

People started coming into the room. The TV was turned off and the meeting was started. Just a short time thereafter—5, 6 minutes at the most, as I recall—someone came into the room and grabbed Senator Daschle, who was at the head of the table, took him out and came back in just a very brief minute and said: The building is being evacuated. We all have to leave. There is an airplane headed for the Capitol.

As we left that room, we could look out and see already the smoke billowing from the Pentagon. The airplane had struck the Pentagon.

Now that day was a day I will never forget—never forget. I was taken with Senator Daschle, Don Nickles, who was the Republican assistant leader, and Trent Lott, and we were flown to a classified location. We spent the day there with a number of people, including the Vice President of the United States.

Late in the evening we came back to the Capitol after having been cleared to come back. The Senators gathered on the Senate steps in the Capitol, Democrats and Republicans. We were gathering just to show we were supportive of this great country. BARBARA MIKULSKI, small in stature but powerful in soul, in every way, said so everyone could hear it: Let's sing "God Bless America."

I don't sing very often, but I sang that night. We all did. "God bless America." We did it because we knew it was a day we would never forget. It was a day we wanted to show we were together as Members of Congress.

So as I have said already two or three times this morning, I don't want to ever forget that moment, that day, and I want to make sure we honor the heroes who paid the ultimate price for our freedom. The greatest memorial we have to offer the brave men and women who perished on 9/11, thousands of them, is to simply never forget.

TERRORISM

Mr. REID. Mr. President, as I have indicated, 13 years since the evil attacks of September 11, terrorism continues to rear its ugly head throughout the world. As I speak, the terrorist group ISIS, like a scourge, is plaguing the Middle East. These radical Islamic terrorists are wreaking havoc in Iraq and Syria, butchering the innocent and instituting brutal edicts.

ISIS is a murderous, fanatical organization. It is evil in nature. They must be stopped, and they will be stopped. We will degrade and destroy them.

The Presiding Officer is a general who led hundreds and hundreds of troops to battle in the Middle East. We must honor our troops as indicated in the prayer this morning by our Chaplain because they are going to be called as they are through the air, as President Obama said last night, to do something to degrade and, working with others, to get rid of this scourge.

Last night President Obama delivered a stirring speech to the Nation outlining his blueprint for eradicating this threat without repeating mistakes of the past. We all know the mistakes about which I speak. The President made it clear: We will not rush into another ground war in the Middle East and we will not go it alone to destroy this evil. Instead, America will lead a coalition that includes European and Arab nations in a targeted, strategic mission to destroy ISIS. American air strikes will be supported by local forces that are trained by the U.S. military advisers and others who will assume the duties of defending and protecting their communities and homes. It falls upon us, Congress and the American people, to rally behind the President on his decisive strategy.

There are no ground troops—I repeat—and that is the way it should be. I am confident we will put our political differences aside and work together to give this administration the tools it needs to meet ISIS head-on—not the least of which is the authority to equip and train Syrian troops to fight these very bad—I repeat—evil terrorists.

However, it is disturbing that at a time such as this there are some in Congress taking cheap political shots at the President. Now is the time for us to come together. When tested, Americans have always closed ranks and engaged our adversaries as one united Nation. A matter such as this is no place for political posturing—political positioning. This is time for the rhetoric of campaign commercials to go away. We must draw together as a nation.

When President Bush called upon Congress to do something about the terrible economic crisis that hit this country, we joined together, we joined together as Democrats, Republicans, and Independents and took this head-on. This is the situation now. We must draw together and support the President in eradicating the evil of ISIS, not only for our Nation but the world.

PAYCHECK FAIRNESS ACT— MOTION TO PROCEED

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Under the previous order, the Senate will resume consideration of the Motion to Proceed to S. 2199, which the clerk will report.

The assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

Motion to proceed to Calendar No. 345, S. 2199, a bill to amend the Fair Labor Standards Act of 1938 to provide more effective remedies to victims of discrimination in the payment of wages on the basis of sex, and for other purposes.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The Senator from Mississippi.

REMEMBERING 9/11

Mr. COCHRAN. Mr. President, I wish to make some comments about the remarks of our distinguished leader and to join him in calling on Senators to remember this day and historical experience of 9/11 and to commit this body

to our best efforts to help ensure our political institutions and our country remain free and safe for all Americans to continue to enjoy the blessings of liberty, the opportunities of an economic system that is the envy of the world, and to commit ourselves to a new sense of responsibility as representatives of our States, to help ensure this is a reality and not just a hope.

We appreciate the remarks of the leader on this important occasion and ask all Senators to express their views as may be appropriate.

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

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

The assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Without objection, it is so ordered.

RECOGNITION OF THE MINORITY LEADER

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The minority leader is recognized.

9/11 TRIBUTE

Mr. McCONNELL. Mr. President, yesterday I joined Congressional leaders in awarding three Congressional Gold Medals to the memory of thousands of men and women who perished so tragically on this very day 13 years ago. Every American that morning bore witness to the terrible tragedy and suffering. But that was not all we witnessed. We also saw incredible acts of bravery and compassion and heroism. We saw it in a great city. We saw it on the edge of the Capitol. We heard about it high above the clouds. The sacrifices of those heroes of 9/11 inspired us then and they inspire us now. The memory of every man and woman who perished so tragically that day continues to serve as a unifying force for our Nation. We will never stop honoring them.

ISIL

Mr. President, the American people have a lot on their minds these days. Among their greatest concerns is the threat of ISIL, the brutal terror group that recently beheaded two American journalists. ISIL is growing stronger by the day and it is lethal. Every day we wait to confront them is a day they grow more deadly. I and others have called on the President to provide us with a comprehensive plan to defeat this menace. Last night, he described to the Nation what our military, intelligence, and diplomatic corps are doing to confront this threat, and outlined ways he will expand on existing operations.

Over the next week, following a series of briefings, Congress will work with the administration to ensure that our forces have the resources they need to carry out these missions. Specifically, the President set forth a near-

term concept of operations to enhance the defense of Baghdad and Kurdistan, a midterm plan for retaking Anbar Province and Mosul from ISIL, and a long-term plan to contain ISIL within Syria.

The defense of Baghdad will require an air campaign to strike ISIL and target them within Iraq and extending into Syria. The midterm plan requires a new train-and-equip program and an increased scale to return the Iraqi security forces to the fight at a higher degree of combat readiness.

The President also envisions an effort to regain the trust and cooperation of the Sunni tribes through a new territorial or national guard, the same tribes and friends we abandoned when we completely withdrew from Iraq. The President's long-term plan, which is now clear, will be a responsibility left to the next administration, will be an effort to field a viable indigenous ground combat component to defeat ISIL within Syria.

Today, the President's staff will begin briefing the Senate on what will be required of our Armed Forces and intelligence community to effectuate this indefinite campaign, which we now know will include a multiyear air war of attrition. My expectation is that the administration will explain how best to build a moderate Syrian opposition capable of defeating ISIL. I am hoping the Congress will consider what this new multiyear campaign will mean for the overall defense program, the need to modernize our military, to retain dominance of the air and sea in the Asia Pacific theatre, to revitalize NATO in the face of Russian aggression, and how to field additional force structure and combat power into the U.S. Pacific Command now that Europe and Central Command require additional tactical units and capabilities. Our Nation must also rebuild a nuclear triad.

That said, I am glad the President has brought a new focus to the effort against ISIL. He needs to take this responsibility head on. This Congress, the next Congress, and the next administration have serious work ahead as we consider this multiyear commitment and what it will take to defeat ISIL.

LEGISLATIVE AGENDA

One more point. Given the urgency of this situation, I have to say it is a little disconcerting to see the Democrat-led Senate focusing on things such as reducing free speech protections from the American people. At a time when the rest of the country is worried about the threat of ISIL, at a time when millions wonder how they are ever going to find a job in this awful economy, at a time when we find out the crushing Federal regulations have gotten so out of control that they now cost the economy more than \$2 trillion a year, this is what they choose to make their top legislative priority this week, taking an eraser to the First Amendment?

Now they plan to devote almost all the remaining time between now and

November to what Democrats like to call messaging bills. These are bills designed intentionally to fail so that Democrats can make campaign ads about them failing. Yesterday, Roll Call got hold of an email from a Democratic aide who let the truth slip without meaning to. His email said that Senate Democrats plan to either "slam Republicans" for blocking the latest designed-to-fail bill or slam Republicans for voting to go ahead and debate the bill. How cynical can that be? The email just confirmed what everybody already knew, that Senate Democrats have zero intention of passing the bill before us today. Passage of this bill would represent failure for them. All they want is fodder for campaign commercials. That is why they refuse to address the growing crisis at home and abroad. That is why they obstruct nearly every good bipartisan bill from the House of Representatives. They even bury bipartisan bills that would help create jobs and help struggling middle-class families.

It is long past time for the Democrats to get serious. We were lucky to get serious things done for the Americans who sent us here. We need to let the Senate start doing that kind of thing. A good start would be to take up the dozens, literally dozens, of bipartisan jobs bills the House of Representatives has already sent us. Let's send those to the President's desk ASAP. Let's help make it easier to put the American people back to work.

Let's take up other commonsense legislation, such as a bipartisan bill that just passed the House on Tuesday with the votes of dozens of Democrats. The bill, which is similar to legislation I have cosponsored, would stop the administration from implementing a so-called "waters of the U.S." proposal that would allow it to regulate and fine almost every pothole and ditch in the country.

Passing this bill is critical to protecting the property rights of every American, especially farmers. One Kentucky farmer from Shelby County wrote me the other day to explain how the administration's heavyhanded regulation would affect him. He lamented that "The White House clearly wants me to spend more time figuring out additional permitting requirements and less time growing food for American families."

Let's work together to fix this problem along with the many other serious challenges facing our country. Let's address the threat of ISIL together. Let's pass serious jobs bills together. Let's take Senate Democrats' focus off saving the jobs of Democratic politicians and start focusing on the needs of the American people instead.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The Senator from Missouri.

9/11 TRIBUTE

Mr. BLUNT. Mr. President, today marks 13 years since the terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001. At that moment, I do not think Americans

would have been surprised that we would still be dealing with that 13 years later. But in the 13 years that have passed, there have been moments when we wanted to hope this had passed from us, that somehow it was no longer a danger. But it is a danger today as it was a danger then.

We clearly should not forget those who lost their lives on 9/11. We continue and should continue to be grateful to our men and women in uniform. I appreciate the service the Presiding Officer provided to the country wearing that uniform. Intelligence professionals out there are doing what they are supposed to do. The first responder community is working diligently to be ready to respond in ways that keep us safe.

I remember well, as others do, one of the things we learned on 9/11 was that those first responders were not properly linked in a way that allowed them to communicate with each other as they generally now are able to. The response they had was probably adequate in Washington and New York, might not have been adequate in terms of capability in some other place. But even in Washington and New York, we found the firemen could not talk to the policemen and the policemen could not talk to other first responders. We have done a lot to try to close that gap in a way that further protects those who protect us.

As the President acknowledged in his speech to the country last night, there is no doubt that our Nation and freedom-seeking people everywhere still face a real threat from terrorist groups and from enemies who wish to do us harm, who cannot tolerate our ability to live together in a society where everybody does not have to be the same way, and everybody does not have to believe the same thing.

We are reminded on this date that just 2 years ago four Americans were killed during a terrorist attack on the American consulate in Benghazi. There is a new book out, "13 Hours," that provides some additional firsthand accounts of what happened there.

It has also been surprising to me that we had that information available to us from the people who were there, and whether it was at the end of the first week or the end of the first year, we still had not heard much of that.

We are beginning to hear that in a way that once again clarifies that that was a planned attack in the ongoing efforts to destabilize the world and move it toward some extremist view of the way people need to conduct themselves. We have seen what has happened with ISIS, sometimes referred to as ISIL. Whatever they are referred to as, they have managed to get themselves in a more powerful position than any terrorist group ever, a true terrorist army with natural resources that produces income, with looting of banks and financial institutions that produce income, and maybe the most terrifying, with the people from our country fighting alongside them.

They have American passports and can return here. People in probably much higher numbers from European countries are fighting alongside these extremists and have access in ways they never had because they would be the homegrown terrorists—the terrorists who would have access to us in different ways that we have always been most concerned about.

These terrorists are clearly not a manageable problem. The President must show it, and he gave real commitment last night to the understanding that this is a group that cannot be allowed to continue to exist. This is a group that we have to destroy—their capacity, their ability to attack us and to impact our way of life.

I am hopeful that the President's resolve and his strategy will actually be sufficient in both cases to meet what was his stated commitment to destroy this extremist group.

As a member of the Defense Appropriations Subcommittee, the Armed Services Committee, and the Appropriations Committee, I am going to do everything I can to be sure those who serve us, our first responders who protect America, have the resources they need.

On this day we should remember—and on every day we should remember—the innocent victims, the first responders, and the families who lost so much on 9/11.

We also need to remember that it is the strength of our society that is what puts the biggest target on us. It is the ability of Americans to live together, the ability of Americans to respect other points of view, the ability of Americans to share those points of view with each other—understanding we could do that in a free society that puts that big target on the United States of America.

We are not a target of these extremist groups because of what we have done to them. We are a target of these extremist groups because of what we stand for. May we continue to stand and stand strong. We should always remember the price to be paid by individuals and families if terrorism is able to achieve its objectives, which is to scare us away from standing for freedom and standing for the kind of society in which we live. That is one of the things that certainly 9/11 every year brings back into focus as perhaps no other date does.

HEALTH CARE

I, as I am sure the Presiding Officer and others did, spent most of August and the early days September at home.

I continue to hear from Missourians about their concerns about the impact of the direction we are headed with health care. We are now at the 1-year anniversary at the end of this month of the launch of the exchanges last October 1.

The unpopularity of where we are headed continues to grow. Just 35 percent of the people who were polled by the monthly poll of the Kaiser Founda-

tion released on Tuesday were supportive of the Affordable Care Act.

How could it possibly be that we are at year-end of this discussion and only have that level of support? Maybe it is not so surprising. Premium costs continue to go up. PricewaterhouseCoopers finds the average insurance premium for health care is going to rise by 8 percent this year. The President's goal was for families to be paying—in fact, his promised goal—\$2,500 less. Instead of that, it seems they are paying \$3,000 more. That is a very substantial missing of the mark; so no wonder they are concerned.

Healthcare.gov was supposed to have undergone many repairs but we learned just last week that at some point—and it is my understanding they are not exactly sure how much or when—there was a major breach into that system to find out information that people had put there. People trying to verify their personal information so they could continue to have the coverage they have is a challenge. People are trying to submit all kinds of documents—citizenship, immigration documents—in order to be able to keep their health care. Apparently it would be a huge imposition to prove who you are to vote but not a huge imposition to have to prove who you are to have government-assisted health care.

A new Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services report offers the latest proof that there are problems by saying the combined effects of the affordable health care coverage expansion, faster economic growth, and an aging population are expected to fuel health spending growth this year and thereafter to where we are going to see 6 percent per year, according to the administration, from 2015 to 2023.

This is one of the things that happens when the government believes it can do things that people rightly—we need to find better ways for people to have more choices—do for themselves. Hopefully this discussion will continue in a way that solves these problems, creates more choices for people, more opportunities for them to have people to have the insurance they want, the coverage they want, and what they believe their family needs and can afford.

I hope we can get back to having that debate on a clear problem for millions of families in America today as opposed to having the debate we are having this week, which is, again, to do things that our friends in the majority know can't possibly happen.

We are here without a budget, without a single appropriations bill being passed, and without dealing with the problems the country knows we should deal with. We are again going to spend the last 2 weeks we are here before the election voting day after day on things that can't happen. The one thing we will have to do is one more stopgap effort to keep the government funded after October 1, since we haven't done any of the other work to set our priorities and say what our government

should be doing and what we can afford to do beginning October 1 of this year.

It is a sad commentary on a Senate that is not working. I hope we all come back after the elections with a greater resolve to get back to the basics of how the Senate, the Congress, and the country are supposed to work.

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

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

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Without objection, it is so ordered.

REMEMBERING 9/11

Mr. BLUMENTHAL. Mr. President, we gather here today in this remarkable place—a symbol of freedom and democracy for the whole world—to remember the tragic, horrific, unspeakable attacks of September 11, 2001, and we remember the innocent lives that were lost, the people of many different ages who worked to help the injured, brave heroes who have fought terrorism and extremism around the globe in the years since 9/11, and, of course, the victims themselves, many of them from Connecticut. This day has special meaning in Connecticut because it affects so directly and sadly the loved ones and families of people who sacrificed their lives as a result of that unimaginably cruel and brutal terrorist act. We remember them with pride. We remember their grace, civility, humanity, dedication to the public good, and their love for their families.

We have been striving since that terrible day to strengthen our Nation, to live proudly and unashamedly, consistently with our national values of peace, tolerance, and service. This effort requires commitment and sacrifice. It has required service at home and abroad from countless men and women who have served in uniform—our police, our firefighters, our first responders—believing that the best way we can honor the men and women who died on that day is to make America the best place it can possibly be. It is the greatest and strongest Nation in the history of the world, and it is so because people have always believed it can be made better, freer, stronger, braver. And that is what we have tried to do.

Today in the Senate, in the Committee on the Judiciary, I was proud to cosponsor and vote for a measure that will give those victims and their families some additional justice. The Justice Against Sponsors of Terrorism Act will hold foreign sponsors of terrorism that target America accountable in U.S. courts.

Obstacles have been raised in our Federal courts, obstacles on procedural grounds and technical issues, most recently in a Second Circuit case, *In re Terrorist Attacks of September 11*,

2001, which, in my view, misread Federal law to provide immunity to the Saudi Government and entities that claim to be associated with the Saudi Government against the 9/11 victims' claims alleging its support for those attacks.

This new legislation will make clear that terrorism is unsupportable and must be held accountable in our U.S. courts. It will erase the immunity and the procedural obstacles that can be raised and make sure that sovereign immunity as a doctrine provides no safe harbor, no haven for terrorism when victims and their families seek to hold those terrorist sponsors as well as terrorist groups accountable for their horrific actions.

That measure was passed with the tremendous leadership and support of its two main cosponsors, Senators CORNYN and SCHUMER. I thank them for their work, as well as our chairman, Senator LEAHY, and ranking member, Senator GRASSLEY, for their willingness to move this matter on September 11, and say to the victims and their loved ones: We will hold accountable the wrongdoers, and we will make sure the courts of the United States are places where justice is provided against terrorism.

We can also make America a better place by giving more Americans a fair shot. A fair shot is what America promises to men and women who live here now and men and women who come here. A fair shot is part of our basic principled existence. The terrorists struck the World Trade Center and they hit the Pentagon, but they missed America. What makes America great is those principled values.

As we gather today, we should say thank you to the brave men and women in uniform. The Acting President pro tempore is one of them, and I thank him. I thank my two sons who have served, one in the Marine Corps Reserve, deployed to Afghanistan, another now in the Navy. The fact is that the burden of this longest war in our history has been borne by less than 1 percent of our population. We owe all of them and their families our thanks, and we can best say thanks by giving them and all Americans a fair shot at the American dream.

A FAIR SHOT

I have just returned from 5 weeks in Connecticut, where I had the opportunity to listen to concerns of my constituents. The people of Connecticut are proud of this country, but they are also concerned about the great disparities that exist. No one is looking for a free lunch. Nobody in Connecticut thinks there is a free lunch. But people believe in a fair shot and the chance to make a better life for themselves and their families. The present disparities are stark and dispiriting and daunting and, at the end of the day, unacceptable and deeply disturbing.

Our country has made important strides toward recovering from the economic crisis of 2008, but we are far from

done. We are still very much a work in progress economically and socially. Unfortunately, as the Federal Reserve noted just last week, economic burdens continue to fall hardest on Americans who can least afford them.

The disparities in this country have a particularly severe effect on women. Today women make up 50 percent of college graduates, but in order to do so they take on an average \$30,000 in debt, and they go on to work at places where they earn only 77 cents or 82 cents for every \$1 paid to men.

When women are treated fairly, we are all treated fairly. When women are treated unfairly, we all suffer. When college graduates struggle under crushing loads of debt, our whole economy suffers and we are all poorer. These problems affect real people. There are real, attainable solutions available to us all.

I have participated in more than a dozen roundtables across the State of Connecticut, roundtables at colleges and universities where I have heard story after story from them—and also roundtables in high schools—about their struggles to stay on top of their debt. They understood, every one of them, that they were taking on a significant burden but not one that is insurmountable, not one that will cripple them financially for the rest of their lives.

I heard from Gillon, an honorably discharged Army veteran who is now studying law. He wrote to me to say:

Despite having done everything that society tells us while growing up is the right thing to do, I'm still saddled with over \$132,000 in federal school loan debt. My total monthly payments amount to nearly a third of my take-home salary each month, with no end in sight.

Dean, who has three children, earned a master's degree to try to move ahead in his career. A year after graduating, he is \$55,000 in debt, and he is struggling to support his family even though he and his wife work four jobs between them—four jobs and he is struggling to make ends meet, to put a roof over his family's head.

Along with my friend and colleague Senator MURPHY, I met last week with Susan Herbst, the president of the University of Connecticut, and with a number of UConn students and recent graduates, on the campus. They shared with me how excited they are about the vast and limitless opportunities afforded them by this great university.

I sensed the excitement while I was there of this great campus, making me envious for the time they are spending there in studying and exploring the tremendous reaches of human knowledge, both practical and theoretical, and yet the difficulty of how affording a college education has constrained and constricted the professional climate beyond that campus. As heady and glorious as the days on campus may be, there is an overhang of doubt and debt that restricts the reach of their lives. It restricts the reach of our

economy because it constricts consumer demand, it restricts the reach of their ambitions to start businesses, and families to buy homes, and to move ahead with their lives. And that is a problem for all of us.

There are ways for Congress to address this problem. We can pass the legislation I am pleased to cosponsor with Senator WARREN of Massachusetts which would allow borrowers to refinance student loan debt. We can pass Senator FRANKEN's legislation to ensure that debt obligations are explained in clear, comprehensible terms so students know what they are taking on. I am developing a proposal to improve the flexibility of loan forgiveness for students who pursue careers in public service such as teaching, public safety, or firefighting.

The current program requires students to work a full 10 years in these professions for any debt forgiveness. Any debt forgiveness hinges on those full 10 years. I believe shorter periods of work should allow for loan forgiveness in proportion to the time they spend on the job. There are ways to make public service a quicker and easier means for loan forgiveness.

There are other methods as well that we should pursue to enable college affordability. Paycheck fairness is basic to America. There is no reason that American women make only 77 cents per every dollar made by men. Male health care workers in Connecticut earn on average almost twice as much as women performing the same job. Men working in finance earn 61 percent more than women with the same position.

This shocking gap persists when controlled for education, experience, and other job-related factors. The data demonstrates unavoidably and inescapably that women make less than men in 97 percent of professions.

The event I attended in Connecticut, which was a meeting of the Connecticut Permanent Commission on the Status of Women, chaired by Antonia Moran, highlighted the shameful lag in women's compensation. Many women with college degrees told me about their personal struggles.

Lori Pelletier, the executive secretary-treasurer of the Connecticut AFL-CIO, explained how carefully crafted union contracts can often make a difference, but everyone agreed that better laws to address the problem are needed.

Fortunately, my distinguished colleague Senator MIKULSKI, who is here on the floor today, has introduced the Paycheck Fairness Act. It will bring into the 21st century, more than 50 years after the Equal Pay Act was signed by President Kennedy, the gap of full equality. It will improve the remedies available to victims of discrimination. It will prohibit employers from punishing workers who share salary information. It will require any differences in pay to be determined only by job-related factors. It will improve

training and education regarding how to take action against discrimination.

Pay equity is good for families, it is good for the economy, it is good for America, and it is a matter of fundamental fairness. I thank my colleague Senator MIKULSKI for her great work on this issue. I am proud to stand here with her today and with so many other colleagues, because it is basic to a fair shot in the United States of America.

I know American people are counting on all of us to help make America better, to keep faith with the great men and women who have served in our military around the world, who have served and sacrificed—the loved ones of 9/11 victims, of all the victims of terrorism who have perished since and before 9/11. To make America better is what we can do to keep faith with them. To give Americans a fair shot should be our mission today and every day. Mr. President, I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. BOOKER). The Senator from Maryland.

REMEMBERING 9/11

Ms. MIKULSKI. Mr. President, I first thank the Senator from Connecticut, Mr. BLUMENTHAL, for his words on what the middle class is facing and his particular advocacy on behalf of women. It is well known and much appreciated.

I come to the floor today to talk about middle-class people who are trying to play by the rules. But before I do, on this auspicious day, September 11, 2014, I wish to pay my respects once again and express my heartfelt sympathy to the families of people who died on September 11 throughout this country—at the World Trade Center, at the Pentagon, in Pennsylvania—to the wonderful first responders who risked their lives and many themselves who perished, to those who were wounded or sick and bear the permanent burden of their response to that awful tragedy, and to the families of the loved ones who have to live with it every single day—who have an absent chair at Christmas or Thanksgiving, or Hanukkah, whatever faith holiday where families gather and remember.

The Nation cannot forget what happened that day and it cannot forget why it happened, and we cannot forget the people who were there and paid this terrible price of terrorism.

I express my sympathy, my condolences, to say one way we can honor them is to make sure we don't have another terrorist attack in the United States. But what they were doing that day is to believe in America, and that brings me to what I want to talk about today.

THE MIDDLE CLASS

Yes, people talk about when we are out on our break we are on vacation. But I have been moving around Maryland, and one of the things I see and hear that is so clear is that, No. 1, the middle class is worried whether it is going to stay middle class. Those who want to be middle class worry if there is going to be an opportunity ladder for them to achieve middle-class status,

where they can earn a decent living, raise a family, and make a contribution to their community.

They are repeatedly told: If you work hard and go by the rules, you will do OK. They are becoming increasingly skeptical of that, because they feel the very rules of government work against them and the very climate of government stops any change to be able to help them. They either feel that we are irrelevant or we are working against them.

That is why they say: All we want is for America to be America again, where if you work hard, go by the rules, you can have a pretty good life and make a pretty good contribution to this great country of ours.

So when they talk about these issues and if you talk to the old-timers—particularly those who are facing families in long-term care—they worry about the very cruel rules of government that tell them to spend down their life savings until they are eligible for Medicaid; that if you worked hard and you saved, you are actually penalized for that—except for legislation I passed 25 years ago—that if they had gone and squandered their money, they would be better off and more eligible.

Then there are the young people who want to be able to go to school where they can make something of themselves and make America a better place to live.

I held student roundtables, along with my colleague Senator CARDIN. People talked to us about the careers they wanted. At Bowie State, four of the young people who were part of the roundtable want to go into nursing, both men as well as women. They think: I could help people. We have a nursing shortage in this country. Yet the very obstacle to them being able to afford to pay for their education will prohibit it.

Why is it that education is so expensive in this country when we look at tuition, books, fees? And then what is it that we do? First of all, we make sure that Pell grants aren't year-long. You can only go two semesters. But if you want to go during the summer to ace that class that you have to do for compliance purposes for graduation, or that especially hard class—you only want to take one class a semester—your government won't help you finish sooner or finish better. We won't help you. We can give tax break earmarks, but we can't give tax breaks or help there.

Then when they look at their student debt and the interest rates they carry, they ask me: Senator MIKULSKI, why is it that you can refinance a yacht but I can't refinance my student loan?

And I say: Well, you know, we are stuck on the motion to proceed, and we are two votes short of the filibuster; but then we will go backward if we do this.

They don't want to hear this parliamentary wonky stuff. What they want to hear is: We believe in them and

we need them and we want them, and we are going to help them for what they believe we are going to help them achieve to be able to get a student loan. But underneath it all is that work should be worth it and work should be rewarded.

That brings me then to paycheck fairness. One of the other rules they feel is against them is: The rules are rigged against you if you want to fight for equal pay for equal work. If you want to fight for equal pay for equal work, you can be retaliated against, you can be humiliated, you can be harassed, you can be fired, simply because you are asking the person standing next to you at the water cooler or the computer printout machine: How much do you make? That simple question, how much do you make, can trigger a whole retaliatory effort against you. That is the rule, and all it is you want to know is what kind of dough the person next to you is making. This is why we once again are bringing up the Paycheck Fairness Act.

The Paycheck Fairness Act is to fill and close the loopholes that came about in the original Equal Pay Act. We have been at this for 50 years. When this fight started under Lyndon Johnson, women made almost 50 cents for every dollar men made—and after 50 years, gee, we are up to 77 cents per every dollar. And for Latino women, African-American women, other women of color, it is even worse.

People might say: Didn't you fix this when you did the Lilly Ledbetter bill? The Lilly Ledbetter bill that we did pass restored the law to where it was before the Supreme Court decision. This updates and strengthens it. What it does is it deals with this whole issue of retaliation. The Lilly Ledbetter bill did not address employers who are currently able to legally retaliate against workers who share salary information. This legislation stops employers from being able to sue or punish workers for comparing wages.

It also helps restore congressional intent. It makes sure that employers who claim that differences in pay based on any factor other than sex are dealt with. This legislation limits employers' ability to exploit this loophole by requiring that this defense can only be used when it is related to job performance and is necessary for business.

This bill creates a fair playing field, simply knowing what the next person earns and being able to work and to negotiate for equal pay for equal work. The Paycheck Fairness Act fixes the law to keep discrimination from happening. It would have helped keep Lilly from having to sue in the first place.

This bill puts an end to the incentives that cause employers to think that paying women less is just a cost of doing business. It gets rid of the secrecy that makes it harder to uncover pay differences. Why should pay be such a secret unless you are ashamed to say what it is? Why would you want to keep it a secret? Maybe it is because

you don't want to brag that you pay the men more than the women. Maybe you are too ashamed. Maybe you think it will lead you to an EEOC lawsuit. We want to end secrecy at the job place, where you know what the person next to you makes—you have a right to ask.

I have heard from women all over America and I have heard from men—men who work so hard, particularly for their daughters; men who have jobs they hate so their girls can go to school and have jobs they love. Men want equal pay for equal work. They want it for their spouses, they want it for their widowed mothers, and they want it for their daughters.

Listening to the cases—Donna Smith of Maryland's Eastern Shore worked as a retail clerk. She was told not to discuss her pay, but when she found out she was being paid less than a male cook and was doing the exact same job, she filed an EEOC complaint. And what happened? While she fought for her pay, they were fighting her with agitation and humiliation.

Latoya Weaver sent a letter to me. She is a single parent with three children, working in guest services at a hotel. She found out her pay of \$8 an hour was \$2 less than the males doing the same job. Two dollars when you are at bare minimum makes a pretty big difference. She filed an EEOC lawsuit. Although she only received compensatory damage because of the discrimination, the company's policy against discussing pay means it could happen again.

I could give example after example. I have been talking about this for a number of years. It is time. In the Senate, after all is said and done, more gets said than gets done. But this time, in the next 72 hours, we could actually vote to move the bill to the floor, to continue the debate and discussion and actually right the wrongs in equal pay for equal work. This is why American women want a fair shot. All they want is to be paid exactly the same—equal pay—as their male counterparts.

Mr. President, knowing of your own steadfast advocacy for the middle class in this country and an opportunity ladder in this country, we have to stop and make sure the rules government creates do not rig the game against people who are working hard and trying to play by the rules. The rules should work for the people and not for the government or for those who want to hold down wages or opportunities.

We are not going to accept women being paid less. We have paid attention to this problem, we've listened to the voices of the people, and we have a solution in the Paycheck Fairness Act. I look forward to working with my colleagues to see if there are amendments, whatever we could do to move this process forward. I would love a unanimous vote out of the Senate to have paycheck fairness finally in our lawbooks and in women's checkbooks. It's time to end pay inequity. It's time for Congress to act.

Mr. President, I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Republican whip.

REMEMBERING 9/11

Mr. CORNYN. Mr. President, today is the 13th anniversary of 9/11, a day that will be burned in all of our collective memories. I remember two events like this in my lifetime—9/11 is one, and the other is when John F. Kennedy, our President, was assassinated. I remember where I was, what I was doing, and I remember the feeling of horror as the reality of both of those events became more clear. And I bet I am not alone. I bet there are Americans all around the country who remember where they were and what they were doing and what their first thoughts were when those planes hit the World Trade Center in New York, the first and then the second, only to learn there were other planes that were flying with terrorists who had other targets. Of course there was the Pentagon, where many Americans lost their lives, and then there was the plane that was brought down in Pennsylvania that I will talk about a little more.

This is one of the defining moments in our Nation's history, a day that proved that our love of country and our fellow Americans will always prevail. I remember the overwhelming sense of unity the American people felt when this tragedy unfolded, and it is entirely right that we did so.

Nearly 3000 Americans lost their lives on that day, many in an attempt to save others from harm. As usually happens in moments of tragedy, there were sparks or hints or bright lights of the triumph of the human spirit, people rising to the challenge, showing some of the very best qualities we exhibit as human beings.

Today we pause with heavy hearts to remember those we lost and pray to God that He will continue to comfort the families of those who still mourn. Thirteen years may seem like a long time to many of us who did not have the personal tragedy of losing somebody we were close to or a family member, but I am confident that for many who did lose family members and loved ones and friends, that 13 years seems like just yesterday.

We also continue to keep our military, our intelligence professionals, our law enforcement officials, first responders, and others who dedicated their lives to that fateful day in our thoughts and prayers because it is they who help keep us safe and who have helped us avoid a similar attack on our homeland over the last 13 years. None of them should ever for a moment doubt our gratitude.

I wasn't serving in this body when those attacks came on September 11, but, as I said, I remember exactly where I was. Like other Americans, I was at home in Austin, TX, preparing for work when I heard the terrible news. I remember my wife called my attention to it after the first plane hit the World Trade Center. I didn't actu-

ally see it. Of course I saw it time and time again as it was replayed. But I turned to the television set, as my wife called my attention to it just as the second plane hit, and we all wondered what in the world was happening. Then when the towers actually fell and as people jumped out of the towers to avoid, they hoped, their death—but, in fact, they did jump to their death—it was all too vivid and is still today.

We should never forget, and that is perhaps the most important lesson we should learn. We should never forget what happened on that terrible day. It is said that those who forget history are condemned to relive it, and I believe that to be true.

September 11 is a solemn reminder of what can be taken from us in the blink of an eye and why we must never waiver in our efforts to protect this great Nation and the freedom it embodies.

Two simple words were spoken that will be remembered in history as one of the most courageous and powerful phrases ever uttered, and of course I am referring to the words spoken by Todd Beamer aboard Flight 93. When they heard terrorists were in command of the controls of the airplane and perhaps heading to the Nation's Capital, perhaps to attack either the White House or Congress and to knock out large portions of the U.S. Government, Todd Beamer's response, along with other brave patriots, was "Let's roll." They then attempted to overpower the terrorists in the cockpit. Those brave passengers on that flight did more than just save the lives of innocent Americans here in the Nation's Capital; absent their sacrifice, it is likely that flight would have claimed even more lives than just those on board.

The passengers on Flight 93, along with every American who died 13 years ago on September 11, were men and women with jobs, with families, and with dreams. I am sure that, like all of us, many of them made promises to their loved ones before they boarded that plane or left for work that day—promises to be home in time for dinner, to make a child's soccer game or birthday party. Some promises don't come cheap. Others cost us absolutely nothing. Others require that we risk everything we have and everything we are, even our very lives, to fulfill those promises. Their acts of courage offer us comfort even today and inspire every American as we have rebuilt from that terrible day 13 years ago.

The acts of courage displayed on 9/11 mark their last promise in a sense—a promise carried on to the Nation, to their children and other loved ones left behind; a promise that says the story of freedom will not end in the vile acts of evil men. It will endure and it will not be destroyed.

Early this morning I had the privilege of joining my colleagues on the Senate Judiciary Committee in approving an important piece of legislation called the Justice Against Sponsors of Terrorism Act, which will now be eligible for movement across the floor. It is

appropriate that we pass that piece of legislation on the anniversary of 9/11.

By amending the current law to hold foreign sponsors of terrorism potentially liable in U.S. courts for acts that injure or kill Americans, this bill will allow the families of the victims of the attacks on 9/11 and others to proceed to court against those responsible for those horrific attacks that took place 13 years ago.

Part of the attack against international terrorism has to be to go against the money that finances it, and this will provide another tool for those families to attack those who fund and finance international terrorism.

This bill, not surprisingly, is strongly supported by the 9/11 family victims, and it would allow their litigation to proceed on its merits. I am hopeful it will receive the prompt consideration here on the Senate floor that it deserves.

Americans have always been deeply concerned about the kind of country and the kind of world we leave our children. As parents, that is what keeps us going some days. Of course, grandparents have other reasons to keep going and to keep fighting for a better world. This remains true both abroad and here at home in our own communities and in our schools and at work. We must continue to push on undeterred, always confident in the pursuit of our ultimate goal: a just, free, and peaceful world not just for ourselves but for our allies and for future generations. Part of that mission involves stopping evil at its source, running it down, and eliminating it for good because we learned another thing on 9/11: We can either take the fight to the source of the evil where it exists or we can defend here on the homeland. Speaking for myself and I am sure others, I want to go fight it at its source and not just defend on the homeland.

The minions of terror have shown their capacity for inhumanity. We have seen recent reminders of that with the beheading of two American journalists by ISIS. We must never underestimate the capacity and desire of these evil people to do so again and again.

We have recently been reminded of this, and last night the President spoke to the Nation's commitment to deal with this sort of horrific activity and dangerous and extreme ideology. As we adapt to new threats and new challenges, Americans must maintain a sense of vigilance, a sense of purpose, and a sense of moral clarity.

We must never forget why we fight, and we must always make sure that our brave men and women in uniform have what they need in order to take the fight to our Nation's enemies. The greatest honor we can give to those we lost is to live our lives worthy of their sacrifice, relish the freedoms guaranteed by our Constitution, and ensure the promise that those freedoms shall not perish for future generations.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The majority leader.

Mr. REID. Mr. President, I appreciate very much the distinguished Senator from Texas for yielding the floor.

Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that all postcloture time on the motion to proceed to S. 2199 be considered expired.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection?

Without objection, it is so ordered. All postcloture time has expired and the question occurs on agreeing to the motion to proceed.

The motion was agreed to.

PAYCHECK FAIRNESS ACT

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

The assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

A bill (S. 2199) to amend the Fair Labor Standards Act of 1938 to provide more effective remedies to victims of discrimination in the payment of wages on the basis of sex, and for other purposes.

AMENDMENT NO. 3800

Mr. REID. In regard to this, Mr. President, I have an amendment that is at the desk that I ask the clerk to report.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report the amendment.

The assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

The Senator from Nevada [Mr. Reid] proposes an amendment numbered 3800.

The amendment is as follows:

On page 20, line 4, strike "6 months" and insert "7 months".

Mr. REID. I ask for the yeas and nays on that amendment.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there a sufficient second?

There appears to be a sufficient second.

The yeas and nays were ordered.

AMENDMENT NO. 3801 TO AMENDMENT NO. 3800

Mr. REID. Mr. President, I have a second-degree amendment at the desk.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report the amendment.

The assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

The Senator from Nevada [Mr. REID] proposes an amendment numbered 3801 to amendment No. 3800.

The amendment is as follows:

In the amendment, strike "7" and insert "8".

MOTION TO COMMIT WITH AMENDMENT NO. 3802

Mr. REID. Mr. President, I have a motion to commit S. 2199 with instructions, which is at the desk.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report the motion.

The assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

The Senator from Nevada [Mr. REID] moves to commit the bill to the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions with instructions to report back forthwith with an amendment numbered 3802.

The amendment is as follows:

On page 20, line 4, strike "6 months after the date of enactment" and insert "7 months after the date of enactment".

Mr. REID. I ask for the yeas and nays on that motion.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there a sufficient second?

There appears to be a sufficient second.

The yeas and nays were ordered.

AMENDMENT NO. 3803

Mr. REID. I have an amendment to the instructions at the desk.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report the amendment.

The assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

The Senator from Nevada [Mr. REID] proposes an amendment numbered 3803 to the instructions to the motion to commit S. 2199.

The amendment is as follows:

In the amendment, strike "7 months" and insert "8 months."

Mr. REID. I ask for the yeas and nays on that amendment.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there a sufficient second?

There appears to be a sufficient second.

The yeas and nays were ordered.

AMENDMENT NO. 3804 TO AMENDMENT NO. 3803

Mr. REID. I have a second-degree amendment at the desk.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report the amendment.

The legislative clerk read as follows:

The Senator from Nevada [Mr. REID] proposes an amendment numbered 3804 to amendment No. 3803.

The amendment is as follows:

In the amendment, strike "8" and insert "9".

CLOTURE MOTION

Mr. REID. Mr. President, I have a cloture motion at the desk that I ask the Presiding Officer to order reported.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The cloture motion having been presented under rule XXII, the Chair directs the clerk to read the motion.

The assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

CLOTURE MOTION

We, the undersigned Senators, in accordance with the provisions of rule XXII of the Standing Rules of the Senate, hereby move to bring to a close debate on S. 2199, a bill to amend the Fair Labor Standards Act of 1938 to provide more effective remedies to victims of discrimination in the payment of wages on the basis of sex, and for other purposes.

Harry Reid, Tom Harkin, Barbara A. Mikulski, Benjamin L. Cardin, Richard J. Durbin, Maria Cantwell, Mazie Hirono, Kay R. Hagan, Jack Reed, Patty Murray, Dianne Feinstein, Robert P. Casey, Jr., Kirsten E. Gillibrand, Barbara Boxer, Sheldon Whitehouse, Amy Klobuchar, Charles E. Schumer.

Mr. REID. I ask unanimous consent that the mandatory quorum under rule XXII be waived.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection?

Without objection, it is so ordered.