

students choose not to go to college because they can't afford it or they come out of school deeply in debt—a debt fastened on their shoulders for decades.

Quality education in America—from child care to higher education—must be affordable for all. Without a high-quality and affordable educational system, we will be unable to compete globally in the international economy and our standard of living will continue to decline. We have to invest in education. The idea that we are laying off teachers is completely absurd.

No. 9, the function of banking—the banking system—is to facilitate the flow of capital into a productive and job-creating economy. That is what banking is supposed to be. People save, people put money in banks, and that money goes out into the economy so that people can buy homes and create businesses.

Financial institutions cannot be an island unto themselves, standing as huge profit centers outside of the real productive economy. In other words, banking must be a means to an end by improving society, creating jobs, providing people with decent housing, and not simply a means by which financial institutions make more and more profit.

Today, six huge Wall Street financial institutions have assets equivalent to 61 percent of our gross domestic product. There is close to \$10 trillion in 6 financial institutions. These institutions underwrite more than one-half of the mortgages in this country and more than two-thirds of the credit cards. The greed, recklessness, and illegal behavior of major Wall Street firms plunged this country into the worst financial crisis since the 1930s, and every day when we open up our newspapers, we see another major banking scandal.

The truth of the matter is that these financial institutions on Wall Street are too powerful to be reformed. They have too much money, too much wealth, too many lobbyists, and make too much in campaign contributions. Our goal must be to break them up. They have too much power and too much wealth. They must be broken up so that our financial institutions begin to serve the needs of the American people and not simply the CEOs and the stockholders of Wall Street firms.

No. 10, the United States must join the rest of the industrialized world and recognize that health care is a right of all and not a privilege. I think many Americans don't know that we are the only major country on Earth that does not guarantee health care to all people as a right. Yet, within this dysfunctional health care system, we have 40 million people who have no health insurance, more people who are underinsured, millions of people with high premiums and high deductibles, and at the end of all of that, we end up spending almost twice as much per capita on health care as do the people of any other major country on Earth.

The time is now for us to declare that health care is a right of all people

and not a privilege. We need to pass a Medicare-for-all, single-payer system.

No. 11, millions of senior citizens in this country live in poverty, and we have the highest rate of childhood poverty of any major country on Earth.

I hear a lot of discussion on the part of my Republican colleagues—and some Democrats—that we should be cutting Social Security. Well, I strongly disagree. In my view, we must strengthen and expand Social Security—not cut it. That is terribly important, especially at a time when more and more seniors are slipping into poverty. We have millions of seniors who are trying to survive on \$12,000, \$13,000 and \$14,000 a year. They have to decide every single day whether they should buy the medicine they need, heat their homes adequately or buy the food they need. We should not be cutting these programs; we should be expanding these programs.

No. 12—and the last point I will make as part of an agenda that rebuilds America and rebuilds our middle class—at a time of massive wealth and income inequality, we need a progressive tax system in this country which is based on ability to pay. It is not acceptable that every single year we have major, profitable corporations which pay nothing in Federal income taxes. It is not acceptable that we have corporate CEOs in this country who make millions of dollars every year and enjoy an effective tax rate which is lower than that of their secretaries. That is grotesquely unfair, and it must be changed.

Further, we have to address the disgrace that every single year our country loses over \$100 billion in revenue because corporations and the wealthy stash their money in offshore tax havens all over the world. The time is long overdue for real tax reform which says to the wealthy and large, profitable corporations that they have to begin paying their fair share of taxes.

I will conclude by getting back to the point I made in the beginning of my remarks, and that is that we are in a pivotal moment in American history. The very, very rich are becoming richer, the middle class is disappearing, and today we have more people living in poverty than at almost any other time in American history. With the wealth of the billionaire class, they are exercising their power politically because Citizens United—a disastrous Supreme Court decision—has given them the power to buy elections and control, to a significant degree, our political process.

We, as a nation, have to ultimately make a decision about whether we are going to continue the process where the middle class continues to decline and the very, very richest people become richer or whether we are prepared—and this is not easy stuff—to stand together to take on the billionaire class and their greed and to say: Enough is enough. This country does not just belong to the top 1 percent or

the top one-tenth of 1 percent. It belongs to all of us.

I hope very much that the American people make the right choice, because if they do, we can bring about a transformation of this country so the government begins to work for all of the people and not just the billionaires who are on top.

With that, I yield the floor.

RECESS

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the Senate stands in recess until 2:15 p.m.

Thereupon, the Senate, at 12:42 p.m., recessed until 2:15 p.m. and reassembled when called to order by the Presiding Officer (Ms. BALDWIN).

NOMINATION OF ROBERT S. ADLER TO BE A COMMISSIONER OF THE CONSUMER PRODUCT SAFETY COMMISSION—Continued

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Vermont.

IMMIGRATION

Mr. LEAHY. Madam President, I will take just about a minute. I know we are waiting for others to come. I have heard some of the discussion on the floor and in the hallways about Thanksgiving. On Thursday, when I sat down with my family over Thanksgiving dinner, I thought about our history and how my grandparents came to Vermont from Italy, my great-grandparents from Ireland, and my wife's family from the Province of Quebec in Canada. We, similar to most Americans, are a family of immigrants. It is that rich melting-pot history that makes our country so special, so strong. Thanksgiving is a good time to celebrate and honor that strength.

Far too many immigrant families today, however, live in fear—fear of being torn apart, of losing a mother or father or sister or brother, to deportation. Bringing peace to those families is one of the things that most motivated me last year during the long debate on immigration reform. Both Democrats and Republicans in this Chamber praised the fair and thorough process that we had in the Judiciary Committee on the immigration bill.

We had 6 hearings featuring 42 witnesses. We debated bipartisan legislation a total of 37 hours over a 3-week period. We considered 212 amendments, and we adopted 136 of them—all but 3 on a bipartisan basis. The full Senate then debated the bill and approved it by an overwhelming bipartisan majority.

But that effort was not good enough for Republican leaders in the House. They would not even allow a vote on the bill. Today, they are batting zero when it comes to addressing the broken immigration system.

They now complain that the President is acting alone, but he is not. The American people support immigration

reform. That is why President Obama acted. His actions are legal, but they are only a temporary fix. Congress must still act. The Republican House leadership has chosen to hold hearings attacking the President's actions, rather than simply stepping up and allowing a vote on a bill to solve the problem. Time is running out and they are wasting it on political antics. I hope that they use the remainder of this month to take up and vote on the comprehensive bill we sent them more than a year and a half ago.

I applaud the President's action to keep families together. That is why next week, the Senate Judiciary Committee will again turn to the issue of family unity. I have asked Astrid Silva, whose remarkable story President Obama began to tell last week, to come and share the rest of her story and what the President's actions will mean to her family. The fact is we have done the work for an immigration bill. Why won't the Republicans at least vote—vote yes or vote no. We did, and I applaud those Republicans and Democrats in the Senate who stood and voted. Let the House act.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from South Dakota.

COLORETTI NOMINATION

Mr. JOHNSON of South Dakota. Madam President, I rise to urge my colleagues to vote in favor of the nomination of Ms. Nani Coloretti to be Deputy Secretary of the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development.

The HUD Deputy Secretary is a critical component of the agency's management team, overseeing HUD's programs that provide affordable rental housing, community and economic development opportunities, and an opportunity for creditworthy families to achieve the dream of home ownership. I believe Ms. Coloretti has the skills and experience necessary to take on this role. The full Senate Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs Committee also approved Ms. Coloretti's nomination for the position on April 29, 2014, by voice vote.

Ms. Coloretti is currently the Assistant Secretary for Management at the U.S. Department of the Treasury. During her tenure at Treasury, Ms. Coloretti helped create a new Treasury Operations Excellence Team, which has applied lean principles developed in the private sector to improve performance at Treasury. This work encompassed dozens of process improvement outcomes, saving the Department money and staff time while engendering a culture of continual improvement.

Prior to joining the Treasury Department, Ms. Coloretti held positions in the San Francisco mayor's office, including budget director; the San Francisco Department of Children, Youth, and Their Families; the U.S. Office of Management and Budget; and the private sector. She is also a recipient of the National Public Service Award, the Public Policy and International Affairs

Achievement Award, and the Federal 100 Award.

In all, Ms. Coloretti would bring over 20 years of experience in budget and program analysis, as well as more than 15 years of management experience, to the position of Deputy Secretary of the Department of HUD.

At a time when millions of American families struggle to find affordable rental housing, the market continues to lock many creditworthy potential borrowers out of homeownership, and HUD's State and local partners work to provide greater opportunities with limited resources, it is critical that HUD and the programs it oversees are run efficiently and effectively. As HUD's Deputy Secretary, Ms. Coloretti would be a valuable addition to Secretary Castro's management team. I urge my fellow Senators to support her nomination.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Virginia.

CHESAPEAKE BAY ACCOUNTABILITY AND RECOVERY ACT OF 2013

FEDERAL DUCK STAMP ACT OF 2014

Mr. WARNER. Madam President, in a moment I am going to be asking a unanimous consent request on some legislation that combines some work I have been doing and work the ranking member of the EPW Committee, my friend, the Senator from Alaska, has been doing. I want to make a brief statement first and then I am going to turn the floor over to the Senator from Louisiana.

I start by thanking Chairman BOXER and Ranking Member VITTER for working with me on this important legislation. I also thank the bipartisan Virginia delegation on both sides of the Capitol, especially my friend Congressman ROB WITTMAN. He and I have worked on this initiative now for more than 4 years.

As we all know, the Chesapeake Bay, while located around Virginia and Maryland and Delaware, is actually a national treasure. It is the centerpiece of the culture and economy of many coastal communities in Virginia and in several neighboring States.

Restoring the health of the Chesapeake Bay must be a national priority. Virginia and five other States, the District of Columbia, 10 Federal agencies, and more than 1,000 local governments have spent decades on this shared priority.

We have joined together over the years in a shared commitment to the Bay. We have worked across jurisdictional lines, across the political aisle, across every level of government in partnership with the private sector and with nonprofit groups such as the Chesapeake Bay Foundation.

This important bipartisan legislation that we are going to be moving on

shortly ensures that we maintain a Federal commitment to the partnership to restore the Chesapeake Bay. It also makes sure that during these challenging fiscal times every dollar spent on improving the health of the Bay produces real results.

The Chesapeake Bay accountability bill requires the U.S. Office of Management and Budget to prepare a crosscut budget. That means we will actually track where and how Federal and State restoration dollars are being spent throughout the entire Chesapeake Bay Watershed.

This will allow us to track costs and match them to results. It means more accountability and it means more transparency to our combined efforts to restore this national treasure.

This bipartisan legislation is an important step forward in ensuring that the Chesapeake Bay restoration and preservation efforts remain effective, accountable, responsible, and transparent. In a moment I am going to urge all my colleagues to join us in approving it.

At this moment, I yield the floor to the ranking member, the Senator from Louisiana.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Louisiana.

Mr. VITTER. Madam President, I am truly honored to join my colleagues on the floor, Senators WARNER and BEGICH. I am pleased to support Senator WARNER's bill that he just described and also a second bill Senator BEGICH and I have been working very diligently on that will be part of the unanimous consent request. That is H.R. 5069, the Federal Duck Stamp Act of 2014. This bipartisan legislation is a real victory for sportsmen and for conservation. It is a straightforward bill that updates the fee paid by duck hunters for a duck stamp for the first time since 1991, and that is a big win for the hunters, it is a big win for conservation because the cost of the duck stamp goes directly toward conservation of waterfowl habitat. In fact, 98 cents on every \$1 generated goes directly to purchase or lease wetland habitat for ducks, and where you have more habitat, you have more ducks and you have a healthier environment. It is as simple as that.

I am very pleased to say our work on this bill is exactly how this place and American democracy is supposed to work. I first heard about this real need from duck hunters, from sportsmen who live this and breathe this every day. I am an occasional hunter, but these folks absolutely live it and breathe it every day and understand the critical need.

I immediately got very involved. I reached out to allies such as Senator BEGICH, who had a great interest in it. I met with the House sponsor, Representative JOHN FLEMING, also from Louisiana. We met with the House Natural Resources chairman, DOC HASTINGS. We got a strong version of the