

they need to contract what is essential to construction at the lowest possible cost in the most efficient way. The certainty and reliability in funding are essential to our municipalities, knowing what their resources will be not just this year but into the future and driving the bargaining with contractors and subcontractors.

It is not just because of our rebuilding needs that we need this investment. There are also many other significant related issues that we must address to keep our roads and bridges safe and reliable. We need to ensure that trucks on the road aren't too big, that truck drivers have enough rest, that our railroads are properly overseen, that constant train control is implemented, that testing for physical and emotional problems is done regularly and reliably. And the long list of NTSB regulations needs to be finally addressed and implemented.

We are in a time when we are talking to young men and women as they graduate from school about those big ideas and about their futures and dreams, when we invoke what is best and brightest about America, our foresight, our strength, our courage to take risks, to invest in ourselves and our future. It is the same spirit that led to the building of the Erie Canal, the transcontinental railroad, and the interstate highway system. Those initiatives were not partisan initiatives. The greatest generation came back from World War II and built the interstate highways under the leadership of President Dwight Eisenhower. He was committed to making America one Nation in its roads, tying us and binding us together as a Nation through that investment. He had the courage—as we should today—to say that what is great about America is what we give back, what we are willing to invest—not only for today, but for tomorrow.

And we are in danger today in this Chamber, in this Nation, of being one of the first generations that left a lesser America for our children. Think of it—a lesser America at a time when the words “exceptional” and “exceptionalism” trip off the tongues of many of our colleagues here in the Chamber. We need to match that rhetoric with real action.

So today, let us resolve that we will debate and act on a long-term investment program to make sure that our roads and bridges, our railroads and airports, and the ports that could make our Nation the envy of the world are matching our rhetoric and our goals; that they truly make us competitive for businesses in Connecticut and around the Nation, competitive on the global scene, where competition has never been tougher and where our infrastructure needs to be better.

I yield the floor.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The senior assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

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

WASTEFUL SPENDING

Mr. COATS. Madam President, I am back on the floor again for “Waste of the Week” No. 10. As my colleagues know, I have been coming down every week talking about waste, fraud, and abuse, ways we can save taxpayer dollars. While we have not been able to address, unfortunately, tragically, the larger issue of the plunge into deficit spending and debt that our Nation has incurred over the past several years, in particular—every effort, every bipartisan effort, has been thwarted by the President’s refusal to engage in that, and yet the debt clock keeps on ticking. We keep spending more money than we take in. We keep putting more and more of a burden on future generations as well as our own.

Our economy is not growing. One of the reasons is that we have not achieved fiscal responsibility in the Congress. So while we have not been able to address the larger issue, we can at least address some of those issues that have been documented as waste, fraud, and abuse, documented by non-partisan agencies that are established for the sole purpose of weeding out some of the excess spending that is not essential to the functioning of government.

We have put up some pretty interesting numbers relative to what we have achieved. We are already over \$50 billion of spending that has been documented as totally unnecessary. Some of it has been of the character of somewhat ridiculous. Some has been very, very substantial. We are going to continue to do this, pointing out to the American taxpayer and pointing out to government officials who run these agencies and make these decisions that we simply cannot afford to keep doing this.

So today’s waste of the week will be addressed, hopefully by the Appropriations Committee, which will soon be working now that we have passed a budget, to distribute those funds that are necessary for the functioning of government.

I am urging them to use a system and means of identifying what is essential and what is not essential. Now, there may be some things we would like to do but cannot afford to do. They need to be put on hold until we can do them. But there are a lot of issues and a lot of spending that goes on that should not be done in the first place.

Significant savings can be made. Even though it is much smaller than what we need to do, we certainly can address issues that will save taxpayer dollars and better allocate spending for government. When our previous Governor in Indiana, Mitch Daniels, took over, he brought with him a resume as

former Director of the Office of Management and Budget. Then-President George W. Bush gave him the name “The Blade.” “The Blade” looked at every small, little detail of spending and asked a lot of questions: Why are we doing this? How can we save? How can we make government more efficient? There are essential things government has to do. But when he became Governor, he transferred over some of that knowledge and expertise and started doing some simple things, asking some simple questions: Why are we spending money on this? Why are we spending money on that?

Let me give you just a couple of examples. He gathered some of his staff and said: I want you to go out and put pennies on the tires of our State-owned vehicles wherever they are housed. Wherever they are parked, put pennies on them. He waited several months then said: Now, go back and identify all of those vehicles where the pennies are still on the tire. In other words, they had not been moved. They had not even been shifted to another parking spot. They simply were just sitting there.

Well, interestingly enough, he found that many unused State vehicles still had the pennies on their tires. If they had been sitting there for months and nobody was using them, why are we paying for them? Why are we spending money on purchasing these? Let’s sell them off, save some money for the State. They obviously are not necessary. It was one-third of the State’s fleet of vehicles.

Another thing he did, he said: Let’s look at our printing costs. The State had its own printing operation. He said: Let’s shop around and see if the private sector can do this more effectively and efficiently. Of course, they did find a private vendor in Indiana that did it much more effectively.

You save a lot of money just going black and white, maybe not quite as pretty, maybe not quite as attractive as color, but another way to save money.

These are small things, but when you total them up for all the agencies that are in Washington—as was determined by the National Commission on Fiscal Responsibility and Reform—it adds up to a lot of money. This government is more vast than anyone can possibly imagine.

Well, the Commission found that Federal agencies could save at least \$10 billion over 10 years by cutting out waste in federal travel, printing and vehicle expenses. So here again is a waste of the week that we are going to add to our ever-increasing gauge of the waste. All this now in red, these are what we have been adding, the 10 items that we have added. We are approaching now, looks like \$60 billion, on our way to \$100 billion. I think we will probably be having to add extensions to this because, folks, I mean, there is waste out there, there is fraud out there, there is abuse out there like you would not believe.

Should we be dealing with the larger question, the runaway entitlements, the lack of money to adequately fund NIH or scientific research or education but we cannot because our budget is totally out of control? Should we be doing this? Absolutely. That is what we are here for. We have talked about this for the last 5 years since I have been back here. Despite the many alternatives that have been presented to the White House, every one has been rejected.

So at least let's do those things where we have more control through the appropriations process and better manage government, make it more efficient and make it more effective. That is why we point out these and we will continue to point out these in the "Waste of the Week" No. 10. I cannot wait to get down here next week and do No. 11.

I yield the floor.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The senior assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

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

CONCLUSION OF MORNING BUSINESS

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Morning business is now closed.

STATING THE POLICY OF THE UNITED STATES REGARDING THE RELEASE OF UNITED STATES CITIZENS IN IRAN

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the Senate will proceed to the consideration of S. Con. Res. 16, which the clerk will report.

The senior assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

A concurrent resolution (S. Con. Res. 16) stating the policy of the United States regarding the release of United States citizens in Iran.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, there will be 30 minutes of debate equally divided in the usual form prior to a vote on adoption of S. Con. Res. 16.

The Senator from Maryland.

Mr. CARDIN. Mr. President, I first want to thank Senator RISCH for his tireless dedication to the plight of the three American citizens unjustifiably detained in Iran, as well as his efforts to call upon the Iranian Government to cooperate in locating Robert Livingston, a missing fourth American, and also returning him to his family.

I also want to thank my colleagues from the States these Americans are from—Senators FEINSTEIN and BOXER from California, Senators STABENOW and PETERS from Michigan, Senators NELSON and RUBIO from Florida, and

Senators CRAPO and RISCH from Idaho—for their efforts in working with the families of these American citizens who have been held too long in Iran.

I call upon the government of Iran to do the right thing—do the right thing and immediately release these citizens and send them home to their families and communities as soon as possible. The resolution has a statement of policy that is absolutely unobjectionable in any way.

Let me point out one last thing, if I might. As the ranking member of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, I want to reassure the families of these Americans that I will continue to urge the U.S. Government to use every tool at its disposal to secure the release of these Americans, and I will continue to call upon the Iranian Government to immediately and unconditionally release these men and send them home to their families.

I am very pleased we will soon be voting on this resolution, which unequivocally says that America should use all the tools at its disposal for the return of these Americans.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The senior assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. CARDIN. 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. CARDIN. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that during the quorum call, the time be equally divided between the majority and the minority.

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

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

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

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

Ms. STABENOW. Mr. President, I commend Senator RISCH, and I am pleased to be a cosponsor of this resolution, which is incredibly important to people in Michigan as well as across the country.

We have a very special man who unfortunately is being held as a hostage in Iran, and he needs to come home now. I have had the honor of getting to know the family of Amir Hekmati. He is a patriotic American from Flint, MI, who served his country honorably and bravely as a marine between 2001 to 2005 in Iraq and Afghanistan. He is an American citizen but also became a dual citizen with Iran in order to be able to visit his grandmother and other family members in Iran.

In August 2011, he was visiting his grandmother and was arrested by the

Iranian authorities and charged with spying for the CIA, which was absolutely false, absolutely trumped-up charges. He was then deprived of a fair trial and jailed on those totally trumped-up charges.

Of those Americans confirmed as prisoners in Iran, none have been incarcerated longer than Amir Hekmati. He has been waiting the longest to come home. He has been tortured and is locked inside a prison notorious for its deplorable conditions. Meanwhile, Amir's father is battling terminal brain cancer.

I was very honored to have the opportunity to spend time with his family—his mom and dad, his sister and two brothers—who are passionately engaged in speaking out, coming to Washington, meeting with the State Department, and making sure we are laser-focused on their brother and their son. My heart went out to them.

Think about all of us who have children. Speaking to his mom and dad, it is frightening, it is deplorable, it is outrageous, and he needs to come home—now.

I can't say enough about the love and devotion of the Hekmati family. I have had a number of different opportunities to meet with them. Amir's sister and brother have frequently been here in Washington making sure we are not forgetting about this brave marine. They have fought so hard for his freedom.

I also commend Congressman DAN KILDEE, who represents the Hekmati family in Flint, MI, for being a great partner and such a strong advocate and a strong voice on behalf of Amir and his family.

This resolution is a clear message to the Iranian Government: If you want a seat at the table with the rest of the international community, free Amir Hekmati now, as well as all the other U.S. citizens who are being held as hostages.

Our thoughts and prayers go out to all of their families. I can tell this body that for us, in Michigan, we are laser-focused on making sure that Amir Hekmati's name is lifted up at every opportunity and that it is very clear that this brave, courageous marine who served our country so well has the full support of our government to bring him home immediately.

I congratulate and thank my colleague.

I am proud to be one of the cosponsors on this resolution.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Maryland.

Mr. CARDIN. Mr. President, I thank Senator STABENOW for her work on this resolution and for her actions on behalf of her constituent who is being held in Iran. She has been extremely helpful in bringing this resolution forward.

I see Senator RISCH on the floor. I want to state one last time that because of Senator RISCH, we are on the floor tonight with a vote in the full