continued presence of U.S. forces in Iraq. "Everybody believed," she said in 2011, "it would be better if there was some kind of residual force."

Most of all, the Obama administration blames Iraqis for failing to grant the necessary privileges and immunities for a U.S. force presence beyond 2011. This too is totally misleading because as we saw firsthand—Senator GRAHAM and I traveled to Baghdad and Erbil. We met with Allawi and Maliki, and we met with Barzani. We met with all of the leaders of the main political blocs, and we heard a common message during all of these conversations: Iraqi leaders recognized that it was in their country's interest to maintain a limited number of U.S. troops to continue training and assisting Iraqi security forces beyond 2011. But when we asked Ambassador Jim Jeffrey and the commander of U.S. Forces in Iraq Lloyd Austin—in direct response to a question in a meeting with Maliki—what tasks U.S. troops remaining in Iraq would perform and what their missions were, the answer was they had still not made a decision.

In Erbil, Barzani said he would fly to Baghdad. Allawi, the actual winner of the election, said that he would agree, and then after that, Prime Minister Maliki announced that if his partners agreed, which they did, he would agree to a residual force in Iraq. Those are just facts.

Just days after the Senator from South Carolina and I left Baghdad, Prime Minister Maliki, as I said, signaled his willingness—and it is a matter of public record—to a residual presence of U.S. troops if 70 percent of Iraqis agreed. The Kurds agreed, the Sunnis agreed, and Maliki himself signaled his support. Had the United States and our Iraq partners used our influence then and there, we could have lined up the remaining Shia support to enable Maliki to make this difficult decision. Unfortunately, that did not happen.

Instead, months and months passed and the administration made no decision on what missions and troop levels it would be willing to maintain in Iraq. By August 2011 the leaders of Iraq's main political blocs joined together and stated that they were prepared to enter negotiations to keep some U.S. troops in Iraq.

Another entire month passed and still the White House made no decision. During this long internal deliberation,

as Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff Martin Dempsey later testified before the Senate Armed Services Committee, the size of a potential U.S. force presence kept "cascading" down from upwards of 16,000 to an eventual low of less than 3,000. By that point, the force would be able to do little more than protect itself, and Prime Minister Maliki, and other Iraqi leaders, realized that the political cost of accepting this proposal was not worth the benefit. To blame this failure entirely on the Iraqis is convenient, but it misses the real point. The reason to keep about 10,000 to 15,000 U.S. forces in Iraq was not for the sake of Iraq alone. It was first and foremost in our national security interest to continue training and advising Iraqi forces and to maintain greater U.S. influence in Iraq. That core principle should have driven a very different U.S. approach to the SOFA diplomacy. The Obama administration should have recognized that after years of brutal conflict, Iraqi leaders still lacked trust in one another, and a strong U.S. role was required to help Iraqis broker their most politically sensitive decisions. For this reason the administration should have determined what tasks and troop numbers were in the national interest to maintain in Iraq and done so with ample time to engage with Iraqis at the highest level of the U.S. Government to shape political conditions in Baghdad to achieve our goal. I focus on this failure not because U.S. troops would have been engaging in unilateral large-scale combat operations to this day. In fact, they had won the conflict, and there was literally no further combat that the United States was engaged in. By 2011 U.S. forces were no longer in Iraqi cities or engaged in security operations. However, a residual U.S. troop presence could have assisted Iraqi forces in their continued fight against Al Qaeda. They could have provided a platform for greater diplomatic engagement and intelligence cooperation with our Iraqi partners. It could have made Iranian leaders think twice about using Iraqi airspace to transit military assistance to Assad and his forces in Syria. And most importantly, it could have maintained the significant diplomatic influence that the United States still possessed in Iraq—influence that had been and still was essential in guaranteeing Iraq's nascent political system, reassuring Iraqi leaders that they could resolve their differences peacefully and politically despite their mistrust of one another and checking the authoritarian and sectarian tendencies of Prime Minister Maliki.

There is a need for immediate action. Every day that goes by, there is greater sectarian violence, and there is greater success by ISIS. I do not believe they can take Baghdad. But look at the places they have already taken. By the way, they are now threatening the major oil refinery in Iraq. I can assure you that will affect the world price of oil. There is a need because

there is more polarization of Iraq, there is a return of the Iraqi Shia militias, there is wholesale killing and slaughter going on, and it will get worse every single day.

Is there any good option now in Iraq? No, there is no good option. The worst option is to do nothing, and apparently, according to the Wall Street Journal this morning, that is basically the approach that has been taken.

We need to recognize that taking military action now is difficult because our intelligence has been so severely degraded since 2011 because ISIS is becoming so integrated with the Sunni tribes. We need to be careful about striking targets, even convoys in the open. There is a real risk of killing Sunni tribal elements and pushing the tribes closer to ISIS.

We also have to recognize that political change in Baghdad has to take place. But the question is: Do we wait for political change? Every day we wait there is more and more Iranian influence. The chief—one of the most evil people in the world—of the Iranian Quds Force has been in Baghdad planning with Maliki. So what does Maliki do when he doesn't see us giving him any real assistance? He turns to the Iranians. There are published reports of Iranian combat troops now coming into Iraq as more and more of the radical ISIS people are flowing from Syria into Iraq.

As I said, I admit that I was surprised at the rapidity of the success of the ISIS. But I also believe that the longer we wait to carry out some airstrikes—as difficult as it is—that we can identify with the few people we have on the ground—it sends a signal psychologically over these people who are traveling long distances in the desert—the ISIS—of an American aircraft flying overhead and perhaps taking some of them out if we have sufficient information. That is a psychological effect on any enemy. Air power alone does not win conflicts, but air power can have a significant effect on the morale of your people, on your capability, and of at least inflicting some damage and changing the enemy's plans.

Obviously, political reconciliation is the key, and we must do everything in our power to make sure that Maliki appoints a government of reconciliation. But it can't be the prerequisite for U.S. military action because the events and time are not on our side.

We also have to recognize this is not an Iraqi conflict. This is an Iraqi-Syrian conflict now. The most, the largest, and the richest center of terrorism in the history of the world is now in the Iraq-Syria area. They have hundreds of millions of dollars from the banks in Mosul, and, obviously, they acquired a whole lot of equipment during their incredible progress across Iraq.

I urge my colleagues to have a look at the maps of Iraq and Syria and look at the places that are now controlled by ISIS. As I say, I don't believe they can roll into Baghdad in their vehicles

with their guns mounted on them, but they sure as heck can cause a lot of problems: bombings, assassinations, the radicalization of these Shiite militias. If one of these Shiite shrines is damaged by ISIS or by Sunni militants, we are going to see a very bigger explosion which will bring us back to the days of 2003, '4, '5, and '6, before the Anbar awakening. The same Sunnis who were part of the Anbar awakening that joined us in putting down Al Qaeda are now being polarized by Maliki. The Shiites, as well as the chickens, are coming home to roost as far as Maliki is concerned because of the continued marginalization and persecution of Sunnis all over Iraq, much less in Anbar Province.

So we have to act. We have to act. We must act. I know there are always people who will tell our leaders reasons why we can't, but I know of no military expert who believes that doing nothing is a recipe for anything but further chaos and eventually threats to the United States of America. Our Secretary of Homeland Security has stated it and our Director of National Intelligence has stated it: that people in this part of Iraq and Syria will be planning attacks on the United States of America. That is their view. It also is mine. But we can do some effective air strikes. We can. And it is more difficult because of our degraded intelligence. By the way, when we left Iraq, all of those intelligence capabilities were shut down.

To make them more effective and mitigate the risks that could push Sunnis deeper into the arms of ISIS, they have to be accompanied, as I mentioned, with a limited presence of special forces on the ground. These forces could gather intelligence to improve our targeting by ISIS control, air strikes from the ground, and provide advice to Sunni tribes.

I believe several other steps could be taken. No. 1, who are the most respected people in Iraq today? Probably David Petraeus and Ryan Crocker. Send them back. Send them back, those who worked so closely with the Sunnis such as General MacFarland—then Colonel MacFarland—the people who built up these long relationships with the Sunnis. Send them back. Maliki will listen to David Petraeus and Ryan Crocker. Send them back. Send back a planning team, a group of smart people who can work with what is left of the Iraqi military leadership and identify tactics and a strategy that can reverse this tide of the ISIS which is about to engulf them.

Send some air power. Send some air power with targets we can identify. I am fully aware of the risks associated with it. I wish to repeat over and over and over: There are no good options. Also, we need to make it very clear to Maliki that his time is up; that he must arrange for a transition.

The Shia won the election, a majority of the votes—not a majority of any of the parties but an overall majority

of the vote. This new government could be headed by a Shia, but it has to be a Shia who can reach out to the Sunni and bring them together in a government of national reconciliation.

All of my colleagues have seen the pictures of the young Shia who are now joining up and are ready to die—the movement from Basra of the Shia militia organizations which had been put down before that are now rising from the ashes. We have seen the horrible pictures of the executions that are taking place and the incredible displacement—500,000 people from Mosul alone. The Kurds have now taken Kirkuk. That is an ambition they have had for the last 50 years. We will see now a drive for total Kurdish autonomy from the government in Baghdad, and they will be making their own deals as far as oil is concerned, and the Kurds will now be pursuing their centuries-old ambition for a Kurdish state, which will cause the Turks to be very concerned.

I also wish to point out that if ISIS continues to succeed and they move back and forth to Syria, they will now pose a direct threat, first of all, to Jordan, and then to other gulf states, and finally, eventually, Saudi Arabia, but those right next to Iraq will be most under threat.

So I urge the President and I urge my colleagues to understand the gravity and the seriousness of this situation; to understand that if ISIS succeeds, even without taking Baghdad, and they are able to establish what they call a caliphate in the Syria-Iraq area—larger than the State of Indiana—and are able to train, equip, and export terror not only throughout the region but throughout the world, it will pose a direct threat to the security of this Nation.

Mr. GRAHAM. Will the Senator yield for a question?

Mr. MCCAIN. I wish to thank the Senator from South Carolina for showing up.

Mr. GRAHAM. I am sorry I was late. Actually, I had an exchange with General Dempsey about this very topic.

Does the Senator from Arizona see any scenario where ISIS is militarily stopped and that the Iraqis can retake ground lost to ISIS without U.S. air power being involved?

Mr. MCCAIN. I know of no military expert who believes that without the use of U.S. air power they will be able to at anytime soon regain the lost territory, which is a sizable part of Iraq.

Mr. GRAHAM. Did my colleague hear President Obama say it is unacceptable for Iraq or Islamists to have safe havens in Iraq and Syria? Did my colleague hear him say that?

Mr. MCCAIN. No, I did not, but I did hear him say on December 14, 2011: "We are leaving behind a sovereign, stable, and self-reliant Iraq with a representative government that was elected by its people," and other quotes throughout the campaign.

Mr. GRAHAM. My point is, does my colleague agree he is right? It is not acceptable for our national security interests for ISIS to have a safe haven in Syria and Iraq that could run from Aleppo to Baghdad; that that is not a good thing for us?

Mr. MCCAIN. I totally agree.

Mr. GRAHAM. Well, if it is not a good thing for us, how do we change it? Give me a scenario where we put these folks on the run in Syria and in Iraq without American air power. Give me a scenario of political reconciliation in Baghdad where that has a snowball's chance in hell of succeeding as long as they are losing on the battlefield. Give me a scenario where the battlefield turns our way without U.S. air power.

I can give my colleagues a scenario where it begins to turn on the battlefield: Iran comes in with great numbers. The most likely scenario to stop ISIS is Iranians getting involved with Shia militia. Does that bother the Senator from Arizona?

Mr. MCCAIN. I would also like to point out what the Senator from South Carolina knows and I know: The air power has a psychological effect. When an aircraft flies over the enemy, they are going to do things differently if they fear they are going to be hit from the air, as we all know. Air power does not determine the outcome of conflicts, but it sure is important in the battlefield equation.

Mr. GRAHAM. Is it fair to say the Air Force in Iraq is grounded for all practical purposes?

Mr. MCCAIN. Not only grounded but a lot of the air assets, I am to understand, such as Apache helicopters, are in the hands of ISIS.

Mr. GRAHAM. So, to the President: We agree with you that Iraq matters. We agree with you that it is not in our national security interests to have ISIS occupy territory from Aleppo to Baghdad. But here is what is a mystery to me: How do we turn this around unless we stop their advance inside of Iraq and we go after them in Syria?

As to political reconciliation, I completely agree that is the ultimate change that needs to occur, that air strikes alone will not get us to where we want to go, but it is a chicken-and-egg concept for me. Can my colleague from Arizona imagine a scenario where we can get all the parties together when ISIS is winning on the battlefield?

Mr. MCCAIN. That is why I was amused by various commentators who have been consistently wrong, including one in the New York Times today: All we need to do is have everybody sit down together—a total misreading of the situation.

Mr. GRAHAM. Here is the problem with that: To go to a meeting in Baghdad, you are likely to get killed trying to get there. Who is going to sit down in Baghdad when everybody is getting killed based on sectarian differences? So my advice would be to use American air power before it is too late as part of

a coordinated, diplomatic effort. That American air power is part of diplomacy. That may sound counterintuitive, but it makes perfect sense to me. Diplomacy cannot succeed unless we change momentum on the battlefield. But when you drop a bomb, you need to have a game plan beyond the bomb falling, and that would be a regional conversation.

Can my colleague see how Maliki can put Humpty Dumpty back together again?

Mr. MCCAIN. I cannot. That is why he has to agree to a transition.

Mr. GRAHAM. I would not send \$1 to Iraq. I would not send one soldier to Iraq, one airman to Iraq until we understand that over the arc of time Maliki has to go. I have been there more times than I can count. Maliki did some good things on his watch, but he has become a political leader who cannot bring the country together. But that, to me, is a concern that is addressed after we stop the momentum on the battlefield.

Does the Senator from Arizona believe it is still possible that the Kurds, the Sunnis, and the Shias, that we know fairly well, can regroup and reconcile with themselves if we act decisively?

Mr. MCCAIN. I am totally confident that they can. That is how the country was held together for long periods of time.

Could I ask my colleague—I began before the Senator from South Carolina arrived talking about this business of the allegations that somehow it is the Iraqis' fault that we didn't leave a residual force in Iraq. I went through our meetings with Maliki, with Barzani, with Allawi, how they were all committed to maintaining residual force.

Could the Senator from South Carolina for the RECORD recount the Senate Armed Services Committee hearing where he directly questioned General Dempsey about this entire issue, after we had withdrawn?

Mr. GRAHAM. Yes, I will be glad to. And to put it in context, in 2008 we signed a strategic framework agreement. It was envisioned that we would negotiate a follow-on force with advisers and some special forces units to secure our Nation as well as to protect our gains. In the process of trying to get the Iraqis on board, Hillary Clinton called me to ask if my colleague, the Senator from Arizona, and I think Senator Lieberman—maybe he didn't go; I can't remember—would go over there and talk to Barzani, Allawi, and Maliki, and we said, Sure, we would be glad to.

Here is what I found. I found in the meeting with Prime Minister Maliki, who was very openminded about a follow-on force—Barzani said, I will take 250,000 Americans; that was never in doubt about where the Kurds were—Allawi understood, the Sunnis understood the need for a follow-on force. It really was about the Shia politics.

After we got back, Maliki said, If the other groups will do it, I will do it. But he says, What kind of force are you talking about, Senator GRAHAM?

Mr. MCCAIN. This was in a meeting in Baghdad?

Mr. GRAHAM. This was in a meeting in his office. He asked me, What kind of force are you talking about? I turned to General Austin and Ambassador Jeffries and I asked them, What is the number? Answer the Prime Minister's question. They said, We are still working on that. The Prime Minister looked at me and said something to the effect, Well, I don't know what I am supposed to be agreeing to.

We come back to Washington. We go to the Vice President's house. We talk to Mr. Donlin, saying they need a number—sometime—and they said they would get back to us about the number. I am still waiting on that phone call.

During my questioning of General Dempsey about the follow-on force, I asked him—General Austin recommended somewhere in the 18,000 to 20,000 range, the Pentagon got down to 10,000, and below that they felt very uncomfortable. I asked him directly, Did the number cascade down or did the number go down because the Iraqis said, That is too many Americans; we don't want that many Americans on our soil. He said, No, sir; the numbers kept cascading down because the White House kept changing the number.

So I want the record to reflect that in a meeting with the Prime Minister of Iraq, when he asked me how many troops we are talking about, we could not give him an answer. I want the record to reflect the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs said the numbers went down and down and down not because the Iraqis were saying no but because the White House kept lowering the number—to the point that it got to be absurd, and we will prove that over time.

Mr. MCCAIN. Finally, could I—I see our colleague from Florida is waiting. I think I would like to have the Senator from South Carolina summarize. The cost of inaction, of doing nothing, is the greatest cost we can incur. The situation on the battlefield is not only terrible, but the polarization of the different groups in Iraq is growing worse by the hour. We are seeing the resurgence of the old Shia militias that, thanks to David Petraeus, we had put down before. Iraq is largely under control, thanks to David Petraeus, Ryan Crocker, and the surge in 2011. If we had left—and it is a fact—if we had left that residual force behind, history would be very different.

I would add one other comment. We cannot ignore Syria in this situation. We have to understand Syria is now part of this huge area, the size of the State of Indiana, which is governed by ISIS.

I yield the floor.

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

Mr. NELSON. Madam President, I find there are a number of things I agree with the Senator from Arizona on. One of the things I agree with the senior Senator from Arizona on is that Maliki needs to go. Otherwise, I think Iraq is going to blow apart, and it is going to end up in three parts, just like the Vice President, when he was a Member of the Senate, as the chairman of the Foreign Relations Committee, said was going to happen.

I will address this subject later on.

I came to thank Senator SHELBY, who is here, and Senator MIKULSKI, who I hope is within earshot of my remarks, for the bill they have come forth with and specifically with regard to the part that has to do with a little agency that I have some familiarity with and to which I have a great deal of emotional attachment; that is, NASA.

What they have done is continue to flush out in Appropriations the direction that was laid out—when there was no direction—4 years ago in the 2010 NASA authorization bill, for which I constantly give credit to our former colleague, Kay Bailey Hutchison from Texas. I had the opportunity to help draw up a balanced plan for the space program—balanced in all aspects: human, nonhuman space exploration, aeronautics, science, education, the whole works.

Earlier this month the National Academies came out with a report that was required by that act 4 years ago that reaffirmed the need for a robust U.S. space program aimed at the goal. The goal is way down the line. We are going on a human mission to Mars. The Academies' study was cochaired by a former Republican Governor, a former head of the Office of Management and Budget, Gov. Mitch Daniels. What they concluded was that human space exploration remains vital to the national interest but it is only going to succeed if it is properly funded.

So the increase in funding provided in this bill for human exploration is going to keep us on track in the coming year. We know that the Space Launch System and its spacecraft, a capsule called Orion—which is being built as we speak, assembled at the O&C building at the Kennedy Space Center—we know these are critical to human exploration. NASA has a very boring term for that. They call it “foundational capabilities.” That is the capability of putting humans into deep space and eventually on Mars. While other countries are talking about a heavy lift rocket, we are actually building it, and it is being built today with its spacecraft.

Now we are going to look to the first test of this spacecraft. It is going to come in just a few months. It is the Orion spacecraft on top of another rocket to do the deep space penetration and high-velocity reentry, pulling lots of Gs, to see how the instrumented spacecraft performs. It is on track and the space launch system is on track.

However, the funding increases are going to have to be maintained in future years. If we go back to this, shall I say—I have other adjectives for it, but shall I say not the best idea of taking a meat ax to the budget called the sequester—if we go back to the sequester levels, NASA is not going to be able to achieve its exploration goals.

So this funding bill that Senators MIKULSKI and SHELBY have produced also reiterates the need to engage our international partners in science and exploration. It supports the international collaboration that is so important in our space program.

There is another new NASA partnership with the German space agency for astronomy research. This same bill also continues the investment in NASA's Commercial Crew Program. It would allow the largest NASA investment in the program to date.

The President requested \$849 million to do a competition to make these rockets that are already proven to be safe for humans—put in all the redundancies and the escape systems. The President requested \$849 million. That was NASA's request. This bill gets it close. It gets it to \$805 million.

But we are going to need to work, to continue to work, with Senator SHELBY and Senator MIKULSKI, as the bill goes to the conference committee, to make sure we have the right mix of oversight and innovation in how NASA contracts for this competition with the competitors—the private industry—as we are letting commercial companies provide this service not only of cargo to and from the International Space Station, but now we are going to provide this service of crew going to and from the ISS.

I cannot overstate the importance of the commercial crew in the long-term viability of the space station because, look, we are going to extend the ISS; that is, the International Space Station, to 2024. It ought to be extended beyond that. Certainly there is all the research that is being produced. We spent \$100 billion putting it up there. We ought to keep it to the end of the decade of the 2020s at least, and we need to make sure there is sufficient funding to support the research on this orbiting outpost.

It is a fantastic asset in low-Earth orbit. It is not only for research to improve life on Earth, but it is also a technology test bed and a stepping-stone for exploration.

There is another reason. Because we have had the aggressiveness of Mr. Putin, and suddenly all the reverberations coming out of Ukraine, it is just another reminder that we want American rockets for Americans to fly on to get to our own space station. The commercial crew, if we can pour the juice into it, as to their target of 2017, they can actually move it back to 2016. So we have a geopolitical reason to keep this going.

It is interesting that as of this day, with this bill on the floor of the Sen-

ate, scientists and engineers have gathered in Chicago for the third annual International Space Station Research and Development Conference. Research investments will help ensure the maximum scientific return for this one-of-a-kind laboratory. By the way, because of Senator Kay Bailey Hutchison, it is designated as a national laboratory—a part of the ISS.

I thank Senator SHELBY and Senator MIKULSKI for their hard work in supporting the Nation's space program. I look forward to continuing to collaborate with them. At the end of the day, what we want to do is to get this bill out of conference and to the President's desk for signature.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Alabama.

Mr. SHELBY. Madam President, first of all, I thank the Senator from Florida for his remarks, especially in the area of NASA, the funding of NASA, the importance of NASA, which he knows very well. We have worked together a long time and of course some of us—the Presiding Officer might not remember—but he was an astronaut himself in another part of his life. We go back a long time to our House days. We came to the House at the same time. But we have worked together on NASA because we believe in science, we believe in space, we believe that it is great for America in many ways.

I point out again that we have a bipartisan effort on the floor right now. We have three bills: the agriculture appropriations bill, which came out of the Appropriations Committee 30 to 0, with Republican and Democratic support; the Commerce-Justice-Science appropriations bill—where I serve as the ranking member of the subcommittee and Senator MIKULSKI serves as the chair of the subcommittee—which came out 30 to 0; and the transportation, housing bill, which came out 29 to 1.

We are talking about working together. We are working under the Murray-Ryan numbers. That is what we are trying to stay within. I would like to see us move these three bills. If we can do this, we are going to regular order, which we need. I think it shows—when we have this kind of bipartisan effort coming out of the Appropriations Committee to the floor—we are saying to our colleagues on both sides of the aisle: Look, we believe these are fair bills, we believe it is a bipartisan effort, and we want to fund these agencies because they are important to this country and also there is some certainty out there. We do not need to go back to uncertainty in this body or in this government.

I thank Senator NELSON for his remarks.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The bill clerk proceeded to call the roll.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Wyoming.

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

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

Mr. BARRASSO. Thank you, Madam President.

This morning the Energy and Natural Resources Committee passed legislation approving the Keystone XL Pipeline. I believe that Congress should do all it can to push the Obama administration to approve this project. This will, of course, help create American jobs; they will come along with the Keystone XL Pipeline.

To me, this morning's committee vote was nothing more than a show vote. It is going to do nothing to advance the Keystone XL Pipeline. It will put no pressure on the White House. It will not put a single shovel in the ground building the pipeline because the Democratic majority leader has absolutely no intention of allowing this bill to get to a vote right here on the Senate floor. The majority leader knows that if Senators got the chance to vote on this bill, there is a very high likelihood it would pass. President Obama cannot afford that, and the majority leader will not do anything the President does not want. The majority leader will not do anything to anger the extremists who fund the Democratic Party and who oppose an "all of the above" energy strategy in a plan that includes oil.

I know the last thing Americans and the people in the gallery want to hear about is Senate process and Senate procedures, but here is why it matters: There are issues that are important to this country, issues such as jobs, energy, and controlling government spending. There are problems we need to solve in this country, and they are not being voted on here in the Senate because the majority leader continues to block votes. He has blocked votes, he has blocked amendments, and he has even blocked debate on one issue after another.

I believe the majority leader has abused every power at his disposal and even broken the rules of the Senate—rules that have been in place for over a century. He has done this to give himself new powers. Over the past 6½ years the majority leader has taken an unprecedented stand against action in the Senate. He has used tactics such as the so-called filling the amendment tree on bills. That means he stops anyone else from offering amendments other than himself. He has used what is called rule XIV of the Standing Rules to bypass committees, so we are only able to talk about what he wants to talk about, not what our constituents want to talk about, what we hear about from home, or what other committee members want to talk about. These kinds of tactics may make it easier for Senator REID to get what he wants, but they shut Senators—Republicans and Democrats—out of legislating and they shut out the American people whom all of

us represent, Democrats as well as Republicans.

Senator REID has filled the amendment tree at least 85 times since he became majority leader. That is more than twice as many times as the previous six majority leaders combined.

Between July 2013 and May of this year, Republicans in the Senate filed 810 amendments, but we only got a total of 9 votes—810 different ideas brought forward by Republicans, and Senator REID has blocked vote after vote, to the point where we have gotten only 9 votes on 810 amendments, and this is almost in a full year.

If you want a comparison, take a look at the House of Representatives, where the Republicans are in the majority but the minority party, the Democrats, have an opportunity to offer amendments and have votes. Over that same time period in the House of Representatives, the Democrats have gotten 132 votes on their amendments. The Democratic minority on the House side has had 132 votes, while the Republican minority on the Senate side has gotten a total of 9.

In the Senate, it is not just the Republicans who are not getting their votes. The majority leader is blocking the Democrats as well. During that same time, from July of 2013 to May of 2014, Democrats introduced 676 amendments on legislation on the floor, and there were only 7 rollcall votes on 676 amendments. I guess it is not surprising that Republicans cannot get votes on their amendments, but it is very surprising that the Democrats cannot get votes because only the majority leader gets a vote.

It is the same story on appropriations bills, and that is why I am here at this time—because we are dealing with appropriations bills. They are some of the most important bills we are supposed to consider in Congress. These are the bills which determine how much Washington spends every year on all the discretionary programs. We started debating the first of these yesterday, and we may do so over the next few weeks.

It used to be that the Senate would take up these bills one by one, and Senators would get a chance to offer amendments and to represent the people who elected them to office. Not anymore. Under this Democratic majority leader, the amendment process on appropriations bills has been almost completely shut down. In the past 2 years Republicans have gotten just six amendments to appropriations bills. Senate Democrats only got one amendment during that same period. The Senate approved trillions—trillions—of dollars in Washington spending, but HARRY REID allowed action on just seven amendments total. In the 8 years before Senator REID became majority leader, the Senate processed an average of almost 300 amendments to appropriations bills every year—every year almost 300 amendments to appropriations bills.

Senators from both parties have been shut out of the process, and the people we represent have been shut out of the process as well—all by Senator REID. It is the same kind of power grab we saw last September when the majority leader used the so-called nuclear option to stop debate in the Senate. He radically changed the rules of the Senate to strip the rights of the minority party. Originally, it had to do with eliminating the filibuster on nominations, but it is the same effect. The majority leader grabbed more power for himself and took away the right of anyone else in the Senate to represent their constituents.

This is not how it is supposed to be. The Senate was designed to be a place where we debate these issues and where political minorities get fair representation. The father of our Constitution James Madison explained that the Senate's role was "first to protect the people against the rulers." James Madison, the father of the Constitution, stated that the Senate's role is "first to protect the people against the rulers." That was the point of this body. That is why over its history the Senate has adopted rules that provide strong protections for political minorities. Well, the way the Senate has been run by Majority Leader REID, it has been embarrassing, it has been unfair, and it has been insulting to the American people.

Again, I know this isn't the most exciting topic of discussion for people to hear, but the damage that is being done by the Senate's failure to act is very real. Congress has important legislation to debate, such as approving the Keystone XL Pipeline, but the majority leader won't even allow a vote on the bill. Our Nation has a total debt of \$17.5 trillion, but the majority leader of the Senate blocks amendments that could improve the appropriations bills and maybe start to control Washington's wasteful spending. We should have an open amendment process on these appropriations bills this year, as we should have had in previous years, and we should be starting with the bill that is on the floor today.

It is time for Democrats to stop the show votes and allow real votes on issues important to American families.

Thank you, Madam President.

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

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the role.

The assistant bill clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. RUBIO. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded, and that I be recognized to speak as if in morning business.

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

IRAQ

Mr. RUBIO. Madam President, I appreciate the opportunity to come to the Senate to speak about the situation in Iraq. A moment ago I was

joined by some very close friends from South Florida, including the former mayor of West Miami, and now the chair of the county commission in Miami-Dade County, Rebecca Sosa. She actually got me started in politics.

When she was mayor of West Miami, I told her I was interested in public service. We walked door to door in the small city called West Miami which has 5,000 residents. She taught me how to campaign one on one with real people and their real lives.

Now I return home every weekend—when we are done here and with my work throughout the State—to the same community that I still live in, and increasingly people there are asking me about the situation in Iraq. The question I get from many people is—and I want to be blunt about how they say it—I understand this is a problem, but why is it our business? Why do we care about what is happening in another country when it seems to be a fight among themselves?

That is a very legitimate question. I know Americans are watching the issues that are happening abroad, and they ask themselves: Why does America need to be the world's policeman?

I want to take a few moments to explain why this matters—why it matters to people not just in the Middle East but even people in the small city of West Miami where I still live. The situation in Iraq is, to some extent, a civil war between Sunni and Shia, as we see in other conflicts such as Syria and other places. That is a real aspect of it. I would say the current government of Iraq has contributed greatly to it—by the way, spurred on by Iranian influence—to further exacerbate that divide between Sunni and Shia.

While it is fair to say that much of what is happening in Iraq is a civil war between two sects, it is not fair to say that is all it is, because what is happening in Iraq has a direct bearing on the future security of every American, even those Americans who live in the small city of West Miami where I live. Here is why.

Imagine for a moment if we could go back in time to the year 1997 or 1996 or 1998 or 1999 and had known about Al Qaeda then what we knew by September of 2001. We would have realized this is a dangerous group that had the capacity and the deep willingness to attack and kill Americans in order to terrorize so that we would leave the Middle East and turn it over to people such as them. If we had known that and taken that seriously—and I would say some did know this—if we had done something about it, it is fair to say that eventually there would have been some sort of terrorist attack, but maybe there wouldn't have been one on September 11, 2001. If we had actually targeted this group and degraded their capabilities while they were still in their safe haven in Afghanistan—or even before that—we potentially could have saved the lives of thousands of Americans and, more importantly,

avoided the rise of Al Qaeda in the region and in the world. But we did not. While this is not a time to point fingers or throw blame around, I certainly think it is a time to learn the lessons of that history and apply them to the challenges of our time.

What is happening today in Iraq and in portions of Syria is in many ways the exact same thing: A radical group—ISIL—which, by the way, rose through the ranks of Al Qaeda until they now have a split from Al Qaeda, believe it or not, because Al Qaeda thinks that ISIL is too brutal to their fellow Muslims. This group has been growing in strength ever since the United States left Iraq. This group has been fed and its strength has been given to them by foreign fighters who have spilled into the conflict in Syria where they have established a foothold and have used it as a staging and operational ground to take their brand of ruthlessness now into Iraq.

We saw over the weekend images and photographs and videos of the mass assassinations, executions of Shia members of the Iraqi military. They have grown in strength over this time and they have begun to grow in their influence in Iraq. Their goal is simple: They want to establish the premier Islamic caliphate in all the world—the premier Sunni Islamic caliphate in the region. Caliphate basically means Islamic kingdom. They don't care about existing borders. The kingdom they envision is a vast safe haven that encompasses portions of Syria they already have under their control and portions of Iraq they are now gaining control of.

What is their goal for this place they are trying to set up? Their first goal is to institute Sharia law, and they have a particularly brutal brand of Sharia they have forced upon people both in Syria and now increasingly in Iraq.

Their second goal is to establish an Islamic caliphate state—a safe haven from where they can plan and train and ultimately carry out terrorist attacks against the United States and other countries, including attacks here in our homeland.

We must learn the lessons of before 2001, and we must say to ourselves: Under no circumstances will we ever again allow a safe haven or for this kind of terrorist group to ever gain a safe haven anywhere in the world. We will never allow this to happen again.

That is why it is so critical for us to be engaged here. The reason why we should care about this issue is not because we want to force upon Iraq democracy or force upon Iraq the type of government we think they need. The reason why we care is because we cannot allow a safe haven to develop there, that can be used to carry out attacks that can kill Americans, including here in our homeland. This is why we should care. This is why it is so important that the Commander in Chief of the United States—the President—come as quickly as possible before the American people and before this Congress with a plan to address this risk.

I know the President likes to go around saying the war is over, but no one told ISIL that. No one told Al Qaeda that. No one has told these terrorists that. They don't think the war is over. In fact, in their minds, this war will go on for hundreds of years. The only person who can rally this country behind a plan to address this is not a U.S. Senator or a Member of Congress, not the majority leader or the Speaker of the House, not the countless people who write very well-informed opinion pieces in our newspapers. The only person in this country who can rally us around a plan to address this is the President himself.

So while I understand he doesn't want us engaged in another conflict, and neither do most Americans, he knows—he must know—that we are going to have to do something about this. That is not the issue before us. The issue before us is whether we do something about it now or we do something about this later when the problem will be much harder and more costly to address.

I hope the President does bring us together to solve this problem. This doesn't need to be—and it should not be—a partisan issue. The national security of the United States should never be a partisan issue, for if terrorists carry out an attack on our homeland they will not attack Democratic sites but Republican sites; they will not target conservatives but leave liberals alone; they will target Americans. Americans from every political persuasion died on 9/11. I fear that may happen at some point again. So we should all care about this.

The only person who can bring us together to do something about it is the President, and so far he has failed to do it. I don't know if it is because it runs counter to his political narrative that the war is over and he got us out of Iraq. I don't know why it is, but so far he has not done that, and he must.

Mr. President: On this issue, you must lead. You must put aside all of these domestic, political debates that are going on in your office about how this is going to poll or whether this runs contrary to what you said on the campaign trail. This is too important, it is too vital, it is too serious, and it is too dangerous.

I have my own ideas, as do others, about what that plan should look like, but we want there to be a plan. We are not asking the President to come forward with a plan to go looking for something to attack. We want him to come forward with a plan because only he can, and he must. In my opinion, that plan has to be we must do whatever we can and everything we can to prevent this group, ISIL, from gaining operational long-term control of these territories in Iraq. To me, that means going after their command-and-control structure, which involves their ability to transit fighters and weapons and fuel and food and ammunition from

their safe havens in Syria to their increasingly new spaces they have now carved out for themselves in Iraq.

I think all of us in this Chamber, when it comes to issues of national security, understand we should not be a part of the back-and-forth of partisan politics.

I guess my plea here today on the Senate floor is this: Mr. President, you must lead on this issue. You must come forward with a plan that we can rally this Congress and our people behind, because if we fail to do so, I fear our Nation will pay a terrible price down the road. Never again can we allow an Al Qaeda-style group to establish a safe haven where they can plot against us anywhere on this planet. The choice before you, Mr. President, is you either deal with it now or some future President and future Congresses and future Americans will deal with it later. I hope you will deal with it now. I hope we will remember the lessons of our recent history. The only one who can lead us in that direction is you, Mr. President. I hope you will, because the consequences of failing to do so would be dramatic and, in my opinion, will be condemned by history.

I hope over the next few hours, the next few days, we will have the opportunity to come to this floor and advocate on behalf of a concrete plan of action that most, if not all, of us can support, so we can ensure we can say that during our time here we did everything we needed to do to keep America safe.

Madam President, I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The assistant bill clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

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

IMMIGRATION REFORM

Mr. SCHUMER. Madam President, I rise today to talk about the House's tragic and disconcerting failure to do anything to fix our broken immigration system, even though an entire year has passed since the Senate passed bipartisan comprehensive immigration reform with 68 votes—an impressive bipartisan vote total in this increasingly partisan climate.

The House Republicans' lack of action on immigration is almost completely inexplicable if you compare the most recent Republican Party platform to what the nonpartisan Congressional Budget Office had to say about the Senate immigration reform bill.

When you take the time to look at both of these documents, you realize that no other bill that we could pass during this or any other Congress would accomplish as many of the Republican Party's stated legislative objectives as passing immigration reform.

Just so that everyone understands this, I want to take you through a step-

by-step process where we look at the Republican Party platform and compare it to the CBO report.

The first substantive sentence of the Republican Party platform says:

The best jobs program is economic growth. Republicans will pursue free market policies that are the surest way to boost employment and create job growth and economic prosperity for all.

Well, what does the CBO report have to say about what the immigration bill does for economic growth, job growth, and economic prosperity?

Page 3 of the CBO report says that “the bill would increase real . . . GDP relative to the amount CBO projects under current law by 3.3 percent in 2023 and by 5.4 percent in 2033. . . .”

Think about what that means in a \$16 trillion economy. If we pass this bill, we will be adding over \$500 billion of annual economic growth to our economy than we otherwise would. This is a staggering number.

Well, what does the immigration bill do for job growth? Page 4 of the CBO report says that the bill will increase the number of jobs in the U.S. economy by about 6 million.

What about economic prosperity? On this front, page 3 of the CBO report says “the rate of return on capital would be higher under the legislation than under current law. . . .” That means Americans would have more savings and a more secure safety net.

This means that passing immigration reform would accomplish the Republican Party's top priority far better than any piece of legislation the Republicans currently have before Congress.

What about the second stated priority of the Republican platform? That priority says that “small businesses are the leaders in the world's advances in technology and innovation, and we pledge to strengthen that role and foster small business entrepreneurship.”

Do you know what the best way to foster small business entrepreneurship is? Immigration reform.

According to a study from the Kauffman Foundation, immigrants were almost twice as likely to start small businesses in 2012 as native-born Americans. Madam President, 27.1 percent of new entrepreneurs in 2012 were immigrants. That is up from 13.7 percent in 1996.

More than 40 percent of Fortune 500 companies were founded by immigrants—90 companies—or by their children—an additional 114 companies—because a lot of these small businesses become big businesses. The immigration bill has an entrepreneurship visa where immigrants who have raised money from legitimate investors will be given a green card to come here, open companies, and hire Americans.

Why will this happen? Because immigrants have always provided the enthusiasm, hard work, and determination to reenergize America. They perform very important jobs at the lower end of the economic spectrum without com-

plaint to make a better life for their families and they provide innovation and new ideas at the higher end of the economy to create the latest big inventions that fuel our growth.

But that is only scratching the surface of what this immigration bill does. The next priority on page 3 of the Republican platform is “balancing the budget.” What is the bill that Congress can pass this year that best balances the budget? Immigration reform.

According to CBO, passing immigration reform would “reduce budget deficits by \$197 billion over the 2014–2023 period and by about \$700 billion over the 2024–2033 period.” That is \$1 trillion in savings that we can achieve by passing immigration reform.

Finally, with regard to immigration itself, the Republican Party platform says “our highest priority is to secure the rule of law at both our borders and at ports of entry.”

Under the Senate immigration bill, anyone who wants to try and cross the border illegally will have to figure out a way to get over an 18-foot steel pedestrian fence, get past the border agents standing every 1,000 feet apart from Brownsville to San Diego 24 hours a day, and then evade the sensors, cameras, and drones that will track the crosser until they are caught by a border agent or local police.

That is an amendment proposed by our Republican colleagues but we put into the bill. If you try to overstay your visa, your name will be placed on a list given to immigration enforcement officials to find you, detain you, and deport you. If you try to work here illegally, you will never be able to get a job because you will not have a name, a Social Security number, and a matching picture that will pop up on our new E-Verify system when you apply for a job. Future waves of illegal immigration will be prevented if this bill is passed.

So for all of the railing from the hard right about stopping illegal immigration, no one—no one—can deny there have been huge improvements over current law.

Let's take an inventory of what this bill does: Stimulate the economy. Check. Create jobs. Check. Help small businesses. Check. Reduce the debt. Check. Secure the border. Check. End visa overstays. Check. End illegal employment. Check.

These are all of the things Republicans claim they want to do, all in one bill. So why is it that all of these positive benefits to passing reform and all of the costs we pay for doing nothing, why is it that with that the House of Representatives, and the House Republicans in particular, refuse to do anything to fix our broken immigration system? Why do House Republicans not pass our bill to fix our broken immigration system, not change it, not pass a good law? This question can be answered with one simple word: Fear. One simple word. Fear.

Fear is what often causes people to do what is counter to their self-interest. Fear makes people succumb to their basest instincts instead of rising to their noblest ambitions. Fear paralyzes us during times when we need to be taking action. House Republicans are afraid of immigration. They are not only afraid of voting on an immigration bill, they are even afraid of introducing legislation on immigration.

Let me give you some examples. June 2013, Congressman JOE HECK says he was going to introduce immigration reform that would address our broken system. In December of 2013, Republican Congressman HECK announced he would not be introducing any immigration bill of any kind.

April 2014, Congressman JOE BARTON said he was going to introduce major immigration legislation. The bill was never introduced. ERIC CANTOR, who just this week claimed that his position on immigration never wavered, said last year he was going to introduce legislation to “deal with the kids who did not break any laws and themselves came into this country in many cases unbeknownst to them.” This legislation was also never introduced.

Finally, House Republican leadership has repeatedly announced they “think we finally have the policy right on immigration.” But again, we have seen no bill even introduced, much less voted on. House Republicans are so afraid of immigration that they have handed the policy and leadership gavel to STEVE KING, who compares immigrants to dogs and livestock and who claims immigration is a slow-motion holocaust.

ERIC CANTOR is actually right that his position on immigration reform never wavered. His rhetoric was often proreform, but his legislative and voting record was always antireform. CANTOR never introduced or voted for a single immigration bill that would help a single immigrant. But he loved to vaguely reference the need for immigration reform when asked about it. That has been the real Republican Party position on immigration: pretending to be pro-immigration reform rhetorically, but never, never permit a Republican to actually introduce immigration reform legislation and definitely never allow immigration reform legislation to come to a vote. This is because House Republicans may claim to disagree with STEVE KING’s words, but they certainly do not seem to disagree with STEVE KING’s policy objectives. They do not want immigration reform that will rationalize our legal immigration system and create a path to legality for those who are already here. Instead, they support the failed and tragic policies of self-deportation for the people who are already here, and they want to reduce legal immigration to a trickle for the people who wish to come here and contribute to our society.

Two nights ago, when I watched our gritty U.S. soccer team win an amazing game against Ghana, I saw an amazing

team effort coached by an energetic German immigrant whose tactics and decisions helped the United States prevail in the final stages of an incredible, compelling game.

Did Republicans watch the same game and ask: Why is an immigrant coaching our team? These last 2 weeks, I watched the San Antonio Spurs play some of the greatest team basketball anyone has ever seen with players from France, Argentina, Brazil, Australia, Italy, Canada, and, of course, the United States. Did Republicans watch those same games and ask: Who cares about the quality of the basketball being played? Why are immigrants allowed in the NBA?

This is the problem the Republicans face. Republicans have a very important choice to make the next few days. If they continue on the same path they are on now, where they feign sympathy for immigration in their rhetoric but do not vote on or even introduce legislation to fix our broken system, it will be impossible for the average voters to distinguish between any Republican and STEVE KING. Republican words of sympathy will not matter to people whose families are suffering, whose businesses cannot find the workers they need or whose churches are seeing their members deported. They will know that Republicans are to blame for doing nothing on immigration reform. Even worse, Republicans will get the worst of both worlds in this scenario. Their most strident rightwing voters will actually punish them for their Machiavellian efforts to feign sympathy for immigration reform.

So what is the real answer for Republicans? Well, LINDSEY GRAHAM showed us the way by being a man of principle. This weekend he said it best. He said:

I don’t think Eric got beat because of his stand on immigration, I think he got beat because of his lack of defining himself on immigration. Republicans nationally will accept an earned pathway to citizenship if you secure the border. For our party to let the 35 percent tell us how to engage on immigration, we will lose a natural ally in the Hispanic community.

That is from Senator GRAHAM who just won his election with 59 percent of the vote, while defending back at home in a conservative Republican State, South Carolina, immigration reform.

In conclusion, to Speaker BOEHNER, Majority Whip MCCARTHY, and others in the new House leadership, the choice is yours. Join with us, the evangelical community, the Catholic Church, American farmers, American police chiefs, America’s business community, and 65 percent of American voters in supporting tough, fair, practical immigration reform legislation or, alternatively, you can ignore the benefits of immigration reform and continue to fail to address our broken immigration system because of your fear, and you can eventually watch your party go into the dustbin of history. Those are your two choices, Republicans.

There is no doubt that at the moment STEVE KING is winning. Repub-

licans are implementing his policy objective of inaction to perfection because they are so fearful. But hopefully, just like the U.S. team, House Republicans can overcome their fears, appeal to their more noble aspirations, and we can pull victory from the jaws of defeat at the very end here and pass the immigration reform legislation our country so desperately needs.

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

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. COONS.) The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Ms. MIKULSKI. I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

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

Ms. MIKULSKI. Mr. President, we have been on the motion to proceed to our three appropriations bills since 10 a.m. this morning. It has almost been 4 hours, and it is true, under the cloture, there is 30 hours of debate. We could let this go on until 11 p.m. tonight—we could. Actually, Members have had an interesting day speaking about issues related to Iraq and to immigration, but we would like to focus on the bills beforehand: agriculture, FDA—how do we feed people in our own country, save the family farm, and be able to export food.

We would like to bring up a bill that funds FDA, the Food and Drug Administration, that looks out for food safety, but also the safety and efficacy of life-science products such as medical devices, biotech products, and pharmaceuticals, which I know are important to the State of the Presiding Officer.

We want to be able to bring up Transportation, Housing, and Urban Development. The highway trust fund is going to run out.

In my own home State we need the transportation money. We need it for the formula funding that will be important to roads, but we also need the money in there that looks out for small airports, such as the Hagerstown airport, the Frederick airport, which the President’s plane needs to get to Camp David.

Right up the road is the Hagerstown airport, for which there is a growing manufacturing hub, of which there is small manufacturing employing 300 to 400 people. Some make trucks, some make the heavy-duty equipment to be sold, that are also export products. One company actually puts in the avionics to the airplanes guarding our border.

If we put all that together, it is close to 900 to 1,200 jobs. Hello, this is what we are talking about—public investment that creates private sector jobs and does public safety.

So we are saying to those who are considering how we could move ahead, we encourage them now. I suggest we follow the model when we were on the floor 3 years ago. That was the last time we had these appropriations on the floor. We had an amendment process.

The managers of the bill, such as my vice chairman Senator SHELBY and I, worked with Members on a defined list, some we could actually take. There were some excellent ideas where Members wanted to improve on what we had done.

For those who have concern about spending, they can actually come and offer cuts or they can offer replacements. This is the place where if you want government to work your way, it is your day and you do it through the amendment process.

Most Americans don't understand that in order to debate a bill on the Senate floor, you have to first file a motion to proceed. That is asking permission to come to the floor to take up the bill. So we had to have a cloture vote on it. OK, it passed 95 to 3. I think it is the will of the Senate to get it going, and let's get these amendments—get it on with the amendments.

Are there anxieties on both sides about the nature of those amendments? Sure. But that is what amendments are. Some we can take, some we need to debate.

We are the greatest deliberative body in the world. We have to start deliberating.

I say to my friends who are pondering how to proceed, the best way to proceed is look at the agreement we had in 2011 that allowed for amendments, a regular order, a methodical process for considering those amendments, and then we would be able to get on them, be able to debate them. My suggestion would be that we would alternate sides, a Democratic amendment, a Republican amendment—hey, maybe even a bipartisan amendment.

I hope we do not spin our wheels and spin the clock for 8½ more hours, because the American people know that after all is said and done, more gets said than gets done.

I am suggesting—really—let's follow the regular order. The process I am recommending is not new. There are no surprises, there are no stunts. It is a process we have followed in the past. I am suggesting, along with Senator SHELBY, the exact model we used 3 years ago, the last time appropriations were on the floor.

There are those who say in this country we have a spending problem. If you think we have a spending problem, this is the time to come to the floor and debate. If you think we have a spending problem and we are spending too much on the Justice Department—if you think it is too much money on bullet-proof vests for cops or shelters for battered women, come on. If you think there is too much money in the space program, you don't like this rocket ship or that satellite, this is the place to come. Offer amendments. We are ready to debate.

I speak for my two other subcommittee chairs, Senator MURRAY on Transportation, Housing and Urban Development and Related Agencies, and Senator PRYOR on Agriculture, Rural

Development, Food and Drug Administration, and Related Agencies. We are already in consultation with the other side of the aisle. Senator COLLINS on transportation and Senator BLUNT on agriculture are also ready to debate.

I would hope we could move forward, have a method for moving forward that promotes regular order. If we do that, I think Members who haven't experienced too much—because of our gridlock and deadlock and the lock on amendments that we actually—I think they are going to like it because they like democracy. If you like the Constitution, if you like democracy, this is the place where we can put it into place today.

Before I yield the floor, I note that the leadership from the Republican side is in conference with Senator SHELBY. I hope that is good news.

Then for those on both sides of the aisle watching the process on the floor, if you have amendments, start to gear up and get ready to bring them over. Senator SHELBY and I are here. We are ready to receive them. We are ready to get ready to do them, we are ready to talk about them, and set the stage for hearing them.

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

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. UDALL of New Mexico). The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

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

IMMIGRATION

Mr. CORNYN. Mr. President, with what is happening in Iraq, what is happening with the claim of lost IRS emails from Lois Lerner, what is happening in the developments of the Benghazi investigation, what is happening in Ukraine, and what could happen in Afghanistan, it is easy—perhaps too easy—to overlook a crisis occurring right here in America on our southern border. That crisis is easily described as a wave of humanity coming across our southern border from Central America.

Tragically, tens of thousands of the people coming across our borders seeking refuge in the United States are children—unaccompanied minors—from Honduras, Guatemala, and El Salvador. The question we should ask ourselves is, Why are we seeing this unprecedented increase in the number of unaccompanied minors coming across our southwestern border?

As we can see, in 2011 there were 6,560 detained. But that number has grown steadily, from 2012, 2013, and now 2014. So far 47,000 minors—unaccompanied children—have been detained coming across our border, primarily from Central America. It is estimated that this 60,000 number will likely double next year unless something is done.

These children—and their parents are enabling this—are crossing the border

because of a widespread perception that they will be allowed to stay here. The reason for that perception is a series of events—a series of stated changes in policy—which have given the impression that President Obama does not have a commitment to enforce our immigration laws.

None of us denies that Central America's Northern Triangle is plagued by drug cartels, street gangs, rampant violence, and deeply entrenched poverty. There is no doubt about it. The fact is that the majority of people coming across the southwestern border these days are not from Mexico; they are from Central America. They are coming through a 500-mile strip of border between Guatemala and Mexico, making their way up the Mexican coast in areas largely controlled by the Zetas—a criminal organization, a drug cartel which has basically figured this is another way to make money. In other words, they not only traffic in drugs, they traffic in people, and now, quite honestly, they are trafficking in tens of thousands of children.

The massive spike in unaccompanied minors, of course, seemed to start to take off when President Obama announced in 2012 his so-called deferred action plan. To be clear and to be fair, this deferred action announcement where the President said he would not deport certain categories or classes of children would not apply to the children coming across the border today. So we might wonder, why in the world do they keep coming?

Well, that was not an isolated event in 2012. Just to remind my colleagues, this deferred action announcement came 2 years after John Morton, who was the Director of Immigration and Customs Enforcement, or ICE, circulated a memo declaring that the enforcement of U.S. immigration laws against most illegal aliens was now a lower priority. That memo went out in June of 2010.

A few months later several colleagues and I sent a letter to then-Department of Homeland Security Secretary Janet Napolitano expressing our concern that the administration's selective enforcement of our immigration statutes was jeopardizing public safety and breeding contempt for the rule of law. That letter read, in part:

Numerous criminal aliens are being released into society and are having proceedings terminated simply because ICE has decided that such cases do not fit within the Department's chosen enforcement priorities. It appears that ICE is enforcing the law based on criteria it arbitrarily chose with complete disregard for the enforcement laws created by Congress.

Then, in the second Morton memo the following June, then-Director Morton sent around another memo which further advised U.S. immigration authorities to systemically reconsider hundreds of thousands of immigration cases and to make them low priorities to enforce immigration laws against millions of people illegally present in the United States. That second Morton

memo went even further than the first in looking at everyone—all the undocumented population here in the United States—and saying: We are going to reconsider our priorities in terms of repatriation of those individuals should they be detained by ICE. That June 2011 memo laid the groundwork for the deferred action program the President announced a year later, which was 2012, and these programs were extended earlier this month.

The average was about 6,500; then it doubled in 2012; and then it doubled again in 2013; and then it is scheduled to double again in 2014.

The administration has continued to treat the vast majority of illegal immigrants as low-priority offenders, thereby creating perverse incentives for people to cross the border. If people don't believe there is any consequence associated with entering the country in violation of our immigration laws, they are going to continue to do it. As the distinguished Presiding Officer knows, law enforcement has more than just what I would call a goal-line defense priority. In other words, deterrence is very important. Obviously, people are not being deterred.

Perversely, people are being encouraged by this series of events to show up at the border—and, of course, in huge numbers—overwhelming Border Patrol, which is now no longer looking uniformly at drug dealers and human smuggling operations. Now they are trying to take care of children and trying to get them to a safe place to live and to take care of them.

John Sandweg, who served as the ICE Director from 2013 to 2014, recently told the *Los Angeles Times*:

If you are a run-of-the-mill immigrant here illegally, your odds of getting deported are close to zero.

It is just unlikely to happen. That message has obviously gotten through to folks in Central America, who, admittedly, are living in a very tough neighborhood, and it has encouraged many of them to risk their lives and their children's lives on an extremely dangerous journey through this region of Mexico covered by the drug cartels.

Actually, it is part of the business model of the drug cartels to encourage this flow of illegal migration from Central America through Mexico because they effectively get paid a tax by the coyotes and human smugglers who smuggle people through this dangerous region. One of the ways they come is on the top of one of these trains.

This is a shot of a train they call *The Beast*. It has been well documented and written about by a Salvadoran journalist, Oscar Martinez, in a book he wrote in 2013 which is chilling, but it describes the journey from Central America through Mexico on the top of one of these trains and the risk of accident, the likelihood of sexual assault—6 to 8 out of 10 migrant women are sexually assaulted—people who are kidnapped for ransom, and people who are killed who don't comply with the dictates of the drug cartels.

Don't take just my word for it.

Last week the *Washington Post* confirmed that the influx of unaccompanied minors:

... is being driven in large part by the perception that they will be allowed to stay under the Obama administration's immigration policies.

The *New York Times* recently told the story of a 13-year-old Honduran boy who was detained in Mexico while trying to reach the United States. Like so many others across Central America, the *Times* reported this boy

... said his mother believed that the Obama administration had quietly changed its policy regarding unaccompanied minors and that if he made it across he would have a better shot at staying.

The distinguished Senator from Maryland is here.

Not only is this affecting States such as Texas, but these children, 1,000 of them, are being effectively warehoused in Lackland Air Force base in San Antonio, TX, some are being shipped to Arizona and California, and some are being sent—or at least the plan is to send them—to Virginia and Maryland, because these 47,000 children who have been detained since October of last year are overwhelming the capacity of local communities and State and Federal authorities to deal with them. As I said, *The Beast*, which transports people 1,000 miles or so on a trip from southern Mexico up to the southern border of Texas, is a horrific way to transit that huge expanse.

Migrant women are preyed upon by drug cartels such as the Zetas. Officials from the mayor's office in Ciudad Hidalgo told Oscar Martinez, the author of the book "*The Beast*," in Ciudad Hidalgo the Zetas control all trafficking, sending men to recruit women in Central America, and sometimes even kidnapping migrant women riding the buses. They sell the women to truck-drivers for a night, and then throw them away like unwanted scraps.

My point is, there is nothing humane about encouraging people to travel through cartel-dominated smuggling routes in the hopes of reaching the United States. Yet that has been the effect of the perception that the President and his administration are not committed to enforcing our immigration laws. I know that wasn't their intention but that has been the consequence. Even before the ongoing border crisis erupted, people were taking notice of the President's disregard for the rule of law.

Last December, for example, a Federal district court judge in Brownsville, TX, absolutely excoriated the Obama administration for making a mockery of enforcement, noting that the President's policies were incentivizing human traffickers and endangering the lives of children. Here is what Federal Judge Andrew Hanen said:

By fostering an atmosphere whereby illegal aliens are encouraged to pay human smugglers for further services, the govern-

ment is not only allowing them to fund the illegal and evil activities of these cartels, but is also inspiring them to do so.

That is a Federal district judge in Brownsville, TX.

One final point. Some of my friends across the aisle have argued that if only Congress would pass President Obama's preferred immigration reforms, the current border crisis would never have happened. That ignores the fact that none of these children qualify for any of the deferred action policies either ordered in 2012 or any of the others I mentioned. But there is the perception caused by the first Morton memo, the second Morton memo, then the deferred action announcement, and now the widely publicized news that the President has instructed Jeh Johnson, the Secretary of Homeland Security, to reconsider the entire repatriation and deportation policy, and it is clear this is related to the upcoming midterm election and the President's desire to try to make a point.

The problem is his point is backfiring. It is victimizing the very same people the President believes, I think, that he is trying to help. That is what happens when the rule of law is no longer your priority—unintended consequences. As I explained today, the President's actions have helped cause this humanitarian crisis.

I know the Finance Committee has in subcommittee appropriated I think roughly \$2 billion to help the Federal authorities to deal with this humanitarian crisis. Unfortunately, unless we are able to process appropriations bills across the floor of the Senate, I don't know when that money is going to be available, and that is another problem.

But the most fundamental problem is the American people's confidence that the Federal Government will enforce the laws, until such time as those laws are changed, has been undermined. Passing new legislation will do nothing to fix that unless the President is willing to enforce laws that have already been passed by Congress. This isn't a problem of passing some more laws; this is a problem of the President and his administration effectively conveying the message that they are not going to enforce the laws they don't want to enforce. Unless we send a clear, unambiguous message that our border is secure and our immigration laws are being enforced, we can expect more and more Central American migrants to embark on the harrowing journey from Central America up through Mexico, which means more of them will be robbed, kidnapped, raped, and killed. We don't know how many start out on this journey. All we know is how many show up on the border. We ought to be concerned about that.

To be clear, I remain personally committed to fixing all aspects of our broken immigration system, but I cannot and will not support any policy that effectively empowers human traffickers and endangers the lives of these children.

Mr. President, I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Maryland.

Ms. MIKULSKI. Mr. President, before the Senator from Texas leaves—and I know we have other matters to discuss—first I want to make a comment and then I have a question.

I want to thank the Senator from Texas for that very compelling presentation. I might not agree with every sentence, but I think the Senator painted a picture of what is happening at the border. We do have a humanitarian crisis.

As chair of the Appropriations Committee, I was made aware of this last year by Secretary Sebelius when they asked for more money to help. I said, yes, more money to help, but we needed to plan. What were we going to do with this? So now these numbers have surged, and what it has become is these children effectively function as refugees.

This portrait the Senator has portrayed—the horrific sense of The Beast, and human beings, women and children, and boys, as well, being sold as if they were commodities? Commodities. It gives you goosebumps. The Senator has painted a very compassionate and compelling picture.

My question, though, is we have to deal with the immediate crisis now. But as the Senator talks about the enforcement on the border, what would the Senator recommend we do?

In other words, the pictures I have seen—and I hope I will go down and see this for myself—is the children come up to the border control guy, some as young as 4 and 5 years old and some go up to the early teens. Some teens carry their younger siblings. Is the Senator saying we should turn them away? These are not provocative questions. We have to work across the aisle to deal with this issue constructively, humanely, and effectively.

Mr. CORNYN. Mr. President, if I may respond to the distinguished Senator's question.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection.

Mr. CORNYN. I appreciate the Senator's leadership and big heart. This is not a political issue. The first and most important thing we need to do is to pursue the best interests of these children, but we cannot simply deal with our immigration problem, illegal immigration problem, at the border. It has to start back in Central America. That is one reason I am glad Vice President JOE BIDEN is traveling to Guatemala, as I know Jeh Johnson, the Secretary of Homeland Security has, to try to see what they can do.

We then need to try to persuade our friends in Mexico to commit more resources. Perhaps we can persuade them to deal with the 500-mile southern border that is basically controlled by the cartels. But the cartels are making money. So this is a governance issue in Central America and Mexico as well.

I might point out that perhaps with the same reservations the distin-

guished Senator from Maryland made about not agreeing with everything I said, but much of what I said, what I have said has I think pretty much been echoed by my friend Representative HENRY CUELLAR from Laredo, TX, who obviously by virtue of where he lives and was raised is very knowledgeable about the border around Laredo and Mexico and Central America.

I saw an interview with our former First Lady Hillary Clinton, that unless we send a very clear and loud message to people in Central America that you should not come, you should not risk your children making this long, harrowing journey because they will not be able to stay, then they are going to keep coming, because right now when these children come here, as the Senator knows, our capacity to deal with them is overwhelmed at the local level, at the State level, and at the Federal level, and they are essentially being treated like refugees and warehoused in places such as Lackland Air Force Base and other places around the country.

You can imagine the impact in the long run not only on the health care system, on education, and other services that would be required to take care of these children until they can be repatriated. But I would align myself with what former Senator Clinton, the former Secretary of State, said: The President and the administration need to send a very clear and loud message that anyone who comes to the United States will be returned to their country of origin once a safe family member can be identified to repatriate these children. But right now the system is so overwhelmed that we don't even know who these children are being placed with in America. They may be some claimed family member, but I am not sure whether there are background checks being done for criminal history or perhaps sex offense.

This is overwhelming the whole system. I am sure working together we can come up with an improvement over where we are now, and I would point out this is not a partisan issue, but it is a very harsh reality and my concern is it is being overwhelmed by the news out of the Middle East and other concerns here in Washington when it is very much front and center back home in Texas.

Ms. MIKULSKI. I thank the senior Senator from Texas, a former attorney general, as I recall. The Senator knows the law, he knows the border, and he knows what is going on.

This Senator looks at this too as not only the chair of the Appropriations Committee but as a social worker. The care of the children even in our own country gives me pause.

They were originally looking at a closed Social Security building to house these children, with no bathrooms except down the hall, putting them in little office cubicles. So we have a very serious problem.

I want the Senator from Texas to know I agree with the holding that we

need to have the strong and clear message in Central America, first of all, that these rumors are false.

Today is not the day to do this. I thank the Senator for his compelling comments. I would like to work with the Senator from Texas and also continue to work with the administration to focus on this. But the message does have to go to Central America. I think we are fair game in Central America. From what I have heard, there are all these radio ads and so on that are truly exploiting this. There is violence, there is ghoulish, grim violence against children in Central America. Desperate mothers and grandmothers are trying to look for a way out. They are being exploited. I am going to work with the Senator in any way I can to stem the flow, deal with the humanitarian crisis, and get a long-range solution. I appreciate this conversation going forward.

Mr. CORNYN. Mr. President, I thank the Senator and look forward to that.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Montana is recognized.

Mr. WALSH. Mr. President, I rise today not only as a Senator from Montana, but as a veteran of the long and difficult war in Iraq. Like most Americans, the increasing instability in Iraq and the disintegration of the country along sectarian boundaries has me deeply concerned. This past weekend when I was home in Montana and talking to Montanans, they were very concerned about what was going on in Iraq; they express their interest to me about Iraq on a regular basis.

The heinous advance of the Islamic State of Iraq and Syria, their systematic execution of Iraqi soldiers, and the murder of innocent civilians gives pause to people everywhere.

I stand here today as a veteran and as a father whose son has been deployed multiple times. I wish to recognize my son today, who is with me today. I ask that my son Michael stand and be recognized.

We fought in the war that Washington began based on false information—a war that ended and from which we must move on.

I led an infantry battalion—the 1st Battalion, 163rd Infantry—into combat, which was made up of more than 100 of Montana's finest. Our area of operation was from just north of Tikrit—from Baiji—to Kirkuk, which is the very same area being fought over today.

It was late 2004 and the country had fallen into a bitter sectarian conflict—a conflict that unfolded after the dismantling of the Baathist-led army and fueled by ancient divides between the Shias and Sunnis. Those same disputes are again boiling over in Iraq today.

From the end of 2004 to late 2005, my unit fought to hold ground, secure roads, and build infrastructure. We worked with local sheiks and key leaders to forge a path to peace. We helped return Iraq's government to its people. While there we oversaw two successful elections and watched with hope and

great satisfaction as the Iraqis ratified their constitution. It was during this time that I also dispatched a team from the battalion to focus solely on training and assisting members of the newly formed Iraqi army.

During our unit's entire deployment in Iraq while fighting the insurgency, we faced rocket attacks, snipers, and improvised explosive devices on a daily basis. Four of my men were killed in action, and there is not a day that goes by that I don't think of those men and their families: MSG Robbie D. McNary of Lewistown, MT, died on March 31, 2005; SSG Kevin Davis of Lebanon, OR, died on April 8, 2005; SGT Timothy Kiser of Tehama, CA, died on April 28, 2005; and SGT Travis Arndt, died on September 21, 2005. Travis was from Bozeman, MT. Scores of other soldiers were injured.

One of my soldiers died by suicide after returning home to Montana. He was a victim of the invisible wounds of war.

Nearly 4,500 Americans have been killed in Iraq, among them 28 Montana heroes. Some 32,000 Americans have been wounded. The war cost us more than \$2 trillion—I say more than \$2 trillion—most of which Congress put on a credit card so our grandchildren can pay the debt.

Because this Nation has failed to prepare for new veterans returning home, we now have a crisis of care within our VA health care system—a system that is overwhelmed after more than a decade of war.

Today we are seeing 22 veterans die by suicide each and every single day across this country. These are the true costs of war. Montanans understand this, and Americans understand this.

Because I work for Montanans, and I am listening to them, I call on President Obama to use extreme caution when considering options to deal with the sectarian violence that we are seeing take place in Iraq today. America cannot afford another Iraq financially or the human costs that are associated with war. We did our job there, and we did it with honor and integrity. Our men and women should be very proud of their success, and the citizens of this country should be proud of the accomplishments of the men and women who served in our armed forces.

Today some are suggesting we make an open-ended commitment to Iraq and keep American troops on the ground indefinitely. Sending thousands of America's young men and women back into Iraq to step into the middle of a civil war is not a solution.

To my fellow Members of Congress, I urge temperance as we navigate this difficult terrain because I know that foreign policy failures made in Washington fall disproportionately on the backs of young men and women from the small towns across Montana and the country.

I have seen war up close and, like too many American families, I have seen the cost of war up close on families and

on communities all across this country.

I believe it is now time for the Iraqis to secure and defend their own nation. The embrace of their own self-determination is the only path to a true and everlasting peace in Iraq.

I wish to remind the American people of the costs that have been associated with the war in Iraq. We are dealing with a crisis within the VA health care system. At one time over a year ago, we had over 450,000 men and women on a backlog list trying to get in to see a health care provider.

Today that backlog has been significantly reduced, but we still have a problem within the VA health care system. We put over 2 million American veterans into that health care system without making sure that the system was ready for them when they came home. Can you imagine sending over 2 million American servicemembers into Iraq or Afghanistan—or anywhere else in the world—whom we didn't train, equip, or provide the resources for them to go into Iraq?

When people talk to me about the cost of war, I think this is a cost that we sometimes overlook because when our men and women return from Iraq, the war is not over. We will be dealing with this cost for many years.

As we talk about the men and women in Iraq and Afghanistan and contemplating our extension of deployment in Afghanistan, a figure has been thrown around as to the costs. Today it costs approximately \$1.2 million for a soldier in Afghanistan. When we reduce the number of soldiers in Afghanistan from 32,000 to less than 10,000, that cost goes up to \$2.3 million. Again, we are planning to put that cost on the credit card.

We have a responsibility, and that responsibility lies on the citizens of this Nation and on the citizens of Montana. We must continue to look out for these people.

I don't want to be an isolationist. I understand there are problems in Iraq and Afghanistan, but we have to take care of our problems here in Washington, DC.

As I travel back to Montana and talk to Montanans, they are concerned about our debt. They know we have a spending problem, and we have to take care of that spending problem. But sending our soldiers to Iraq or extending their stay in Afghanistan is not going to solve the problems we are dealing with there.

Again, America cannot afford another Iraq financially or the human costs that are associated with Iraq. We owe it to the citizens of this Nation.

The Members of the Senate need to ask themselves: If it were my son or daughter who was going to be sent into Iraq to fight in a sectarian conflict, would I be as willing to do that as I am today without having someone I care for sent over there?

We hear about suggestions on a daily basis about what we should be doing in

Iraq and Afghanistan, and I know we are dealing with a difficult situation there, but we have to make the right decision. We have to look out for the United States of America and what is happening here in America.

I think that too many of my fellow Members of Congress are too abrupt and think too quickly about what we should do in Iraq. I believe they need to take a step back and think about the impacts—the second and third order of effects of continuing to send our men and women back over to Iraq.

As I said, I know that foreign policy failures made in Washington will fall disproportionately on the backs of smalltown America—towns like Culbertson, MT, Livingston, MT, and Boulder, MT. It is not the large cities that will bear the burden of sending men and women back into Iraq.

I have also mentioned I have seen war up close. I still recall the ramp ceremonies we held shortly after the deaths of the men and women in Iraq. We had to have those men and women out of there within a 12-hour period. Those were very difficult times to deal with not only for me but for the other 700-plus men and women who were deployed with me to Iraq.

Again, I cannot overemphasize how important I think it is that we really step back, take a look at what is happening in Iraq and determine if this is really the best thing for the United States of America. Is it the best thing for our military to have to deal with?

We have been at war for over 13 years in Iraq and Afghanistan. Our military will do whatever we ask of it, but we also have to think about the families of our service men and women, the impacts that the wars of Iraq and Afghanistan have had on them with the number of divorces, broken marriages, and broken families. Those are also the costs of war we are having to deal with.

There are no easy answers to what is happening in Iraq, and I know we will come together and come up with a solution, and I hope it is the right solution because these are very important times. Who knows what will happen next? Will it happen in the Middle East? Will it happen in Europe? I don't think that anyone knows, and we have to be prepared.

Again, I have said it once and I wish to emphasize this point again: I believe it is time for the Iraqis to secure and defend their own nation. We heard they have over 17 divisions. Think about the size of those divisions. A division of the United States is nearly 20,000 soldiers, and I am sure that an Iraqi division is somewhere in that same capacity. They have 17 divisions—4 of which we hear have dropped their weapons and fallen back, but that still leaves 13 divisions they would have to fight, and so they can make a stance to protect their country.

I am calling on the Members of this Senate to ask the Iraqi people to stand up and fight for their country.

I thank the Chair.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

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

CLIMATE CHANGE

Mr. WHITEHOUSE. Mr. President, I come to the floor to make an objection, if necessary, to an effort to submarine the President's climate change initiative, which two-thirds of all Americans support and which a huge number of major name-brand American corporations supported and which is supported by those whom we trust to lead our national defense and our national security interests. But something about this building, something about this place makes it a place where the polluting interests have wildly disproportionate sway, so we keep seeing these attacks on environmental regulations. So it is actually kind of fortunate timing that I am here because it gives me a chance, for the 71st time, to try to wake this body up to the harm carbon pollution is causing to our oceans, to our economy, to our wildlife, and to our health.

I traveled recently to New Hampshire. I have been traveling around the country, going to States that are facing the carbon predicament and seeing how they are doing it.

I can tell my colleagues that Granite Staters are facing up to the daunting challenges of climate change. Rhode Islanders understand that New Hampshire's challenges are like our own. We see similar threats in our own State. At the Newport, RI, tide gauge, right at our naval station, sea level is up almost 10 inches since the 1930s. In the winter, we are three to four degrees warmer in Narragansett Bay. The recent "National Climate Assessment" report concludes that Rhode Island will see even more rising sea level, warmer temperatures, and extreme weather.

New Hampshire showed that there is plenty of Yankee good sense up there as well. The people of New Hampshire get it, and they are taking steps to tackle climate change. Let me first say that no one pretended it isn't real. The first line of defense on the other side of the aisle is that climate change isn't real. No one I spoke to in New Hampshire is pretending it isn't real.

University of New Hampshire expert Cameron Wake told me that New Hampshire is "getting wetter and getting warmer," and they pointed out that it is happening fast. The "National Climate Assessment" shows that due to climate change, the Northeast already has seen 70 percent more extreme precipitation in recent years—dramatic downpours that increase the risk of flooding. This University of New Hampshire data shows an even more severe problem for New Hampshire. Dr. Wake told me that he and his Univer-

sity of New Hampshire colleagues have collected data from southern New Hampshire on what they call "extreme precipitation events"—what we might call a rain burst, where over 4 inches of rain falls in just 48 hours. The data show these rain bursts have increased 4 to 10 times since 1960, and they will only grow more frequent through the rest of the century, Wake and his University of New Hampshire colleagues report.

That brings us to the warmer part of the wetter-and-warmer equation. The University of New Hampshire's recent studies show the State's temperature has increased by twice the global average, happening in large part due to what Dr. Wake calls "snow dynamics": Warmer temperatures during New Hampshire's winter mean less snow. Less snow exposes more dark ground underneath. The dark ground absorbs more heat, and it warms faster than if it were covered in reflective snow—what scientists call high albedo snow. So the ground then warms the air—and on goes the cycle.

At Plymouth State University, the Appalachian Mountain Club has data which show temperature increases in Pinkham Notch in New Hampshire's White Mountains. The average increase in temperature has climbed over 75 years. Then, if we look at the average over 50 years, we see that the line has steepened and it is accelerating, and if we look at the line for the last 25 years, it has steepened again and the increase is accelerating further. So New Hampshire's temperatures aren't just rising, they are rising faster.

What do these temperatures mean for Granite Staters? Well, big changes to their winter industries, such as skiing. Six years ago Ben Wilcox, who is the general manager of the ski resort Mount Cranmore in North Conway, NH, was using 40 to 50 snow guns to cover his ski mountain. Now he is using 150. In the last 5 years, Wilcox reports, ski mountains in his region have invested in over 1,700 new top-of-the-line snow guns, capable of making three to four times the amount of snow of previous models, so they can offset the snowpack loss from the shorter winters. That makes them lucky. But when people down the mountain don't see snow, they don't think about skiing, so they don't go.

Stefan Hausmann is the owner of Zimmermann's Ski and Snowboard Shop in Nashua, NH. He told me his business sees this in fewer new skiers and snowboarders buying their equipment at his store. He is still selling the higher end skis to established skiers at a pretty good clip, but he is selling less equipment to beginners. Those lower end customers just aren't coming in the door, says Hausmann.

Of course, New Hampshire's winter tourism industry goes far beyond skiing. The New Hampshire Department of Travel and Economic Development says 34 million visitors travel to the Granite State and spend roughly \$4.6

billion. This makes tourism the State's second largest industry, and climate change hits a lot of it.

For instance, snowmobilers and Nordic skiers come to New Hampshire's backcountry for more than 7,000 miles of trails. If you are a ski mountain, you can crank snow out onto your busy ski slopes. It is not so easy when you are talking about snowmobile trails or Nordic skiing trails. So the ski business of trail skiing and the snowmobile business is taking a hit.

The Hubbard Brook Research Foundation, based in North Woodstock, NH, has found that snow cover has decreased by 22 days since I was born in 1955, and the frozen lakes included in those trail systems that snowmobilers and Nordic skiers use are covered in ice less of the year—33 less days on Mirror Lake just since 1967, for example. As one Granite Stater told me, this hit not just the trails but the hotels, restaurants, snowmobile shops, and outdoor outfitters who depend on that market.

Of course, it is not just sports. Jamey French of Portsmouth, the CEO and president of Northland Forest Products, told me how climate change is affecting two of New Hampshire's most valuable hardwoods—the sugar maple and the yellow birch.

Sugar maples, of course, support New Hampshire's maple sugar industry, but they also draw leaf peepers who travel to view the spectacular foliage that blankets the New Hampshire landscape in the autumn. As New Hampshire and neighboring States get warmer, the trees' geographic range moves north. Scientists predict that future warming will exacerbate this trend, meaning more production of maple syrup in Canada and less in the United States—bad news for New Hampshire's maple sugar houses.

As for the yellow Birch, Mr. French points out that in the 1940s and 1950s, most of the furniture in New England was made out of yellow birch, and yellow birch remains a valuable hardwood, drawing good prices for New Hampshire's timber business.

French fears the consequences for his industry if yellow birch and sugar maples are pushed northwards and out by warmer-weather trees. "Will there be a wood product industry?" he asks. "Will there be a maple sugar industry in a climate-changed New England? There is going to be a lot less of one," he concludes.

New Hampshire biologist Eric Orrf is witnessing one of the most dramatic changes. He studies the moose—an animal that is bred to survive harsh northern winters. But what Orrf sees is a catastrophic decline in moose population mostly due to the success of moose ticks. This is going to get a little bit gross, so forgive me. Moose ticks breed more easily and they survive longer in milder winters. Orrf explains—these are his words:

What happens when we have an early spring, when winter ticks fall off on bare

ground, is they thrive. They lay their eggs. They are successful at reproducing. Then, in the fall, in November, when the baby moose ticks are hanging together, if there is no snow, then by the thousands, tens of thousands, they get on the calves. Now for these calves, they'd literally have to resupply their blood supply two times over to survive the winter. They suck them dry.

I think one tick is pretty revolting. The idea of tens of thousands of ticks on a moose calf, sucking the blood out of the calf so fast that it can't keep up, is a truly grisly thought. They literally "suck them dry," according to Orrf.

Jim O'Brien of the New Hampshire Audubon Society told me how climate change is affecting the State's bird. New Hampshire's State bird is the purple finch. It is the official bird of New Hampshire. It is a cold-weather bird with a range up to Canada. He said this:

The purple finch is at the southern end of its range, and, in all likelihood, our state bird isn't going to be found in the State of New Hampshire anymore.

So while we dawdle and delay in Congress thanks to the influence of big polluters, there is work to be done out there. Thankfully, States across the country, knowing the risks of doing nothing and knowing the costs of doing nothing, are starting to act.

I have been to the Southeast coast. I have been to the Midwest. I have seen wind parks in Iowa with 500 wind turbines generating more than a quarter of the State's electricity. I went South. I saw Republican mayors and county officials in the Southeast putting climate and energy policy at the center of their government's plans.

I saw it again in New Hampshire, Granite Staters who understand the risks all too well. The University of New Hampshire recently released two—not one but two—comprehensive reports about climate change, one for northern New Hampshire and one for southern New Hampshire. I have them with me. New Hampshire Governor Maggie Hassan has played a pivotal role in making sure this work gets done and in developing and operating New England's Regional Greenhouse Gas Initiative, which we call "Reggi," which is already at work reducing our region's carbon pollution and providing a model for how other States can succeed under the powerplant regulations.

We are already seeing our States—our laboratories of democracy—taking sensible steps down the path to reducing carbon emissions. The EPA rule for carbon pollution from powerplants will encourage that State role. Just this morning the Wall Street Journal and NBC News released polling saying two-thirds of Americans support President Obama's new climate rule, and more than half say the United States should go for it and deal with global warming even if it means higher electricity bills for them. People in America get it. It is only this building that is isolated by polluter influence.

It is time for Congress to wake up, and we will if the American people will

give us a good shake. It is time to wake up.

I yield the floor, and I note the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

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

TRIBUTE TO BRIANNA VANCE

Mr. MANCHIN. Mr. President, I rise to recognize a remarkably brave, very young West Virginian, 10-year-old Brianna Vance, who helped save her father's life just last week—truly amazing. It was on Twitter, all over the pages.

On June 10, as a severe storm—and with all of the severe storms we have been having all over the country—tore through her neighborhood in Henlawson, WV, Brianna's father Gregory and two of his friends were sitting on the porch when lightning struck a nearby very large tree that crashed down on top of them and their home.

Brianna tried to use her phone to call for help, but the storm had knocked out all of the cell services. She had nothing. She could not do a thing. Remarkably, she was still able to access the Internet and quickly logged onto Facebook—just by a miracle.

In an extraordinary demonstration of courage and resourcefulness, Brianna posted a video, and I have seen this video. If you haven't, please go to Brianna's Facebook page, "Brianna Vance," and look at it. She asked anyone who had cell phone service or access to a phone to please call 911 and send an ambulance to her yellow house to save her daddy.

She thought, had enough presence about her during this very trying and emotional time. When people see the video, I think it will explain and speak for itself.

Thankfully, someone saw her post and a rescue team was able to save the three victims, including her father, because of that Facebook post.

When all other options failed, Brianna did not give up. She still had the presence of thought and her desire to help her father and his friends.

Because of her sharp wit and resourcefulness, her father is alive and recovering today—just in time to celebrate Father's Day together, as we just finished up this past weekend.

I am so proud of Brianna, and I know her family and community are as well, as can be expected when we have situations not just in West Virginia but in the Presiding Officer's own State of Ohio and all over this great country, where we have family bonds such as this and we have family stories that have good outcomes that we do not hear enough of.

I thank Brianna for her heroism that helped save the lives of her father and

his friends. She should be recognized for her bravery.

So I say, Brianna, on behalf of the grateful State of West Virginia, thank you for what you have done for your father and his friends and showing the courage you have as a young West Virginian.

I thank the Chair.

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

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

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

Mr. COONS. Mr. President, I come to the floor this afternoon because this week the Senate has a chance to take another crucial step away from the political cliffs and manufactured crises of previous years and to get back to the regular order—to get back to the considered, measured, orderly process on this floor that for so long was characteristic of this body, in the past considered the greatest deliberative body on Earth, but in recent years it has ground to a halt.

It is critical that we return to regular order and that we return to the steady consideration of appropriations bills in a way that will move not just the Senate and this Congress but this country forward.

I thank the chair and ranking member of the Appropriations Committee, Senators MIKULSKI and SHELBY, for their leadership and their steadfast determination to work in a bipartisan manner and bring us back to regular order.

We are considering today a collection—or what is called today a "mini-bus" instead of an omnibus—of three appropriations bills: Agriculture, Rural Development, and Food and Drug Administration; Commerce, Justice, and Science; and Transportation and Housing and Urban Development—an unbelievable scope across these three appropriations bills that could in combination make a real and significant difference for our communities, our States, and our country. This is an opportunity for this Congress to carry out its duties to provide oversight and direction and to help all the different agencies I just named move forward and address some of our most important priorities.

As a member myself of the Appropriations Committee, I have advocated for some of what are our Nation's top priorities embedded in these three important bills. So I wish to speak for a few minutes about how these bills will, first, help my home State of Delaware; second, help our country; and then, third, the important obligation we have as Senators to return to regular order and to use the appropriations process for oversight and for management of this whole Federal project.

For Delaware, these three bills invest in a number of areas. I could talk about literally dozens of matters critical to my home State, but let me focus on two—public safety and infrastructure.

When we think about it at the local level—where I served for a decade in county government—these are the foundation of what government does and does well: Keep our people, homes, communities, and families safe, and provide for the sewer water, drinking water, and the highways and tollways and bridges and ports that are critical to moving commerce and our country forward.

This bill extends children's advocacy centers. Let me talk for a few minutes about what children's advocacy centers are and why it is so vital to public safety.

Children's advocacy centers allow communities to bring child abusers to justice without retraumatizing their victims. Children's advocacy centers are unique because it is a model that brings together, under one roof in one place, law enforcement, prosecutors, counselors, and child service professionals—all focusing on how to best care for and move forward with a child who has been a victim of abuse.

In Delaware we have three centers—one in each of our three counties. And although I wish we didn't need them, the fact is they are indispensable. In my experience in a decade of local government, I was exposed over and over to the critical role they play in helping law enforcement secure critical evidence and move forward to conviction against the monsters who commit abuse against our children.

Since the creation of these centers, they have transformed our Nation's response to child abuse, giving families hope and guidance in their darkest moments and delivering justice to those who have endured the worst.

As we work together to continue to try our best to keep our children safe, this bill allows us to continue to fund child advocacy centers so we can have a more efficient, more effective, more federally sponsored and coordinated way to deliver at a very modest cost this vital resource for our children.

Second, as we work to keep our children safe, this bill also allows us to protect those who protect us. Every day more than 1 million law enforcement officers across this country accept risks to their personal safety. As they leave their families at dawn and head off to their jobs, they know that what they accept as part of their mission is the risk they may not come home that night. That is why it is so important this bill also funds the bulletproof vest partnership.

In Delaware we know its value all too well. Last February at the New Castle County Courthouse in my hometown of Wilmington, DE, a gunman unleashed a hail of bullets into a courthouse lobby, tragically killing two. On what was a difficult morning in Wilmington, two

lives were also saved—those of Sergeant Michael Manley and Corporal Steve Rinehart—members of the Delaware Capitol Police—officers who were wearing bulletproof vests funded by the Federal Bulletproof Vest Partnership. This is a partnership launched by my predecessor, now-Vice President BIDEN. It has been sustained on a bipartisan basis for many years, but without this appropriation, this vital Federal-State-law enforcement partnership would grind to a halt.

Vests work. They save lives. They save officers' lives, and with this bill we will be able to ensure even more officers all across this country have life-saving bulletproof vests.

Those are two areas where in law enforcement and public safety this bill continues critical investments in partnership from the Federal Government to State and local governments.

In recent weeks in Delaware we have also been reminded of just how critical our infrastructure is—our bridges, our roads, and highways.

There is a bridge on I-495 that goes across the Christina River. This is a vital highway for Wilmington and for the whole mid-Atlantic region. It carries 90,000 drivers a day, but 2 weeks ago it was closed indefinitely when workers nearby noticed four of its pillars were off plumb, were slanted, and then upon further investigation discovered there were cracks in the very foundation holding this bridge 50 feet in the air. Its closure is hurting families, businesses, and commuters, and it is just one in a string of recent emergencies all across our country that demonstrate the need for investment in fixing America's roads and bridges.

The funding we are considering this week in this bill recognizes that and takes steps to address some of our most urgent needs across this country. It continues to invest in two innovative funding vehicles: One called TIGER grants and another called TIFIA loans. These are acronyms, but they are inventive ways to mobilize private capital in partnership with States and the Federal Government, to get us moving again in repairing and upgrading the roads and bridges of America. They help State and local governments pay for new highways and bridges, public transit projects, railways, and ports.

In Delaware, the Port of Wilmington—a critical economic engine for our State and region—secured a \$10 million TIGER grant last year to renovate facilities built in 1922. On U.S. 301, a little south and west of Wilmington but still in Delaware, TIFIA grants are helping us to do critical work to relieve congestion.

In southernmost Delaware at Georgetown, at the Sussex County Airport, we have also seen the vital role and the value of Federal investment. Since 2012, the Sussex County Airport has received \$4 million in airport improvement grants to expand its runway and improve safety and to help grow manu-

facturing jobs at that Georgetown Airport. With this week's bill, we will be able to continue making these kinds of critical improvements at airports in Delaware and across our country.

I relatively rarely get to fly, but I commute virtually every day back and forth from Wilmington, DE, to Washington, and I ride on Amtrak when I do so. Today, ridership levels are at a record high, and Delaware's region in the Northeast corridor brings in \$300 million in profits alone. So it is good this bill maintains Amtrak's national operations and investments in its capital needs, but I believe we need to do more. We need to step up and do more federally to invest if we want to keep these results, not just in the Northeast but across the country.

We have a more than \$6 billion backlog to reach a state of good repair for Amtrak. As our bridges, tunnels, and rail lines get older and older, fixing them will only become more expensive. That is why I intend to offer an amendment to this bill to further increase our investment in the capital needs of Amtrak. This is critical. It is something we need, and we need to start chipping away at this long overdue debt we have, this unaddressed infrastructure debt, if we are going to continue to serve our communities.

There are many other great provisions in these incredibly broad bills that are of national and international importance. Let me just briefly reference a few.

At home manufacturing continues to be critical to our economy and our future, and biomanufacturing plays an increasingly important role; the manufacturing of products and materials from renewable sources, from plant-based sources rather than petrochemicals. For the first time, through this bill, we will dedicate \$15 million to the National Science Foundation's budget for new biomanufacturing initiatives that will allow us to deploy in the marketplace new inventions and innovations.

Our competitors aren't holding back on doing so. Countries from the United Kingdom to China are ramping up their investments in new biomanufacturing. In my view it is time for the United States to refocus our research, to reprioritize our investments, and to stay competitive in this vital field.

Finally, I am proud these appropriations bills also support in the housing area funding for Community Development Block Grant—CDBG—Programs. We used them when I was in county government in Delaware to help rehabilitate homes, to help provide for affordable homes, and to help strengthen and sustain jobs in our communities.

In 2013, so-called CDBG, or Community Development Block Grants, helped 225 families. Some in this body have tried to cut CDBG, but I am thrilled we have been able to successfully move forward and sustain its support in this bill.

While we invest at home, these appropriations bills also make important

investments abroad. One I would like to briefly highlight is in our international food aid program, where we feed millions but can do more. This bill provides for flexibility of our food aid that will allow it to be delivered more efficiently, more quickly, and to feed more who hunger around the world.

As businesses also look abroad from the United States, we are doing more to open new markets for them. One of the investments I most value that is in this bill in this regard is the expansion of the Foreign Commercial Service at the Department of Commerce—in particular, its expansion in Africa, where 7 out of 10 of the fastest growing economies in the world are currently growing but where the United States isn't doing enough to take advantage of these burgeoning export markets for our products.

As chair of the African Affairs Subcommittee, I have had a chance to see up close the great opportunities for growth and partnership that Africa offers. There will be four new Foreign Commercial Service offices in Angola, Tanzania, Ethiopia, and Mozambique, as well as expansion in Kenya, Ghana, Morocco, and Libya. Now we can make investments in them jointly so our growing partnerships in the Sub-Saharan countries I listed can thrive.

As I close, I also make one brief point about why this whole process is important—why we need to pass these appropriations bills rather than just continuing resolutions, which go on from year after year, that sustain funding but do not engage the minds and skills of the Members of this body in doing oversight of the Federal Government.

As the Federal Government changes, as our Nation's needs change, we need to be able to ensure that our spending and our focus adapts as well. A great example from this particular minibuss bill that is on the floor today is the Crude By Rail Safety Initiative. Within the last year there have been a number of accidents on our rail networks that demand our action. America is moving more and more oil and hazardous products by rail every year, so we are putting in place an approach to do it safely.

The Department of Transportation and Transportation Secretary Foxx have done a great job responding with the resources and tools they have, but Congress needs to do more. That is why this bill adds 20 new rail and hazardous materials inspectors, adds \$3 million to ensure that oil routes are safe and sound, creates a new short-line safety institute, improves classifications, and extends training for first responders.

Without this appropriations bill and regular order, new and timely investments such as these that are responsive to conditions of the world wouldn't happen. Thus, if I might say in closing, while our economy changes, we need to change, and we need regular order and regular appropriations bills to be able to do that.

I again thank the chair and vice chair of the Appropriations Committee,

Senators Mikulski and Shelby, for their leadership and their efforts to shepherd a bipartisan process forward. It is critical to our country, our economy, and our future.

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

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Utah is recognized.

Mr. HATCH. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that I be permitted to deliver my remarks in full.

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

Mr. HATCH. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the distinguished Senator BROWN be permitted to speak immediately following my remarks for 10 minutes.

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

Mr. HATCH. Thank you, Mr. President.

GUANTANAMO RELEASES

I rise today out of serious concern about the release of the five senior Taliban commanders detained at Guantanamo and the way in which the Obama administration has accomplished it.

These individuals that the Taliban successfully demanded the release of in exchange for SGT Bowe Bergdahl were some of the most dangerous terrorists in our custody. Some had close operational ties to Al Qaeda. Others perpetrated horrifying war crimes. All were senior leaders in the Taliban—a group with whom we remain at war.

These former detainees, the Taliban five, are only subject to a 1-year international travel ban. It seems shockingly unrealistic to expect that they will not seek to undo everything our brave men and women in uniform have fought and died for in Afghanistan.

However foolish, the prospect that we might release the most dangerous Guantanamo detainees has been a matter of national debate for some time. President Obama and his subordinates have long espoused a singular devotion to closing the detention facility at Guantanamo. Many of us in Congress have remained decidedly less sanguine about this longtime leftwing fantasy. We are wary of the dangers, inappropriateness, and oftentimes the impossibility of prosecuting battle-hardened terrorists in civilian court as if they were common criminals. We are frustrated by the procedural roadblocks to pursuing justice through military commissions. Above all else we are alarmed by the more than one in four released detainees who have apparently rejoined the fight. And unlike the administration, we have long been disabused of the notion that our enemies and perennial critics would somehow fall in love with America if we simply close Guantanamo.

With these concerns in mind, we exercised our rightful legislative authority under the Constitution to prevent the transfer of any further detainees out of Guantanamo. Nevertheless, the

Obama administration bitterly opposed any release restrictions. Facing incessant and intense pressure from the administration to repeal our ban, Congress acted on a bipartisan basis to reach a compromise—a compromise that was extraordinarily generous to the administration's position.

Under the new law in effect—section 1035 of last year's National Defense Authorization Act—Congress must be notified 30 days before any detainee transfer. The notification must contain a detailed statement of the basis of transfer, an explanation of why the transfer is in the national security interests of the United States, and a description of the actions taken to mitigate the risks of detainees returning to the fight. Our subsequent funding legislation also banned the Obama administration from using any of the appropriated money to transfer detainees except in accordance with these agreed-upon procedures.

Despite this good-faith effort on the part of Congress to find common ground with the President, he chose to simply disregard his statutory obligations to inform Congress of this highly controversial release of the Taliban five. While we should celebrate the return of any American from Taliban captivity, the President's actions carry very troubling consequences.

When a lawmaker animatedly denounces the President's violation of a technical provision so wonky and seemingly unimportant as a statutory notification requirement, many Americans might understandably dismiss such a concern as a petty turf war—if their eyes don't glaze over first. Although perhaps intuitive, such an impression couldn't be more wrong.

First, notification requirements such as this one have proven critically beneficial to national security decision-making, particularly in the national security context. The most prominent example is our oversight of the intelligence community. For more than 30 years, prior congressional consultation has been a key foundation of ensuring effective policymaking on intelligence-gathering activities and covert operations.

On these incredibly sensitive and weighty issues, the executive branch is required to brief certain members of the legislative branch on all such proposed activities before they happen. The discussion of such highly classified information necessitates a strict observance of secrecy, which Congress has a long tradition of respecting. Discussions behind these closed doors provide the benefits of deliberation outside of the fishbowl of the ordinary policy process. In this setting concern about national security and the wisdom of the contemplated action dominate. Politics takes a back seat. The administration can modify or cancel proposed actions without the costs that attach to public policy pronouncements. And by assuaging our concerns before execution, the administration

gets the congressional buy-in that is so necessary when these sorts of difficult decisions are taken.

Although the system certainly has its critics on all sides, I remain a passionate believer in its overall effectiveness. I should know: I served on the Senate Select Committee on Intelligence longer than any other Republican ever has. For years I was intimately involved in this process and witnessed up close just how well it works to produce good policy. In the context of national security—an area in which our Nation regularly faces so many critical and difficult decisions—we need a well-functioning congressional oversight process to ensure our safety and security, now more than ever.

But even beyond improving an administration's national security decisionmaking, we should genuinely concern ourselves as a nation that formal restraints on power be observed by the coordinate branches of our government. Whether the administration agrees with the restrictions on its power to release Guantanamo detainees, those restrictions remain enshrined in a duly-enacted Federal statute, and the President remains obligated to take care that the laws be faithfully executed.

To ignore the law and the President's constitutional obligation to see that the law is enforced may seem enticing in an instance of apparent pressing need, but our Constitution provides no such authority.

Consider the wisdom of Justice Jackson in his seminal concurrence in the *Steel Seizure* case:

The appeal . . . that we declare the existence of inherent powers [out of necessity] to meet an emergency asks us to do what many think would be wise, although it is something the forefathers omitted. They knew what emergencies were. . . . [T]hey made no express provision for exercise of extraordinary authority because of a crisis. I do not think we rightfully may so amend their work, and, if we could, I am not convinced it would be wise to do so. . . .

Indeed, the central organizing principle of the Federal Government is the division of powers and authorities between the different branches. As a 21st-century American, it is far too easy to treat the separation of powers as a cliché confined to the civics classroom rather than a meaningful cornerstone of our liberty. But we should recall Madison's warning in *Federalist* 47 that "[t]he accumulation of all powers, legislative, executive, and judiciary, in the same hands, whether of one, a few, or many, and whether hereditary, self-appointed, or elective, may justly be pronounced the very definition of tyranny."

To disregard these central precepts of constitutional government is to vitiate the barriers protecting us from arbitrary government action and to undermine the rule of law.

We in the Congress should make no apology for zealously guarding the legal prerogatives of the body in which

we serve, for, as Madison also warned in *Federalist* 51, "[T]he great security against a gradual concentration of the several powers in the same department consists in giving to those who administer each department the necessary constitutional means and personal motives to resist encroachments of the others."

Nevertheless, out of respect for a coordinate branch of government, the Obama administration's arguments excusing its action in releasing these five dangerous Taliban detainees merits thoughtful consideration and analysis. I have never been shy about defending the powers of the President when exercised lawfully, no matter how unpopular. Nevertheless, such an examination of the Obama administration's explanations reveals not only the ridiculousness of its arguments but also demonstrates deeply concerning attitudes and priorities that guided the administration's action.

The Obama administration has advanced multiple distinct arguments about the legality of its move to release these senior Taliban leaders. Advancing multiple, sometimes contradictory arguments does not exactly instill confidence in the administration's commitment to its legal obligations. Some have been patently absurd, such as the suggestion from the White House Press Secretary that briefing Members of Congress more than 2 years ago about the potential for the detainee exchange constituted sufficient compliance with the detailed statutory notification requirements for an actual decision to transfer.

I want to examine the two more sophisticated rationales advanced by the administration because it is in the details of these arguments that my gravest concerns arise.

First, I want to consider the National Security Council spokeswoman's written statement to the press asserting that "Congress did not intend that the Administration would be barred from taking the action it did in these circumstances."

Trying to read Congress's mind when interpreting the law, as the administration purports to do, has always struck me as absolutely absurd. Article I of our Constitution creates a legislative process that today includes 536 different individuals. To assume the existence of a single intent among so many different minds—all with different interests, different purposes, different philosophies, and different methods—runs counter to basic logic, not to mention the theory of representative government at the foundation of our Constitution. This notion that we should be governed by easily manipulated arguments about what Congress supposedly would have wanted long justified the hijacking of the law to undermine the clear meaning of the text.

Fighting this abuse of the law and the Constitution has animated so much of my work over the past 38 years. We have made enormous progress in rees-

tablishing the bedrock principle that we are governed not by vague claims about intent but, rather, by the words themselves—words that have a fixed and discernible meaning, with the power to bind us all—including the President. I will continue to fight for this principle as long as I have the honor to serve our people in this country.

In this light, a proper reading of the detainee transfer and release notification requirements includes no such exception that the Obama administration imagines exists. We should always be skeptical of arguments assuming unwritten exceptions to laws, and here the relevant factors counsel strongly against assuming such an exception into existence.

The statute uses strong universally applicable language: "the Secretary of Defense shall notify"; "each notification shall include, at a minimum"; "the Secretary of Defense may transfer . . . only if" and the like.

The text of the provision is particularly detailed. This detail, especially when read in conjunction with the numerous other incredibly detailed provisions in the National Defense Authorization Act and its many predecessors—many of which contained detailed exceptions—demonstrates that Congress is quite capable of creating exceptions to a provision like this one but instead actively chose not to include one here.

Finally, as had been clearly established, lawmakers were aware of the administration's desire to conduct exactly this sort of a transaction before the beginning of the legislative process. To assume such an exception, when the Congress was aware of the administration's desire and proffered need for such a provision but chose not to provide one, would completely undermine the notion that Congress has the power to choose its preferred policies by legislation.

Put another way, how could Congress have been clearer that no detainee transfers could be accomplished outside its established process? If Congress's bright-line rule can be wished away by the Obama administration in this case, when can the Congress act to establish a policy to which the administration cannot carve out exceptions—exceptions that destroy the very core of the law?

In advancing this rather ridiculous attempt to misconstrue the transfer and release notification requirements, the Obama administration is simply avoiding making their more controversial argument explicit. The administration's Pentagon General Counsel admitted as much last week.

This argument centers on the President's contention that "in certain circumstances" the transfer and release notification requirements "would violate constitutional separation of powers principles."

Other senior administration officials have made statements, albeit hesitantly, invoking the President's authority under the Constitution to disregard the statute. Although the administration attempts to cloak it in the complex obscurity of statutory construction, this is the real issue at hand.

As a threshold matter, the rule of law and the separation of powers both depend on the longstanding notion that an unconstitutional statute is no law at all. We should take the Obama administration's arguments about the constitutionality of the notification requirement as applied to the Taliban five trade very seriously.

When appropriate, I have defended the President's authority to act in contravention of certain statutes. And I absolutely stand by the positions I have taken before—no matter how unpopular they have sometimes been.

I feel it is incumbent upon me to lay out my case of why I am so disturbed by the administration's actions here not to deflect any charge of hypocrisy for personal benefit but because I feel so passionately about the Obama administration's overreach in this and so many other cases. To risk having these arguments dismissed without serious consideration of their merits would be unbearable. I feel compelled to lay out my case in some detail.

Here, the Obama administration's arguments fail on the administration's own terms and in so doing demonstrate some disturbing trends at work within this administration.

Now, the Obama administration has not advanced the notion that the transfer and release notification requirements are always unconstitutional. Instead, the administration has been very careful to suggest that the notification requirements unconstitutionally encumbered the executive branch because of the specific circumstances at issue in the Taliban five trade. The general terms of the Obama administration's rationale initially seemed potentially reasonable: that it feared Sergeant Bergdahl would be endangered unless the administration moved swiftly and secretly to make the trade, and compliance with the notification requirement would have prevented the President from exercising his lawful authority to order the detainee swap.

However, the logic of the administration's rationale falls apart under closer inspection of the two key factors that were cited as creating the specific circumstances in disregarding the statute: the need for swiftness and the need for secrecy.

First, the need for swift action. The Obama administration has—at various times—suggested that Sergeant Bergdahl's health was in rapid and accelerating decline to the point of necessitating immediate rescue, and that the Taliban would refuse to agree to Bergdahl's release unless the administration executed the trade quickly.

After examining what evidence the administration provided us, a number of my colleagues from both parties, including the senior Senator from California, the chair of the Senate Select Committee on Intelligence, have expressed significant doubt about these claims.

But even if we accept the Obama administration's claims that there existed a need for swift action, that when faced with this realization, compliance with the 30-day notification requirement would have endangered the potential for recovering Sergeant Bergdahl, and that these are the sort of circumstances where the Constitution authorizes the executive branch to act in defiance of a notification requirement—even if we accept everything the administration suggests, their argument doesn't totally nullify the administration's obligations under the statutory notification requirement.

Under the administration's own logic that the notification requirement is not unconstitutional *per se* but, rather, only under certain circumstances, the executive branch still has a duty to take care that the laws be faithfully executed. Thus, even if it is authorized to order a transfer or release of detainees in less than the 30 days mandated by the statute, the President remains obligated to comply as substantially and faithfully as possible, mitigating any anticipated breach by keeping Congress abreast of negotiations and complying with the notification requirements as soon as any transfer decision is made or undertaken.

But that clearly is not the case here. Instead, we know from the statements of senior administration officials that the administration deliberately withheld notification from Congress until after the trade occurred—months after negotiations to make this trade resumed and intensified, weeks after the detainee transfer agreement with Qatar was signed, and days after the final decision itself was taken. Given that the administration accepts the constitutionality of the legality of the notification requirement generally, its actions represent a direct effort to undermine the obvious core purpose of the law: giving Congress the opportunity to raise its objections and lobby against an ill-advised release or transfer before it happens.

This is not maximally faithful compliance. This is outright flouting of the statute.

The administration, though, has also claimed a need for secrecy—specifically, that informing Congress would endanger the prospects for Sergeant Bergdahl's safe return. I take this concern for secrecy extraordinarily seriously, and I know that every one of my colleagues does as well. Preserving secrecy as not to endanger ongoing operations remains an absolutely vital cornerstone of congressional oversight of national security issues, and my long service on the intelligence committee engendered in me a particular appreciation for how necessary it is.

But administrations have for decades briefed Congress on extraordinarily sensitive matters. Take the Bin Laden raid. It is hard to think of an operation more sensitive than that. In both the Taliban five swap and the Bin Laden operation, the mission objectives as well as the safety of our troops would have both been completely unattainable if details leaked. Yet, even before the Bin Laden operation, the administration kept Congress regularly briefed as required by law, which is, to me, testament to the extraordinary resiliency of our oversight structure.

Even those of us who have long defended robust executive powers in the national security context have long asserted that:

The constitutional basis for withholding notification can only be invoked credibly, by its own terms, in very rare circumstances. A generalized fear that Congress might leak would not by itself suffice, because the same fear could be invoked equally from all [secret operations].

In the case at hand, the Obama administration accepts the constitutionality of congressional notification requirements in most circumstances. Yet it has also failed to articulate any particular reason why notifying Congress would impose a particular problem when compared to other sensitive operations. But the implication that it did not notify Congress just because of a generalized fear of leaks not only disregards decades of successful congressional oversight of intelligence collection and covert operations but also makes an exceedingly radical argument that would give the President essentially arbitrary power to ignore what he acknowledges is a valid law.

In this case, though, the administration's actions wholly undermine the notion that there was an unusual secrecy concern at issue here. First, consider that the administration itself estimated that between 80 and 90 executive branch officials were told of the decision to release the Taliban five ahead of time—in an administration that leaks sensitive national security information like a sieve, but zero—zero—Members of Congress were informed.

The Secretary of Defense and his General Counsel even admitted that Justice Department lawyers were told of the upcoming trade for the very purpose of keeping even a few key Members of Congress in the dark. In light of the statutory requirement to notify just a key handful of Members of Congress, this situation appears flatly absurd and certainly inconsistent with maximally faithful compliance with the statute.

Furthermore, the administration had already discussed with Congress the potential for such a deal. They ran into bipartisan opposition, as expressed in the bipartisan letter of early 2012 signed by the top Democrat and top Republican on both the House and Senate intelligence committees. In response to that letter, media reports indicate that the then-Secretary of State

and former Senator from New York promised the administration would pursue further congressional consultations before making the exchange. And in 2013 the White House Press Secretary responded to a question about trading Sergeant Bergdahl for Taliban detainees in stark terms promising: "We would not make any decisions about transfer of any detainees without consulting Congress."

So why the more than 2 years of radio silence from the Obama administration? Why the disregard of the Federal statute when the administration's arguments for doing so in this case are so disturbingly unconvincing? Why wait until after the decision could not be challenged before telling Congress?

After reviewing these events, the answer seems obvious. President Obama and his subordinates illegitimately chose not to inform Congress until after the decision was irrevocable because they knew that Congress would object. Two administration officials told Bloomberg News as much: The failure to notify key Members of Congress in advance was a deliberate move to skirt opposition to releasing the five Taliban prisoners.

While the vigor of the Obama administration's defense of the deal has shocked many, it has not shocked me. To this President, this deal represents the apex of responsible winding down of the conflict in Afghanistan—not only in returning Sergeant Bergdahl but also in releasing the Taliban five, whom the administration has eagerly sought to release so often before.

Just take it from the majority leader who said he was "glad to get rid of these five people." And for a President and an administration that have demonstrated endless reservoirs of faith in the goodwill of hostile forces abroad, there is also surely hope—no matter how ridiculous—that giving into the Taliban's demands will somehow inspire a renewed interest on the part of the Taliban in peace talks, as if that did anything but demonstrate how the Taliban's current tactics will get them concessions from the Obama administration.

President Obama has on many occasions announced very clear beliefs of our detention operations at Guantanamo, articulating a nearly religious conviction that detention of Taliban, Al Qaeda, and associated forces under the law of armed conflict is a beacon of this nation's evils to the world. And although the administration has faced immense political pressure to reconsider from many of us, I have absolutely no doubt President Obama intends on following through with his long-time, recently repeated promise to make every effort to close Guantanamo during his remaining time in office.

Many of my colleagues and I share a diametrically opposed view from the President's—one that is more focused on securing the stability of the Afghan Government that our men and women

in uniform fought so hard to establish. But in our honest disagreements, President Obama only sees reflexive intransigence. On Guantanamo and on so many other matters, President Obama has proven himself unable to accept good-faith differences with those of us elected to a coordinate and coequal branch of government. This frustration has motivated the President to enact his agenda unilaterally. In doing so, he not only poisons the well of congressional oversight of sensitive national security matters, as troubling as that is, but also by arrogating power with casual disregard for the structural restraints of the Constitution, he stretches our longstanding laws and norms past the breaking point.

My allegiance to constitutional government and the rule of law compels me to stand up to this overreach by President Obama and the executive branch. I will continue to speak out against what I strongly believe are serious instances of overreach by this administration—as I have already done on immigration, sentencing, education, Benghazi, and, of course, ObamaCare. I urge all of my colleagues to join me, for what is at stake is not just our rightful authority to get done what our constituents sent us here to do but also the very precepts at the core of our Constitution.

That is why I have joined my colleague, the junior Senator from Ohio, to cosponsor a resolution declaring that the Obama administration violated the statute and calling for an investigation into the matter. With all that is at stake, registering our objection in this way could not be more important.

Additionally, in light of these troubling events—which also involve the Justice Department, which should hold the separation of powers in the highest regard—I should note I found myself now unable to support the nomination of Peter Kadzic to be Assistant Attorney General for Legislative Affairs. My deference to the administration's choice of appointees can only go so far, and I cannot support a nominee who has so persistently refused to share the Department's memos on the release of the Taliban five. Absent a real commitment from Mr. Kadzic and the Justice Department to respect Congress's role under the Constitution, I felt compelled to oppose his nomination.

On their own terms, the Obama administration violated the law by releasing the Taliban five—dangerous men who are sure to return to the fight. In doing so, he not only endangered the lives of our men and women in uniform but also jeopardized everything they fought and died for in Afghanistan. My commitment is to them and to the Constitution's division of powers and authorities amongst the coordinate and coequal branches of government which they fight to protect. These loyalties are what have compelled me to stand up to the Obama administration.

I urge all of my colleagues, regardless of party, to join me in this fight. Too much is at stake to let petty partisan concerns and blind political loyalty to the President take precedence over the weighty matters of national security and constitutional authority that are at stake, and especially when one considers how much this branch of government is being ignored on almost a daily basis by this out-of-control White House.

Democrats and Republicans have to put a stop to this, and they have to start standing up on these issues or we are in danger of losing the Constitution itself.

Mr. President, I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. COONS). The Senator from Ohio.

Mr. BROWN. Mr. President, yesterday I chaired, along with Congressman SMITH, a Republican from New Jersey, the Congressional-Executive Committee on China. At this hearing, Terry Sefranek, a Clevelander actually from Brooklyn Heights, OH, a suburb of my city, submitted written testimony. The hearing was to address the concerns that American consumers, pet owners, farmers, and parents have about the safety of pet food, pet treats, processed chicken, and animal feed from China. Ms. Sefranek joined me then today on a call with some national press to talk about this issue. I wish to share briefly the actual words of Ms. Sefranek's testimony. She said:

In December of 2011, my little Sampson, a healthy, lively and hilarious fox terrier mutt was showing signs that he was not well. He seemed withdrawn, and his appetite was decreasing, and all he wanted was to drink water and urinate. His health rapidly decreased.

We took him to the veterinarian 3 times in the next two weeks. Finally, blood tests revealed horrible results. Sampson was in acute renal failure.

The Doc gave him intravenous fluids for six long, tormenting days. And then, the agonizing decision, the hardest, most heartbreaking decision. With my husband and children around us, I held my little buddy in my arms for the last time, as he was euthanized.

Ms. Sefranek continues:

One day during this time, I saw a local family on the news, holding up a bag of Waggin' Train Chicken Jerky Treats. Their dog had eaten them and died of renal failure a few weeks earlier. Their new little puppy was fed leftovers from the same bag—and became ill right away. As soon as they stopped the treats, he recovered.

I was floored. It was the exact same treat that Sampson had eaten; it has been his new favorite, and I was giving him them as a treat for about a month. I'm sure that was the only major change in his diet.

Sixty-two million households in this country have a pet. Americans raise 83 million dogs and 96 million cats whom, as is the case with my wife's and my dog Franklin, we treat, in many ways, as members of the family. That is why it is alarming that since 2007, the FDA has been aware of the deaths and illnesses of thousands of pets, but we still don't know what is causing it.

Last month the FDA said that reports of illnesses had increased to 5,600

pets, including 1,000 dog deaths, and now three human illnesses.

Pet owners shouldn't have to worry about the safety of the food they give their pets. When we go to a pet store, go to a grocery store and buy pet food, we shouldn't have to worry that pet food could actually endanger that dog's, that cat's health.

While no cause has been identified, the illnesses many think are linked to pet treats from China, which raises questions. If something says it is made in China, can we be assured that it is safe? If it says "made in the USA," what exactly does that mean? Is everything being done to keep these pet treats safe?

Last year the USDA declared that China can export processed, cooked chicken into the United States. This paves the way for chicken sourced in the United States to be shipped to China for processing and then sold back to American consumers. While no such chicken has yet entered our shores, it is possible that very soon this processed chicken could end up on our dinner tables and in our school lunchrooms.

Researchers are exploring a possible link also between animal feed from China and the PEDv that has wiped out 10 percent of piglets—10 percent of our young pig population. It has been a year already and no definitive cause has been identified.

Americans want and require better answers. We want and require clearer labels and the peace of mind that the foods we import from the People's Republic of China are safe.

This is why I am introducing an amendment to the agriculture appropriations bill to ask the Food and Drug Administration and the U.S. Department of Agriculture about the status of inspectors' visas to China and how many are currently inspecting there.

We heard in testimony yesterday an uncertainty from FDA and USDA about our ability to get the number of inspectors we need into China to inspect the processing of chickens in China. I urged the FDA to investigate and determine the cause of these pet illnesses and PEDv, and the companies to ensure the highest safety standards.

When we buy something that says "made in the United States of America," whether it is food for human consumption or whether it is processed food for human consumption or whether it is processed food for our pets, we should be confident that food is actually made, processed, and put together in the United States of America. In our testimony yesterday, we couldn't quite be 100 percent sure that is the case.

A couple of things need to go on there. One, the packaging and the labeling needs to be believable and credible and it needs to be true. Second, those companies that import—it used to be that companies would produce in the United States with food safety rules we have in the United States—drug safety, food safety—customers,

buyers, and supermarkets that buy this food with "made in the USA" labels knew that because we have a good FDA, because we have a good U.S. Department of Agriculture, because we have good food safety rules in our country—we knew that "made in the USA" was a label we could trust.

Then companies in this country began to do something in the last 20 years—especially since Congress passed Permanent Normal Trade Relations with China. Companies began to shut down production in places such as Rocky River and Maple Heights and Garfield Heights and Brooklyn Heights, OH, and move that production to Wahan or Shihan or Beijing, or Shanghai, China, and then sell those products back to the United States. If companies are going to do that, costing our communities jobs in far too many cases, hurting families and workers who lose those jobs—if companies are going to do that, they need to be responsible in the production in those countries. They need to be responsible when pharmaceuticals are made in China by U.S. companies and then shipped back to the United States. Those pharmaceuticals need to be safe.

We know in the case of a drug called Heparin which people in Toledo, OH, took, and a number of people died from it. All over the country they took this drug. It was a blood thinner made in China by a company that, frankly, didn't know—couldn't reach back and determine and find out where all the ingredients for these drugs were made.

So there are a couple of points. One is whether it is dog treats, whether it is food that humans consume in our country or whether it is pharmaceuticals, our regulatory structure needs to make sure these are safe. If they are made in the United States, we are much more confident they are safe, because government rules and regulations in the United States—despite what my colleagues on the other side of the aisle always like to say about government regulation—we know our food supply is pretty darn good. But if companies are going to outsource that production, move it to China and then sell it back to the United States, we need these rules in place. We need these companies to be reliable and liable ultimately in what they are doing. So if a company is going to bring a drug into the United States—an American company producing in China and bringing it back to the United States—they are responsible for the contents, and they are responsible for the safety of those drugs. Their executives, those companies, should be liable if they are producing that food. Whether it is for human consumption or whether it is for pets or whether it is pharmaceuticals, all of that matters.

Americans, again, should not be worried about the safety of the food they put on the dinner table nor the safety of the pet food they give to their dogs and cats.

Mr. President, I note the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. BLUMENTHAL). The clerk will call the roll.

The assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

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

Mr. CASEY. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent to speak as in morning business.

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

CHILDREN'S HEALTH INSURANCE

Mr. CASEY. Mr. President, I rise to speak about children's health insurance, an issue we hear about periodically but not nearly enough and an issue that will fast become a critically important question before both bodies, the Senate especially, because of what could happen to the Children's Health Insurance Program, which we call at the State level the CHIP program, known more commonly in Washington as S-CHIP, one of the great advancements in health care in recent American history.

We can go back 25 or 50 years, and other than Medicare and Medicaid and maybe a few other examples, VA health care, children's health care has been a great success and I would say forthrightly a bipartisan success, but we need to keep it that way. I have a particular interest in this program because of the experience we have in Pennsylvania, as tens of thousands of families have benefited from the Children's Health Insurance Program that was signed into law and advocated strongly by my father when he served as the Governor of Pennsylvania. At the time Pennsylvania was a model for the country. This was the early 1990s I am talking about.

When he signed that bill into law, Pennsylvania became one of the largest States with a new Children's Health Insurance Program which then became a model for the Nation. Here is how that happened. In 1997, Congress passed the bipartisan Children's Health Insurance Program signed into law in August of 1997 by President Clinton. The original bill was cosponsored by the late Senator Ted Kennedy, from Massachusetts of course, and the Senator from Utah, still serving, Mr. HATCH.

They worked together, along with many others in a bipartisan fashion to produce important legislation for our children. Since that time this program has worked as a remarkable public-private partnership to deliver critical health care to children. So in addition to being bipartisan, it was public and private together.

Care such as well child visits, immunizations, physical and occupational therapy, home health care and medical equipment and more were all available for the first time for many families. So it helps children not only have health insurance and health coverage, but it helps them be well and to stay well

over a long period of time, providing them with care they need and giving their parents something government does not do enough; it provides a measure of peace of mind to parents and to families.

In 2009, the President signed into law a bipartisan reauthorization of the Children's Health Insurance Program. The most recent year of data indicates that CHIP covered over 8.1 million children over the course of a year. Consider that. With this program more than 8.1 million children have health care that would not have it any other way in the absence of this program.

Even with the progress we have made in providing new health insurance options in the last couple of years as a result of the Affordable Care Act, the rate of uninsured Americans overall is still over 13 percent. That is the lowest rate since 2008 but still too high. The rate of uninsured children is 9 percent, a much lower rate obviously than the overall rate but still too high.

CHIP has played an important role in increasing access to insurance for children. The Web site for the Pennsylvania program, which is www.chipcoverspakids.com, discusses several stories from Pennsylvania parents about how this Children's Health Insurance Program in the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania has helped one particular family, in this case, and many others. As you read the stories—here is one story. I will sum it up briefly. The CHIP program has been great.

So said one family member:

We know that this is quality insurance and we are finally able to sleep at night knowing that our kids can be seen by excellent pediatricians. I do not know what we would have done without CHIP. Now my children can play sports and go away to camp like other kids and if they get hurt, CHIP is there for them.

So said a parent. That is probably the best summation or the best recitation of all of the reasons it is so important to make sure we preserve the Children's Health Insurance Program and preserve the funding for it and preserve any strategy that will ensure that children have the health care they need.

So CHIP is always going to be there for those kids. That is what we need to make sure that we hold on to. I, similar to so many here and many in both parties, have consistently advocated for the Children's Health Insurance Program. I am pleased it has been authorized through fiscal year 2019. However—this is why I am standing here today. However, we were able only to secure funding through 2015. So the program is reauthorized to 2019 but funded only through fiscal year 2015.

That deadline is approaching. Now is the time to act, again in the right bipartisan way, to preserve the Children's Health Insurance Program. It is time to make sure we ensure that CHIP will continue to be funded through the authorization, at a minimum, through fiscal year 2019.

Senator ROCKEFELLER, one of the great champions of this program over

many years now, decades literally, introduced legislation last week that I wholeheartedly support. That is an understatement. There is not a Senator in this Chamber who should not support his legislation, the CHIP Extension Act of 2014, S. 2461.

The legislation extends funding for CHIP through fiscal year 2019, bringing the funding in line with the authorization. I cannot stress enough the need to pass this legislation this year, pass this 2014 legislation that deals with this 2015 problem. State budget cycles are such that if we wait until next year, when the funding is about to expire, we will be jeopardizing health insurance for millions of American children.

States need time to plan their budgets and cannot operate under the uncertainty of a funding threat to such an important program. I thank Senator ROCKEFELLER for his tireless commitment to the Children's Health Insurance Program over many years—as I said, over several decades. I thank him for his work in introducing this legislation.

I urge all of my colleagues in both parties to support Senator ROCKEFELLER's legislation, the CHIP Extension Act of 2014, S. 2461, to make sure children's health insurance will always be there for the children who are covered by that program.

In conclusion, this is very simple. We have people in both parties who have spent a lot of their careers saying how much they care about children. They give speeches, they campaign, they talk about kids. We all talk about kids in very positive ways. That is wonderful. But the test is how we act and what actions we take. That usually means how we vote. So if someone votes for this bill, they can stand and say they have taken a substantial step in the direction of ensuring that children will have the health care they need. If they do not, and they vote against it, I do not think they can say that.

If someone votes against it, I think they have to have a substitute for it, some measure that will provide the same coverage for the same number of children by a different method. If they cannot come up with that, they cannot stand and say they are for kids. They cannot stand and say they care about our children and their future.

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

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

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

PAY OUR GUARD AND RESERVE ACT

Mr. REID. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Chair lay be-

fore the Senate a message from the House of Representatives with respect to H.R. 3230.

The PRESIDING OFFICER laid before the Senate a message from the House, as follows:

H.R. 3230

Resolved, That the House insist upon its amendment to the Senate amendment to the text of the bill (H.R. 3230) entitled "An Act making continuing appropriations during a Government shutdown to provide pay and allowances to members of the reserve components of the Armed Forces who perform inactive-duty training during such period," and ask a conference with the Senate on the disagreeing votes of the two Houses thereon.

Ordered, That Messrs. Miller of Florida, Lamborn, Roe of Tennessee, Flores, Benishek, Coffman, Wenstrup, Mrs. Walorski, Mr. Michaud, Ms. Brown of Florida, Mr. Takano, Mses. Brownley of California, Kirkpatrick, and Mr. Walz, be the managers of the conference on the part of the House.

Mr. REID. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate insist on its amendment, agree to the request for a conference with the House, and authorize the Chair to appoint conferees with a ratio of eight Democrats and six Republicans, with all of the above occurring with no intervening action or debate.

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

The Presiding Officer appointed Mr. SANDERS, Mr. ROCKEFELLER, Mrs. MURRAY, Mr. BROWN, Mr. TESTER, Mr. BEGICH, Mr. BLUMENTHAL, Ms. HIRONO, Mr. BURR, Mr. ISAKSON, Mr. JOHANNES, Mr. MCCAIN, Mr. COBURN, and Mr. RUBIO as conferees on the part of the Senate.

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

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

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

MORNING BUSINESS

Mr. REID. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate now proceed to a period of morning business, with Senators allowed to speak therein for up to 10 minutes each.

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

WASHINGTON FOOTBALL TEAM PATENT

Ms. CANTWELL. Mr. President, I come to the floor because the patent office has just ruled that the name of the Washington football team is not patentable because it is a slur. We are so excited to know that finally people are recognizing this issue can no longer be a business case for the NFL to use this patent. They will not be able to